

TRMC2023

PROCEEDINGS OF

The 5th International Tourism and Retail Service Management Conference

19-20 OCTOBER 2023
MACAO INSTITUTE FOR TOURISM STUDIES
MACAO SAR, CHINA

Host and organiser



澳門旅遊學院
INSTITUTO DE FORMAÇÃO TURÍSTICA DE MACAU
Macao Institute for Tourism Studies

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Destination Consultancy

Proceedings of the 5th International Tourism and Retail Service Management Conference (TRMC2023)

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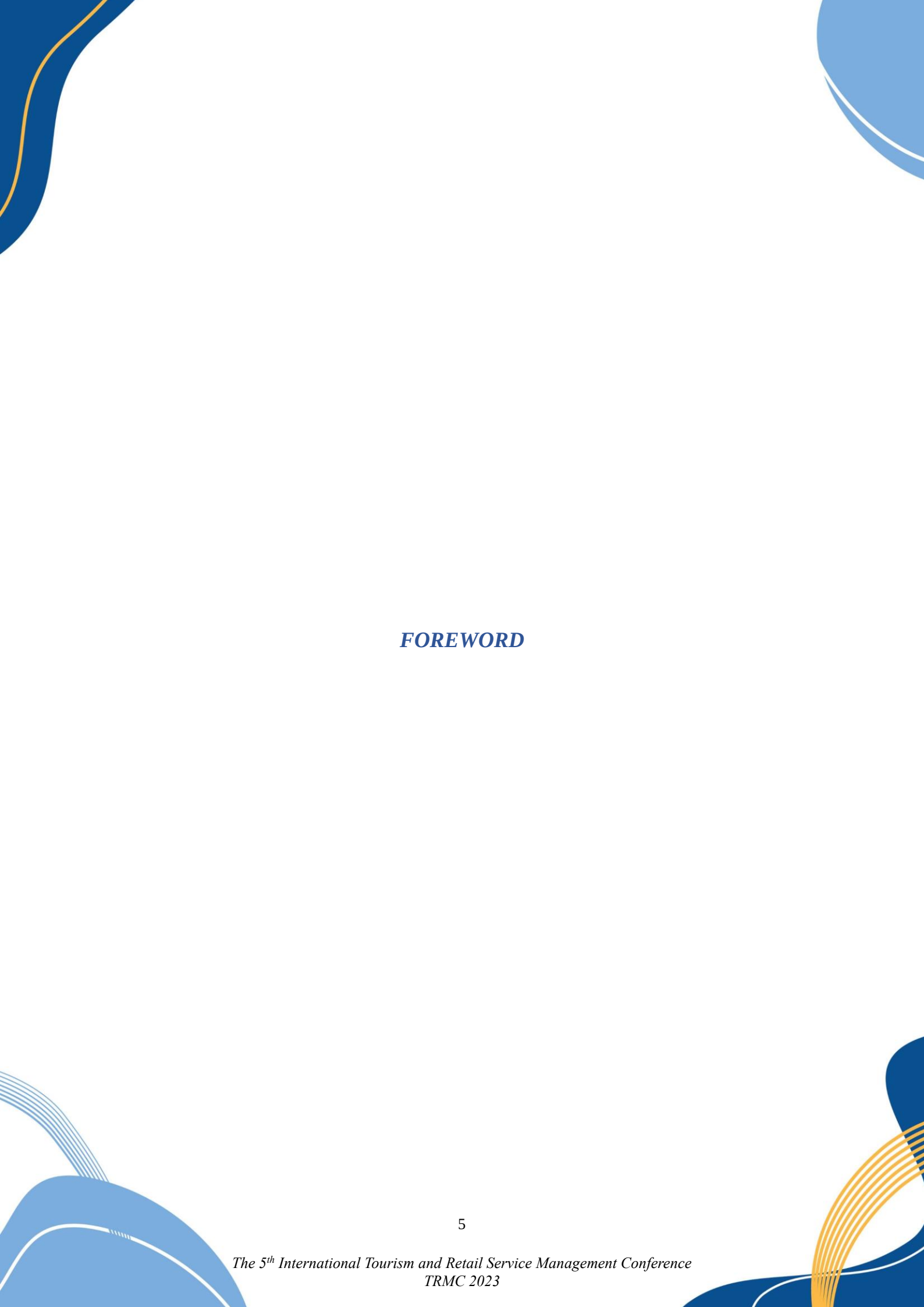


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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD.....	5
WELCOME REMARKS	7
From Dr. Fanny Vong, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies	8
From Prof. Fang Meng, University of South Carolina.....	10
From Prof. Hong Xu, Nankai University	11
From Prof. Marcus L. Stephenson, Sunway University	12
From Prof. Perry Hobson, Breda University of Applied Sciences.....	13
From Prof. Hanqin Qiu, Hangzhou City University	14
ABOUT THE CONFERENCE.....	15
CONFERENCE PROGRAMME	21
KEYNOTE ADDRESSES	24
The Partnerships That Sustain Us Through Uncertain Times by <i>Prof. Rich Harrill, University of South Carolina</i>	25
Tourism Development Trends and Related Opportunities for the Hospitality and Retail Sectors by <i>Prof. Hanqin Qiu, Hangzhou City University</i>	26
Sustainable Tourism: How to Encourage Tourists and Hospitality Businesses to Act Green by <i>Assoc. Prof. Lisa C. Wan, The Chinese University of Hong Kong</i>	27
INDUSTRY PANEL SESSION	28
Industry Panel Session - Emerging Trends and Challenges in Tourism and Retail during Post-Pandemic Era	29
TABLE OF CONTENTS (EXTENDED ABSTRACTS AND FULL PAPERS).....	31



FOREWORD

FOREWORD

It is our utmost pleasure to welcome you to the 5th International Tourism and Retail Service Management Conference (TRMC2023) hosted by the Macao Institute for Tourism Studies. As co-chairs of TRMC2023, we are delighted to witness the gathering of researchers and practitioners for the first offline conference in three years. TRMC2023 serves as a significant marker, symbolizing our resilience and determination to overcome obstacles and challenges.

With the theme "Strengthening the synergies between tourism and retail in an uncertain era," TRMC2023 explores emerging trends, challenges, and opportunities in the ever-evolving tourism and retail landscapes. Our distinguished keynote speakers and panelists enlightened us with their expertise in areas such as the impacts of the pandemic on tourism and retail, the role of digital transformation and sustainability, and the importance of strategic partnership. TRMC2023 also promises to be a platform for intellectual sharing and collaborative networking. The extensive range of topics reflects the dynamic nature of the tourism and retail fields.

Taking this opportunity, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to all our partner institutions for your unwavering support. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to all the keynote speakers, industry panelists, and authors presenting at the conference. We are also grateful to the members of the scientific committee and paper reviewer committee whose rigorous evaluation has ensured the quality of the presented works. Additionally, we would like to thank the members of the organizing committee, the moderators and the organizing team who have contributed to making this conference an unforgettable one.

We hope you enjoy your time in Macao. We hope this conference sheds some light as we navigate the uncertainties of our time.

Sincerely,
TRMC2023 Co-Chairs

Dr. Xiangping Li
Assistant Professor, Academic
Coordinator for Tourism Business
Management Programme
School of Tourism Management
Macao Institute for Tourism Studies

Dr. Catherine Li
Assistant Professor, Academic
Coordinator for Tourism Retail and
Marketing Management Programme
School of Tourism Management
Macao Institute for Tourism Studies



WELCOME REMARKS

WELCOME REMARKS

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to the 5th International Tourism and Retail Service Management Conference (TRMC 2023), which we are proudly co-organising this year with Nankai University, Hangzhou City University, Breda University of Applied Sciences, Sunway University, and the University of South Carolina.

This year's conference is very special indeed, as it is the first time we are meeting in-person after three long years of the pandemic. I am therefore delighted to see the familiar faces of lifelong friends and long-time partners. I can strongly feel the warmth of your close physical presence. I am also delighted to see and welcome new colleagues and scholars joining the TRMC Conference for the first time this year.

Together with our esteemed partners, we launched the TRMC Conference back in 2018 to establish a platform for intellectual exchange, collaboration, and partnership in this pioneering and unique niche area linking tourism and retail services. Even before the pandemic, our institutions recognized the growing importance of this field. In a post-pandemic era, we can only expect it to strengthen further and continue to grow in significance.

We are very fortunate to be partnering with highly committed, innovative, and forward-thinking universities from around the world in pushing forward the vision and purpose of the TRMC Conference. I would therefore like to thank them for their valued and continued support, which has enabled TRMC to grow strong.

In the next two days, we have an interesting and thought-provoking agenda lined up. We have brought together esteemed keynote speakers, renowned experts, and seasoned industry professionals who will share their knowledge and insights. The conference sessions are designed to provide you with valuable takeaways, stimulating discussions, and networking opportunities.

As in previous occasions, this year's TRMC Conference promises not only to foster fruitful interactions and learning but also to contribute to pioneering research, innovative ideas, and the development of best practices that can address the complex challenges of tourism and retail services. I encourage all of you to actively engage, ask questions, and contribute to the stimulating intellectual discourse in the coming days.

I wish to recognize all session presenters and our distinguished keynote speakers, who have come from different parts of the world to join us. We look forward to hearing and learning from you. I would like to express my gratitude to our partner institutions, their representatives, and members of the organizing and scientific committees for their time, immense effort, and commitment in making this event possible. You have given your utmost in creating an enriching experience for all of us.

Special mention must go to this year's Conference Chairpersons, Drs. Catherine Li and Xiangping Li, for their hard work putting everything together.

Finally, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to all our attendees who have traveled from near and far to be here today. Your presence signifies your dedication to knowledge-sharing and your commitment to creating a positive impact.

Once again, a warm welcome to all of you. I hope this conference provides you with valuable insights, lasting connections, and inspiring experiences.

Thank you.

By
Dr. Fanny Vong
President
Macao Institute for Tourism Studies (IFTM)



WELCOME REMARKS

On behalf of my colleagues in the School of Hospitality and Tourism Management and the College of Hospitality, Retail and Sport Management at the University of South Carolina, I would like to welcome all attendees to the 5th International Tourism and Retail Service Management Conference (TRMC 2023), held by Macao Institute for Tourism Studies (IFTM). After two fully virtual conferences held in 2021 by Sunway University and in 2022 by the University of South Carolina, this is the first face-to-face TRMC conference after the COVID-19 pandemic. We also appreciate IFTM's valuable efforts in providing virtual attendance opportunities for overseas participants in TRMC 2023.

Since the inaugural conference hosted by IFTM in 2018, TRMC Consortium has seen exciting growth with six academic institutions in Asia, Europe, and North America. TRMC has continuously made significant contributions to cutting-edge research in tourism and retail management, which benefits researchers, students, and industry professionals globally. This year's conference theme, "Strengthening the synergies between tourism and retail in an uncertain era", will undoubtedly ignite meaningful discussions and foster innovative idea exchange in tourism and retail research and industry practices in the post-pandemic period.

We look forward to the big success of TRMC 2023. Congratulations in advance to IFTM for their excellent work in organizing and hosting the conference! Wish all attendees a rewarding experience in TRMC 2023!

By

Prof. Fang Meng

TRMC 2022 Conference Chair

School of Hospitality and Tourism Management

College of Hospitality, Retail and Sport Management

University of South Carolina



WELCOME REMARKS

On behalf of the College of Tourism and Service Management at Nankai University, I would like to extend a warm welcome to all of you at the 5th International Tourism and Retail Service Management Conference.

Nankai University is one of the earliest qualified organizations to grant master's and doctoral degrees in tourism management in China. We have always attached importance to enhancing international communication and cooperation through organizing and participating in international conferences. We hosted the second TRMC conference in 2019 and many of the delegates had a memorable experience in the autumn of Tianjin. We are very glad to see that our faculty, students, and Chinese scholars are increasingly attending TRMC conferences. We see this conference as a means to facilitate the building of a closer academic community in tourism, and hopefully to foster future relationships.

This year's conference is focused on "Strengthening the synergies between tourism and retail in an uncertain era". It presents a joint effort from all of us to welcome the new co-creation between the tourism industry and retail and to cope with the industry evolution. I believe it is also a very important move and stimulator for the tourism discipline and tourism industry. More importantly, this conference is a great platform for scholars, students, and experts from the industry to gather on this platform to exchange innovative ideas.

I'd like to thank all the committee members of this conference, the team from IFT, and the volunteers. I think there is absolutely something fantastic that this conference makes possible.

Finally, I'd like to congratulate for the successful opening of the conference and wish all of you a very enjoyable conference experience, a fruitful academic discussion, and network building.

By
Prof. Hong Xu
Professor and Dean
College of Tourism and Service Management
Nankai University



南开大学 旅游与服务学院
Nankai University COLLEGE OF TOURISM AND SERVICE MANAGEMENT

WELCOME REMARKS

First and foremost, I would like to extend a word of thanks to Macao Institute for Tourism Studies (IFTM) and the TRMC 2023 committee for hosting and putting together a detailed and well-planned conference. The theme of the conference, “Strengthening the synergies between tourism and retail in an uncertain era”, is particularly apt especially when there is more emphasis placed in more novel forms and concepts of tourism in this post-pandemic era. This indicates that the tourism and retailing industry is continually transforming to adapt to a dynamic business environment. I believe that discussions in relation to strategies and ways forward in enabling the sustainability of tourism retailing will be reflected in the upcoming paper presentations. As an academician, I also want to advocate for the need to collaborate with tourism practitioners to consistently innovate tourism services and revolutionising the industry for the betterment of the future.

By

Prof. Marcus L. Stephenson

Professor of Tourism and Hospitality Management

Dean - School of Hospitality and Service Management

Sunway University



WELCOME REMARKS

The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) calculated that before COVID retail tourism represented a substantial US\$178 billion, comprising 6% of the travel and tourism sector's value and exceeding 15% in some destinations. However, they also identified that this was an area that had historically been under-researched. The annual TRMC conference series has sought to address this gap. After all, retailing has moved beyond the selling of souvenirs, and it plays many differing roles within tourism. For some destinations, it may be the primary attraction and reason for travel. In others, it serves as a secondary or as a supporting activity. A number of global brands have been built on the back of tourism, while in other cases retailers have given meaning and access to local products and communities. Furthermore, the retail service experience is often an integral part of the tourist's experience while travelling. The consortium of universities that support the annual TRMC conference has come together to help give a focus to all the various facets of tourism retailing - whether it's about the growth of 'retail-tainment', the policies surrounding duty free, the creation of outlet malls in rural destinations, and/or the engagement of indigenous communities. Breda University (BUas) is proud to support this year's TRMC conference hosted by IFT in Macao (SAR-China), and we look forward to welcoming you next year to TRMC 2024 in Breda (The Netherlands).

By
Prof. Perry Hobson
Director
Academy of Tourism
Breda University of Applied Sciences (BUas)



WELCOME REMARKS

Welcome to Macao, Welcome to Macao Institute for Tourism Studies, Welcome to TRMC 2023!

On behalf of one of the co-organizing institutes, it is my great pleasure to say a few words about the conference. This year, the 5th TRMC returns to Macao and is hosted by Macao Institute for Tourism Studies, which hosted the inaugural conference in 2018. IFTM is a public institution of higher education in Macao, always striving ahead in its quest of learning and educational innovation, fostering professionals and making contributions to the tourism development in Macao, Asia Pacific region, and the world. Given that TRMC has now grown bigger with more consortium members and continues to build on the success of previous conferences, I do believe that worldwide researchers, graduate students and industry professionals can continuously share and discuss current research findings and good practices on those topics that are shaping the future of tourism, retail and service management through TRMC 2023.

Before concluding, there are two important acknowledgments that I would like to make. First, I want to express the gratitude to the Organizing Committee for their invaluable endeavors, which have been essential to making this conference possible. Last but not least, many thanks to our distinguished guest for coming to this conference both onsite and online, and for enriching the conference with participation.

Best wishes for a wonderful time in Macao!

By
Prof. Hanqin Qiu
Dean and Distinguished Professor
International School of Cultural Tourism
Hangzhou City University





ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

Conference Host

Dr. Fanny Vong, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies
Prof. Michael Sagas, University of South Carolina
Prof. Hong Xu, Nankai University
Prof. Marcus L. Stephenson, Sunway University
Prof. Perry Hobson, Breda University of Applied Sciences
Prof. Hanqin Qiu, Hangzhou City University

Conference Co-chairs

Dr. Catherine Li, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies
Dr. Xiangping Li, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies

TRMC Consortium Leaders and Organisers

Dr. Fanny Vong, President, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies
Prof. Leonardo (Don) A.N. Dioko, Professor, IFTM Tourism Research Centre, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies
Prof. Eve Ren, Professor, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies
Prof. Michael Sagas, Dean, College of Hospitality, Retail and Sport Management, University of South Carolina
Prof. Drew Martin, Professor, College of Hospitality, Retail and Sport Management, University of South Carolina
Prof. Fang Meng, Professor, College of Hospitality, Retail and Sport Management, University of South Carolina
Prof. Rich Harrill, Research Professor, College of Hospitality, Retail and Sport Management, University of South Carolina
Prof. Hong Xu, Dean, College of Tourism and Service Management, Nankai University
Prof. Hui Li, Associate Dean, College of Tourism and Service Management, Nankai University
Prof. Marcus L Stephenson, Dean, School of Hospitality and Service Management, Sunway University
Assoc. Prof. Alexander Trupp, Associate Dean, School of Hospitality and Service Management, Sunway University
Prof. Perry Hobson, Director, Academy of Tourism, Breda University of Applied Sciences
Prof. Hanqin Qiu, Dean, International School of Cultural Tourism, Hangzhou City University

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Dr. Jianwu Bi, Nankai University
Dr. Yujia Chen, Nankai University
Prof. Leonardo (Don) A.N. Dioko, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies
Prof. Rich Harrill, University of South Carolina
Dr. Frances Kong, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies
Dr. Virginia Lau, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies
Dr. Catherine Li, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies
Prof. Hui Li, Nankai University
Dr. Xiangping Li, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies
Dr. Sai Liang, Nankai University
Dr. Tan Hui Ling, Sunway University
Prof. Jiaying Lyu, Hangzhou City University
Prof. Fang Meng, University of South Carolina
Prof. Eve Ren, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies
Dr. Joey Sou, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies
Dr. Xing Su, Nankai University
Dr. Philip Wong, Sunway University
Mr. Don Wu, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies
Dr. Kun Zhang, Nankai University

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Prof. Leonardo (Don) A.N. Dioko, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies
Ms. Janice Leong, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies
Dr. Catherine Li, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies
Dr. Xiangping Li, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies
Mr. Patrick Lo, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies
Dr. Jiaying Lyu, Hangzhou City University
Prof. Fang Meng, University of South Carolina
Ms. Hairani M Nur, Sunway University
Ms. Georgia Petritsis, University of South Carolina
Ms. Wendy Tang, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies
Ms. Evelyn Loh Geok Yan, Sunway University
Dr. Junjiao (Judy) Zhang, Nankai University

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Dr. Irene Chan, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies
Dr. Sharleen Chen, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies
Dr. Yujia Chen, Nankai University
Ms. Elizabeth Cheng, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies
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Ms. Kitty Fong, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies
Dr. Jenny Guan, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies
Prof. Rich Harrill, University of South Carolina
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Ms. Loretta Tou, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies
Dr. Louis Vong, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies
Prof. Penny Wan, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies
Mr. Don Wu, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies
Dr. Kun Zhang, Nankai University

Conference Secretariat

Ms. Janice Leong, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies

Ms. Wendy Tang, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies

Conference Session Moderators

Dr. Elangkovan Narayanan Alagas, Sunway University

Assoc. Prof. Matthew Brown, University of South Carolina

Dr. Jose But, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies

Prof. Leonardo (Don) A.N. Dioko, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies

Assoc. Prof. Joo-Ee Gan, Sunway University

Prof. Perry Hobson, Breda University of Applied Sciences

Dr. Frances Kong, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies

Mr. Joe Lam, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies

Ms. Belina Lei, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies

Mr. Samson Leong, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies

Dr. Hanliang Li, Hangzhou City University

Dr. Jack Ly, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies

Prof. Eve Ren, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies

Assoc. Prof. Alexander Trupp, Sunway University

Prof. Penny Wan, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies

Dr. June Yang, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies

Local organising team from IFTM

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Dr. Ahmed Fouad Abdel Latif Abdel Fattah
Ms. Sandra Feng
Ms. Hilda Fok
Ms. Kitty Fong
Mr. Billy Im
Ms. Karina Iu
Mr. Ford Lei
Mr. Patrick Lo
Dr. Yixin Luo
Mr. Eric Ng
Mr. Ryan Pan
Dr. Shanshan Qi
Mr. Liangwei Qiu
Dr. Joey Sou
Ms. Loretta Tou
Ms. Lucy Wang
Mr. James Zhang

Special thanks

Dr. Connie Loi, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies
Dr. Max Zhao, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies
All IFTM staff and colleagues involved in the conference



CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

TRMC2023

The 5th International Tourism and Retail Service
Management Conference

*"STRENGTHENING THE SYNERGIES BETWEEN TOURISM AND
RETAIL IN AN UNCERTAIN ERA"*

19-20
OCTOBER
2023

IFTM

THURSDAY 19 OCTOBER

- 8:30 Registration
- 9:15 Opening
- 9:35 Keynote I
- 10:35 Coffee
- 10:55 Parallel sessions I
- 12:30 Group photo and lunch
- 14:45 Industry panel session
- 15:45 Tea
- 16:05 Parallel sessions II
- 17:35 Transportation
- 18:30 Welcome reception

FRIDAY 20 OCTOBER

- 9:15 Keynote II
- 10:15 Coffee
- 10:35 Parallel sessions III
- 12:30 Lunch
- 14:15 Keynote III
- 15:15 Tea
- 15:35 Parallel sessions IV
- 17:30 Transportation
- 18:30 Gala and closing dinner



CONFERENCE
VENUE

Inspiration Building, Mong-Há Campus
Macao Institute for Tourism Studies

Conference Venue

All sessions are held in Mong-Ha Campus of Macao Institute for Tourism Studies, unless otherwise stated.



Map of IFTM Mong-Ha Campus

Inspiration Building

All keynote sessions and panel discussion
Parallel sessions
Business Centre and Secretariat
Coffee breaks

G/F Grand Hall
G/F IG04, IG06 & 1/F I103
G/F IG05
G/F Foyer

Educational Restaurant Building

Lunches

Educational Restaurant

KEYNOTE ADDRESSES

The Partnerships That Sustain Us Through Uncertain Times

Prof. Rich Harrill

*School of Hospitality and Tourism Management
College of Hospitality, Retail and Sport Management
University of South Carolina*

Prof. Harrill's keynote draws from decades of working with young scholars in tourism, hospitality, retail, years of forging institutional and industry collaboration between academia and the community around the world, as well as a career lifetime of undertaking international research and scholarly activity. He outlines the myriad challenges and demands successful long-term partnerships often encounter and traverse a wide gamut of personal, professional, and institutional examples and case studies how partnerships and alliances can overcome difficulties. His keynote draws important lessons for institutions, young scholars, and the community on how to sustain and mutually benefit from productive and active engagement and alliances in the context of international and local tourism, hospitality, and retail.

About the speaker

Prof. Rich Harrill is currently the director of the International Tourism Research Institute (ITRI) at the University of South Carolina. He is also a member of the board of directors at The Experience Columbia SC DMO. He conducts studies on applied research to provide practical solutions to increase U.S. and international tourism industry competitiveness, resulting in additional revenues and strong economic development opportunities.

Prof. Harrill earned his Ph.D. in parks, recreation, and tourism management and his master's degree in city and regional planning from Clemson University. He holds a B.A. in political science from the College of Charleston. He has published his research in urban planning's top three journals: The Journal of American Planning Association, Journal of Planning Education and Research and Journal of Planning Literature. The Journal of the American Planning Association is the top-ranked journal for urban studies and number-two ranked journal for planning and development.

Prof. Harrill edited Fundamentals of Destination Management and Marketing (American Hotel and Lodging Association, 2005), the first comprehensive textbook for the destination management industry. He is also co-editor of the International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research and research notes editor of Tourism Analysis.

Tourism Development Trends and Related Opportunities for the Hospitality and Retail Sectors

Prof. Hanqin Qiu

*International School of Cultural Tourism
Hangzhou City University*

Shopping is an important component of tourism activities, and there are many famous shopping centers around the world where people gather. While shopping, they also drive the development of local restaurants, hotels, and tourist attractions. With the release of the epidemic control, the demand for outbound tourists has rebounded, and the tourism retail industry has also begun to recover. This speech mainly focuses on four aspects. Firstly, it explores the relationship between tourism and retail, and discusses the trend of their integrated development. The second part uses data to illustrate the development and trends of global tourism retail. The third part discusses the development of China's tourism retail and industry, and tourist consumption preferences. The final part shares the future development opportunities of the high-end tourism and retail industry.

About the speaker

Prof. Hanqin Qiu, is currently the Dean and Distinguished Professor at International School of Cultural Tourism, Hangzhou City University. She also serves as Academic member of China Tourism Academy, Vice President of UNESCO Hong Kong Association, Quality Assessor of The University Grants Committee for Hong Kong government. She is also the council member of HKCAAVQ since the year of 2019.

Prof. Qiu's research interests lie in the areas of tourism education and education reform. She has been engaged in tourism education and research for more than 30 years, guiding more than 60 graduate students, including doctoral students. She has published more than 100 high-quality papers in major international journals of tourism and hospitality management, including *Tourism Management*, *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, etc. She is also the regular speaker at major international conferences, including ICHRIE Conference, Surrey Conference, ENTER Conference. Prof. Qiu expects to promote the concept of sustainable education and lifelong learning through the development of information technology in the Internet and Artificial Intelligence era.

Sustainable Tourism: How to Encourage Tourists and Hospitality Businesses to Act Green

Assoc. Prof. Lisa C. Wan

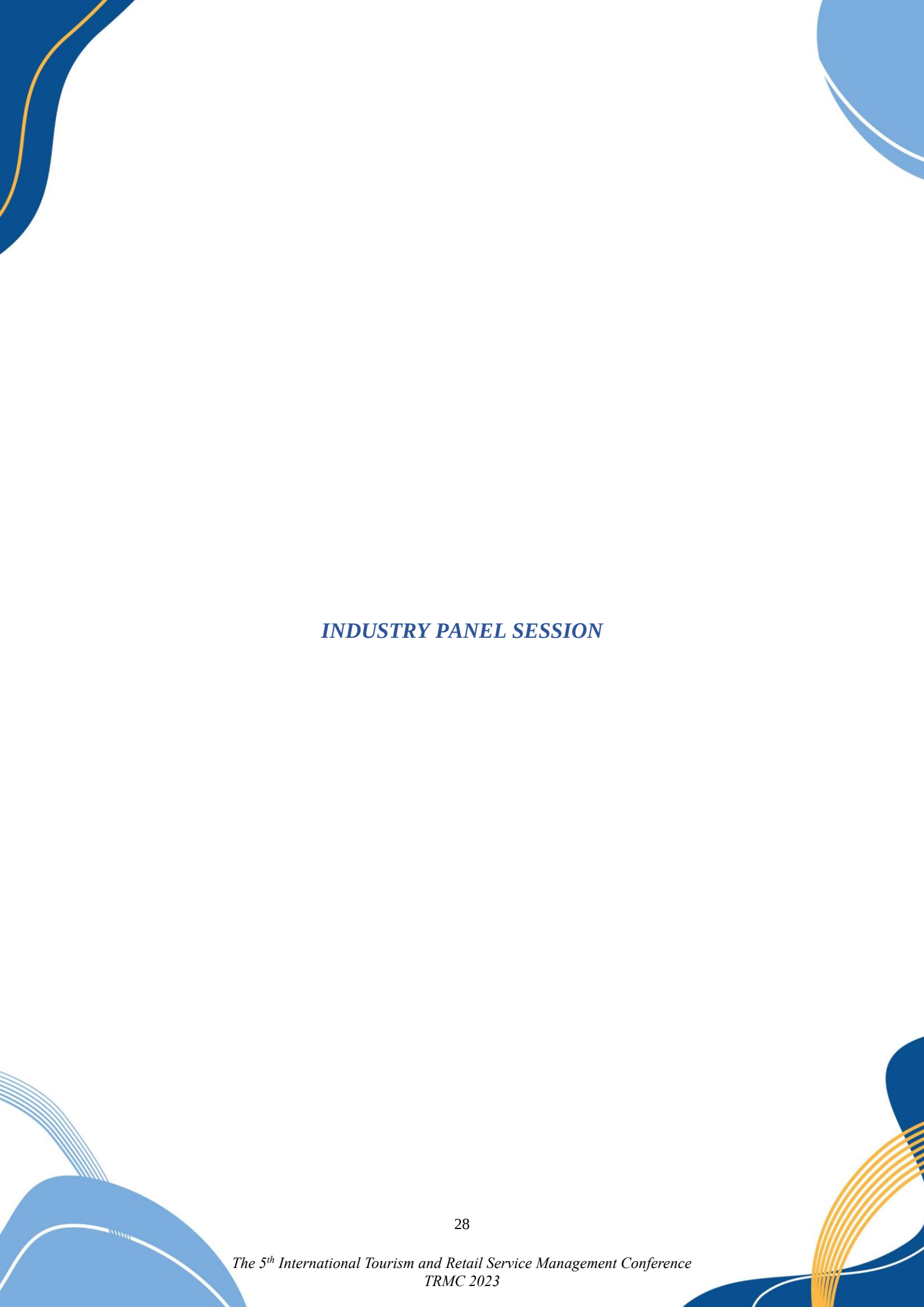
*School of Hotel and Tourism Management and Department of Marketing
Business School
The Chinese University of Hong Kong*

Hospitality and tourism businesses have a significant impact on the environment. For instance, both tourists and hotels tend to overuse energy for lighting, fuel, and water, leading to the generation of substantial food and plastic waste. In response to urgent global concerns about environmental degradation and climate change, raising awareness about environmental sustainability and conserving natural heritage and biodiversity become crucial for maintaining sustainable tourism. In this keynote session, Professor Lisa presents her research findings on the factors influencing tourists' pro-environmental behaviors. Moreover, she discusses ongoing efforts to develop a Hotel Sustainability Index aimed at encouraging hotels and tourism businesses to embrace sustainable practices.

About the speaker

Assoc. Prof. Lisa C. Wan is an Associate Professor of School of Hotel and Tourism Management and Department of Marketing at The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) Business School. She is also a Co-Director of the Centre for Hospitality and Real Estate Research.

Her research interests include services marketing and service failure, consumer/tourist reactions to service robots and technologies, cross-cultural consumer behaviour, consumer/tourist green consumption, and tourist misbehaviors, and space tourism. Her works has appeared in the top-tier marketing and hospitality journals, including *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of International Marketing*, *Journal of the Association for Consumer Research*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Tourism Management*, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, and *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research* etc. She reviews for major Marketing and Hospitality journals, including *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Retailing*, *European Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Tourism Management*, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, and *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*. She is an editorial board member of *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*. As a co-director of the Centre for Hospitality and Real Estate Research, she worked with the Centre for Business Sustainability and established the Hotel Business Sustainability Index (HBSI) in 2021. She also serves as the editor-in-chief for the *Tourism Chronicle* for Hong Kong Chronicles Institute Limited.



INDUSTRY PANEL SESSION

Emerging Trends and Challenges in Tourism and Retail during Post-Pandemic Era

About the panel speakers

Dr. Esra Calvert

*President, Esra Calvert Consulting, Atlanta, GA
Chair, International Board of Travel & Tourism Research Association*

Founder of a tourism consultancy centered on the intersection of data analytics and strategic foresight - Esra works with destinations to reach their true North by building a wide, frequent, and lean mindset. Formerly chief data advisor for a successful travel startup and head of research at Virginia's official tourism and film office, Esra is passionate about transforming destinations from analog to digital business models with sustainability at heart. She is an alumna of Harvard University's Business Analytics Program and completed her doctoral work in hospitality tourism management from Virginia Tech. She contributes to industry efforts as the chair of the International Board of Travel & Tourism Research Association and speaking engagements.

Mr. Edison Chen

Vice President, Destination Marketing & Strategic Alliances, Trip.com Group

Mr. Edison Chen is the Vice President of Destination Marketing & Strategic Alliances at Trip.com Group, a leading one-stop travel service provider. In this role, Mr. Chen oversees the Group's strategies to develop and strengthen relationships with key stakeholders, including governments, tourism boards and media, through customised marketing and trade engagement programmes— with the goal of promoting tourism and travel to the targeted destinations.

Under his leadership, the destination marketing teams have collaborated with tourism boards on key projects including the SingapoRediscovered Vouchers programme, and See You in Macao campaign. Mr. Chen has more than 10 years of experience and a track record in the travel & tourism industry, and his key areas of expertise include branding, marketing and communication, strategic planning, and fostering relationships with global industry partners.

Ms. Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes

Director, Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO)

Ms. Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes came on board the Marketing Department of the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) in 1988, and throughout the years organized and participated in various local, Mainland and overseas tourism exhibitions, conferences, seminars and promotional activities. She was appointed as MGTO Director in December 2012. She is a current member of different committees of the Macao SAR Government, such as Tourism Development Committee and Economic Development Committee. She also acts as Macao SAR (China) Focal Point to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network.

Mr. James Guntrip

Vice President, DFS Store Operations in Macao

James is currently the Vice President Store Operations in Macao providing support, leadership, and direction to the General Managers to deliver an efficient world-class operation and execute on our strategies to meet our business and people objectives. He has over 20 years of retail experience spanning 6 countries covering both commercial and luxury retail. His experience covers fashion, beauty, watches and jewelry, online and offline stores. James received a diploma in Business and Finance from the Business and Technology Education Council.

Moderated by

Prof. Perry Hobson

Director, Academy of Tourism, Breda University of Applied Sciences

TABLE OF CONTENTS
(EXTENDED ABSTRACTS AND FULL PAPERS)

TABLE OF CONTENTS (EXTENDED ABSTRACTS)

FROM HANDMADE TO MASS-PRODUCED AND NO WAY BACK? GLOBALISATION, SOUVENIRS AND SMALL BUSINESSES IN VANUATU	
<i>Alexander Trupp, Chetan Shah and Michael Hitchcock</i>	39
TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES WITH CHATGPT IN TOURISM	
<i>Andi Yang and Kelan Ye</i>	44
THE UNFOLDING STORY OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT, TERRORISM, AND WELL-BEING: AN IDEOLOGY OR INEQUALITY PERSPECTIVE	
<i>Asif Khan, Jiaying Lyu and Sughra Bibi</i>	47
EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF FOOD SHORT VIDEO ON DESTINATION PROMOTION: THE CASE OF MACAU	
<i>Chris Zhu, Man-U. Io, Henrique Fátima Boyol Ngan and Rachel Luna Peralta</i>	51
DO TOURISTS PREFER DIALECTAL SERVICE? EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCE BASED ON CULTURAL LEARNING THEORY	
<i>Danni Sun, IpKin Anthony Wong, Xiling Xiong and Qi Lian</i>	54
EXAMINING REGIONAL DESTINATION IMAGES FOR LONG-HAUL MARKETS	
<i>Dennis Baloglu, Joseph Lema, Seyhmus Baloglu, and Jerome Agrusa</i>	59
THE EFFECTS OF PERCEIVED CONSTRAINTS, NEGOTIATION AND SOCIAL SUPPORT ON OUTBOUND TRAVEL INTENTIONS AMONG CHINESE SENIORS	
<i>Fei Long and Can-Seng Ooi</i>	62
FACTORS AFFECTING ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION IN RURAL TOURISM: A STUDY FROM UNDERGRADUATES MAJORING IN TOURISM	
<i>Haiqin Yao and Wenke Xu</i>	65
ENTERTAINMENT, LODGING, AND FOOD SECTOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT QUALITY	
<i>Hanliang Li, Asif Khan, Jiaying Lyu, Hanqin Qiu and Jing Ji</i>	69
WHAT HAS THE US-CHINA TRADE WAR COST TOURISM? QUANTIFYING THE POTENTIAL LOSS BY LEVERAGING ELASTIC NET SYNTHETIC CONTROL METHOD	
<i>Haoxiang Xie, Guoqiong Ivanka Huang, Torres Wanyi Christina Zhou and IpKin Anthony Wong</i>	71

UNLEASHING AI-POWERED E-CREATIVITY: CULTURAL TYPOLOGY IN THE POST-COVID-19 ERA

Hoi-yung Leung, Yi-hui Su and Ke-xiao Chen..... 74

THE ROLE OF VISITORS' EMBEDDEDNESS FOR VALUE CO-CREATION PROCESS IN CULTURAL QUARTER: THE CASE OF SHANGHAI WEST BUND

Hui Zhang 77

MY EXPERIENCE OR OTHERS' EXPERIENCE: A MULTILEVEL EXPERIENCE MODEL ON TRAVEL APP-INDUCED ATTITUDE

IpKin Anthony Wong, Shushan Wu and Zhiwei (CJ) Lin..... 80

EVALUATING TOURISTIC QUEST FOR AUTHENTICITY: WORLD HERITAGE SITES IN CHINA AT THE CROSSROADS OF CULTURES

Jing Ji, Zhirui Zhou, Lianping Ren, Yan Mei and Rong Yan..... 85

THE SMART SERVICE FAILURE MODEL IN SMART RESTAURANT

Jingwen Huang, IpKin Anthony Wong, Zhiwei (CJ) Lin, Yahui Xu and Chenyu Shi 91

GLOBAL CRISIS AND RECOVERY: DO GOVERNMENT STIMULUS MEASURES IMPROVE ADAPTIVE RESILIENCE?

Joo-Ee Gan, Alexander Trupp and Joann P. S. Lim..... 94

WHAT MAKES AN APPEALING COVER? THE INFLUENCE OF AIRBNB COVER PHOTO SHOT-SCALE PRESENTATION ON CONSUMER DECISIONS

Junqi Jia, Yuchen Wang and Shiyao Jiang 99

DOES CSR MATTER IN TIMES OF CRISIS? EVIDENCE FROM YOUNG CONSUMERS' PERSPECTIVE DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Ke Zhao and Catherine Li..... 103

“YOU WANT TO PICK ME UP”: THE INTEGRATION OF BRAND EQUITY THEORY AND AFFECT TRANSFER THEORY IN THE CONTEXT OF FANDOM AND TOURISM

Liangwei Qiu, SunHa Yeo, Xiangping Li and Jeon-Nam Kim..... 107

SEXUAL MINORITY IN TOURISM: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF LGBT+ TOURISM LITERATURE

Liangwei Qiu, Xiangping Li and Ali Bavik..... 112

UNDER THE MOONLIGHT: UNVEILING TOURISTS' NIGHTTIME TOURISM EXPERIENCE AND BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS WITH A MIXED-METHODS

Ning Lyu, Yaping Wang, Huiying Zhang and Bo Pang 116

THE INFLUENCING FACTORS OF WORK ENGAGEMENT OF NEW GENERATION EMPLOYEES IN HOTEL

Pingping Hou, Fengjie Wu and Fangqian Xu 122

THE INTEGRATION OF RESEARCH & EDUCATION INNOVATION: ALL-ROUNDED SYSTEM

Rong Yan, Meng Wu and Jiacheng Chen..... 125

ARE RESTAURANTS REALLY SERVING THE FOOD THEY ADVERTISED? THE CASE OF MACANESE FOOD ON MENUS

Tammy Ku, Ubaldino Sequeira Couto and Carolina Castilho da Silva Nogueira 130

CRISIS SURVIVAL STRATEGY: HOW HOTEL RESTAURANTS OPTIMIZE OPERATIONS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Ut Lon Im, Yi-Fan Chen and Ka Kui Yan..... 134

EXPLORING EMOTIONAL SOLIDARITY CO-CREATED THROUGH LOCAL ART EVENTS

Virginia Meng-Chan Lau and Mini Kit U Vong 137

YOUNG PEOPLE TAKING OVER OLDER TOUR GROUPS? A STUDY OF THE EFFECT OF INDIRECT INTERGROUP CONTACT ON WILLINGNESS TO TRAVEL

Yanbo Yao, Juntong Chen and Yanjun Chen..... 141

THE MAGIC OF SHARING: THE IMPACT OF SENIOR TOURISTS' LEISURE AND TRAVEL SHARING NARRATIVE STYLE ON STATE ANXIETY AMONG NON-SENIOR GROUPS

Yanbo Yao, Yanjun Chen and Juntong Chen..... 144

THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF DESTINATION BRAND IDENTITY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TOURIST SPENDING POWER AND LONGEVITY YANGSHENG TOURISTS' PERCEPTION IN CHINA

Yang Lin Wei and Elangkovan Narayanan Alagas..... 146

DIMENSIONS OF URBAN TOURIST SATISFACTION OF URBAN PUBLIC TRANSPORT –A CASE STUDY OF METRO IN SHANGHAI

Yawei Wu, Mengyao Zhu and Zhiheng Wang..... 152

HOW DO CONSUMERS THINK OF THE VIRTUAL INFLUENCERS? THE IMPACT OF PERCEIVED HUMANNES OF VIRTUAL INFLUENCERS ON PURCHASE INTENTIONS

Yi Dong and Xiaoye Li..... 155

HOTEL STAYCATION: A FANTASY OF TRAVELLING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Yi-Fan Chen, Yeung Pak Kan, Ut Lon Im and Ka Kui Yan..... 158

AN INVESTIGATION INTO HOW THE FEATURES OF POP-UP STORES
IMPACT ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH (EWOM) IN THE CHINESE
AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY

Yilang Xie..... 162

THE INFLUENCE OF TOURISM EXPERIENCE ON TOURISTS' WELL-BEING:
A LONGITUDINAL STUDY

*Yulan Fan, IpKin Anthony Wong, Zhiwei (CJ) Lin, GuoQiong Ivanka Huang
and Shushan Wu*..... 167

HOW SOCIAL MEDIA DESTINATION CONTENT AFFECTS TOURIST
BEHAVIORAL INTENTION: A COMPARISON BETWEEN MGC AND UGC

Yu Ling Zeng and Chong Fo Lei..... 171

RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND INTERGENERATIONAL
MEANINGS OF LAND

Zhe Chen, Xiaoyu Zhang and Pengchao Sun..... 174

TABLE OF CONTENTS (FULL PAPERS)

OUTSIDE THE FOUR WALLS: CHANGES IN METRO MANILA’S LOCAL MALL CULTURE AND THE PUBLIC’S PREFERENCES ON RECREATIONAL	
<i>Alyssa Margaret Reyes, Bea Terese Villa, Jaimee Felice Delos Santos, Jeorgia Pamela Alonzo, Lorryne Claire Reyes, Ma. Julia Grace Samson, Philip Son Vargas and Alec Bagcus</i>	<i>177</i>
THE IMPACT OF TOURISM EVENTS ON TOURIST DEMAND: A REVIEW	
<i>Don Wu and Shanshan Qi.....</i>	<i>195</i>
GROUP LIFESTYLE MOBILITIES: UNDERSTANDING CHINESE SENIOR LONG-STAY TOURISTS IN RURAL DESTINATIONS	
<i>Huan Huang, Scott Cohen and Jiaying Lyu.....</i>	<i>209</i>
TOURIST’S LOYALTY IN CAVITE CITY, PHILIPPINES FASHIONED BY LOCAL FOOD SATISFACTION	
<i>Jhana Mari B. Lastimoso, Kian Angelica B. Locsin, Nathaniela S. Vergara and Jimford U. Tabuyo</i>	<i>224</i>
MAXIMIZING SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATION IN TOURISM MARKETING—AN ANALYSIS BASED ON INFORMATION DIFFUSION THEORY	
<i>Juncheng Frank Guo and Leonardo (Don) A.N. Dioko.....</i>	<i>248</i>
GENDER ROLES AND PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS IN RETAIL INDUSTRY OF MACAO SAR: PERSPECTIVES OF FEMALE PRACTITIONERS	
<i>Kuan Mei Lo, Wai Kei Chim and Ieok Tong Tam</i>	<i>260</i>
EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GAMES-BASED LEARNING FOR HOTEL TRAINING	
<i>Kun Fu, Yuanyuan Yang, Yating Du, Rouxi Liu and Yuan Yuan.....</i>	<i>271</i>
LOVE ME, LOVE MY DESTINATION: ELABORATION LIKELIHOOD MODEL (ELM) IMPACT AND MEDIATING ROLE OF CONSUMER PREFERENCE IN VIRTUAL HUMAN INFORMATION AND DESTINATION BRAND LOVE	
<i>Liu Xu and Miao Wang</i>	<i>285</i>
STUDY IN GREATER BAY AREA: WHAT INFLUENCE THE CROSS-BORDER TRAVEL INTENTION UNDER THE POST-PANDEMIC ERA?	
<i>Meitong Lu, Yang Zhuang, Jieqi Guan and Yui-yip Lau</i>	<i>305</i>
PRICE ENDINGS IN THE TOURISM LUXURY RETAIL	
<i>Ou YangLiu and Henrique Fatima Boyol Ngan</i>	<i>326</i>
A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF PROXIMITY TOURISM RESEARCH	
<i>Ruijue Wang and Qian Guo.....</i>	<i>339</i>

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF TOUR GUIDING TO SUSTAINABLE TOURISM:
THE MYANMAR CONTEXT

Sompong Amnuay-ngerntra and Tay Zar Oke Kyaw..... 378

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE INVENTORY MANAGEMENT IN SMES OF
THE FASHION RETAIL INDUSTRY

Un Ieng Loretta Tou, Kit Sam Kitty Fong and Chi Wai Don Wu 392

RESTAURANT MENUS AS A MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING TOOL: A
SYSTEMATIC REVIEW (2004-2023)

Xiangzhen Nie, Weibing Zhao and Jieqi Guan..... 404

EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL OF HEALTH TOURISM IN GAMING CITY:
TOURISTS' PERCEPTIONS AND KEY STAKEHOLDERS' INSIGHTS

Yang Zhuang, Jieqi Guan and Yui-Yip Lau 421



EXTENDED ABSTRACTS

**FROM HANDMADE TO MASS-PRODUCED AND NO WAY BACK?
GLOBALISATION, SOUVENIRS AND SMALL BUSINESSES IN VANUATU**
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Abstract

This study delves into the economic and sociocultural dimensions of the souvenir sector from the unique perspective of local market vendors in the South Pacific nation of Vanuatu. Findings reveal a heavy reliance on imported souvenirs, particularly for the cruise-ship market. Such practices often lead to the commodification and misrepresentation of local cultures and destinations, driven by the demands of tourists and the broader processes of international exchange and globalisation. By giving voice to grassroots producers and vendors within the handicrafts and souvenir sector, this research contributes to a more holistic understanding of the sector's dynamics and its role within the broader context of global tourism and economic change in emerging island economies.

Keywords: Globalisation; imported vs local products; small businesses; souvenirs; island states

Introduction

In the context of emerging island economies, microbusinesses in countries like Vanuatu play a significant role in the local economy by selling handicrafts and souvenirs (Grobar 2019; Trupp et al., 2023). These souvenirs not only contribute to local income and employment but also shape the image of tourism destinations (Thirumaran et al., 2014). While such items are typically handmade and reflect local artisan skills, the production process has sometimes shifted towards meeting the preferences of tourists. Consequently, souvenirs may no longer authentically represent local traditions but serve as tangible proof of having visited specific places (Hitchcock, 2000; Taylor, 2016). This paper aims to explore the economic and sociocultural dimensions of the handicraft and souvenir sector, as perceived by market vendors and microbusinesses in the emerging island economy of Vanuatu. A particular focus is placed on the dynamics of imported versus locally-produced souvenir products. This research contributes to the ongoing discourse on the impacts of tourism, globalisation, and economic and sociocultural transformation in emerging economies (Cave et al., 2013; Tolkach & Pratt, 2021). Additionally, it amplifies the voices of grassroots (Cheer et al., 2013) producers and vendors within the handicrafts and souvenir sector.

Methodology

Data for this study was collected in Port Vila, Vanuatu, before the COVID-19 pandemic. The research permits necessary for empirical data collection were obtained from national authorities. 14 qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted in English with micro-entrepreneurs engaged in the souvenir and handicraft business, and

stakeholders from relevant ministries and associations. These research participants played crucial roles in either the production or sale of craft and souvenir items, and in some cases, held multiple roles such as business owner, manager, producer, or vendor. Additionally, interviews were conducted with representatives from the Ministry of Tourism and a handicraft association to gain insights into the socioeconomic, cultural, and political contexts that shape the handicraft sector. Observations and field notes were recorded at various handicraft markets and shops in Port Vila to document the types of souvenirs available and interactions between buyers and vendors. Data analysis followed data-driven coding strategies adapted from Corbin and Strauss (2008), leading to the identification of key themes and categories supported by interview quotes.

Results and Discussion

Before the region's transition from subsistence cultivation to a cash-oriented economy, carving and weaving served important secular and religious functions (Horoi, 1980). In the 1950s, commercial airlines settled down, and international tourism started to grow, though at relatively low levels (Douglas & Douglas, 2004). Today, In Port Vila, the capital of Vanuatu, a striking 80-90 percent of crafts and souvenirs are imported, as confirmed through on-site observations, interviews, and publicly available information (Roberts, 2018). The government has made efforts to promote locally-made products and small businesses by establishing a handicraft marketplace in the city center. This market, opened in late 2017, exclusively features Vanuatu-made crafts, including woven baskets, paintings, wood carvings, and jewelry, and is operated by around 50 vendors. Despite these efforts, the majority of tourism-related items in Port Vila's city center are still imported products, primarily sourced from China and other Asian countries through a wholesaler located outside the town. Many vendors now specialize in selling these imported, mass-manufactured items, as exemplified by a participant from the cruise-ship market:

I buy form Chinatown, I mean Chinese shop. We always say Chinatown [laughing]. . . Magnets are my bestsellers. (IVA 4)

This shift from local to imported products has historical roots, with vendors recalling a turning point when they were compelled to change their product offerings to comply with biosecurity and quarantine regulations imposed by their main tourism source markets, Australia and New Zealand, approximately 15-20 years ago:

We used to sell the local products here [at the cruise-ship market] and then they [the authorities] just stopped everything. Quarantine [regulations] just stopped everything; they stopped everything, the mat, the shell, the coral. Everything, they stopped it. So we had to find things from the Chinese. (IVA 11)

Furthermore, international agreements such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) have had a significant impact on handicraft sales. Items made from wood, plants, and marine or animal products must meet stringent quarantine requirements to be eligible for export to Australia and New Zealand. As a

result, many cruise-ship vendors felt compelled to transition to selling mass-manufactured and imported souvenirs. This shift in sourcing has persisted, as government officials have only recently begun encouraging the sale of local products once more. Vendors have been provided with booklets to assist them in promoting Vanuatu-made crafts, aligning with the objectives of the Vanuatu National Sustainable Development Plan 2020 (Department of Industry, n.d.).

However, convincing vendors who have already transitioned to imported souvenir items to revert to local products has proven challenging, highlighting the enduring impact of international agreements like CITES.

Now they try to encourage [local products] again, just last month they came and the government they start to tell us to sell our local product again. Last month, they gave us the booklet. Any time, any tourists want to buy a matt, fan, chair, or anything, we can show them the booklet. Australian and Vanuatu governments have come to make an agreement. (IVA 11)

Moreover, the decline in locally-made products is also attributed to the perceived loss of local cultural knowledge and skills, particularly in carving:

Because some of them, their husband don't know how to carve. They don't know how to carve and some of them, they don't know how to create different things. (IVA 7)

In recent years, parts of the Vanuatu government and other international organisations have pushed for more sustainable handicrafts that should ideally reflect locally sourced products and culturally authentic designs (Department of Industry, n.d.). Campaigns and educational materials have been introduced to assist both vendors and tourists in identifying potential quarantine concerns associated with Vanuatu's handicrafts (PHAMA, 2017). The handicraft vendor booklet further provides instructions on inspecting handicrafts to see if they comply with quarantine regulations.

While vendors focusing on local handicrafts generally welcome these initiatives, those who have shifted to imported souvenirs remain resistant to change. This resistance underscores how international agreements like CITES have left a lasting impact, one not easily reversed. Furthermore, the nature of cruise tourism in Vanuatu has changed, with tourists purchasing fewer souvenirs than in the past. Cruise-ship tourists are distinguished from overnight tourists, with the former being perceived as temporary visitors who come and go quickly, while the latter are considered traditional tourists. Cruise tourism has been criticized for not effectively distributing tourism benefits to the local level, benefiting primarily cruise-ship market vendors while leaving many other businesses in the city excluded from these developments.

Honest words, we do not like cruise-ship tourists because they tell me things like: we can't take this because the Australian custom won't let us. You see! [They] always repeat those words in front of me. I am a Ni-Van [Ni-Vanuatu]. I am not an Australian. What I have is what I can sell. (IVA 1)

In Vanuatu, the positive economic impacts of cruise tourism are mainly limited to those vendors located at the cruise-ship market. At the same time, most other businesses in the city cannot benefit from this development. A more inclusive tourism development that benefits a broader range of stakeholders, including small businesses and local communities, is needed. The case of Vanuatu reveals that souvenir consumption often prioritizes factors other than authenticity (Douglas & Douglas, 2004; Kumar et al., 2022), with many souvenirs being mass-manufactured products only loosely connected to local traditions. Furthermore, this research addresses the underrepresentation of local indigenous voices within the handicrafts and souvenir sector discourse, shedding light on the economic and sociocultural transformations experienced by local communities in emerging economies through the lens of tourism and globalisation.

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the dynamics of the handicraft and souvenir sector in Vanuatu, with a specific focus on the challenges associated with imported versus locally-produced products. The heavy reliance on imported souvenirs, driven by regulatory changes and shifting tourist preferences, has led to a commodification of local culture and traditions. Efforts to revive the sale of locally-made products face resistance from vendors who have already transitioned to selling imported items. Moreover, the changing nature of cruise tourism has impacted souvenir purchasing patterns. This research contributes to the ongoing discourse on tourism, globalisation, and their effects on emerging economies, emphasizing the need for more inclusive tourism development that benefits a broader range of stakeholders, including small businesses and local communities.

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TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES WITH CHATGPT IN TOURISM

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Abstract

ChatGPT, an advanced AI language model developed by OpenAI, uses deep learning to understand questions and generates helpful and informative humanlike text responses to users. ChatGPT has received attention in tourism and hospitality management. However, studies have yet to explore whether ChatGPT is the preferred service mode for customers and what are the customer experiences in tourism and hospitality. This study aims to investigate customer experiences with ChatGPT interactions based on the five dimensions for evaluating user experiences (i.e., embodiment, emotion, human-oriented perception, feeling of security, and co-experience). Qualitative thematic analysis is adopted to analyze customer experiences. This study contributes to the existing tourism and hospitality literature by exploring customer experiences with Chat GPT interaction.

Keywords: ChatGPT, Customer experience, Thematic analysis, Tourism

Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI)-based applications such as ChatGPT have accelerated the changes in tourism and hospitality industries and transformed the travel landscape. The state-of-the-art language model, ChatGPT, developed by OpenAI, utilizes advanced deep-learning techniques to deliver information and respond to users' inquiries (Luan et al., 2023). For example, ChatGPT can help in customer service (i.e., customer queries, booking, reservation, travel information) as well as generating high-quality text for marketing materials (i.e., social media posts, websites, blogs) (Chui et al., 2022; Carvalho & Ivanov, 2023). Due to ChatGPT's unprecedented success, millions of consumers have used it and delved into its capabilities (Okan, 2023). This has spurred a discussion over the implications of ChatGPT in a variety of fields, including tourism and hospitality.

Despite these trends, some researchers claim that the emergence of such technology generates misleading information, lacks intuitive and empathetic intelligence, and raises worries over human employee replacement (Carvalho & Ivanov, 2023; Gursoy et al., 2023). On the other, some argue that ChatGPT has the potential to increase the efficiency, productivity, and profitability of the business (Ranganathan, 2022), and boost user convenience and satisfaction by providing language fluency, personalization, availability, security, and interaction (Gursoy et al., 2023). ChatGPT has received attention in tourism and hospitality management (Gursoy et al., 2023; Gursoy et al., 2023), such as ChatGPT in tourism academia and education (Nautiyal et al., 2023; Skavronskaya et al., 2023). However, studies have yet to explore whether ChatGPT is the preferred service mode for customers and what are the customer experiences in tourism and hospitality. To address this research gap, this study aims to investigate

customer experiences by interacting with ChatGPT.

The unique experiences of ChatGPT provide intelligent and humanlike responses to user queries using conversational approaches and natural language processing technologies, have ushered in a new era of artificial intelligence (Gursoy et al., 2023). ChatGPT will identify customers' preferences and offer the most enjoyable experiences, resulting in new business models for tourism companies. In consideration of human-AI interaction, Weiss et al. (2009) proposed five dimensions to evaluate user experiences within the USUS (usability, social acceptance, user experience, and societal impact) framework: embodiment, emotion, human-oriented perception, feeling of security, and co-experience with robots. This study investigates customer experiences with ChatGPT using the USUS evaluation framework for human-ChatGPT-interaction. Considering the unforeseenness of ChatGPT, there remains a paucity of studies investigating customer-ChatGPT interaction and customer experience, which can enhance the competitive advantage related to hospitality and tourism management.

Methodology

This study employed thematic analysis to identify, analyze, and report data patterns (Daengbuppha et al., 2006). As the qualitative method, the thematic analysis gives a rich, detailed picture of the studied phenomenon. Purposive sampling is adopted in this study to assess customer experiences with ChatGPT interaction. In purposive sampling, samples deemed most appropriate for addressing a specific research question are selected (Buchmann, 2017). Semi-structured interviews will be conducted, the chosen participants should have experiences interacted with ChatGPT. The semi-structured interview questions are based on the five dimensions for evaluating user experiences (i.e, embodiment, emotion, human-oriented perception, feeling of security and co-experience), as derived from the USUS evaluation framework. Saturation will be used to determine the majority of the qualitative sample size. We will not conduct additional interviews if theoretical saturation is reached without producing new insights (Fu et al., 2022). This study will employ open coding to acquire the general properties and specific subcategories which informants describe during a set of interviews (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Validity and reliability will be employed to ensure the trustworthiness of the results.

Implication

When ChatGPT enters the realm of tourism experiences and replaces interpersonal contact, the transformation will go beyond what has been theorized in the tourism literature thus far. This study contributes to the field's growing interest of ChatGPT, which is highly relevant for advancing tourism and hospitality research (Gursoy et al., 2023). By incorporating GPT, the tourism industry will be transformed considerably, allowing travelers to customize their travel experiences more efficiently and effectively. The hospitality and tourism industry will benefit significantly from adopting GPT for service and experience creation and delivery.

Additionally, this study contributes to tourism and hospitality management by highlighting current practices and customer interaction with ChatGPT to suggest areas

of improvement to enhance future customer experiences.

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THE UNFOLDING STORY OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT, TERRORISM, AND WELL-BEING: AN IDEOLOGY OR INEQUALITY PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This research uses macro-level data to explain the causal relationships between tourism development, well-being dimensions, and terrorism by contextualizing ideology and inequality. Time series quarterly data for Pakistan from 1980 to 2019 is collected from different sources for the mentioned variables. A non-linear autoregressive distributed lag (NARDL) model approach is applied to explore the asymmetric relationships between different sets of variables. Stationarity and other tests are conducted for the application of NARDL. We calculated ten equations, and the results are documented and explained. Tourism development was found to be a contributor to inequality and terrorism. Both positive and negative shock in terrorism increases well-being dimensions. We found an inverse relationship between inequality and well-being dimensions. The main findings are discussed in the contextual environment to reach a better conclusion and initiate policy initiatives.

Keywords: Tourism development, well-being, terrorism, inequality, ideology

Introduction

Researchers, politicians, and leaders treat tourism development as a less expensive and comprehensive way to achieve bundles of goals through trickle-down and spillover effects. These include poverty alleviation, empowering the less privileged, enhancing social cohesion, peace-building, and improving residents' living standards. However, the tourism industry confronts several challenges: political and social instability, environmental degradation, distribution of tourism benefits, adverse cultural impacts, and the big nightmare of violence and terrorism. Various theories and frameworks link terrorism either to ideology or prevailing inequalities of life in a country or region. Terrorism phenomena never become outdated because it takes many forms, including economic, social, cultural, political, media, and religious terrorism. The risk alarms are constantly beating the terror's drums and asking policymakers and researchers to find more sustainable and feasible solutions to eradicate and cure this curse.

The established literature tells us about how tourism contributes to economic development or environmental degradation. After setting the 2015 sustainable development goals and the 2030 Agenda, global leaders and organizations preach the use of tourism development to achieve these goals. As far as developed nations are concerned, there may be no problem in applying and implementing various tourism development strategies to achieve the mentioned. However, the situation in the developing and less developed world is very different. Terrorism, cruel events, radicalization, excessive power use, social distancing, and violence have become a staple of routine life. These events are considered a nightmare for tourism development;

however, tourism also contributes to such events by enlarging the extent of socioeconomic inequalities. Therefore, it becomes necessary to explore tourism development and residents' well-being in connection with inequalities and terrorism (especially in developing and less developed countries) to reach better and compact policy initiatives.

This article focuses on Pakistan, an emerging South Asia nation facing economic growth problems, political instability, inequality, and terrorism. The main objective is to determine whether tourism development could enhance residents' well-being in a developing economy. Besides, Pakistan is continuously facing an unforgettable storm of terrorism and political distress; hence, exploring solutions to strengthen the tourism industry's resilience is equally important. The main variables of interest are tourism development, tourism impacts, residents' sense of well-being dimensions, overall well-being, terrorism, and inequality. Unfortunately, terrorism is always attached to specific national, religious, or ethnic ideologies by a part of media houses or some scholars to gain political agenda. However, no religion, ethnicity, or national ideology preaches its followers to walk on the road of radicalization and terror. It is the disparities and inequalities that drag people toward such a mindset. This article attempts to find solutions to how tourism development can be used to fight inequalities.

The questions answered include: Does tourism development enhance residents' well-being? Does tourism development influence different well-being aspects? What is the mechanism of tourism's contribution to well-being dimensions? How does tourism development lead to inequalities? What is the relationship between tourism development, inequality, and terrorism? This paper attempts to answer these questions under the umbrella of Hagerty's system theory, Agnew's strain theory, and Alcala's radicalization model. Hagerty's theory holds that tourism development (for instance, infrastructure and superstructure) works as input and results in throughputs (revenue, health, education), leads to outputs (for example, material, health, social well-being), and ultimately influences overall well-being. Agnew's strain theory and Alcala's radicalization model hold that terrorism is the summation of collective strain or disparities in different dimensions of life. This article provides collective wisdom on tourism resilience building by curving socioeconomic inequalities.

Methodology

We selected Pakistan as a sample destination. The motivation for the selection of Pakistan is multifold. First, terrorism events are taking place to the maximum in the developing world due to its economic, social, cultural, and unequal distribution of resources. Second, after 9/11, Pakistan has been heavily struck by terror waves. Third, Pakistan shows progress in various well-being dimensions. Fourth, Pakistan is a land of natural, cultural, and religious diversity that lends itself to tourism. Time series quarterly data from 1980 to 2017 are collected from different sources. This study applied a Non-linear Autoregressive Distributed Lag (NARDL) approach to study the asymmetric impacts of the explanatory on dependent variables (Meo et al., 2020). The construction of NARDL permits incorporating the possibility of an asymmetric effect of a partial sum of positive and negative changes. Unlike in the linear ARDL, the

possible impacts remain the same. Besides, NARDL does provide asymmetric outcomes and offers cumulative dynamic multipliers to trace the adjustment patterns following positive and negative shocks to the explanatory variables (Ahmad, Khan, Ur Rahman, & Khan, 2018). Interestingly, the NARDL approach holds the asymmetric assumptions for explanatory variables' impacts on the dependent variables. In contrast, conventional ARDL assumes that the impacts or the regressor on the dependent variable are uniforms.

Discussion

It is noticed that a positive and negative shock in terrorism activities boosts material well-being; however, a negative shock in terrorism is found highly useful in uplifting material well-being. Terrorism and inequality are directly proportional, indicating that when inequality increases, the level of terrorist activities boosts up. Agnew's (2010) strain theory best explains the mentioned situation, stating that terrorism results from various deprivations and denials. Besides, tourism development is found to be a positive contributor to terrorism.

A negative shock in tourism development enhances inequality higher than a positive change, indicating that if tourism development is planned with care, it would help reduce inequality. Tourism can be used to reduce disparities through pro-poor tourism initiatives. This approach focused on the delivery of maximum welfare to the underprivileged class. The pro-poor approach ensures the high-level involvement of society's vulnerable segment in producing tourism services and goods.

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EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF FOOD SHORT VIDEO ON DESTINATION PROMOTION: THE CASE OF MACAU

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Abstract

Drawn upon mental imagery and flow theory, this study aims to identify the relationships between mental imagery, flow experience, nostalgia, and travel intention in the context of short-video food tourism promotion. Based on our data analysis, there is a positive relationship between these factors. Moreover, significant managerial and theoretical contributions are forwarded to food tourism stakeholders.

Keywords: Food tourism; TikTok; Flow theory; Mental imagery; Nostalgia; Travel intention; Macau.

1. Introduction and research questions

The popularity of short videos has given more tourists the opportunity to make decisions before they travel. Recent scholars have found that short videos can facilitate the marketing and promotion of destinations (Cao et al., 2021; Chenchen et al., 2020). To respond to this research hotspot, the current research aims to address two research gaps. Although previous studies have found that short videos can promote tourists' behavioral intentions (Han & Wang, 2023; Zhao et al., 2022), these studies have rarely focused on destination short video promotion (e.g., food tourism destinations). Second, although food tourism is preferred by consumers of different age groups (e.g., Levitt et al., 2019), and recent studies have found that digital technology has a significant boost on the travel intentions of Gen Z participants (Seyfi et al., 2022), few studies have focused on Gen Z's attitude towards the promotion of food tourism based on digital technology presentation (e.g., TikTok).

To fill the previously proposed research gaps, the current study has drawn upon mental imagery and flow theory and aims to test a theoretical model that includes mental imagery, flow experience, nostalgia, and travel intention in the context of a TikTok-presented food short video. Furthermore, a primary research question was posed: What are the relationships between mental imagery, flow experience, nostalgia experience, and travel intention within the context of short video promotion for food tourism? Our work aims to enrich the application of mental imagery and flow theory in food tourism and short video marketing. Lastly, the current study also aims to help stakeholders better understand food destination marketing through the lens of Gen Z groups.

2. Methodology

The current study focuses on Macau food tourism short video promotion based on the following points: First, Macau is defined as a tourism and leisure center in China, and

second, Macau has many well-known food products, especially Portuguese egg tarts (Lai, 2020), which have gained a high international reputation.

Non-probability convenience sampling would be used for sample collection in the current study. Considering that recent scholars have noted that an online questionnaire is appropriate based on social media experience, an online survey can be effective in expanding the background of participants and increasing the response rate (e.g., Cao et al., 2021). Therefore, the current study employs Tencent Survey (<https://wj.qq.com/>) for the questionnaire collection.

Furthermore, partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) will be used to test the proposed research model (see Figure 1) based on the following points: First, PLS-SEM is suitable for exploratory studies; second, PLS-SEM is suitable for small sample studies, and there is no mandatory requirement for the data to conform to normal distribution requirements (Hair Jr. et al., 2017).

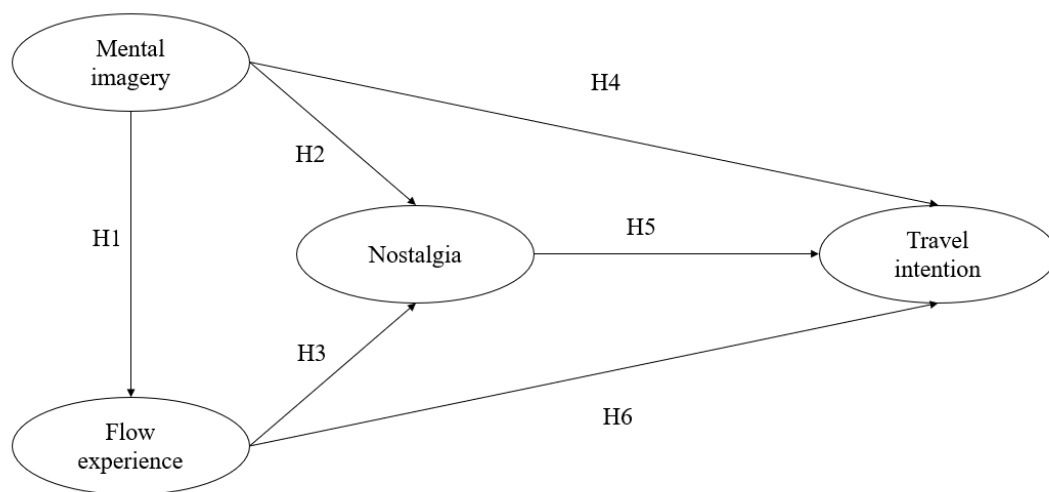


Figure 1. Research model.

3. Conclusion

The development of short videos (e.g., TikTok) has made it easier for tourists to browse the destination food in advance. However, existing research lacks sufficient empirical basis to explore the study of the psychological mechanisms and behaviors of Gen Z groups before making decisions on food tourism-promoting short videos presented by TikTok. To fill this research gap, the current study uses flow theory to construct a theoretical model, and the survey results reveal that when Gen Z tourists achieve good mental imagery and flow experiences, they positively form their nostalgia perception and their intention to travel. Furthermore, the current study extends the development of flow theory and mental imagery theory in TikTok and food tourism literature and helps stakeholders better market their destinations through short videos.

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DO TOURISTS PREFER DIALECTAL SERVICE? EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCE BASED ON CULTURAL LEARNING THEORY

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Abstract

Cultural learning is an important motive for traveling. Among many ways to show the local culture to tourists, a dialect has always been a crucial cultural carrier rooted in regions, history, and nations, yet its impact on tourists' experience is controversial. Although dialect service can enable tourists to experience a more authentic culture, it may also bring negative experience to customers due to language understanding barriers. This research draws on cultural learning theory to explore the effects of dialectal service under different boundary conditions, and the mediating role of language processing fluency and perceived sense of distinctiveness. Three scenario-based experiments reveal that dialectal services have a backfire effect due to low language processing fluency, which can be alleviated by means of cultural learning cues (e.g., local dialect posters). This research enriches cultural learning theory and gives practical implications on providing better dialectal services for tourism destinations.

Keywords: cultural learning theory, dialectal service, processing fluency, perceived sense of distinctiveness, local characteristics

Introduction

Cultural learning is an important motive for traveling (Funk & Bruun, 2007). There are many ways to show the local culture to tourists, such as local architecture, folk customs, food and etc. (Wong & Cheng, 2014; Yang, Wong, Tan, & Wu, 2020; Yu & Lee, 2014). Among these ways of expression, language is the most prominent and common way, which permeates every detail of the interaction between tourists and locals (Cohen & Cooper, 1986; Lazear, 1999; L. Lu, Wong, & Zhang, 2021). In order to provide tourists with a more authentic cultural experience, many destinations scenic spots or restaurants may use dialects to provide services (Y. Lu, Chen, Huang, & Bao, 2019). Although dialect service can enable tourists to experience more authentic culture, it may also bring negative experience to customers due to language understanding barriers (Douglas G Pearce & Heike A Schänzel, 2013). Based on cultural learning theory (Masgoret & Ward, 2006; Pacheco, 2020), our research will explore the effects of dialect service under different boundary conditions. Moreover, we further explore the mediating role of language processing fluency and sense of distinctiveness towards the place. This research will help to broaden the application of cultural learning theory in the field of tourism and give practical implications on how to better provide dialect services for tourism destinations.

Literature review

The cultural learning theory, rooted in social psychology, assumes that cross-cultural

problems arise because individuals who are unfamiliar with a culture struggle to navigate everyday social interactions.(Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001). It is widely recognized that gaining knowledge about cultural differences can impact one's perspective, perception, senses, and sensitivity. This can result in the creation of meaningful and memorable experiences for tourists (e.g., Kim & Ritchie, 2014; Kim, Ritchie, & McCormick, 2012; McKercher & Du Cros, 2002; McKercher, Ho, Cros, & So-Ming, 2002).

When visiting a new place, the language spoken there plays a vital role in showcasing the local culture. Dialects can greatly influence the cultural experience of the tourists. (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2011). The significant linguistic variations could contribute to a sense of linguistic distance (Tang & Van Heuven, 2009). Tourists may sometimes perceive locals as unwelcoming due to the challenges of adapting to the dialect-speaking culture, which can result in language barriers and misunderstandings (e.g., Devereux, 1998, pp. 31-48; D. G. Pearce & H. A Schänzel, 2013). On the other hand, dialects have become a representation of local culture and, thus some researchers posit tourists perceive the language in a destination as a symbol of localness constitute significant symbolic markers of regional distinctiveness. (e.g., Snow, 2004; Whitney-Squire, 2016).

Methodology overview

Research design

EXPERIMENT 1: The objective of this experiment is twofold. First, we examine tourists' evaluation of service under different exposure to service language modality type (standard, AKA mandarin vs. dialect) in the restaurant service setting. Secondly, we use ChatGPT to conduct the cross validation.

EXPERIMENT 2: The objective of this experiment was to examine the interaction between service language modality type (dialect vs. standard) and dialectal culture learning cue (salient vs. not salient) on tourists' evaluation of service.

EXPERIMENT 3: The objective of this experiment was to examine the mediated role of processing fluency and perceived sense of distinctiveness. Also, we retest the interaction between service language modality type (dialect vs. standard) and dialectal culture learning cue (salient vs. not salient) on tourists' evaluation of service.

Sampling and population

All participants were recruited through the Wenjuanxing platform, a Chinese online survey platform that functions similarly to Amazon Mechanical Turk (Cao, Wang, & Wang, 2020). Wenjuanxing comprises 2.6 million Chinese members from diverse demographic and socioeconomic backgrounds (Xiong, Wong, & Yang, 2021).

Analytical method

All analyses were conducted using SPSS 22.0.

Discussion

This study supports previous literature which stands that the language in a destination

acts as a communication tool in the interactions (e.g., Edung, 2017; House, 2003), and the remarkable linguistic difference could result in linguistic distance (Tang & Van Heuven, 2009). And also takes the other point into consideration, that is, tourists perceive the language in a destination as a symbol of local identity (e.g., Snow, 2004; Whitney-Squire, 2016). The exotic language (e.g., dialect), with its special and unfamiliar tones, helps to meet tourists' pre-trip expectations and create the unique cultural experience (e.g., Hall-Lew & Lew, 2014; Huisman & Moore, 1999). Based on cultural learning theory (Masgoret & Ward, 2006; Pacheco, 2020), our research reveals the subtle effect of dialect service under different boundary conditions.

This study breaks new ground by integrating the two academic streams and exploring the subtle effect of dialect on travel experience in the perspective of culture learning theory. The results reveal that dialect, as a special cultural carrier, needs a learning process in tourist experience. If tourists do not have corresponding cultural learning bedding in the process of short-term visit, they will not only be hard to be attracted by the charm of dialect, but also will have a backfire effect due to poor communication quality.

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EXAMINING REGIONAL DESTINATION IMAGES FOR LONG-HAUL MARKETS

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Abstract

Image formation among multi-country travel offers a number of unique dynamics from consumer behavior, purchase intention, and dimensions of sustainability. For long-haul travel to multiple countries, in particular, such as U.S. travelers to the rapidly developing ASEAN region, images among individual countries and as a region present opportunities and challenges from branding and marketing perspectives. Coupled with emerging technologies offering both text and visual formation through organic and sponsored content along with the increasing influence of social networks and user-generated content, the advancing complexity of image formation is evolving in destination marketing and the retail experience. This research examines visitor and non-visitor behavioral intentions and images across cognitive, destination self-image congruency, affective, and behavioral dimensions among selected ASEAN countries in the context of long-haul travel to multiple country destinations.

Keywords: Image formation, Consumer behavior, Multi-country Travel, ASEAN

Introduction

While multiple destination travel has emerged predominantly throughout tourism and marketing literature, single journey multi-country travel research is limited. With the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region rapidly emerging in trade & travel and more specifically for the United States (U.S.), long-haul travel market to the region presents unique opportunities and challenges in the context of consumer behavior and sustainability. Although travel literature often scrutinizes the sustainability of long-haul travel with air emissions, among many other factors, the environmental implications are not the primary focus of this research. Long-haul travel presents unique opportunities for regions such as ASEAN to promote single journey, multi-country visitation for emerging travel markets. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to examine the U.S. traveler perceptions among select ASEAN countries (Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam) along with potential service experience and retail implications. Grounded in self-congruency theory (Sirgy & Su, 2000), a comparison of U.S. visitor and non-visitor image and behavioral intentions are compared between the ASEAN countries among the cognitive and affective dimensions.

Tourist arrivals for the U.S. to ASEAN have increased (excluding Covid-19) yearly from 2012-2022 (Statista, 2023) while overall 2019 (pre-pandemic) levels accounted for 143.5 million international visitor arrivals with a contribution of 9.6% among international visitor arrivals worldwide (ASEAN Secretariat, 2023). While travel to ASEAN countries offers a unique appeal for long-haul markets such as the U.S. an

understanding of image formation in the era of real time digital technology presents evolving opportunities as well as challenges. Although extensive destination image research and measurement has progressed throughout the tourism literature (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Gallarza et al., 2002; Gartner, 1989; Kock, et al, 2016; Li & Murray, 1997; Samiee, 2010) further analysis will add to the context of multi-country travel and destination development including product offerings and synergistic approaches among the unique attributes of the destination. With large tourist hubs markets receiving the majority of tourist arrivals and activity, lesser known or traveled areas may have a strategic appeal in the development of a unique and complementary cultural experience among multiple countries.

The unique cultural attractions among ASEAN countries and as a region for the long-haul traveler also has implications for retail experiences. Partnerships around the creative economies that link to tourism offerings appeal to the advancement of immersive experiences as new products (Zackariya, 2023). Due to the relative intangible nature of creative offerings and particularly live cultural activities such as festivals, music events, theatre, among other live sporting and educational offerings as special events, strategic partnerships and programming among multiple countries also presents unique challenges for long term sustainability. As social media platforms can elevate events in real time, operational effectiveness becomes more critical in the delivery and projection of activities on a potentially large scale with both positive and negative implication for the individual country or for the region as a whole.

Methodology

Data were collected via an online survey administered by Qualtrics. The self-administered survey instrument consisted of pre-screening questions along with a demographic section, information sources, cognitive perceptions (14-items), self-image congruity (6-items) and affective images (4-items), as well as visitation intention (3-items) questions. Online and social media sources included Internet, travels blogs or vlogs, and social networks such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, whereas traditional media sources listed brochure/travel guide, tour operator/travel agent, airlines, books/movies, articles/news, friends/relatives, and advertisements by the destination.

The online questionnaire was administered in English to U.S. residents over the age of 18 years who traveled internationally. The overall survey took 20 minutes to complete with a sample size of 328 valid respondents. Attention check questions were used to increase the quality of the data. The majority of respondents preferred to travel among two or more countries on their single journey. Gender was evenly distributed, and most respondents were married and had annual income over \$100 thousand.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was used for comparing the destinations and visitors and nonvisitors. Open-ended questions related to image, atmosphere/mood, tourist attractions, and tourist activities are analyzed through text analysis and the creation of Word Cloud to visualize the data among the sample among

select ASEAN countries. The results are provided an understanding of the motivations and intentions for multi-country travel of U.S. resident to the ASEAN region. In the context of the results, strategic marketing plans can be developed to complement the attractions including product offerings as well as potential product development that may appeal to the long-haul travelers seeking single journey multi-country travel experiences. The identified strengths and weaknesses, coupled with qualitative evaluations and the importance of perceptual dimensions, provide important implications for U.S. residents' travel to select Asian destinations in terms of target marketing, positioning, and communication strategy.

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THE EFFECTS OF PERCEIVED CONSTRAINTS, NEGOTIATION AND SOCIAL SUPPORT ON OUTBOUND TRAVEL INTENTIONS AMONG CHINESE SENIORS

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Abstract

Chinese seniors' outbound travel behaviors are less discussed in the literature despite its market significance. This research intends to examine the effects of perceived constraints, negotiation and social support on Chinese seniors' outbound travel intentions by proposing a conceptual framework based on the Leisure Constraints Model, negotiation and social support theories. The findings of the research are expected to provide both theoretical and practical implications to support outbound tourism for seniors, particularly in the Chinese market.

Keywords: travel constraints; negotiation strategies; social support; outbound travel; Chinese seniors

Introduction

The senior population is attracting attention from the tourism industry due to its increasing size, and is a lucrative market segment (Dominik et al., 2018; 2019). It is predicted that every fifth person on earth (about 2.1 billion) will be 60 years old or older by 2050, and the proportion of seniors in China will be even larger then (United Nations, 2019). In 2020, there were 264 million Chinese seniors (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021), accounting for 18.7% of China's total population. This percentage is anticipated to peak at 35% by 2050 (The China National Committee on Aging, 2018). Meanwhile, more Chinese seniors show interest to outbound tourism. According to a joint report by the China Tourism Research Institute and Ctrip, 34.47 million Chinese seniors travelled outside of mainland China in 2018 (Travel Daily, 2018). That number is bigger than the population of Australia. Older Chinese visitors are contributing significantly to the global tourism economy (Xiong et al., 2021).

Senior Chinese with stable pension usually have time and disposable income, so they take the opportunity to travel. However, their travel frequency is not as high as expected due to various travel constraints (e.g., health concern and lack of companionship) (Chen et al., 2021; Dominik et al., 2018; Huber et al., 2018). There is an increasing number of research discussing travel constraints faced by senior tourists, but it remains unclear how perceived constraints influence senior tourists' outbound travel participation, and how senior tourists overcome these constraints (Wen et al., 2020). They face travel anxieties (Ma et al. 2018). Besides, these seniors, under the influence of Confucianism, value family support, so their outbound travel participation is arguably affected by the opinions of family members. Nevertheless, it is still ambiguous how social support from family facilitates Chinese seniors overcoming perceived constraints for outbound travel (Chen et al., 2021).

Methodology

This research intends to collect data from Chinese seniors via a questionnaire-based survey. According to China's current retirement policy, females and males retire at the age of 55 and 60 respectively. Thus, we consider those who aged 55 and above as seniors in this study. The data will be collected from a state-owned company based in Mianyang, the second largest city in Sichuan province, China. Retirees from this company usually live in the same community, which facilitates the data collection process. Besides, many of them are financially able to travel abroad.

All the measurement items will be adopted/adapted from prior studies focusing on older tourists. Pre-test will be conducted with the target population to ensure that the targeted respondents understand the survey questions same as the researchers do. The survey will be arranged into three sections. The first section includes items measuring travel constraints, negotiation and social support. The second section contains demographic questions. The third section includes items measuring outbound travel intentions. Such arrangement aims to reduce the impacts of common method variance (CMV).

Results/Discussion/Implication

Given the growing number of older visitors, researchers should pay more attention to their preferences, perceived constraints, negotiation strategies and other travel-related behaviors. Nevertheless, there is a lack of understanding of Chinese seniors' outbound travel participation. Based on prior research and related theories, this paper proposes a conceptual framework examining the effects of perceived constraints, negotiation and social support on outbound travel intentions among Chinese seniors. The prospective findings of the research are expected to enhance the existing tourism literature on Chinese seniors' outbound travel behaviors, and provide meaningful insights to industry practitioners.

Travel constraints have been widely discussed in the tourism literature, but it remains ambiguous what core components comprise perceived constraints for Chinese seniors. The Leisure Constraints Model (LCM) only focuses on intrapersonal, interpersonal and structural constraints, which may not be very suitable for Chinese retirees. Thus, this research intends to identify sub-dimensions of the three main constraints from relevant studies, and examine which sub-dimensions have the most significant effects on outbound travel intentions. Besides, this study aims to investigate the mediating role of negotiation, and examine whether Chinese seniors could overcome different types of perceived constraints through negotiation strategies. At last, the findings of the research are anticipated to enhance our understanding on how social support from family could shape Chinese seniors' constraints-negotiation relationship and travel behaviors.

Based on the expected theoretical contributions, this research may provide some practical implications as well. The study will provide destination marketers and other industry practitioners guidance on their marketing strategies and products/services. They may be able to alleviate some perceived constraints that inhibit Chinese seniors from travelling. Meanwhile, policy makers and government agencies could stimulate

senior tourism by reducing travel constraints via legislation and social campaigns, and promote an atmosphere that seniors should pursue an active and travelling lifestyle.

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FACTORS AFFECTING ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION IN RURAL TOURISM: A STUDY FROM UNDERGRADUATES MAJORING IN TOURISM

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Abstract

Xi Jinping proposed the rural revitalization strategy in the report to the 19th National Congress of CPC. Talents are the key to rural revitalization. The state encourages college students to start their own businesses, especially returning to their hometowns. Although many research findings were made on the entrepreneurial intention and behavior of college students, few were conducted on the field of rural tourism entrepreneurship. The study is based on a questionnaire survey of undergraduates from 5 universities in Hangzhou. In the study, 210 senior college students majoring in tourism were randomly selected, and provided with the pencil and paper survey. The collected surveys were used in the analysis of the relationship between the three factors and the entrepreneurial intention in rural tourism. The empirical analysis concluded that the three factors, entrepreneurial attitude, subjective norms and the perceived behavioral control, have a positive correlation with the entrepreneurial intention in rural tourism.

Keywords: Theory of Planned Behavior, rural tourism, entrepreneurial intention, undergraduates majoring in tourism

Introduction

Xi Jinping proposed the rural revitalization strategy in the report to the 19th National Congress of CPC. The overall plans for advancing this strategy was made in the successively issued No.1 central document. Talents are the key to rural revitalization. The state encourages college students to start their own businesses, especially returning to their hometowns and starting businesses. Entrepreneurship can also promote economic growth (Acs et al., 2012) and technological progress (Acs & Audretsch, 2005). Entrepreneurship is an important measure to increase the employment opportunities and ease the employment pressure (Bauman & Lucy, 2019). Returning to hometown and starting a business is not only helpful to promote the economic and social prosperity and development of graduates' hometown, but also helps the graduates to become rich, which is a career option taking into account both individual and social interests (Xia & Zhang, 2020).

Because of its unique function, rural tourism has become a new engine and economic source for tourism and rural development in the new era. To solve the problem of rural talents is the key factor to achieve the sustainable development for rural tourism. But college students who have entrepreneurial intentions in rural tourism are still a minority. Compared with college students in other majors, students majoring in tourism have the background knowledge in tourism, have a higher recognition of the tourism market and rural tourism, and they are easier to form the entrepreneurial

intention in rural tourism.

Studies on the factors influencing college students' entrepreneurial intention has been relatively mature. A family background of self-employment had a positive influence on offspring's entrepreneurial intentions (Laspita et al., 2012; Bloemen-Bekx et al., 2019). Entrepreneurial self-efficacy, related to searching, planning and marshalling activities, has a strong effect on entrepreneurial intention (Naktiyok et al., 2010), it also mediates the impact of entrepreneurial education and personality traits on entrepreneurial intention (Nowiński et al., 2017; Jiun-Hao, et al., 2016). Studies also found the greater the college students' perception of environmental support, the greater their perceived entrepreneurial behavior control (Fini, et al., 2012), which helps strengthen the entrepreneurial intentions. In contrast, there are few preliminary studies on the entrepreneurial intention and behavior in rural tourism. This paper studies the entrepreneurial intention in rural tourism and influencing factors of college students' entrepreneurial intention in rural tourism, looking forward to provide reference for the local government to formulate policies to attract entrepreneurial talents in rural tourism.

Methodology

Research design

Based on the Theory of Planned Behavior, this study analyzes three causing factors of entrepreneurial intention in rural tourism. The collected surveys were used in the analysis of the relationship between the three factors, such as attitude, and the entrepreneurial intention in rural tourism. The empirical analysis concluded that the three factors, such as attitude, have a positive correlation with the entrepreneurial intention in rural tourism, which provides some suggestions for the government and universities to encourage college students to start businesses in rural tourism.

Sampling and population

Taking tourism students as an example, this paper conducted a questionnaire survey on 210 senior students aged from 21 to 23 years old from five universities, including Hangzhou City University, and verified the hypothesis with the survey data collected.

Data collection

The first part of the questionnaire includes basic information of samples, gender, age, etc., and the second part includes items such as attitude and subjective norms. Items in the second part were scored using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. In April 2021, a total of 250 questionnaires were issued, and 220 questionnaires were recovered with 10 invalid ones, so the effective response rate of the questionnaire was 95.4%.

Analytical methods

The collected data passed the reliability and validity test. The α reliability coefficient method was used to test the reliability analysis, with Cronbach's Alpha of 0.911. About validity analysis, the value of KMO is 0.863, so the data are available for exploratory factor analysis. Finally, the three dimensions of the model can explain 35.8% of the

entrepreneurial intention in rural tourism, which has a good interpretation effect.

Results

Based on the Theory of Planned Behavior, this study analyzes three causing factors of entrepreneurial intention in rural tourism of the undergraduates majoring in tourism. The following conclusions are drawn with the help of empirical analysis. First, the entrepreneurial attitude of rural tourism is positively related to the entrepreneurial intention in rural tourism. Undergraduates majoring in tourism have positive viewpoints on entrepreneurial intention in rural tourism because of the background knowledge on tourism. Second, the subjective norms are positively correlated with entrepreneurial intention in rural tourism. The views from parents, friends and classmates will have a certain impact on the individual intention, such as parents with entrepreneurial experience, relatives and friends with businesses in rural tourism. Third, the perceived behavioral control is positively correlated with the entrepreneurial intention. The perceived behavioral control in rural tourism of individuals is particularly critical, which is the biggest factor affecting the entrepreneurial intention in rural tourism. Two implications from the results, entrepreneurial education is a good way to develop positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship, and favorable entrepreneurial policies from government will promote people's positive ideas on entrepreneurship and support undergraduates' entrepreneurial intentions.

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ENTERTAINMENT, LODGING, AND FOOD SECTOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT QUALITY

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Abstract

China is one of the major players in the global tourism industry. The huge outbound tourism markets make China attractive to various tourism destinations where everyone likes to have a share of this enormous market. Undoubtedly, China's tourism industry is a pillar of economic growth in its economy and many others globally. However, at the same time, the tourism industry is responsible for various environmental degradation. This study assesses the sectoral impacts of lodging, entertainment, food production and services industries on various environmental indicators, including greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution, and ecological footprint. We also examined environmental policy implementation and environmental regulations' effectiveness in building resilience. Several econometrics tools and techniques are applied to a time series of data from 2000 Q1 to 2022 Q4 to explore and explain various relationships between the mentioned indicators. The main findings and implementation are discussed in the discussion section.

Keywords: tourism, environment, environmental policy implementation, environmental regulations, ecological footprint

Introduction

China's domestic and international tourism markets have developed swiftly in recent history. This development has been accompanied by continuous economic growth, balancing trade deficits with partner countries, and empowering less privileged parts of society (Huang, Shao, Zeng, Liu, & Li, 2021). Tourism development in China also triggered a debate on its environmental impacts and ecological quality. China has the largest outbound and domestic tourism market attracting many governments, enterprises, and destination managers at the domestic and international levels. China is also the largest emitter of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) (Xiong, Khan, Bibi, Hayat, & Jiang, 2022). Therefore, understanding tourism growth and its environmental and ecological footprints has become an essential issue in China and globally. This research will affect the future orientation of China's economic, environmental, and tourism policies. This study provides a detailed assessment of the tourism and hospitality industry's various sectors on GHG emissions, air pollution, and ecological footprint quality.

This study focuses on three major sectors of the tourism industry: entertainment, lodging, and food production and services. Environmental policy and regulations are tools that create resilience against the odds of economic growth, energy consumption, and tourism development. The sectoral level analysis aims to answer questions like how much each sector contributes to GHG emissions, air pollution, and ecological footprint quality. To what extent are environmental policies implemented in these sectors? Does the level of implementation create environmental resilience? To what extent are these sectors responsible for the ecological footprint? Does government regulation are effective enough to curb environmental issues? By answering these questions, this study will enable policymakers to determine what kind of legislation they require and what implementation strategies should be put in place to enhance the environmental

resilience of the tourism industry in China.

Methodology

This study focuses on China as study area. We use macro-level indicators to examine the influence of entertainment, lodging, food production and service on the environmental indicators, for instance, GHG emissions, PM 2.5, and ecological footprint, by contextualizing environmental policy, environmental regulation, energy consumption, economic growth, and globalization. This provides a detailed view of the tourism sector's contribution to the environment and the effectiveness of resilience-building measures. The data is collected from World Bank Developmental Indicators (WDI), China Statistical Yearbook (various versions), the Footprint Data Foundation website, and various other sources. The data range from 2000 Q1 to 2022 Q4.

We applied various econometric modeling and techniques to analyze the data set. These include the autoregressive distributed lag model, Dicky Fuller and Phillip Perron stationarity tests, bounds test of cointegration, multicollinearity and heteroskedasticity tests, normality tests, Cusum and Cusum-square tests.

Discussion and findings

The lodging industry positively and significantly contributes to GHG emissions. However, the increase in the total domestic product is negatively associated with GHG emissions; besides, the environmental regulations negatively impact GHG emissions, indicating that environmental taxation is a favorable measure to create greater environmental resilience. Entertainment industries show a significant positive relationship with air pollution; however, the food production and services industry is negatively associated with PM 2.5. The environmental policy implementation level is not significant and similar to GHG emissions, environmental regulation and GDP revealed a negative association with PM 2.5. This shows that environmental taxes work as a catalyst to enhance environmental resilience in the food production and service industries. All the tourism sectors, GDP, energy consumption, and even environmental regulations reveal a positive association with ecological footprint, indicating that China is using its natural resources very fast and creating a huge negative impact on the ecological system.

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WHAT HAS THE US-CHINA TRADE WAR COST TOURISM? QUANTIFYING THE POTENTIAL LOSS BY LEVERAGING ELASTIC NET SYNTHETIC CONTROL METHOD

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Abstract

What has the US-China trade war cost tourism? The current work examines a scenario without a US-China trade war by leveraging a new casual inference method, elastic net synthetic control, on Chinese annual outbound tourism arrivals data from 16 OECD countries. Thus, to estimate the invisible tourism cost after the trade war by comparing a decade of recorded Chinese tourists traveling to the U.S. The counterfactual approach yields compelling evidence of substantial economic costs inflicted by the trade war. The findings contribute to quantifying the intangible cost of trade wars and that ignoring this could result in a lose-lose situation.

Keywords: tourism; trade war; causal inference; elastic net synthetic control; avoidance

Introduction

The U.S.-China trade war has significantly influenced the global economy and international relations. Major media outlets have proliferated both misinformation and disinformation, leading to secondary harm to the tourism industry, which is already beleaguered by an economic downturn and the COVID-19 pandemic (Dai et al., 2022; Luo & Zhai, 2017; Zhang et al., 2021). However, few tourism studies have centered on trade wars, barring Dai et al. (2022), which examines destination animosity spawned by these circumstances, and Jin et al. (2021), which explores the potential role of tourism in adjusting the trade balance.

The U.S.-China trade war, exacerbated by sanctions on high-tech firms, has ignited a new battleground: the \$1.6 trillion U.S. tourism industry. Data indicate that the average Chinese tourist outlays \$6,700 during a U.S. visit, exceeding other international tourists by 50% (White, 2019).

This situation instigates a pertinent question. What has the trade war cost U.S. tourism? Before the trade war, official data revealed a steady rise in Chinese tourists to the U.S., a significant decrease of 5.7% and 5.4% in 2018 and 2019, respectively, compared to 2017 observed after the trade war (World Tourism Organization, 2023). These statistics, however, neglect the opportunity costs absent in a trade-war-free context. Consequently, this study suggests that the real impact on the U.S. tourism sector may be more profound than current estimates indicate.

The present study employs a new causal inference method, the elastic net synthetic control (Doudchenko & Imbens, 2016), selecting and analyzing annual Chinese outbound tourism arrival data from 16 OECD countries. This method allows estimating the unseen tourism cost post-trade war by comparing a decade's data on Chinese tourists visiting the U.S. The counterfactual causal inference approach provides compelling evidence of substantial economic costs inflicted by the trade war.

Methodology

This research adopts a new causal inference technique, the elastic net synthetic control (Doudchenko & Imbens, 2016), to scrutinize Chinese annual outbound tourism arrival

data from 16 OECD countries spanning 2009 to 2019, thereby postulating a scenario without the U.S.-China trade war. This method is employed due to the inherent difficulty in observing the number of Chinese tourists visiting the U.S. without the trade war, a counterfactual scenario, given that the trade war did occur. Further, the method leverages observable tourism arrival data from other OECD nations, which remained unengaged in a trade war with China over the identical timeline.

The matrix completion method can help predict the unobserved counterfactual outcomes by focusing on observed data. Specifically, the elastic net synthetic control formulates a weight set allowing the linear combination of the control units' pre-treatment outcome (Chinese tourist arrival count in other OECD nations pre-trade war) and treated unit's pre-treatment outcomes (Chinese tourist arrival count in the U.S. before the trade war) to be approximated by a weighted average of control units. Then, use this estimated weight set and the observed control units' post-treatment outcomes (Chinese tourist arrival count in other OECD nations after the trade war) to predict the unobserved counterfactual outcome for the treated unit (Chinese tourist arrival count in the U.S. would be, if there is no trade war). This forms the "synthetic control" - a counterfactual dataset mirroring Chinese tourist arrival data in the U.S. without the trade war.

Nevertheless, without restrictions, the solution for synthetic control will be not be unique, and the predicted counterfactual outcomes might be incorrect due to overfitting. When the quantity of control units matches or exceeds the number of pre-treatment outcomes, multiple sets of weights may equally well fit these outcomes in the pre-treatment period. Hence, this approach necessitates using the machine learning technique as regularization, or shrinkage. The elastic net penalty term employs both L1 (i.e., LASSO) and L2 (i.e., Ridge) regularization penalties, governed by two parameters: the tuning parameters λ and α . The parameter α establishes the ratio of L1 and L2 penalties, while λ determines the degree of regularization, balancing variance and bias. Following Doudchenko and Imbens (2016), the optimal values for the tuning parameters λ and α were chosen via Leave-One-Out Cross-Validation (LOOCV).

The data for this study was obtained from the Yearbook of Tourism Statistics (World Tourism Organization, 2023). Control units were selected from OECD countries that are prominent destinations for Chinese tourists due to their economic and institutional similarities to the U.S. Specifically, and the donor pool should comprise units with characteristics akin to the treated unit (U.S. Chinese tourist arrival data). In this study, 16 OECD countries that are also prime destinations for Chinese tourists were used as a control group, namely Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.

Countries were excluded judiciously: South Korea and Japan were left out due to geographical and cultural disparities, and France was omitted due to events (e.g., terrorist attacks, floods, strikes) that contaminated its tourism data. The study spans the years 2009 to 2019, excluding the confounding effects of the 2008 Global Financial Crisis and the pre-COVID-19 era, ensuring the analysis is not skewed. The post-treatment period, during which the trade war effects are assessed for 2018 and 2019.

Results

The counterfactual approach provides robust evidence of the substantial economic burden wrought by the trade war. Utilizing elastic net synthetic control methods on Chinese annual outbound tourism arrival data from 16 OECD countries, the present work inferred a trade-war-induced decrease of about 12% to 18% in Chinese tourist

arrivals in 2018, and around 5% to 13% in 2019, relative to the synthetic control. This equates to a loss of nearly half a million tourists in 2018, compounded by an additional reduction of approximately a quarter million in 2019.

These findings quantify the often overlooked, intangible costs of trade wars, the disregard of which could culminate in a lose-lose outcome. Specifically, the decline in Chinese tourists portends significant potential revenue loss for the U.S. and job cuts within their tourism and hospitality industries. Thus, while the U.S. initially heralded its trade war as a strategic maneuver intended to strengthen manufacturing and address trade deficits, it seems to have resulted in a Pyrrhic victory.

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UNLEASHING AI-POWERED E-CREATIVITY: CULTURAL TYPOLOGY IN THE POST-COVID-19 ERA

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Abstract

This study aims to validate the effectiveness of ChatGPT as an AI-powered E-Creativity tool for tourism planning in the context of post-COVID-19 cultural tourism. Traditional cultural tourist typologies have relied on two dimensions: the desired experience and the level of decision-making importance. However, this paper introduces a novel conceptual framework that incorporates a third dimension: E-Creativity-supported tourism planning facilitated by AI. The study involves five distinct cultural tourist types (Purposeful, Serendipitous, Sightseeing, Casual, and Incidental) utilizing ChatGPT to explore E-Creativity in tourism planning. The resulting tourism plans will undergo validation by experienced tourism experts. This research not only proposes an innovative AI-powered conceptual and operational framework for contemporary tourism planning but also explores the potential of AI in selecting culturally significant destinations. The findings may contribute to a paradigm shift in cultural tourism, particularly by empowering incidental cultural tourists to overcome limitations imposed by prior knowledge of cultural attractions. By emphasizing the significance of addressing missing cultural knowledge, AI-powered tourism planning has the potential to bridge existing gaps through the E-Creativity of cultural destinations under the Persuasion Economy.

Keywords: AI-powered, E-creativity, Persuasion Economy, Post-covid-19, Cultural Tourist

Introduction

The advent of artificial intelligence (AI) has revolutionized various industries, including tourism. In the realm of cultural tourism, AI-powered technologies offer new possibilities for enhancing visitor experiences and shaping tourism planning strategies. The COVID-19 pandemic has further amplified the need for innovative approaches in tourism, as the industry seeks to adapt to changing circumstances and provide safe and engaging experiences for travellers.

This study focuses on the validation of ChatGPT, an AI-powered E-Creativity tool, for tourism planning in the post-COVID-19 era within the context of cultural tourism. Traditional typologies in cultural tourism have primarily relied on dimensions such as the desired experience and the level of decision-making importance. However, this research introduces a novel perspective by incorporating a third dimension, namely E-Creativity-supported tourism planning facilitated by AI.

The conceptual framework presented in this study aims to explore the construct of AI-powered E-Creativity and its potential impact on tourism planning. By integrating ChatGPT into the process, the study seeks to uncover how E-Creativity can enhance tourism planning for different cultural tourist typologies in the post-COVID-19 landscape. The five intended cultural tourist types identified as Purposeful, Serendipitous, Sightseeing, Casual, and Incidental will engage with ChatGPT to explore the realms of E-Creativity for tourism planning purposes.

The resulting tourism plans generated through AI-powered E-Creativity will be

further validated by experienced tourism experts. This validation process aims to assess the effectiveness and practicality of incorporating AI-powered tools like ChatGPT into the tourism planning process. Additionally, the study also examines the potential paradigm shift in cultural tourism, particularly in terms of selecting culturally significant destinations and empowering incidental cultural tourists who may lack prior knowledge about cultural attractions.

Overall, this research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on AI-powered tourism planning and highlights the potential of E-Creativity to bridge gaps in cultural knowledge and provide innovative solutions in the post-COVID-19 cultural tourism landscape.

Methodology

The primary objective of this research is to evaluate the effectiveness of human-AI interaction measures in the context of tourism planning using ChatGPT as an AI-powered E-Creativity tool. The study aims to assess the impact of such measures on the quality of tourism plans generated and the overall user experience.

Experimental Design **Participant Selection:** A diverse sample of cultural tourists will be recruited for the study, representing different age groups, cultural backgrounds, and travel preferences. Participants should have basic familiarity with AI technologies and be willing to engage with ChatGPT for tourism planning purposes.

Pre-test Measures Prior to the interaction with ChatGPT, participants will complete a pre-test survey to gather demographic information, assess their prior knowledge of cultural tourism, and establish baseline measures of their expectations and perceptions regarding AI technologies.

Human-AI Interaction Participants will be given access to ChatGPT and instructed to utilize the tool for tourism planning. The AI system will generate recommendations, provide information, and assist participants in crafting their tourism plans. The interaction session will be timed and monitored to collect data on the duration of interaction, the number of queries made, and the overall engagement level.

Post-test Measures After the interaction session, participants will complete a post-test survey to evaluate their experience with ChatGPT. The survey will assess factors such as perceived usefulness, ease of use, satisfaction with the generated tourism plans, and the impact of AI-powered E-Creativity on their decision-making process.

Validation The final tourism plans generated by participants will be evaluated by experienced tourism experts. The experts will assess the quality, feasibility, and alignment with cultural tourism principles of the plans to validate the efficacy of AI-powered E-Creativity in generating tourism proposals.

Data Analysis Quantitative data collected from the surveys will be analyzed using appropriate statistical methods, such as descriptive statistics, t-tests, and regression analysis. Qualitative data from open-ended survey questions and expert evaluations will be analyzed thematically to identify common themes and patterns related to the human-AI interaction measures.

Implication

Overall, this research design aims to investigate the effectiveness of human-AI interaction measures using ChatGPT as an AI-powered E-Creativity tool in the domain of cultural tourism. The findings will contribute to understanding the role and impact of AI in enhancing tourism planning processes, thereby informing future developments in the field.

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THE ROLE OF VISITORS' EMBEDDEDNESS FOR VALUE CO-CREATION PROCESS IN CULTURAL QUARTER: THE CASE OF SHANGHAI WEST BUND

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Abstract

The construction of cultural quarter marked by the Service Dominant Logic has gained attention from researchers across a variety of disciplines and professions. Based on Social Exchange Theory, this study used the qualitative analysis of in-depth field observations and the quantitative analysis of 788 questionnaires to construct the measurement scales and to verify the conceptual model of the value co-creation process. The results reveal visitors respond in both relational (embeddedness) and behavioral (co-creation behaviors) ways when they visit and receive benefits from cultural area actors, and that visitors' embeddedness significantly and positively influences their co-creation behavior and provides a positive impact on the perceived value of the cultural quarter. The study also finds that co-creation behaviors had a strong mediating effect, and they complement and reinforce the role of visitor embeddedness in driving their perceived values. These findings can validate the Social Exchange Theory and guide decision-making.

Keywords: cultural quarter; urban tourism; cultural tourism; embeddedness of visitors; value co-creation

Extended Abstract

The cultural quarter represents a geographical area within a large town or city, culture-related economic activities, artistic services and activities. This zone features a collection of buildings and purposefully crafted spaces exclusively designated for these activities, thereby engendering a distinct sense of identity and encouraging the provision of related activities. Drawing from the tenets of Service Dominant Logic and Social Exchange Theory, this study used the qualitative analysis of in-depth field observations and the quantitative analysis employing 788 questionnaires. These methodologies revealed the meanings of embedding of visitors into the social structure of this special urban geographic unit, and delved its embedding path and subsequent with value co-creation process.

The specific results of the study are as follows:

(1) China's cultural quarters exude distinct local attributes characterized by the fusion of culture and tourism, reciprocal sharing between hosts and guests, and the cultivation of mutual advantages. Within these quarters, visitors are not solely participants in interpersonal exchanges, but also enthusiasts partaking in consumptive and experiential pursuits. The integration of individual visitors takes on profound significance.

Based on the definition of "cultural quarter", this study selects the most typical cultural quarter in Shanghai, a metropolitan city in China, which is built with art and culture as its orientation - Shanghai West Bund for the case study. Through in-depth field observations and interviews, it was found that the culture quarter under the Chinese government's planning is an urban destination that integrates culture and tourism and that its space for cultural activities, leisure activities, and economic activities contains a large number of reshaped cultural buildings, new cultural venues and other readable places, and the use value of the space can be consumed in tourism

and leisure activities. Visitors to this particular place also act as more than mere consumers, linking their behavior to the fabric of the area through active interpersonal interaction, active participation in consumption and experience, and giving meaning to their embeddedness.

(2) The embeddedness of cultural quarter visitors includes three dimensions: network embeddedness, societal embeddedness, and territorial embeddedness; the value co-creation behavior of cultural quarter visitors includes three dimensions: co-production behavior, co-experience behavior, and co-sharing behavior; the perceived value of cultural quarter visitors includes three dimensions: perceived functional value, perceived emotional value and perceived social value.

Based on the social exchange theory, the link between the embeddedness of visitors as economic individuals in the cultural quarter and their participation in the value co-creation process in the cultural quarter is conceptualized epistemologically and paradigmatically in the light of the previous actor observations and literature, and its internal properties and dimensional characteristics are explored. During this period, visitors' relational responses to the cultural area (embeddedness), influence their behavioral responses (value co-creation behaviors), while both visitors' embeddedness and value co-creation behaviors influence visitors' multidimensional perceived value of the cultural quarter. Based on this, a conceptual model of visitor embedding and co-creation process is constructed in conjunction with the literature review.

(3) A comprehensive pool of measurement indicators for each dimension of the visitors' value co-creation process was initially conceptualized. The scale development procedure was meticulously employed to validate, enhance, and refine these scales, yielding three measurement scales distinguished by their robust reliability and validity. This process also served to substantiate the envisaged conceptual model of the visitors' co-creation process.

Based on the constructed higher-order reflective conceptual model and the three measurement scales, the empirical analysis of a sample of visitors to the cultural quarter on the West Bund of Shanghai is carried out. The results show that visitor embeddedness, visitor value co-creation behavior, and visitor perceived value can all be operationalized as second-order factors and that there is a causal relationship between visitor embeddedness, value co-creation behavior, and perceived value in the cultural district. The overall higher-order reflective model is robust and effective. The study also finds that behavioral responses (co-creation behaviors) had a strong mediating effect, and they complement and reinforce the role of visitor embeddedness in driving their perceived values.

The discussion and significance of the paper are as follows:

(1) Validating Social Exchange Theory: The study's findings provide empirical support for the tenets of social exchange theory. Visitors respond in both relational (embeddedness) and behavioral (co-creation behaviors) ways when they visit and receive benefits from cultural area actors, and that visitors' embeddedness significantly and positively influences their co-creation behavior and provides a positive impact on the perceived value of the cultural quarter.

(2) Guiding Decision-Making: Understanding the causal relationship between visitor embeddedness, value co-creation behavior, and perceived value provides a roadmap for cultural quarter managers. The identification of specific dimensions within value co-creation behavior, such as co-production, co-experience, and co-sharing

behaviors, offers insights for crafting tailored experiences. Cultural quarters can curate activities and spaces that align with these behaviors, catering to the diverse preferences of visitors and maximizing their perceived value. By focusing on creating an environment conducive to relational interactions and co-creation activities, cultural quarters can heighten the overall experience for visitors.

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MY EXPERIENCE OR OTHERS' EXPERIENCE: A MULTILEVEL EXPERIENCE MODEL ON TRAVEL APP-INDUCED ATTITUDE

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Abstract

The literature on tourist experience commonly puts the current en-route experience at the center stage through single-level analysis. This research steers away from that tradition to improvise a triple-experience model through multiple inquiries. Data were collected from a survey to assess how prior and current travel app usage experiences could impact app-induced site attitude and revisit intention via the app. The cross-level moderation of others' experiences was also explored. This research draws on the functional theory of attitude and the theory of normative conduct to acknowledge the knowledge and social functions of attitude change. It contributes to the literature by bridging the divide between the online app and offline travel evaluations. It builds a theoretical synthesis between the aforementioned theoretical lens to demonstrate how the experiences of others through travel apps can impact an individual's experience, ultimately affecting attitude toward app-induced tourism destinations.

Keywords: experience; attitude; travel application; revisit intention

Introduction

Attitude has been an important concept in understanding human behavior, as “attitudes are formed and changed in a variety of different ways, with varying amounts of cognitive deliberation,” including knowledge acquired from personal encounters and deliberation from others (Albarracin & Vargas, 2010, p. 394).

The linkage between experience and attitude has been widely established, as experience often directly impacts one's attitude. In this regard, experience research did not receive equal attention until Pine and Gilmore's (1998) agenda on the experience economy. Travel experience has followed suit to gain traction beginning in the new millennium. Over the years, how it can be shaped by various socio-environmental factors (Lin & Wong, 2020; Wen et al., 2021) along with different experiential outcomes (Kastenholz et al., 2018; Moon & Han, 2019). Experiences from other occasions and other tourists are less regarded. This creates the first gap in the literature. As this domain of knowledge matures, it is time to move beyond this taken-for-granted view (i.e., current experience from personal encounters).

A second limitation in the tourism literature rests on the mediation of experience and attitude through technology (Wang et al., 2016; Yu et al., 2018). This line of inquiry commonly views technology as a means to an end; accordingly, experiences reaped from using technology take center stage (An et al., 2021; Gao et al., 2023; Wu et al., 2021). However, tourist experience/attitude is an integral part of both technology usage and physical encounters of a tourism product (e.g., a site, an attraction, or an event).

Literature Review

This research draws on the functional theory of attitude and the theory of normative conduct to acknowledge the knowledge and social functions of attitude change. It contributes to the literature by bridging the divide between the online app and offline travel evaluations. It builds a theoretical synthesis between the aforementioned theoretical lens to demonstrate how the experiences of others through travel apps can impact an individual's experience, ultimately affecting attitude toward app-induced

tourism destinations.

The literature on tourist experience commonly puts the current en-route experience at the center stage through single-level analysis. This research steers away from that tradition to improvise a triple-experience model through multiple inquiries. This research aims to bridge the aforementioned gaps through a quantitative approach based on data collected from tourists who use travel apps to make travel decisions. In particular, it seeks to answer the following questions: What are the antecedents and consequences of app-induced site attitude? What are the roles of previous and current app usage experience on such an attitude? How does others' experience play a role in the relationship between previous and current app usage experience, and site attitude? This inquiry seeks to unpack the notion of triple-experience by modeling tourist experience from different sources: personal (previous and current experience) (Luo et al., 2020; Oh & Jeong, 2004) and others (experience curated from other travelers) (Oliveira et al., 2020).

Methods

Data were collected from a survey to assess how prior and current travel app usage experiences could impact app-induced site attitude and revisit intention via the app. The cross-level moderation of others' experiences was also explored. This study employed a multilevel quantitative design utilizing person-administered face-to-face surveys and online tourist ratings from popular travel apps to evaluate the hypothesized relationships proposed above. The population of interest was tourists, who used online apps to make travel decisions. We sampled Chinese tourists who had used and are still using travel apps in planning trips to domestic attractions. To ensure a representative sample, a list of attractions in several popular domestic tourism cities were first selected based on their popularity with online travel agencies such as Ctrip and Qunar.

We collected two sets of data, with individual-level data conducted using surveys. The survey data were secured from multiple cities in China (i.e., Changsha, Chongqing, Chengdu, Huangshan, Guangzhou, and Zhuhai). Each survey was initiated by recruiting a team of trained on-site investigators, with instructions provided to intercept travelers at the exits of each selected tourism attraction.

Findings

This research used HLM 6.06 to perform two hierarchical linear models. We also controlled for gender, age, and app usage frequency, which may have an impact on the proposed relationships (Wu et al., 2021). We tested the direct effects of individual-level variables of interest. Results reveal that previous app usage (PAU) experience and current app usage (CAU) experience are significantly related to app-induced site attitude. The relationship between app-induced site attitude and revisit intention through apps is also significant at the .001 level. We tested the mediation of app-induced site attitude using Haye's Process via a bootstrapping approach (N = 5,000). Results reveal that the mediation is significant at the .001 level.

The cross-level moderation of others' experience. Results reveal that the PAU experience $\times$ others' experience interaction is significant. Following the simple slope procedure, we depict the moderation and the figure suggests that the slope of PAU experience is more acute for a higher level of others' experience. In other words, the PAU experience – app-induced site attitude relationship is more (vs. less) salient in attractions.

Discussion

This research is motivated by the need to further explore the tourist experience in the tourism literature. It utilized a survey approach to assess how PAU and CAU experiences could shape tourists' attitudes toward an attraction via a travel app. Results reveal that app-induced attitude mediates the relationship between PAU and CAU experiences and revisit intention via an app. The cross-level moderation from others' experience further indicates that the effect of PAU experience is more salient when other tourists project high regard for an attraction, thus creating a descriptive norm that encourages a favorable attitude toward the place. The findings inform theoretical and practical implications.

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EVALUATING TOURISTIC QUEST FOR AUTHENTICITY: WORLD HERITAGE SITES IN CHINA AT THE CROSSROADS OF CULTURES

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Abstract

Discussions on authenticity have become prominent in tourism research. However, while much research has examined the impact of authenticity, there is less understanding regarding the dimensions that influence tourists' perceptions of authenticity, especially within the cultural heritage tourism and cross-cultural comparison domain. Thus, the purpose of this research is (1) to develop and validate a multi-dimensional scale to assess authenticity in heritage tourism, (2) to construct an evaluation model based on entropy weight, (3) to fuzzy evaluate typical cultural heritage sites in China in order to verify the applicability of the relevant theoretical methods, and (4) to compare the similarities and differences in the perceptions of authenticity between domestic and international tourists. Our findings support reflective-formative hierarchical component model of perceived authenticity toward heritage experience, including three higher-order components of objective authenticity, existential authenticity, and customized authenticity. Based on the entropy method and fuzzy comprehensive evaluation, different weights were allocated to different indicators, and the overall perceptual evaluation of each site is represented by a value (0-5), and was ranked accordingly. A case study of three heritage sites in China demonstrates the effectiveness of the model. Findings also reveal that there are significant differences in various perception dimensions between domestic and international tourists. The findings not only deepen the research of Sino-foreign tourists' behavior but also provide valuable suggestions for Chinese heritage sites to participate in the international heritage tourism market competition.

Keywords: Cultural heritage tourism, Sino-foreign differences, Perceived authenticity, World cultural heritage sites

1. Research aim

World heritage tourism research has developed rapidly in the early 21st century, showing a trend of expanding from developed countries to emerging economies^[1]. Authenticity is the basic feature of the value of world heritage, an important sign to measure the value of world heritage and the fundamental point of heritage protection. Therefore, authenticity is the world's key concept in the world of heritage tourism^[2], which is the core of the tourist attraction of the heritage site (Alexandros Apostolakis, 2003)^[3]. Moreover, the tourists' perception of authenticity is the great value to the future development of world heritage resources. The key to heritage tourism lies in conveying and receiving true information. In this process, interpretation and communication between subject and object are constructed around "authenticity", thus forming a dynamic changing system among subject, object, and various media, and realizing the integration of heritage value and tourism value^[4].

There have been many studies on authenticity theory in Western tourism circles, and relevant studies have been gradually carried out in China in the past 20 years. However, in general, the concept, theory, and logical relationship of authenticity in heritage tourism are still relatively confused, and there is a lack of how to measure the

perception of authenticity in world heritage tourism. This paper constructs the world heritage tourism authenticity perception indicators from three aspects: objective authenticity, existential authenticity, and customized authenticity. The purpose is to construct an evaluation model based on entropy weight, to fuzzy evaluate typical cultural heritage sites in China to verify the applicability of the relevant theoretical methods, and to compare the similarities and differences in the perceptions of authenticity between domestic and international tourists.

2. Research Method

2.1 Questionnaire design

The "objective authenticity" observation indicators were studied by Burner and Cohen (Burner, Cohen, 1988; Feng Shuhua, Sha Run, 2007)^[5], Knudse and Waade (Knudse and Waade, 2010) used the study of "customized authenticity" observation indicators for reference^[6]. The observation indicators of "existence authenticity" were studied by Kolar and Zabkar (Kolar, Zabkar, 2010; Xu Wei, Wang Xinxin, 2011)^[7,8] (Table 1) .

World cultural heritage sites include Liangzhu ancient city relics, West Lake scenic spot, and the Hangzhou section of Jing Hang Grand Canal.

2.2 Questionnaire survey

In this study, a face-to-face questionnaire survey is conducted by the Central Intercept Test (CIT). A total of 473 questionnaires were issued in this survey, of which 446 were valid (284 for domestic tourists and 162 for foreign tourists), with an effective rate of 94.3%.

3. Research result

3.1 There are different importance for evaluating the authenticity of world cultural heritage sites between Chinese and foreign tourists

According to the indicators weight calculation based on entropy method, there are cultural psychological differences in the perception of the authenticity of world heritage tourism which is confirmed quantitatively.

Firstly, both Chinese and foreign tourists showed that the weight of objective authenticity perception was the largest, which shows that the objective authenticity of world heritage sites is the most major factor in the authenticity perception for Chinese and foreign tourists. Compared with Chinese and foreign tourists, foreign tourists are higher than domestic tourists in objective authenticity perception, but lower than domestic tourists in customized authenticity and existential authenticity (Figure 1). The strict standard of objective authenticity puts forward excessive requirements for sightseeing cultural tourists^[9]. Westerners seek an independent aesthetic value in architecture and the preservation of objective cultural relics and seek to reflect the objective world accurately and carefully.

Secondly, according to the weight evaluation of every indicator for each authenticity perception, there are very different rankings between domestic tourists and foreign tourists. It means that there are differences between Chinese and foreign tourists in the perceived importance of the authenticity of world cultural heritage sites for each indicator (Table 2).

3.2 There are significant differences in comprehensive evaluation between Chinese and foreign tourists on the same world cultural heritage site

Based on the indicators system constructed above, the fuzzy comprehensive evaluation factors of tourists' world heritage sites are set as follows: first level $UA=\{UB_1, UB_2,$

UB3}; second level UB1={UC1, UC2, UC3, UC4, UC5, UC6, UC7}; UB2={UC8, UC9, UC10, UC11, UC12}; UB3= {UC13, UC14, UC15, UC16}.

According to fuzzy comprehensive evaluation, the total score of tourist authenticity for domestic and foreign respectively is 3.966, 3.546. Figure 2 shows that the ranking of the three types of authenticity perception for two kinds of tourists are as follows: objective authenticity > customized authenticity > existential authenticity. However, compared with foreign tourists, domestic tourists are greater than foreigners in evaluating all three types of authenticity perceptions fuzziness. The average difference T-test between the total score of authenticity perception and the three kinds of authenticity perception scores shows that the scores of Chinese and foreign tourists all have very significant differences ($p < 0.001$).

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Appendix

Questionnaire (English Version)

Instructions: Please indicate your overall feeling about this heritage site (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

Items	1	2	3	4	5
I prefer the historic architecture in its original state.					
The site ingeniously combines landscape and architecture.					
I like that the site has a compelling theme of showing the past years.					
It takes me on a journey backward through time.					
Exhibits such as excavated artifacts evoke a sense of history.					
The museum in the heritage site perfectly presents the history.					
I feel awe, infection, and shock from the site.					
I feel a sense of affinity for the local customs.					
The folklore of the place inspires me.					
The tourist goods have an original aesthetic.					
The old shops maintain their original character.					
Its festive performances stop and engage tourists.					
I feel the experience of touching the deep of me.					
I feel a sense of escape from reality.					
I find it open-minded to immerse myself in another culture.					
The ambiance of this heritage site allows me to relax.					

Table 1. World heritage tourism authenticity perception questionnaire

Latent Variable		Code	Latent Variable		Code
Primary Indicators	Second Indicators		Primary Indicators	Second Indicators	
Objective Authenticity	Historical building	C1	Customize Authenticity	Social relation	C8
	Natural environment	C2		Traditional lifestyle	C9
	New-old environment	C3		Handicrafts	C10
	Historical environment	C4		Traditional diet culture	C11
	Traditional appliance	C5		Traditional festival	C12
	Museum exhibition	C6	Existential Authenticity	Tourists' self-aware	C13
	Cultural relics and historic sites	C7		participatory	C14
				Feeling	C15
				Value identification	C16

Table 2. Weight order of secondary indicators

Primary Indicators	Tourist category	Weight ranking
Objective authenticity perception	Domestic tourists	Historical environment > Museum exhibition > New-old environment > Traditional appliance > Cultural relics and historic sites > Natural environment > Historical building
	Foreign tourists	Natural environment > Historical environment > Cultural relics and historic sites > Traditional appliance > New-old environment > Museum exhibition > Historical building
Customize authenticity perception	Domestic tourists	Handicrafts > Traditional diet culture > Traditional festival > Social relation > Traditional lifestyle
	Foreign tourists	Traditional lifestyle > Traditional diet culture > Handicrafts > Social relation > Traditional festival
Existential authenticity perception	Domestic tourists	Participatory > Tourists' self-aware > Value identification > Emotion
	Foreign tourists	Participatory > Emotion > Tourists' self-aware > Value identification

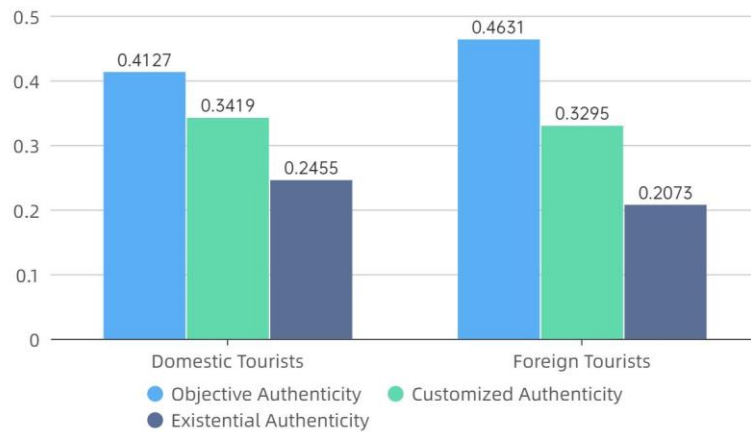


Figure 1. Comparison of the First-level Indicators' Weights of Three Perceived Authenticity Dimensions between Domestic and Foreign tourists

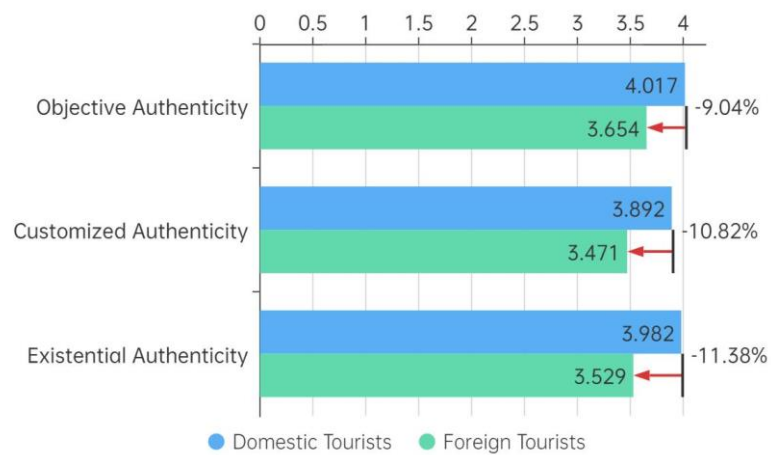


Figure 2. Comparison of Domestic and Foreign Tourists' Fuzzy Comprehensive Evaluation Scores on the Three Categories of Perceived Authenticity Dimensions

THE SMART SERVICE FAILURE MODEL IN SMART RESTAURANT

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Abstract

This research steers away from the positive connotation of smart service to embark on the smart service failure phenomenon, which have yet to be fully uncovered from a holistic perspective to identify specific dimensions. This study therefore aims to unfold what cause the smart service failures with an emphasis on the role of smart technology. Data were obtained from smart restaurants, and categorized through the qualitative approach. It reveals a triadic model of service failure in smart eateries with respect to core smartness failure, smartness servicescape failure, and smartness interactivity failure. In essence, this work contributes to the smart service literature by understanding the drawbacks of technology, and requires the operators to be fully prepared to reduce the occurrence of service failure.

Keywords: smart dining, smart restaurant, robot, employee, service

Introduction

Smart restaurants have combined robots and other smart devices to create a sense of futuristic ambience. In such a setting, intelligent devices mainly act as facilitators or even replacement for human staff. But is smart dining really a smart choice? What are some issues and obstacles customers face dining at smart restaurants? These questions challenge the taken-for-granted assumption that consumption in smart outings would result in favorable hospitality experience.

Although prior studies offer insights into how technology could lead to expected or unintended consequences, they face several limitations. First, most research on smart technology focuses primarily on robots and robotic services. Yet, smart dining includes an array of other advanced/intelligent devices (e.g., smart order system, non-robotic autonomous food delivery service, interactions with customers and employees, and more). Second, robot-related service failure research commonly utilizes experimental design to simulate hypothetical scenarios, which lacks insights from a field inquiry with real-world issues and feedback that patrons have raised. This research seeks to answer the above questions and fills the aforementioned literature voids through the qualitative investigations to identify themes that underpin the phenomenological structure of smart service failure.

Methods

Four popular smart restaurants were selected for analysis, including Foodom, Robot.He, JD Xcafe, and Haidilao were selected. Data collection was initiated in two stages. First, user-generated commentary pertaining to smart dining experience was utilized. The researchers then filtered the data to exclude duplicates and emojis, resulting in 9,891 usable reviews. Then, using purposive sampling, the investigators intercepted participants who had encountered service failure during patronage of one of the participating smart restaurants to do semi-structured interviews. The research secured 21 interviews with those who had experience with the selected restaurants.

The coding process followed Saldaña's (2009) guideline to develop first-cycle and second-cycle codes. It first involved two researchers. An additional coder was invited to monitor the process and resolve discrepancies among other coders. Three themes

emerged including core smartness failure, smartness servicescape failure, and smartness interactivity failure.

Results

Core smartness failure

Core smartness failure denotes an array of factors that propel consumer dissatisfaction due to the technical dysfunction of smart devices and smart management systems represented by robots and artificial intelligence, mainly including smart service delay, smart service error, and smart service interruption. In smart restaurants, the accuracy of smart services is demonstrated when they are delivered within the promised time, yet smart devices are pre-programmed to follow a prescribed process. These attributes present limitations that may not well accommodate highly heterogeneous customer needs and expectations, particularly among those with high expectations of smart service promptness.

More importantly, smart technology often leads to errors in service delivery, such as serving the wrong dish or missing an order. Additionally, technology implementation relies on algorithms, data, and cloud computing, which are particularly network-dependent. Such devices are at a standstill when there are network problems, thereby prolonging service processes.

Smartness servicescape failure

Smartness servicescape failure concerns service failure driven by the incongruence of smart servicescape, overhyped smartness, and dissatisfaction with smart foodscape. The incongruence of smart servicescape arises when diners realize that the sense of smartness embedded in the physical setting does not sufficiently match their expectations. Further, smartness remains the main selling point of smart eateries (Peek, 2021). The servicescape of smart restaurants features rich high-tech appeals ranging from smart physical designs and decoration to the outlook of smart facilities and devices; however, when the servicescape is consistent with the smartness theme, consumer ratings tend to be positive, and vice versa. Additionally, service products largely depend on tangible products (e.g., food). Since food products in smart restaurants are mainly crafted by robots, service failure is inevitable.

Smartness interactivity failure

The *smartness interactivity failure* pivots on service failure caused by the intersection between smart technology and service actors (e.g., consumers and robotic/human employees). The application of technology requires employees to work collaboratively with technology when serving consumers (Fu et al., 2022). If appropriate remedial actions are not presented by employees when the technological malfunction occurs, consumer satisfaction and loyalty can be adversely affected.

Moreover, complex smart service accentuates the extent to which patrons find it laborious to use a certain apparatus. On the other hand, undesirable smart service concerns incidents owing to the use of technology failing to improve performance, leading to the evaluation of smart services being complex and undesirable. Besides, when robots fail to accurately sense the location of consumers, it also bring about the uncomfortable experience.

Discussion

The findings reveal the dark side of smart dining, showcasing an array of issues that lead to service failure. Importantly, this research provides an alternative conduit for

understanding why customers avoid smart dining. It extends existing knowledge in the service failure and robotic service. This research also opens a forum of discussion on smart dining and restaurant failure. It offers implications to decision makers on how operators could mitigate failure in smart service, such as serving time and error rate, so as to avoid smart service delay or service error.

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GLOBAL CRISIS AND RECOVERY: DO GOVERNMENT STIMULUS MEASURES IMPROVE ADAPTIVE RESILIENCE?

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Abstract

This qualitative study examines government stimulus measures as an external influence on tourism business resilience during the Covid-19 pandemic. Through the lens of adaptive resilience, we juxtapose tourism business challenges and government stimulus measures between 2020-2022, in order to evaluate the role of the government in pandemic business survival. The findings show that financial assistance, wage subsidy, loan moratorium, loan guarantee and other stimulus measures were beneficial, but their collective impact was diminished by the low quantum of financial aid, regulatory obstacles, red tape, unrealistic preconditions, and late implementation. Overall, state intervention influenced the respondents' adaptive resilience moderately. Business survival during the pandemic largely depended on leadership, speed and agility, entrepreneurial ingenuity, creativity and innovation and savvy negotiation.

Keywords: Adaptive resilience, crisis management, government intervention, Malaysia, tourism business

1. Introduction

This paper examines the influence of government stimulus measures on tourism businesses during the Covid-19 pandemic. More specifically, to what extent did state intervention influence business resilience? Much has been written about the macro impact of stimulus measures on the national economies (Feng, 2022; Munawar et al., 2021; Rodriguez-Anton & Alonso-Almeida, 2020). There are also localised case studies on business responses towards the pandemic challenges (Aidoo et al., 2021; Sarkar & Clegg, 2021). Nevertheless, limited studies examine how state intervention and adaptive resilience intertwine decisively in aiding firm-level business survival during a global crisis. We focus on tourism businesses that have overcome the pandemic financial distress and apply the theory of adaptive resilience to juxtapose their business journeys with the state intervention measures between 2020-2022. The findings indicate that government stimulus measures influenced the respondents' business resilience moderately. Business survival during the pandemic was primarily influenced by the respondents' personal or organizational adaptive traits.

2. Literature Review

The tourism industry has weathered many global crises, but none surpassed the Covid-19 pandemic in magnitude and duration. With tourism at a standstill, there was industry expectation for government assistance (Do et al. (2021). The stimulus measures adopted include furlough or wage subsidy, loan moratorium, government loan guarantee, financial assistance, tax cuts, and other stimulus packages (Juergensen et al., 2020; Kuckertz et al., 2020).

Effective stimulus measures arguably enhance tourism business resilience. In the management context, adaptive resilience refers to an organisation's capabilities to manage and respond strategically to crises, innovate, and explore solutions beyond the organisation's planned strategies (McCarthy et al., 2017). Adaptive resilience is not merely about the ability to 'bounce back' from a crisis and the resumption of previous performance levels. Resilience includes the development of new capabilities, methods,

markets or relational social capital to support post-crisis growth (Nilakant et al., 2014).

Between the first MCO on 18 March 2020 and the lifting of the international travel ban on 1 May 2022, the Malaysian government implemented nine stimulus packages worth MYR530 billion (Loong & Usamah, 2022). Table 1 outlines the intervention measures, which include loan guarantees, two phases of loan moratoriums, wage subsidy and targeted financial assistance. Furthermore, the Temporary Measures for Reducing the Impact of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) Act 2020 (Covid Act 2020) was enacted to provide legal protection for the non-fulfilment of contractual obligations from 18 March 2020 to 23 October 2020.

Table 1. Malaysia's main stimulus measures for tourism

Tourism stimulus measures	Source of financing
Loan moratoriums (businesses)	PRIHATIN, PEMULIH
Loan guarantee	PRIHATIN, PEMULIH
Wage subsidy	PRIHATIN, PRIHATIN PKS+, PENJANA, KITA PRIHATIN, PERMAI, PEMERKASA, PEMERKASA+, PEMULIH
Taxation: Deferral of monthly income tax instalment payments, tax relief for Covid-19 related expenses, 50% remission of penalty for late payment of sales tax and service tax, tax deduction for renovations and refurbishments, etc.	PENJANA
Deferral of employer's contribution to the Employees Provident Fund (EPF)	PRIHATIN
Electricity discount up to 15% (hotels, travel agencies, airline premises shopping malls, conventions and exhibition centres)	PRIHATIN, PEMERKASA, PEMULIH
Cash assistance to SMEs (RM1,000 to RM3,000 each time, not exceeding RM10,000 in total.)	PENJANA
Matching grants for the repair of licensed budget hotels and registered home stays	PENJANA
Matching grants for the creative, events and exhibition industries	PENJANA
Incentive funds to promote domestic tourism (Digital vouchers of up to RM100 per person for domestic flights, rail travel and hotel accommodation)	PENJANA
Special individual income tax relief for domestic tourism expenses of up to RM1,000	PENJANA
Grants for digitalization/ transformation initiatives by SMEs	PENJANA

(Source: Malaysia Ministry of Finance data adapted from Loong and Wan Usamah, 2022)

3. Methodology

We conducted semi-structured interviews with an interpretivist paradigm to analyse individual business journeys (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Between May to October 2022, we interviewed 33 respondents, namely, entrepreneurs, senior managers, service providers, one government officer and members of government-affiliated organizations, and decision-makers of tourism and hospitality associations who were also business owners. Purposive sampling was applied to identify potential respondents. This was supplemented by snowball sampling where respondents connected us with other potential respondents. Four respondents opted for business closure, due to the inability to overcome one or more of the above challenges. By contrast, 28 respondents responded to the crisis differently, exploring means to lower their expenses, alternative business platforms and explore new opportunities to keep their business afloat.

Thematic analysis was applied, combining Strauss and Corbin's (1998) coding and memoing technique with Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-stage framework of analysis, namely: becoming familiar with the data, (2) generating codes, (3) generating themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) finalizing the analysis.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 State financial assistance

The respondents considered state financial assistance (maximum of RM10,000) as inadequate. Similarly, the electricity rebates for hotels and tourism-related premises were deemed insufficient, compared to the losses incurred. Hence, the respondents put minimal expectations on state financial assistance during this period.

4.2 Wage subsidy

For the respondents who overcome bureaucratic hurdles (e.g. tedious documentation and slow response to inquiries), the wage subsidy scheme lowered operating expenses. However, the low quantum only aided the wage bill of rank-and-file but inapplicable to highly skilled employees. Moreover, the scheme only provided temporary relief, because the tourism sector was almost non-existent due to movement control. Overall, the wage subsidy scheme's influence on adaptive resilience was important but not decisive.

4.3 Loan moratorium, loan guarantee, and statutory protection

The loan moratorium was beneficial in delaying loan repayments. However, the regulatory divide between banks and leasing companies deprived travel companies of the loan moratorium in respect of tourist vehicles financing. Essentially, the Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM), Malaysia's central monetary authority, has jurisdiction over commercial banks, but the Ministry of Housing and Local Government regulates leasing companies. Since BNM instituted the loan moratorium, it did not extend to leasing companies. Ironically, the purchases of tourist vehicles were mainly financed by leasing companies. This meant that most respondents did not enjoy the loan moratorium until this regulatory loophole was addressed in the second half of 2021. By this point, financial hardship had caused the forced sale of some tourist vehicles. Hence, cashflow resilience was more important than loan moratorium in preventing the disposal of their remaining tourist vehicles.

The loan guarantee scheme was not accessible, due to unrealistic preconditions. In particular, an applicant must to provide financial statements demonstrating three consecutive years of profitability. Such a requirement was invariably impossible, seeing that the tourism industry came to a standstill in 2020. Hence, business survival hinged on the respondents' ability to minimise expenses, rather than the availability of additional funds to tide them through the crisis.

The respondents also considered Malaysia's statutory protection to be ineffective. This was because the Covid Act 2020 only came into effect on 23 October 2020, past the critical period when the first MCO was announced. Overall, debt negotiation depended more on the respondents' leadership skills than the formalistic legal protection against breach of contractual obligations.

4.4 Matching grants

The matching grants for the repair/refurbishment of budget hotels were of limited assistance because, to be eligible, an applicant must have funds for a project. Hence, cash-strapped hotels that could not initiate any repair/refurbishment project do not

qualify for such assistance. No respondent benefitted from the grants for digitalisation and transformation. In the climate of uncertainty, they were hesitant about allocating capital expenditure for digitalisation with no guarantee of successful government funding. Instead, they explored innovative solutions without incurring capital expenditure – they innovated through the creative use of existing software and sourcing free platforms.

4.5 Other stimulus measures

Most respondents considered the government's management of travel restrictions to be lack-lustre – the imposition and easing of lockdowns were purportedly influenced by political factors and festivities, which prevented the government from keeping infection level under control. This view was echoed by Loong and Wan Usamah (2022).

The matching grants for the creative, events and exhibition industry were of limited relevance. Prior to the opening of international borders, the lack of tourist volume and Covid uncertainties dissuaded many respondents from planning for such events. Consequently, this stimulus measure did little to boost the respondents' adaptability in revenue generation.

Many respondents considered the e-voucher promotion of domestic tourism spending (through e-commerce platforms) to be a positive measure. However, they expressed scepticism about the effectiveness, in view of the low quantum of RM100 per consumer. Similarly, the RM1,000 tax relief for domestic tourism booking was deemed inadequate. Although these measures were commendable, the sum might be too small to galvanise tourism recovery.

The Langkawi International Travel Bubble (LITB) was lauded as an important stimulus. Although the visible impact was localised in Langkawi island, many respondents benefitted through the sale of tour packages and the facilitation of entry of foreign tourists. Ultimately, the best remedy was the opening of international borders on 1 May 2022, because inbound tourism was crucial for a holistic sectoral growth.

5. Conclusion

The findings indicate that Malaysia's tourism stimulus measures vary in their effectiveness. The LITB was unanimously endorsed as a positive measure. There were also qualified praises for the wage subsidy that eased their wage bill, hence enabling them to focus on organisational restructuring. To the respondents who benefitted from the loan moratorium, it was a lifeline that gave them much-needed relief from debt servicing. This facilitates the channelling of dwindling resources to the exploration of business solutions. At the very least, the loan moratorium bought them more time to strategize and innovate. However, the impact of the stimulus measures was diminished by low quantum of financial aid, regulatory obstacles, red tape, unrealistic preconditions, and late implementation. Overall, state intervention influenced the respondents' adaptive resilience moderately. Business survival during the pandemic largely depended on leadership, speed and agility, entrepreneurial ingenuity, creativity and innovation and savvy negotiation.

The study's theoretical implication lies in its analysis of the role of the state as an external influence on adaptive resilience, which contributes to the debate on the effectiveness of state intervention for businesses in crisis contexts (Gereffi et al., 2020). The managerial implication is the post-disaster learning and shoring of knowledge which enhance disaster preparedness. The main limitation is the non-generalizability of the findings, as regulatory frameworks and intervention measures vary between states and the types of crises.

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WHAT MAKES AN APPEALING COVER? THE INFLUENCE OF AIRBNB COVER PHOTO SHOT-SCALE PRESENTATION ON CONSUMER DECISIONS

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Abstract

Due to the intangible and experiential nature of hospitality, guests heavily depend on cover photos to evaluate accommodation properties. However, there is limited understanding of how to optimally present the shot-scale of cover photos to enhance guests' click-through and booking intention. This study investigates the impact of Airbnb's cover photo shot-scale presentation on consumer decisions based on the elaboration likelihood model. By conducting three scenario-based experiments with different experimental stimuli, the results show that (1) panoramic presentation is more effective at motivating consumers' click-through and booking intention; (2) the depth of information processing mediates the relationship between shot-scale presentation and consumers' click-through and booking intention. (3) Consumers' regulatory focus moderates the relationship between shot-scale presentation and consumers' click-through intention and booking intention, as well as the depth of information processing. The implications and limitations of the study are discussed.

Keywords: Airbnb, cover photo shot-scale presentation, elaboration likelihood model, booking decisions

Introduction

The intangible and experiential nature of lodging necessitates that photographs play a central role in providing consumers with valuable visual information, thereby influencing their decision-making (Ert et al., 2016; Espigares-Jurado et al., 2020). This significance is accentuated in the context of Airbnb, as photos provide exceptionally persuasive data (Gunter, 2018; Mauri et al., 2018). Researchers have examined the effect of Airbnb photos on room pricing (Gibbs et al., 2018), booking performance (Abrate & Viglia, 2019; Ert et al., 2016), online review helpfulness (Ma, 2018), and online popularity (Gunter, 2018; Liang, 2017). The property cover photo is a crucial advertising medium for property owners to attract and persuade potential guests (Jang, 2022; Li et al., 2022). It serves as the cover image that consumers view during the Airbnb browsing process. Despite advances in our understanding of the role cover photos (i.e., profile photos, congruency of the cover photo with a headline) play in assisting customers' decision-making in the Airbnb context (Jang, 2022), the effect of Airbnb cover photo shot-scale presentation on click-through and booking intent has yet to be investigated.

As a spatial product, Airbnb's shot-scale presentation frequently serves as a vehicle for spatial distance representation, with cameras placed at a distance capturing a larger viewing area through panoramic shots and cameras placed at a closer distance capturing more details of the product through close-up shots (Kim et al., 2019). This study draws on prior research on shot-scale presentation divided into close-range and panoramic series of shots (Rooney & Balint, 2018; Sheng et al., 2020). Specifically, close-range presentation scenes are displayed at a closer spatial distance, have a smaller visual range, and contain fewer visual elements than panoramic presentation series scenes, which are displayed at a greater spatial distance, have a larger visual range, and contain more visual elements (Artz et al., 1993; Huang et al., 2017). Based on ELM theory, this

paper examines the impact of a cover photo shot-scale presentation as persuasive information on consumer decisions. We argue that high reliance on Airbnb room images for consumption decisions is impacted by the information and perceptions conveyed by the differential cover photo shot-scale.

According to elaboration likelihood model (ELM) theory, information processing depth significantly impacts the persuasive power of information (Yoon et al., 2018; Petty et al., 1986). In essence, the more thoroughly individuals engage with and process information, the more persuasive its effects become (Yoon et al., 2018). This depth of information processing refers to the level of engagement and focus an individual maintains while processing information. Building upon this concept, recent studies by La (2018), and Sarial-Abi and Ulqinaku (2020) have indicated that the depth of information processing plays a crucial mediating role in how persuasive messages influence consumer behavior. This suggests that the degree to which individuals process information mediates their responses to persuasive messaging. Hence, we speculate that the depth of information processing may mediate the relationship between shot-scale presentation, click-through intention, and booking intention. Moreover, ELM theory posits that motivation determines an individual's information processing route (Petty et al., 2016). Specifically, it identifies two primary motivational orientations: promotion focus and prevention focus, which are stable and enduring self-regulatory modes or tendencies (Higgins, 1998). These orientations have been found to influence consumer risk attitudes and sensitivity, subsequently affecting how individuals process persuasive messages and make consumption decisions (Pham & Higgins, 2005). As a result, the present study hypothesizes that consumers' regulatory focus moderates the impact of cover photo shot-scale on both information processing depth and click-through and booking intention.

Overall, this research introduces ELM theory as its theoretical foundation and synthesizes a theoretical model that defines the cover photo shot-scale presentation effect on consumer decisions in an Airbnb context to fill in the gaps mentioned above. Our study aims to answer three critical research questions: (1) How does Airbnb's cover photo shot-scale presentation (close-range vs. panoramic) affect consumer decisions? (2) If so, what are the underlying factors that shape their intention to click through and book an Airbnb room? (3) Whether regulatory focus can moderate this process Fig. 1 illustrates the research model.

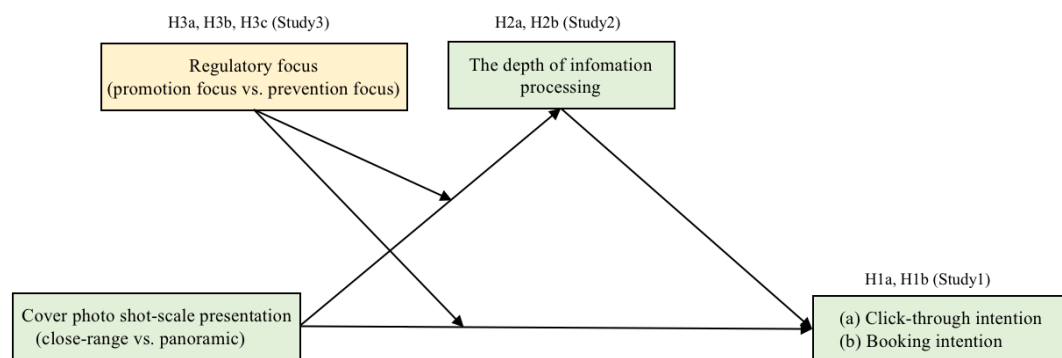


Figure 1. Research model

Methodology

Prior to the main studies, a pre-study was conducted to select the appropriate Airbnb shot-scale stimuli. In the following experiments, the Airbnb cover photo shot-scale

(close range vs. panoramic) was tested in a between-subjects design. Three situational experiments were designed to validate the conceptual model and the hypotheses formulated (Fig. 1). Specifically, Study 1 examined the effect of the cover photo shot-scale presentation (close range vs. panoramic) on consumers' click-through intention (H1a) and booking intention (H1b). Study 2 tested the mediating effect of the depth of information processing (H2a, H2b) based on laboratory experiments. Study 3 investigated consumers' regulatory focus as the boundary condition for the effect of shot-scale presentation on consumers' click-through intention (H3a) and booking intention (H3b), as well as the depth of information processing (H3c). Participants were recruited from Credamo to complete the experiment.

Results/Discussion/Implication

First, panoramic cover photo presentation is more effective at motivating consumers' click-through and booking intentions.

Second, the depth of information processing mediates the relationship between cover photo shot-scale presentation and consumers' click-through intention and booking intention. Panoramic presentation is more effective in eliciting the depth of information processing and positively motivating consumers' click-through intention and booking intention.

Third, consumers' regulatory focus moderates the relationship between cover photo shot-scale presentation and consumers' click-through intention and booking intention, as well as the depth of information processing. Specifically, promotion focus (prevention focus) plays a positive moderating role in enhancing the impact of panoramic (compared to close-range) presentation on click-through rates, booking intentions, and the depth of information processing.

The current study mainly adds to the hospitality literature on photos by investigating the effects of Airbnb cover photo shot-scale presentation on booking intention. We distill these findings into detailed managerial guidelines for optimizing cover photo display strategies that influence consumer click-through and booking intention and can address the shortcomings associated with Airbnb accommodations.

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DOES CSR MATTER IN TIMES OF CRISIS? EVIDENCE FROM YOUNG CONSUMERS' PERSPECTIVE DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract

This study intends to understand the influence of young customers' perception of hotel implemented corporate social responsibility practices on their attitude towards luxury hotel brand image during the crisis period. Sample drawn during COVID-19 pandemic, by adopting a quantitative approach questionnaire was used to understand young consumers' perceptions and attitudes. The results revealed that the corporate social responsibility activities implemented by hotels towards customers and society would have a positive impact on young consumers' perceived brand image. The findings drawn from the study provide important practical implications for luxury hotel managers, which can help them effectively implement corporate social responsibility practices to enhance luxury hotels' image during the crisis period.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR); Brand image; COVID-19 pandemic; Hotel industry

Introduction

Researchers have paid growing attention to corporate social responsibility (CSR) in recent decades (Liu et al., 2020; González-Rodríguez et al., 2019). CSR as a significant business concern, it is a vital component which can facilitate or hinder the development of a brand's image (Liu et al., 2020). It is acknowledged by the hotel managers that the implementation of CSR practices would have a positive influence on the hotel's brand image (González-Rodríguez et al., 2021). The impacts have become more evident during the crisis period. The study from Aguinis et al. (2020) revealed that hotel brand image can be significantly affected during a crisis period. Gürlek & Kılıç (2021) have explored CSR practices that hotels implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, the study revealed that hotels' CSR efforts mainly focus on three primary dimensions, namely society, employees, and customers. Understanding consumers' attitude towards hotel implemented CSR practices can help the hotel to remain resistant to the challenging business environment, and subsequently to keep a good brand image. However, previous studies have mainly focused on the relationship between CSR and brand, or CSR measures during COVID-19 pandemic, to the authors' knowledge there is no specific study has examined hotel industry's CSR practices during the crisis period and its influence on brand image. In addition, not much study has focused on young consumers' perspective. Young consumers who have grown up in the digital age tend to be more socially conscious, more willing to actively participate in social issues, and they are more likely to support brands that align with their values and make a positive contribution to society (Liu et al., 2020), so it is very necessary to understand what young consumers' perspective. Therefore, the current study intends to understand young consumers' perception towards hotel implemented CSR practices during the COVID-19 pandemic and its subsequent influence on hotel's brand image.

The customers' perceptions of CSR practice are broad, encompassing four areas, namely economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic (Choi & La, 2013). Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Kucukusta et al. (2013) studied Hong Kong tourists' views of CSR practices in four- and five-star hotels and found that environmental dimension and the hotel's mission & vision were the two most important factors influencing service

quality and image. Özcan & Elçi (2020) stated that employees are one of the most important factors in a business and investigated the importance of employees' perceived CSR practices, and examined the potential role of employer branding, image and corporate reputation. The results show that employee-oriented CSR activities have a significant impact on SME employees' perceptions of employer branding and image, and that perceived company reputation mediates this link. In addition, Research by Lu et al. (2020) shows that CSR practices targeting social dimensions will make customers have a significant impact on a company's brand loyalty, and corporate philanthropy allows customers to have a positive impact on their image and brand loyalty. Based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Customer perceived CSR practice towards customer has a positive influence on brand image.

H2: Customer perceived CSR practice towards employee has a positive influence on brand image.

H3: Customer perceived CSR practice towards society has a positive influence on brand image.

Methodology

This study aims to investigate how customer perceived CSR practices towards customer, employees, and society influence young consumers' attitude towards luxury hotels' brand image. Based on the set objective, it is more appropriate to collect extensive data for a more accurate assessment. The questionnaire has been used as the main method for the data collection. The questionnaire included four parts, the first part was filter questions, which is used to identify accurate respondents. The second part of the questionnaire intended to understand customers' perspectives of the three CSR-practices dimensions. The questions in the third part focused on customers' perceptions on hotel brand image. The last part of the questionnaire recorded respondents' demographic information. Data were collected by means of convenience sampling. Two criteria were set for data collection: (1) the respondent had stayed in a luxury hotel during the COVID-19 pandemic; (2) the respondents should be familiar with hotel implemented CSR practice. The questionnaire was distributed in the form of QR code. The collection process lasted about two weeks, from early January 2022 to mid-January 2022. Responses from 267 individuals were ultimately collected, of which 119 questionnaires did not meet the requirements. Finally, 148 questionnaires were considered to be eligible for this study, and the effective response rate was about 75.28%.

Results & Conclusion

The objective of this study was to examine the effects of customer perceived CSR practices towards customer, employees, and society on young consumers' attitudes towards luxury hotels' brand image. A zero-order correlation analysis was performed. Next, a multiple regression analysis was performed to understand the relationship between H1, H2 and H3. Multicollinearity diagnosis was performed, and the variance inflation factor ($VIF=2.454<10$, $VIF=2.607<10$, $VIF=1.451<10$) indicates that the independent variables are statistically independent and not highly correlated with each other. Findings of the regression analysis in Model reveal significant effects of CSR-Customer ($b=0.298$, $p<0.05$), CSR-Employee ($b=0.044$, $p>0.05$), and CSR-Society ($b=0.177$, $p<0.05$). From the independent variable of CSR towards employee, which is not relate to the dependent variable, the result revealed that only hypotheses H1 and H3 were supported. The finding is similar to the past research that luxury hotel customers'

perceptions of CSR practices towards three dimensions have a positive influence on hotel brand image (Lu et al., 2020; Gürlek & Kılıç, 2021). The finding revealed that customer-related CSR practice had the strongest impact on hotel brand image, followed by the society-related CSR practice. The customer perceived employee-related CSR practice had no impact on brand image, which is different from the past research (Liu et al., 2020; Choi, M., & Choi, Y., 2021).

From the above findings, it suggests that customers had better understanding on hotels' measure that have taken to protect customers' health and safety and try their best to meet customer needs during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as establish the concept of green and sustainable development, support social and cultural activities and make charitable donations can have a favorable impact on the hotel's image. Compared with the previous research, the current research focuses on customers' perception, especially the cognition of young consumers. For hotels who want to engage young consumers can implement more society and customer related CSR practices, such as setting up more facilities to ensure the safety of customer. In addition, social media platforms are the major channel to keep the customer updated about hotel's CSR efforts and brand's DNA. Therefore, the study suggests that hotel managers should effectively utilize their social media platforms to build a positive brand image by creating customer and society related CSR content during the crisis period.

This study has certain limitations that must be addressed. First, due to time constraints, the sample size is relatively small, which limits the generalizability of the research findings. The findings may not fully represent the entire population of interest. Secondly, the majority of the respondents were female, this demographic difference should be taken into account when interpreting the results.

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“YOU WANT TO PICK ME UP”: THE INTEGRATION OF BRAND EQUITY THEORY AND AFFECT TRANSFER THEORY IN THE CONTEXT OF FANDOM AND TOURISM

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Abstract

Popular culture tourism has garnered significant attention and sparked research interest in various areas. This research elucidates through the integration of Brand Equity Theory and Affect Transfer Theory that both fandom for prospective celebrities and the reality show could indirectly influence the travel intention to the reality show filming location by destination brand equity and destination attachment. The validity of this approach is tested through audiences watching the shows “Youth with You Season 2” and “CHUANG 2021.” The findings reveal a positive relationship between fandom for the show and destination brand equity, highlighting the effectiveness of on-screen media as a marketing tool. Leveraging the showcased attractions, the destinations can successfully promote themselves. By exploring the nexus between idol trainee elimination reality shows and tourism, this study provides insights into the potential of popular culture tourism in enhancing destination appeal and competitiveness.

Keywords: Fandom, idol elimination reality shows, destination, brand equity theory, affect transfer theory

Introduction

Popular culture tourism, defined as fans traveling to destinations associated with their fandom pursuit, has attracted significant research attention in various areas (Lexhagen et al., 2022). Prior studies regarding popular culture tourism and fandom were investigated centered on cartoons, movies, sports, and TV dramas (Beeton et al., 2016; Jones, 2008; Williams, 2011; Yamamura, 2020). However, limited efforts have been made in reality shows.

This research focuses on Chinese idol elimination reality shows, where the filming locations have become famous tourist destinations for fans, representing an essential market segment for tourism destinations. Given the growing appreciation for the positive impact of popular culture, such as increased tourists number and economic outcomes (Lee, Bai, et al., 2019), this research integrates Brand Equity Theory and Affect Transfer Theory to examine how fandom indirectly influences travel intentions to reality show filming locations through destination brand equity and destination attachment. Given the extant gaps in theory, the main objective of this research is to develop a model for illustrating the touristic importance of filming an idol elimination reality show in a tourist destination. The model’s validity was tested using data collected from audiences who watched the show “Youth with You Season 2” or “CHUANG 2021”, both filmed in popular tourism destinations.

Literature Review

Fans gladly embark on trips to get associated with popular stars, despite constraints of time, distance, and finance (Lee, Busser, et al., 2019). This behavior can be understood through the concept of fandom, consisting of commitment, involvement, and attachment to celebrities and media content (Lee, Bai, et al., 2019; Obiegbu et al., 2019). Celebrity fandom involves a state of profound attention and admiration expressed through attitudes, feelings, and behaviors in daily life (Lee & Scott, 2009). Previous

studies found that fans emotionally connect with celebrities, exhibiting interest and attachment to these figures (Fiske, 1992; Gray et al., 2017). The same emotional connection is expected to be found with prospective celebrities, such as idol trainees and the featuring reality shows.

This research asserts that fandom influences destination brand equity, a concept derived from Aaker's (1991) Brand Equity Theory (Kladou et al., 2015). Brand equity is a brand's distinct assets and liabilities and has four dimensions - awareness, association, quality, and loyalty (Aaker, 1991; Ferns & Walls, 2012). This means destination brand equity encompasses the key attributes influencing destination selections (Kladou & Kehagias, 2014). The Affect Transfer Theory suggests that consumers' positive emotions and attitudes toward an endorser can transfer to a product through successful endorsements (McGuire, 1985; Zhang et al., 2020). An association between all dimensions of fandom and brand loyalty has also been confirmed (Oplustilova et al., 2022). Hence, fandoms for the idol trainee (**H1**) and the reality show (**H2**) could respectively affect the destination brand equity where the reality show was filmed.

The Affect Transfer Theory also suggests that individuals may develop affection for a never-visited destination based on their emotional connection to popular cultures associated with that destination (Zhang et al., 2020). Therefore, this study proposes to test the impact of destination brand equity on destination attachment (**H3**).

Destination brand equity, as a strong motivator, plays a significant role in attracting tourists and influencing prospective tourists when making decisions about destinations (Brakus et al., 2009; Horng et al., 2012; Kim & Lee, 2022). Thus, destination brand equity could positively influence travel intention (**H4**).

Prior studies empirically support a positive relationship between destination attachment and behavioral intentions. Attachment to media-featured destinations positively affects visitation and recommended likelihood (Wong & Lai, 2015). Hence, this research posits that destination attachment positively influences travel intention (**H5**).

Method

This research employed a survey approach, items were developed through a comprehensive review of relevant literature (e.g., Iwasaki & Havitz, 2004; Lee & Yoo, 2015; McIntyre & Pigram, 1992). The questionnaire was distributed through "super topics," a virtual community on Weibo, attracting individuals interested in the selected reality shows and idol trainees. After data screening, 577 valid questionnaires from participants who had watched either of the shows were analyzed using IBM SPSS and SmartPLS software. A second-order model was employed, commonly used to examine hypotheses involving distinct yet related constructs that can be accounted for by one or more underlying higher-order constructs. The proposed hypotheses were tested using partial least squares-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis.

To estimate the accuracy of the structural model, the R^2 of variance explained for destination brand equity (28.7%), awareness (76.0%), association (91.1%), quality (85.0%), loyalty (82.0%), destination attachment (63.4%), and travel intention (72.3%) were calculated as predictive power, showing that the structural model was reliable (Hair et al., 2017). Bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples was conducted to evaluate the research model.

Result

Four out of the five hypotheses were supported: fandom for the reality show positively

affects destination brand equity (H1: $\beta = .506$, $t = 12.169$, $p < .001$); destination brand equity positively affects destination attachment (H3: $\beta = .796$, $t = 41.389$, $p < .001$) and travel intention (H4: $\beta = .457$, $t = 10.357$, $p < .001$); destination attachment positively affects travel intention (H5: $\beta = .440$, $t = 9.584$, $p < .001$). However, fandom for the idol trainee has no significant impact on destination brand equity (H2: $\beta = .053$, $t = 1.389$, $p = .165$).

Conclusion

This research provides insights into the impact of fandom for prospective celebrities and reality shows beyond online support. The findings demonstrate that fandom for a show influences destination brand equity, while that for a person does not. This finding could contradict previous studies that suggest celebrities serve as proxies and cultural icons shaping fans' perceptions of associated destinations (e.g., Glover, 2009; Lee, Bai, et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2008). However, they did not investigate fandom for celebrities and the program simultaneously. The influence of fandom for celebrities on destination brand equity may have faded due to the fandom for the popular culture program, yet we need further research on this.

This study shows that the attractions, landscapes, cultural sites, monuments, and events that serve as filming locations can be effectively utilized as marketing tools to promote the tourism destination. Therefore, destination marketers should consider leveraging both on-site and broadcast popular culture events, as they are deemed effective marketing strategies for enhancing a destination's reputation and brand, ultimately attracting tourists.

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SEXUAL MINORITY IN TOURISM: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF LGBT+ TOURISM LITERATURE

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Abstract

Research interests have grown significantly in recent decades regarding lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and other sexuality and gender minority segments (LGBT+) in tourism. By employing a qualitative systematic review approach, this research aims to outline the research trends of LGBT+ tourism and offer insights for future research. The “6P” framework, including people, possibility, perception, position, product, and program, was utilized to organize and summarize the key findings. This study identifies several prominent themes by conducting a thematic analysis of 164 journal articles. This research reveals gaps in the literature and calls for further research to develop a more holistic understanding of LGBT+ tourism. This study contributes to the ongoing dialogue on inclusive tourism practices and provides valuable insights for academia and industry stakeholders.

Keywords: LGBT+, sexual minority, systematic review, tourism, hospitality

Extended Abstract

Given the increased emphasis on equality and diversity, topics of sexuality and gender have come to the forefront of various disciplines, including tourism management. Research interests have grown significantly in recent decades regarding lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and other sexuality and gender minority segments (LGBT+) in tourism. LGBT+ tourism is not a recent phenomenon but with a long history, tracing to the 18th century when upper-class and well-educated homosexual men took a Grand Tour from Northern European countries to destinations with warmer climates and exotic cultures while searching for the companionship of young boys (Clift & Wilkins, 1995). Despite its long history, academia only started around investigating this phenomenon two decades ago (Clift & Wilkins, 1995; Holcomb & Luongo, 1996). It is important to note that the LGBT+ community is heterogeneous, yet the academic tourism literature focused has focused exclusively on gay and lesbian tourists. The presence of other queer tourists has been largely ignored. For many years, the internal consistency of LGBT+ tourism has been emphasized improperly (Monterrubio et al., 2021). To clearly link high-speed accelerated knowledge production regarding gender and sexuality discussions in tourism research, a systematic review is required to fulfill the research gap in summarizing current literature on LGBT+ tourism.

To address the research inquiry regarding the areas of investigation in the field of LGBT+ tourism, the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework was employed, which consists of four consecutive phases: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion of studies (Moher et al., 2009). The entire databases of Scopus and Web of Science (WoS) were utilized for the research, encompassing all related publications from their inception until the end of 2022. Specific terms including “gay”, “lesbian”, “homosexual”, “bisexual”, “transgender”, “queer”, “LGB*” and “GLB*” were combined with “tourist”, “tourism”, “holiday”, and “travel” individually to formulate search words. These search words were used to search for articles throughout three sections of articles, including title, abstract, and keywords. A total of 998 results were identified from Scopus and 855 from WoS. In the screening phase, duplicate articles between Scopus and WoS were removed,

resulting in a narrowed number of 1412 results. This led to the eligibility phase, where the researchers applied specific criteria to align with the research objectives. The time frame for inclusion was set from the earliest available output to the end of December 2022. Furthermore, only papers written in English were considered due to language competence. In terms of document types, only full-length papers published in peer-reviewed journals were included to ensure high-quality research. Only articles published in journals listed in the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) and Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) were retained. As a result, 501 journal articles were filtered. Subsequently, authors reviewed the selected articles, focusing on their abstracts and introduction sections. Papers that showed low relevance to the tourism and hospitality sectors were excluded from further analysis. Ultimately, 164 papers were included for further qualitative synthesis, and a structural coding approach was employed to organize the information on LGBT+ tourism throughout the process.

To identify the key foci of the existing literature, all articles were analyzed thematically. Drawing inspiration from Morrison's (2019) destination product model, authors proposed a coherent framework called the "6P" framework to organize and summarize the knowledge, including people, possibility, perception, position, product, and program. Notably, these identified categories are not mutually repulsed, indeed, they are usually combined in a single academic investigation.

Firstly, the "people" category synthesizes research on LGBT+ tourists, including their profiles and interactions with residents. Secondly, "possibility" refers to factors that enable or constrain travel, such as travel motivations and constraints. LGBT+ tourists travel for various reasons, with scholars recognizing that they possess unique motivations while sharing commonalities with mainstream tourists (e.g., Clift & Forrest, 1999; Hughes, 2005; Lewis et al., 2021). Thirdly, the term "perception" encompasses the travel experience, both positive and negative, as well as the sexual experience during holidays. The holiday experience provides a time for LGBT+ tourists to escape heterosexuality in their places of residence (Hughes, 1997; Poria, 2006). Fourthly, the "position" category encompasses research related to identity and space, as identity can define individuals in terms of their positions in society, while space refers to the physical location of an object. Fifthly, the "product" dimension includes destinations and hotels. As an extension of the desire by gay people to be away from social restrictions, tourism destinations can be seen as a way to freely express their sexual identity away from life world (Herrera & Scott, 2005; Hughes, 2002). Lastly, the "program" category refers to activities that enhance tourist experiences within a destination, such as events and festivals (Morrison, 2019). Unlike indoor and stationary gay spaces, LGBT+ events create open but liminal spaces for queer tourists to freely exhibit their authentic identities and bodies and celebrate the culture which may not be visible and normalized in the "gay ghetto" (i.e., daily life) under heteronormative order (Kaygalak-Celebi et al., 2019; Kaygalak-Celebi et al., 2022).

Gender and sexuality are two important factors that influence travel motivations, tourist behaviors, constraints, and destination choices (Weeden et al., 2016). Two decades ago, scholars, including Pritchard et al. (1998), Clift and Forrest (1999), and Hughes (2002), have already noted the absence of critical academic research on LGBT+ tourism. Despite the review of existing literature on LGBT+ tourism, numerous niche topics remain under-researched. For instance, the holiday experience of the senior queer population or those who live in rural regions; LGBT+ tourism in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia; monitoring and avoiding discrimination and victimization toward LGBT+ tourists; response to sexually transmitted diseases of LGBT+ tourists; and queer theorization. Since the research on LGBT+ tourism is still in an exploratory stage, a

majority of the existing literature has relied on qualitative methods to investigate this phenomenon. Therefore, future investigations should strive to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of LGBT+ tourism, beyond the identified key foci. This can be achieved by employing a combination of methods in diverse regions and contexts to obtain more holistic findings. Meanwhile, the findings also provide valuable insights for destination marketers seeking to create a more inclusive environment for the sexual minority community.

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UNDER THE MOONLIGHT: UNVEILING TOURISTS' NIGHTTIME TOURISM EXPERIENCE AND BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS WITH A MIXED-METHODS APPROACH

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Abstract

Rooted in grounded theory and self-regulation theory, this research aims to delve into the underlying mechanisms of tourists' nighttime tourism experience, identify prevailing travel trends, and enhance tourists' revisit and recommend intentions towards the destination. Through a sequential mixed method approach, the research initially employed a qualitative method to discern five dimensions of nighttime tourism experience - aesthetic, cognitive, emotional, escapist, and unique experience, based on the analysis of online comments. Following this, a quantitative survey validated the noteworthy influence of nighttime tourism experience on tourists' behavioral intentions. Notably, place attachment and tourism safety perception were found to mediate and moderate this relationship. This research fills a gap in the literature by deconstructing the nighttime tourism experience and providing valuable insights for academics, practitioners, and policymakers involved in the development of nighttime tourism experience in urban areas.

Keywords: Nighttime tourism, Sequential mixed method design, Self-regulation theory, Place attachment, Behavioral intentions

Introduction

Nighttime tourism has gained popularity due to its benefits for businesses and tourists, contributing to revenue generation and meeting travelers' exploration needs. However, challenges such as safety concerns and transportation limitations persist. Research on nighttime tourism has primarily focused on product development and stakeholder perspectives, neglecting tourists' insights. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the dimensions of nighttime tourism experience and their impact on tourists' behavioral intentions. Based on grounded theory and the self-regulation theory, the mediating and moderating role of place attachment and tourism safety perception are also included and tested to explain the reasons behind tourists' preferences. The research enhances our understanding of nighttime tourism and provides practical recommendations for destination managers and businesses to optimize tourists' nighttime experience.

Methodology

The study employed a sequential mixed method design, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches to comprehensively understand tourists' nighttime tourism experience. Beijing was selected as the research context due to its well-developed nighttime economy and initiatives to promote nighttime tourism.

Firstly, this study did an in-depth analysis of textual data collected from online comments of nighttime tourist attractions in Beijing. After the thematic analysis, the dimensions of nighttime tourism experience were found.

In the subsequent phase of this study, the focus shifted towards validating the nighttime tourism experience and assessing its influence on tourist behavioral intentions. This was achieved using a quantitative approach, involving the creation of

a comprehensive survey through both online and offline channels. The collected survey data underwent analysis through structural equation modeling (SEM) to validate the research hypotheses and extract meaningful conclusions.

Hypotheses are as follows:

H1. Nighttime tourism experience positively influences behavioral intentions.

H2. Nighttime tourism experience positively influences place dependence.

H3. Nighttime tourism experience positively influences place identity.

H4. Place attachment positively influences behavioral intentions.

H5. Place dependence mediates the relationship between nighttime tourism experience and behavioral intentions.

H6. Place identity mediates the relationship between nighttime tourism experience and behavioral intentions.

H7. Tourism safety perception moderates the relationship between nighttime tourism experience and place attachment.

Along with the hypotheses, this study proposed conceptual relationship model as Figure 1.

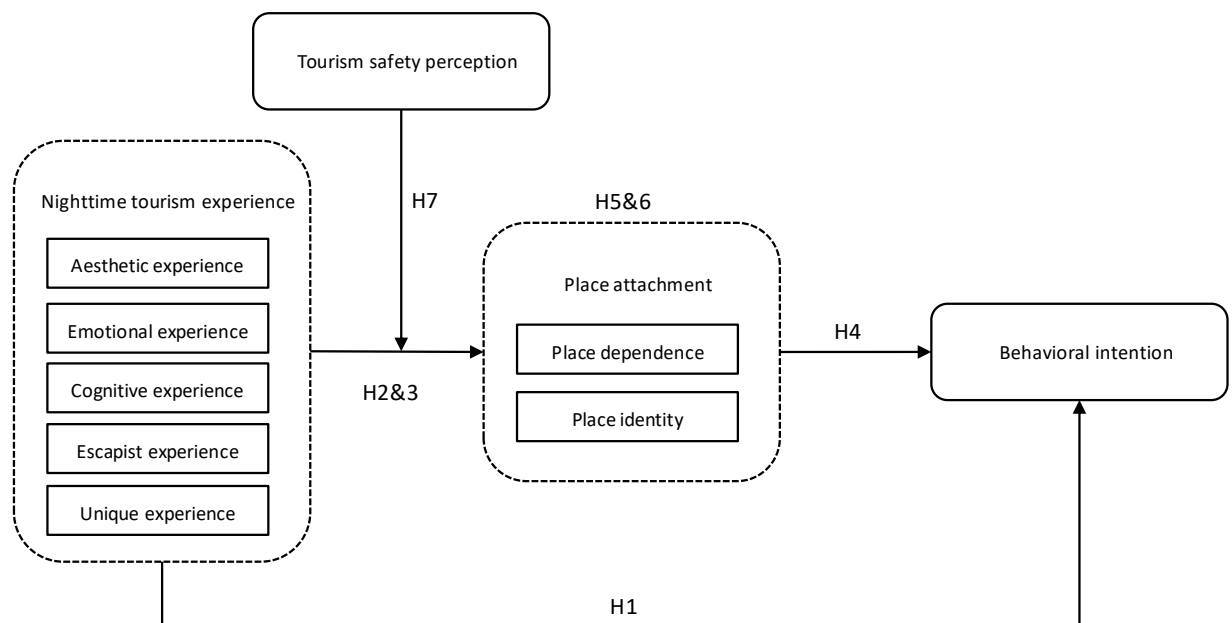


Figure 1. Proposed research model

Results/ Discussion/ Implication

Findings

The study finds that aesthetic and escapist experience significantly influence behavioral intentions in nighttime tourism. Emotional, cognitive, and unique experience do not have a significant impact. Emotional experience plays a key role in shaping place dependence and identity. Place attachment mediates the relationship between nighttime tourism experience and behavioral intentions. Tourism safety perception moderates the impact of nighttime tourism experience on place dependence. Enhancing safety is crucial for nighttime tourism development.

Theoretical contributions

Our study contributes by identifying and validating five dimensions of nighttime tourism experience, namely aesthetic, emotional, cognitive, escapism, and unique

experience. This framework enhances understanding of tourists' perceptions. Applying self-regulation theory (SRT) reveals mechanisms shaping place attachment and behavioral intentions. Findings confirm the importance of emotional experience, the mediating role of place attachment, and the moderating role of tourism safety perception. This provides insights for nighttime tourism development and management.

Managerial implications

Key implications include developing pleasant landscapes, exploring local culture, enhancing safety, and implementing effective promotion strategies to enhance tourists' experience and satisfaction.

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THE INFLUENCING FACTORS OF WORK ENGAGEMENT OF NEW GENERATION EMPLOYEES IN HOTEL

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Abstract

The frequent turnover of new generation employees has seriously affected the stability of the hotel staff team. How to better managed them has become one of the major problems faced by China's hotel industry. This study takes the new generation employees of hotel born after 1990 as the research subjects, collecting data through in-depth interviews and using content analysis method to systematically explore the influencing factors of work engagement among the new generation employees of hotel. We found that the influencing factors of work engagement among new generation employees of hotel consisted of eight dimensions: salary and benefits, leadership style, job characteristics, personal development, job prosperity, organizational support, work enjoyment, and resource recovery. Finally, a model of the influencing factors of job engagement among the new generation employees of hotel was constructed. This study enriches the theory of work engagement, and has important management implications for improving the work engagement of new generation employees of hotel.

Keywords: new generation employees; hotel; work engagement; influence factor model; structural dimensions

Introduction

At present, the new generation born after the 1990s has become the main force in the labor market of the hotel industry. Affected by the growth environment, the new generation of individuals pursue happiness and satisfaction, are self-centered (Gu, Tang, 2022), and tend to dominate their own career development (Waters, Briscoe, Hall et al., 2014). This is manifested in common phenomena such as frequent job hopping and low loyalty in career choices (Li, Jiang, Yu, 2021). The data from the "Survey Report on the Current Situation of Human Resources in Chinese Hotels (2022)" shows that: the three departments with the highest turnover rate in hotels were the Food and Beverage (77%), the front office department (72%), and the housekeeping department (54%). Employee work engagement is important to maintaining the stability of the workforce and reducing employee turnover intention. Work engagement is a commitment of employees to their work and a manifestation of their work energy, and highly engaged employees are able to complete high-quality work (Thompson, Lemmon, Walter, 2015). Highly dedicated employees are emotionally attached to their organization, have a great passion for organizational success, and are highly involved in their work, doubling their efforts (Markos, Sandhya, 2010). Therefore, how to enhance the work engagement of the new generation employees, and enhancing the service quality and competitive advantage of the hotel is an urgent and important issue to be solved.

Although many scholars have studied employee work engagement, there are still some deficiencies. Firstly, the current research on hotel employee work engagement does not pay attention to the new generation employees. At present, more and more new generation groups enter the hotel to work, and the research on the new generation employees is imperative. Secondly, current research on the new generation employees of hotel has not focused on the issue of work engagement. Thirdly, from the perspective of research methods, existing studies mostly use questionnaire surveys to study satisfaction, making it difficult to systematically examine the influencing factors of

work engagement among the new generation employees of hotel. Based on this, this study uses in-depth interview method to collect data, and uses content analysis method to systematically explore the factors affecting the work engagement of new generation employees of hotel, providing theoretical reference for the management of new generation employees.

Methodology

This study focuses on the new generation employees of hotel born after 1990, and uses theoretical sampling to determine the number of respondents based on the principle of theoretical saturation in coding. A total of 25 new generation employees of hotel were interviewed using in-depth interviews. The interview questions mainly focus on: What do you think are the main factors that affect the work engagement of hotel employees? What are your dissatisfaction/satisfaction with hotel work? What aspects do you think the hotel urgently needs to improve? What are your main feelings since working in the hotel.

This study uses content analysis to analyze interview data. Content analysis is a research technique used to make effective inferences about textual records (or other meaningful content) and their context (Huang, Li, 2021). Its core is a semi quantitative analysis method that conducts objective and systematic research on the text content, and draws more realistic and comprehensive conclusions through coding, comparison, analysis, and induction (Jiang, Long, 2021).

Results

This article uses content analysis to encode interview materials. According to the steps of content analysis method: Firstly, two coding personnel extract the original statements from the interview content, merge similar information statements into similar items, and obtain the analysis unit; Secondly, encode the analysis units to extract the main constructs and obtain subcategories; Finally, the sub category is recoded to obtain the main category. This article obtained 25 sub categories and 8 main categories through content analysis. The influencing factor model of the new generation employee of work engagement in hotels consists of eight dimensions: salary and welfare, leadership style, work characteristics, personal development, job prosperity, organizational support, work fun, and resource recovery.

Salary and welfare are composed of three subcategories: salary level, employee benefits, and employee incentives. A higher salary level can effectively stimulate the professionalism of the new generation employees of hotel and increase their willingness to work. Leadership style consists of four subcategories: leadership praise, fair treatment, communication skills, and task allocation. When leaders have strong communication skills, treat every employee fairly, and allocate work tasks reasonably, it will improve the work engagement of the new generation employees of hotel. Work characteristics are composed of five subcategories: work atmosphere, work environment, work intensity, work duration, and work scheduling. Job characteristics can deeply affect the work attitude and behavior of the new generation employees of hotel. Personal development consists of three subcategories: employee psychology, inner needs, and personal growth. The new generation employees of hotel hope to achieve personal development in their work. Work prosperity consists of two subcategories: learning skills and expression ability. Work prosperity refers to the positive psychological state in which employees experience both learning and vitality in their work (Zhang, 2023). When the new generation employees of hotel are willing to learn and are full of vitality in their work, their work engagement will significantly

increase. Organizational support consists of three subcategories: management system, training system, and career development. When the new generation employees feel that the hotel is supporting their work, they will demonstrate high work engagement. Work pleasure consists of two subcategories: achieving a sense of achievement and feeling happy, which can affect the work engagement of the new generation employees of hotel. Resource recovery consists of weekends, holidays, and daily vacations. Resource recovery refers to the increase in employee demand for recovery when work pressure increases. When the new generation of hotel employees receive sufficient rest, their work engagement will be improved. Based on the work engagement theory, we construct the influencing factors model of the new generation employee of work engagement in hotels.

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THE INTEGRATION OF RESEARCH & EDUCATION INNOVATION: ALL-ROUNDED SYSTEM

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Abstract

Institution of higher learning must take the initiative to adapt to the new needs of national strategic development and the new trend of world higher education development, and firmly grasp the core point of comprehensively improving the ability of personnel training. This study uses case study method, in-depth interview method and Delphi method, and takes the Integration of Research & Education Innovation of Hangzhou City University as an example to sort out the origin, concept, application, practice and promotion of the Integration of Research & Education Innovation. Focusing on the International School of Cultural Tourism of Hangzhou City University, it will study how to cultivate high-quality application-oriented, composite and innovative cultural and tourism talents with innovative thinking, international vision, digital literacy and humanities.

Keywords: The Integration of Research & Education Innovation; Interdisciplinary integration; Cultivation of cultural and tourism composite talents

1. Introduction

1.1 Research background

At present, China's higher education is in a critical period of connotative development, quality improvement and reform and a vital stage of comprehensively improving talent cultivation capacity and building a strong higher education country. Institutions of higher education must take the initiative to adapt to the new needs of national strategic development and the new trend of the development of higher education in the world, firmly grasping the core point of comprehensively improving the ability to cultivate talents, putting undergraduate education at the core of talent cultivation, the basic status of education and teaching, and the status of the forefront of the development of education in the new era, to form a high-level talent cultivation system, and strive to create a new situation in higher education.^[1]

1.2 Research purpose

- (1) The study clarifies the underlying logic, top-level design and construction and evaluation system for the construction of the Integration of Research & Education Innovation in Hangzhou City University.
- (2) This study sorts out the construction philosophy and practices of the International School of Cultural Tourism of Hangzhou City University in promoting the construction of industrial colleges, promoting the formation of an all-round education system and advancing the construction of the new liberal arts.
- (3) This study summarizes the educational performance evaluation system and forms a model and path for the digital development of education to provide a model reference for the educational reform of other institutions.

1.3 Research content and framework

This study comprehends the origin, concept, application, practice and promotion of the Integration of Research & Education Innovation. The specific research contents are as follows:

(1) Origin: Interdisciplinary Integration

This section analyzes the origins of the Integration of Research & Education Innovation in the context of Interdisciplinary integration.

(2) Philosophy: Integration of Research & Education Innovation

This part explains how Hangzhou City University builds a new paradigm of the Integration of Research & Education Innovation with strategic synergy of innovative elements and explores new paths of transformation and development in the context of national strategies and local major development needs.

(3) Implementation: Tourism +

This part analyzes "Tourism + Culture", "Tourism + Big Data", "Tourism + Artificial Intelligence" and "Tourism + Medicine" from the perspective of cross-disciplinary integration, analyzes the cross-disciplinary and in-depth fusion of tourism, and reforms and innovates the teaching methods and means of tourism education in order to cultivate interdisciplinary and complex talents, and to provide all-around intellectual support for tourism education, tourism enterprises, industry organizations and governmental agencies.

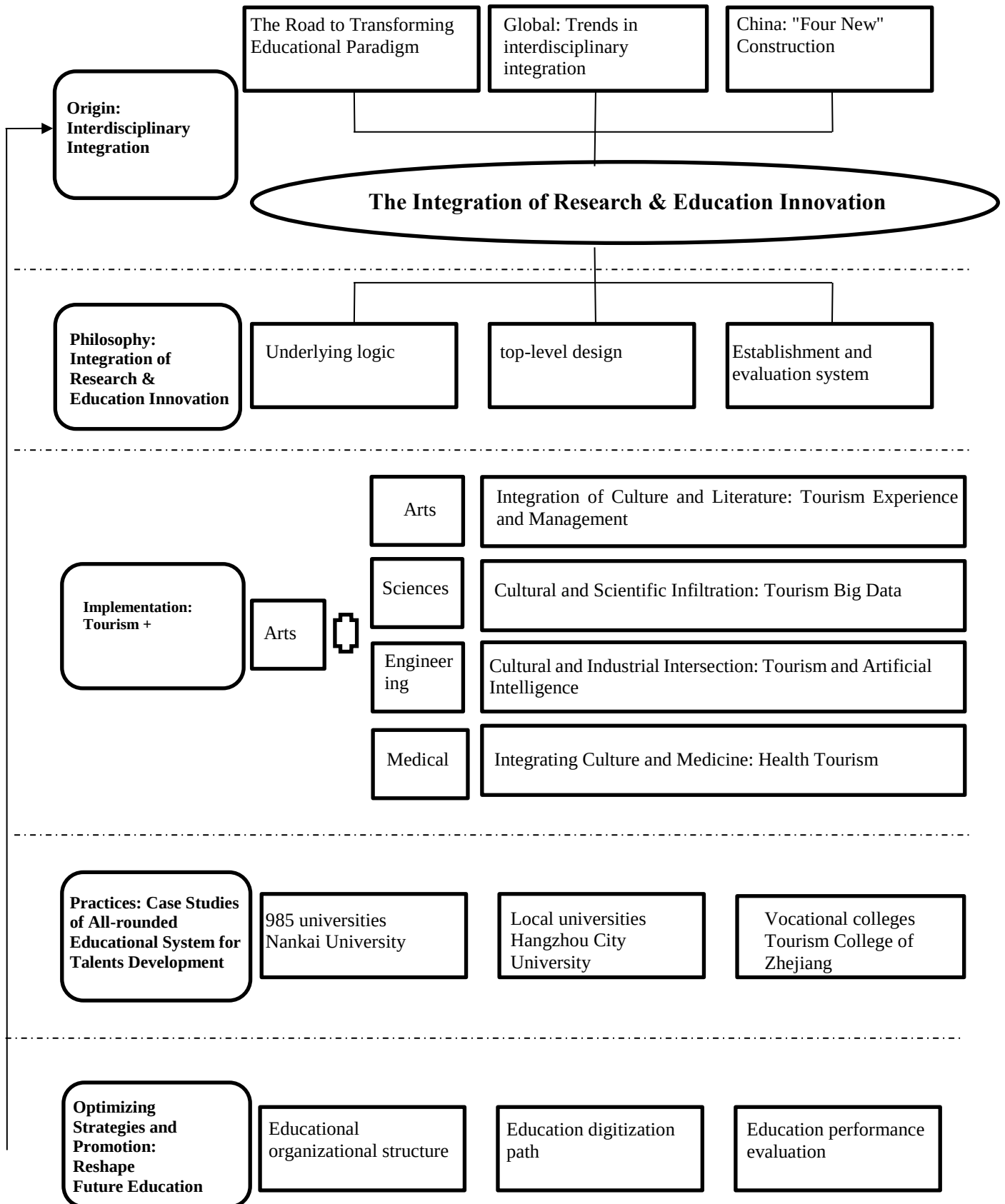
(4) Practices: Case Studies of All-rounded Educational System for Talents Development

This part takes three typical institutions as examples to explore the way of cultivating composite talents in the category of cultural and tourism industry.

(5) Optimizing Strategies and Promotion: Reshape Future Education

This part is to summarize and promote the education and parenting system, with a view to providing experience for more colleges and universities to build their parenting system.

The Integration of Research & Education Innovation: All-rounded System



2. Methodology

In this research process, the following research methods were mainly used:

(1) Case study method. This study takes The Integration of Research & Education Innovation of Hangzhou City University as an example to study its commitment to building an open science and education integration education mechanism, and creating a new form of educational organization model that integrates interdisciplinary research, research platforms, technology innovation transformation centers, training bases, social services, and fund support. Secondly, this study focuses on the International School of Cultural and Tourism at Hangzhou City University, studying how to cultivate high-quality applied, compound, and innovative cultural and tourism talents with innovative thinking, international perspective, digital literacy, and humanistic sentiments in a "four in one" talent cultivation innovation model.

(2) Deep interview method. This study conducted in-depth interviews with well-known experts and scholars in the field of higher education reform and innovation to understand their thinking on the transformation of educational paradigms, the top-level design of The Integration of Research & Education Innovation, and the underlying logic, laying a solid foundation for the development of this study.

(3) Delphi method. This study uses the Delphi method to determine the indicators and coefficient of the education performance evaluation system, promoting the optimization and promotion of the digital education system.

3. Results

3.1 The Integration of Research & Education Innovation of Hangzhou City University
Hangzhou City University is oriented towards national strategies and major local development needs, anchoring the goal positioning of a first-class applied university, daring to reform and innovate, and constructing a new paradigm of exploring a "The Integration of Research & Education Innovation".



Figure 2. The Integration of Research & Education Innovation

Photo source: Hangzhou City University WeChat official account

According to the strategy of "doing something but not everything", we will optimize the disciplinary layout, comprehensively promote The Integration of Research & Education Innovation to the six major national strategies of digital China, healthy China, manufacturing power, and cultural power, and build an open and interdisciplinary platform for government, industry, academia, and research linkage education that combines virtual and real situations; Coordinate internal and external resources, integrate and promote the construction of new disciplines and majors, promote the infiltration of humanities and sciences, the intersection of science and engineering, and the integration of medical and engineering, and create a new mode of talent cultivation for "new engineering", "new humanities", and "new medical" subjects; Stimulate the vitality of education, and create a new path and form of characteristic development for the integration of disciplines, talents, industries, and innovation chains, such as "connectivity", "chain link", and "symbiosis" of science and education, industry and education, and school local integration. The Integration of Research & Education Innovation is committed to the following goals: firstly, reshaping the logic of disciplinary construction and promoting disciplinary integration; Secondly, innovate collaborative education platforms to promote the integration of science and education; Thirdly, the transformation of interdisciplinary organizational models promotes platform integration.

3.2 The current situation of the construction of the International Industry College of Cultural and Tourism

The International Industry College of Cultural and Tourism will focus on the construction concept of "wisdom, sharing, and openness", guided by the construction concept of "new humanities", and build a university student Integration of Research & Education Innovation that integrates teaching, practical training, scientific research, and cultivating a living atmosphere. Committed to cultivating high-quality applied, compound, and innovative cultural and tourism talents with innovative thinking, international perspective, digital literacy, and humanistic sentiments.

Firstly, establish a disciplinary research base to serve the five university disciplines. Secondly, build the "First Smart Academy" and provide a distinctive interdisciplinary education environment. Thirdly, build a center for cultural exchange between China and the West, and create an international teaching staff. Fourthly, build a culture and tourism+laboratory to empower the integration of culture and tourism. Fifth, build a cultural and tourism+innovation research center to promote the transformation and promotion of research achievements. Sixth, the New Liberal Arts Teacher Professional Ability Improvement Plan. Seventh, create a student career development training camp. Eighth, the construction of student innovation and entrepreneurship incubation bases, and the construction of high-level competition results' incubators'. Ninth, the construction of a quality evaluation base for industrial talent cultivation.

4. Notes

[1] 40 Articles of Higher Education in the New Era. Opinions of the Ministry of Education on Accelerating the Construction of High Level Undergraduate Education and Comprehensively Improving Talent Cultivation Ability.

ARE RESTAURANTS REALLY SERVING THE FOOD THEY ADVERTISED? THE CASE OF MACANESE FOOD ON MENUS

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Abstract

The role of food in creating a destination's image is instrumental so restaurants are important 'ambassadors' of a destination's culture. Despite much effort on producing an attractive menu, both in terms of presenting the items visually stimulating and nutritionally enticing, certain aspects of the food appear to receive less attention. For instance, there seems to be a lack of research on how culture is presented and represented on menus, in some cases even potentially leading to cultural appropriation. Using the case of Macanese food in Macao, this conceptual paper explores the case of cultural appropriation in menus serving Macanese food by weaving together related concepts and discusses the implications to both the restaurant businesses and authorities which may want to provide and enforce authentic menus, particularly in a destination like Macao which avails from Macanese food as the centrality of the UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy designation.

Keywords: Cultural appropriation; Macanese food; Macao; destination image

Introduction

The role of food in creating a destination's image is instrumental so naturally eateries such as restaurants are important 'ambassadors' of a destination's culture so the restaurants sector in destinations is a crucial and integral component of the travel and dining experience (Choe & Kim, 2018; Hsu & Scott, 2020; Sio et al., 2021). Principally, they contribute to the local economy and tourism industry, contribute to the unique identity and differentiation of a destination, which is a key factor in attracting tourists and promoting the destination's offerings.

Additionally, food allows tourists to experience the local cuisine and culinary traditions of a destination and acts as a gateway to the culture and heritage of a destination, reflecting the local customs, traditions and hospitality. When selecting restaurants, tourists have a diverse range of considerations (Duarte Alonso et al., 2013): convenient and accessible locations, reputation and reviews, recommendations from others, demand for an authentic and local culinary experience as well as price range and value for money. Destination marketers such as tourist boards must therefore utilise multiple platforms in promoting food within destinations (Lee, 2012). For instance, the Macao Government Tourism Office use festivals and events, collaborations with chefs and influencers, culinary awards and accolades, culinary tourism campaigns, food-themed itineraries and guides as well as online presence and digital marketing.

A key element within this list is the role of restaurants as ready and almost first point of 'contact' when tourists reach a destination in the context of food. It is therefore important to design the food experience at restaurants to attract tourists and create memorable experiences, particularly in today's modernity as these memories can be 'kept' and 'recorded' on social media. The design of the restaurant concept from its interiors to the menu is a concerted effort between different parties within the restaurant business (Baraban & Durocher, 2010).

Despite much effort on producing an attractive menu (Ozdemir & Caliskan, 2014, 2015), both in terms of presenting the items visually stimulating and nutritionally enticing (Wansink & Love, 2014), certain aspects of the food appear to receive less

attention (Kwong, 2005). Specifically, there seems to be a lack of research on how culture is presented and represented on menus, in some cases even potentially leading to cultural appropriation (Pearson & Kothari, 2007). It is loosely referred to the intentional or unintentional usage of cultural elements from a culture without much knowledge, significance and/or acknowledgement of that culture. There are many examples of cultural appropriation in societies, for instance, using symbols and icons of a culture in other contexts unintentionally which may be offensive.

In the present case, the Macanese food is often portrayed on menus in conjunction with ‘Portuguese food’ but these are essentially from two very different cultures (Yee, 1997). The reasons may be attributed to the ambiguous nature of the Macanese culture, the historical links to Portugal as a former colony or simply, better marketing. Portuguese cuisine reflects the geography, history and cultural exchanges of Portugal since the Roman and Arab occupation whilst Macanese food is very different as it is a unique blend of Chinese, Portuguese and Southeast Asian cuisines and came from the Macanese home (Silva, 2019). According to Mamak (2007), Macanese families combined Portuguese recipes with Chinese and food traditions from former colonies and later transformed into the distinct Macanese cuisine. These are two distinctive cuisines which are categorically different from each other and most tourists are unable to differentiate between traditional and Macanese-style Portuguese cuisines (Lai, 2020).

This conceptual paper explores the case of cultural appropriation in menus serving Macanese food by weaving together related concepts and discusses the implications to both the restaurant businesses and authorities which may want to provide and enforce authentic menus.

Methodology

This study adopts an ethnographic (Veal, 2017), constructivist approach (Hollinshead, 2006) in collecting empirical data to illustrate the situation of cultural appropriation in food menus in Macao, in the context of Portuguese and Macanese food. Specifically, it is proposed that the research team collects menus and analyses the menus of restaurants listed as Portuguese or Macanese cuisine according to the website of Macao’s tourism board. The data analysis follows the guidelines recommended by (Camprubí & Coromina, 2016) with themes and categories naturally emerging from the inductive coding process (Thomas, 2006), guided by principles outlined by Elo et al. (2014) to ensure trustworthiness.

Implications

We believe the implications are crucial in particular to restaurant businesses and authorities which may want to provide and enforce authentic menus in a destination like Macao which avails from Macanese food as the centrality of the UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy designation (Wan & Choi, 2022). For instance, tourists coming to Macao in search for an authentic cuisine – be it Macanese or Portuguese – would want to enjoy what the destination has to offer. For one, Macanese food is the world’s first fusion food and also originated in Macao – it is the innate responsibility of the authorities and food businesses to ensure this cuisine is well preserved and served on tables. As the first and last European outpost in Asia, Macao has a long and rich history of Portuguese influence, supposedly serving the region’s most authentic Portuguese cuisine. It would be highly inappropriate and embarrassing if Macao, being positioned as a World Centre for Tourism and Leisure by leveraging the colonial history and distinctive bicultural character as its unique proposition, marketing a cuisine and serving dishes which are erroneous and may potentially offend related cultures.

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CRISIS SURVIVAL STRATEGY: HOW HOTEL RESTAURANTS OPTIMIZE OPERATIONS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract

Since its first outbreak in December 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic has lingered for three and half years, and created profound impacts on different industries and sectors. This study uses the hotel restaurants in Macao as the case to explore the high-level guidelines and practical actions that companies can adopt to effectively and efficiently manage a crisis. In-depth interviews were conducted with food and beverage practitioners at the middle and senior management level. Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the data. The findings discovered that the key challenges hotel restaurants encountered include: tremendous revenue loss, shift of target customer segment, instability of workforce, and ineffective business forecast due to high degree of uncertainty. The corresponding responses were discussed accordingly. This empirical study contributes to the literature of crisis management by shedding light on the practical strategies and tactics that hospitality and tourism companies can take to reduce operating costs and increase revenue during a crisis.

Keywords: Crisis management; Crisis response strategy; COVID-19 pandemic; Hotel restaurant; Macao

Introduction

COVID-19 has lingered for three and half years since its first outbreak in mainland China in December in 2019. Numerous studies proved that this global crisis has caused a number of profound influences on nations, societies, industries and individuals, in particular the tourism and hospitality industry and various sectors which are closely related to it (Duro et al., 2021; Ntounis et al., 2022). Despite the industry is making a gradual recovery from the nosedive drop, as of the first quarter of 2023 the business was still 20% lower than the pre-COVID record (UNWTO, 2023). Many researchers attempted to study the impact of various types of crises and proposed different frameworks for crisis management (Aldao et al., 2021; Le & Phi, 2021; Leta & Chan, 2021; Li et al., 2021). However, few explored the high-level guidelines and pragmatic tactics for crisis management. To narrow this knowledge gap, this study uses hotel restaurants as the case to identify the key challenges restaurant managers encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic and explore how they optimized the operations for survival in the prolonged crisis.

Methodology

To address the research aim and objectives, this exploratory study collected opinions and insight from experienced food and beverage practitioners. Since the richness and quality of data greatly depends on the background and exposure of the informants, it is essential to recruit the right practitioners for interview. The eligible interviewees were practitioners who: 1) work in a hotel restaurant in Macao at the middle and senior management level; 2) possess minimum of 10 years of industry experience; 3) manage at least one restaurant, including front-of-the-house and back-of-the-house operations. The recruitment of interviewees started with personal professional network of the research team. The snowball technique was then applied to extend the invitation to other eligible informants. A total of 12 in-depth interviews were conducted in person, and all

interviews were audio recorded with interviewees' prior agreement. The collected data were transcribed verbatim and sent back to the individual interviewees for review and confirmation of accuracy. Data collection ended when the saturation point was identified (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2020).

The researchers employed thematic analysis technique to develop codes and categories. These codes and categories were discussed and agreed by the research team members to ensure internal validity. The patterns of strategies and tactics devised by these hotel restaurants were identified as the themes emerged in the process of data analysis.

Results

The findings discovered that the key challenges hotel restaurants encountered include: (1) tremendous revenue loss, (2) shift of target customer segment, (3) instability of workforce, and (4) ineffective business forecast due to high degree of uncertainty. The revenue loss was mainly due to a significant drop of customers. The decrease of restaurant business was especially significant when the hotel occupancy rate was low. The number of customers dramatically dropped when there were few tourists, so the hotel restaurants had to switch their attention to the local market. Sudden outbreaks of COVID led to quarantine restriction in certain areas, which made manpower planning and forecast of business infeasible. In response to the aforementioned four challenges, restaurant managers firstly analyzed financial reports and reduced the overheads. One effective strategy was to adjust business hours of restaurants to reduce operating costs. Secondly, restaurant managers re-defined the value of their products based on the needs and preferences of the newly targeted customers. The menu was re-designed and services process was adjusted accordingly. Thirdly, to deal with the problem of manpower shortage and staff competency, restaurant managers provided cross-training to develop and broaden team members' skillsets, so that they could flexibly support food and beverage outlets with varying business needs. Last but not least, many restaurants developed a crisis management protocol so as to make a speedy response to sudden and unexpected changes, and more importantly, this taskforce could centrally coordinate efforts of different departments/units and execute crisis response strategies.

This study provides tourism and hospitality companies, in particular those in food and beverage sector, pragmatic tactics in responding to crisis or other unexpected yet vigorous market change. Compared with other crises, the COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented impacts due to its scope and prolonged period. Future research may continue to explore and identify the new business model and strategies in the post-COVID era.

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EXPLORING EMOTIONAL SOLIDARITY CO-CREATED THROUGH LOCAL ART EVENTS

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Abstract

Destinations have engaged in arts and cultural events to revitalize the community and promote tourism. The success of such scheme is dependent on the collective collaborations and perceived benefits from the involved parties. Art events provide opportunities for tripartite interactions among artists, residents and tourists and build social cohesion through sharing the value of art while satisfying individual emotional, hedonic and utilitarian needs. In this study, the motivations of artists and audiences are explored and the framework of emotional solidarity is applied to explain the intimate and emotional bonds of the parties through feelings of identification, closeness and interactions in the art events hosted in Macao. The results indicate that the emotional bonding was consistent with the original emotional solidarity scale (ESS), whereas the role of emotional connection and value co-creation is highlighted. The results also indicate a significant enhancement in participants' attachment to Macao, their perceived quality of life, as well as an improvement in Macao's image. The findings further confirm that participation in art events is critical to the development of Macao's art and tourism industry.

Keywords: art events, emotional solidarity, Macao Art Festivals, co-creation

Introduction

Since ancient times, art has been the microcosm of human life that records people's insights and true feelings. Scholars have agreed on the symbolic value of art which serves as the collective memory of society and is an indispensable element of social and personal development (Castellano et al., 2020; Langer, 1966). The benefits of art have been well-established for cultivating and maintaining the health and well-being of individuals and communities (Muirhead & Leeuw, 2013). As a result, art events and exhibitions have gained considerable attention for the gradual changes in the relationship between the place and the people in modern society.

Several studies show that art events play a significant role in the community. Art assists in place regeneration and enhances people's health and sense of well-being (Kay, 2000). Myerscough (1988) suggests that art events can attract art-related customers and boost the place's attractiveness to businesses. Allowing art to be utilized for commercial and non-artistic objectives can impact the revival of a place. It is therefore not surprising that destinations have engaged in arts and cultural events to revitalize the community and promote tourism. The success of such scheme is dependent on the collective collaborations and perceived benefits from the involved parties. Unlike previous studies which investigated art events confined within a group of participants, this study attempts to formulate a holistic view by unraveling the shared views and relationships among three groups of key participants, including the community, the artists and the tourist.

From the view of the residents, engaging in art events may help individuals and groups gain self-confidence and self-identity (Matarasso, 1997). Art events also strengthen the community's image that makes locals feel embraced in their residing place. Their participation in art events makes them feel better and healthier. In addition, art events may assist artists in advancing their careers; they can utilize art events to interact with local communities and extend their social networks, resulting in greater

public visibility and popularity of their artwork (Grodach, 2009; Markusen & Johnson, 2006). Artists recognized through the event may feel a sense of accomplishment, self-identity, and social belonging (Thomas et al., 2011). Finally, arts, in addition to dance, movies, theatre, and crafts, are typical activities that help tourists better grasp the culture of a place (Williams, 1997). Tourists are intrigued by unique and thrilling art events, fulfilling their need for cultural experience and knowledge (Gursoy et al., 2006). Therefore, the art events experience satisfies tourists' needs, even beyond their expectations, when the emotions from engagement are positive. Eventually, tourists' loyalty and sustainability are ensured (Crompton & McKay, 1997).

The positive emotions and benefits from art events connect the three groups of participants from different backgrounds (Wood, 2019). Art events provide opportunities for tripartite interactions among artists, residents and tourists and build social cohesion through sharing the value of art while satisfying individual emotional, hedonic and utilitarian needs (Gursoy et al., 2017). In particular, the framework of emotional solidarity is applied to explain the intimate and emotional bonds of the parties through feelings of identification, closeness and interactions (Woosnam et al., 2009) through the art event.

Methodology

This study context is in Macao where local and international art fairs, festivals and exhibitions are held throughout the year. The government has made considerable efforts to develop platforms to promote cultural and artistic ecological diversity and to establish Macao as a world center of tourism and leisure center. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the key participants of art events to delineate a framework to explain the motivations and interactions among the artists and the audiences.

Results and Discussions

Based on the interview results, the motivations of the artist to join the art festivals include utilitarian, connection and exhibition purposes. All of the artists interviewed were local artists from various fields of art, the monetary return from the art fairs will help to subsidize their work. In addition, art events also help artists to connect with people and encourage interactions. Finally, it is known that space and resources are limited in Macao, so when asked what motivates them to participate in art events, most artists described how art events provide opportunities for them to display ideas through various forms.

For the audiences, the motivations for joining an art event are mainly for the art exposure, self-enrichment and understanding Macao. Most participants agreed that art events could help them get in touch with the arts. Another motivation of joining art event is for self-enrichment as the audience will benefit in different ways. It is also noteworthy that some participants considered most learning Macao's history and culture through the art event is important.

The motivations of the artists and audiences supplement each other, with the artists desire to exhibit and voice out and the audience to receive and learn. This sets the perfect stage for co-creation and leads to building a strong bond of emotional solidarity, from welcome nature, emotional closeness and sympathetic understanding. The welcome nature was established through the pride taken by the artist to join the event and the audience felt being well received and cared for. The emotional closeness was then developed through both social interactions and the theme of art, allowing both parties to express themselves and exchange ideas in different forms,

sometimes beyond words through appreciation of art. Eventually, the passion for art, the desire to contribute to art, and the open innovative attitude leads to sympathetic understanding of the meaning of art and the underscored culture of art and destination. It is noted that the enhanced emotional solidarity eventually enhances the personal quality of life, destination image and the sense of place attachment. The overall framework is delineated in Figure 1.

The results indicate that the emotional bonding of the parties was consistent with the original emotional solidarity scale (ESS), whereas the role of emotional connection and value co-creation is highlighted. The results also indicate a significant enhancement in participants' attachment to Macao, their perceived quality of life, as well as an improvement in Macao's image. The findings further confirm that participation in art events is critical to the development of Macao's art and tourism industry.

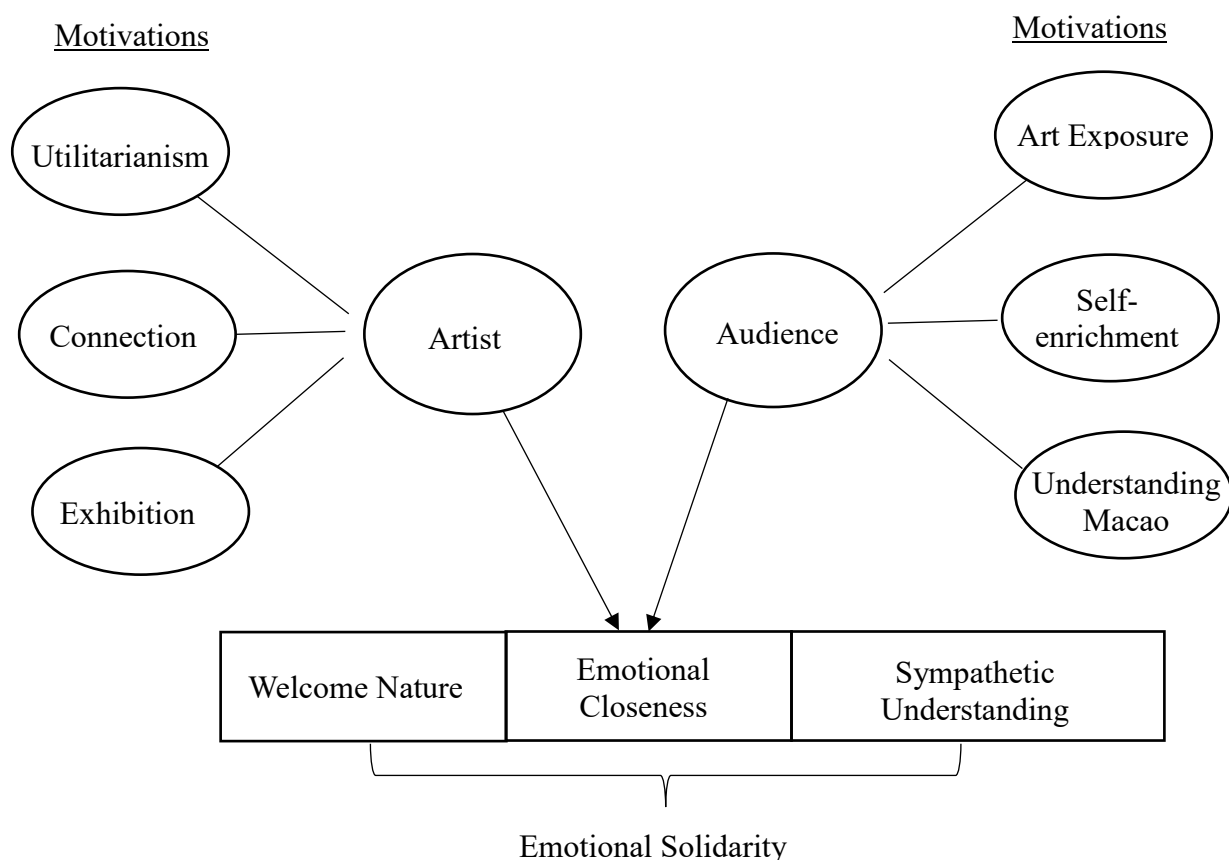


Figure 1. Emotional solidarity co-created through local art events

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YOUNG PEOPLE TAKING OVER OLDER TOUR GROUPS? A STUDY OF THE EFFECT OF INDIRECT INTERGROUP CONTACT ON WILLINGNESS TO TRAVEL

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Abstract

Young people's participation in elderly tour groups has become an emerging mode of tourism, and the release of related videos has triggered heated debates, behind which the communication and interaction between the two groups is reflected. Based on the theory of intergroup contact, this paper analyzes the influence of the release of related videos and constructs the behavioral mechanism of indirect intergroup contact in the context of tourism. Study 1 uses content analysis to analyze the comments and pop-ups under the videos related to youth participation in senior tours posted on social media, and finds that youths change their implicit bias towards senior tourists through cognitive and emotional mechanisms, and enhance their willingness to travel. Study 2 utilizes the experimental method to verify the causal relationship between alternative intergroup contact and tourism intention. This paper provides a reference for destination tourism marketing to promote an active aging society.

Keywords: Intergroup contact; Indirect intergroup contact; Willingness to travel; Senior tourism; Mixed research methods

Introduction

The general public, especially the youth group, has a common prejudice against the elderly (Guest, et al., 2021), and this prejudice is even more obvious in the tourism context, and most of the contacts between the youth and the elderly groups in tourism are only limited to within the family. Recently, however, on social media platforms, videos related to young people seizing senior tour groups have been hotly debated, and the number of views of related phrases on the Xiaohongshu platform has reached 2 million, and topics such as "the 00s who go to senior tour groups to travel in the reverse direction" and "young people have become the favorites of senior tour groups" have aroused heated debate on the microblogging platform. Topics such as "the 00s who went to the reverse tour of the senior group" and "young people became the group's favorites in the senior tour group" on the microblogging platform have aroused heated discussions, and participation in the senior tour group has become an emerging way of travel for young people. Why do young people change their previous attitude of avoiding senior tour groups, what is the mechanism of their behavior, and what is the impact of the contact between the two groups, and what are the implications? Currently, academics mainly study the interaction between young and elderly tourists from the intergenerational perspective in family tourism (Jia, et al., 2023; Li & Yan, 2021), the new phenomenon proposed in this paper is detached from the family relationship, and the existing findings cannot fully explain the behavioral mechanism of young people's preemption of senior tours.

The participation of youth groups in senior corps is essentially a contact between two groups. Intergroup contact theory focuses on the effects of contact interactions between different groups on intergroup relations, and has been recognized as one of the most effective strategies for improving intergroup relations (Dovidio et al., 2003). Currently, intergroup contact theory is applied to how to reduce prejudice between racial and cultural groups, such as ethnic, homosexual, and elderly groups (Gao & Wan,

2018). Intergroup contact is categorized into direct and indirect contact (Gao&Wan,2018; Hao,2015), youths seizing senior tours to have face-to-face contact with senior tourists belongs to direct intergroup contact; youths posting the relevant videos on social media belongs to indirect intergroup contact for viewers. It has been generally argued that direct intergroup contact can reduce group prejudice, and its mechanism of action includes intergroup dependency, intergroup interaction, emotional factors, and cognitive attitudes (Gao & Wan, 2018; Dovidio et al., 2003; Gao et al., 2014). Indirect contact such as through simulated contact in an online society can also change stereotypes about the characteristics of a particular group (Gao&Wan,2018; Hao,2015). Tourism is a comprehensive activity and an important scene for intergroup contact, but few studies have discussed intergroup contact by putting it into the context of tourism, while the specificity of tourism makes intergroup contact in this scene produce new chemical reactions. Therefore, using the theory of intergroup contact to analyze the emerging phenomenon of youth hijacking senior tours is of great academic and practical significance, and this paper therefore poses the research question: what impact does the release of youth hijacking senior tours, i.e., indirect intergroup contact in the context of tourism, have on the youth viewer, the senior tourist, and the tourist destination?

Methodology

1. Research design

(1) Constructing the indirect intergroup contact mechanism in the tourism context

Based on the theory of intergroup contact, we explored the mechanism of indirect intergroup contact between young people and the elderly in the context of tourism. Based on the content analysis method, we analyze the comments and pop-ups under the content related to "young people seizing elderly tour groups" on social media, and analyze the whole behavioral process from the first perspective of the participating subject youth, including their motives for contact, characteristics of the contact process, and the influence after contact.

(2) Empirical Research

Use the experimental method to verify the influence mechanism of indirect intergroup contact. According to the exploratory study, indirect intergroup contact will reduce prejudice against the elderly tourists and increase the willingness to travel. Accordingly, it is hypothesized that indirect intergroup contact positively affects travel intentions, with group prejudice playing a mediating role. The experimental subjects are youth groups aged 15-34 years old, divided into experimental and control groups. The experimental steps were divided into three steps: (1) randomly assign subjects to the experimental group and control group, and ask subjects to fill in the basic information and prior contact experience questionnaire; (2) simulate the indirect intergroup contact task, and ask subjects to watch the pre-selected experimental materials; (3) ask subjects to fill in the test items of the relevant variables. The experimental data were statistically analyzed to analyze the effect of indirect intergroup contact on travel intention.

2. Research Methods and Data Collection

(1) Content analysis method: From the first perspective, analyze the comments and pop-ups under the content related to "young people take over senior tour groups" on social media, and construct the mechanism of indirect intergroup contact in the context of tourism.

(2) Experimental method: The causal relationship between indirect intergroup contact and willingness to travel was verified using experimental method, and the mediating

role of group prejudice was verified.

Results/Discussion/Implication

- (1) Defining a new phenomenon: the academic connotation behind the phenomenon of youth seizing senior tours is analyzed, and the phenomenon is considered to be an active intergroup contact in which the youth group presents anti-group preference characteristics in order to satisfy their own needs.
- (2) Constructing a mechanism of indirect intergroup contact between youth and elderly tourists: youth groups change their group prejudice against elderly tourists through cognitive and emotional mechanisms, and then enhance their willingness to travel. The applicability and specificity of the intergroup contact theory in the tourism context are demonstrated, and the black box of the indirect intergroup contact mechanism between young and elderly tourists is solved.
- (3) Empirically demonstrating the relationship between indirect intergroup contact, group prejudice and tourism intention. Through the experimental method of indirect intergroup contact, i.e., by watching the content related to the youth grabbing the elderly group, it can change the group prejudice of the youth group towards the elderly tourists and enhance the willingness to travel.

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THE MAGIC OF SHARING: THE IMPACT OF SENIOR TOURISTS' LEISURE AND TRAVEL SHARING NARRATIVE STYLE ON STATE ANXIETY AMONG NON-SENIOR GROUPS

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Abstract

The prevalence of anxiety disorders is rapidly expanding worldwide, prompting youngsters to turn to elderly tourists' leisure and travel sharing content as a new form of relaxation. This study examines narrative styles in senior leisure and travel sharing and their impact on anxiety reduction in non-senior individuals. Through qualitative design, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 29 non-elderly participants. Findings revealed three narrative styles and the characteristics of elderly leisure and tourism sharing, motivations for non-elderly individuals to engage with it, and the underlying psychological mechanisms. The findings shed light on the positive aspects of seniors' aging process and propose a pathway for promoting positive aging through leisure and travel sharing behaviour. This research encourages the utilization of elderly people's leisure and travel sharing to alleviate anxiety in non-elderly groups, fostering intergenerational integration and contributing to the development of an active ageing society.

Keywords: Senior tourists; Leisure and Travel Sharing; Narrative style; State anxiety; Intergenerational contact theory

Extended Abstract

According to the World Health Organization, anxiety disorder has become a common symptom of mental illness and is expanding at an alarming rate, especially among young people and the most severely affected groups are young people and women (WHO, 2022). Due to rapid economic development, rapid urban expansion, accelerating pace of work and life, and increasingly fierce competition, people are under great psychological stress and even have difficulty in adjusting to psychological problems such as anxiety and depression, and the depletion of human psychological resources is intensifying due to the latent psychological stress and the growing accumulation of negative emotions that have nowhere to go (Santomauro et al., 2021). Faced with the surge in pathological anxiety and psychological stress, young people have discovered that short videos and older user-generated content from middle and older age groups have become a new Internet "habitat for the mind" and have discovered the pleasure and value of interacting with non-generational groups. Young people have discovered the pleasure and value of interacting with non-generational groups. In the travel field, young people are turning to reading and browsing elderly tourists' travel-sharing content as a new form of entertainment and relaxation. This study focuses on this emerging phenomenon and aims to answer the features of narrative styles in elderly leisure and travel sharing attract non-senior people and how they can alleviate their anxiety levels.

This study used a qualitative research design to explore the effects of elderly tourists' leisure and tourism sharing on non-elderly audiences' state anxiety. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with 29 non-elderly groups who had browsed elderly tourism and leisure sharing content. The interview data revealed the characteristics of elderly tourism and leisure sharing narratives, as well as the types of motivations for non-elderly groups to browse elderly tourism sharing. Our findings

explained the complete psychological response mechanism of elderly groups' leisure and tourism sharing with different narrative styles in reducing non-elderly groups' state anxiety.

This study promotes research on the cross-group positive effects of leisure and travel sharing, opens the black box of positive value in elderly people's aging process, and proposes a causal path to promote positive aging through leisure and travel sharing behavior. In practice, this study advocates for harnessing the positive value of elderly people's leisure and travel sharing, proposes a travel-based solution to alleviate anxiety levels in non-elderly groups, and contributes to intergenerational integration and positive aging society building.

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THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF DESTINATION BRAND IDENTITY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TOURIST SPENDING POWER AND LONGEVITY YANGSHENG TOURISTS' PERCEPTION IN CHINA

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Abstract

This article explores the effect of destination brand identity on the relationship between the tourist perception and spending power in the context of Taoist longevity Yangsheng culture in China. Besides the unique China longevity and Yangsheng culture will be considered to the investigation. The study will explore the district of Bama Yao autonomous county in China. The proposed study is expected to explore the mediation effect of destination brand identity on the relationship between tourist perception and individual spending power. The methodological approach to the study will involve a quantitative approach. The mediation effect for the study will use partial least square (PLS), bootstrap approach and the significant outcome of the study is expected to identify destination brand identity to provide a pivotal role in the destination tourism outcome specifically for the Yangsheng culture in Guanxi Province China. The result is also expected to draw several recommendations for improving destination branding for the province.

Keywords: Destination brand identity, Longevity Yangsheng tourism, Tourists' perception, Tourists' spending power & Bama Yao Autonomous County.

Introduction

The longevity Yangsheng tourism is the fusion of China Taoist philosophical thought and cultural background. In specific, Taoism was fully formed as a religion with a distinctive theology during the Han dynasty (206 B.C.–220 C.E.) in ancient China (Goossaert, 2006). As the traditional local religion, Taoism and its philosophical thought deeply rooted in Chinese people modality, consciousness, and character, as well as further influence their behavior over two thousand years (Le & Yu, 2018; Li, 2017; Hansen, 2000; Ots, 1994). Taoism culture, thereby, is not only one standard element of traditional Chinese medicine, philosophy and religion but also forms a part of the foundational culture structure (Kirkland, 2018).

The Taoist longevity Yangsheng concept was first proposed in the 'Zhuangzi Health Preservation Master' 2,000 years ago (Yang, 2018; Xiang, 2015). Yangsheng principle follows the law of nature and human development that contributes to the Chinese keeping physical and mental health, and further preventing the disease. 'Yang (养)' is defined as keeping health, and 'Sheng (生)' means survival and life in Chinese (Zhang & Cheng, 2012). Yangsheng is an activity with various Taoist approaches (e.g., Qigong, Bigu, Wushu, etc.) that helps people keep healthy and achieve personal longevity (Jenzen, 2008). Longevity Yangsheng tourism is regarded as the synonym of wellness tourism, which also has Chinese cultural and historical elements. Although the longevity Yangsheng tourism activities are different from Western's (Huang & Xu, 2018), few scholars and studies mentioned the effect of destination brand identity on the longevity Yangsheng tourist spending power and their perception.

Spending and Tourist Behavior

The tourist personal spending for trips is considered a significant factor for tourists

selecting a travel destination. Dwyer, Forsyth and Rao (2000) conceptualized two price elements of tourism, involving the cost of travel to a location (Masson & Petiot, 2009) and tour expenditure (e.g., tickets, food, beverages, accommodation, and entertainment, etc.) in the travelling destination respectively (Dogru, Sirakaya-Turk & Crouch, 2017; Vengesai, 2013; Divisekera, 2003; Martin & Witt, 1987).

Cannon and Ford (2002) proposed that the trip-related characteristic and socio-demographic characteristic are two determinants for tourists spending on their trips. On the other hand, socio-demographic characteristics, involving marital status, age, gender, family size, educational level, ethnicity (Cannon & Ford, 2002; Wang, Rompf, Severt & Peerapatdit, 2006; Tavares, Ivanov & Neves, 2016) also influence tourists' spending. Luxury hotel accommodation, outbound tourism and air transport are regarded as three main factors that cause the high spending of trips (Marcussen, 2011). It was generally constituted that tourists are usually more sensitive to expenses in long-haul journeys (Crouch, 1994).

Destination Brand Identity

Building a successful brand of tourism destinations is beneficial for attracting visitors and increasing regional income (Saeedi & Heidarzadeh Hanzaee, 2018). Scholars have explored the factors that affect the attractiveness of tourist places. For instance, Radišić and Mihelić (2006) pointed out that one attractive tourism location depends on its image, brand, and trademark. Since people usually select products or services with personalities that are congruent with their character (Kumar & Kaushik, 2018; Sirgy, 1982), a distinctive personality contributes to intensifying the brand identity of places in the personal mind (Kumar & Nayak, 2018; Huang, Zhang & Hu, 2017; Tsaur, Yen & Yan, 2016). The image of the destination is the core considerate element for a powerful destination brand (Saeedi et al., 2018). Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou (2015) argued that the destination image is an essential factor to influence the demand of destination and tourist perceived value (Kim, Jung, Kim & Fountoulaki, 2015), as well as change the tourist decision process and behavior (Baloglu, Henthorne & Sahin, 2014).

Tourists' Perception

Tukamushaba, Xiao and Ladkin (2016) described the tourist perception as a process of visitors building a holistic picture of tourism destination image (Tukamushaba et al., 2016; Gnanapala, 2015; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). Scholars have discussed the factors that might affect tourists' perception of destination selection. For instance, the cultural attributes, residence friendliness and hospitality facilities of tourism destinations are regarded as three influential factors for tourists' perception (Chheang, 2011). Xie and Wall (2002) compared visitors' characteristics and experiences in Hainan and investigated the tourists' perceptions of authenticity in tourism places. In Yunan, Yang (2012) analyzed the tourist perception of ethnic tourism in Lugu Lake. The tourist perception is less investigated than other tourism related topics (Tukamushaba et al., 2016).

Lim, Chew, Lim and Liu (2014) argued that the investigation of tourist perception on destinations to date concentrated in western developed nations, and little attention to Asia. A research gap exists on what would explain Yangsheng tourists' perception towards China's longevity Yangsheng tourism. This investigation will emphasize the impact of destination brand identity on the relationship between tourists' spending power and their perception, as well as suggest the future research direction of China's longevity Yangsheng brand.

Proposition: Destination Brand Identity as the mediator for spending power and tourist perception.

Destination brand management has attracted scholars from both the marketing and tourism fields. An attractive destination brand directly influences the tourist perception and their behavior in the tourism place (Saeedi et al., 2018; Wheeler, Frost & Weiler, 2011). According to Yusof and Ismail (2014), the brand identity of destinations makes up a name that is usually captured from the visitors' perspective. Mediation on destination brand identity was vastly discussed however the antecedent of spending were not included to measure the outcome for perception. For instance, Tukamushaba et al., (2016) advocated that the relationship between tourists' experience and their perception is significant for destination branding, which has not been researched. As the destination brand experience (DBE) affects destination brand identification (DBI), as well as subsequently affects tourists' loyalty, studying how visitors perceive a destination brand is essential (Tsaur et al., 2016). This study calls for a significant contribution where destination brand identity will provide a mediator towards tourist spending and tourist perception towards health tourism.

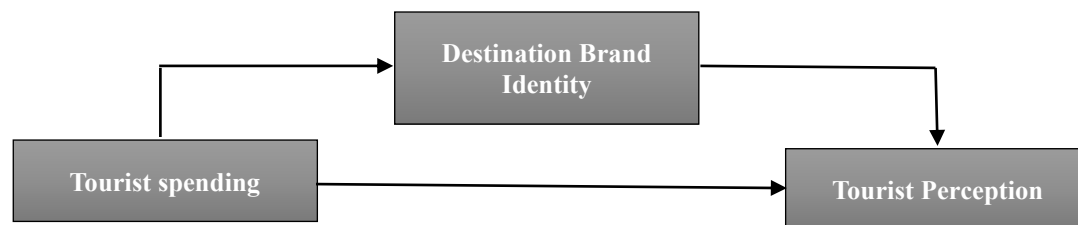


Figure 1. Proposed Mediation model

Methodology

The investigation will use the post positivism research paradigm using quantitative approach and more specifically to measure the mediating effect of tourist spending based on destination brand identity with the outcome referring to tourist perception toward Bama Yao autonomous county. The proposed data collection will involve mainly in Bama Yao Autonomous County. The target sample unit of analysis will be tourist visiting Bama Yao which is located in Guangxi Province, China, with the highest number of centenarians and older residences, which is recognized for its Taoist longevity and Yangsheng culture in the country. The data will be collected on probability sampling method applying simple random sampling. Data will be analysed using the Partial Least Square (PLS) method. The data will be collected on a Likert survey scale of 7 ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Currently the study is going through a pilot study phase and the respondent's data will be assessed on reliability and validity followed with confirmatory factor analysis, the relationship between the variable for hypotheses via Smart PLS using path modelling upon collecting the expected sample data.

Conclusion

The study expected to provide a significant result on destination brand identity as a mediator that will be a significant milestone for Longevity Yangsheng tourists' perception and spending power. As Taoist philosophical thought and concept deeply rooted in the Chinese mind, the Longevity Yangsheng brand of Bama Yao Autonomous

deserve a better standing as a destination that can attract tourist globally to put the county in the world map as one of the most visited destination. Thus, the result for this study is expected to significantly contribute to the theoretical implication in terms of confirming the pull factor theory and provide an avenue marketing implication on the importance of attracting tourist via brand identity.

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DIMENSIONS OF URBAN TOURIST SATISFACTION OF URBAN PUBLIC TRANSPORT –A CASE STUDY OF METRO IN SHANGHAI

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Abstract

Nowadays, urban areas have become the primary choice of tourism destinations for many tourists. It means that the urban public transport system would no longer be utilized by residents but by tourists, and its quality may also affect tourists' satisfaction. Shanghai, one of the world's important economic centers, possessing a powerful public subway system, has also become a famous urban destination. Therefore, taking Shanghai Metro as a case, based on the three-factor theory of customer satisfaction, this study would utilize mixed research methods to explore the factors impacting tourist satisfaction with the public transportation system. Firstly, through a semi-interview and online comments, 8 factors affecting urban tourists' satisfaction were obtained. Secondly, these 8 factors were further classified through the KANO analysis. This study, finally, offers recommendations for cities to improve tourist satisfaction and serve tourists better.

Keywords: urban tourism, public transport, tourist satisfaction, mixed methods

Introduction

Society has been referred to as entering the century of the city. It is possible that the same can be said that society is entering a century of urban tourism (Seto, et al., 2010). A large percentage of tourists select specific cities as their primary destinations for many reasons -- 1) Cities often possess convenient transportation systems (Kim, 2019); 2) high-quality infrastructure and facilities (Bao & Chu, 2013); 3) important role of economic and political center (Edwards, et al., 2008); 4) several kinds of tourism attractions, e.g., shopping malls, theme parks (Bao & Chu, 2013).

However, when cities began to receive large numbers of tourists, facilities, particularly public transport, that originally served only residents had to face the risk of overload (He, et al., 2023; Aall & Koens, 2019). Their quality will affect the tourists' experience quality and satisfaction, whose factors are usually divided into three categories, namely basic, performance, and excitement (Füller & Matzler, 2008). Therefore, it is important to understand what factors in the subway system affect the quality of the tourist experience. However, at present, there is less relevant research to discuss, which is worth further digging.

As one of the world's important economic centers, Shanghai has also become a tourist destination. As an important part of Shanghai public transport (PT), Shanghai Metro is a huge system. As of December 30, 2021, Shanghai has 831 kilometers of subway in operation, ranking first in mainland China and first in the world. Also, it has 20 lines in operation (including maglev lines), 508 stations (including 2 maglev lines), and 29 kilometers of maglev lines. Even with its huge system, the Shanghai subway still has many problems, especially during the hot season. In this context, it is necessary for Shanghai to make some adjustments to the subway system to improve the satisfaction of tourists.

Therefore, this paper takes the Shanghai Metro as a case study. Based on the three-factor theory of customer satisfaction, this study will explore the factors impacting tourist satisfaction with the public transportation system. Specific questions are: (1) What are the service attributions of the city subway that tourists are concerned about

and that can affect their satisfaction? (2) What kind of factors influencing tourists' satisfaction does this service attribution belong to?

Methodology

The first question will use qualitative research methods. Although there has been much research on the influencing factors of subway satisfaction, most of them are based on residents (Yin, et al., 2021). Therefore, using the qualitative method will be beneficial to determine the dimensions that affect tourist satisfaction. There are three main methods of collecting data: online comments, participatory observation, and semi-structured interviews (n=12). Then, content analysis will be used in this study (Elo, et al., 2014).

In the second step, based on the extracted dimensions, the online questionnaire was developed to understand the categories of dimensions and satisfaction of Shanghai city tourists with subway use. This part collects data mainly through questionnaires. The questionnaire design was mainly based on the KANO model (Matzler & Hinterhuber, 1998). Through the obtained data collected from the survey, we calculated the better-worse coefficient (Qiao & Zhang, 2022), to show the extent to which achieving this factor attribute influences increasing satisfaction or eliminating dissatisfaction (Materla, et al., 2019). Through KANO investigation and analysis, the better-worse coefficients of 5 functions can be calculated respectively, and the following quartile map can be constructed (Qiao & Zhang, 2022). Usually, the first quadrant is the performance factor; the second quadrant is the excitement factor; the third quadrant is the indifference attribute; and the fourth quadrant is the basic factor.

Results

Based on collected data so far, 8 dimensions are obtained, namely, intelligence of facility, professionalism of staff; convenience; infrastructure; overall atmosphere; carrying capacity; stability, and price. Intelligence of facility means, through the introduction of technology, the subway department allows passengers to have a faster and more comfortable experience; professionalism of staff represents the ability of the staff to bring a good experience to the visitors; convenience shows that visitors can easily get a good experience; infrastructure refers to those facilities that provide basic services for visitors; The overall atmosphere is the tourist's considerate feeling and image; the bearing capacity highlights the capacity of the subway in the face of rush hour and hot seasons; stability is the ability to operate steadily; and price emphasis the tourist friendliness. These dimensions will be further categorized in the next step.

Implications

In the context of urban tourism development, urban transportation needs to be adjusted according to the situation of tourism development to better adapt to changes and needs. The results of this paper will be beneficial to the urban transportation department to make more targeted adjustments. So that tourists can get better service and experience.

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HOW DO CONSUMERS THINK OF THE VIRTUAL INFLUENCERS? THE IMPACT OF PERCEIVED HUMANNESS OF VIRTUAL INFLUENCERS ON PURCHASE INTENTIONS

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Abstract

Recently, virtual influencers have emerged as a novel marketing tool, garnering attention and popularity, particularly in the fashion industry. This paper studied the role of the perceived humanness of virtual influencers in affecting customers' purchasing intention in the retail industry. An online experiment was conducted, and questionnaire was developed to collect data on consumers' perceived humanness of virtual influencers, source credibility (expertise, trustworthiness, and activeness), and purchasing intention after viewing endorsement videos featuring either high-humanness or low-humanness virtual influencers. The results revealed that humanness had an insignificant influence on customers' purchasing intention when mediated by source credibility. Consequently, higher humanness and source credibility do not necessarily lead to increased purchasing intention. This finding suggests that marketers should carefully determine the appropriate levels of humanness for virtual influencers based on the specific attributes of their products.

Keywords: virtual influencer; influencer marketing; purchasing intention

Introduction

Social media platforms are currently effective for marketing campaigns because they allow businesses to interact with followers and market to target audience (Nurfadila & Riyanto, 2020). Until 2023, influencer marketing has been used in campaigns by 93% of marketers, and it is now recognized as a crucial advertising tactic to compete in social media (Santora, 2023). Influencers are described as people who have a large number of followers and are regarded as reliable trend setters in one or more niches (De Veirman et al., 2016). Like traditional human influencers, virtual influencers are nonhuman characters created by computers and are used to promote brands, products, and messages on social media (Berryman et al., 2021). By 2022, the market value of virtual influencers was \$4.6 billion and is expected to grow by 26% by 2025, indicating their great potential for generating consumer interest and benefiting brands (Maruzsi, 2022).

The humanness of appearance and behavior have been found to have an impact on customers' perception and personal connection (Andrist et al., 2012; Broadbent et al., 2013). It has shown that the humanness of virtual influencers can affect customers' perception of their authenticity, reliability, attractiveness, and trustworthiness, which, in turn, can influence purchasing decisions (Chen & Park, 2021; Jain, 2021). However, when the appearance and behavior of virtual influencers are too close to reality, consumers may feel uneasy and find them unrealistic (Molin & Nordgren, 2019). While virtual influencers have the potential to increase customers' trust, engagement, and emotional attachment to a brand, concerns about authenticity and trustworthiness may limit their effectiveness as endorsers. To provide recommendations for designing an appropriate virtual influencer for marketing campaigns, it is important to conduct a study on how customers perceive the humanness of virtual influencers and how this perception affects their purchasing intention.

Methodology

An online experiment was conducted to examine the research model in terms of how customers perceive virtual influencers with different levels of humanness in fashion endorsement affect purchase intention, through the mediation of source credibility. The hypotheses of the study which explored the impact of perceived humanness of virtual influencers on consumer purchasing intention in the fashion industry, were developed based on the uncanny valley and source credibility. Each participant was randomly assigned to one of the two videos with virtual influencers selected from pilot test. Influencer 1 (Kyra) was selected to represent high humanness group and influencer 2 (Guggimon and Janky) was selected to represent low humanness group. After looking through the related stimulus, the participants were instructed to complete the questionnaire. Then, they were instructed to answer the questions related to source credibility including expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, as well as purchase intentions. A total of 170 valid responses were collected through the online platform. Data was analyzed through confirmatory factor analysis, structural equation modeling, regression analysis, and mediation analysis to test the hypotheses.

Results/Discussion/Implication

It was revealed that source credibility acted as a partial mediating factor between perceived humanness and customers' purchasing intention. Customers' purchasing intention was also affected directly by perceived humanness. Uncanny valley suggested that high humanness objects created negative feelings and negative evaluations (Barteck et al., 2009; Mori, 1970), which was not supported in the study since higher perceived humanness enhanced the source credibility of virtual influencers. According to the result, the greater perceived humanness of virtual influencers increased their source credibility. It can be explained why the study did not prove uncanny valley, while numerous previous studies support it. In this study, the perceived humanness was mainly influenced by the appearances and movements of virtual influencers because the videos did not show the voices of virtual influencers. The initial description of the uncanny valley highlighted the effect of movement in generating negative responses towards human-like objects. It is possible that a visual stimulus is not sufficient to evoke people's negative feelings and attitudes towards human-like objects, and that the presence of human-robot interaction is necessary to generate such responses. Another possible reason is that people have become more accustomed to interacting with human-like objects, which leads to fewer unpleasant feelings and evaluations toward virtual influencers. As virtual influencers become prevalent in marketing and advertising campaigns, customers may become more comfortable with these types of interactions, which could reduce the potential for negative responses.

The study provides some implications for marketers who are going to involve virtual influencers in businesses. It revealed a significant difference in perceived expertise, attractiveness, and trustworthiness of virtual influencers with varying levels of humanness. The use of credible endorsers is a common marketing strategy to create a competitive advantage for the products of a company (Wang et al., 2017). The results indicated that the messages delivered by virtual influencers with higher humanness will be seen as more persuasive than that of virtual influencers with low humanness. It is valuable to create virtual influencers with higher humanness which is beneficial to form a closer connection with the customers. To effectively use virtual influencers in marketing campaigns, brands must consider the humanness of virtual influencers and how they may influence customers' perceptions and purchasing decisions.

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HOTEL STAYCATION: A FANTASY OF TRAVELLING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract

The widespread of coronavirus greatly reduced social interactions among people and constrained them from travelling overseas. Many studies in the area of crisis management focus on the business strategy of companies in diverse industries. Few researched the phenomenon from the perspective of customers. To narrow the knowledge gap, this qualitative study explores generation Z customers' purpose of undertaking a hotel staycation, and identifies the critical factors that they consider when selecting a hotel. A total of 12 in-depth interviews were conducted. The finding revealed that hotel staycation became a popular trend for the generation Z because it created a fantasy of a short-haul trip and the premise of hotel provided them an ideal venue for gathering and occasion celebration with their close friends. When generation Z customers purchased a hotel staycation package, they mainly consider price, location, convenience and room amenities. This study advances the knowledge of hotel staycation, and helps practitioners develop a deeper understanding of consumer behavior.

Keywords: Generation Z; Hotel staycation; Hong Kong; COVID-19 pandemic; Consumer behavior

Introduction

COVID-19 was officially announced by World Health Organization (WHO) as a pandemic in March 2020. The pandemic spread at an unprecedented rate across different countries in the world, which severely affected the economic, political, socio-cultural systems (Leta & Chan, 2021). A series of strategies and measures were enforced to limit the outbreak of disease, for example, social distance restriction, immigration control, self and mandatory quarantine. Since these rules and guidelines confined people to stay in their home cities, hotel staycation became popular in the past three years (Yan et al., 2022). As its name suggested, the term of staycation is a combination of “stay” and “vacation,” which means staycationers undertake a short vacation nearby their hometown (Au et al., 2021).

Many studies researching on staycation focused on the classification of tourist activities (James et al., 2016; de Bloom et al., 2017; Yan et al., 2022; Au et al., 2021) and the crisis strategies formulated by the hospitality and tourism industry (James et al., 2016; Au et al., 2021; Fotiadis et al., 2021). However, few researchers studied hotel staycation experience from the perspective of customers, in particular with a focus on the generation Z (Dolot, 2018; Choirisa et al., 2021). The generation Z refers to the individuals who were born between 1993 and 2005, which represents approximately 25 percent of the global population (Turner, 2013). When generation Z customers are purchasing a product, they particularly look for features of innovation, convenience and security (Wood, 2013) and their consumption power cannot be underestimated (Hulyk, 2015; Hua & Chiu, 2022). In consideration of the unique characteristics of the generation Z and their increasing spending power, developing a deeper understanding of these consumers' consumption behavior is deemed necessary. This study aims to explore generation Z customers' purpose of hotel staycation and identify the critical

factors that influence their hotel booking.

Methodology

In this qualitative study, a total of 12 in-depth interviews were conducted with generation Z consumers who had hotel staycation experience in Hong Kong in the past six months at the time of interview (i.e., June 2022 to December 2022). Interview participants were recruited through the personal network of the research team and the referral by the participants (i.e., snowballing technique). The interview guide first explained the purpose of the research, and included a number of open questions to solicit participants' views on their staycation experience and hotel selection consideration. The interview guide was pilot tested with three college students who celebrated their friends' birthday at a hotel in Hong Kong.

A majority of participants were in their early 20s. Besides of the monthly allowance given by the parents, many of them earned an additional income from their part-time job. Nearly half of the participants were male and half were female. Most interviews were conducted at a café, and on average, the duration of interviews was appropriately 45 minutes. With participants' prior consent, the conversations were audio recorded and then transcribed verbatim for content analysis. This study employed different strategies to assure its validity and reliability. First, the researcher avoided asking leading questions at the interviews. Second, the summary of each interview script was sent to respective interviewee to verify the accuracy of interview content. Last, thematic analysis technique was adopted to systemically analyze the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Results

Purpose of hotel staycation

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, many young people in Hong Kong liked to have a short overseas trip to the neighbouring countries, like Taiwan, Korea and Japan, with their friends. However, the unexpected and prolonged outbreak of coronavirus confined them to stay in their home city and greatly reduced their social opportunities. The finding revealed that planning a hotel staycation became a popular trend for generation Z because it created a fantasy of a short-haul trip and the premise of hotel was regarded as an ideal venue for gathering and occasion celebration with their close friends.

Critical factors influencing hotel selection

Similar to the findings of other studies (e.g., Lo, Chen, & Yan, 2022), price was identified as one of the most important considerations when participants made a room reservation. Most participants made a reservation through an online travel agent (i.e., Klook and Agoda) and the official website of the hotel. When searching for suitable hotels, the ones that offered a great price reduction could quickly attract their attention. After identifying two to three options, they carefully compared the prices and services included in a package, and chose the one with the highest value.

Location and convenience were the other two important factors for hotel selection. In order to develop a sense of being away from home, most participants indicated that they booked the hotel that was located in the other district. They also considered the public transportation and the attractions nearby the hotel. The places young people in Hong Kong liked to visit included Tsim Sha Tsui, Tsuen Wan, Central and Mong Kok. In addition, Lantau Island was found popular because of its proximity to Hong Kong Disneyland.

Different from the findings of previous study by Lo, Chen and Yan (2022), many participants expressed during the hotel stay, they spent most of the time inside the room

with their companions, and therefore, they cared much about the provision of room amenities and entertainment, such as high-speed Internet access, USB plug in, the screen size and quality of television. Relatively, they paid little attention to hotel facilities (e.g., variety of hotel restaurants, fitness centre, and swimming pool).

Conclusion

The prolonged COVID-19 pandemic severely affected the business of hospitality and tourism companies. When facing a significant decrease of international tourists, staycation package targeting local residents became an important revenue source for many hotels in the world. This study explored generation Z customers' hotel staycation experience, and suggested that this segment of customers undertook a hotel staycation mainly for the purpose of social gathering. In search of a suitable hotel for staycation, price, location, convenience and room amenities are the four most critical factors. Traditionally, hotel brand and service quality are important considerations for hospitality and tourism customers. However, in this study these two factors were relatively less discussed by the participants. Future research can further discover why generation Z customers do not emphasize these two factors like customers of other generations. In addition, further research can adopt a quantitative approach to investigate the relative importance of critical factors when consumers purchase a hotel staycation package.

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AN INVESTIGATION INTO HOW THE FEATURES OF POP-UP STORES IMPACT ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH (EWOM) IN THE CHINESE AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY

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Abstract

Facing the impact of reshaped consumer behaviours, purchasing habits, and retailing methods, auto brands need to seek novel ways and reinvention methods of enhancing brand eWOM while attempting to reach both new and current target audiences. Therefore, this study investigates how the features of pop-up stores impact eWOM in the Chinese Automobile Industry. This study critically explores why, how, and what critical features through the mediation of psychographic status and consumer perceived value impact eWOM in the automotive industry. Results demonstrate that ephemerality and co-creation have positive impacts consumers' fear of missing out and consumer innovativeness. Besides, there is a positive relationship between psychographic status and consumer perceived value. Notably, the study also indicates that ephemerality has a more significant impact on eWOM than another critical feature, co-creation. Importantly, this study also provides vital implications and insights for automobile brand marketing managers and pop-up agencies.

Keywords: Pop-up event; Co-creation; Fear of missing out (FOMO); Consumer innovativeness; eWOM

Introduction

Due to socioeconomic and demographic shifts, traditional retailers need to satisfy consumer needs and change themselves proactively to encounter the current challenges (Hagberg et al., 2018). The pop-up store is a solution and reinvention method for those traditional retailers, which is an innovative experiential marketing tool providing a surprising and unrepeatable novel experience for consumers and has the feature of "here today, gone tomorrow" (Henkel & Toporowski, 2021; Robertson et al., 2018). Besides, this kind of store is also an approach to communicating and contacting consumers to enhance brand loyalty and build a long-term relationship between consumers and the brand (Lowe et al., 2018). It is worth investigating whether brands can take advantage of pop-up store features to improve e-Word of Mouth (eWOM).

There are many existing pieces of literature regarding the impacts of pop-up stores on luxury brands and the fashion industry (de Lassus & Anido Freire, 2014; Pomodoro, 2013). At the same time, pop-up stores have seldom been investigated in the context of the automobile industry (Klein et al., 2016). It is still unclear how pop-up features would impact brands' eWOM in the Chinese automotive market. Besides, it has been proved that positive information can transfer from one client to another if consumers have satisfied experience in the automobile industry (Murtiasih et al., 2013). Thus, it is critical to extend the investigation to the automobile industry since the Chinese pop-up store in the automobile industry has significant market value and practical usage. Therefore, this paper aims to examine how features of pop-up stores can influence eWOM in the Chinese automobile industry and how the relationship is influenced and bridged by mediator variables such as psychographic status and consumer perceived value. Specifically, in order to bolster the aim of the research, the author has raised the following research questions:

- RQ1: How do pop-up features affect consumer psychographic characteristics?
RQ2: How do psychographic characteristics impact consumer perceived value?
RQ3: Which feature has the most significant impact on eWOM?

Methodology

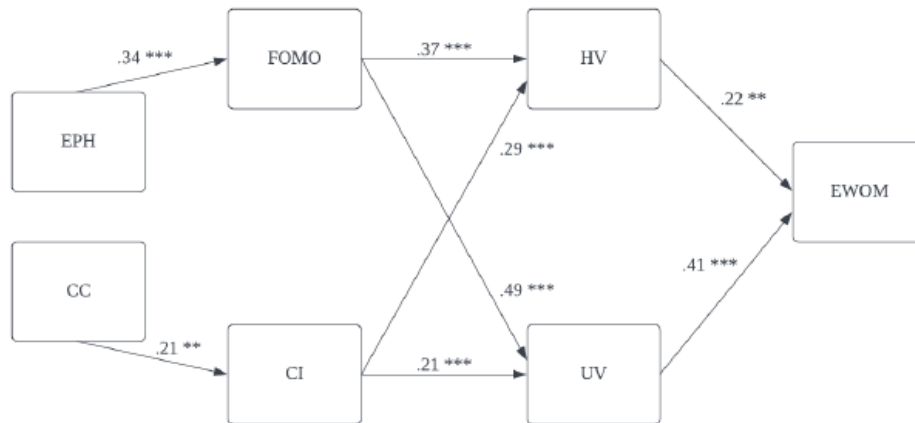
Ephemerality and co-creation are main distinguishing features of pop-up stores. Their scarcity and innovative experiential marketing element might trigger the psychological status of fear of missing out (FOMO) and consumer innovativeness. Thus, positive relationships between pop-up store features and psychological status have been hypothesized by the author.

FOMO is not more than driven by scarcity psychology but also manifests the desire to keep sustainable connections with others (Przybylski et al, 2013). Consumer innovativeness could increase the hedonic experience and enhance the pursue of utilitarian knowledge seeking however the findings are mainly concentrated on high-tech industry (Chen & Fiore, 2017; Hong et al, 2017). Therefore, it is possible for the author to assume the positive relationships between FOMO and consumer innovativeness and utilitarian and hedonic value.

When consumers are satisfied at a high level or receive huge value from suppliers, consumers would recommend to others in return for the received value (Hansen et al, 2008). Previous studies mainly focus on how eWOM impact purchasing intention (Kunja & Gvrk, 2020) or how consumer perceived value can affect purchasing intention (Chae et al, 2020; de Medeiros et al, 2016). There is rarely literature that discusses the relationship between consumer perceived value and eWOM. It is worthwhile to investigate how consumer perceived value influences Ewom and the research hypothesized positive relationship between them.

This study adopts a quantitative approach using a survey, aligning with the deductive approach. Surveys help to gather standardized data from a vast segment of the automobile target audience in China efficiently. A five-point Likert scale was used to rate 24 adapted questions, leveraging the existing scales to enhance the research's credibility and validity.

For this research, stratified random sampling has been selected. Given the potential variance in interest in automobiles between genders and the potential influence of location, this sampling method is deemed suitable. With an intent to minimize bias and uncertainties, it is crucial to manage these factors through stratified random sampling. Questionnaires were disseminated online via Tencent Questionnaire to individuals aged 25-39. Tencent Questionnaires, delivered directly to participants' WeChat, ensured a quick turnaround. Due to data saturation, limited time and limited resource for the researcher, a total of 232 valid responses were collected from the initial 250 sent out. The data were analyzed using SPSS Statistics and SPSS Amos, examining the data's validity and reliability, and testing hypotheses via the structural equation model.



*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.001$, * $p < 0.01$

EPH=ephemerality, CC=co-creation, FOMO=fear of missing out, CI=consumer innovativeness, HV=hedonic value, UV=utilitarian value, EWOM=electronic word of mouth.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This research adds some new insights and findings to existing literature. In general, the pop-up store could enhance brand value in terms of eWOM in the Chinese automobile industry. Features of pop-up stores like ephemerality and co-creation are explicit manifestations of strengthening the brand's eWOM. However, the essence and implicit factors that trigger the positive effects on consumer perceived value and eWOM are consumer psychographic status, including FOMO and consumer innovativeness. Ephemerality as a feature of pop-up store has the most significant impact on eWOM through the impact of consumer psychological status of FOMO and consumer perceived hedonic and utilitarian value.

Meanwhile, some research gaps have also been filled by this study. This research extends co-creation impacts to the automotive industry beyond previous research restrained to high-tech and hospitality industries. Besides, the study also enlarges the target audience's age range to relatively older adults. Moreover, the study also reverses the lens. Namely, this research instead of focusing on the effectiveness of eWOM and what eWOM can bring to the brand but concentrating on how can brand generate positive eWOM and through what process by utilising pop-ups to generate positive eWOM. This research has found that both hedonic and utilitarian consumer perceived value have significant and positive influences on eWOM. It illustrates that automotive brands need to take both two values into consideration when designing and launching pop-up stores.

Additionally, this research provides vital implications and insights for automobile brand marketing managers and pop-up agencies regarding how to design effective pop-ups and alternative novel ways of increasing brands' eWOM and long-term image.

Despite the contribution, this research has limitations and offers opportunities for future research. The sample is solely based in China with a small size and specific age range, which reduces the study's generalizability and validity in other cultural contexts. Future research should expand the age range and increase the sample size to enhance

the study's scope and reliability.

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THE INFLUENCE OF TOURISM EXPERIENCE ON TOURISTS' WELL-BEING: A LONGITUDINAL STUDY

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Abstract

The objective of this research aims to assess tourists' subjective well-being and psychological well-being during and after their trips through a longitudinal design. Drawing on self-determination theory and attention restoration theory, an integrated theoretical framework was proposed to examine the relationships among perceived attention restoration, social sharing satisfaction, psychological needs satisfaction, subjective well-being, and psychological well-being in the during-trip and post-trip stages. Results show that social sharing satisfaction and psychological needs satisfaction have positive influences on subjective well-being and psychological well-being at both stages. Additionally, perceived attention restoration positively affects subjective well-being and psychological well-being during the trip, while this effect is not significant in the post-trip stage. This study also reveal that perceived attention restoration, social sharing satisfaction, and psychological needs satisfaction have delayed effects. Theoretical and practical implications are provided accordingly.

Keywords: well-being; perceived attention restoration; social sharing satisfaction; psychological needs satisfaction; travel stages

Introduction

Research has shown that tourism can improve well-being (Filep, 2014; Rahmani et al., 2018; Vada et al., 2020). There are two perspectives in the study of well-being: subjective well-being based on hedonia and psychological well-being based on eudaimonia (Rahmani et al., 2018; Ryan & Deci, 2001). Previous research on tourist well-being has mainly focused on subjective well-being (Lengieza et al., 2019; Sirgy, 2019), while psychological well-being has been overlooked. To fill this gap, this study integrates both hedonia and eudaimonia to gain a comprehensive understanding of the well-being domain of knowledge.

The impact of tourism experiences on tourists' well-being can be divided into two stages: during-trip (through on-site experience) and post-trip (though memory recall) (Nawijn, 2011; Su et al., 2020). However, few studies have investigated the dynamics of well-being at different travel stages. In particular, previous research designs were mainly cross-sectional (Narangajavana Kaosiri et al., 2019; Sie et al., 2018). Longitudinal studies have been overlooked, hindering a deeper understanding of the changes in tourist well-being. This poses the first research gap.

Another limitation of the extant literature stems from whether or not different types of travel satisfaction (i.e., psychological needs satisfaction and social sharing satisfaction) could influence tourists' well-being differently, as well as whether or not their en route satisfaction could have a lasting effect on post-trip satisfaction. This limitation also applies to the restorative role of tourism, which poses the second research gap.

This study works to address the above research gaps and questions through the lenses of self-determination theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and attention restoration theory (ART) (Kaplan, 1995). It synthesizes an integrated theoretical model that includes both the during- and post-trip stages to examine the influence of external

factors (i.e., perceived restoration from the physical environment) (Lehto, 2013; Lin et al., 2021; Qiu et al., 2021) and internal factors (i.e., psychological needs satisfaction and social sharing satisfaction) (Zhang et al., 2022) on subjective and psychological tourist well-being (Lengieza et al., 2019; Sirgy, 2019).

Methodology

The sample frame was Chinese visitors who engaged in a pleasure trip. To approach respondents, this study used the Credamo platform to conduct online surveys. The questionnaire used in this study was primarily adopted from measures developed in previous studies. The questionnaires were randomly distributed to a pool of respondents who met the following criteria: they must be aged 18 years or above, must have visited a destination during the survey in the first wave of data collection, and they shared their travel experience via social media. The data collection for the main study was conducted between March and April 2022. Specifically, we distributed questionnaires at two time points (during trip and after trip), with a two-week interval between the two time points. After removing incomplete questionnaires responses, 267 valid responses were retained for the during-trip stage and 242 for the post-trip stage.

Discussion

The key theoretical implications of this study are as follows. First, it integrates subjective and psychological well-being to provide a more holistic picture of the role of tourism on human well-being intervention (Jun et al., 2012; Yi et al., 2022). More importantly, this study offers an alternative view on the dissipating effect of well-being after a trip (Kwon & Lee, 2020) by identifying the divergent effect of tourism on the change in subjective well-being and psychological well-being through a multiwave design.

This research also improvises the concept of satisfaction with social sharing (Bazarova et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2022) as an important travel outcome and a conduit for touting tourist well-being. From a broader theoretical perspective, SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and ART (Kaplan, 1995) have been introduced to examine the impact of the perceived attention restoration, psychological needs satisfaction, and social sharing satisfaction on tourist well-being. This study further enriches SDT and ART by synthesizing these two theoretical strands of research.

From a practical perspective, this study provides practical assistance to those involved in the management and operation of tourism destinations. Tourism operators and managers should regard hedonic and eudaimonic approaches as effective strategies for improving tourist well-being. For example, strengthening infrastructure construction and improving service quality can enhance tourist well-being. Government policymakers should pay more attention to the importance of tourism in enhancing individuals' well-being and formulate a series of tourism plans or policies to support tourism development. In addition, this study provides empirical guidelines for tourism operators and managers by identifying perceived restoration, social sharing satisfaction, and psychological needs satisfaction as key factors in achieving high levels of subjective and psychological well-being.

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HOW SOCIAL MEDIA DESTINATION CONTENT AFFECTS TOURIST BEHAVIORAL INTENTION: A COMPARISON BETWEEN MGC AND UGC

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of marketing-generated content (MGC) and user-generated content (UGC) on tourist behavioral intention and whether there is differentiation. It also examines the aspects of perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and attitude of MGC and UGC that influence travelers' intention to decide a travel plan. The results showed that MGC has a modest advantage over UGC in perceived usefulness. This research contributes to the development of Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) theory, particularly regarding the application of social media platforms for tourism-related aims and objectives. It is recommended that tourism businesses of any kind should utilize social media to promote tourism destination content, focusing on MGC and taking into consideration that the perceived ease of use and the perceived usefulness during the process of destination content creation.

Keywords: social media; user-generated content (UGC); marketing-generated content (MGC); tourist behavioral intention; tourism destinations

Introduction

Social media is a virtual online community where people share all kinds of information such as travel planning and spending. Thus, progressively more attention is being paid by marketers to use social media as means to connect directly with consumers for brand communication (Pachucki et al., 2022; Platon, 2020). Although research has shown that both user-generated content (UGC) and marketing-generated content (MGC) are beneficial to tourist behavioural intention (Arica et al., 2022; Nguyen & Tong, 2022; Hernández-Ortega et al., 2020; Yang & Wang, 2015), the majority of previous studies have considered the impact on tourists based on either MGC or UGC alone, but rarely compared the two together in terms of their impact on tourists. Therefore, this study compares these two different types of content to find out if there are differences in the impact on tourists.

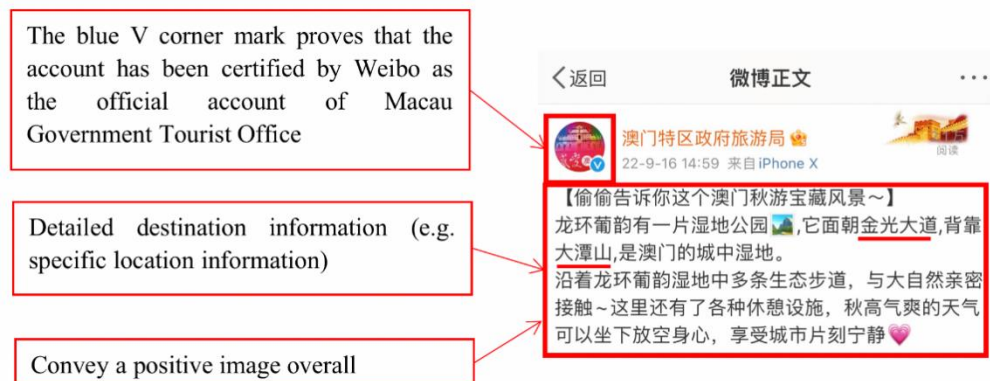
Methodology

This study applied between-subjects experimental design in 2 different conditions (MGC and UGC) in combination with an online questionnaire. Data was collected in Mainland China, considering Weibo's significant presence as one of the largest social media platforms in the country (McCartney & Pao Cheng Pek, 2018). The questionnaire collection platform "Tencent Questionnaire" was selected to distribute and collect data online. A total of 216 questionnaires were gathered and 202 qualified questionnaires were used for data analysis after removing 14 invalid responses. The population consists of 15.8% males and 84.2% females with the majority aged between 19-24 years old.

In this study, the MGC from the official account of the Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) is used and the UGC is designed and pre-tested to ensure the reliability and validity of the research (See Appendix A). By applying the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the study analysed the impact of both the UGC and MGC on tourist behavioural intention in terms of perceived usefulness, attitude, and perceived ease of use. Correlation and regression analysis were used, and independent samples t-test was

carried out after incorporating the data samples from both sources in order to evaluate the effect of MGC and UGC on the behavioral intentions of tourists.

MGC sample used in the study



Source: MGTO. (2022)

UGC sample used in the study



Source: The Author

Results/Discussion/Implication

According to the findings, the perceived usefulness and the perceived ease of use of MGC and UGC have a direct and favourable impact on the tourists' attitudes toward the destination. In addition, despite the fact that MGC appears to have a slight advantage over UGC in terms of perceived usefulness (MGC, $M=5.4871$, $SD=1.16805$, and UGC, $M=5.4772$, $SD=.95120$, $t=.066$, $p=.047$), while perceived ease of use ($t=.348$, $p=.994$), attitude ($t=.245$, $p=.880$) and tourist behavioral intention ($t=1.245$, $p=.825$) are not significantly different between MGC and UGC. Therefore, there is no distinct difference between the effects of MGC and UGC on the behaviours that tourists intend to engage in.

The results of this study contribute to the theoretical foundation of technology acceptance theory by expanding the theory's scope and providing a theoretical foundation for future research in the field of tourism destination social media content. By examining both the MGC and UGC impacts, this study offers a more thorough grasp of how social media content affects tourist behavioural intention. From a practical perspective, the findings of this study offers favourable suggestions to tourism destination social media official account operators. Specifically, tourism organisations should apply perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness of content to increase

tourist's favourability towards the destination and ultimately advance their behavioural intention to travel.

Furthermore, is it suggested small to medium-sized tourism businesses that have not yet considered using social media to promote their products should reconsider such marketing strategy as it is an effective marketing technique to increase the visibility of the destination online while attracting more tourists for actual offline visits. By leveraging the power of social media, these businesses can reach a wider audience and promote their destination in a cost-effective manner. Lastly, this research emphasises the importance of understanding the role of social media in promoting destinations and influencing tourist behaviour. It provided insights that may help destination management organizations to improve their social media marketing strategies.

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RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND INTERGENERATIONAL MEANINGS OF LAND

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Abstract

With the acceleration of urbanisation and modernisation, there are significant intergenerational differences in the meaning of land among residents in Chinese rural tourism destinations. Despite the obvious differences, there are still questions about how these differences vary between generations and in what dynamic environments. This paper focuses on the case of Fu'an Village (Zhejiang province, China) to interpret intergenerational meanings of land in the context of Chinese rural tourism development. This case-based qualitative research is analysed by using the value-ownership-commodity-policy framework. Findings provide the vivid meanings of land for the elderly, the middle-aged, and the younger generations and confirm the intergenerational changes. Findings also reveal that the intergenerational meanings of land are influenced by two forces: the stable force of land ownership and desire for commodification; the changing force of shifting values and the policy that keeps pace with the times.

Keywords: Rural tourism; Generations; Meanings of land

Introduction

This paper aims to provide an empirical account for interpreting intergenerational meanings of land in the context of Chinese rural tourism development. It can be argued that with the acceleration of urbanisation and modernisation, there are significant intergenerational differences in the meaning of land among residents in Chinese rural tourism destinations (Chen et al., 2022a, 2022b). Despite the obvious differences, there are still questions about how these differences vary between generations and in what dynamic environments. Summarizing from the literature (Fortin et al., 2021; Kjörholt & Bunting, 2021; Ma et al., 2020; Morrison, 2022; Preston & Gelman, 2020), intergenerational differences can be interpreted from the perspectives of the values of land, land ownership, tourism commodification, as well as the local and national policies. The values of land have changed as younger generations no longer depend on the land for living. The ownership of land represents less economic value but more about the rural citizenship in China. The commodification of tourism has complicated the intergenerational uses and meanings of land. The dynamic relationships of land, generations, and tourism are structured by national rural policies. This case-based paper is analysed by using the value-ownership-commodity-policy framework.

Methodology

This paper is based on the qualitative research conducted in Fu'an Village, located in Daruoyan Town, Yongjia County, Wenzhou City, Zhejiang Province. Fu'an village is close to Baizhang Waterfall, which is a newly developed scenic spot with tourism, leisure, and outdoor sports experience in the Nanxi River Scenic Area. Fu'an village is rich in tourism resources, however, its tourism development is still in the stage of development.

Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The interview guide focused on three areas: The local identity, the impact of rural tourism development on the land, and the resident's attitude and significance towards land. Purposive sampling was used in the fieldwork. A total of 15 residents were interviewed,

with 5 from each of the following age groups: the elderly (60 and up), the middle-aged (40-59), and the younger generation (under 40). Thematic analysis was employed based on the value-ownership-commodity-policy framework for intergenerational interpretations.

Results and discussion

For the elderly, even if they do not resist tourism, they have lived with the land all their lives, which is the most reliable guarantee. Their ideas of tourism development are often based on what they heard from other farmers. These elders' decision-making on land transfer is often influenced by policies or village authorities. For elder participants, land is still emotional, but as long as their interests are protected and their life circle is not destroyed, it is acceptable for family land to be used for rural tourism. For the middle-aged, their emotions for land are constrained by the family and are affected by land income. The middle-aged generation has a certain expectations for the service industry, and most of them are also engaged in non-agricultural work. Middle-aged people, who use land for tourism development, start with whether they can obtain benefits. The younger generation, on the other hand, generally holds an indifferent attitude towards land. In the face of tourism development, their feelings towards land are conflicting. On the one hand, the ownership of land is to some extent a burden on families, on the other hand, they hope to profit from local development through land as a springboard.

This analysis further finds that the intergenerational meanings of land are influenced by two forces. One is the stable force of land ownership (the rural land will pass from generation to generation) and the desire for commodification (all current generations have expectations for more businesses and a busy countryside). The other is the changing force of shifting values and the policy that keeps pace with the times.

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FULL PAPERS

OUTSIDE THE FOUR WALLS: CHANGES IN METRO MANILA'S LOCAL MALL CULTURE AND THE PUBLIC'S PREFERENCES ON RECREATIONAL SPACES

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Abstract

Metro Manila has a prevalent “mall-going” culture due to the lack of alternative recreational spaces that are accessible, well-equipped, and appealing to the public. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the public’s capacity to visit malls was limited as only essential trips were allowed. This study aims to see if these restrictions affected the “mall-going” culture and shifted the public’s preference for recreational spaces towards open-air spaces. The study used a quantitative data analysis approach with the data gathered from online questionnaires disseminated to residents of Metro Manila. It was found that Metro Manila residents patronize both indoor and outdoor recreational spaces with preference for the latter. The respondents state a preference for outdoor recreational areas but prefer attributes that are seen in indoor recreational spaces. The study recommends for the public and private sector to develop outdoor green spaces that have the same level of comfort and convenience of shopping malls.

Keywords: green spaces; mall culture; metro manila; recreational preferences; recreational spaces

Introduction

Metro Manila has seen an array of changes throughout its time as the nation’s center of culture and economy. A mainstay trend amidst the region’s long history is its thriving mall-going culture, simply referred to as ‘mall culture.’ According to an article by Saloma et al. (2021), leisure plays a part in an individual’s sense of belonging, fulfilled through seeking leisure activities. Built to cater to these needs are hyper-conditioned environments meant to stimulate socio-materiality which are shopping malls. Their prevalence as the go-to place for all recreational needs is bolstered by the lack of alternative recreational spaces that are free, open, and accessible to all. This trend was temporarily put to a halt at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, as quarantine protocols and social distancing requirements forced malls to close. Hence, a rise in interest in public outdoor green spaces, as the public started to look for an alternative space that fulfills their recreational needs. Urban planners and public health advocates believe that this is an opportunity for cities to invest more in public parks and green spaces (Ranada, 2020).

Given the longevity of mall culture and the proven profitability of malls, the public sector continues to neglect investing in parks and green spaces. The continued ‘privatization’ of public spaces has become a rising issue as malls are increasingly built to cater to the recreational demands of a growing population (Rico et al., 2017). These malls have become inherently problematic as they continue to take over neighborhoods and instill a culture of consumerism and inequality amongst the masses. In comparison, public parks are free of access – making low-income groups feel a sense of belongingness as they do not have to spend to stay – and offer a variety of benefits for

the environment and locals' well-being (Sahakian et al., 2020). As the world makes a return to the 'new normal,' this study aims to see if there is a positive shift in the public's preference towards accessible green spaces over shopping malls. The recency of these changes means that the latest information regarding the mall culture of Metro Manila residents and their preferred recreational spots are limited to brief mentions under news articles rather than published journals. There is also a distinct lack of journals that contain comparative analyses between public parks and shopping malls.

Considering the topics and corresponding issues mentioned, this study aims to achieve the following objectives: (i) to determine the recreational preference of locals in Metro Manila; (ii) to identify if there is a shift of public interest towards alternative recreational spaces that are free, spacious, and easily accessible; (iii) to provide a different tourist spot that can offer recreational activities in Metro Manila; (iv) to promote the creation of more open and green public spaces in Metro Manila. Achieving these objectives will introduce the importance and benefits of open parks and green spaces to the mall-loving Filipino masses and prove the worth of public parks and proper urban planning. Another benefit to achieving these objectives is an enhanced urban environment that values sustainability and equity, striving towards a better and brighter Metro Manila.

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

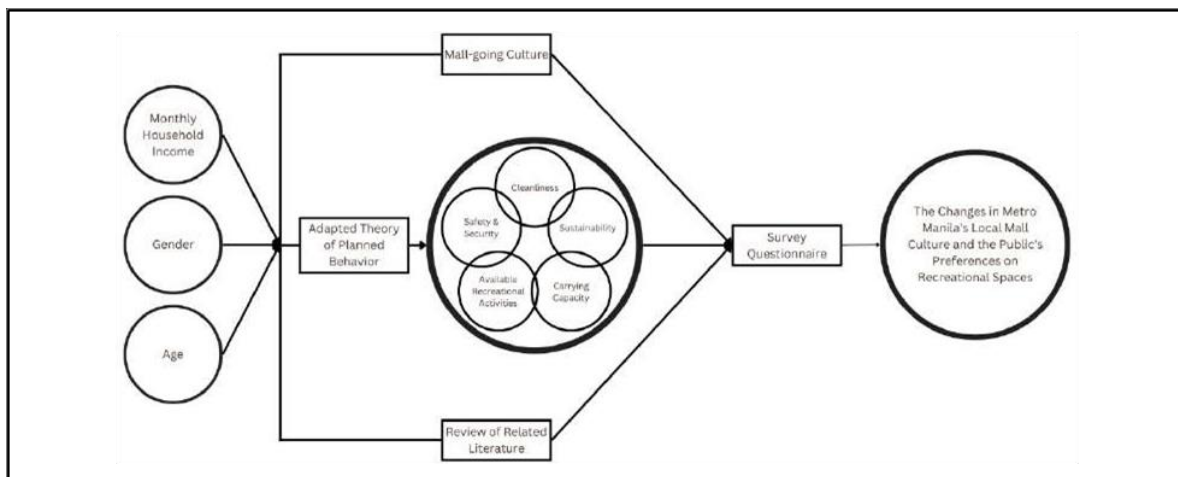


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework illustrates the research process to provide a better understanding of the study. Three (3) demographic variables: Age, Gender, and Monthly Household Income, are used to determine which demographics patronize certain recreational spaces. The survey questionnaire was created through the control variables: the mall-going culture, statements supported by the articles on the review of related literature, and the five (5) factors (Cleanliness, Sustainability, Carrying Capacity, Available Recreational Activities, and Safety and Security) that relates to the Adapted Theory of Planned Behavior, with the incorporation of the Psychosocial Constructs by Mateer et al. (2021). These were used to create grounded statements and questions to evaluate people's preferences. Mateer's adapted theory was used instead of its original to consider the pandemic's effect on people's preferences. The survey's findings show the changes in mall culture and preferences in recreational spaces as influenced by the above-mentioned variables.

Metro Manila's Mall Culture

Mall culture before the pandemic

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Metro Manila had a booming mall culture that made shopping malls the go-to place for all recreational needs. This obsession with malls can be largely attributed as a legacy from the US – with the country's first enclosed shopping center, Crystal Arcade, being built in the 1930s during the US colonial period (Rico et al., 2017). Despite gaining independence, malls remain a permanent fixture in the country as a convenient location that provides easy access to retail, food and beverage services, entertainment, and even government satellite agencies (Rico et al., 2017; Saloma et al., 2021). Their popularity has resulted in the term “mallng,” which means to go to malls as a form of leisure. While malls offer a wide array of services and activities, there are some who go without a specific goal in mind and are merely there for the air-conditioning or to meet up with people (Roesler, 2018). A testament to the popularity of shopping malls in the country is the amount of foot traffic they receive. According to the SM Supermalls' website (n.d.), they received an average foot traffic of around 4.2 million daily in their 79 shopping malls across the country, while the Robinsons Malls' website (n.d.) reports that they received 120 million visits annually.

Mall culture during the pandemic

At the onset of the pandemic in March 2020, Luzon was placed under Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) as announced in Resolution No. 38, s. 2020 by the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF). Under the ECQ, most mall operations were prohibited, with restaurants and groceries located within the malls allowed to operate at a limited capacity. Restaurants were allowed to operate at 20% capacity, which includes take-out, delivery, and outdoor or al fresco dining should the restaurant's venue and personnel pass the standards set by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). Groceries were allowed to operate at full on-site capacity as they counted under “essential retail.” As a result of the lack of physical shopping malls, consumers turned to online retail. An article by Abueg (2020), mentions the “revenge spending” phenomenon which became prevalent among higher-income households who have the economic and digital capacity to partake in the newest form of retail therapy.

Once restrictions were eased under the Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine (MECQ), malls were allowed limited operations provided they abide by the DTI guidelines that were released in April 2020. These guidelines include the monitoring of foot traffic and social distancing inside the malls; decreasing the number of entrances and seats; restricting elevator access to senior citizens, PWDs, and pregnant women; keeping mall temperature at 26° Celsius and removing free mall WiFi to discourage loitering; and prohibiting marketing events and sale promotions that tend to attract large crowds. Restrictions were further eased once the IATF placed NCR under Alert Level 1 as announced in Resolution No. 166-A, s.2022 in March 2022. To entice consumers to return to malls, SM Supermalls announced the launch of their #SafeMallngAtSM campaign through a press release. This campaign included PR and digital initiatives that showed customers how SM Supermalls updated their malls to follow safety protocols and ensure their health and safety. According to the SM Investments 3M 2022 Earnings Briefing (May 11, 2022), weekend foot traffic levels have returned to around 91% of what they were before the pandemic.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Malls

Shopping malls are popular for their convenience, as one-stop sites that are easily

accessible through public transportation while also offering parking spaces for private vehicles; and comfortable environment, through their comfort room facilities, dining spaces, air-conditioning, and use of 'cozy' lighting. Another advantage that malls have over most public spaces is the perceived safety of the space. Through their entrance bag checks, CCTV surveillance, and security guards, instances such as pickpocketing, mugging, and soliciting are less likely to occur (Saloma et al., 2021). Lastly, malls provide locals with economic benefits through job opportunities and increased consumption. The construction of more malls was seen as a sign of the country's strong economic position and the Filipinos as confident consumers (Rico et al., 2017).

Despite the numerous advantages malls provide, it is not without faults. Malls are known to promote a culture of consumerism, foster socio-materiality, and increase wealth inequality. Malls promote spending and create a problematic sense of belonging that caters only to the middle and upper classes, conducive to the country's current system rife with wealth inequality. According to the Asian Development Bank's 2021 survey, 23.7% of the Philippine population lives below the poverty line. Meanwhile, the Forbes list of the Philippines' Richest 2022 is filled with mall tycoons such as the Sy siblings, Lance Gokongwei, and Jaime Zobel de Ayala. Any economic benefits previously listed are inaccessible to the poor due to their inability to afford such services or even access mall premises (Rico et al., 2017; Saloma et al., 2021). In more recent times, COVID-19 has also started to pose a disadvantage in choosing malls as recreational spaces. Due to the enclosed space and crowded atmosphere, consumers perceive a higher risk of getting infected with COVID-19 when going to malls rather than through online shopping (Ong et al., 2021).

Metro Manila's Green Spaces

The current state of green spaces in Metro Manila

The structure of green spaces has been significantly impacted by rapid urban growth. Urban growth has accelerated globally in recent decades (Cohen, 2006, as cited in Nor et al., 2017). Urban vegetation has experienced a dramatic reduction and loss in connectedness due to the current worldwide urbanization. (Kowe, Mutanga & Dube, 2020). This affects the present condition of Metro Manila's green spaces. As urbanization increases, green spaces such as eco-parks would be impaired. Consequently, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) of the Philippines' "Green, Green, Green" program assists different cities in the Philippines and local governments in enhancing current green spaces for development and maintenance. Thus, public open spaces can create more livable, sustainable, and well-connected communities (DBM, 2018). According to Saloma & Akpedonu (2021), although Manila and Quezon City, two of the 16 cities that make up Metro Manila, were planned with the principles of the City Beautiful Movement and Garden City Movement in mind, they did not have the anticipated effects. For park management and policies to align more closely with the objectives of the many groups in the city, urban planning must extend contacts with these groups. It will be necessary to balance competing needs and expectations, find common ground, and occasionally negotiate difficult concessions. If such efforts are successful, fully restored public green areas will recover their original purpose as a gathering spot for individuals from various social and symbolic backgrounds. One may easily get the conclusion that the history of public green spaces in the city and their lofty societal aspirations is a tragic tale of failure if one considers that the most well-liked public parks in Manila and Quezon City today are modest remnants of failed big government complexes.

The public's opinions

According to the study by Gonzales & Magnaye (2017) the Simpson's Index Diversity (SID), among the 21 urban green spaces, Luneta Park had the highest population richness score (0.937), the value that was closest to 1, followed by Fort Santiago (0.932), Arroceros (0.917), Plaza Malate (0.913), Kartilya ng Katipunan Monument (0.899), Plaza Dilao (0.88), Alexander Puskin Monument (0.811), and Rajah Sulayman Park (0.8). According to the SID results, the following recommendations for urban planning and development actions are made to address the resiliency of human settlements in an environment: encourage more vegetation, manage ecological waste, create a hierarchy of urban biodiversity stations, create metropolitan parks, relocate informal settlers, and create a local legislative and policy agenda. To support the local government's efforts to build a livable city and promote urban development toward a sustainability framework within the Urban Landscape, the provision of urban green space is essential (Paredes, 2022).

Benefits and risks of public green spaces

Urban greening appears to be a practice that planners in cities all over the world are favoring further when trying to revitalize urban neighborhoods (Haase et al., 2017, as cited in Basu & Nagendra, 2021). Compared to exercising indoors, physical activity in a green setting may provide more benefits for one's physical and mental health (Maas et al., 2008; Richardson et al., 2013, as cited in Yang et al., 2021). There are two possible explanations for why exercising in a green area is better for an individual's health. First, green space may help people recover from stress and attention fatigue, according to the theories of stress recovery and attention restoration (Kaplan, 1995, as cited in Yang et al., 2021). Secondly, the synergistic relationship between exercise and exposure to nature elicited more favorable affective, cognitive, and physiological responses (Mitchell, 2013; Van den Berg et al., 2007, as cited in Yang et al., 2021). Urban green areas can enhance social cohesiveness, encourage physical exercise, and lessen the stress caused by noise, heat, and other environmental factors, among other ways to enhance human health and well-being (James et al., 2015; van den Bosch & Ode Sang, 2017; Collins et al., 2020, as cited in Aerts et al., 2021). However, trees in urban parks may also generate pollen irritating to some people (Thompson and Thompson, 2003; Cariñanos and Casares-Porcel, 2011; Cheng and Berry, 2013; Cariñanos et al., 2017; Kasprzyk et al., 2019; Lara et al., 2019; Cariñanos et al., 2020, as cited in Aerts et al., 2021). Therefore, the public health implications of urban green spaces related to tree pollen are significant (Eisenman et al., 2019; Jia et al., 2020; Sousa-Silva et al., 2020; van Dorn, 2017, as cited in Aerts et al., 2021).

In relation to inequality and discrimination, large parks that were supposed to give people from distinct social classes a chance to establish and challenge symbolic boundaries either never materialized or were gradually converted to commercial and residential development (e.g., Harrison Park in Manila was turned into a shopping center, the Quezon City Quadrangle now houses shopping and residential complexes). Contrary to the olden times when the "Luneta" was then the primary place of leisure and recreation for Manila's elite, wealthy people have almost completely vanished from Rizal Park in present times. Upper-class Filipinos today largely avoid public green spaces, preferring amenities instead in their own gated enclaves or vacationing abroad, much like the rest of the metropolis where the already small group of upper-class citizens has increasingly retreated further into gated residential communities or heavily guarded high-rise condominiums. Upper-middle class Filipinos at least partially follow in this trend. As a result, the social cohesion that planners like Burnham supported and

maintained is weak today. (Saloma & Akpodenu, 2021).

Recreational preferences of Metro Manila residents

Mall activities

Malls have emerged from just shopping grounds to a hub of convenience; from government services to bill paying and even recreation, malls have been able to cater to the public's needs (Rico et al., 2017). As malls grow larger, so do the facilities offering a range of activities that mallgoers can choose from. Common mall spaces include Cinemas, Food Courts, Playgrounds, Mini Amusement Parks, Arcade Areas, Massage Chair Stations, Lottery Shops (Elmashhara et al., 2019), and relatively new spaces like Alfresco Areas, Gardens, and Rooftops with Scenic Views. These mall spaces may influence mallgoers to prolong their stay or may increase the possibility of tourists visiting malls with a variety of recreational spaces to choose from. However, as stated in the same journal article (Rico et al., 2017), despite the numerous activities, there was a contradiction that some people just go to the mall to shop for their necessities as they would not be able to afford other items at malls. Despite this, malls still prove their popularity to the masses as it provides air-conditioned spaces to combat the Philippines' heat, which low-income families are not able to afford, so they flock to malls for the sole purpose of experiencing a cool environment (Sahakian, 2018).

Outdoor recreational activities

Open and well-ventilated areas are what tourists search for under the new normal (Rocamora, 2021), which makes the Philippines' tropical climate and natural sceneries suitable for outdoor activities. Urban spaces such as parks are mostly utilized in Metro Manila, such as Rizal Park and the University of the Philippines' Academic Oval. Examples of outdoor recreational activities in green spaces are fitness-related activities, bird watching, and family bonding (Saloma et al., 2021).

Despite the benefits of these outdoor recreational activities, only a few people get to enjoy them due to the lack of "free" and accessible urban parks recreation in Metro Manila. The journal article of Saloma and Akpedonu (2021) emphasized the lack of available recreational spaces to the public as some of them are "access-controlled public parks," which are mostly owned and accessible only to the homeowners of a subdivision or by the private sector. Furthermore, other available recreational spaces are not mainly accessible via public transportation, which can deter the public from going to these recreational spaces.

Factors affecting preferences for recreational spaces

Creating a sense of safety and security is a critical factor in choosing recreational facilities and influencing the public's decisions to visit a destination (Zou & Yu, 2022; Zhang, Wu, & Buhalis, 2018). Health and safety are also top concerns brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic as people gradually regain their confidence to travel (Al-Hasni, 2021). Xie et al. (2021) and Poku & Boakye (2019) suggest a direct correlation between safety and security and the risk perception that affect travel intentions, enjoyment, and experiences, whereby personal safety needs should be satisfied by the destination's natural and socio-cultural environments and conditions. Therefore, negative perception of recreational spaces as unsafe, dangerous, and crime-prone, especially in some areas of Metro Manila, can result in poor favorability in people's preferences since risk perceived varies from person to person (Zou & Yu, 2022), issues with safety and security have not stopped residents and visitors from going to recreational areas in the capital city provided they are familiar with the precautions and

safety awareness to reduce the spread of the virus and avert the potential dangers. Likewise, malls offer accessibility. Metro Manila hosts many malls and has become a center for mall culture as most are located near transportation terminals and main roads (Soriano, 2021), making them accessible to nearly all locals and tourists in the city.

As stated by Al-Hasni (2021) and Humagain and Singleton (2021), cleanliness also influences the preferences and constraints in choosing recreational establishments with the emerging trends on sanitation, health, and hygienic measures to adapt to the 'new normal'. Since a clean facility suggests organization and control, cleanliness and security frequently go hand in hand and are of utmost importance for satisfaction, comfort, and health. (Poku & Boakye, 2019). In addition, one aspect that affects how interested and satisfied residents are in the availability of basic infrastructure and facilities where recreational activities can be performed. Residents are more likely to become dissatisfied when their needs are unmet, or the facilities are less than the standard for the activities. The closure and restrictions on various public facilities to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 have also caused a decline in pursuing recreation or leisure (Morse et al., 2022; Venter et al., 2022). Nonetheless, some studies claim that there is an increased use of outdoor recreational space as the restrictions on indoor facilities such as shopping malls, museums, gyms, etc., have caused more people to choose outdoor facilities (Venter et al., 2022). Much consideration has been given to urban green spaces, urban parks, and neighborhood streets as venues where residents could enjoy, be active, and engage in physical and recreational activities (Lee et al., 2022).

Aside from that, Al-Hasni (2021) and Cervený (2022) indicated that people are becoming more sensitive to environmental issues and showing interest in choosing sustainable options due to the pandemic's long-term effects. The shift towards sustainability that is more considerate of a destination's environment and socio-cultural aspect has been discussed a lot in many recent studies and general consumer trends (Pulido-Fernandez & Lopez-Sanchez, 2019). While some studies show that this shift is occurring and that residents are becoming more responsible, other studies argue that many have little awareness of environmental issues and are still hesitant to take personal corrective measures (Cervený, 2022). That being the case, it is evident that there is a demand segment that makes a real commitment to sustainability and a segment for those who are only environmentally concerned that aligns with perceptions of whether sustainability in a destination is determined (Pulido-Fernandez & Lopez-Sanchez, 2019). Suppose a recreational space can strike a balance between achieving quality tourism and protecting the natural and cultural environment, it can positively influence the residents' perception of a destination where their lifestyles, access to amenities, and well-being are prioritized. Part of this is when the carrying capacity for visitor management is also being considered to minimize the negative impacts and preserve the qualities of recreational facilities and infrastructures to meet the current needs of residents and future generations (Li et al., 2021).

Methodology

Subjects

This study used a descriptive quantitative research design. Random sampling was used to determine the respondents, and Cochran's formula was utilized in order to get the sample size population. The target audience for this research was mallgoers that partakes in mall culture as a form of recreation due to the convenience malls offer (Rico et al., 2017). A total of 385 mallgoers were used as the sample for this study, based on the total population reported by the Philippine Statistics Authority's National Capital

Region Population 2020 Census of Population and Housing. The target population was filtered using three questions to check if they were qualified to be respondents.

Instruments

Using a quantitative research design, the proponents used a self-made survey questionnaire as a data collection instrument. The questionnaire was divided into four (4) parts. Part I determined the demographic profile based on age, gender, and monthly household income. The questions under the following parts were all based on a specific section in the related literature. Part II determined which areas of the mall were frequently used for recreation. The areas listed are based on the studies under 'Mall activities.' Part III determined how likely the respondents would patronize outdoor recreational spaces rather than indoor recreational spaces and the reasons for their preference. The statements were taken from the studies under 'Advantages and Disadvantages of Malls,' 'Metro Manila's Green Spaces,' and 'Recreational preferences of Metro Manila residents.' Part IV determined the factors that affected their recreational preferences regarding safety and security, cleanliness, available recreational activities, carrying capacity, and sustainability. These factors were taken from the studies under 'Factors affecting preferences for recreational spaces.' Part II, III, and IV used 4- point Likert Scale based-questions that showed the frequency and the level of agreement or disagreement of the respondents to the statements provided in the survey.

Data Collection Procedure

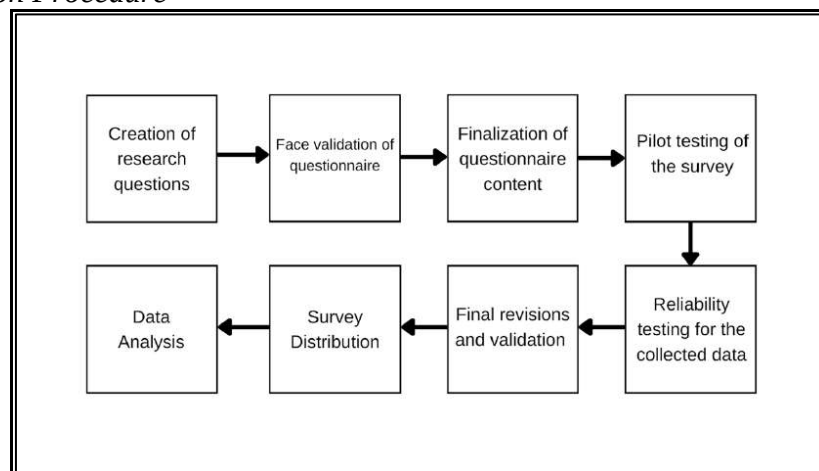


Figure 2. Data Collection Procedure

Data used in this study was collected through the provision of a survey questionnaire via Google Forms. The proponents of the study, first, created and drafted the questions. The survey questionnaire flow follows:

1. Demographics, wherein respondents were asked to choose their age, gender, and monthly household income
2. Respondents were asked regarding their mall recreational preferences
3. Respondents were asked about statements regarding their recreational preferences
4. Respondents were asked about factors that affected their recreational preferences

All survey questions, except the demographics, used the Likert Scale to accurately

fetch the data based on the respondents' liking. After the preparation of the questionnaire, the proponents verified its content with the help of the research advisers. For face validity, five (5) professionals, consisting of two (2) grammarians and three (3) experts in the field assessed and measured the overall validity of the survey questionnaire. Upon completion, the survey then underwent pilot testing to determine any faults and to see whether the questions result in the needed data. Cronbach's Alpha was used to properly check the consistency of the questionnaire. The survey had a rating of 0.722, which indicated that it was acceptable for dissemination. At the end of the testing, the survey was distributed using social media. This targeted those living in Metro Manila and those who traveled to its cities. The survey gauged the respondents' frequency in their participation in various recreational activities both in malls and open spaces, and it determined whether there was a change in the local mall culture and the people's recreational preferences.

Data Analysis

For the evaluation part of the gathered data, it was processed systematically through a descriptive statistics analysis that identified the accurate and appropriate results about the preferences of the people when it comes to recreational mall activities and alternative-open recreational spaces. Under Part I, the demographics were assessed through frequency and percentage while Part II to Part IV used averaging. Then it proceeded to the data coding for it to be analyzed as simply as possible rather than a massive data collection. The findings were analyzed in relation to the studies under the Review of Related Literature.

Ethical Consideration

The study does not contain any plagiarized work. All authors, books, journals, and sayings are all properly cited and follow the Republic Act No. 8293 (1997), the "Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines." The collection of the respondents' names was a voluntary act, should they opt to maintain their anonymity. Any information received was treated as classified and confidential. The respondents' consent was taken into consideration as they were free to decline in answering the questionnaire. The results and conclusion of this study are extended to the respondents upon request.

Consent Form

The researchers aim to determine if there has been a change in Metro Manila's mall culture and the public's preferences for recreational spaces. Participants will be asked to provide their age, gender, and monthly household income as well as asked to answer questions regarding the aforementioned topic. A total of 385 participants will be asked to participate in this study. All data collected will be used for educational purposes only and be treated with utmost confidentiality in accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

☐ I confirm that I have read and understood the information mentioned above and give my voluntary participation to take part in the study. I understand that all information I provide in this study must be truthful and accurate to my preferences.

☐ I do not agree to take part in this study.

Figure 3. Consent Form

Results

PART 1: What is the demographic profile of the sample population?

In the study, 385 individuals in total were surveyed. 7 out of 10 responders are in their twenties, according to Table 1. The sample is predominantly female. Additionally, more than half (55.4%) of the respondents have a monthly household income between Php21k and Php131k.

Table 1. Socio-demographics of the respondents' backgrounds

	Frequency	Percent
Age		
19 and below	76	19.7
20 – 30 years old	268	69.6
31 – 40 years old	14	3.6
41 – 50 years old	14	3.6
51 – 60 years old	8	2.1
61 years old and above	5	1.3
Total	385	385
Gender		
Female	277	71.9
Male	105	27.3
Prefer not to say	3	.8
Total	385	385
Monthly Household Income		
Less than ₱11,000	46	11.9
₱11,001 - ₱21,000	42	10.9
₱21,001 - ₱44,000	75	19.5
₱44,001 to ₱77,000	70	18.2
₱77,001 to ₱131,000	68	17.7
₱131,001 to ₱219,000	35	9.1
At least ₱219,001 and up	49	12.7
Total	385	385

PART 2: Which areas of the mall are frequently used by the respondents for recreation?
According to the findings, the food court scored the highest on average [3.17 (± 0.76)]. On the other side, a playground, amusement park, or garden are seldom visited. This infers that majority of respondents go to the mall to buy food and seek entertainment.

Table 2. Frequency and descriptions of visiting various mall locations

	Never	Rarely	Often	Always	MEAN	SD	INTERPRETATION
Al Fresco Dining Area (Restaurant, Lounge, etc.)	29	140	161	55	2.63	0.819	Often
Entertainment Area	13	133	182	57	2.74	0.748	Often
Garden	28	209	115	33	2.4	0.747	Rarely
Rooftop with a Scenic View	40	182	110	53	2.46	0.856	Rarely
Food Court	8	60	175	142	3.17	0.762	Often
Mini Amusement Park	42	191	114	38	2.38	0.809	Rarely
Playground	99	203	59	24	2.02	0.813	Rarely

Source on interpretation: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Four-point-Likert-Scale_tbl1_332533000

PART 3: Given the situation, how likely are the respondents going to patronize open spaces rather than going to indoor spaces like malls?

According to the findings, respondents favor outdoor recreational spaces with a mean of 3.2 (± 0.74).

Table 3. Preferred type of Recreational Spaces

1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly Agree	MEAN	SD	INTERPRETATION
I prefer visiting indoor recreational spaces (Shopping malls, convention centers, etc.)						
11	92	171	111	2.99	0.802	Agree
I prefer visiting outdoor recreational spaces (Urban parks, green areas, etc.)						
6	57	176	146	3.2	0.742	Agree

Source on interpretation: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Four-point-Likert-Scale_tbl1_332533000

The statements are sorted into those supporting indoor recreational spaces and those supporting outdoor recreational spaces. The spaces that respondents most prefer are spaces with convenient access to public transportation and spaces where there are lower chances of attracting COVID.

Table 4. Factors to consider in choosing Recreational Space

1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Disagree	4 Strongly Disagree	MEAN	SD	INTERPRETATI
MALLS AND INDOOR RECREATIONAL SPACES						
I consider a location's accessibility through public transport when choosing a recreational space						
238	121	13	13	1.48	0.722	Strongly agree
I consider the availability of parking spaces when choosing a recreational space						
168	140	49	28	1.84	0.911	Agree
I consider if a location has air-conditioning when choosing a recreational space						
140	181	46	18	1.85	0.806	Agree
I consider if a location has reliable security when choosing a recreational space						
232	120	23	10	1.51	0.726	Agree
I consider if a location has free WiFi when choosing a recreational space						
88	124	119	54	2.36	0.985	Agree
I consider if a location has a wide range of shops and services when choosing a recreational space						
194	141	39	11	1.65	0.776	Agree
I consider if a location offers free entry when choosing a recreational space						
196	138	35	16	1.66	0.81	Agree
I consider its proximity to other tourism-related establishments (Theme parks, Hotels, etc.) when choosing a recreational space						
169	163	33	20	1.75	0.82	Agree
OPEN RECREATIONAL SPACES						
I consider a location's exposure to nature when choosing a recreational space						
161	165	44	15	1.77	0.799	Agree
I consider if a location has space for outdoor physical activities (jogging, cycling, running) when choosing a recreational space						
120	147	85	33	2.08	0.933	Agree
I consider if a location offers free access to recreational equipment when choosing a recreational space						
135	155	73	22	1.95	0.877	Agree
I consider if a location has less chances of COVID transmission when choosing a recreational space						
263	89	19	14	1.44	0.751	Strongly Agree

Source on interpretation: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Four-point-Likert-Scale_tbl1_332533000

PART 4: What are the factors that affect the respondents' decision and preferences?
According to the results, cleanliness ranks first, with a mean score of 3.77, as the respondents' main consideration when choosing a recreational area.

Table 5. Factors affecting respondents' decision and preferences

1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Disagree	4 Strongly Disagree	MEAN	SD	INTERPRETATION
I value safety and security when choosing a recreational space						
7	10	68	300	3.72	0.604	Strongly Agree
I value cleanliness when choosing a recreational space						
7	6	56	316	3.77	0.565	Strongly Agree
I consider available recreational activities when choosing a recreational space						
11	28	138	208	3.41	0.749	Agree
I consider carrying capacity when choosing a recreational space						
11	36	139	199	3.37	0.769	Agree
I value sustainability when choosing a recreational space						
10	17	133	225	3.49	0.704	Agree

Source on interpretation: <https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Four-point-Likert-Scale-tbl1-332533000>

Discussion and conclusion

With the shift towards the 'New Normal', this study was conducted to determine changes in people's preferences between shopping malls and open green spaces for recreation. It has been concluded that the respondents have shown a great preference towards outdoor recreational spaces but have expressed that shopping malls are relevant as it provides services and facilities that the former lacks.

Based on the data collected, cleanliness was the number one factor respondents chose for them to partake in recreational activities. This preference has been influenced by the pandemic, as people consider the consequences of improper safety protocols and the risk of contracting the virus.

This study was able to achieve its objectives, benefiting the industry by showcasing the importance of open green spaces to the mall-going public and enhancing the urban environment in Metro Manila to a more sustainable and equity-focused environment. This paper can be used to gauge the public's preferences toward outdoor and indoor spaces and the factors that affect such. Beneficial to both private and public sectors, including Metro Manila LGUs, DOT, NPDC, and other private companies that could invest in creating such spaces for the public. This paper can also be used as a basis for other studies such as urban planning as a topic of interest.

Theoretical Contributions

This study contains available literature regarding the Philippine's mall culture, outdoor recreational spaces, activities involved in these recreational spaces, and the preferences of the people between malls and the outdoor recreational spaces. Through these related literature, further studies may be conducted by both public and private establishments,

especially tourism-related industries to further improve and evolve the Philippine's tourism scene. This study utilized the Adapted Theory of Planned Behavior, with the incorporation of the Psychosocial Constructs by Mateer et al. (2021) to predict a person's behavior and attitude towards outdoor recreation. Based on the results in Table 3, outdoor recreational spaces were preferred and in Table 5, cleanliness was the topmost priority of the respondents. Both results were because of COVID-19. This study adds to current literature how people's preferences have changed, considering all the aforementioned psychosocial constructs.

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THE IMPACT OF TOURISM EVENTS ON TOURIST DEMAND: A REVIEW

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Abstract

Tourism events such as sporting events and cultural festivals significantly impact the local economy by attracting tourists and improving the quality of life of locals. Therefore, it has also attracted academic attention. Despite substantial studies on the impact of these events, the approaches used to quantify the impact of events on tourist demand are not well understood. This review article examines published research papers that assess the impact of tourism events on tourism demand to bridge this gap. This article points to the prominence of “Tourism Economics” as a leading journal in the field. The findings show that sports events are the most often investigated category, followed by festivals, commercial, cultural, musical, and religious events. Methodologies include surveys, statistical analysis, and regression models, while common tourism event demand proxies include the number of visitors/ tourist arrivals, visitor expenditures/ spending, and hotel performance metrics. This review article offers insightful information for scholars and practitioners interested in understanding how tourism events impact tourist demand.

Keywords: Tourism Events; Tourist Demand; Review; Event Tourism

Introduction

Tourism events have seen a rise in popularity on a worldwide scale nowadays. Tourism events have evolved into top draws, whether music festivals that bring visitors from all over the world or sporting events that draw millions of spectators. As a result, tourist events have become effective instruments for promoting destinations and catalysts for economic growth.

Events related to tourism can be grouped according to their nature and objectives. Cultural Events showcasing local customs, artwork, and legacy provide tourists with engaging experiences (Akhoondnejad, 2016; Ziakas & Costa, 2011; Torre & Scarborough, 2017). Sports events unite players and fans to display ability and athleticism worldwide (Delpy, 1998; Hinch & Higham, 2001; Kirkup & Sutherland, 2017; Perić et al., 2019). Conferences and trade exhibitions are examples of business events that provide venues for networking, creativity, and industry cooperation (Colombo & Marques, 2020; Foley et al., 2013; Hankinson, 2015). Studying these divisions enables a fuller comprehension of their dynamics and effects. Each group brings unique advantages and possibilities.

Even though there has been a lot of research on festivals and events related to tourism (Akhoondnejad, 2016; Brown et al., 2016; Getz, 2008; Getz & Page, 2016; Kim et al., 2015; Laing, 2018; Vajirakachorn & Chongwatpol, 2017), there is still a glaring gap in the literature regarding a review on how these events affect travel demand. By researching and assessing the articles that study how tourism events impact tourist demand, this paper seeks to close this gap. Researchers and professionals in event tourism will gain a lot from shedding light on this topic.

Literature review

Event Tourism

Tourism events, ranging from major sports competitions and cultural festivals to small-scale events, contribute significantly to the economies of many regions worldwide.

Scholars have taken an interest in event tourism (Backman et al., 1995; Kim et al., 2013; Laing, 2018; Todd, 2017; Yoon et al., 2000; Yuan, 2013), as these events draw a sizable number of visitors and potentially increase the quality of life for residents by creating a more vibrant and culturally rich community (Getz, 2012). When the different aspect of tourism events, such as destination image (e.g., Deng & Li, 2014; Jin et al., 2013; Kaplanidou, 2006; King et al., 2015; Lai, 2018), intention to visit (e.g., Lee et al., 2014; Pratt & Chan, 2016), loyalty (e.g., Alexandris, 2016; Alexandris et al., 2017; Ho et al., 2022; Kirkup & Sutherland, 2017) have been studied extensively, there are limited reviews on the methodology used to study the impact of tourism events on tourist demand. This review aims to fill this gap by exploring how previous research measures the impact of tourism events on tourist demand.

Review Article on Tourism Demand

Numerous review studies have been published on the field of tourism demand and forecasting (for example, Dogru et al., 2017; Jiao and Chen, 2019; Li et al., 2021; Song et al., 2019; Wu et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2021). However, there is a marked difference in the number of review papers focusing on demand for tourism events compared to review papers studying general tourism demand and forecasting. While some attempts have been made to estimate the economic impact of event tourism (Hodur & Leistriz, 2006), these studies generally focus on economic impact rather than specifically addressing tourism event demand. In addition, studies focusing on the economic impact of sporting events have been carried out (Dimitrovski, Lekovic, and Duradevic, 2022a; Darko Dimitrovski, Leković, and Duradevic, 2022b). This discrepancy underscores the importance of a comprehensive and rigorous study of the impact of events on tourism demand. More attention must be paid to the factors influencing the demand for tourism events. This paper bridges this gap in the current literature by reviewing tourism event demand articles and providing valuable insights.

Methodology

According to Shamseer et al. (2015) and Yang et al. (2017), this research employed a five-stage model for analyzing articles. These stages include (i) the definition of the research question, (ii) the development of the review protocol, (iii) the literature search, (iv) the extraction of relevant literature, and (v) the synthesis of conclusions. This research followed the guidelines outlined in the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) established by Liberati et al. (2009) (see Figure 1).

Based on the details provided in the Qiu et al. (2023) study, the search terms used for article retrieval were defined as (((TI=(tour* OR travel OR visit* OR destination OR aviation OR hospitality OR hotel)) AND TI=(arrival OR impact)) AND TI=(event OR sport OR festiva*)). The search was conducted on Web of Science in August 2023, with restrictions to include only English language articles and journal articles (e.g., articles and review articles) while excluding conference papers, book chapters, books, letters, conference reviews, and editorials.

Following the assessment, 57 records were identified through database searching, and an additional 12 records were found through other sources, resulting in a total of 66 records. After removing duplicates, 41 records were excluded based on abstract screening. During the screening process, titles and abstracts were evaluated. The criteria for article inclusion were determined by reviewing the abstracts to ensure alignment with the research focus on the impact of tourism event demand. Articles analyzing the domestic image impact of hosting the 2012 Summer Olympic Games

(Kenyon & Bodet, 2018) and examining changes in destination images from a tourism perspective (Kim et al., 2019) were excluded as they did not address event demand specifically. Furthermore, a study on the impact of tourism on religious festivals in Bhutan, particularly the Tsechu festival and its effects on local communities (Suntikul and Dorji, 2016), was excluded as it fell outside the scope of event demand investigation. From these, nine full-text articles were excluded for various reasons, ultimately leaving 16 articles included in the study.

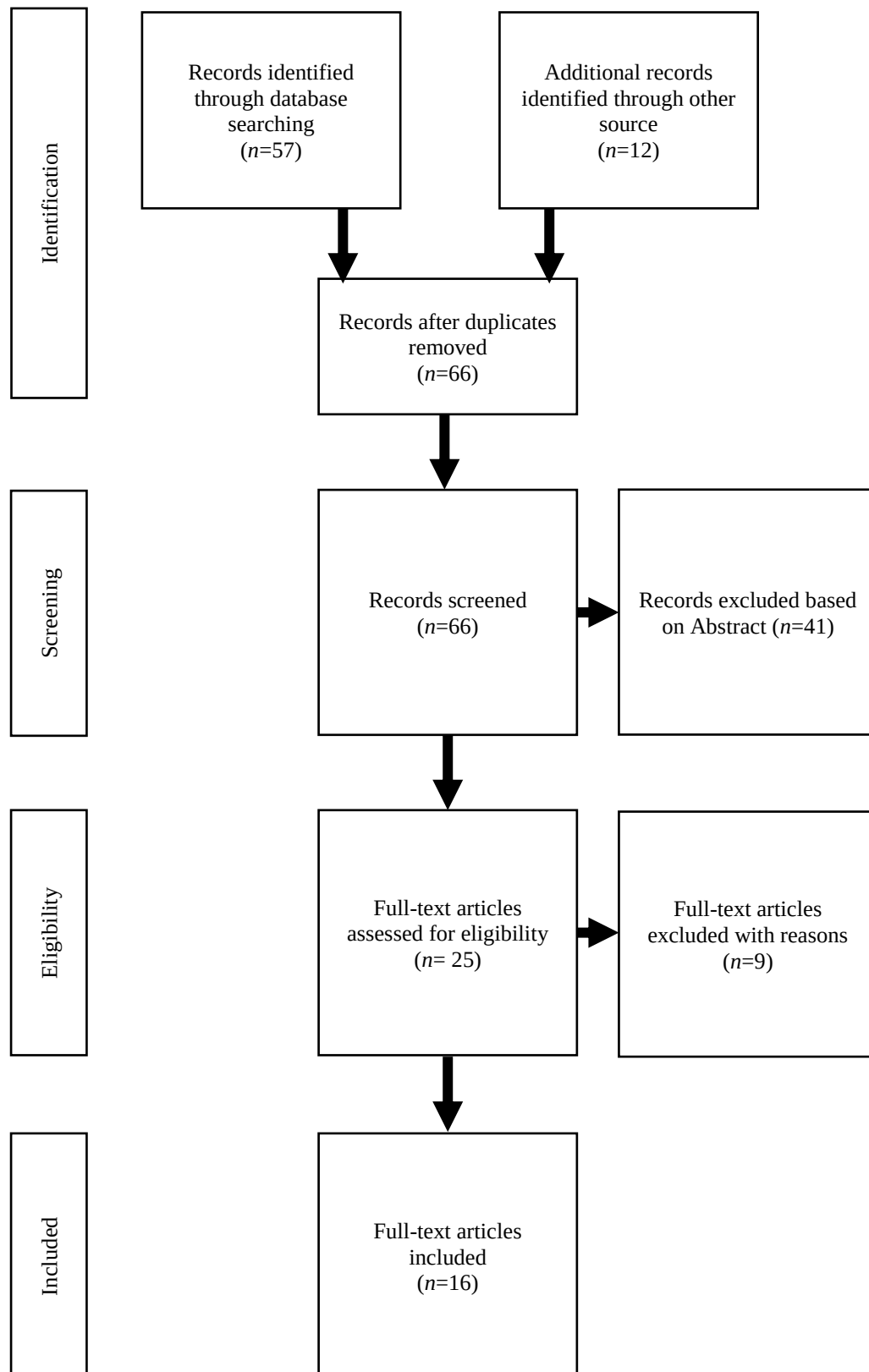


Figure 1. Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) flow diagram

Results

Publication Time

Upon reviewing the publication years of the articles, it is evident that there has been a steady increase in the number of publications over time (Table 1). From 2001 to 2010, only one article was published, indicating limited research on the topic during that period. However, from 2011 to 2020, the number of articles significantly increased to eleven, suggesting a growing interest in the subject matter. Moreover, from 2021 onwards, four more articles were published, highlighting the topic's continued relevance and ongoing exploration. This trend demonstrates the expanding scope of research in this field as scholars increasingly recognize the importance and potential applications of the impact of tourism demand.

Table 1. Publication Years of the Articles

Year of Publication	Frequency
2001-2010	1
2011-2020	11
2021-now	4

Publication outlets

Table 2 shows the number of published papers and the percentage distribution of journal outlets. "Tourism Economics" published the largest number of articles, accounting for 37.50% of the total number of articles. "Journal of Travel Research" followed closely, publishing two papers, accounting for 12.50% of the total. The remaining journals each published one paper, including "Journal of Destination Marketing & Management," "Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research," "Sustainability," "Tourism Review," "International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management," "Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research," "Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism," and "Tourism Management." each account for 6.25% of the total number of journal articles. These findings illustrate the dominance of "Tourism Economics" in the number of published papers on understanding tourism demand.

Table 2. The Number of Papers Published and the Percentage Distribution of Journals.

Journal Name	Frequency	Percent
Tourism Economics	6	37.50%
Journal of Travel Research	2	12.50%
Journal of Destination Marketing & Management	1	6.25%
Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research	1	6.25%
Sustainability	1	6.25%
Tourism Review	1	6.25%
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	1	6.25%
Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research	1	6.25%
Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism	1	6.25%
Tourism Management	1	6.25%

Research location

As can be seen from Table 3, the study locations of these 16 articles are distributed on different continents. Most of the research was conducted in North America, with four articles focusing on tourism events in the United States. Europe is also well represented,

with seven articles spread across countries including Germany, Spain, Italy, Italy and Switzerland, Greece and the UK. Furthermore, Azerbaijan and China represent research in Asia, while Australia and New Zealand are the only two countries in Oceania. Finally, there is an article conducted in Brazil, representing South America. Overall, the geographic distribution of the study locations suggests that the research conducted is globally diverse and represents a deep understanding of tourism events in multiple regions.

We can also categorize the research locations into developed and developing countries. Developed countries include the United States, Germany, Spain, Italy, Italy and Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and Greece, accounting for 13 articles. Advanced economies, high standards of living, and well-established infrastructures characterize these countries. On the other hand, developing countries such as Azerbaijan, China, Brazil, and account for three articles. These countries are still in the process of economic growth, industrialization, and improving their infrastructure and standard of living. This categorization emphasizes the global representation of the research, with insights from both developed and developing nations contributing to knowledge in the field of tourism events.

Table 3. Research Location of Articles

Developed / Developing Countries	Geographical Regions	Research Locations	Frequency	Percent
Developed countries	North America	United States	4	25.00%
	Europe	Germany	2	12.50%
		Spain	1	6.25%
		Italy	1	6.25%
		Italy and Switzerland*	1	6.25%
		United Kingdom	1	6.25%
		Greece	1	6.25%
	Oceania	Australia	1	6.25%
		New Zealand	1	6.25%
Developing countries	Asia	Azerbaijan	1	6.25%
		China	1	6.25%
	South America	Brazil	1	6.25%

Note: The event studied is "CollonTrek trail". The trail is located between the Unité du Grand Combin (Aosta Valley, Italy) and the Val d'Herens (Canton du Valais, Switzerland) northwest of the Pennine Alps.

From 2001 to 2010, one article focused on a single location, indicating limited exploration of multiple cities during that period. However, from 2011 to 2020, one of the eleven published articles examined multiple cities, while the remaining ten focused on a single location. In the most recent period from 2021 until now, three out of four articles studied multiple locations, with only one focusing on a single location. Four out of a total of 16 articles explored multiple locations, demonstrating a growing interest in understanding the dynamics, interconnections, and comparative analysis between different geographic regions. This trend reflects a growing recognition of the importance of studying multiple locations simultaneously to understand the impact of tourism events on demand.

Table 4. Study Locations with Year of Publication

Year of Publication	Single	Multiple	Total
2001-2010	1	0	1
2011-2020	10	1	11
2021-now	1	3	4
Total	12	4	16

Type of Events

As shown in Table 5, most studies focused on examining one event at a time, with only 37.5% investigating multiple events simultaneously. For example, Nashi (2013) conducted a study to explore the impact of seven major sporting events on inbound tourist arrivals. These events include the British Lions Tour, Rugby World Cup, Commonwealth Games, Cricket World Cup, America's Cup, and the British and Irish Lions Tour. Anguera-Torrell and Nicolau (2023) examined the effect of major trade shows held in the US on hotel occupancy.

Table 5. Number of event(s) studied at a time

Event(s) studied at a time	Frequency	Percent
Single event	10	62.50%
Multiple events	6	37.50%

In Table 6, there seems to be a tendency to study multiple events in tourism event demand research. Six of the sixteen articles explored multiple events, while the remaining ten focused on a single event. Example for multiple events included. From 2001 to 2010, only one article was published, studying a single event, indicating limited research at the time. Two of the 11 articles published between 2011 and 2020 examined multiple events, while the majority (nine) focused on one event.

In contrast, from 2021 to the present, three of the four articles examined multiple events, and only one focused on a single event. This trend indicates a growing interest in exploring the relationships and interactions between different events for tourism demand research. Researchers can better understand the impact of different events' demands by considering multiple events.

Table 6. Number of event(s) studied with Year of Publication

Year of Publication	Single event	Multiple events	Total
2001-2010	0	1	1
2011-2020	9	2	11
2021-now	1	3	4
Total	10	6	16

Table 7 shows the different types of events. Sports events were mentioned the most, with six papers accounting for 37.50% of the total. Examples of sporting events studied included the 2014 FIFA WC (Barreda, Zubieta, Chen, Cassilha, & Kageyama, 2017), Pro Bowl, two professional golf events (Hyundai Tournament of Champions and Sony Open), Honolulu Marathon and Ironman Triathlon (Baumann & Matheson, 2016). Followed by festivals, there are four papers, accounting for 25% of the total. 2 papers studied business events, and two papers studied cultural events, each accounting for 12.50%. One paper studied music event, and another studied religious event, accounting

for 6.25% each. These findings highlight the diversity of event types studies, with sporting events being the most prominent category.

Table 7. Event Type

Event Type	Frequency	Percent	Example
Sport	6	37.50%	(Baumann & Matheson, 2016; Nishio, 2013)
Festivals	4	25.00%	(Chhabra, Sills, & Cubbage, 2003; Mahadevan, 2016)
Business	2	12.50%	(Warnick, Bojanic, & Cartier, 2017)
Cultural	2	12.50%	(Capocchi, Barboza, DeMicco, & Vallone, 2020)
Musical	1	6.25%	(Arnegger & Herz, 2016)
Religious	1	6.25%	(Sanchez, Fernandez, & Lara, 2017)

Research Design

As demonstrated in Table 8, cross-sectional and longitudinal studies were used to analyze the demand for tourist events. Eight different cross-sectional investigations were conducted in total. Only one research was done to look at the demand for tourist events between 2001 and 2010. Six cross-sectional studies were conducted from 2011 to 2020, suggesting an increasing interest in comprehending the demand for tourist events. Only one research was done using a cross-sectional study that covered the years 2021 to the present.

Notably, the focus has shifted to longitudinal surveys. Between 2001 and 2010, no longitudinal survey was conducted. However, five studies were conducted between 2011 and 2020 to investigate tourism event demand. Three longitudinal studies have recently been published after 2021 to deepen our understanding of how tourism event demand is evolving.

Table 8. Research design among different year

	Cross-Sectional	Longitudinal	Total
2001-2010	1	0	1
2011-2020	6	5	11
2021-now	1	3	4
total	8	8	16

Two of the five longitudinal studies between 2011 and 2020, as indicated in Table 9, concentrate on examining yearly data to comprehend the demand for tourist events. A move toward higher data frequency was also seen, with two studies using monthly data and one looking at daily data. This shows the need for more precise and timely data to track variations in demand for tourism events throughout the year is recognized.

From 2021 until now, no longitudinal studies have depended on yearly data. Instead, the usage of high-frequency data has grown much more. While one study uses monthly

data, the other two concentrate on daily data, reflecting daily variations in the demand for tourism activities. This highlights how real-time monitoring and analyzing tourist event demand are increasingly important in guiding decision-making.

Table 9. Data Frequency with Year of Publication

	Annual Data	Monthly Data	Daily Data
2011-2020	2	2	1
2021-now	0	1	2
total	2	3	3

Data

As shown in Table 10, the number of visitors, tourism expenditure or spending are commonly used as indicators to measure the tourism event demand. The number of visitors reflects the number of tourists arriving at a destination or the number of people participating in a specific event, indicating the overall demand for tourism events. On the other hand, tourist expenditure and spending reflect the economic impact of tourism and the economic contribution made by tourists through their consumption of goods, services and activities. Three studies used hotel performance metrics such as average daily rate (ADR), occupancy, and revenue per available room (RevPAR).

Furthermore, alternative measures such as willingness to pay (WTP) or consumption of beer, chicken and sausages can also be considered when studying tourism demand. These measures capture additional aspects of tourist behavior and preferences, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the tourism event demand.

Table 10. Proxies for Measuring Tourism Event Demand

Type	Frequency
Number of Visitors/ Tourist Arrival	8
Expenditures/ Spending	7
Hotel Performance Metrics	3
Others	2

Note: A study may have more than one proxy for measuring tourism event demand

Out of the 16 studies shown in Table 11, 8 used surveys as the source of data collection. Regarding the secondary data sources, eight studies utilized secondary data, indicating the importance of existing information in understanding tourism event demand. Government data was the most commonly used among the secondary data sources, with three studies relying on this source. The STR (Smith Travel Research) database was used in 2 studies, while Booking.com data was used in one study. Additionally, two studies utilized multiple secondary data sources for a more comprehensive analysis.

Table 11. Data Sources

Data Source			Frequency
Survey			8
Secondary Data	Government	3	8
	STR	2	
	Booking.com	1	

	Multiple Sources	2	

Methodologies Employed

Researchers studying tourism event demand employ a range of methodologies to gain insights into the factors influencing attendance. All study employs descriptive methods, which help summarize and describe key demand characteristics. As shown in Table 12, 7 studies relied solely on descriptive methods. Researchers conducted hypothesis testing in three papers to assess potential demand differences among different groups. Researchers make use of regression models to gain valuable insights. Ordinary least squares (OLS), a simple yet powerful regression method, is employed to analyze the relationship between variables and predict demand patterns. Additionally, advanced techniques such as the Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) model, the AutoRegressive (AR) model, the AutoRegressive Integrated Moving Average with Exogenous Variables (ARIMAX), Two-Stage Least Squares (2SLS) method, and the spatial difference-in-differences approach are utilized. These advanced regression models allow researchers to capture complex dynamics, control for potential confounding factors, and assess the impact of various variables on tourism event demand.

Table 12. Methodologies Employed

Method Used	Frequency
Descriptive Method Only	7
Hypothesis Testing	3
Regression Models	6

Discussion and conclusion

A keyword search might not include all relevant articles on researching demand for tourism events. Recognizing the shortcomings of keyword-based searches in terms of comprehensiveness is critical. Despite this restriction, It is feasible to spot patterns in the literature. According to the available publications, it is clear that academics are increasingly using new techniques, taking into account several places and events at once and including higher frequency data in their assessments of the demand for tourist events. These patterns indicate a rising need for deeper and more in-depth investigations of this topic. Researchers always experiment with novel ideas to improve our comprehension of the variables affecting demand for tourism events.

Although events have long been an important part of the tourism industry, research has paid less attention to event demand. Event demand has been less studied than tourist demand and forecast for a region and attractions. In addition, the methodologies used in event studies are not sufficiently advanced, especially the lack of deep learning methods that are commonly found in tourism forecasting (Bi et al., 2021; He et al., 2021; Law et al., 2019; Wu et al., 2021). Therefore, further broader research is needed to understand how events affect tourism demand fully.

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GROUP LIFESTYLE MOBILITIES: UNDERSTANDING CHINESE SENIOR LONG-STAY TOURISTS IN RURAL DESTINATIONS

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Abstract

Existing work on senior lifestyle mobilities in China has thus far predominantly focused on therapeutic landscape imaginaries and second-home cities. This paper shifts the focus to the group-oriented lifestyle pursuits of Chinese urban seniors who temporarily reside in rural areas for extended vacations. By interviewing Chinese senior long-stay tourists in rural destinations, this study examines how their decisions to engage in long-stay tourism are driven by the quest for a communal leisure lifestyle characterized by group living routines and a sense of camaraderie. Our findings highlight the role of geo-arbitrage in facilitating and accommodating these group-oriented mobility patterns among senior tourists. Yet, their mobile later life experiences are also marked by precariousness and vulnerability due to individual and group-level health decline, as well as the disparities in senior care services between urban and rural regions in China.

Keywords: senior tourists, long-stay tourism, lifestyle mobilities, geo-arbitrage, rural destinations, China

Introduction

China ranks first globally in terms of the scale and speed of population aging (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021). Concurrently, it has witnessed an increased number of older adults travelling to and temporarily residing in places away from their permanent residence for lifestyle-oriented purposes, such as leisure and health enhancement (Chen & Wang, 2022; Xu & Wu, 2016). Proactively addressing population ageing has become a crucial national strategy in China (National Health Commission of People's Republic of China, 2022). A thorough and extensive exploration of the potential of tourism in promoting active ageing, recognized as a strategic pillar industry by the Chinese government, is thus warranted.

With the rise of social and personal mobility in pursuit of a 'better' life, an increasing number of tourists are inclined to extend their stays in tourism destinations to fully immerse themselves in the local environment (Cohen et al., 2015). Long-stay tourism, albeit relatively underexplored, has gained significant attention due to its expanding scale and impact (Anantamongkolkul et al., 2019; Lyu et al., 2021). This concept originates from the practice of seasonal tourism, where individuals would travel to warmer regions during winter and cooler areas during summer (Smith & House, 2006). Long-stay tourists choose to temporarily or seasonally settle in tourism destinations driven by a desire for a particular lifestyle (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009). Scholarly literature often examines these individuals through the lens of lifestyle mobilities or lifestyle migration (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009; Cohen et al., 2015). While lifestyle migrants typically own a second home in their preferred destination, affording them a relatively stable base, lifestyle mobilizers do not possess a property and have greater flexibility in selecting destinations and accommodations (Cohen et al., 2015; Lyu et al., 2021).

In recent years, the phenomenon of elderly Chinese individuals relocating to rural destinations for extended vacations has been gaining momentum (Cheng et al., 2022). However, existing literature on senior long-stay tourists in China has primarily focused on seasonal elderly migrants who own second homes in southern coastal cities such as

Sanya, while overlooking the temporary residence of senior tourists in rural settings (Cheng & Yang, 2021; Lyu et al., 2021). Tourism plays a vital role in the rural revitalization program initiated by the Chinese government in 2017. It effectively enhances the attractiveness of countryside destinations to urban seniors seeking extended vacations. This is particularly relevant in contributing to addressing the challenges posed by population ageing and the associated pension burden in metropolitan areas (Cheng et al., 2020; Pan et al., 2021).

A key factor that distinguishes senior long-stay tourism in rural China from other countries is the urban-rural dual structure related to the land ownership system (Pan et al., 2021). In China, land property in rural regions is collectively owned, with strict regulations prohibiting land trading for real estate purposes. Consequently, senior tourists often choose to stay in *nongjiale* (农家乐, in Chinese refers to happy family homes), a prevalent form of rural tourism homestays, during their extended holidays. This sets their experiences apart from retirees in Western countries who may own countryside villas or vacation homes as their later-life residences (Hedberg & Haandrikman, 2014; Vepsäläinen & Pitkänen, 2010). The temporary nature of these homestays indicates lifestyle *mobilities* rather than lifestyle *migration* (Cohen et al., 2015). Moreover, unlike the second-home tourism prevalent in urban areas of China, where properties are often purposefully constructed as apartments within high-rise buildings in gated communities (Wu et al., 2015; Salazar & Zhang, 2013), *nongjiale* provide a unique option for Chinese senior tourists seeking temporary residence in rural areas, offering a perceived authentic rural setting along with cost-effective travel service packages. Notably, traveling in companion groups is typical among older Chinese adults in rural long-stay tourism destinations, which diverges from the individualistic tendencies observed in previous lifestyle mobilities studies (Cohen et al., 2015).

Accordingly, this study focuses on senior group long-stay tourism in rural China and aims to explore its unique characteristics and practices. It addresses three main questions:

- (a) Why do senior Chinese individuals gather together and travel to rural destinations for extended vacation?
- (b) How do they spend their group-oriented days during their extended stays in rural areas?
- (c) Why do they choose to end their group long-stay tourism?

By scrutinizing this unconventional form of later-life mobilities through a theoretical lens of lifestyle mobilities, the study intends to provide a deeper understanding of the experiences of senior tourists who temporarily reside in rural areas in China. The research findings, derived from semi-structured interviews with Chinese senior long-stay rural tourists, are expected to shed light on the theoretical interplay between lifestyle pursuits, long-stay tourism, population ageing, and rural revitalization. Furthermore, the findings can inform future policies and strategies aimed at promoting sustainable and inclusive rural tourism development while addressing the potential benefits and challenges associated with this form of tourism.

Literature Review

Long-stay tourism and lifestyle mobilities

Long-stay tourism, positioned between short-term tourism and permanent migration, represents a form of discretionary mobility with an indeterminate duration ranging from weeks to months (Castilla-Polo et al., 2023). Despite its significance, this extended vacation has received relatively limited attention within conventional tourism

typologies, leading to diverse terms used to describe it, such as seasonal migration (McHugh & Mings, 1991), second-home tourism (Hall & Müller, 2004), amenity migration (Gurran, 2008), lifestyle migration (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009) and lifestyle mobilities (Cohen et al., 2015). Despite differences in research perspectives and emphases, these instances share the commonality that the tourists typically possess a certain affluence level and seek an improved lifestyle. Long-stay tourism resides within a continuum wherein short-term travel and permanent migration lie at opposite ends (Bell & Ward, 2000). Individuals engaged in long-stay tourism may first experience a destination as day trippers but gradually transform into temporary migrants as they progress through different life stages, with travel experiences accumulated and their core life objectives changed (Anantamongkolkul et al., 2019). As such, long-stay tourism blurs the boundaries between travel and migration, as well as the concepts of 'home' and 'away', reflecting a temporally-extended lifestyle choice as opposed to episodic tourism experience (Cohen et al., 2015).

In recent years, literature on long-stay tourism has reflected a 'mobility turn' in the social sciences (Hannam et al., 2006; Sheller & Urry, 2006). Broadly speaking, research on long-stay tourism can be categorized into two main strands. The first strand focuses on the socio-economic factors that facilitate lifestyle-driven extended vacations, encompassing the elevation of social mobility and the expansion of individual motility. On the one hand, social mobility symbolizes progress and wealth, and the emergence of a temporary residence market signifies a society's embrace of leisure-oriented mobility (Müller & Hoogendoorn, 2013). On the other hand, extended stays in specific destinations not only reflect individual motility but also serve as a manifestation of social capital possessed by distinct social groups (Åkerlund, 2017; Casado-Díaz et al., 2014).

Lifestyle-driven forms of mobility or migration represent strategies employed by individuals with relative privilege to escape pressures in their original places of residence, such as habitual life burdens and the 'rat race'. Simultaneously, they benefit from the host society's advantages, including a more relaxed pace of life, lower property prices and cost of living, and favorable climate and health conditions (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009; Chen & Bao, 2021). This relative privilege encompasses economic, human and political capital, which enables individuals to relocate or temporarily reside in places that offer a higher quality of life compared to their home regions (Casado-Díaz et al., 2014; Xu et al., 2018). The concept of 'geo-arbitrage', proposed by Hayes (2014), emphasizes how individuals strategically respond to structural inequalities and geographic variations in living costs. In general, these lifestyle-driven flows predominantly occur from global north to south and from metropolitan areas towards rural regions, exemplifying downward social mobility (Vepsäläinen & Pitkänen, 2010).

The second line of research in long-stay tourism examines the experiential aspects for mobile individuals and the societal impacts within the host society. Firstly, long-stay tourism has profound effects on individual identity, sense of belonging and place attachment (Cohen & Cohen, 2015). It reflects and further accelerates the ongoing transformation of 'liquid modernity', blurring the boundaries between work and leisure, production and consumption, while foregrounding lifestyle dimensions (Bauman, 2000; Wu et al., 2015). Secondly, long-stay tourism challenges the conventional notion of home as a singular entity and introduces more intricate dynamism and symbolic meanings to the concept of home, particularly in the context of second home tourism (Chen & Bao, 2021; Wu et al., 2018). Thirdly, long-stay tourism has substantial socio-physical impacts on host communities. Despite actively distancing themselves from mass tourists, long-stay tourists may also show disinterest in local culture and

integration (Anantamongkolkul et al., 2019; Wu & Xu, 2019). Given the attraction of long-stay tourists to specific climate conditions, natural beauty and cultural factors, long-stay tourism can lead to shifts in resource allocation and land use within destinations (Kocabiyik & Loopmans, 2020). For example, purpose-built second-home properties in gated communities may not only escalate housing prices and restrict land supply but also exacerbate spatial differentiation and social disparities between long-stay tourists and local residents, further deepening societal divisions (Hedberg & Haandrikman, 2014; Larsson & Müller, 2019).

The senior population constitutes a significant segment of the long-stay tourism market owing to their abundant discretionary time, and for some, financial resources. Existing research on senior long-stay tourism has predominantly focused on developed countries and international travel, highlighting the distinct characteristics of elderly long-stayers across nations (Castilla-Polo et al., 2023). In North America, particular attention is given to “snowbirds” who migrate to coastal areas in Mexico or sunbelt regions, engaging in community-based leisure activities during their ‘third stage of life’ (Smith & House, 2006). In Europe, particularly Nordic countries, the cultural tradition of owning vacation homes (second residences) along the Mediterranean coast or in mountainous rural areas is deeply ingrained (Larsson & Müller, 2019). Australia has seen the popularity of recreational vehicle travel among retirees, embodying the notion of ‘grey nomads’ (Hillman, 2013). Additionally, Japanese retirees increasingly relocate to Southeast Asia, attracted by policy preferences and the availability of medical services in destinations such as Malaysia (Ono, 2015). However, limited attention has been given to developing countries such as China regarding elderly long-stay tourism.

Later-life mobilities and rural long-stay tourism in China

In contemporary China, the rapid increase in the aging population is intricately intertwined with the growing mobility of the elderly, posing a challenge for elderly care due to the current deficiencies in institutionalized care services (Pan et al., 2021). As the process of social modernization unfolds, traditional family-based elderly care is eroding, and the reluctance to relocate and preference for rootedness in later life is fading. Instead, a growing number of older adults in China are actively seeking a desired lifestyle during their later years by engaging in long-stay tourism (Li & Chan, 2021; Xu & Wu, 2016).

Similar to international retirement mobilities, domestic senior mobilities within China exhibit a north-to-south trajectory. These elderly individuals are often referred to as seasonal lifestyle migrants or *Houniao* (snowbirds) in related studies (Chen, 2020; Wu et al., 2018). They own or long-term lease second homes in these destinations, utilizing them as winter retreats to evade the cold before returning to their primary residences in summer to escape the heat, thereby enjoying the ‘best of both worlds’ (Chen & Bao, 2021; Kou et al., 2017). These second abodes are often situated within gated communities, separated from the local community and forming enclaves (Wu et al., 2015). Snowbirds often establish social circles, known as *quanzi* (圈子, in Chinese), with like-minded peers such as the *laoxiang* (老乡, in Chinese refers to individuals hailing from the same region), though these social connections are often perceived as transient and superficial (Kou et al., 2017; Wu et al., 2015). They facilitate their emplacement through forging on-site social circles with other long-stayers and reproducing their accustomed routine leisure activities (Chen, 2020; Salazar & Zhang, 2013). While some individuals effortlessly transition between the identities of permanent residents and seasonal migrants, forming attachments to both locales (Chen & Wang, 2022; Wu & Xu, 2019), others face challenges in integrating into the host

society and adapting to the oscillations inherent in seasonal lifestyles (Kou et al., 2017; Kou et al., 2018).

In Western countries, retirees often travel in search of a leisurely lifestyle once they are freed from work obligations (Åkerlund, 2017). However, in China, lifestyle-driven tourism is more commonly observed among elderly individuals once they are relieved from the duty of caring for their grandchildren (Li & Chan, 2021). They tend to choose tourist destinations with therapeutic landscapes for extended vacations, primarily aiming to improve their health and wellbeing (Huang & Xu, 2018; Zhou et al., 2018). Often, this choice is compelled by the need to escape unfavorable environments in their home cities, such as harsh climates (Chen & Wang, 2022). While studies generally indicate that long-stay tourism can enhance the physical health of the elderly population through the healing power of nature (Chen & Wang, 2022), research also suggests that senior long-stayers may experience a decline in subjective wellbeing due to difficulties in establishing close bonds, maintaining self-continuities, and adapting to a mobile lifestyle (Kou et al., 2017; Kou et al., 2018). Despite the burgeoning trend of Chinese seniors embarking on group extended travels to rural destinations, this phenomenon of group lifestyle mobilities has largely escaped scrutiny.

Methodology

Interpretivism was utilized in this study due to its recognition and embracement of multiple socially constructed realities (Willis et al., 2007). Based on this paradigmatic stance, our research adopted a qualitative approach, specifically employing interviews, to uncover the intricate complexities surrounding long-stay vacations of Chinese group senior tourists in rural destinations. To gather empirical evidence, a total of 22 semi-structured interviews were conducted with senior tourists from June through August 2021.

In recent years, rural tourism in China has been undergoing a shift from mass tourism to extended vacations, and this trend is prominent in Zhejiang province (Cheng & Yang, 2021). Three mountainous villages in northern Hangzhou, the provincial capital of Zhejiang, namely Baisha, Linjiatang, and Xiyou, were visited by the lead author (Fig. 1). These villages are situated around the Tianmu Mountain Scenic Area and are renowned for their enchanting natural landscape, well-established accommodation services, and diverse scenic attractions. As a result, they have gained popularity among elderly tourists from the Yangtze River Delta region and they are now sought-after summer vacation destinations (Li et al., 2021).



Figure 1. The location of study area.

Participant recruitment in this study utilized a combination of convenience and

snowball sampling techniques. The lead author, a younger Chinese woman, resided in *nongjiale* at each site for several days to conduct participation observation and gather interview material. She communicated with the hosts with whom she resided when they were available and hung around the villages at different times to observe the life scenarios. This allowed the lead author to become acquainted with the daily routines of the potential respondents. Subsequently, she approached potential interviewees outside the door of each *nongjiale* and requested face-to-face interviews, providing an introduction of herself and the research project. The majority of respondents (N=16) were approached on-site and their participation in the interviews was voluntary.

To ensure sample diversity, only one tourist from each travel group, which typically consisted of 10-20 individuals, was invited to participate, as communal groups may share similar backgrounds and experiences. Generally, only one travel group stayed at each *nongjiale*. It is important to note that not all respondents were initially approached by the lead author; some were recommended by their travel group and willingly accepted the interview request. To ensure a conducive environment for the interviews, private rooms or quiet public spaces were selected to minimize disruptions. Additionally, WeChat voice call or phone interviews were conducted with participants approached through further snowball sampling (N=6) for greater accessibility and convenience given they were not at the destination when contacted. All interviews were conducted in Mandarin by the lead author and were voice recorded with participants' consent, each lasting 25-60 minutes.

The participants included 12 women and 10 men, all of whom originated from cities within the Yangtze River Delta region. Their ages ranged from 58-85 years old, with 10 participants in their 60s, 5 in their 70s, 6 in their 80s, and 1 in her late 50s. All participants had engaged in rural holidays for more than two weeks, with 14 of them staying over a month. None were first-time rural long-stay vacationers. They had all been retired for several years and relied on their retirement pensions, either individually or as couples, to cover their travel expenses. It is important to acknowledge that the convenience strategy employed in this study may introduce biases into the findings, thereby limiting the extent to which they reflect the broader population. Furthermore, we recognize that the study's focus on participants from a specific geographical region may result in potential biases and limitations, since the selected region may be more socioeconomically advantaged than other areas in China.

The interview program aimed to encourage participants to share their personal stories regarding their motivations for participating in long-stay vacations in rural areas, their daily routines and experiences on sites, and their aspirations for any future group travel plans. The focus was specifically on their experiences at the rural destination. Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring themes and overarching patterns within the data set (Patton, 2014). Participants provided detailed explanations for their choice to travel in groups to rural destinations for an extended vacation, highlighting the enjoyment they derived from the group lifestyle and how it influenced their travel aspirations. The analysis of the data prompted the emergence of group-oriented lifestyle-related themes, which were inductively derived from the participants' own interpretations of their experiences living in a rural group setting. Theoretical and analyst triangulation techniques were used to ensure the reliability and trustworthiness of the data.

Findings

Leaving home and huddling for a group later life

Chinese seniors traditionally cohabit with their children but societal changes have

disrupted this family-based care (Li & Chan, 2021). Elderly generations now often migrate to assist in raising their grandchildren, a phenomenon known as ‘accompanying migrants’, as working parents rely on their support to simultaneously shoulder enormous work demands and family responsibilities (Lyu et al., 2023). However, as child-rearing demands change, Chinese grandparents are also expected to retire from this role, leading (back) to empty nesters. As frequently expressed by our respondents, their children are busy with their own careers and nuclear families, making it unrealistic to expect constant companionship from them, for example:

“My daughter-in-law went back to work after giving birth, so my wife and I cared for the kids...But when they went to boarding school, we were left alone. I was 75 years old at that time...We discussed this morning that we, the older generation, sacrificed for the younger generations - it’s our responsibility and we’re willing to - but ended up alone...That’s why we choose to gather and travel together.” (F22, Male, 85)

The above quote suggests that the pursuit of a leisurely lifestyle through tourism is deferred until our respondents retire from their grandchildren-care roles. Furthermore, most of our respondents worked under the *danwei* (单位, in Chinese) system, a collective work-unit organization that provided communal welfare including *danwei*-built housing (Fei et al., 1992). This communal way of life fostered strong interpersonal bonds with colleagues/neighbors. However, in contemporary China’s increasingly mobile society, gated communities have taken precedence over communal *danwei*. Therefore, facing the absence of emotional support from the family ties (living alone), business ties (retiring from work), and geographical ties (unfamiliar neighborhood), our respondents chose to embrace group travel as a means to cultivate a group-oriented later life. Typically, our interviewees travel in couples or pairs, and their travel groups often comprise peers in a similar age range, typically ranging from ten to twenty people per group:

“We are a travel group composed of close friends with shared interests and lifestyles – we all like travelling and cherish the pleasure it brings in our old age. Our core group consists of six members, including our siblings and good friends, and we intentionally invite more friends and friends of friends, resulting in a larger group of ten or more...” (F20, Female, 67)

“This building has 11 guest rooms and is currently occupied by our group of 21 individuals, including my husband, sibling, classmates, colleagues, *zhiqing* (知青, in Chinese) friends, and their siblings and friends. We are very familiar with each other...” (F9, Female, 66)

Zhiqing refers to educated urban youths who were sent to rural areas for labor reform during the *Shangshan Xiaxiang* (上山下乡, in Chinese) campaign that took place during the 1950s-70s in China. The shared experience of the *zhiqing* years in the countryside not only forged deep friendships but also influenced their choice of long-stay vacation destinations. Additionally, their preference for group travel arises from the perceived inadequacy of institutional settings to cater to elderly individuals’ diverse needs:

“Living in elderly service institutions can feel oddly restrictive, as residents are required to seek permission to leave and have to pay for unoccupied rooms during their absence...” (F7, Female, 67)

“A place to spend one’s later years should feel like a home. However, senior

institutions often fail to fulfill this ideal and can be quite expensive. Media reports frequently highlight instances where staff members in nursing homes exhibit a lackluster dedication to their duties, displaying a subpar attitude towards caring for the elderly...” (F22, Male, 85)

In comparison, tourism servicescapes differ from these institutions in their deinstitutionalized nature and emphasis on hospitality. As described by F4 (Female, 63), “*Here, we are consumers, we are guests, whereas we are regarded as the aged or even patients in institutions*”. This implies that long-stay tourism provides a more consumer-centric and leisure-oriented life experience for elderly individuals in China.

Therapeutic effects of ruralscapes and geo-arbitrage

Undoubtedly, when Chinese senior citizens choose a destination for extended holidays, they prioritize the presence of a pristine natural environment due to its perceived therapeutic effects on their health and well-being (Huang & Xu, 2018; Zhou et al., 2018). Immersion in nature facilitates a more active lifestyle for the elderly, primarily by increased engagement in outdoor physical activities:

“Living here is beneficial to our health due to the exceptional air quality, green cuisine, and tranquil surroundings. In contrast, my urban dwelling is marred by incessant traffic, bustling crowds, and noise pollution...” (F1, Female, 66)

“Utilization of an air conditioner is infrequent and unnecessary here, as the weather remains cool and comfortable. And I like to take strolls from time to time...However, back home [in the city], the scorching heat necessitates running the air conditioner all day long...We elderly individuals are left with little else to do indoors except watch TV, and over time, diseases will find its way to the doorstep...” (F13, Male, 83)

Rural ecology in China distinguishes itself not only through its lush green environment but also its distinctive mode of production. Unlike urban residents, rural families possess their own farmland and vegetable plots. The availability of homegrown vegetables and homemade food adds allure to rural living, as highlighted in the following:

“The countryside is born a good place for *yangsheng* (养生, in Chinese refers to regimen)! The vegetables we eat are grown by the host’s mother. The hostess usually commences meal preparation at 4 pm, while the vegetables are still in the garden at 3 pm! She plucks and cleans them just before the cooking process begins. The dishes are exceptionally fresh and flavorful! Such freshly grown and harvested produce is a rarity in urban areas. Supermarkets sell similar produce labeled as high-mountain vegetables, and it’s super expensive...” (F7, Female, 67)

Food holds significant importance in Chinese culture. The traditional Chinese saying ‘disease enters by the mouth’ reflects the relief that proper diet plays a crucial role in maintaining good health. Recently, China has witnessed a growing trend called “farm-to-table campaign” among the urban middle class, avoiding processed and ready-to-cook foods. While the farm-produced foods are high priced in supermarkets in our respondents’ home cities, they have daily access to these foods during temporary residence in rural areas, providing them a cost-effective option for healthy diets. Our respondents appreciate the healthy cuisine and that they are relieved from mundane

household chores. Many respondents stressed the cost-effectiveness of long-stay vacations in rural areas, for example:

“The green environment here keeps me in excellent physical condition, and I enjoy healthy cuisine and plenty of free time. Unlike at home, where I am occupied with mundane tasks such as grocery shopping and cooking, my current routine primarily consists of leisurely activities such as walking and playing. I sometimes joke with my friends that we live a life akin to the *shenxian* (神仙, in Chinese refers to immortals), and we only pay 100 RMB each day for it...” (F15, Male, 78)

The description from F15 of their experiences in a rural destination resembling a life of idleness and leisure reflects the concept of “geo-arbitrage”. Geo-arbitrage refers to tactics employed by individuals from privileged regions in search of a ‘better’ quality of life through leveraging structural inequalities enabled by mobility (Hayes, 2014). In China, the pension system exhibits a significant imbalance, especially between urban and rural areas, primarily due to the *hukou* (户口, in Chinese refers to the nationwide household registration system) system. It assigns localized rights to public services such as education and healthcare, inadvertently leading to pronounced disparities in urban-rural access to public services and welfare provisions. Consequently, our participants are able to capitalize on their pensions through geo-arbitrage, indulging in leisure activities in the living room or courtyard, while their rural counterparts are often occupied with kitchen duties, given that their hosts’ children typically work and reside in cities to pursue better educational and job opportunities. And in the words of F14 (Male, 82), “*everyone is happy*”.

Communal practices and the sense of community

“What counts most is not necessarily the level of service or amenities, but rather being able to live together with our siblings and friends. Having an opportunity to reunite with close ones is especially precious to us elderly individuals...” (F10, Female, 72)

Within the context of a “liquid society”, tourism serves as a means for individuals to create social connectedness and seek emotional support through physical mobility and interactions with others (Bauman, 2000; Gössling et al., 2018). The provided excerpt emphasizes the significance of communal practices for our respondents. Our interview data consistently demonstrates the immense pleasure they derived from residing with familiar peers. While snowbirds may view their social connections in the host community as temporary and superficial (Kou et al., 2017; Kou et al., 2018), senior tourists in our study have much to gain from congregating with lifelong relations. The *us* time spent engaging in group activities during long-stay vacation is frequently compared to the *me* time that the elderly couples spend at home, as illustrated by the following quotes:

“Engaging in various group activities gives us a sense of collective belonging. The abundance of group experiences accelerates the passage of time during our stay here, whereas when at home, I just inhabit the couch, passively adsorbing media to kill the time, and the day drags on.” (F1, Female, 66)

“Life here is extremely fulfilling and pleasurable, with many hearty laughs throughout the day, which is rarity in my daily life back home. My husband is quite introverted and doesn’t talk much, so it’s not easy to find someone to

talk to [when at home], let alone share moments of laughter...” (F7, Female, 67)

Group travel offers a unique avenue for senior long-stayers to experience ‘Gemeinschaft’, a community of people who share similar values, beliefs and norms (Gössling et al., 2018). They maintain social well-being by travelling with their existing *quanzi*, engaging in familiar activities such as strolls, chatting, card games, karaoke, and square dancing. While seen as boring or old-fashioned by some, our participants find these activities enjoyable and ideal for their later lives. As F14 (Male, 82) concluded, “*That’s how elderly people spend their days*”.

In contemporary China, friendships often provide greater understanding and emotional support in the later lives of elderly individuals compared to their own children (Cheng et al., 2022; Li & Chan, 2021). Lifelong friendships nurture shared memories, allowing the older generation to reminisce about their youth, a time when the world seemed comprehensible and controllable:

“Our conversations tend to dwell on the past due to the fact that we cannot keep up with the present-day technological advancements [sigh]... We often reminisce about the good old days... During today’s lunch, one of our companions boasted about effortlessly carrying a weight of 200 kilograms in his 30s. It might not be the real story, but we all know that he just wanted to signify his manly prowess. And I responded, ‘Yes, you were very strong back then’...” (F2, Male, 70)

The narratives above highlight that group travel has become a path for our respondents to sustain and strengthen their self-identities as elderly individuals. By travelling with a community of like-minded individuals who share collective memories, they can experience and express a tangible representation of a shared identity (Zhou & Zhang, 2018). And their sense of community has progressed from being place-dominated (e.g., neighborhood) to a people-oriented approach (Gössling et al., 2018). This finding is articulated by the following script:

“There is no communication happening in our neighborhood at home... However, here in our travel group, we are like a family, and I would even say that our bond goes beyond familial ties! We are a close-knit group!” (F6, Female, 60)

While our respondents exhibit a preference for a communal way of life, it does not necessarily translate into an inclination to socialize with others. As opposed to building on-site social circles with local residents, tourists outside their group or engaging in local affairs (Kou et al., 2017; Kou et al., 2018), our participants tend to travel and stay within their own group during the journey. They have limited contact with tourists from other groups or even the hosts, despite potentially cohabiting under the same roof for months.

Lifestyle mobilities and fragile futures

Travelling with a close-knit group allows our participants to cultivate a leisurely and communal lifestyle while enhancing a collective enthusiasm to keep on moving. Unlike the snowbirds traveling between their two fixed residences in a fixed seasonal rhythm, our respondents exhibit flexibility in choosing destinations due to the absence of a rural residence. They often revisit certain rural destinations and accommodations. Nevertheless, the absence of a fixed abode renders their journeys fluid and flexible. They do need to make reservations months in advance but may change plans if

availability is limited. Some may be unwilling to revisit due to increased expenses from homestay upgrades. As F14 (Male, 82) explained, *"We live economically and seek alternative options if we cannot accept the price - after all, there are plenty of choices for rural vacations"*.

Irrespective of their next destination, some respondents view their permanent homes as stable anchor points where they temporarily reside before embarking on their next journey:

"We plan to stay here for about two months as we have already made travel plans on September 10th...Just two days ago, we returned from another village before coming here. After resting for two days at home, we start this journey. Our travel schedule sustains a tight framework..." (F7, Female, 67)

"I enjoy interacting with other tourists during our trips, and it enriches me with information about good places to explore further with my friends. Then we collectively decide on our next destination..." (F18, Male, 85)

The narratives mentioned above resonate with the concept of lifestyle mobilities wherein "the intention to move on rather than move back is pre-supposed" (Cohen et al., 2015, p5). In regard to when they will cease group travel, our participants assert that they will continue as long as they are physically capable, as emphasized by F18 (Male, 85), *"As elderly individuals, we must make the most of our time to enrich our lives while our physical abilities still allow us to do so since we don't have much time left..."*

Concerns may arise regarding health problems that come with age and whether rural destinations can cater to the needs of this aging market considering their fragility and the lack of medical facilities in non-urban areas in China:

"Most of us have chronic illnesses, but it's fine as long as we have enough medication...My body feels comfortable here and sometimes I decide not to take my high blood pressure medication...But it's crucial to have enough medication while travelling...And we'll have to stop when we cannot move..." (F8, Female, 71)

The majority of respondents expressed concerns about the potential termination of group travel due to physical disabilities, using the pronoun "we" to indicate a collective ending decision. Generally, within a travel group, there is a head who holds greater influence in decision-making processes, such as making accommodation and transportation reservations. In the case of F2's group, there is a man who uses a wheelchair and requires mobility assistance. As F2 highlighted, *"we have been good friends for several decades, and he loves travel"* while discussing the reason for including him.

In Confucian culture, it is a recognized social norm for elderly individuals to age in place. While the ending point of group long-stay travel may be uncertain and precarious, it is certain that these individuals will eventually return to their permanent home. As F21, who travelled alone with friends after the death of her husband two years ago, emphasized:

"Despite the enormous benefits that travel brings, such experiences are always temporary in nature. Home is home. As the Chinese proverb suggests, 'no amount of wealth can replace the sense of belonging and affection one has for their own living space'". (F21, Female, 82)

Many scholars have highlighted the blurred boundaries between 'home' and 'away', leading to the emergence of the concept of 'dwelling-mobility' within this discourse

(Cohen et al., 2015). In contrast to studies that focus on the practices of elderly second-home migrants, our study emphasizes the importance of lifelong friendships in constructing a sense of community among senior tourists. This further complicates the understanding of home and away, as well as the interplay between dwelling and mobility.

Conclusion

This paper presents a unique perspective on later-life lifestyle mobilities, specifically focusing on group Chinese senior long-stayers in rural destinations. These individuals seek alternative later-life living arrangements in response to the loss of familial (living alone), vocational (retiring from work), and geographical ties (unacquainted neighbors). While intergenerational proximity is considered the main source of happiness for Chinese older generations, the highly competitive and fast-paced socio-economic environment in contemporary China has made it challenging for younger generations to provide adequate care for the elderly within the family. This lack of emotional support prompts elderly individuals to search for community-based care through long-stay tourism.

The study reveals that temporary rural living is regarded a collective endeavor for Chinese seniors to establish or maintain their intrapersonal continuities and interpersonal (re)connectedness. They engage in communal leisure activities and foster a sense of camaraderie. This group orientation contrasts with the individualism associated with most lifestyle mobilities research (Cohen et al., 2015). These mobilized social circles play a crucial role in promoting positive experiences for elderly tourists in rural living contexts, creating a close-knit community and evoking shared memories.

The study also highlights the role of geo-arbitrage in facilitating and accommodating group-oriented mobilities among senior tourists in rural China. Temporarily residing in rural areas enables these individuals to pursue their desired communal lifestyle in a cost-effective manner and benefit from the therapeutic ruralscapes. These offer a distinct natural, economic and social ecology, suggesting that the allure of rural areas for Chinese senior long-stayers lies in the intricate practice of the countryside perceived as a wildscape (natural amenities), farmscape (rural way of production) and activityscape (familiar neighborhoods).

Furthermore, the study acknowledges the precariousness and vulnerability faced by the mobile Chinese seniors. Health decline, both at the individual and group levels, poses challenges to their extended vacations. Disparities in senior care services between urban and rural regions in China further contribute to the complexities. Place-based care networks may not adequately address the needs of seniors in rural areas, exacerbating their vulnerability during their temporary relocations.

The primary contributions of this study lie in bringing a group-oriented or collective approach to lifestyle mobilities research, which lies in stark contrast with past studies that have imbued lifestyle mobilities with individualistic tendencies. We furthermore contribute by expanding the literature on senior long-stay tourists in China, which has primarily focused on seasonal elderly migrants who own second homes, while overlooking the temporary residence of senior tourists in rural settings.

The study acknowledges certain limitations. The data was collected from a specific region in China and thus is not intended to reflect Chinese retirees more widely. To address this, future research may encompass diverse socio-economic groups within China. Additionally, exploring the gendered aspects of Chinese rural long-stay tourism presents a promising avenue for future investigation. As does exploring the experiences of those hosting Chinese rural long-stay tourists: is everyone truly happy as one of our

interviewees suggested? This points to the need for more attention on the structural inequalities that enable forms of lifestyle mobility.

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TOURIST'S LOYALTY IN CAVITE CITY, PHILIPPINES FASHIONED BY LOCAL FOOD SATISFACTION

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Abstract

This study determined the relationship between tourists' satisfaction with local cuisine and their loyalty in Cavite City, Philippines. It also aimed to explore the mediating role of perceived risks, including COVID-19, manmade and natural related risks. The expectancy-disconfirmation theory, protection motivation theory, and sensory impression theory were used as the theoretical foundations of the study. The research design employed was quantitative, which utilized a survey questionnaire to collect data from 107 local tourists who visited Cavite City. The survey questionnaires included measures of food satisfaction, destination loyalty, and perceived risks, and the reliability of the questions was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. Data were collected on-site at selected food tourist spots over a 6-day period, and the analysis involved weighted mean, linear regression, ANOVA, percentage, and mediation analysis conducted using STATA version 17. The findings of the study revealed a substantial and positive relationship between the satisfaction of tourists regarding food and their loyalty towards Cavite City as a destination. Increased levels of motivation, involvement, and contentment pertaining to food contribute significantly to the enhancement of both loyalty and overall satisfaction. Furthermore, the investigation established that perceived risks, encompassing those associated with COVID-19, man-made occurrences, and natural hazards, do not act as mediators in the linkage between food satisfaction and destination loyalty. Nevertheless, it was indicated that an elevation in tourists' satisfaction with food corresponds to a rise in their perception of risks, and an amplified risk factor is positively correlated with heightened levels of destination loyalty.

Keywords: risk, food satisfaction, destination loyalty, tourists, Cavite City

Introduction

Destination loyalty plays a substantial role in giving accurate predictions of tourists' revisit intent (Chen & Chen, 2010). Recent studies hypothesize that tourist loyalty shapes the travelers' perceived satisfaction from experience, expectations, quality service, and costs of tourism products present (Hoang et al., 2022; Nilplub et al., 2016; Sudari et al., 2019). Moreover, understanding destination loyalty is deemed significant due to its contribution to achieving profitability (Yoo & Bai, 2013). To further understand destination loyalty, a study by Lacap (2019) has demonstrated that tourists who have visited Angeles City, Philippines, tend to associate satisfaction with local food with positive feelings towards the destination. According to Chen & Huang (2019), tourists' food satisfaction that stems from their food involvement and motivation will lead to strengthening destination loyalty. A significant connection between satisfaction with food and loyalty to a destination has been established and should be considered when advertising and promoting the local cuisine of a destination. (Yasami et al., 2021). Although understanding the connection between food satisfaction and destination loyalty is important, few studies explore the integration of local food in the context of the study, yet several researchers have emphasized the significance of local food to destination loyalty (Q. Chen & Huang, 2018; Erkmen, 2019; Hernández-Rojas & Huete

Alcocer, 2021; Horng et al., 2012). Furthermore, a research study has provided evidence showcasing the significance of food satisfaction in influencing tourists' inclination to revisit a specific destination, indicating a positive connection between satisfaction with the food and loyalty to the place and highlighting the significance of considering the role of food in the overall tourism experience (Ali et al., 2020).

However, despite having a strong desire to dine out, those who are highly conscious of the potential dangers of COVID-19 may be less likely to visit restaurants, as this increases the chance of contracting the virus (Dedeoğlu & Boğan, 2021). The outbreak of COVID-19 exposed numerous issues centering on the different sectors' vulnerability, such as tourism workers, enterprises, and industries. As restrictions are now easing up, the Department of Health announced that wearing a facemask is optional in open, well-ventilated spaces in the Philippines but is only limited to vaccinated individuals (DOH, 2022). Statista Research Department, (2023) released data that about 3.9 million Filipinos had recovered out of 4.07 million cases affected by COVID-19, and 77% of Filipinos had received the covid vaccination shots. As of January 30, 2023, the confirmed cases in the country were 471 compared to last year's 17,313 confirmed cases (World Health Organization, 2023). The easing up of restrictions implies that studies are needed to be conducted on whether such perceived risks in COVID-19 are still in the minds of tourists despite the lockdowns easing up. With this, a study by Dedeoğlu & Boğan (2021) revealed that consumers' intention to consume food during the pandemic is significantly influenced by their risk perceptions related to COVID-19. This impact is reflected in the way it alters the connection between the reasons for dining out and the intention to visit a restaurant. Dedeoğlu et al. (2022) found out that due to COVID-19, tourists perceive a higher risk of partaking in tourism activities such as going to restaurants, consuming local food, etc. A recent study by Li et al., (2022) found that consumers' willingness to consume products from restaurants is significantly negatively affected by their perception of the risk associated with the pandemic. In spite of the extant scholarly works that have investigated the influence of food satisfaction on the loyalty of tourists towards a destination, there remains a research void pertaining to the examination of how the explicit perception of risk, specifically related to the COVID-19 pandemic, modulates this association. Therefore, additional investigation is necessary to better understand how the perceived risk of the pandemic may influence food satisfaction and tourists' loyalty to Cavite City, Philippines.

Furthermore, tourist risk perception refers to how travelers perceive and evaluate the potential risks associated with their travel destination, activities, and experiences (Hasan et al., 2017). The study of Çakar, (2021) introduced the concept of Tourophobia, which refers to the fear of travel due to the perceived risk of natural or man-made disasters. The research indicates that Tourophobia can arise from either type of risk, or tourists' perceptions of these risks can differ based on their nature. Mancini, (2022) has revealed that risk perception plays a crucial role in determining satisfaction and destination loyalty. The study found that tourists' risk perceptions were linked to a reduced likelihood of revisiting the destination in the future and recommending it to others. Furthermore, research indicates that tourists who possess a greater level of risk perception are less inclined to partake in local cuisine (Jeaheng & Han, 2020; H. Zhang et al., 2018). Moreover, Rosselló et al., (2020) discovered that natural disasters may result in a reduction in destination loyalty among past visitors to the impacted area and a decline in the number of prospective tourists who would have previously considered traveling there.

In addition, man-made disasters such as terrorist attacks were found in the study by Ma et al. (2020) which impacted the safety image of a destination rather than its

tourism. The research by Asgary & Ozdemir (2020) also revealed that man-made risks were considered geopolitical risks, which tourists consider as a concern to impact tourism. These kinds of perceived risks and the perceived risk of COVID-19 gave importance to providing a study that affected tourists' destination loyalty. As comprehended the relationships among perceived risks, food satisfaction, and destination loyalty was crucial for the tourism industry, it was imperative to investigate the connections between these factors.

The current study sought to investigate the connection between tourists' satisfaction with local cuisine and their loyalty to the destination. Furthermore, the study intended to differentiate itself by examining the mediating impacts of perceived risks on this relationship. Inclusion of the perceived risks as the mediating factor, the study used a framework with variables of food satisfaction and destination loyalty. The following research objectives were:

- (1) To determine the relationship between food satisfaction and destination loyalty in Cavite City, Philippines.
- (2) To determine the effect of tourist risk perception on the relationship between food satisfaction and destination loyalty in Cavite City, Philippines.

Setting of the Study

Cavite City is a 4th class city of the province of Cavite situated at the northern end peninsula of the province, surrounded by the bays of Manila, Bacoar, and Cañacao (The Official Website of the Province of Cavite, 2022). Based on the 2020 Census, Cavite City's population was 100,674, representing 2.32% of the total Cavite province population or 0.62% of Region 4A's total population (PhilAtlas, 2023). Cavite's historical importance may lead many Filipinos to know of its delicious cuisine, which boasts a wide variety. However, having its location near Manila—which may obliterate its diversity of cuisines (Cabato, 2018). However, an emerging trend toward local heritage cooking has become apparent in recent years, which allows Cavite to showcase its unique culinary dishes (Orda, 2018). A food crawl tour entitled the "Proba: Cavite Comida, arranged by the San Miguel Pure Foods Culinary Center (SMPFCC), aimed to highlight Cavite as a destination with an excellent place to explore for tourists seeking food destinations close to Manila. Through the tour, it expects that people would develop an appreciation for the diverse culinary traditions of Cavite (Vanzi, 2018). Cavite City was one of the municipalities included in the tour highlighting Pansit Pusit & Pansit Puso from Bernie's Kitchenette.

In Cavite City, some of the most well-known heirloom dishes are, Pansit Pusit, Pansit Puso, Bibingkoy, Tamales, Calandracas & Bacalao (Gondra, 2022). Compared with the original ingredients of a traditional pancit bihon, Pansit Pusit or the Pancit Negra is a noodle dish popular in Cavite City made with squid ink, which gives its dark color and unique savory flavor (Harne, 2021). The Pancit Pusit is a popular dish served at Bernie's Kitchenette along with Pansit Puso, a noodle dish accompanied by kinilaw na puso ng saging, and Buttered Bacalao, a type of seafood cooked by sautéing cod fish in butter, which is often served only once during Good Friday once a year. A famous pasalubong treat from Cavite City is Tamales, a delicacy wrapped in banana leaves made from ground peanuts, rice flour, pork belly, and chicken breast. It is an essential part of Cavite City's resident during their handaan on Noche Buena (Heussaff, 2019). Calandracas is a soup made with the broth of a hamonado bone with ingredients such as macaroni, chorizo bilbao, potatoes, squash, and napa cabbage. This soup is known as food for comfort or "prosperity food," typically eaten during Christmas and the New Year (Casper, 2019). Lastly, a delicacy only eaten in Cavite City

is Bibingko, the glutinous rice treat with sweet mung bean filling cooked inside a pugon. The delicacy usually comes with a thick and flavorful sauce consisting of coconut cream, jackfruit, and sago drizzled on top of the food (Mendoza, 2018).

On the other hand, the City of Cavite inevitably experienced various natural and man-made risks, which is highly important in answering whether the tourists will continue to travel despite the presence of these risks. With the presence of COVID-19 in the Philippines for three years, Cavite City has accumulated 4,465 COVID cases in the city but with only one active case from March 11 to March 17, 2023, (Cavite Provincial Information Office, 2023). The city is also prone to natural disasters due to its location in a high-risk zone for typhoons and floods and is situated on a major fault line. According to a study by the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology or PHIVOLCS, the city is located near the Manila Trench, which increases its risk for earthquakes and tsunamis (Juanico, 2015). Furthermore, man-made risk like terrorism is high. According to Deña (2023), it was reported in the City of Cavite in January that there were about seven victims of a grenade blast where it mentions that a gang of teenagers threw a grenade into the city at midnight. Risk situations like these may affect whether tourists visit Cavite City.

Literature Review

Destination Loyalty

Destination loyalty resulted from tourists' engagement and attentiveness to places they had been to that had different attractions, which could lead to competition in different destinations, further explained through sensory impressions of tourists in the nomological network (Lv et al., 2020). The nomological network of experiencecape explained the circumstances in a setting wherein different service was provided through important criteria that will make it more comprehensible (Tasci & Pizam, 2020). According to the study of Agapito et al. (2014), sensory impression theory affirmed that people used their different senses to appreciate the world that was seen through their attitudes and behavior, which could alleviate their decision-making. Among different sensory impressions, the haptic impression (e.g., the feeling of the surrounding) helped verify its importance in determining its influence on tourists' loyalty toward the destination (Fakfare et al., 2021). The current study could either agree or provide contrary evidence to the sensory impression theory in determining the effect of tourists' satisfaction towards food that could affect their loyalty to the destination.

Food Satisfaction. The comparison of tourists' expectations with their experiences at the destination will determine their satisfaction (Sangpikul, 2018). In the present study, tourists responding positively to Cavite City's local food are identified as having a positive reaction to food satisfaction. According to Ullah et al. (2022), Food satisfaction stimulates tourists to engage in gastronomic activities, resulting in increased loyalty to the destination. Atikahambar et al. (2019) found that customer food satisfaction increased destination loyalty and revisitation. Furthermore, research has found that tourist satisfaction with traditional restaurants positively impacts the promotion of the culinary branding of a destination, influencing tourists to return and promote the destination, thereby fostering destination loyalty (Toudert & Bringas-Rábago, 2019). In addition, food satisfaction is substantial in marketing the destination's local cuisine (Yasami et al., 2021). In addition, food satisfaction is substantial in marketing the destination's local cuisine (Yasami et al., 2021). There are several theories for understanding customer satisfaction (Isac & Rusu, 2014). Whereas the present study utilized the theory of expectancy-disconfirmation as many other research studies have undertaken (Adesina et al., 2022; Chendo, 2019; Hasan et al., 2019;

Sudari et al., 2019). The theory of expectancy-disconfirmation describes the evaluation of a customer's pleasure or discontent with the goods or services they received in relation to their perceived expectations (Oliver, 1980). Therefore, the present study hypothesized that:

H1: *Food satisfaction positively affects destination loyalty.*

Perceived Risk

Perceived Risk of Natural Disasters

Natural disasters can significantly negatively impact destination loyalty, as tourists perceive affected destinations as riskier and less attractive (Genç, 2018). The study by Rosselló et al. (2020) categorized natural risks into two main categories: geological and meteorological risks. Geological risks refer to natural hazards caused by the Earth's geological processes, such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and landslides. On the other hand, meteorological risks refer to natural hazards caused by atmospheric processes, such as hurricanes, cyclones, and floods. These types of hazards can significantly impact tourism destinations, as they can cause physical damage to infrastructure, disrupt transportation systems, and threaten the safety and well-being of tourists (Rosselló et al., 2020). Moreover, studies found that the presence of natural risk can increase tourists' perceived risk of the destination, leading to decreased satisfaction with the travel experience and a lower likelihood of revisiting the same destination in the future (An et al., 2010; Tavitiyaman & Qu, 2013). However, in terms of participating in the consumption of authentic local food research, Dulani et al. (2021) found that tourists are willing to take risks when it comes to consuming local food, as they prioritize the experience and the unique cultural aspects of food over potential health risks. In addition, a study by S. R. Li & Ito (2021) shows that tourists' intent to travel is not significantly affected by perceived risk considering that they desire travel experiences and believe it is possible to manage risk through personal precaution. The mediating impact of natural disasters remains an important area of research that requires further investigation to understand its effects better on food satisfaction and destination loyalty.

Perceived Risk Made by Man

Disasters caused by a human were divided into three types: those directly linked to security, economics, and politics, which were the reasons why the tourism industry was most prone to them (Ma et al., 2020). Terrorism was one of the most common man-made risks that hinder tourism. Corbet et al., (2019) argued that terrorism, specifically violence and/or threat, brought extensive fear to tourists, disrupted different infrastructures and tourism operations in a destination. Despite the reduction of prices for tickets and other tourism products, Liu & Pratt (2017) identified that it was common for tourists to prevent visiting a destination due to a possible history of terrorism. There were also perceived risks that Tavitiyaman & Qu (2013a) ascertained, such as psychological risk, social risk, physical risk, political instability, and satisfaction risk, among others. These risks were proven to be related to one another as they influenced how people made decisions and added much uncertainty to their consequences. The safety image of a destination had to be prioritized whenever a disaster happens so that the tourists could be satisfied, which could result in destination loyalty.

Perceived Risk of COVID-19

With Covid-19 affecting the world globally, the tourism and hospitality industry has experienced significant negative consequences, impacting various nations, businesses,

employment, and opportunities. (UNWTO, 2020). Li et al. (2022) contend that consumers' perception of pandemic risk negatively impacts food consumption in restaurants. The COVID-19 virus carries a risk to anyone's safety. However, since COVID-19 has sparked a pandemic globally, and there is currently no cure other than vaccines, the perceived risk of this disease is different from other health hazards (Dedeoğlu et al., 2022). Research conducted by Dryhurst et al. (2020) identifies high-risk perception associated with COVID-19 across Europe, Asia, and North America. Risk perceptions influence decisions regarding the acceptance of dangers and are a significant factor in actions taken before, during, and after a disaster (Rohrmann, 2008). Cui et al. (2016) also mentioned that the tourism industry presents several risks; satisfaction with a destination and the impact of catastrophic events are all somewhat connected. The research conducted by Dedeoğlu & Boğan (2021) revealed that the perceived risks associated with tourists who have COVID-19 had an influence on their motivation for dining at restaurants and their interest in visiting specific destinations. Additionally, the findings of Dedeoğlu et al. (2022) suggest that as perceptions of risk related to COVID-19 decrease, it becomes less of a factor in shaping tourists' reasons for traveling and consuming food at a destination. It is consistent with the findings of Huete-Alcocer & Hernandez-Rojas (2022), which show that contentment with food is a massive factor in tourists' opinions and revisit intentions. But now the coronavirus pandemic affects where people go on vacation. The study applied the Protection Motivation Theory (Rogers, 1975), which (Dedeoğlu & Boğan, 2021; Dryhurst et al., 2020) utilized in previous research to comprehend people's decisions based on the possible risks and consequences to the safety of their health. (Clubb & Hinkle, 2015). Therefore, the present study hypothesized that:

H2: *The perceived risks have a mediating effect on the relationship between food satisfaction and destination loyalty.*

Conceptual Framework

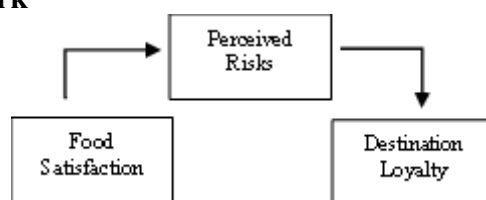


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 showcased the IV-DV model used in the study, which described the hypotheses. The IV-DV model discussed whether the independent variable (IV) had contexts that gave an important function to the dependent variable (DV) (Tabuena, 2021). First, the food satisfaction (independent variable) of tourists affected the tourists' loyalty to a destination (dependent variable). Mediating variables were also used in the study to identify the perceived risks. Mediation analysis aided in determining the direct and indirect effects of perceived risk on destination loyalty and satisfaction (Chaudhary & Islam, 2021). In relation to this, the upward-pointing arrow identified whether the perceived risks, as the mediating variable, had a mediating effect on the dependent and independent variables. Furthermore, Lacap (2019) used important aspects such as food-related motivation and local food involvement as additional variables, which were now be the criteria under food satisfaction.

The expectancy-disconfirmation and protection motivation theories (PMT) supported the variables to create a destination loyalty model in Figure 1. The protection

motivation theory was used to understand the possible changes in one's attitude while experiencing fear (Rogers, 1975). According to Shillair (2020), the PMT suggested that when there was a perceived risk, it might either discourage or encourage people to participate in activities. In the present study, food satisfaction and destination loyalty were examined according to PMT which utilized the perceived risks as the mediating variable. Aligned with the study by Soon et al. (2022), an evaluation of the COVID-19 perceived risks was conducted using PMT to identify how it impacted people's food safety concerns and motivation to participate in activities related to food.

Moreover, the present study utilized the concept of expectancy-disconfirmation theory to understand the food satisfaction variable. A theory that was widely viewed as acceptable in understanding customer satisfaction is the theory of expectancy-disinformation (Oh, 1999). The theory of expectancy-disinformation stated that customer satisfaction results from meeting their expectations for the service or product given (Oliver, 1980). The theory helped the present study understand how satisfaction from local food was formed, leading to destination loyalty. The expectancy-disconfirmation theory was used in a study that found that food significantly impacts international tourists' overall satisfaction (Hui et al., 2007). In addition, Rashad Yazdanifard (2021) also used the same theory and found who found that involvement in food resulted in satisfaction and loyalty to local food festivals. Hence, understanding the perceived risk's mediating effect and food satisfaction was relevant to building destination loyalty.

Methodology

Research Design

The study utilized the quantitative method. Also, it was befitting to use quantitative since the research objectives were to determine whether tourists' food satisfaction affected destination loyalty and to identify if there were mediating effects on these two variables with the perceived risks. The data gathering was through an on-site survey questionnaire given to the selected respondents. The results gathered from the survey helped researchers to describe and answer research problems and hypotheses.

Research Participants

The research participants were the local tourists of Cavite City. The survey was intended to measure the impact of food satisfaction on destination loyalty, as well as whether there was any mediating effect of perceived risks on these two variables. The sites were selected based on restaurants that offered traditional Caviteño cuisine in Cavite City. Using purposive sampling, the researchers selected local tourists as respondents at each location who had experienced visiting Cavite City during the pandemic starting from 2020 to the present as respondents. The GPower Calculator, a computer statistical software, calculated the sample size needed, which was 107 respondents.

Data Gathering

The data-gathering tool was a survey questionnaire. The pilot testing on ten (10) respondents examined the validity of the questions. For reliability, the study used Cronbach's Alpha to evaluate the pilot test's results. At the same time, all questions were accepted after the validity test, which tested the consistency and reliability of their content validity.

The initial step in the data-gathering process involved obtaining consent from respondents willing to participate in the study. The research gathered information from local and international tourists who had visited Cavite City from the year 2020 up to

the present. The researchers gathered data through an on-site survey. The researchers were at selected food tourist spots in Cavite City. They were situated at various notable locations such as Asao Grill & Restaurant, Lydia's Down-Home Cooking, Regal Dining Catering and Restaurant, Palakainan, Hattydy's sizzling & Panciteria and Café Antix. The survey questionnaires were distributed inside the local restaurants. And the researchers gathered data for 6 days during Saturdays and Sundays.

Statistical Analysis

The study employed a variety of statistical techniques to analyze the data collected. One key tool was the weighted mean, which was used to obtain the general average of the results. This method allowed for the calculation of an average that took into account the relative importance of each data point. Another statistical tool used in the study was linear regression. This approach was used to analyze the correlation between two variables: destination loyalty (dependent variable) and food satisfaction (independent variable). Linear regression helped identify patterns and trends in the data, aiding in understanding how these two variables were related. The study also employed One-way ANOVA and Percentage. In addition to the aforementioned methods, the research study employed regression analysis combined with mediation analysis to ascertain the nature of the link between food satisfaction and destination loyalty. Additionally, a mediation analysis was conducted to investigate the mediating effect of COVID-19 on destination loyalty and food satisfaction. These techniques were employed to address the research hypothesis, examine the variations between variables, and provide a representation of how frequently data points occurred. These techniques were chosen as they were deemed the most appropriate for the nature of the study, and all data analyses were done using STATA version 1.

Result and Discussions

The table 1 shows that item with the highest mean for food-related motivation based on rank is item number 1. The mean response is 4.46, which is interpreted as agree. This means that the respondents generally agree to the statement "Food in Cavite City plays an important role in my destination choice". On the other hand, the item with the lowest mean is item number 3. The mean response is 3.69, which also means that the respondents agree in the statement "I decided on destinations to visit only based on the foods I wanted to experience". Among all the statements, this statement obtained the lowest agreement. The composite mean for food-related motivation is 4.21, with SD of 0.60. The result indicates that the participants exhibit a considerable degree of motivation when it comes to food-related factors.

The findings align with Morris et al. (2020)'s study, indicating that tourists may choose a specific destination based on its local cuisine and anticipated food experiences. Consequently, local food should no longer be perceived merely as a supplementary resource but rather as a compelling attraction in itself. Therefore, it can be concluded that local food and various food-related experiences play crucial roles in attracting tourists to a destination (Atikahambar et al., 2019; Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2017; Su et al., 2020). The results also emphasize the significance of food-related motivation in enhancing tourists' overall satisfaction in Cavite City. In contrast, Stankov et al. (2019) suggests that the decision to select a destination can be influenced by multiple factors, such as the availability of local cuisine, natural and historical resources, and cultural heritage. which implies that there may be other reasons why tourists visit a destination other than food-related motivation.

Table 1. Mean Results of Food Satisfaction

Descriptive Statistics for Food Satisfaction				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Food in Cavite City plays an important role in my destination choice.	4.46	0.63	Agree	1
2. Prior to my trip in Cavite City, I planned food choices to experience local culture.	4.34	0.64	Agree	3.5
3. I decided on destinations to visit only based on the foods I wanted to experience.	3.69	1.07	Agree	6
4. I usually do some research about the local food or restaurants in Cavite City prior to my trip.	4.00	1.01	Agree	5
5. Prior to my trip in Cavite City, one thing I anticipate is eating the food there.	4.34	0.75	Agree	3.5
6. I like trying different styles or types of food during travel in Cavite City.	4.40	0.82	Agree	2
Food-Related Motivation Composite Mean	4.21	0.60	High level of motivation	
1. Local Food activities in Cavite City are Interesting.	4.35	0.78	Agree	1
2. Local Food activities in Cavite City are Appealing.	4.14	0.87	Agree	4
3. Local Food activities in Cavite City are Valuable	4.25	0.80	Agree	2
4. Local Food activities in Cavite City are Exciting.	4.16	0.83	Agree	3
5. Local Food activities in Cavite City are Stimulating.	4.05	0.84	Agree	6
6. Local Food activities in Cavite City are Desirable.	4.02	0.92	Agree	7
7. Local Food activities in Cavite City are Wanted.	3.90	0.84	Agree	8
8. Local Food activities in Cavite City mean a lot to me.	4.09	0.86	Agree	5
Food Involvement Composite Mean	4.12	0.67	High level of motivation	
1. My food experience in Cavite City gave me high satisfaction.	3.99	0.76	Agree	3
2. My choice to taste the local cuisine of Cavite City was a wise one.	4.15	0.85	Agree	2
3. My food experience in Cavite City gave me a sense of joy.	4.19	0.73	Agree	1
4. The food in Cavite City met my expectations.	3.81	0.83	Agree	5
5. My food experience in Cavite City exceeded my expectations	3.68	0.84	Agree	6
Food Satisfaction Composite Mean	3.96	0.70	Satisfied	4
Overall Food Satisfaction	4.11	0.57	Satisfied	

Moreover, Table 1 indicates that in terms of food involvement, item number 1 received the highest mean rank, with a mean response of 4.35, indicating agreement. This suggests that respondents generally find the "Local Food activities in Cavite City interesting." Conversely, item number 7 obtained the lowest mean, with a mean response of 3.90, indicating agreement with the statement "Local Food activities in Cavite City are wanted." This statement received the lowest level of agreement among all the statements. The composite mean for Food Involvement is 4.12, with a standard deviation of 0.67, indicating a high level of respondents' motivation towards food.

The findings regarding tourists' positive motivation towards food in Cavite City align with Sthapit et al., (2020)'s study, which identified that sampling local cuisine is a significant factor driving trips and is considered a primary activity. When tourists are satisfied with the food experience, it motivates them to actively participate in gastronomic activities, leading to increased loyalty to the destination (J. P. Lacap, 2019; Ullah et al., 2022). However, in contrast to this Morris et al., 2020b; Roust & Jamshidi, 2020) suggests that tourists' attitudes towards local food do not impact their motivation to travel, indicating that the interest in local food does not influence tourists' motivation

to visit and re-visit particular destination.

Furthermore, table 1 reveals that the item with the highest mean rank for Food Satisfaction is item number 3. The mean response of 4.19 indicates agreement, suggesting that respondents generally agree to the statement “My food experience in Cavite City gave me a sense of joy.” Conversely, item number 5 obtained the lowest mean, with a mean response of 3.68, also indicating agreement with the statement "My food experience in Cavite City exceeded my expectations." This statement received the lowest level of agreement among all the statements. The composite mean for Food Satisfaction is 3.96, with a standard deviation of 0.57, indicating that respondents are generally satisfied with their food experience.

The research findings suggest that local cuisine plays a significant role in fulfilling the satisfaction of tourists. This aligns with the findings of Fitrizal et al., (2021) and Zargar & Farmanesh, (2021) study, which highlight the positive impact of local food on tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty. Additionally, according to Ryu & Jang (2006), impressive food experiences in a tourism destination not only enhance the national food image but also increase tourist satisfaction levels and encourage repeat visits. These findings support the theory of expectancy-disconfirmation, which explains how customers evaluate their pleasure or dissatisfaction with the goods or services received based on their perceived expectations (Oliver, 1980). The results demonstrate that local food contributes to enhancing tourist satisfaction in various ways. Overall, the food satisfaction has a composite mean for Food Satisfaction is 4.11, with SD of 0.57. which implies that tourists are satisfied with the local food of Cavite city.

Table 2. Mean Results of Destination Loyalty

Descriptive Statistics for Destination Loyalty				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. I would like to recommend Cavite City to others	4.37	0.781	Agree	1
2. I will spread positive word of mouth about Cavite City.	4.36	0.767	Agree	2
3. I will visit Cavite City again	4.23	0.913	Agree	3
Destination	4.32	0.749	Loyal	

The Table 2 shows that the item with the highest rank for destination loyalty is the item number 1. The mean response is 4.37, which is interpreted as agree. This means that most of the respondents generally agree to the statement, “I would like to recommend Cavite City to others.” On the other hand, the item with the lowest rank is item number 3 with a mean response of 4.23. It is interpreted as agree, which means that most of the respondents generally agree to the statement, “I will visit Cavite City again.” Among all the statements, this statement obtained the lowest agreement. The composite mean for destination loyalty is 4.32 with standard deviation of 0.749. Consequently, the respondents have high level of loyalty to the destination when it comes to recommending it to others and revisiting it—agreeing with the statement of Lee & Xue, (2020) that these factors are considered as the tourists’ intentions to revisit.

Table 3. Mean Results of Perceived Risk

Descriptive Statistics for Risk				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
I am very worried about getting COVID-19.	4.01	1.10	Agree	3
During the COVID-19, I paid more attention to restaurant disinfection & safety measures during the service of the restaurant staff (such as tableware disinfection/contactless thermometer, wearing of mask)	4.47	0.73	Agree	1
Around the time of the COVID-19, the frequency of my dining out dropped considerably	4.08	0.88	Agree	2
I am interested in visiting restaurants in Cavite City even without the COVID-19 Vaccine	3.07	1.19	Neutral	5
I'm still willing to go to restaurants during the COVID-19	3.29	1.06	Neutral	4
Covid risk composite mean	3.78	0.50	High Risk	
I will revisit restaurants in Cavite City even if unexpected crimes may happen	2.96	1.04	Neutral	2
I will revisit restaurants in Cavite City even if terrorist attacks can occur and destroy my personal property and lives may happen unexpectedly.	2.44	1.12	Disagree	4
I will revisit restaurants in Cavite City even if unexpected political restrictions may limit the places I am visiting and traveling.	2.93	1.08	Neutral	3
I will revisit restaurants in Cavite City even if traveling expenses may increase according to the change of the price of products and services.	3.19	1.13	Neutral	1
Man-made risk composite mean	2.88	0.93	Neither	
I will revisit restaurants in Cavite City even if unexpected natural disasters, such as floods, landslides, or storms etc. may happen.	2.97	0.95	Neutral	2
I will revisit restaurants in Cavite City even if I am worried that typhoons are dangerous or catastrophic to me	2.76	0.97	Neutral	3
I will revisit restaurants in Cavite City even if I expect great chances of storm surges causing flood	2.57	0.92	Neutral	4
A natural disaster will not influence my decision to revisit restaurants in Cavite City	3.02	1.07	Neutral	1
Natural risk composite mean	2.83	0.87	Neither	
Overall Risk	3.73	0.66	High Risk	

Table 3 demonstrates that item 2 has the highest mean for perceived risks related to Covid-19 based on ranking. The mean response for the item is 4.47, which interprets as "agree." It indicates that the respondents generally agreed with the statement, "During the Covid-19, I paid more attention to restaurant disinfection & safety measures during the service of the restaurant staff (such as tableware disinfection/contactless thermometer, wearing of mask)" Conversely, item 4 has the lowest mean with a response of 3.07, which also signifies that the respondent neither agree nor disagree with the statement, "I am interested in visiting restaurants in Cavite City even without the Covid-19 Vaccine." Among all the statements, this statement acquired the lowest level of agreement. The composite means for Covid-19 risk is 3.78, with a standard deviation of 0.50. These figures indicate that the respondents have a high level of perceived risk concerning Covid-19.

The results are similar to the findings of Faour-Klingbeil et al. (2021) stating that the uncertainty surrounding COVID-19 has led to increased anxiety and a greater awareness of the risks associated with food and non-food sources of infection. The presence of Covid-19 indicates that tourists are more cautious about their revisit intentions. These results also align with previous studies by Dedeoğlu et al. (2022) & Li et al. (2022) that indicate tourists who travel now perceive more risks because of the

pandemic. However, despite respondents giving neutral answers regarding their intent to visit in the presence of COVID-19, the study by Lazaridis et al. (2022) stated that during the pandemic, people's attitude towards food improved, and tourists were also encouraged to try local cuisine. The desire to have a cultural experience and enhance their well-being were crucial factors in their decision to taste local food.

With Man-Made risks, the table shows that the item with the highest mean based on rank is item 4. The mean response is 3.19, which interprets as agree. The response signifies that the respondents neither agree nor disagree with the statement, "I will revisit restaurants in Cavite City even if traveling expenses may increase according to the change in the price of products and services" On the contrary, the item with the lowest mean is item 2, with a mean response of 2.44. The mean signifies that respondents disagree with the statement, "I will revisit restaurants in Cavite City even if terrorist attacks can occur and destroy my personal property and lives may happen unexpectedly." This statement received the least amount of agreement compared to all the other questions. The composite mean for Man-made risk is 2.88, with a standard deviation of 0.93. The data means that the respondents neither have high nor low risk concerning Man-made risk in Cavite City.

The findings indicate that respondents are neutral about their revisit intent to Cavite City with the presence of Man-made risks, as well as disagreeing to return to the city with the occurrence of terrorist attacks. The findings align with the study of Chahal & Devi (2017), where results show how people perceive risks directly affects their opinions about a destination and influences other factors related to the destination. For instance, with domestic tourists, their perception of risks in relation to finances, quality of services, human activities like militancy, and expensive tourist facilities greatly influences their revisit intent. The study of Zhang (2016) also shares similar findings where tourists' perceived risks negatively affected their decision to visit a destination as they have concerns about risks from any unexpected danger, crime risk, natural disasters, terrorist risk, political restrictions, and rise of traveling expenses. The research indicated that when tourists felt that there was a significant amount of risk involved, they were more likely to change their choice or postpone their visit to a future date.

For Natural Risks, as illustrated in the table, item 4 obtained the highest mean based on ranking. The mean response for this item is 3.02, which indicates neutral answers from the respondents. The response suggests that the respondents neither agree nor disagree with the statement, "A natural disaster will not influence my decision to revisit restaurants in Cavite City" In contrast, item number 3 has the lowest mean with a response of 2.57, which also signifies a neutral response. This response implies that most of the respondents neither agree nor disagree with the statement, "I will revisit restaurants in Cavite City even if I expect great chances of storm surges causing flood" Among all the statements, this particular statement received the lowest level of agreement. The composite mean for Natural Risks is 2.83, with a standard deviation of 0.87. These findings indicate that the respondents neither have high nor low risk concerning Man-made risk in Cavite City.

Like Man-made risks, results indicate that respondents are neutral about their revisit intent to Cavite City with the presence of Natural Risks. The findings are like the research of Chew & Jahari (2014), where results show individuals who have previously visited a destination and encountered a disaster may decide against revisiting the same place if they perceive physical risks such as natural disasters. In other words, if they believe their safety or well-being is at significant risk, they are more inclined to avoid returning to that destination, regardless of their previous experience there.

However, in contrast to these findings, the study of Kozak et al. (2007) mentioned that natural risks such as disasters do not appear to influence people's decision to change their travel plans, as initially thought. One possible reason is that while natural disasters may have a temporary impact, they do not significantly affect people's long-term choices when visiting a destination.

Table 4. Pearson's Correlations

Variable		Food satisfaction	Destination
1. Food satisfaction	Pearson's r	—	
	p-value	—	
2. Destination	Pearson's r	0.614	—
	p-value	< .001	—

The table 4 shows the Pearson correlation value of 0.614, with a p-value of <0.001. The findings signify a highly significant relationship between food satisfaction and destination loyalty. The positive value indicates a direct relationship, implying that as food satisfaction increases, so does destination loyalty, and vice versa.

The findings of this research support the hypothesis 1 stating that food satisfaction positively affects destination loyalty. The findings are backed by research conducted by Ali et al., (2020) Q. Chen & Huang, (2019) Folgado-Fernández et al. (2017) J. P. Lacap, (2019) and Safian et al., (2021). Additionally, studies have revealed that when tourists are satisfied with the food at a destination, it has a positive impact on their overall satisfaction which, consequently, leads to a greater intention to recommend the destination to others and a higher likelihood of revisiting it in the future (Esparza Huamanchumo et al., 2023; X. Li & Qiu, 2023).

Mediation Analysis

Table 5. Direct effects

					95% Confidence Interval	
		Estimate	Std. Error	z- value	p	Lower Upper
Food satisfaction	→ Destination	0.709	0.092	7.747	< .001	0.530 0.889

Note. Delta method standard errors, normal theory confidence intervals, ML estimator.

Table 5 shows the direct effect which means the relationship between food satisfaction and destination loyalty accounting for risk factor. The p-value of <0.001 is significant which means that the relationship is significant as implied in the correlation value in the precious table. The estimate or coefficient of 0.709 implies that a one unit increase in the food satisfaction would lead to an increase in destination loyalty by 0.709 units accounting for the risk factor.

The mediation analysis found that food satisfaction has a direct positive effect on destination loyalty, even after controlling for the risk factor. The research outcomes contradict Hypothesis 2, which posits that perceived risks serve as a mediating factor

in the relationship between food satisfaction and destination loyalty. Therefore, the findings indicate that tourists who exhibit higher levels of food satisfaction are inclined to display loyalty towards the destination, regardless of their perception of associated risks. The findings of this study align with prior research investigating the correlation between satisfaction and destination loyalty (Chaudhary & Islam, 2021; Cong, 2021). On the contrary, a study by (Manci, 2022) states that tourists who perceive a high level of risk associated with a destination are less likely to be satisfied with their visit, recommend the destination to others, or revisit the destination. However, this study is the first to control for the risk factor, which provides a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between these variables.

Table 6. Indirect effects

	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
Food satisfaction → Risk → Destination	0.019	0.021	0.925	0.355	-0.021	0.060

Note. Delta method standard errors, normal theory confidence intervals, ML estimator.

Table 6 presents the indirect effect, indicating the association between food satisfaction and destination loyalty, with the risk factor considered as a mediator. The p-value of 0.355 demonstrates non-significance, suggesting that the relationship does not hold statistical significance when the risk factor is employed as a mediator. Consequently, this implies that the factor of risk does not mediate the relationship between food satisfaction and destination loyalty. In relation to this, the study of Jiang et al., (2022) found out that perceived risk influences travel intention indirectly through various factors, including mediating factors such as risk aversion. It should be noted, however, in contrast to the results of the aforementioned study, it was observed that perceived risk does indeed exert an influence on travel behavior, particularly when considering factors such as destination selection and satisfaction.

Table 7. Total effects

	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
Food satisfaction → Destination	0.728	0.090	8.088	< .001	0.552	0.905

Note. Delta method standard errors, normal theory confidence intervals, ML estimator.

In Table 7, the total effect is presented, which refers to the connection among food satisfaction and destination loyalty without considering the influence of the risk factor. The p-value of <0.001 is significant which means that the relationship is significant as implied in the correlation value in the correlation table. The estimate or coefficient of 0.728 implies that a one-unit increase in food satisfaction would lead to an increase in destination loyalty by 0.728 units without the risk factor.

The findings for Table 7 support hypothesis 1, indicating that Food satisfaction positively affects Destination loyalty. The table provides an overview of how food satisfaction influences destination loyalty, disregarding any particular risk factor. The p-value indicates a strong statistical significance in the relationship between food satisfaction and destination loyalty, and the p-value is less than 0.001 showing that the

relationship observed is unlikely to be of random chance. Furthermore, the estimate or coefficient of 0.728 means that for every one-unit increase in food satisfaction, there is an expected increase of 0.728 units in destination loyalty, assuming the risk factor is not considered. The units suggest that when people are more satisfied with the food, they tend to be more loyal to the destination considering there are no perceived risks. The results align with the study of J. P. G. Lacap, (2019), where tourists' food satisfaction has a direct effect to their loyalty to a destination. The research of Ali et al., (2020) also indicates that food satisfaction has a vital role in influencing loyalty, as result implies that when customers are satisfied with the food they experience, they are more likely to exhibit loyalty to the destination and revisit the same place.

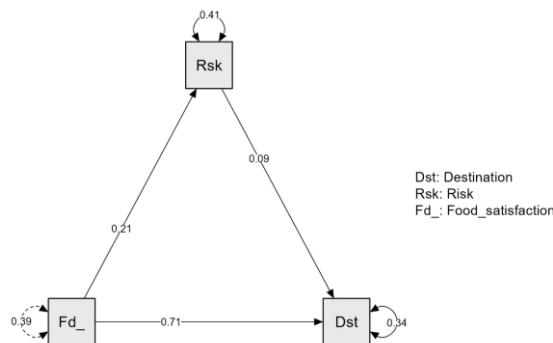


Figure 2. Path plot

The figure 2 shows the relationship between food satisfaction as mediated by risk factor. The path from food satisfaction to risk factor has a value of 0.21, which means that an increase in food satisfaction would lead to an increase in risk factor by 0.21 units. The path from risk to food destination has a value of 0.09, which means that an increase in risk factor would lead to an increase in destination loyalty by 0.091 units. Lastly, the path from food satisfaction to destination loyalty was already discussed in the direct effects table above.

The findings from the path plot indicate that as tourists' food satisfaction increases, the perceived risks also increase. In other words, higher food satisfaction is linked to a rise in the risk factor. The connection between food satisfaction and the risk factor is depicted by a path with a value of 0.21, implying a positive relationship. This means that when food satisfaction increases, the risk factor also tends to increase by approximately 0.21 units. Similarly, the path from the risk factor to the food destination has a value of 0.09, showing the influence of the risk factor on destination loyalty. In simpler terms, an increase in the risk factor corresponds to an increase in destination loyalty. The results are similar with the study of Chew & Jahari (2014) which states that individuals who had previously visited areas affected by a disaster rated the risks associated with travel to those places as low. Moreover, they expressed a strong desire to return to those destinations. In their study, these repeat tourists viewed the post-disaster situation as a unique opportunity to revisit the country, taking advantage of lower travel costs or seeking a distinct experience during the destination's recovery phase.

Conclusion

The study delved into the relationship between food satisfaction among Cavite city tourists and their loyalty to the destination, considering the perceived risks associated

with the destination. The findings revealed a significant and positive relationship between food satisfaction and destination loyalty, underscoring that heightened levels of motivation, involvement, and satisfaction pertaining to food substantially contribute to elevated levels of loyalty and overall satisfaction among tourists. Additionally, the findings indicated that tourists in Cavite City revealed a significant degree of destination loyalty, as evidenced by their agreement with statements endorsing the recommendation of the city to others and the intention to revisit.

In addition to exploring the association between food satisfaction and destination loyalty, the current study investigated the mediating influence of perceived risks, including those related to COVID-19, man-made, and natural risks, on this relationship. The results revealed that respondents agreed with the importance of restaurant disinfection and safety measures during the pandemic, while holding neutral attitudes towards visiting restaurants without the COVID-19 vaccine. Tourists also exhibited a moderate level of risk perception concerning man-made and natural risks. Notably, through mediation analysis, it was determined that the direct impact of food satisfaction on destination loyalty remained statistically significant, even after accounting for the influence of risk factors.

Moreover, the analysis indicated that perceived risks did not serve as mediators in the relationship between food satisfaction and destination loyalty. These findings imply that tourists who derived higher levels of satisfaction from their culinary experiences exhibited a greater inclination towards loyalty to the destination, regardless of their individual perceptions of associated risks. The results demonstrated that the relationship between food satisfaction and destination loyalty, when mediated by the risk factor, was not statistically significant. On the other hand, the path plot analysis revealed that as tourists' food satisfaction increases, so does their perception of risks.

Moreso, the path from the risk factor to destination loyalty suggested that an increase in the risk factor is associated with higher levels of destination loyalty. The current study, however, is the first to consider the following risk factor as a control variable, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship.

Furthermore, the data analysis gained significant findings into the relationship of food satisfaction, perceived risks, and destination loyalty among tourists in Cavite City. The results revealed a positive connection between food satisfaction and destination loyalty, indicating that when tourists are content with their dining experiences, they are more inclined to show loyalty towards the destination. The results validate hypothesis 1, which state "Food satisfaction positively affects Destination loyalty" Notably, results show tourists in Cavite City are pleased with the local food of the city, which resulted in a high level of loyalty, as evidenced by their intentions to re-visit and recommend the city to others. The significant agreement among respondents about recommending Cavite City to others and expressing their intention to re-visit signifies a positive perception and overall satisfaction with the destination. These findings enhance our understanding of the factors that shape destination loyalty. The study also highlights the significance of favorable experiences and food satisfaction within the destination in instilling loyalty among tourists. Specifically, the results emphasize the importance of recommendations and re-visit intent as indicators of destination loyalty. The study also explored the role of perceived risks; related to COVID-19, man-made risks, and natural risks in determining the relationship between food satisfaction and destination loyalty.

Analysis revealed that perceived risks did not mediate the relationship between food satisfaction and destination loyalty. The analysis means that even if tourists worry about risks in the place they visit, their satisfaction with the food still strongly influences how loyal they feel towards the destination. The findings invalidate

hypothesis 2 as it states that "The perceived risks have a mediating effect on the relationship between food satisfaction and destination loyalty" The study contributes to the existing knowledge of by considering the impact of risk factors and providing a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between food satisfaction and destination loyalty.

Based on the results of the study, the research implied several factors that can be considered and provide benefits in the future. First, tourism marketing in Cavite City should highlight and promote the city's culinary experiences. Accordingly, efforts should be made to enhance the quality and variety of food options offered to tourists since food satisfaction is positively correlated with destination loyalty. A higher level of loyalty is likely to result from this, as more tourists will be attracted, and the overall satisfaction of the tourists will be increased. Moreover, study findings reveal that tourists were concerned with restaurant disinfection and safety measures during the COVID-19 pandemic. Putting strict health and safety protocols into practice and communicating them to visitors is an important step in building trust and confidence among visitors. It can alleviate tourists' concerns regarding COVID-19 risks and create a safer environment for them to enjoy their culinary experiences. In addition, it is imperative for Cavite City to prioritize long-term resilience planning in light of the moderate level of risk perception regarding man-made and natural risks. The process involves assessing and mitigating risks associated with infrastructure, climate change, and other potential hazards. It is important for the local tourism officers to demonstrate proactive measures to address risks in order to increase tourists' sense of safety and resilience in their destinations. Next is the management of risk perceptions.

Despite the study finding that perceived risks did not mediate the relationship between food satisfaction and destination loyalty, it is still imperative that destination stakeholders address and manage perceived risks in an effective manner. Tourism risk mitigation can be achieved by improving infrastructure, enhancing safety measures, and communicating risk mitigation efforts to tourists. Tourism destinations can enhance tourist loyalty and satisfaction by addressing risk factors. Following through, the findings showed that the majority of tourists surveyed intended to revisit Cavite City in the near future. In order to take advantage of this positive attitude, destination marketers should develop strategies that encourage repeat visits. Offering loyalty programs, personalized recommendations, and promoting unique and memorable food experiences can all promote loyalty and encourage tourists to return.

Finally, further research could explore the relationship between food satisfaction, destination loyalty, and perceived risks in other destinations, in addition to Cavite City. It can be valuable for tourism destination marketers to gain insights into the impact of culinary experiences on destination loyalty, as well as the mediating effect of risk factors in various contexts and develop effective marketing strategies as a result.

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MAXIMIZING SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATION IN TOURISM MARKETING—AN ANALYSIS BASED ON INFORMATION DIFFUSION THEORY

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Abstract

Online social media has become increasingly important in contemporary tourism marketing campaigns, in order to explore the depth, breadth, and size of marketing tweets' diffusion. We analysed the information diffusion patterns of these retweeted tweet cascades by examining the diffusion differences of Macau-related tweets and using topic analysis, sentiment analysis, and the XGBoost deep learning algorithm, which proves that the highly retweeted tweets with positive sentiments such as curiosity, admiration, and love generate higher retweet rates and depth of diffusion. Additionally, tweets related to the topics of exploration, relaxation, gastronomy, and sport competition are also more likely to be widely spread. This paper provides theoretical and practical insights into how destination management organizations and tourism marketers can create and optimize more spread-efficient tweets, and it suggests limitations of the study and directions for future research.

Keywords: information diffusion; consumer engagement; online social media engagement; deep learning

Introduction

Online information and social networks have become an integral part of contemporary communication, affecting all aspects of people's lives. The huge volume of information spreading across social media and the Internet has given tourism marketing a better way to project image and convey information to different people around the world. At the same time, information dissemination on the Internet has become very competitive. Many tourism cities and organizations are trying to increase their exposure by placing advertisements on social media and inviting influential users to join them in their marketing campaigns to gain online buzz and retweets. Despite the huge investment in online advertising, however, the level of user response to the campaign is often insufficient and ineffective. In this study, we analyze online tourism marketing campaigns through viral marketing networks, using the perspective of information diffusion theory. We examine the extent of the spread of Macau related marketing messages on social media by modeling its depth value under information diffusion theory.

Literature Review

Consumer engagement

The term “engagement” was originally associated with employee engagement (Kahn, 1990), described as expressions of a positive, pragmatic, work-related attitudes, characterised mainly by energy, dedication and focus. This concept has now been extended to the field of consumer engagement (CE), where it plays a central role in a network of managed service relationships. Consumer engagement has gained significant attention in marketing and tourism (So et al., 2021). In marketing, scholars study CE from psychological and behavioural perspectives and define it as a psychological state that arises through the interaction and co-creation of the customer experience with the brand in a service relationship (Brodie et al., 2013). In short, CE

can be regarded as an interactive brand experience for customers.

In addition, CE has also been studied from the perspectives of social science/management, business practice management, and other fields (Lee et al., 2018). Though definitions vary greatly, in general, CE is characterized by many studies into cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions.

From a psychological perspective, CE includes cognitive (e.g., being interesting in some activities), affective (feeling positive/negative about activities), and behavioural elements (participation). From a behavioural perspective CE may include non-transactional customer behaviour.

Other researchers have conceptualised CE in various dimensions, for example, identification, enthusiasm, attention, absorption and interaction (De Vries et al. (2012). In the broad internet sphere, Pletikosa Cvijikj and Michahelles (2013) consider and measure CE by looking at factors such as click-through rates, number of views and length of browsing.

In social media spheres, user or consumer engagement can also be measured through interactions on parameters such as liking, sharing and commenting on a brand's page. These metrics can be a good measure of whether user perceptions and engagement are in line with the brand's philosophy and promotional efforts. In addition, social media interactions and information dissemination affect other consumers. Van Doorn et al. (2010); Verhoef et al. (2010) argue that information sharing that helps other customers to consume better is also an important consumption behaviour.

The relationship between motivation in the uses and gratifications theory (U&G) and brand performance, image, and loyalty can be captured in a number of CE frameworks (Lian & Yoong, 2018). For example, scholars in tourism posit that CE is the connection between the customer and the (destination) brand, as reflected in their cognitive, affective and behavioural responses in the non-purchase context (Rather, 2020).

In previous research, CE tends to contribute positively to the overall brand experience of tourists, thus boosting the performance of tourism companies and related industries. Rather (2020) argued that the dimensions of tourists' engagement in experiential services affect their cognitions and behaviours and that CE is mainly the result of self-enhancement, social integration, and reward.

With the rapid development of Internet technology and social media, several existing studies have incorporated social media into CE. Based on real-time data and online experiments, Wang et al. (2023) found that emotional emojis generate higher credibility than semantic emojis, which improves tourism consumer engagement. Lian and Yoong (2018) also demonstrated that effective CE in social media can significantly enhance brand image and tourist loyalty via social interaction, surveillance, and attraction. The rapid growth of social media has also led to the explosive accumulation of information. It has transformed CE from a simple offline participation to a hybrid mode of online and offline behavioral engagement, with the two interacting with each other. Furthermore, the speed and scope of information diffusion is now faster and wider in social media, which makes it easier for consumers to participate and engage.

Social media engagement behaviour

If consumer engagement generates feelings of enthusiasm, enjoyment, etc., and promotes sharing, learning, etc., then consumer engagement is an important determinant of the effectiveness of social media platform marketing and communication strategies. Consumer engagement thus leads to more effective advertisement circulation and economic benefits for brands because it is mainly driven

by consumers' personal intentions and motivations rather than by companies.

Van Doorn et al. (2010)'s definition of consumer engagement behavior considers that customers' behaviors towards brands and commodities go beyond the act of purchasing, and are motivated by word-of-mouth, recommendations, writing and reviewing, and other motivational drivers. From a social media-centered approach, several studies have also argued that users are now able to target a wider network of participants (including potential consumers) by their ability to engage directly with brands or interact with other consumers.

On social networks, Schivinski et al. (2016) developed a three-factor framework for measuring consumer engagement activities with brand-related social media content, which other scholars have further delved into, arguing that the engagement behaviors of consumers (users) with a brand on a social media site represent varying levels of engagement and creativity, ranging for example from following (lower level of engagement) to commenting (higher level of engagement).

Cao et al. (2021) categorized each of the three dimensions of engagement behavior by studying social media. *Consumption* represents the lowest level of engagement, such as passively watching and reading articles and videos, while contribution represents a higher level of engagement which involves peer-to-peer social interactions such as commenting and retweeting.

Contributing represents a higher form of engagement that can lead to a wider distribution of social media content, which may be generated by travel bloggers or by official destination marketing organizations. *Creating*, on the other hand, belongs to the highest level of engagement, where consumers actively generate content to share it on social media.

In tourism research, measuring the level of engagement performance of destination-related tweets on social media platforms usually starts with reads, likes, comments and retweets. Commenting and retweeting involves the critique and in-depth diffusion of content, while liking can increase outreach to potential users. However, there is still insufficient research examining how different forms of engagement behaviour affect information diffusion pathways and the speed of information diffusion.

Information Diffusion

Because of rapid information creation, sharing, and large-scale cascades, the amount of information dissemination has grown exponentially. Information dissemination usually occurs through the spawning of new cascades, retweeting, commenting, liking, and so on. Every interaction with tweets can increase information exposure on social media platforms. A few researchers have conducted extensive and in-depth studies on information diffusion. Havakhor et al. (2018) defines information diffusion as the process by which information (knowledge) spreads and reaches individuals through interaction.

On various social media platforms, destination management organizations (DMOs) and agents post many tweets to promote and disseminate information. Through direct interaction with consumers or potential consumers, information is further diffused in depth. Alrajebah et al. (2017) argues that this diffusion phenomenon is partly composed of the cascades of the content of the communication and the motivation behind the individual's behaviour.

The spreading trace of such cascades form structures that link users together, and these links represent the direction of information flow between individual users. Vosoughi et al. (2018), in his study of the way information spreads on Twitter for real and fake news, captured cascades created by users and the behaviour of other users who

retweeted them, he measured the dimensions of speed, depth and breadth of information dissemination.

In tourism, scholars have used models to understand how information diffusion affects tourists' consumption patterns and found that word-of-mouth information diffusion can significantly increase consumer purchases. Hlee et al. (2017) conducted a study between social media (Weibo) information providers, which were classified as official users, and personal cognitive users, comparing the number of retweets and likes on posted tweets. The study found that tourism users were less responsive to the more granular ones posted by officially recognised users and were less likely to retweet and share them.

In the context of tourism research, most studies are based on information such as the number of retweets, the content of comments, the number of likes. But an in-depth study on the tweet-retweet network for tourism information dissemination is still lacking. To address this gap, this study explores the types of tweets that lead to a more rapid and in-depth diffusion of travel or tourism information via an analysis of information diffusion networks. Such a study would be helpful for tourist destinations to improve communication reach and the depth of potential visitors' engagement.

Methodology

Data collection

The study collected data on Weibo between the months of March and April in 2023. Data collection was divided into two stages: The first was to download all the retrieved Weibo tweets that contained the keyword "Macau." The second was to download the retweet data of each tweet based on the primary downloaded Weibo tweets. This includes the retweets' retweets, with the retweet relationship depending on the engagement behaviour of the platform users.

Data analysis

This study uses network structure analysis to mine the deeper content of the data structure. (1) First, descriptive statistics were performed on the downloaded corpus of tweet data. (2) Secondly, the diffusion pattern of tweet cascades (), which describes the information diffusion of is characterized using the metrics of depth, breadth, and size of the diffusion pattern (Tweet's cascade represents an unbroken chain of retweet with a common, single origin). (3) Third, content analyses of the tweets were undertaken, involving sentiment analysis and topic analysis. (4) Finally, analysis to predict how far information is disseminated was undertaken by utilizing a deep learning prediction algorithm. Specifically, the study identifies what kinds of topics and emotional language maximizes the depth dimension of information dissemination.

Sentiment analysis

This study conducted sentiment analysis using GoEmotions(Demszky et al., 2020), a deep learning sentiment classifier model, which is a manually annotated dataset containing 58,000 Reddit comments extracted from the popular English-language social media platform Reddit and tagged with 27 sentiment categories. The taxonomy includes 12 positive emotions, 11 negative emotions, 4 fuzzy emotion categories and 1 'neutral' emotion, making it broadly applicable to dialogue comprehension tasks that require fine-grained distinctions between emotional expressions. The study analysed all weibo tweets for sentiment, using a threshold of 0.4, and filtered them programmatically so that each tweet could return a sentiment word with the highest weight.

Topic analysis

Due to the short text nature of microblogs, the length of tweets posted is usually no more than 140 characters. Thus, in analysing short text, this study adopts GSDMM, a deep learning model, for theme extraction. Model hyperparameters were set so that as many text data can be categorized under the emergent topics suggested by the deep learning model. (Hu et al., 2019; Li & Yamanishi, 2003).

Static measures of information diffusion

This study measures and compares the static data in the process of information diffusion, i.e., without considering the factor of time. The static measures in this study are depth, breadth, and size, defined as follows:

- 1) *Depth* of a node is the number of edges from that node to the root node (in this case the original tweet). The depth is the maximum depth in the cascades. Depth represents how far a tweet is re-tweeted.
- 2) *Breadth* represents the maximum width of the cascade, which is the number of nodes at the same level in each propagation activity of each cascade.

Size refers to the number of unique (unduplicated) users in the cascades corresponding to the cascade scale, where each user can perform single or multiple forwarding activities while participating in the dissemination activities of the respective cascade.

Predictive analytics based on XGBoost

XGBoost (or Extreme Gradient Boosting) is a regularised gradient boosting framework and is currently the leading deep learning framework capable of combining the predictions of multiple weak models to produce more accurate predictions. The most advantageous aspect of the framework is its handling of missing values, which allows the researcher to reduce the pre-processing of the data and achieve very high predictive performance. In this study, we divided the data set into sample set and test set according to the ratio of 0.8 and 0.2, using this predictive framework, the study attempts to identify and relate what types of topic (content) and emotive language in social media communication can (a) increase user engagement and (b) maximize dissemination (depth).

Results

Descriptive analysis

From

Table 1 shows that, for March and April there were 42,439 and 78,849 tweets containing the keyword “Macau”, in which 11.46% and 14.86% of the tweets were retweeted, resulting in 52,744 and 277,243 total retweets generated, respectively.

Table 2 shows that information dissemination varied considerably between the two months, with an average depth of dissemination of 1.77 in March compared to 3.92 in April, and an average size of only 253.80 in March compared to 2,844.03 in April.

Figure 1 shows the CCDF plots for the depth, breadth, and size dimensions of information dissemination. For example, on average, tweets containing “Macau” as a keyword attains a depth of 4 around 18% of the time.

Figure 2 shows which type of emotion or sentiment in tweets generates high levels of retweets (breadth), compared to baseline (Figure 1, breadth). Tweets that convey a Realisation sentiment appears to generate the highest retweet probability (breadth). Similarly, tweets that convey sentiments of Approval, Admiration, Optimism and

Neutral are also more likely to get high retweets.

Figure 3 shows different levels of retweets depending on the topic (content) of the tweet. Closer inspection shows that tweets are most likely to be retweeted when they are generally travel-related. Specifically, topics related to ‘Sport competition’, ‘Gastronomy’, ‘Entertainment’, Entertainment Event Tickets, are also more likely to get high retweets and spread more easily to other users.

Table 1. Tweet and retweet frequency statistics

	# of tweet with keywords “Macau”	% retweeted	Total# of retweets
March	42,439	11.46%	52,744
April	78,849	14.86%	277,243

Table 2. Cascade diffusion depth, breadth and size of retweeted tweets

	Ave. Depth ⁽¹⁾	Ave. Max-Breadth ⁽²⁾	Ave. Size ⁽³⁾
March	1.77	76.39	253.80
April	3.92	931.62	2844.03

⁽¹⁾ Number of nodes represent the average number of edges from the node to the root node. ⁽²⁾ the number of average max-breadth represent the maximum width of all cascades. ⁽³⁾ the number of average sizes correspond the average number of users in all cascades.

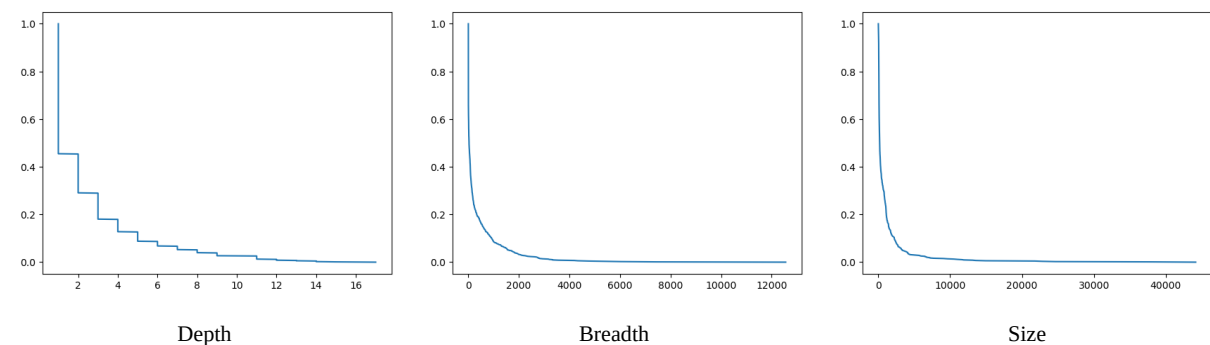


Figure 1. Complementary cumulative distribution functions (CCDFs) of depth, breadth and size

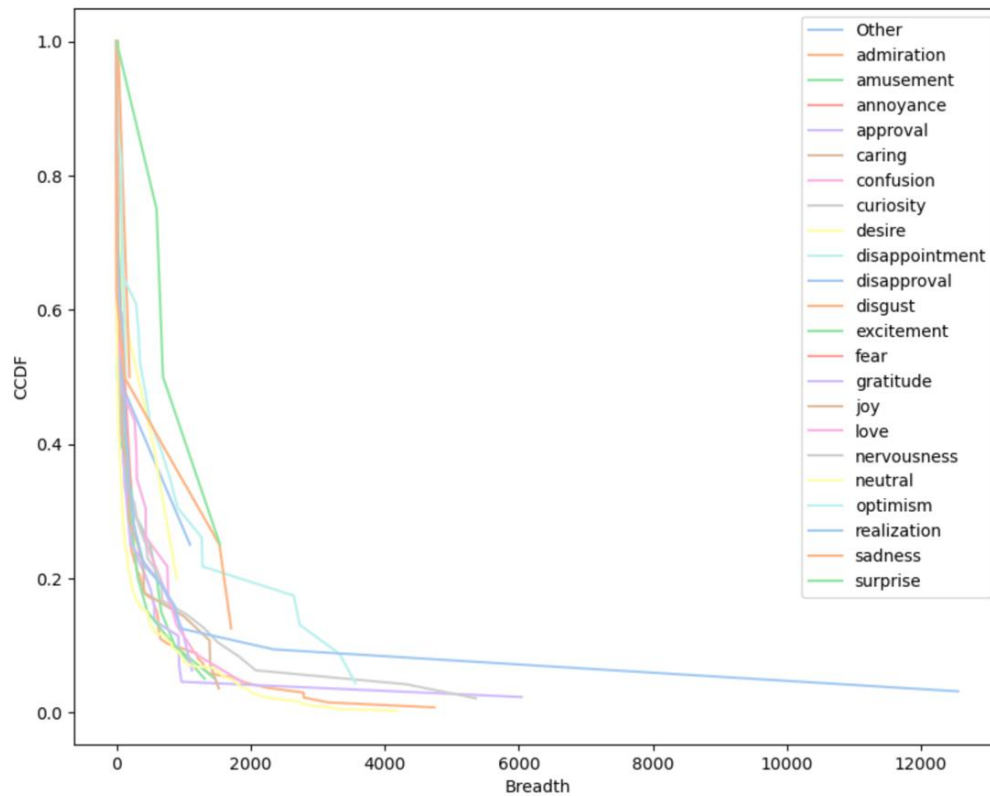


Figure 2. Complementary cumulative distribution functions (CCDFs) of emotion in group of breadth

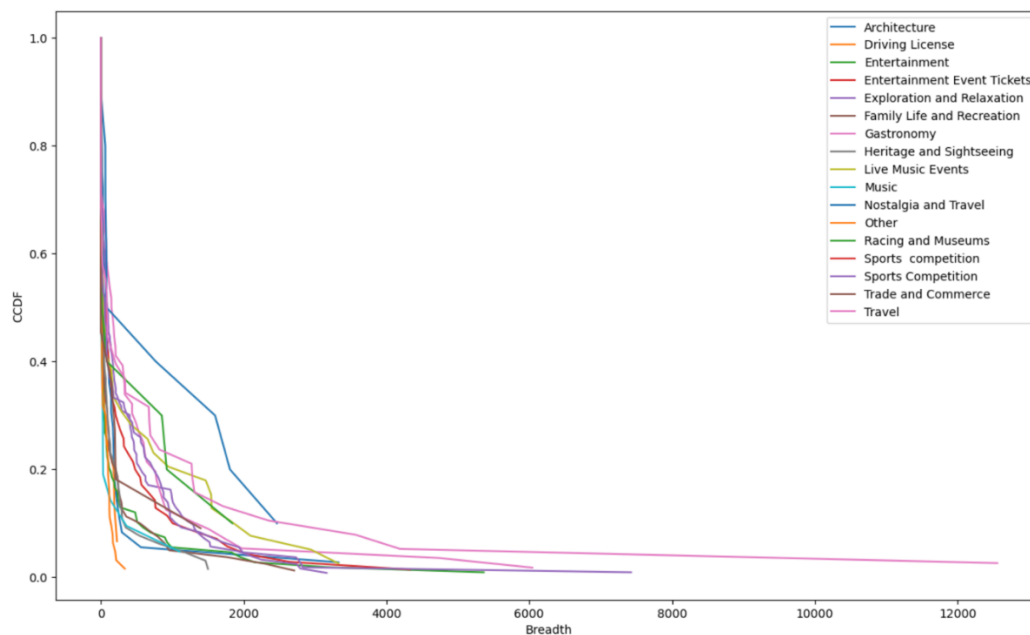


Figure 3. Complementary cumulative distribution functions (CCDFs) of topic in group of breadth

ANOVA analysis

To statistically confirm the aforementioned visual analysis suggesting different topics and sentiments can influence information dissemination, Table 3 reports ANOVA results for the categorical variables Emotion and Topic. In terms of sentiments, the most significant type of emotion affecting information dissemination is optimism. In terms

of the topic (content) of tweets, Gastronomy, Exploration, and Relaxation, are the most statistically significant ones that influence information dissemination.

Table 3. ANOVA analysis

	sum_sq	df	F	PR(>F)
<i>By sentiment of tweets</i>				
optimism	19.915823	1	4.255028	0.0394
confusion	17.426129	1	3.723104	0.0540
love	16.089778	1	3.437591	0.0641
disgust	14.152299	1	3.023648	0.0824
sadness	2.386488	1	0.509875	0.4754
realization	1.885046	1	0.402741	0.5259
approval	1.86329	1	0.398093	0.5282
Other (Emotions)	1.835626	1	0.392183	0.5313
excitement	1.744905	1	0.3728	0.5416
admiration	1.401718	1	0.299478	0.5844
nervousness	0.928422	1	0.198358	0.6562
gratitude	0.744149	1	0.158988	0.6902
disappointment	0.626522	1	0.133857	0.7146
fear	0.465029	1	0.099354	0.7527
disapproval	0.411347	1	0.087884	0.7670
desire	0.282299	1	0.060313	0.8061
curiosity	0.186545	1	0.039856	0.8418
annoyance	0.085414	1	0.018249	0.8926
joy	0.059969	1	0.012812	0.9099
surprise	0.059273	1	0.012664	0.9104
caring	0.017004	1	0.003633	0.9520
amusement	0.007767	1	0.001659	0.9675
neutral	0.000022	1	0.000005	0.9983
<i>By topic (content) of tweets</i>				
Exploration and Relaxation	54.548437	1	11.654308	0.0007
Gastronomy	46.370436	1	9.907073	0.0017
Sport competition	8.481774	1	1.812137	0.1786
Family Life and Recreation	5.867028	1	1.253494	0.2632
Racing and Museums	2.51922	1	0.538233	0.4634
Live Music Events	1.579027	1	0.33736	0.5615
Architecture	1.156921	1	0.247177	0.6192
Commerce and Tickets	0.985611	1	0.210577	0.6464
Other (Topic)	0.678369	1	0.144934	0.7035
Heritage and Sightseeing	0.600927	1	0.128388	0.7202
Driving License	0.418113	1	0.08933	0.7651
Music	0.089839	1	0.019194	0.8898
Entertainment	0.073323	1	0.015666	0.9004
Nostalgia and Travel	0.064407	1	0.013761	0.9066
Travel	0.018084	1	0.003864	0.9505
Trade and Commerce	0.000031	1	0.000007	0.9979

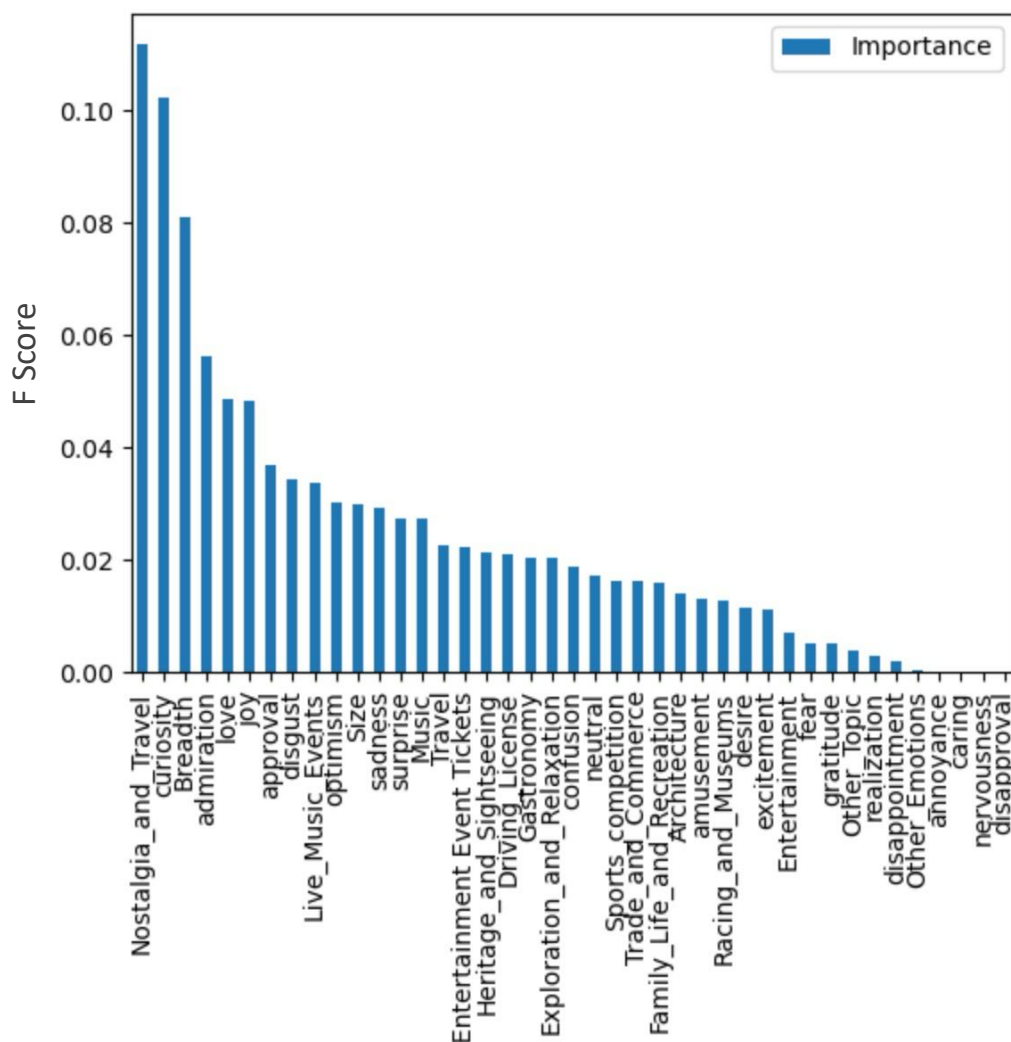


Figure 4. Importance ranking of sentiments and topics in predicting information dissemination depth, based on XGBoost deep-learning model

Predicting Depth of information dissemination using XGBoost

While the foregoing analyses describe the sentiments and topics that generate the greatest depth dimension of information dissemination for tweets related to “Macau”, they lack predictive ability. Results from using XGBoost deep learning algorithm to predict depth based on the type of tweet sentiments and topics as input variables suggest that variables such as Nostalgia and Travel, Curiosity, Breadth and Admiration are the ones that can be predicted to generate the most depth. In terms of tweet topic (or content), Exploration and Relaxation is the most predictive. The mean squared error = 2.55, it means the average standard error of the prediction of the maximum depth of propagation value is lower and has better prediction performance. Figure 5 shows the importance ranking of various tweet sentiments and content that are best able to predict depth of information dissemination.

Discussion and Conclusion

The study characterized the pattern of information diffusion of tweets mentioning “Macau” on Weibo during the months of March and April 2023. It can be concluded that there is a significant difference in the speed and efficiency of information spread

on Weibo due to the different levels of user engagement with tweets regarding different topics. The study found that tweets mentioning about Macau's "Performance and Admissions", "Gastronomy", etc., users' engagement on social media increased significantly, and the frequency of retweets spiked, and the depth and breadth of engagement values varied significantly.

These findings suggest that users are highly event orientated when it comes to destination travel, with a significant increase in activity on social media platforms when entertainment events such as concerts are held in Macau. Another topic generating significant information sharing activity is food, which is also mentioned and retweeted significantly more often than other topic categories of tweets.

When tweets are categorised in terms of emotions, tweets with positive emotions generate higher relative retweet rates. CCDF analysis shows that the three sentiment categories of Approval, Admiration, and Optimism have a higher chance of achieving high retweet rates.

Based on these findings, destination management organisations and brand marketers can increasing their exposure on social media by increasing the engagement of potential users through specific topics and emotional texts (Pachucki et al., 2022). In addition, by using predictive models such as XGBoost gradient boosting algorithm, our study shows that marketing agencies and destination management organisations can predict the likely performance of their social media communication in terms of depth, volume, and other measures of effective information diffusion (Mariani & Wamba, 2020).

On a theoretical level, this study adds to the theoretical knowledge of online social media engagement in a tourism marketing context, using the case of Macau. By investigating the cascade patterns of destination-related tweets and retweets, the study provides a concrete example of a methodological innovation for examining online engagement. More specifically, the theoretical relationship between diffusivity and content categories in cascading information pattern is further clarified and quantified.

In practical terms, the study provides destination management organisations with an effective methodology for mining user engagement topic preferences and sentiment preferences for marketing destinations, enabling them to create and generate more effective, far-reaching, marketing tweets on social media platforms and motivate potential consumers to engage. The study also provides industry with a reasonable method for calculating information diffusion depth.

The study's findings are limited by several factors. First, the study only observes two months of social media data. Second, the findings are generalizable only to tweets and retweets based on the keyword of Macau (as a travel destination). Follow up studies should investigate more in-depth computation of information diffusion and expand the scope of data collection in terms of time and destinations in order to make the conclusions more generalizable.

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GENDER ROLES AND PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS IN RETAIL INDUSTRY OF MACAO SAR: PERSPECTIVES OF FEMALE PRACTITIONERS

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Abstract

The stereotype of gender is a strong social force (*Oakley, 2000*). Studies also reveal that male and female with similar educational background might have different experiences in their career (*Gregg & Johnson, 1990*). Female are stereotyped as someone who focus on actual service interaction and emotional outcomes during service encounters and is believed that female could handle duties involved interactions with customers better than male do (*Mathies & Burford, 2011*). Female practitioners are always associated with “caring” and “thoughtful”, which are the stereotypes of female (*Oakes et al., 1994*). Together with these characteristics of female and their physical attractiveness, they usually receive higher attention and expectation from customers, especially from male customers (*Schmitt & Pan, 1994*). Many of the tourism and hospitality organizations still prefer female practitioners for those services provider positions (*Mathies & Burford, 2011*) because of their gender nature and characteristics (*Hochschild, 2012*) as they are believed to be more suitable than male practitioners, especially in the eyes of managements (*Basnyat et al., 2021*).

The female practitioners takes up over 49% of the total number of full-time practitioners in all industry of the Macao Special Administrative Region (hereafter as: Macao SAR) (*Statistics and Census Service, 2021*). Since the liberalization of the gaming industry in Year 2002, tourism and hospitality industry in the Macao SAR is growing up steadily (*Chan & Kuok, 2011*). The number of practitioners in the retail industry of the Macao SAR has taken up 23.5% of the total tourism related practitioners (*Statistics and Census Service, 2021*). The significant proportion makes them become one of the important parts of the retail industry and the hospitality industry. From the point of view of the female practitioners in the retail industry of the Macao SAR, this study examines the importance of their gender roles during service encounter.

Another objective of the current study is related to the importance of physical attractiveness for female practitioners in the retail industry during service encounter. Physical attractiveness is a valued ingredient in modern social communication (*Hamermesh & Biddle, 1993*). It is considered as valuable asset in the tourism and hospitality industry and is more likely to apply for the promotion of the hospitality services (*Abubakar et al., 2019*). It is a commonly used tool to attract and retain customers (*Basnyat et al., 2021*) for the industry. The physical attractiveness of female practitioners are directly influencing the satisfaction, attitudes and intended behaviors of the customers during service encounters (*Otis, 2008*). Previous studies focus on the relationship of gender roles and service encounter (*Carr & Poria, 2010*), while there is lack of studies focus on the relationship of physical attractiveness and service encounters. Furthermore, most of the previous studies are from the perspectives of the customers, the viewpoint from female practitioners are missing while service encounters encompass both consumers and service providers.

To examine the two objectives of the study from the perspectives of female practitioners, qualitative measurement is applied. Female practitioners from the retail industry of the Macao SAR is invited to participate in an in-depth semi-structured interview in order to understand their values, opinions, behaviors and their demographic information.

In order to address the research gap of gender role and physical attractiveness in the tourism and hospitality industry, this study aims to present the gender role situation of the retail industry in the Macao SAR and to examine the importance of gender roles and physical attractiveness for female practitioners in the retail industry of the Macao SAR in their perspectives instead of the perspectives of the customers.

Keywords: Gender roles, Physical Attractiveness, Retail Industry, Macao SAR, Service Encounter

1. Introduction

The tourism and hospitality industry in the Macao Special Administrative Region (hereafter as: Macao SAR) is growing up steadily (Chan & Kuok, 2011). The significant proportion of the female practitioners (over 50%) makes them become one of the important parts of the hospitality industry (澳門特別行政區政府社會工作局, 2023; Clevenger & Singh, 2013). Female are stereotyped to be capable to handle duties involved interactions with customers better than male do (Mathies & Burford, 2011). Together with physical attractiveness, which is considered as valuable asset and a commonly used tools for attracting and retaining customers in the tourism and hospitality industry (Abubakar et al., 2019). Therefore, physical attractive female usually receive higher attention and expectation from customers, especially from male customers (Schmitt & Pan, 1994) and are more preferable for service provider positions (Mathies & Burford, 2011).

2. Literature Review

Physical attractiveness can be defined as the degree to which one's facial image elicits favourable reactions from others and is a package of one's facial attractiveness, dressing, weight, body gesture, movement, etc (Morrow, 1990). Previous study affirms that bias towards individuals with high physical attractiveness are found among most of the people (Mazur et al., 1987).

Service encounter is widely considered to be one of the foundational constructs of service research (Bitner & Wang, 2014), which is also known as “moment of truth”, is critical in the eyes of the service industry during their service delivery process as customers would evaluate the quality of the service and the practitioners during the service encounters (Browning, 2008). Practitioners are largely affecting the perceived service quality as they are the one to interact with customers (Farrell et al., 2001; Payne, 2009). Therefore, enterprises usually preferred practitioners who are believed to be capable to handle service encounter (Lin & Mattila, 2010). Foster & Resnick also reveals that age, gender and physical attractiveness are affecting the perception of the customers (Foster & Resnick, 2013). Female practitioners are often described as an individual that focus on service interaction and emotional outcomes during service encounters and are considered more efficient when compared to male. Therefore, they are more preferable to take up service role (Mathies & Burford, 2011). No doubt that in the tourism and hospitality sectors, gendered approach to occupational segregation is commonly seen (Poria, 2008). Along with the preference of physical attractiveness, thus, to conclude, physically attractive female practitioners are usually preferable.

The gender role and commodification of physical attractiveness of the female practitioners will be introduced in this study, particularly in the perspectives of the female practitioners.

3. Method Design

3.1 Data Collection

The data for this study are collected by conducting in-depth semi-structured interview with 10 female practitioners who are participating in the local retail industry. The application of in-depth semi-structured interview allows interviewees to voice out issues that they considered important and useful for the study.

Participant No.	Age Range	Years of Experiences	Types of Retail Shop ^{Note 1}	Practitioners	
				Number	Ratio ^{Note 2}
1	21-25	3 months	Clothing	2	1:1
2	21-25	3 years	Clothing	--	All female
			Watches & Jewellery	--	All female
3	31-35	12 years	Clothing	2	1:0
			Clothing	20	1:1
			Souvenir	10	8:2
			Department Store	3	2:1
4	31-35	6 months	Souvenir	10	1:1
			Clothing	4	4:0
5	21-25	6 years	Clothing	--	--
			Cosmetics and Sanitary Products	14	6:1
6	31-35	10 years	Clothing	10	7:3
7	31-35	7 years	Department Store	10	9:1
8	31-35	5 years	Department Store	--	1:1
9	31-35	3 years	Department Store	5	4:1
10	36-40	1 year	Clothing	20	11:9

Note:

1. The types of retail shops and products are categorized by the interviewee

2. The ratio of practitioner is presented in female to male

To facilitate the initial data collection, the first interviewee contacted is author's friend. Further with her recommendation, more potential interviewees are found for interviews. To avoid bias caused by the application of snowball sampling, researchers on purposely recruit interviewees from different types of retail shops.

The data collection for the study was between 1st to 9th August 2023. Interviewees are female aged 21 to 40, with 3 months to 12 years' experience, from different types of local retail shop, namely luxury brands, clothing, souvenir shops, etc.

All interviews are conducted in Cantonese and further translated into English. Thematic approached is applied for the data analysis. The data analysis is performed by all authors to ensure the trustworthiness.

3.2 Data Analysis

4. Findings

From the responses of the in-depth interview of the participants, mainly two themes are identified. Important parts of the interviews are excerpted.

4.1 Gender Roles

Participants have mentioned about the nature of gender associated with their daily work

are reinforced. It is observed that female practitioners take a much higher ratio, especially in female related products retail shops. The concepts of “caring”, “thoughtful”, “aesthetic” is usually associated, and thus they are believed to be more suitable to serve customers and are more preferable. Participant 4, participant 6 and participant 8, have revealed that:

“As some of the products are artistic products, customers used to believe that female practitioners are with higher aesthetic senses, therefore female practitioners are more preferable in the service encounter.”

“Because of opposite attract, female practitioners are more preferable for male customers and even more respective to be served by female practitioners.”

“Female practitioners are more thoughtful when introducing products and is believed to have a better understanding on the products.”

Participant also disclose the comparison of the nature of gender and provide reasons to explain that female practitioners are more suitable for retail industry as they are usually emotionally stronger and can cope with those demanding customers or negative situations. They also believed that this should be the normal way for customer services. Nearly all participants have identified that female practitioners are the one who usually responsible for customer services when comparing to male practitioners. Participant 3 has specially clarified that:

“In compare with female practitioners, male practitioners are usually lack of patience. When facing demanding customers, male practitioners might scowl into silence or lack of smiles.”

It is used to find that functional appropriateness of gendered segregation of jobs in services sectors in Asia, female practitioners are considered more suitable for providing services (Luoh & Tsaur, 2009). Therefore, it is not surprised that the participants of this study are with the perceived suitability of gendered segregation of jobs. These traditional gender roles stereotypes are reinforced through their daily service encounters as participants mentioned that female practitioners are more preferable in the eyes of the customers and supervisors and eventually became part of their perception.

The participants of this study further affirmed that female practitioners receive higher attention and many participants have mentioned that female practitioners are more welcomed by male customers.

4.2 Physical Attractiveness

Physical attractiveness is particularly emphasized by all participants. Participant 4, participant 6, participants 7 and participant 10 have particularly mentioned that:

“Physical attractiveness is one of the interview requirements and allows you to get a job easier. When comparing to male practitioners, the physical attractiveness standards towards female practitioners is usually higher.”

“There are requirements on physical attractiveness. It is not necessary to be beautiful but at least clean and tidy... physical attractiveness is one of the acceptance requirements though it is not mentioned in the recruitment advertisement, this is more like an unwritten rule.”

“In the view of supervisor, facial beauty is not necessary, however, vitality of the practitioners is extremely important.”

“Supervisor has emphasized the importance of physical attractiveness during interview ... has specially reminded me that it is necessary to put on full make up during work and she will check the makeup of the female practitioners.”

Most of the participants understand that physical attractiveness for practitioners and many retail shops tend to capitalize the physical attractiveness of the female practitioners to attract customers and increase sales. Participant 4 and participant 6 have mentioned that:

“Customers tend to agree with the comments from female practitioners with high physical attractiveness as their aesthetic sense is shown.”

“Humans are visual animals. If the female practitioners with high physical attractiveness, all products that she wear will be add valued and increase the purchase desire. Practitioners with high physical attractiveness will be add valued as customers loved to chat with them.”

However, participant 3 has shared the story of her colleague, which reflects the importance of physical attractiveness from the other side:

“My ex-colleague is an extremely fat young lady, along with hairy moustache on her face and husky voice. She is accepted as the shop is really running short of labour. Later, few customers reflect that they are terrified by that young girl and are not willing to stay in the shop, therefore, she is fired. For sure, the supervisor knew that she is not a practitioner with physical attractiveness, but he did not want to discriminate the young lady (her appearance is due to Polycystic Ovary Syndrome). None of us can predict this bad result.”

Customers shed extra attention to physical attractive female practitioners. However, none of them expressed concern on this practice and even considered this as a strategy for them to reach their sales targets or achievement. Participant 2, who is a female practitioner from luxury branding, has shared her own harassment experience:

“I have served a male customer and claimed that he would like to know about more about two handbag and asked me to carry them for his video taking. However, I found out that his camera is focused on my face instead of the bags. Later, he also invited me for dinner. I found this offensive, however, I knew this can help to achieve my sales target. I will try to fulfil their request if it is not too offensive.”

The female practitioners are aware the practices of commodification of their physical attractiveness and reflects no objection to this practice.

5. Discussion

The stereotypes of the traditional female gender role are reinforced continuously and is critical for the constructions of the perceived gender roles of the female practitioners in the local retail industry. They are considered to be better when compared with male practitioners, because of the stereotyped “caring” and “thoughtful” nature and are believed to be mentally and emotionally stronger. Therefore, the female practitioners perceived that they are capable to stand for those negative or undesirable circumstances, especially in handling with the emotions of the customers.

Previous study has indicated that the tourism and hospitality industry is an industry with acute gendered occupational segregation, mainly due to the job nature (Lew et al., 2008), while this feature is still found valid in this study. The reinforcement of the

gender-based stereotypes exist in retail industry through continuous repeat of direct and indirect indication in their workplace. This stereotypes reinforcement has mislead the female practitioners that this segregation is appropriate and even with higher effectiveness during service encounters. They seldom challenge or question about these traditional inequalities, or some of them considered this as a privilege.

High hospitality is an essential feature for hospitality industry; however, the physical attractiveness of the female practitioners is being commodified and ultimately turns into actual economic benefits, which is found corresponding with the previous study (Rudman & Fetterolf, 2014). Female practitioners notice about the importance of physical attractiveness and considered as their advantage over male practitioners, nonetheless, none of them expressed any concern on this feature, even though they have encountered harassments. They consider the harassments as a marketing activity though they might feel offensive, businesses or sales is their first priority.

This study reveals that the retail industry of the Macao SAR has been commodified the gender role and physical attractiveness of female practitioners for more economic gain, and this even distorted their personal values. Therefore, positive values of the gender role and physical attractiveness should be developed throughout the industry, no matter female or practitioners and also their supervisors, who are one of the critical roles that deliver the distorted value.

5.1 Practical Implication

This study reveals the insights of the female practitioners towards their gender and physical attractiveness during service encounter in the retail industry of the Macao SAR. Instead of from the consumer's point of view like the previous studies, this study focuses on the point of view of the female practitioners. Along with this gendered stereotype reinforcement, they become supportive to this stereotype. Secondly, this study also reveals that the retail industry has commodified the physical attractiveness of the female practitioners, female practitioners even agreed with this practice and considered this as an advantage. Harassments cases are recorded, and they even condone with this practice because of the economic gain.

No doubt that being part of the hospitality sector, practitioners with physical attractiveness could benefit the work or the industry. However, it should be avoided to abuse the gender and physical attractiveness of the female practitioners. Reinforcement of the gender stereotype might undervalue the contribution of the female practitioners (Rudman & Fetterolf, 2014). It is necessary to initiate some practices to reshape the gender role of the female practitioners by the development of positive values. It is suggested to offer promotion opportunities to female practitioners to enhance their dignity and self-value, which allows them to understand that they could generate economic benefits for the retail industry in diverse ways and there are different opportunities for them. Hopefully, with these strategies, the positive value of the industry and the perceptions of the customers could be rectified to some extent.

6. Limitation

First, the age range of the participants of this study ranged from 21 to 40 years, majority are young female. The older groups are not being covered, whereas their insights might be varied as female practitioners of aged above 40 years old might be at the position of supervisors or managers and they might be influenced by their age and job insecurity. Second, this study is conducted in the Macao SAR, which reflects the cultures of the retail industry of the Macao SAR and culture-based biases might exist.

7. References

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EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GAMES-BASED LEARNING FOR HOTEL TRAINING

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Abstract

The competition in the hotel industry in the market mainly depends on the quality of service. To maintain and improve service quality, hospitality training becomes an investment for human beings. Traditional training programs can no longer meet the needs of the development of the hotel industry. Innovations to improve the effectiveness and universality of hospitality training are proposed, combining the popularity of digital games and the need for training practices to form game-based learning as a new form of training. Game-based learning (GBL) has the potential to overcome some of the shortcomings of traditional training methods. GBL for hospitality training was developed and compared with traditional methods. The results showed that GBL was as effective as conventional methods at supplemental levels. The GBL method is suitable for different levels of hotels in terms of knowledge acquisition, learner aspect and perception.

Keywords: Game-based learning, hotel training, serious game, empirical study

Introduction

The Chinese tourism industry is rapidly developing since the late 1990s. In the aftermath of Covid-19 China saw nearly 1.22 billion domestic trips in the first quarter of 2023, an increase of 46.5 percent year on year; tourism revenue reached 189 billion US dollars, and an increase of 69.5 percent, according to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (Xinhua, 2023). The anticipated growth of tourism requires commensurate infrastructures to support the radical development. The hospitality sector is an important component of the tourism sector. The hotel sector in the service industry is primarily concerned with providing services (Gronroos, 2000). Increasingly, hotel organizations recognize that service is the most effective way to achieve differentiation and provide a business with a competitive advantage (Powers and Barrows, 2006). An employee with knowledge and abilities in administrative work, technical skills, and positive emotions has a positive effect on organizational performance (Mok, Sparks, and Kadampully, 2013). However, the hotel industry is confronted by a lack of both qualified workers (Stuttard, 2000) and insufficient training (Lam and Xiao, 2000). Davidson, Mcphail and Barry (2011) demonstrate that the Chinese hotel industry is concerned with their requirements for skilled labour far exceeding the industry's average. As a result, the hotel's training program has become an investment in human being (Mok et al., 2013). Additionally, Harel and Tzafrir (1999) state that training has a significant impact on organizational performance. Training becomes one of the elementary measurements to assess organisational performance. On the other aspect, Traditional training programs perform at low levels of efficiency and lack sufficient interest for employees. Cheng and Ho (2001) pointed out that only 10% of the training expenditure can lead to learning transfer. Improving the effectiveness of training programs is a key focus of the Chinese hotel industry.

Game-based learning (GBL) appears to be a new phenomenon (Alvarez, Alvarez,

Djaouti and Michaud, 2010) and uses entertainment for corporate education and training (Gee, 2005; Robertson, 2009). It has been shown to involve players and integrate functions (Griffiths and Davies, 2002). Previous research indicates that games can enhance learning (van Eck, 2006). Traditional methods such as paper-based, coaching, lectures, demonstrations, and role-playing are used in the training of Chinese hotel staff in terms of knowledge acquisition, technical skills, and emotional attitudes (Wei, 2013). The GBL is expanding (Alvarez et al., 2010) and evidence supports the use of serious games in the corporate sector (Ranchhod, Gurău, Loukis, and Trivedi, 2014; Katsaliaki, Mustafee, and Kumar, 2014). This study aims to evaluate whether GBL can be a supplementary approach in comparison with traditional training approaches.

Literature Review

Problems in Traditional Hotel Training

The actual training program cannot satisfy the growth of the hotel sector required (Zhang, Cai and Liu, 2002). Various reasons constrain the implementation of the hotel training program, such as financial constraints (Wood, 1994), high labour turnover (Boella, 2000), and lack of training customs (Mullins, 1998). In addition, Janes (2000) summarized the five most common reasons why companies fail to provide employee training including lack of time, high employee turnover, high business requirements, cost, and lack of training resources.

Limitations of Financial Resources and Human Resource

The labour market lacks qualified workers (Davidson and Wang, 2011) and professional trainers. Training is becoming an essential part of organizational strategies to gain a competitive advantage in the market (Dhar, 2015). Chinese domestic hotels are cautious about the external trainer and in joint venture hotels, most of the training programs are conducted by their own trainers (Wang, 2011). The traditional training method is an iterative and repeated process, and the financial cost needs to be continuously optimized. Limited financial resources mean that all advances in traditional education are unaffordable (Wayne, 2000). Likewise, the hospitality industry inherently suffers from high employee turnover (Hinkin and Tracey, 2000), which affects the willingness of organizations to invest in training programs.

The Shortage of Motivation and Training Time

Motivation is the main factor affecting the effectiveness of training (Abadi, Jalilvand, Sharif, Salimi, and Khanzadeh, 2011). In fact, older or experienced workers were less interested in traditional methods (Hales and Tamangani, 1996). Most traditional training programs are formal and considered to be uninteresting. This challenge may arise in how to maintain employee motivation.

Disadvantages of Traditional Training

Forrest (1990) proposes that training methods in the hotel sector are classified into individualized training methods and group training methods. The individualized methods usually offer custom instruction for a specific trainee, often named on-the-job training (Ahammad, 2013). Group training methods usually provide verbal, audiovisual and written information to demonstrate the concepts and practices (Ahammad, 2013). Several scholars have identified disadvantages of traditional methods (Ahammad, 2013; Forrest, 1990; Wei, 2013; Hospitality Training Foundation, 2000), such as:

- 1) The lecture method is one-way communication, too much information without

practice, and trainees are passive.

- 2) The demonstration method requires preparation and the learning plan is restricted.
- 3) The cases study may mislead to some specific problems, and too conceptual with bias.
- 4) The role play method require time, not appropriate for large groups of people.
- 5) The E-learning method may happen that learners may not participate in training, or be lost with regards to the training topic.

Blanchard and Thacker (1999) discussed a range of training methods to meet the knowledge, skills and attitude learning objectives listed in Table 1. The results provide general guidance on the effectiveness of the training method. Among computer-based training, on-the-job training is expected to achieve the highest scores for knowledge (declarative and procedural), skills, and attitudes. Business games (non-digital game) are considered the best way to learn strategically. Therefore, if computer training can be integrated into the business game, learning outcomes and attitudes will improve and may match the effectiveness of on-the-job training. In other words, GBL applications provide the opportunity to achieve effective learning outcomes.

Table 1. Training Method Effectiveness at Meeting Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes Objectives (Blanchard and Thacker, 1999)

Training Methods	Knowledge			Skills		Attitude
	Declarative	Procedural	Strategic	Technical	Interpersonal	
Lecture	3	2	1	1	1	3
Case study	3	2	4	2	2	3
Role play	1	3	4	1	2c	2
Business game (Non-digital)	2	3	5	2	2b	2
Equipment	1	3	2	5	1	2
Computer based	5	4	3	2a	2	3
OJT						
JIT	3	5	4	4	2	5
Apprentice	5	5	4	5	2	5
Coaching	3	5	4	4	4	5

Scale: 1= not effective, 2= mildly effective, 3= moderately effective 4= effective, 5= very effective,

a This rating is for general technical skills. For some specific skills the rating would be 5. b If the business game is designed for interpersonal skills, this would be 4. c If multiple in baskets were used this rating would be 3. d Specifically role reversal.

Overcoming Some of the Problems of Traditional Training

The growing literature on the use of GBL as a potential teaching tool demonstrates the benefits of overcoming the shortcomings of traditional training methods. GBL as a visual digital medium often has a positive impact (Solanki, 2009). GBL can improve information retention, increase learner motivation, and enhance the learning experience (De Freitas and Liarokapis, 2011). In addition, GBL not only delivers reputable content from the above elements but also profoundly affects the players' own values, beliefs and behaviours (Peng, Lee and Heeter, 2010). When comparing GBL with traditional methods, the main difference is the type of learning strategy: passive learning or active learning (Healy and Connolly, 2007). Traditional approaches are often based on instructional teaching strategies. In contrast, the key concept of GBL encourages learners to actively seek information and knowledge, as digital games have a strong potential to enhance learning motivation.

GBL provides a constructivist learning environment where learners can practice their learning through hands-on practice and receive immediate feedback. GBL allows learners to explore the environment until a specific task is accomplished. GBL also provides an experiential learning cycle through learning transformation, in which knowledge is derived from reflective feelings and thoughts (Kolb, 1984). If this

learning cycle model is not considered, knowledge may be quickly forgotten or may be lost. Therefore, the GBL approach can integrate various knowledge and skills training.

Previous Study on Motivation and Attitude of Using GBL

Motivation is rated as the top reason for using GBL. The motivation for playing computer games also influenced the attitude to engage in gameplay. There are several experiment studies performed to investigate the attitude and motivation of using GBL. Grinber, Careaga, Mehl and O'Connor (2014) experiment with 35 college students to evaluate social engagement and spatial exploration in a game environment. Kiili, de Freitas, Arnab and Lainema (2012) conduct a study of 98 college students examining flow experiences in educational games. Bekebrede, Warmelink and Mayer (2011) carry out a survey of 1,432 Higher Education students in the Netherlands, in which participants preferred games as a useful learning tool. Previous studies also investigate the attitude and acceptance of playing computer games in an educational context. Chao (2006) conducts a survey of 157 respondents to investigate attitudes toward GBL in different learning styles. The results indicate that there is a positive attitude towards GBL among students regardless of learning styles. Li, Huang, Heh, Chen, Wang and Yeh (2010) perform a study with 306 participants to identify their attitude toward using GBL, where 96.8% of respondents expressed willingness through using GBL. Lynch-Sauer, VandenBosch, Kron, Gjerde, Arato, Sen and Feters (2011) and Eddy, Edmond and Choy (2010) both perform empirical studies to investigate attitude and acceptance of using GBL. Overall, participants had a positive attitude about the potential role of using GBL. In addition, there is no significant difference between the level of education of students with regard to attitude and acceptance of GBL.

There is a clear correlation between motivation and game performance. Studies measured motivations at different levels of education. Sobkin and Evstigneeva (2004) surveyed 796 Russian school children for playing computer games where motivations for playing GBL were entertainment, emotional release and competition challenge. Hainey, Westera, Connolly, Boyle, Baxter, Beeby and Soflano (2013) also conducted a study in HE comparing students' attitudes and motivation for playing GBL in Scotland and the Netherlands. Fu, Hainey, Gavin and Inal (2016b) surveyed 832 students regarding motivation at Secondary Education institutions in Turkey. Rossiou and Hainey (2011) conducted a study of 120 secondary school students in Greece and found positive outcomes using the GBL. In 2018, Fu (2018) perform a survey study on the motivation and attitude of using computer games in hotel training. The results suggest potential interest in using GBL as a supplement training method.

GBL Empirical Studies in Business Sector

To explore empirical evidence main concern is the effectiveness of GBL in the business sector (Connolly, Stansfield and Hainey, 2007; De Freitas, 2006). An overview of the impact of the business game aims to identify evidence of GBL's effectiveness in organisations. Riedel, Feng, Azadegan, Romero, Usart and Hauge (2014) conducted a systematic literature study on the impact of business games on firms and organizations. The results showed that GBL proved to be an effective teaching tool as it helped improve learners' attitudes towards learning, learner engagement, use and contribution to modules/course units, and levels of analysis/implementation. Jahangirian, Eldabi, Naseer, Stergioulas and Young (2010) systematically reviewed the literature between 1997 and 2006, providing an overview of the role of simulation in manufacturing and economics. This work also shows that simulation games are useful in education and training, and have utility in certain industries such as insurance, financial services, and

supply chain (Jahangirian et al., 2010). In another article, Azadegan and Riedel (2012) discuss the potential of applying GBL to firms. The four key points about GBL in organizations are summarized: popularity for corporate training, helping transform the people and the companies, suitable to relevant staff, engaging audiences and problem-solve. Lopes, Fialho, Cunha, and Niveiros (2013) systematically reviewed the literature to identify business games directly related to leadership development. Furthermore, Bellotti et al. (2014) conducted a literature review on business games that were suitable for developing an entrepreneurial mindset. Fu et al., (2016a) also performed a systematic review of GBL in the business sector to confirm the improvements in learning and motivational outcomes. Pasca, Renzi, Di Pietro & Guglielmetti Mugion (2021) perform a systematic literature review on gamification in tourism and hospitality. The authors summarise existing knowledge into five themes describing gamification efforts on improving services and generating engagement and value for tourism and hospitality providers. Dahalan, Alias, & Shaharom (2023) conduct a systematic literature review to map the emerging trends of GBL in vocational training. The findings confirm the improvement of academic performance, engagement and motivation in vocational education learners, and authors suggest that GBL are most suited for vocational education and learning.

The Hotel Training Game

The prototype game (Hotel Training Game), developed by HTML5, was an RPG to create a series of scenarios where players know how to handle hospitality complaints. The game promotes a realistic hospitality environment where the non-player character (NPC) complains about the hospitality service and the facility issues. The prototype game provides a virtual environment through dialogue and interactions with NPCs. The objectives of dialogue aim to provide complaints information and guest emotion. Through resolving guest complaints in the game, the player learns the guiding principle of complaints handling in practice and handles complaints in a disciplined manner. Certainly, the solution should meet guests' requirements without violating the company's principles. In addition, the player can hone their interpersonal skills, develop analytical and problem-solving skills by interacting with NPCs. The basic story of the game is to offer the player opportunity to handle complaints in a realistic setting. The game content incorporates case studies and literature reviews in the creation of scenarios. The player can choose one of two job roles to service and resolve guest complaints. Each scenario may provide a situation for guest complaints. The player should choose the appropriate actions to meet the guest's requirements. A quiz embedded in the game enhances the memorisation of guest complaint information and the principle of guest complaints. The reward system encourages players' intrinsic motivation through the successful completion of the quiz and guest complaints.



Figure 1. Screen for the game play

As mentioned before, two game avatars can be chosen, such as a front-line desk clerk and a lobby supervisor. For example, if the player's role is a front-line desk clerk who is required to deal with customer complaints in the office in a timely manner, the player should communicate effectively, understand the NPC's requirements, appease the customer's emotions, make suggestions and solve problems. If the player is a lobby manager, he/she will receive a complaint notification from the NPC. Players need to go from the lobby to the NPC's room, and then talk to the NPC to see what problems there are and consider the NPC's psychology. Depending on the specifics of the complaint, the player will propose appropriate measures to satisfy the NPC's needs. Of course, players need to be recognized and authorized by the NPC manager in the game.



Figure 2. Screen for receiving a complaint notice

The prototype game was available to access from the internet. The requirement to run the game is that Web SQL Database and Apache HTTP Server, and the client applicant run it on a web browser, such as Chrome, Internet Explorer, and Firefox. The prototype game was installed in the PC, participants are available to play the game PC and from the PC and mobile devices.

Methodology

The purpose of this research aims to evaluate the effectiveness of GBL compared with the traditional teaching approaches. The hypotheses used to answer this research will be:

H₀: the GBL approach does not have an effect on the learning outcomes.

H₁: the GBL approach has an effect on the learning outcomes.

This experiment comprises two independent groups: a control group and an experiment group.

- 1) The control group evaluate that a paper-based and video-based group learns the knowledge and skill of hotel training.
- 2) The experiment group evaluate that the GBL group learns the knowledge and skill in the digital game.

Participants

A pre-test / post-test and control / experimental group design will be adopted to compare the learning effectiveness between GBL and the traditional approaches. The participants will be employees who work in the Chinese hotel sector. The experiments will be implemented in four different hotels, three five-star hotels and one four-star hotel. Participants are selected by HR managers according to their work shifts and convenience, and they are voluntary contributors. Because of the participants' working time constraints and their willingness, the experiment was conducted in the hotels. The participants were randomly allocated to one of the control or experimental groups.

The sample size for the experiment involved 52 participants. The mean age of participants was 27.52 (SD=5.72) and the age range from 18 to 45. 24 participants were males and 28 participants were females. The occupation of participants includes front desk clerk (19), managers (12), administrative staff (11), porters (5), waiters/waitresses (3) and housekeepers (2). 75% (39) of respondents achieved university degrees. Most of the participants (19) have worked between 1-3 years, and 17 worked between 4-8 years. 26 participants were randomly assigned to the experimental group who were 16 females and 10 males. The mean age was 28 (SD=6.88) with a range from 18 to 45. 8 participants worked in the hotel between 1-3 years, followed by less than one year (7). 26 participants were randomly assigned to the control group. The mean age of participants was 27.04 (SD=4.36) ranging from 21 to 37, 14 males and 12 females. 11 participants worked in the hotel between 1-3 years, and the same number of participants worked between 4-8 years.

Procedure

Participants were given a pre-test questionnaire to collect demographic variables, motivation and attitude of using computer games, technical aspects of games, and knowledge of training content. In the experimental group, the participants were first displayed the information instruction for the game to explain the gameplay. Then participants expended around 20 minutes to complete the game tasks. After the gameplay, the participants filled out a post-test questionnaire to evaluate their training knowledge. The post-test aimed to collect data about motivation and attitude of gameplay, and perceptions of the learners. In the control group, the participants read the training document book and watched the training video. After then, they were also given a post-test questionnaire to evaluate whether there was an increase in training knowledge, which is the same as the experimental group test.

Coding Scheme

The items for detecting the motivations for playing computer games were generated from the existing scales verified by the Hainey (2010) evaluation scale. The measure of motivations was proposed in 6 dimensions: play for a prolonged period, willingness, engaging, sustained engagement, play again and felt distracted. Knowledge of the hotel

training concerns about guest complaint principle and practices. The pretest and posttest of the hotel training content maintain uniformity and consistency in principle guest complaint. Computer game attitude scale (Liu, Lee and Chen, 2013), perceived satisfaction (Liaw, 2008) and the student acceptance of the GBL scale (Saleh, Prakash and Manton, 2014) were used to examine the attitudes toward playing computer games.

Data analysis

Quantitative statistical analysis is used to verify the hypothesis. Several t-test methods are used to compare the learning effectiveness between the two groups, such as the Mann-Whitney U test for the two groups and the Kruskal-Wallis test for all groups at once. The t-tests methods are also used for identifying the motivation and attitudes to playing computer games. Descriptive statistics are used for rating the engagement of the training approach for each group.

Results

Learning Effectiveness

The mean knowledge scores of the pre-test in the experimental group was 10.46 out of 15 (SD=1.77) and the post-test was 13.15 out of 15 (SD=1.29). According to the analysis of a Wilcoxon matched pair, the knowledge scores have significantly increased after game intervention ($Z=-4.22$; $p = 0.00$). The mean knowledge scores of the pre-test in the control group was 10.50 out of 15 (SD=2.35) and the post-test was 12.92 (SD=1.26). The knowledge scores have also significantly improved after traditional training intervention ($Z=-4.14$; $p=0.00$). There was no significant difference in knowledge between the two groups ($p = 0.73$; $p=0.53$). The length of working experience has no significant difference between knowledge scores in the post-test ($p=0.77$). The difference in the educational levels and demographic variables (year and gender) between groups was not significant.

Learner Perceptions

Most participants (23) in the experimental group were willing to play games in the pre-test. 17 participants were interested in playing the game, however, 3 participants were negative about using the game as a training tool and one has no idea. The mean score of playing the game was 3.77. In the post-test, 24 participants acknowledged that the game covered the knowledge of training content and all participants recognised themselves to learn new knowledge. Participants were more willing to accept GBL as a supplementary learning tool. The frequency of playing the game significantly influenced the willingness of using the game as a training method. From the perspective of motivation in gameplay, the mean score of sustained engagement of using computer game was 3.96 (SD=0.72), which is rated the highest score, followed by playing the game again (Mean=3.77; SD=0.71), engaging (Mean=3.77; SD=0.77), playing for a prolonged period of time (Mean=3.62; SD=0.85) and felt distracted (Mean=2.54; SD=0.95). Overall, the rating score of motivation in playing the game is positive. Meanwhile, participants had generally positive attitudes toward using the game as a learning tool (Mean=3.96 SD=0.59) and recognised that the effectiveness of GBL was acceptable (Mean=4.04 SD=0.72). However, participants may be confused by gameplay (Mean=2.70 SD=1.08) and participants indicated that was complex (Mean=2.85 SD=1.23).

In the control group, all participants agreed that they were able to learn something from the traditional training. The mean score of the usefulness of traditional training was 4.38 (SD=0.57). The engagement scores of the traditional training were neutral in

general. The engagement rated from highest to lowest were felt distracted (Mean=3.69.; SD=0.93), training for a prolonged period of time (Mean=3.62; SD=0.90), sustained engagement (Mean=3.38; SD=1.20), review papers and lecture again (Mean=3.38; SD=1.20), and engaging (Mean=3.23; SD=1.11). According to a Mann-Whitney *U* test analysis, participants who were trained by the traditional approaches rated felt distracted significantly higher than GBL ($Z=-3.89$; $p=0.00$) and participants were significantly interested in being willing to play games as a training approach ($Z=-2.05$; $p=0.00$).

Comparison of 4-start and 5-start Hotel Employees

35 participants worked in the 5-start hotel, 20 participants were in the experimental group and 15 were in the control group. 17 participants worked in the 4-start hotel, 6 participants were in the experimental group and 11 were in the control group. In the game group, the mean knowledge score of 5-start hotel employees in the pretest was 10.30 (SD=1.81) and in the post-test was 13.20 (SD=1.32). and the mean knowledge score of 4-start hotel employees was 11.00 (SD=1.67) in the pretest and 13.00 (SD=1.26) in the post-test. Both the 5-star hotel participants and 4-star hotel participants have significantly improved their knowledge scores ($P=0.00$; $P=0.026$). This indicated that GBL can be a supplemental training tool for the different levels of hotels. A Mann-Whitney *U* test indicated that there was no significant difference in knowledge of the pretest and posttest between the two groups ($p=0.49$; $p=0.66$). Moreover, the motivation scores of gameplay between the two groups were no significant difference, nor in attitudes toward using computer games. In the 5-start hotel group, the highest score was that participants believe that the game provided a good overview of the hotel training process (Mean= 4.10 SD=0.64), followed by increased realism to improve training effort (Mean=4.05 SD=0.76), game could potentially help participants (Mean=4.05 SD=0.76) and game increase skills (Mean=4.05 SD=0.69). In the 4-start hotel group, participants believe that the game increased skills and advice quality in the game was acceptable were the highest score (Mean=4.17 SD=0.41; Mean=4.17 SD=0.75).

In the control group, the mean knowledge score of 5-start hotel employees in the pretest was 10.67 (SD=2.38) and in the post-test was 13.00 (SD=1.07). and the mean knowledge score of 4-start hotel employees was 10.27 (SD=2.41) in the pretest and 12.82 (SD=1.54) in the post-test. There is a significant improvement in knowledge scores from both participants in the 5-star hotel and 4-star hotel ($Z=-3.22$, $p=0.001$; $Z=-2.68$, $p=0.007$). According to a Mann-Whitney *U* test analysis, there was no significant difference in the knowledge score of the pretest and posttest between the two groups ($p=0.57$; $p=0.61$).

Discussion and Conclusion

The empirical study supports the hypotheses H_1 : the GBL approach has an effect on the learning outcomes. GBL can be a suitable training method at a supplementary level in hotel training. Both the control and experimental groups have significantly increased in knowledge. There is no significant difference associated with education, the length of working experience and demographic variables between the groups. This implies that the learning results remain consistent, which means that GBL and traditional training methods are both effective learning tools. In a comparison of the 5-star and 4-star hotels, both experimental group participants have a significant increase in knowledge acquisition, which means that GBL can be used for different levels of Star hotels, this version game can satisfy the different levels of group training.

In terms of learner perception, the majority of participants were willing to play the

game and interested in playing the game as part of the training process. Participants also have positive attitudes toward using games as a learning tool. They convicted themselves to learn new things from GBL and accepted the effectiveness of the learning outcome. The results confirm that the motivation for using GBL is much higher than the traditional training method. The frequency of playing computer game significantly influence the willingness of adopting the GBL method in hotel training. The rating of engagement in playing the game was positive. There is no significant difference in game engagement between 5-star and 4-star hotel groups. Both groups recognised that GBL can be a supplemental training tool to increase skills and potentially help themselves in business training.

In conclusion, research shows that GBL can be an appropriate method for hospitality training. The method is suitable for different levels of hotels in terms of knowledge acquisition, aspects and learner perception. The game proved to be just as effective at the supplementary level as traditional methods. The study found that GBL requires clear object structure, narrative and dialogue, sound and environmental realism more than graphics in recreational games. Most participants were willing to play the game as part of their training and confirmed that they believed they could learn new things from GBL. Both 4-star and 5-star hotel groups are in the game and believe GBL can help them improve their continuing education skills.

Although the study achieved its goals, there were some unavoidable limitations. First, the sample size of the study was small; only 52 participants may not be representative of the majority of Chinese hotel workers. Second, the brief intervention was not enough for researchers to see the full effect of using GBL. The effect would be better if the intervention lasted longer. Third, GBL is a new technology approach applied to hotel training. The impact of novelty on the results should be considered. Finally, there is debate about possible shortcomings of the study's methodological design, one being the consequence of false-positive test results and the other being the lack of qualitative analysis.

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LOVE ME, LOVE MY DESTINATION: ELABORATION LIKELIHOOD MODEL (ELM) IMPACT AND MEDIATING ROLE OF CONSUMER PREFERENCE IN VIRTUAL HUMAN INFORMATION AND DESTINATION BRAND LOVE

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Abstract

Virtual humans were introduced by numerous tourist destinations to boost the tourism industry. However, it has yet to be discovered whether the virtual human as a new type of representation of the destination can positively impact the tourism industry. This paper examines the relationship between virtual humans, prior knowledge, consumer preference, and destination brand love based on the Elaboration Likelihood Model and transfer theory. 192 self-administered questionnaire was collected. Results show the clue of perceived usefulness and image appeal influence Consumer Preference; Consumer Preference positively influences Destination brand love. Prior knowledge can positively moderate the relationship between virtual humans (engagement and source credibility) and Consumer Preference. Findings illustrate what kind of characteristics of virtual humans can appeal to consumer preference. The study investigates the role of Prior knowledge in the process. This study highlights the effects of virtual humans in the tourism context and offers insights for virtual human designer managers.

Keywords: Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), Consumer Preference, Virtual Human, Destination Brand Love

Introduction

Destination brand love is a concept that has gained increasing attention in the field of destination marketing and research (Amaro et al., 2020; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Gupta et al., 2022; Lv & Wu, 2021), which can lead to increased loyalty, visitation intentions, and positive word-of-mouth recommendations (Amaro et al., 2020; Langner et al., 2015). Many tourist destinations have recently launched virtual human services to promote the local tourism industry (Talafubieke et al., 2021). For example, Jiangyou, China, launched the virtual human “Li Bai” or “Liu Sanjie”, Tencent gaming hotel's virtual human “Veegy,” and “Ai Wenwen” in the National Museum of China (CCTV network, 2023; Ma Si chinadaily.com.cn, 2022; The Department of Culture and Tourism of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, 2023; The National Museum of China, 2023). Tourism destinations have different types of virtual humans and adopt different promotions according to their unique characteristics (Samala et al., 2020). However, it has yet to be discovered whether the virtual human as a new type of representation of the destination can positively impact the tourism industry (Samala et al., 2020). Previous studies have suggested that the highly anthropomorphic nature of virtual humans has brought more trust and favor to the audience (Bartneck et al., 2008; Gratch et al., 2007; Volonte et al., 2016). Still, several studies have also shown that the “uncanny valley” effect weakened the viewer experience (Kätsyri et al., 2019; Higgins et al., 2021; Ciechanowski et al., 2019). In practice, however, ICT products may not be accepted or even have digital exclusion by consumers (Çelik et al., 2022). Conversely, several studies have also suggested that Internet generation may show a greater preference for ICT products and designs (Jarrahi & Eshraghi, 2019). Virtual humans, as kind of representatives of tourist destinations, aim to enhance the destination's

attractiveness. Therefore, what kind of virtual humans can gain consumer preference and whether consumer preference for virtual humans could affect consumers' destinations brand love.

This paper critically examines the relationship between virtual humans, prior knowledge, consumer preference, and destination brand love based on the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) and transfer theory.

The present study investigates the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) in virtual human interactions in order to gain insights into the impact of various antecedents, which represent distinct pathways to persuasion, on consumer attitude transformation. More specifically, (1) Simultaneously examine the impact of the central cue and peripheral cues to determine the relative impact of each cue on consumer preferences in the tourism context, ultimately leading to destination brand love. (2) Investigate whether prior knowledge acts as a moderator on virtual humans to consumer preferences.

The present study investigates the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) in virtual human interactions in order to gain insights into the impact of various antecedents, which represent distinct pathways to persuasion, on consumer attitude transformation.

A self-administered online questionnaire was distributed to tourists with destination brand love in China. The PLS-SEM approach is employed to test the model. The findings of this study can contribute to the existing body of literature on the scope of virtual humans to illustrate what kind of characteristics of virtual humans can appeal to consumer preference in the tourism context. The study also investigates the role of Prior knowledge in the virtual human as representatives of destinations. This study highlights the importance of further research on the effects of virtual humans in the tourism context. Besides, this work offers insights for virtual human designers. It emphasizes a need to be cognizant of using specific information elements.

Literature review

Elaboration Likelihood Model

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) is a theoretical framework proposed by Petty and Cacioppo (1984) that seeks to elucidate the cognitive processes and persuasive effects of information on humans. The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) claims that persuasion can occur through two different routes: the central route and the periphery route. Petty and Cacioppo (1984) investigated. In the central route, individuals engage in high levels of elaboration and carefully consider the information presented to them. In contrast, the peripheral route involves low levels of elaboration, and individuals may rely on simple heuristics or prior knowledge to make judgments Petty and Cacioppo (1984).

The ELM has been applied to various contexts, including communication and marketing. In the field of marketing, the ELM has been used to study the influences of product advertising on consumer behavior (Buchanan et al., 2017). For example, exposure to digital marketing content has enhanced young adults' interest in particular products, such as energy drinks (Buchanan et al., 2017). In the communication context, the ELM has been applied to understand how individuals process persuasive messages in different media channels. The ELM has been used to analyze the effects of sustainable messages in advertising campaigns on consumer preferences for product attributes (García et al., 2016).

In the context of tourism, the ELM helps to explain how tourists process information and make decisions about using LBS based on the central and peripheral routes of persuasion (Meng & Choi, 2019). Furthermore, the ELM has been used to

analyze the determinants of users' information dissemination behavior on social networking sites (SNS) in the tourism context (Shi et al., 2018). The ELM classifies factors into the central route and the peripheral route, and both routes have been found to have positive impacts on individual dissemination behavior on SNS (Shi et al., 2018). John et al. (2020) confirm a positive relationship between argument quality, audience engagement, source credibility, audience involvement, and international students as tourists' perceived destination image through the theoretical framework of the Elaboration Likelihood Model.

In the central route, individuals systematically process and critically evaluate the arguments and information presented in a persuasive message. This route is typically used for high-involvement decisions, where individuals have the motivation and ability to process information in a detailed and thoughtful manner (McAlister & Bargh, 2016). This study considers three clues: anthropomorphism, perceived usefulness, and engagement.

The concept of anthropomorphism attributes human characteristics to inanimate objects to help rationalize the objects' behavior (Duffy, 2003). Nowak and Biocca (2003) examined the concept of anthropomorphism in robots and accomplished this by presenting users with images of robots that varied in their level of anthropomorphism. The low-anthropomorphic images depicted robots that were immovable, expressionless, and devoid of any actions. On the other hand, the high-anthropomorphic images portrayed robots with a humanoid appearance, capable of movement, and exhibiting limbic movement. To gauge users' perception of these robots, the researchers administered a survey to assess their sense of use. This study considers anthropomorphism as a major route cue, given that the virtual human possesses anthropomorphic characteristics resembling a human in its digital IP form. Perceived usefulness is a crucial factor that influences users' acceptance and adoption of information technology (Davis, 1989). Perceived usefulness is a fundamental construct in the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989). It is often utilized in researching new technologies (Preusse et al., 2014). Also, it is used in ELM as part of the central route (Guha Majumder et al., 2022). Therefore, with Virtual humans as a new technology, the consumer's central route should include perceived usefulness.

The tourism and hospitality industry has attracted increased interest regarding the role of the metaverse. Engagement, in essence, encourages tourism-based services/activities in a broad range of geographical locations outside physical boundaries (Cifci et al., 2023). Raouf Ahmad Rather (2023), through the study of virtual reality in tourism, showed engagement's importance.

On the other hand, the peripheral route is used in low-involvement situations, where individuals have limited motivation or ability to process information (McAlister & Bargh, 2016). In this route, individuals rely on peripheral cues to form attitudes and make decisions (McAlister & Bargh, 2016). Peripheral cues include visual cues, attractive actors, and source credibility (Vo & Wu, 2022).

This study considers three clues as peripheral routes, including perceived ease of use, source credibility, and image appeal. Source credibility is an essential factor in the ELM, as it influences the individual's motivation to engage in the elaborative processing of the message. The credibility of the source can impact persuasion (Chaiken, 1980). Credible sources are more likely to be trusted, and their messages are more likely to be processed carefully and thoughtfully (Frewer et al., 1997). Studies have shown that source credibility can influence attitudes, behaviors, and information acceptance (Li, 2015; Nowak & McGloin, 2014; Kumar et al., 2021).

Besides, perceived ease of use is a TAM concept that often appears in the technical literature (Kashive et al., 2020; Ismael & Ali, 2021). Nel and Boshoff (2017) Applying ELM found that perceived ease-of-use on ABMS trust emerged as a peripheral cue in application-based mobile services.

The image refers to the perception and evaluation of a brand or product based on its visual representation and associated attributes (Faullant et al., 2008). Image can influence individuals' attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors, and it shapes loyalty and trust (Faullant et al., 2008; Singh et al., 2020). The ELM suggests that image can be a peripheral cue, influencing persuasion through visual cues and attractive actors (McAlister & Bargh, 2016). For example, the linking element in the ELM emphasizes the impact of influencers' intrinsic characteristics on brand awareness and the reduction of coping mechanisms during persuasion (Matin et al., 2022; Singh et al., 2020), which highlight the role of visual processing and attention in persuasion in the ELM.

Consumer Preference

Consumer preference plays a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior and purchase decisions. Consumer preference refers to the subjective evaluation and choice made by consumers based on their tastes, preferences, and needs. Consumer preferences are influenced by personal factors, such as individual preferences, past experiences, and sociodemographic characteristics.

In tourism destinations, consumer preference is influenced by various factors, such as destination brand image (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997), brand awareness, brand associations, and brand equity in shaping consumer preference. Baloglu & Brinberg (1997) conducted a study on the affective images of tourism destinations and found that destination image plays a significant role in shaping consumer preferences. Park et al. (1986) discuss the strategic management of brand concept and image and emphasize the role of brand image in enhancing brand performance and consumer preference. Majeed et al. (2022) focus on destination brand image and its impact on consumer behavior during health crises and highlight the importance of destination brand image in influencing consumer preference and behavior. Kim & Fesenmaier (2008) examined the role of destination attributes in shaping consumer preferences. They found that different attributes, such as natural beauty, cultural heritage, and recreational activities, can have varying impacts on consumer preferences.

In ELM, different routes affect consumers' attitudes towards information. Furthermore, how the central and peripheral routes affect preferences for important concepts for consumer purchases. Based on the above literature, the research hypothesis is developed.

- H1: Anthropomorphism Influences Change in Consumer Preference
- H2: Perceived usefulness influences Change in Consumer Preference
- H3: Engagement influences Change in Consumer Preference
- H4: Perceived ease of use influences Change in Consumer Preference
- H5: Source credibility influences Change in Consumer Preference
- H6: Image appeal influences Change in Consumer Preference

Destination brand love

The concept of brand love, initially introduced within the realm of marketing, has garnered growing attention within the domain of tourism studies (Gupta et al., 2022; Hegner et al., 2017; Huang, 2017; Lee & Hyun, 2016). According to Swanson (2017), the incorporation of the concept of brand love within the realm of tourism destinations

has resulted in enhanced strategies and techniques in the field of destination branding and marketing. Destination brand love is characterized by the fervent and emotional bond that contented consumers have with a specific destination brand. The concept being referred to is a marketing construct that has undergone examination within the realm of psychology (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). According to Carroll and Ahuvia (2006), there exists a favorable correlation between brand affection towards a destination brand and heightened levels of brand loyalty, as well as positive word-of-mouth. Amaro et al. (2020) also investigated the antecedents and outcomes of destination brand love. They found that destination image and the experience of studying abroad through the Erasmus program positively affected destination brand love. The study also revealed that destination brand love significantly impacts electronic word of mouth, word of mouth intensity, recommendation, and revisit intention. Zhang et al. (2020) emphasize that there exist varied impacts of celebrity endorsement on destination brand love within distinct demographic cohorts. The credibility and knowledgeability of celebrity endorsers have a beneficial impact on the affection towards a destination brand among prospective tourists, both directly and indirectly through Para-social interaction. In the context of prior visitors, it has been observed that attractiveness and trustworthiness have an indirect positive impact on the development of destination brand love, mostly through the mechanism of para-social interaction. Filieri et al. (2021) show that destination brand love is expressed on Instagram through photographs of some destination attributes, accompanied by specific positive emotions. According to the study conducted by Lv and Wu (2021), the formation of destination brand love may be attributed to exceptional sensory experiences. The authors suggest that the provision of remarkable pleasant sensory experiences serves as an effective strategy for fostering destination brand love. The study conducted by Gupta et al. (2022) presents an innovative approach to examining the concept of destination brand love by exploring the interconnectedness between destination brand love and tourists' intention to revisit. Hence, the concept of destination brand love holds a significant role within the discipline of tourism.

Customer preference and destination brand love

The relationship between consumer preference and destination brand love is mainly studied from the perspective of brand image and transfer theory. On the one hand, virtual humans serve as a symbol of the destination brand image. Its brand image affects consumers' love for the destination brand in business. On the other hand, based on the transfer theory, tourists' emotions for virtual humans will be transferred to the destination brand, which will generate the destination brand love.

Many studies in the field of tourism have shown the relationship between brand image and consumer preference and decision-making (Li et al., 2021; M. Guliyev, 2023). Brand image refers to consumers' perceptions, beliefs, and associations about a particular brand (Keller, 1993). A positive brand image can increase customer preference, loyalty, and purchase intention, while a negative brand image can have the opposite effect (Yoo et al., 2000). Brand awareness is critical to brand image as it influences consumers' perceptions and evaluations of the brand (Keller, 1993).

Transfer theory, or the transfer of learning theory, is a psychological concept that explains how prior knowledge and skills can be applied and transferred to new situations or contexts (Chaiken, 1980). transfer theory can explain how brand love can be transferred from one brand to another within the same category or industry. For instance, if an individual has a strong emotional attachment and love for a particular brand in the tourism industry, they may be more inclined to develop brand love for

another brand within the same industry that offers similar experiences or values (Majeed et al., 2022). This transfer of brand love can occur because the individual recognizes similarities or associations between the two brands, allowing them to transfer their emotional attachment and positive feelings from one brand to another (Majeed et al., 2022). Additionally, transfer theory can be applied to understand how brand love can be transferred from interpersonal relationships to brand relationships. Research has shown that individuals can develop emotional attachments and love for brands as they do for interpersonal relationships (Langner et al., 2015). This transfer of emotional attachment can occur when individuals perceive similarities between the emotional experiences and connections they have with loved ones and the emotional experiences and connections they have with brands (Langner et al., 2015). The theory suggests that individuals can transfer their emotional capacity for love and attachment from interpersonal relationships to brand relationships, leading to the development of brand love (Langner et al., 2015). Therefore, this study tries to find out whether tourists' preference for virtual people can be transferred to their preference for destination brands. Through the above theories and concepts, the research hypothesis is put forward:

H7: Customer preference positive influences Destination brand love

H8: Customer preference mediating the relationship between anthropomorphism and destination brand love.

H9: Customer preference mediating the relationship between perceived usefulness and destination brand love.

H10: Customer preference mediating the relationship between engagement and destination brand love.

H11: Customer preference mediating the relationship between perceived ease of use and destination brand love.

H12: Customer preference mediating the relationship between source credibility influences and destination brand love.

H13: Customer preference mediating the relationship between image appeal and destination brand love.

Prior knowledge

Prior knowledge plays an essential role in the elaboration likelihood process. Individuals with relevant prior knowledge about the topic are more likely to engage in central route processing (Van Blankenstein et al., 2012). This is because prior knowledge provides a cognitive framework that allows individuals to understand better and evaluate the information presented in the message (Van Blankenstein et al., 2012). When individuals possess prior knowledge, they are more likely to generate their arguments and counterarguments, leading to a more thoughtful and critical evaluation of the message (Van Blankenstein et al., 2012).

On the other hand, when individuals lack prior knowledge, they are more likely to rely on peripheral cues and engage in superficial processing (Woloshyn et al., 1992). Without the necessary knowledge to evaluate the message content, they may rely on simple heuristics or cues such as source credibility or attractiveness (Woloshyn et al., 1992). In such cases, the peripheral route becomes more influential in shaping attitudes (Woloshyn et al., 1992).

Besides, Prior knowledge plays a significant role in consumer preferences and decision-making processes. It refers to the existing knowledge, beliefs, and experiences that consumers have about a particular brand or destination. Several studies have explored the influence of prior knowledge on consumer behavior and brand preferences. M. Park et al. (2010) discuss the concept of brand attachment and brand attitude strength

as critical drivers of brand equity. They define brand attitude strength as the positivity or negativity of an attitude weighted by the confidence or certainty with which it is held. Strong attitudes result from effortful thought and personal relevance, which guide consumer behavior (Park et al., 2010). This suggests that prior knowledge and beliefs about a brand can shape consumer preferences and attitudes. Hypothesis H8~H14 are proposed.

H14: Prior knowledge moderating the relationship between Anthropomorphism and Consumer Preference.

H15: Prior knowledge moderating the relationship between Perceived usefulness and Consumer Preference.

H16: Prior knowledge moderating the relationship between Engagement and Consumer Preference.

H17: Prior knowledge moderating the relationship between Perceived ease of use and Consumer Preference.

H18: Prior knowledge moderating the relationship between Source credibility and Consumer Preference.

H19: Prior knowledge moderating the relationship between Image appeal and Consumer Preference.

Using a PLS-SEM approach, Figure 1 summarizes the hypothesized relationships between four concepts, including the mediating and moderating effects.

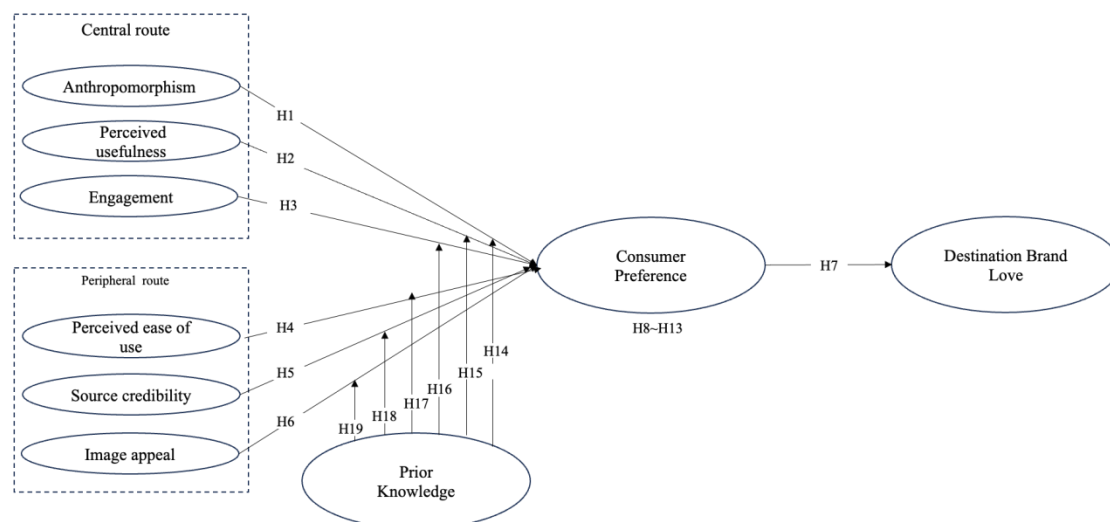


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

Methodology

Survey instrument

A self-administered questionnaire about virtual humans and destinations brand love was distributed to tourists. Participants were asked about their knowledge of virtual humans in the tourism context. In this questionnaire, the central route is composed of anthropomorphism, perceived usefulness and engagement, perceived ease-of-use, source credibility, and image appeal comprised the peripheral route.

The Anthropomorphism is measured by Bartneck et al. (2008). The concepts of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use were introduced by Davis (1989). The measurement of engagement was conducted by Raouf Ahmad Rather in 2023. Source credibility is adapted from Rubin et al. (2020). The measurement of image attractiveness is conducted by Cyr et al. (2018). The concept of consumer preference is derived from the measurement methodology developed by Mao and Zhang (2012). The

measurement of destination brand love is derived from the research conducted by Carroll and Ahuvia (2006). The measurement of all questions was conducted using a 5-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). In this study, the Partial Least Squares-based Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method was used to test the model.

Data collection and analysis

This study's target population comprised members of the Wenjuanxing website who were at least 18 years old and had experience watching the destination's virtual human video. This study utilized an internet-based survey. A month-long web-based survey was conducted in China via the prominent commercial portal site Wenjuanxing (<https://www.wjx.cn/>). Each participant in the questionnaire received a \$1 payment. Due to its stringent requirements for verification of personal identification information, this survey website guarantees that no individual will respond more than once. In contrast, this website's members engaged in activities or transactions were assured of their privacy.

207 questionnaires were collected in total. A total of 192 effective questionnaires were obtained, excluding those whose responses required less than one minute.

Results

Respondent profile

There was nearly equality between female respondents (54.2%) and male respondents (45.8%) among the 192 participants; the ages ranged from 18 to above 60 years, with a higher percentage in the ages between 18–25 and 26–30 (28.1% and 35.4%, respectively); the majority travel 1 or 2 in a year (59.4%); and the majority (63.0%) had at least a bachelor's degree.

Data analysis

PLS-SEM was used to evaluate the validity of the proposed framework. A confirmatory factor analysis was carried out to determine the degree to which the measuring model adequately represented the relationships among the nine concepts (Anthropomorphism, Perceived usefulness, Engagement, Perceived ease-of-use, Source credibility, image appeal, Prior Knowledge, Consumer Preference and Destination Brand Love). The measurement model incorporated a total of 40 observed variables, as outlined in the summary. According to Hair et al. (1998), three items were excluded from the model due to having a factor loading below 0.6.

This paper presents an exploratory study that draws upon existing literature and utilizes a limited sample size for data collection. Hence, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) appears to be a fitting approach for the present investigation. The data were subjected to analysis using Smart PLS and PLS-SEM, which stands for partial least squares-based structural equation modeling (Ringle et al., 2005). The present study employed an Internal Consistency Reliability analysis to assess the extent to which the items used in the study were capable of measuring consistent constructs across different scores (Hair et al., 2017). Internal consistency refers to the degree of coherence and reliability inside a set of data, measures, or items that are intended to measure the. The evaluation of reliability involved the utilization of composite reliability (CR) values in order to ascertain the level of internal consistency reliability. Based on the research conducted by J. Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), it is suggested that exploratory investigations may find CR values ranging from 0.6 to 0.7 to be acceptable, while following studies may consider CR values between 0.7 and 0.9 to be acceptable. In order to guarantee satisfactory internal consistency, it

is necessary for CR values to exceed 0.7(Hair et al., 2017). Cronbach's Alpha $\alpha > 0.7$ is also a measure of the reliability of items measuring a construct (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The value of AVE must be greater than 0.5 (Hair et al., 2021). The inclusion of Outer Loading values above 0.5 (Hair et al., 2012) is also warranted, as these values indicate a robust correlation between the item and the construct being measured. Table 1 presents the results of Cronbach's Alpha, loading, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Composite Reliability (CR) for each construct examined in this study.

Table 1. Reliability and validity measures and correlations matrix of all latent constructs (PLS output)

Constructs	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Prior knowledge	0.858	0.916	0.786
Destination brand love	0.899	0.936	0.677
Engagement	0.945	0.956	0.783
Source credibility	0.871	0.921	0.795
Image appeal	0.949	0.959	0.796
Perceived ease-of-use	0.948	0.966	0.905
Perceived usefulness	0.889	0.93	0.816
Anthropomorphism	0.868	0.905	0.657
Consumer Preference	0.893	0.933	0.823

According to the findings presented in Table 1, the reliability and convergent validity of the model were confirmed through the assessment of average variance extracted (AVE), Cronbach's alpha, and Composite reliability (CR) (F. Hair Jr et al., 2014). All constructs demonstrated acceptable internal consistency, as indicated by a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.70, and the composite reliability (CR) meeting the minimum threshold of 0.80.

Hypotheses testing

The path coefficient describes the influence between variables which is carried out through the bootstrapping procedure. The acceptance or rejection of the hypothesis is determined by the t-statistic test value. If the t-statistic value exceeds 1.96 and the significance level (p-value) is below 0.05, the hypothesis is accepted. The results of the path coefficients will be presented in Table 2.

a. Direct Effects

The three hypotheses are supported based on the path coefficients presented in Table 2. Perceived usefulness positively affects and significantly affects consumer preference, Image appeal positively affects and significantly affects consumer preference, and consumer preference positively affects and significantly affects destination brand preference. However, the relationship between perceived ease of use, Anthropomorphism, Engagement, and Source credibility on consumer preference is not statistically significant.

Table 2. Path Coefficient

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Result
Consumer Preference -> destination brand love	0.931	0.936	0.051	18.111	0	Support
Perceived usefulness -> Consumer Preference	0.249	0.269	0.119	2.085	0.037	Support
Perceived ease-of-use -> Consumer Preference	-0.017	-0.051	0.161	0.109	0.913	
Anthropomorphism -> Consumer Preference	-0.187	-0.182	0.172	1.085	0.278	
Engagement -> Consumer Preference	0.172	0.119	0.237	0.727	0.467	
Image appeal -> Consumer Preference	0.54	0.592	0.201	2.689	0.007	Support
Source credibility-> Consumer Preference	-0.082	-0.048	0.179	0.457	0.648	

b. Moderating effect

The analysis shown in Table 3 demonstrates that of a moderating effect, providing support for two specific hypotheses. This finding indicates that there is a notable correlation between prior knowledge and source credibility about consumer preference. Specifically, prior knowledge has a moderating effect on the connection between source credibility and consumer preference ($T = 3.263$, $p < 0.05$). Furthermore, it is worth noting that Table 3 demonstrates a statistically significant interaction between Prior knowledge and Engagement in relation to Consumer Preference. The association between engagement and consumer preference is moderated by prior knowledge ($T = 3.205$, $p < 0.05$).

Table 3. Moderating effect

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Result
Prior knowledge x Source credibility -> Consumer Preference	0.555	0.518	0.17	3.263	0.001	Support
Prior knowledge x image -> Consumer Preference	-0.061	-0.057	0.132	0.46	0.646	
Prior knowledge x Engagement -> Consumer Preference	-0.533	-0.505	0.166	3.205	0.001	Support
Prior knowledge x Perceived ease-of-use -> Consumer Preference	0.027	0.018	0.129	0.21	0.834	
Prior knowledge x Anthropomorphism-> Consumer Preference	0.056	0.044	0.114	0.488	0.626	
Prior knowledge x Perceived usefulness -> Consumer Preference	-0.076	-0.06	0.093	0.817	0.414	

c. Mediation Effects

Variance Accounted For (VAF) proves useful for identifying the category of mediating variables, whether entire or partial mediation. If the VAF value is between 20% and 80%, then the mediation is classified as partial. However, if it exceeds 80 percent, it is classified as comprehensive mediation. The VAF equation is then as follows.

C1: Image appeal -> Consumer Preference -> Destination brand love

$VAF = \text{Indirect Effect} / (\text{Direct Effect} + \text{Indirect Effect})$

$VAF = 0.503 / (0.54 + 0.503) = 48.2\%$

The results of the calculation above indicate that the variable mindfulness is considered as partial mediation because the VAF value is between 20% and 80%, or 48.22%.

C2: Perceived usefulness -> Consumer Preference -> Destination brand love

$VAF = \text{Indirect Effect} / (\text{Direct Effect} + \text{Indirect Effect})$

$VAF = 0.232 / (0.232 + 0.249) = 48.23\%$

The results of the calculation above indicate that the variable mindfulness is considered as partial mediation because the VAF value is between 20% and 80%, or 48.23%.

Table 3. Mediation Result

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Result
Anthropomorphism -> Consumer Preference ->Destination brand love	-0.174	-0.170	0.161	1.083	0.279	
Prior knowledge x perceived ease-of-use -> Consumer Preference ->Destination brand love	0.025	0.017	0.120	0.210	0.834	
perceived ease-of-use -> Consumer Preference ->Destination brand love	-0.016	-0.046	0.149	0.109	0.913	
Image appeal -> Consumer Preference ->Destination brand love	0.503	0.554	0.190	2.644	0.008	Support
Prior knowledge x perceived usefulness -> Consumer Preference ->Destination brand love	-0.070	-0.057	0.087	0.811	0.417	
Source credibility -> Consumer Preference ->Destination brand love	-0.076	-0.044	0.167	0.456	0.648	
Engagement -> Consumer Preference ->Destination brand love	0.160	0.110	0.221	0.724	0.469	
Prior knowledge x Source credibility -> Consumer Preference ->Destination brand love	0.517	0.483	0.158	3.279	0.001	Support
Prior knowledge x Engagement-> Consumer Preference ->Destination brand love	-0.496	-0.471	0.153	3.239	0.001	Support
Prior knowledge x Anthropomorphism -> Consumer Preference ->Destination brand love	0.052	0.041	0.106	0.486	0.627	
Prior knowledge x Image appeal -> Consumer Preference ->Destination brand love	-0.056	-0.054	0.124	0.456	0.648	
Perceived usefulness -> Consumer Preference ->Destination brand love	0.232	0.251	0.110	2.111	0.035	Support
Prior knowledge -> Consumer Preference ->Destination brand love	0.050	0.056	0.073	0.690	0.490	

2. The path coefficients and P-values, and R-square of this model are shown in Figure

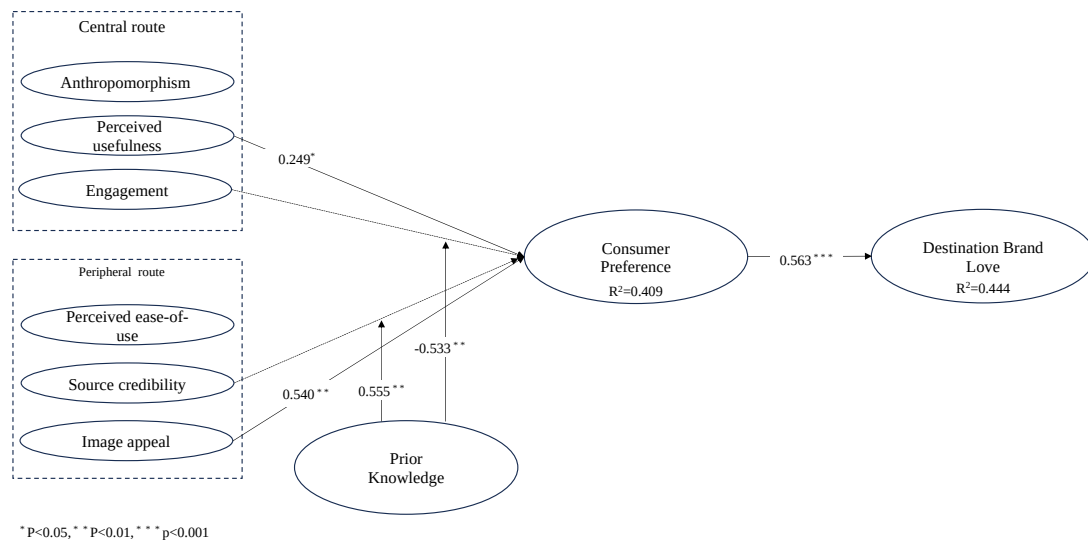


Figure 2. Results from PLS. [Sample n = 192]

Discussion and conclusion

The main research question of this study is what characteristics of virtual humans are more likely to be preferred by tourists and whether this preference for virtual humans can be transferred to destination brand love. Based on the findings of this study, there were statistically significant and non-significant changes. Specifically, in the central route, perceived usefulness had a significant positive effect on consumer preference. On the contrary, in the Peripheral route, image appeal has a statistically significant positive effect on consumer preference. Meanwhile, consumer preference has a significant mediating effect on destination brand favoritism during travel. especially, prior knowledge positively moderated the relationship between source credibility and consumer preference. However, prior knowledge had a negative moderating effect on engagement and consumer preference. Following this, the implications of the findings are discussed.

First, based on ELM theory to explain how virtual humans influence consumer preference. Then the relationship between consumer preference and destination brand love was established based on transfer theory. The results show that perceived usefulness and image appeal can positively and significantly influence consumer preference This finding is supported by several articles (Davis, 1989; Jiang et al., 2021) This finding can help virtual human designers to pay more attention to the usefulness of virtual humans for tourists as well as emphasize the importance of appearance and image.

Secondly, the study highlights that under the transfer theory, consumers' fondness for the object of virtual humans is transferred to the destination brand. This result emphasizes the importance of destination image. It is important for tourist destinations to create an iconic and appealing image (Hanlan & Kelly, 2005; Hernández-Lobato et al., 2006). At the same time, it is important for managers to rationalize the possibility of promoting brand derivatives so that tourists will increase their liking for the destination brand.

Thirdly, prior knowledge was found to positively moderate source credibility to consumer preferences. This is similar to the findings of a number of previous studies

that have emphasized the importance of prior knowledge for attitude change (Kim & Fesenmaier, 2008; Sharifpour et al., 2013). In practice, the ability to indicate official sources of information in the virtual human interface can increase consumer preferences to a degree.

In addition, prior knowledge was found to negatively moderate engagement and consumer preferences. This contrasts with previous studies about prior knowledge that brought positive effects. This may be because prior knowledge may reduce consumer curiosity as well as identify deficiencies in the avatars, which in turn affects consumer preferences.

This study centers on the application of frontline virtual human technology and offers valuable insights into the actual implementation of virtual people within the tourism business. However, it is important to acknowledge the existence of certain limitations. At first, it is important to note that the present study did not take into account the relationship between perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness within the technology acceptance model (TAM). Furthermore, the present study failed to account for the influence of age and economic variables when examining consumer preferences for virtual humans, hence neglecting important elements associated with this emerging technology. Prior research has established that younger cohorts exhibit a greater inclination toward favoring novel technology. Furthermore, it is common for virtual people to be encountered alongside immersive experiences in practical circumstances. This study remains limited to the utilization of virtual human technologies within the context of a video interface. The concept of immersion may be deemed worthy of consideration in future academic investigations.

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STUDY IN GREATER BAY AREA: WHAT INFLUENCE THE CROSS-BORDER TRAVEL INTENTION UNDER THE POST-PANDEMIC ERA?

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Abstract

The present research employs the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) model, analyzing the willingness of the Greater Bay Area (GBA) residents to engage in international travel. Based on data collected from 492 respondents within the GBA, the study highlights the significant influence of attitude, subjective norms, and the perception of revenge travel on the intention of cross-border travel. Moreover, a positive attitude towards health and hygiene enhances tourists' confidence in their ability to travel abroad. Notably, Hong Kong and Macau exemplify this broader phenomenon, affirming that revenge travel is likely to manifest across China. By enriching the theoretical model of TPB, this analysis delves into the intricacies of cross-border tourism behavioral intentions among GBA residents, elucidating its mechanisms and characteristics in detail.

Keywords: TPB; Post-pandemic; cross-border tourism; revenge travel

Introduction

The tourism industry, a critical leading force of the world trading system, has been acting as one of the local economy's influencers and is recognized by many WTO members (World Trade Organization, 2022). Based on statistics from the WTO in 2022, 133 WTO members have undertaken the tourism commitment, which showed that most highly valued the tourism industry as an essential business. However, the COVID-19 pandemic in late 2019 has brought the tourism industry severe disasters. Although a series of restrictions that aim to delay the COVID-19 spreading were deployed by most authorities globally, the pandemic continues to undermine all sectors of the economy (Gössling & Schweiggart, 2022), which led to economy shrank and recession in the tourism industry. Hajiyeva (2021) states that the pandemic has led to a loss in the tourism industry of around US\$4.5 trillion. Fortunately, with the lowering death ratio, the emergence of evolved but weakening strains of COVID-19 and increasing vaccination, many authorities have withdrawn and even canceled most of the strict preventive measures since mid-2022 (Euronews, 2022; Reuters, 2022). It is time for recovery and to make the situation manageable (Gössling & Schweiggart, 2022). Chinese government claimed a resumption of passport and visa issuance, including the exit-and-entry permits of Hong Kong S.A.R., Macao S.A.R (The State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2022). Therefore, this paper would like to study the intention of outbound tourism among the residents of the Greater Bay Area (GBA). The GBA, comprised of Hong Kong, Macao and another nine cities in Guangdong province that share very similar cultures and social norms, is a good illustration of the recent development of China tourism. Outbound tourism, a synonym of oversea tourism, would be defined as the travel between mainland China, Hong Kong and Macao in this context since China tourists must apply for an exit-and-entry permit before traveling to Hong Kong or Macao.

The GBA contains nine cities in Guangdong Province (Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Foshan, Huizhou, Dongguan, Zhongshan, Jiangmen, Zhaoqing) and two special administrative areas (S.A.R.), Hong Kong and Macao, among which are sharing

related social culture and having similar norms. However, based on the “One Country Two Systems” policy from the central government, there are traveling regulations and restrictions that must be obeyed by Chinese tourists when traveling to Hong Kong and Macao, which creates an opportunity to study the cross-border travel intention. A report mentioned by Dai et al. (2017) stated that nearly 70% of Chinese outbound tourists chose Hong Kong and Macao as their destinations. This study primarily puts emphasis on GBA tourists' behavior in Hong Kong and Macao. With the goal of Chinese storytelling, Guangdong proposed to focus on developing the GBA as a world-class tourist destination, considering a vital topic in the tourism studies field of China. Especially after the pandemic, the customs restriction between Mainland, Hong Kong and Macao has been withdrawing. Therefore, the intention of tourists in the GBA to have cross-border travel would be very interesting to study in the current situation.

Upon the nearly three-year pandemic, the economic environment has been reconstructed. Although humans probably have to coexist with COVID-19 continuously, all sections of the economy are full readiness to recover (Gössling & Schweiggart, 2022). Afterward, a consensus was nearly recognized by the public that the zero-COVID policy had been abandoned in early 2023 (BBC, 2022a; NPR, 2022). Since the restrictive and preventive measures against COVID-19 have been suspended gradually, there is still a lot of uncertainty facing the recovery of the tourism industry. A sustainable amount of studies about the post-pandemic and the changing tourism behavior, for example like tourism consumption patterns (Park et al., 2022; Wen et al., 2020), or the factors that could lead to the tourism intention changes (Sujood et al., 2021). There is another assumption supposed by Vogler (2022) is “revenge travel”, or “catch-up travel”: individuals who are exhausted from physical isolation for an extended period of time strongly desire to meet people and hang around. Hence, the travel intention has become their emotional need in this case. Despite the weakened coronavirus, tourists' concern about health and hygiene and their attitude toward revenge travel could be essential to understand the tourist's intention to travel. This study is to figure out the perspective of the GBA tourists about going for an outbound trip and to what extent health consciousness and revenge travel would influence the tourists' intentions. Three research questions were set toward the objective of understanding better what could drive their intention. Moreover, this study could help extend the theory of planned behavior (TPB) with more constructions and further corroborate the effectiveness of TPB applied in tourism studies.

Currently, the concern about health and hygiene as well as revenge travel could be essential to understand the tourist's intention to have cross-border traveling. Therefore, this study tries to figure out what would be the attitude of the citizen from the GBA about going for a cross-border trip and to what extent health consciousness, as well as revenge travel, would influence the tourists' intention. Three research questions were set toward the objective. The whole study is conducted by optimizing the theory of planned behavior (TPB). We utilized convenient sampling and the snowball sampling method to deliver the questionnaire. Residents in the GBA cities (except Macao) were randomly invited to finish an e-questionnaire on the streets. Another group of participants living in Macao who are selected will be given the e-questionnaire from us, and they are encouraged to deliver the questionnaire to their friends who are GBA residents. Upon the data analysis, the tourism industry of the destinations could better estimate the tourism flow by understanding the tourists' travel intention and better managing and preparing for the boom of tourist flow. Moreover, this study could help with extending the TPB with more constructions and further corroborate the effectiveness of TPB application in tourism studies.

Literature review

The Conceptualization and Development of Cross-Border Tourism

Cross-border tourism, also called international tourism, refers to travel behavior that a tourist crosses the border of sovereign states, which results from the advancement in transportation and mobility (Sofield, 2006). Chinese outbound tourism has been a topic in the tourism field for many years (Jin & Wang, 2015). An exception occurs in Hong Kong and Macao, where Chinese tourists have special access to visit but are required to get an agreement from customs towards both sides. Hence, the definition of cross-border tourism in China usually extends to a broader range (Dai et al., 2017; Jin & Wang, 2015). Macao and Hong Kong are the first two popular destinations where the majority of outbound tourists come from Mainland China (Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, 2022; Macao Statistics and Census Service, 2022). Besides, according to the National Immigration Administration (2019), Hong Kong and Macao tourists traveling to Mainland China were reported to approach 38.87 million and 13.44 million person-times respectively, which implies that tourists from three places possess stronger intention to have cross-border trips.

Based on the study of Bianchi et al. (2017), tourists prefer to go to a familiar place for travel instead of traveling to where it is with high uncertainty and energy-taking for planning, and GBA that incorporates several tourist destinations is very friendly and appealing to Chinese tourists. This study adopts the term “cross-border” to refer to the specific focus of the research. Existing literature, such as the work of Sparks and Pan (2009), highlights the substantial demand for cross-border tourism, particularly among tourists from Hong Kong, Macao, and Mainland China. Therefore, this study will concentrate on the travel behavior between these regions for its investigation of “cross-border tourism.” To explore post-pandemic travel intentions, the hypothesis formulated in previous pre-pandemic studies will serve as a valuable reference.

The Theory of Planned Behavior

The theory of planned behavior is a theoretical model which could help explain beliefs, attitudes, subjective norms, behavioral control and intention (Sparks & Pan, 2009). And this theory could be applied to help explain the complex decision-making process (Lam & Hsu, 2006). Based on previous studies, the theory of planned behavior (TPB) has been used for many of studies to understand the tourist’s behavior in the field of tourism. According to TPB, people’s intentions are driven by three constructs: attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control. The behavioral intention would eventually lead to the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). According to this theory, the attitude stands for the individual who would have favorable feelings toward the consequence of the behavior. As for the subjective norms, it stands for the perception of pressure from society, which was considered to be important. According to Ajzen (1991), perceived behavioral control is defined as how many difficulties and challenges face a specific behavior.

Also, based on the further description of the theory of planned behavior with the behavioral intervention based, the attitude toward the behavior would be produced by behavioral beliefs, the normative beliefs would influence the subjective norm, and the control beliefs could influence the perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 2006). From this model, the behavioral beliefs bring up the positive or negative attitude of the behavior. And the beliefs in the norm and expectations from people around could lead to perceived pressure from society, which could be understood as the subjective norm. The beliefs of controlling help raise the perceived behavioral control, which was considered as the moderator, which moderated in between the attitude and intentions as

well as subjective norm and intention. There were studies that didn't regard perceived behavioral control as a moderator of the attitude or subjective norms but as a direct measurement (Lam & Hsu, 2006; Sparks & Pan, 2009). Therefore, this study would also apply attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control as three direct predictors of the cross-border travel intention within the Greater Bay Area in China.

TPB and Travel Intention

In the realm of travel and tourism, numerous studies have investigated the positive relationship between attitude and travel intention (Anderson et al., 2020). However, Quintal et al. (2010) found that this association varied among tourists from different countries when it came to travel decisions. Some studies even challenge the assumption that attitude uniformly influences tourists' intention to revisit a destination, as Abbasi et al. (2021) revealed that attitude did not predict tourists' revisitation behavior. Given the conflicting findings in previous research, understanding the complex relationship between attitude and travel intention becomes an intriguing subject of investigation. This paper aims to explore the link between tourists' attitudes towards cross-border travel within the GBA and their intention to travel.

Bianchi et al. (2017) conducted a study on vacation destination selection intentions towards Chile, revealing that subjective norms and perceived behavioral control significantly influenced both long and short-haul travelers' vacation intentions. Notably, perceived behavioral control emerged as the strongest predictor of intention. Quintal et al. (2010) also employed the TPB to investigate travel decision-making intentions among Asian tourists regarding overseas travel. Their research highlighted the considerable impact of subjective norms and perceived behavioral control on travel intentions, particularly for Chinese tourists.

Similarly, Wang et al. (2022) focused on travel intentions among Taiwanese individuals during the pandemic, identifying perceived behavioral control as the primary contributor to travel intentions, while attitudes played a moderating role. Their findings also indicated that age and perceived risk negatively influenced subjective norms, emphasizing the significant influence of subjective norms on attitudes and perceived behavioral control (Rahmafritia et al., 2021). Lee and Lina Kim (2018) conducted a meta-analysis of tourism research utilizing the TPB model, categorizing perceived behavioral control into internal and external aspects. Their results revealed that self-efficacy and internal control were related to travel intention, with self-efficacy emerging as a more robust predictor. This finding suggests that while perceived behavioral control may be related to travel intention, other variables may also influence it, acting as potential mediators.

Therefore, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Attitude would affect the intention of cross-border travel.

Hypothesis 2: Subject norms would affect the intention of cross-border travel.

Hypothesis 3: Perceived behavioral control would affect the intention of cross-border travel.

The Tourism Study Related to Health Concerns

Since COVID-19 generated the public panic, there is a possibility that people might feel uncomfortable going out for a trip. For example, the tourism industry dropped down due to the SARS epidemic, which made people less intent to travel (Wen et al., 2005). Also, since the outbreaks, people's protective motivation about travel would also be triggered (Lin, 2020). Therefore, people might be more cautious about going to travel. Moreover, similar to what happened after SARS, people perform to pay more attention

to health and hygiene after the peak of the outbreak (Wen et al., 2005).

According to Zheng et al. (2021), they found that the fear of travel was not an inevitable consequence of the pandemic. A seemingly acceptable reason is that most people have been well-equipped with the common knowledge of COVID-19 even if they are facing a challenging situation, especially for those who are live where the pandemic is still a terrible risk. Zheng et al. (2021) also found that the threat severity and the susceptibility of COVID-19 would trigger “travel fear”. Threat severity stands for the infection consequences as well as the health threat of COVID-19 and threat susceptibility related to the risk of infection. However, it does not consider that the tourists have forgotten the threat of COVID-19 or other potential health risks. A tourist’s intention to travel to a big extent could be decided by his protection motivation (Rajendran & Shenbagaraman, 2017). In brief, those prior studies have revealed that perceived risk by the tourist is likely to impact their following travel behavior. Therefore, this study also wants to research whether the concern of health and hygiene influence perceived behavioral control by individuals during the post-pandemic era. Consequently, two further hypotheses are proposed here:

Hypothesis 4: Individual perception of health and hygiene would affect the perceived behavioral control.

Hypothesis 5: Individual perception of health and hygiene would affect the intention of cross-border travel.

The Revenge Travel in the Post-pandemic Era

Revenge travel becomes a buzz term in the second year of the global pandemic (Wang & Xia, 2021). Before stepping into the formal conceptualization of this new term, another familiar term, retaliatory consumption, which refers to consumer behavior that stems from a unique psychological process, has been discussed by scholars for decades. Under the circumstance of the pandemic, people experience restrictions and isolation that will cause moderately extreme psychological distress (Liu et al., 2023). This distress gave rise to various abnormal consumer behaviors, including panic purchasing (Rick et al., 2014), compulsive buying, and revenge spending (Liu et al., 2023). Revenge travel, as a phenomenon observed after periods of travel restrictions or lockdowns, is characterized by an intense desire among individuals to engage in extensive or indulgent travel experiences as a way to compensate for the limitations and constraints endured in the post-pandemic era (Jeffrey & Sposato, 2022). Liu et al. (2023) revealed that distress, hedonism, and social norms all influenced perceived behavioral control, ultimately leading to the intention to engage in revenge purchasing after the COVID-19 lockdown.

We assume revenge travel is a peculiar species of retaliatory consumption driven by the anxiety to travel after being confined (Wang & Xia, 2022). Girish (2021) proposed a conceptual model to explore the reasons behind revenge travel. According to this integrated theory, negative emotions such as disgust and anger due to the COVID-19 pandemic could influence attitudes and subjective norms and positively impact the desire for revenge travel, leading to the intention to engage in such behavior. Building on this concept, Wang and Xia (2022) studied the topic from the perspective of nostalgia. Their research indicated that perceiving the COVID-19 pandemic as more severe was correlated with feelings of nostalgia, which in turn increased the desire to travel in the post-pandemic era.

Other studies suggest that revenge travel may be attributed to pandemic fatigue (Zaman et al., 2021). During the peaks of the pandemic, people perceived the highest risk and harbored negative attitudes towards traveling. However, as the pandemic

subsided and travel restrictions eased, individuals felt more in control of their behavior and decisions, leading to the phenomenon of revenge travel. These findings highlight the psychological perspective that influences the travel intention associated with revenge travel.

Building on Liu et al.'s study (2023), which revealed the significant impact of perceived behavioral control on revenge consumption after the pandemic lockdown, this research aims to investigate the relationship between the perception of revenge travel after the pandemic and perceived behavioral control. The conceptual model proposed by Girish (2021) suggests that revenge travel intention is influenced by attitude, subjective norms, and the desire for revenge travel. Therefore, this study proposes the last two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 6: Perception of Revenge Travel would affect the perceived behavioral control.

Hypothesis 7: Perception of Revenge Travel would affect the intention of cross-border travel.

Methodology

This study solely employed quantitative research methods and we target GBA residents as the population. The purpose of this study contributes to explore GBA tourists' travel intentions during the post-pandemic era. TPB is utilized to build up the framework. We have discussed five constructs that potentially impacts the cross-border tourism intention among residents in the GBA. All variables and their measurement items are quoted from prior research studies and some modifications were done. The five-point Likert scale measurement system is employed (Joshi et al., 2015). All the measurements of scale are shown in Table 1. The framework (as shown in Figure 1) is built on the base of the TPB, which has been utilized and modified by countless researchers.

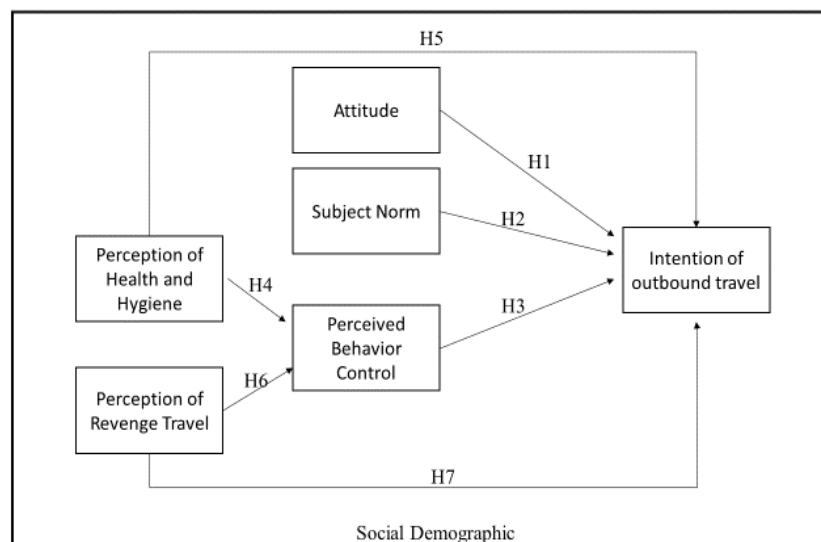


Figure 1. Hypothesized Research Framework

Table 1. Measurement items

Constructions		Measurements	Resource
Cross-border tourism intention	IT1	I want to go for cross-border travel within GBA cities.	(Lam & Hsu, 2006; Liu et al., 2021; Sparks & Pan, 2009)
	IT2	I intent to go for cross-border travel within GBA cities.	(Lam & Hsu, 2006; Liu et al., 2021; Sparks & Pan, 2009)
	IT3	I already had or plan to go for cross-border travel within GBA cities recently.	(Lam & Hsu, 2006; Liu et al., 2021; Sparks & Pan, 2009)
	IT4	I will certainly invest time and money to go for cross-border travel within GBA cities.	(Lam & Hsu, 2006; Liu et al., 2021; Sparks & Pan, 2009)
Attitude	AT1	Go for cross-border travel within GBA cities is pleasant.	(Abbasi et al., 2021; Al Ziadat, 2015; Lam & Hsu, 2006; Sparks & Pan, 2009)
	AT2	Go for cross-border travel within GBA cities is important.	(Abbasi et al., 2021; Al Ziadat, 2015; Lam & Hsu, 2006; Sparks & Pan, 2009)
	AT3	Go for cross-border travel within GBA cities is enjoyable.	(Abbasi et al., 2021; Al Ziadat, 2015; Lam & Hsu, 2006; Sparks & Pan, 2009)
	AT4	Go for cross-border travel within GBA cities is enjoyable.	(Abbasi et al., 2021; Al Ziadat, 2015; Lam & Hsu, 2006; Sparks & Pan, 2009)
Subjective norms	SN1	Most people who are important to me think that I should go for cross-border travel within GBA cities.	(Liu et al., 2021; Sparks & Pan, 2009)
	SN2	Most people who are important to me support that I should go for cross-border travel.	(Liu et al., 2021; Sparks & Pan, 2009)
	SN3	The government and organizations in the city I live allow me going for cross-	(Rahmafitria et al., 2021)

		border travel within GBA cities.	
	SN4	The government and organizations in the city I live support me go for cross-border travel within GBA cities.	(Rahmafitria et al., 2021)
	SN5	Preferential policies support me go for cross-border travel within GBA cities.	(Liu et al., 2021; Rahmafitria et al., 2021)
Perceived Behavioral control	PBC1	I can easily go for cross-border travel within GBA cities.	(Lam & Hsu, 2006)
	PBC2	I am able to go for cross-border travel within GBA cities.	(Lam & Hsu, 2006)
	PBC3	I have control of myself to go for cross-border travel within GBA cities.	(Lam & Hsu, 2006)
	PBC4	I feel there is nothing that prevents me from going for cross-border travel within GBA cities	(Liu et al., 2021)
Perception of Health and hygiene	PHH1	I feel like the overall health and hygiene situation now is not serious which made me more intent to go for cross-border travel within GBA cities.	(Wang & Xia, 2022)
	PHH2	I feel like the health threat to tourists is low which made me more intent to go for cross-border travel within GBA cities.	(Zheng et al., 2021)
	PHH3	I feel like the risk of having health and hygiene related problem is low which made me more intent to go	(Zheng et al., 2021)

		for cross-border travel within GBA cities.	
	PHH4	5.4 I feel like I can control the risk of having health and hygiene related problem which make me more intent to go for cross-border travel within GBA cities.	(Zheng et al., 2021)
Perception of Revenge travel	PRT1	Since the COVID-19 pandemic is over, I want to travel again.	(Zaman et al., 2021)
	PRT2	I have made some savings during the pandemic in order to travel again as soon as the COVID-19 pandemic is over.	(Zaman et al., 2021)
	PRT3	I really miss my travel experiences before the COVID-19 pandemic, which make me more intent to go for cross-border travel.	(Zaman et al., 2021)
	PRT4	I feel like reflecting on memories make me can't help to be more intent to go for cross-border travel within GBA cities.	(PS & Das OP, 2020)
	PRT5	Thinking about good times I have had in past make me can't help to be more intent to go for cross-border travel within GBA cities.	(PS & Das OP, 2020)

A large number of studies referring to Chinese cross-border tourism collect their data from first-tier cities (Jin & Wang, 2015). The data collection was processed within the GBA cities, and the questionnaires were sent out through online channels or offline

channels. In order to prevent some of the scale items in the questionnaire from ambiguity in understanding, before the formal distribution of the questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted, and the pre-survey was distributed to some friends and classmates around a small range. According to the results of the pilot test and the advice of experts, the scales in the questionnaire were finely modified, and the formal questionnaire was formed and distributed.

The questionnaire was distributed through Wenjuanxing, an online questionnaire platform that is available in China. Multiple sampling methods are integrated for data collection. Given that COVID-19 is still moderately risky, the tourist flow might not appear until the Chinese New Year. Hence, the first round of data collection was conducted in January 2023. Here we integrated judgment sampling and snowball sampling to invite a group of Macao residents who expressed very robust intention to travel overseas during the pandemic in front of us and have rich travel experience before 2020 to attend this survey, in which session they were required to finish the e-questionnaire. Then, they are strongly encouraged to help deliver the questionnaire to their friends and family members in any GBA city. The second round started one month later, and we moved the lens to other GBA cities where we primarily relied on convenient sampling, implemented by snowball sampling. The participants are randomly invited on the streets, and they are also recommended to deliver the questionnaire to whoever looks forward to taking a cross-border trip as soon as possible.

All participants get promised that their personal information will not be leaked out under any circumstance. The data will be stored in an e-disk which could only be unlocked by the authors of this article with a highly complicated security code. There are two attention-check questions (e.g., “Please choose ‘strongly agree’ for this question.”) in the questionnaire to interrupt the answering immediately unless they chose the correct option.

Eventually, a sum of 536 questionnaires were claimed back. After examining the email address and phone numbers left by the participants, we deleted the questionnaires that were done by the same people. And those who used an unchanged number to answer the Likert scale questions (e.g., answers for all Likert scale questions are always “5”) would be considered invalid. Upon the data cleaning, there were 492 valid questionnaires with an effectiveness rate of 91.80%. Demographically, most participants are from Zhuhai (45.12%), followed by Guangzhou (14.23%), Shenzhen (9.76%) and Macao (6.10%). The majority of different age clusters are those who are between 18 to 25 (31.91%) and 31 to 41 years old (26.02%). Over half are female (63.62%), and approximately 67.48% of the participants have been awarded a bachelor’s degree or possessed higher academic achievement. Table 1 shows the demographic information in detail.

Table 2. Demographic Information

	Frequency	%
Living city		
Guangzhou	70	14.23%
Shenzhen	48	9.76%

Zhuhai	222	45.12%
Foshan	37	7.52%
Dongguan	28	5.69%
Zhongshan	23	4.67%
Jiangmen	11	2.24%
Huizhou	8	1.63%
Zhaoqing	6	1.22%
Hong Kong	9	1.83%
Macao	30	6.10%
Gender		
Male	179	36.38%
Female	313	63.62%
Age (years old)		
Younger than 18	3	0.61%
18~25	157	31.91%
26~30	68	13.82%
31~40	128	26.02%
41~50	98	19.92%
51~60	30	6.10%
61 and elder	8	1.63%
Occupation		
Student	103	20.93%
Production staff	22	4.47%
Sales	53	10.77%
Public Relationship	36	7.32%
Customer Service	15	3.05%
Administrative	27	5.49%
Human Resources	11	2.24%
Financial/Auditor	21	4.27%
Clerical/Official staff	29	5.89%
Technical/R&D personnel	30	6.10%
Management	34	6.91%
Teachers	14	2.85%
Consultant/Consulting	6	1.22%
Professionals	17	3.46%
Others	74	15.04%
Income level (RMB: Yuan)		
1,000 and less	53	10.77%
1,000~3,999	95	19.31%
4,000~7,999	160	32.52%
8,000~11,999	104	21.14%
12,000 and over	80	16.26%
Education		
Middle school or less	39	7.93%
Associate degree	121	24.59%

Bachelor's degree	283	57.52%
Graduate degree	49	9.96%

The results of the descriptive statistical analysis and correlation test are shown in Table 3. Chinese tourists seem to have a very high willingness for cross-border travel intention (mean 4.04). Reliability reflects the degree of consistency of the designed questionnaire when collecting the data results under multiple measurements. The evaluation score reflects the reliability of the results, and the higher the scores, the more reliable the results are. According to Cronbach's alpha (α) method, a larger alpha predicts a set of items are intensely connected within a not such dimensional group. The value of Cronbach's α of each variable is greater than 0.70, which indicates there are little concerns with systematic error and measuring items are sufficient as expected (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	STD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. IT	4.04	.81	(.85)					
2. AT	4.16	.75	.70**	(.87)				
3. SN	4.11	.72	.71**	.69**	(.85)			
4. PBC	4.08	.65	.55**	.62**	.67**	(.72)		
5. PHH	3.98	.85	.60**	.57**	.67**	.65**	(.89)	
6. PRT	4.07	.81	.68**	.65**	.70**	.65**	.70**	(.88)

Note. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). The Cronbach's α is shown on the main diagonal.

IT=cross-border tourism intention, AT=attitude, SN=subjective norms, PBC=perceived behavioral control, PHH=perception of Health and hygiene, PRT=perception of revenge travel.

Findings and Results

Both exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were conducted (as shown in Table 4 and Table 5). Normally, the factor loading of each item is estimated to be greater than 0.5, which indicates the measurement system has an acceptable intra-intensity. As we expected, all the items met the demands. The average variance extraction (AVE) values could be derived with the combined reliability (C.R.) values and then summarized in Table 5. Generally, AVE should be greater than 0.50, and C.R. value had better exceed 0.70, which indicates high aggregation validity.

Table 4. EFA Result

Variable	Measurement items	Factor Loading
IT	IT1	.792
	IT2	.785
	IT3	.694
	IT4	.776
AT	AT1	.796
	AT2	.754
	AT3	.804
	AT4	.800
SN	SN1	.740
	SN2	.768
	SN3	.642
	SN4	.707
	SN5	.748
PBC	PBC1	.633
	PBC2	.602
	PBC3	.676
	PBC4	.657
PHH	PHH1	.782
	PHH2	.830
	PHH3	.861
	PHH4	.809
PRT	PRT1	.692
	PRT2	.658
	PRT3	.850
	PRT4	.846
	PRT5	.852

Table 5. CFA Result

	Factor loading							
Factor 1: Intention of cross-border travel	1	2	3	4	5	6	AVE	C.R.
IT1	.79						.62	.83
IT2	.79							
IT3	.70							
IT4	.78							
Factor 2: Attitude								
AT1		.80					.62	.87
AT2		.75						
AT3		.80						
AT4		.80						
Factor 3: Subject norms								
SN1			.74				.54	.83
SN2			.77					
SN3			.64					
SN4			.71					
SN5			.74					
Factor 4: Perceived behavioral control								
PBC1				.62			.49	.66
PBC2				.58				
PBC3				.65				
PBC4				.66				
Factor 5: Perception of Health and Hygiene								
PHH1					.79		.67	.89
PHH2					.83			
PHH3					.86			
PHH4					.81			
Factor 6: Perception of Revenge Travel								
PRT1						.69	.66	.89
PRT2						.66		
PRT3						.85		
PRT4						.85		
PRT5						.85		

According to the research hypothesis of this paper, AT, SN, PBC, PHH and PRT will all have an affecting relationship with IT. AMOS22.0 structural equation model is used to construct the conceptual model. After constructing the structure equation model, a model fit test should be down to the whole concept model. According to Marsh et al. (1988) and Sun (2005), the size of the sample can have a notable impact on the fit indices. These studies provided specific references for these fit indices, indicating that

the χ^2/df is recommended to be lower than three, CFI should be around 0.95, and RMSEA should be less than 0.06. Overall, the model has good fitness ($\chi^2/df=2.87$, $p<0.01$, GFI=0.91, RMSEA=0.06, RMR=0.03, CFI=0.95, NFI=0.93). Accordingly, these indexes suggest that the new proposed and extended TPB model is reasonable. Table 6 presents the regression result of all the hypotheses. Therefore, H3 stands. Besides, the result of the SEM predicts that attitude ($\beta=0.36$, $p<.001$), subjective norms ($\beta=0.35$, $p<0.001$), and perception of revenge travel ($\beta=0.24$, $p<0.001$) all have a positive relationship with travel intention, whilst people's attitude dominates the effect to travel intention in the context of TPB. That is, H1, H2 and H6 are all accepted. Additionally, the tourist's perception of health issues positively related to their behavior control and their intention to cross-border tourism, which supports H5. The association between the perception of revenge travel and behavior control is also significantly positive in statistics, which indicates H7 is supported. Unexpectedly, tourist's behavior control and their perception of health and hygiene both exert insignificant influence on tourist intention, which supports neither H3 nor H4.

Table 6. Hypotheses testing (N = 492)

Hypothesized path	Estimate	S.E.	<i>p</i>	Result
H1: AT→IT	.36	.04	***	Accepted
H2: SN→IT	.35	.05	***	Accepted
H3: PBC→IT	-.09	.05	.08	Rejected
H4: PHH→IT	.08	.04	.06	Rejected
H5: PHH→PBC	.28	.03	***	Accepted
H6: PRT→IT	.24	.05	***	Accepted
H7: PRT→PBC	.32	.04	***	Accepted

Note. *** $p<0.001$, ** $p<0.01$

IT=cross-border tourism intention, AT=attitude, SN=subjective norms, PBC=perceived behavioral control, PHH=perception of health and hygiene, PRT= perception of revenge travel

Discussion and conclusion

The descriptive of the analysis confirms that having cross-border travel intention within GBA correlated with the attitude, subjective norm and perceived revenge travel. Tourists' attitudes and subject norms are both robust predictors of their travel intention, which keeps consistent with previous literature (Han & Kim, 2010). Tourists have conceived that they own the competency when having a cross-border trip based on their optimistic attitude to the hygiene conditions toward the destination. When people have a better attitude toward cross-border travel, such as feeling pleasant or feeling valuable, they would be more intent to go cross-border travel. The GBA tourists approximately believe they are well-prepared for a new trip, even if it is cross-border. The cancellation of the zero-case policy may engender a perception of revenge travel among Chinese tourists. This perception reflects a psychological desire to compensate for the limitations and restrictions endured during the pandemic by engaging in extensive or indulgent travel activities. The notion of revenge in this context is characterized by the wish to regain a sense of control and freedom after a period of confinement. This perception of revenge travel can significantly influence Chinese tourists' travel intentions. It leads to an increased urge to travel and explore various destinations as a way to make up for lost time and experiences during the restrictive period. Furthermore, the anticipation of unrestricted travel opportunities may evoke excitement and novelty,

further motivating tourists to plan and execute their travel intentions.

Unexpectedly, the individual capacity of behavior control perceived by a tourist is not managed to predict the tourism intention, which aligns with the findings in Mao and Lyu's study (2017) that behavioral intention has no relationship with PBC. A latent reason for this result may owe to the multidimensionality of PBC, in which construct that separate components would exert different influences on various behavior intentions (Kraft et al., 2005). Akter and Hasan (2023), who paid attention to Muslim halal tourism, contended that PBC has a positive influence as a whole construct on tourist intention, but surprisingly, perceived capacity as a critical component of PBC presents an insignificant relationship with tourist intention and high-level PBC will restrain the positive impact from the attitude toward tourist intention. Disable to conceive a significant relationship between PBC and tourism intention, we suppose GBA tourists experiencing a three-year pandemic fed up with restrictive and preventative measures against COVID-19. Suppressive emotion extracted from the pandemic could influence people, which results in a desire for revenge travel and link to a behavioral intention (Girish, 2021). Tourists are fully confident they are capable of taking a revenge trip that feels like reobtaining freedom and believe COVID-19 has started its withdrawal. Meanwhile, the relationship between perception of health and travel intention is not significant statistically.

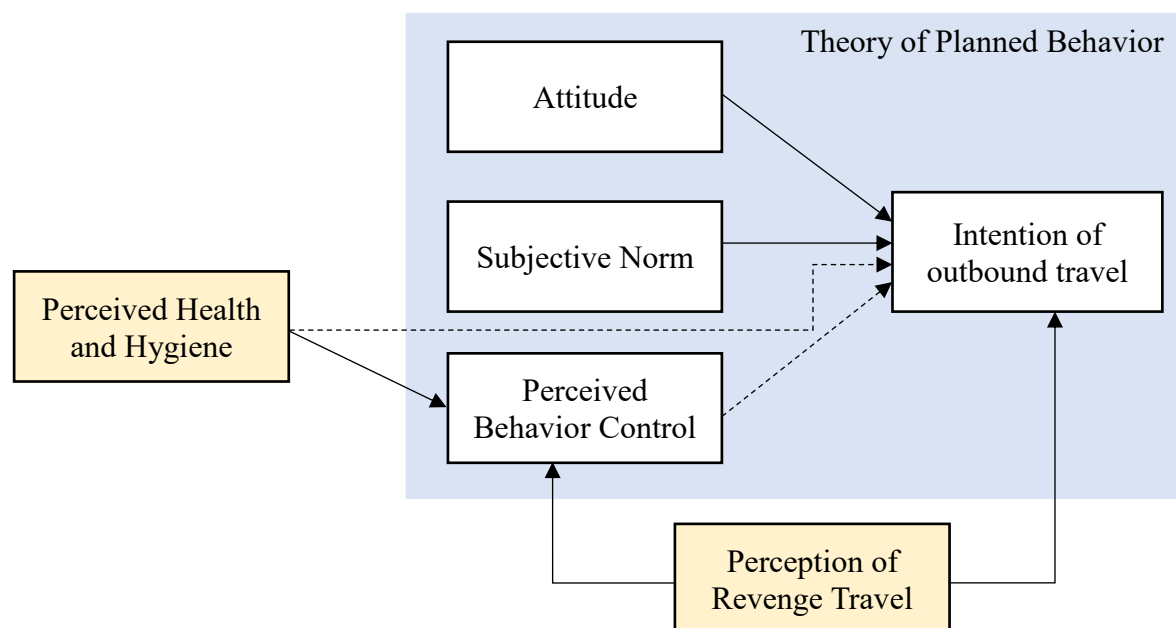


Figure 2. The structure of the extended model

First, the innovations and theoretical contribution of this paper were mainly reflected in verifying the capability of the TPB model employed to study the GBA residents travel intention. This model extends with perceived health and hygiene as well as perceived revenge traveling. Revenge travel has become heated since the pandemic of COVID-19 is on the ebb, which explains the surge in travel demand and desire for extensive or indulgent travel experiences as restrictions are lifted (Jeffrey & Sposato, 2022; Wang & Xia, 2021). We consider this phenomenon as compensation for the travel limitations endured during the pandemic, and this empirical study is one of few employing TPB to explore the mechanism of GBA tourists intending to have cross-border trips, which is consistent with calling for expanding the theoretical boundaries

of the model (Liu et al., 2021). While perceived behavioral control, which reflects individuals' perceptions of their ability to perform a behavior, is a necessary predictor to travel intention, perception of revenge travel successfully takes that position and works more effectively in the context of the post-pandemic era.

Second, a special focus on revenge travel as a novel concept is introduced and examined. China was one of the few countries where the most severe lockdown policies, border closure and COVID-19 preventions were launched and maintained longest. Revenge travel is supposed to be more seeable and robust among Chinese tourists. Health, which is widely believed and demonstrated, is hardly devalued when making a decision about traveling (Rajendran & Shenbagaraman, 2017). Since the fear of COVID-19 is decreasing, GBA tourists relieve their out-of-compass anxiety about physical health and hygiene. The empirical results induced here indicate if an individual holds the belief that a potential trip is available according to his capacity, he is very likely to perform.

Third, the study explores the mechanism and characteristics of the influence on the intention of residents in the GBA, which inspires future research. And it innovatively proposes the practical application of the TPB model, taking it as a new variable dimension, proving the derivation with scientific methods such as data analysis, and making it scientific and practical. This result is helpful for the cross-border tourism of residents in the GBA.

The empirical analysis conducted in this study yields multiple practical implications pertaining to three key aspects: attitude, subjective norm, and the perception of revenge travel. The significance of tourists' attitudes cannot be understated. It is imperative for both governmental bodies and marketing management to enhance the destination image to attract travelers. However, tourism-related industries should not solely rely on the appeal of revenge consumption; instead, they must focus on providing thriving services that aid in the recovery of travelers' overall travel experiences (Yang et al., 2021).

Furthermore, subjective norms warrant particular attention when devising tourism publicity and marketing strategies, as well as garnering positive political support for cross-border tourism. Although the perception of health and hygiene may not directly determine tourists' travel intentions, it is unwise for the government and relevant industries to relax regular health requirements. The COVID-19 pandemic is an undoubtedly high-risk and rapidly spreading epidemic, surpassing the challenges posed by the SARS outbreak. Adhering to rigorous hygiene standards, such as maintaining frequent disinfection in tourist attractions and providing handwashing sanitizers or alcoholic gel, remains essential in ensuring the safety and well-being of travelers.

This study strives to be rigorous and standardized but failed to avoid some limitations. Firstly, the sample of this study is limited to the GBA. Future studies could collect another group of samples from Shanghai and Peking where most Chinese outbound tourists depart for outbound trips (Statista, 2019). Since China is a nation where the cultural intra-variance is very significant (Taras et al., 2016), tourists from various places are likely to possess different perceptions. Scholars are encouraged to make a comparative study with the samples from more mainland cities in China.

Moreover, the present study reviewed the conceptualization of revenge travel in the context of the post-pandemic era. However, we prefer to witness a novel measurement scale for this term. Future studies can contribute to developing a more empirical measurement scale with high intensity in logic. Could revenge travel be conceptualized as a short-term psychological status or an inevitable consequence of some depressive public events that people are denied opportunities to travel? Does it

have the same or similar mechanism as other revenge behaviors (e.g., revenge buying)? Or is it a sub-concept of revenge consumption?

Also, a two-wave or multiple-wave questionnaire-delivering method is recommended, which helps to examine how long the “revenge attitude/perception” could last, and under what conditions it will disappear or weaken. The relief and cancellation of epidemic prevention will significantly boost people’s intention to travel outside, and the amount of people that have clearly acknowledged COVID-19 is increasing. They are probably more motivated to have an outbound trip as time goes on. A longitudinal study within one or two months is recommended, which helps understand a group of tourists induce or change their intention to cross-border trip.

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PRICE ENDINGS IN THE TOURISM LUXURY RETAIL

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Abstract

The luxury market in tourism retail has become an essential component in the tourism and hospitality industry. The market size is estimated to value at \$55.74 billion in 2023 and is expected to growth in the coming years. In response, retail operators and service providers have directed their efforts in capturing this market. Apart from upscaling their products and services, there are other subtleties that are often used to connect with the higher end customers. In Chinese, price endings are concentrated around the digit 8, as it phonetically resembles luck and fortune. In fact, many organizations emphasize the use of price endings with 8, be it in the accommodation market. Our study aims to examine the perceptions of 8 ending prices and whether it influences purchase intentions in the luxury market. Our study employed a single factor between-subject experimental design with three different price ending levels - 000, 888, 999 - to explore the effect of different price endings on luxury purchase intention and perceptions. We find there is a significant negative correlation between price consciousness and purchase intension under the condition of 8 price ending - high superstition.

Keywords: Price endings; Superstition; Price Consciousness; Purchase Behavior

1 Introduction

The luxury market in tourism retail has become an essential component in the tourism and hospitality industry. The market size is estimated to value at \$55.74 billion in 2023 and is expected to growth in the coming years. Naturally, this is due to the sizeable amount of expenditure from tourists on goods acquired and food and beveraged consumed during their visit to the destination (Disegna & Osti, 2016). In response, retail operators and service providers have directed their efforts in capturing this market. Apart from upscaling their products and services, there are other subtleties that are often used to connect with the higher end customers. The language that is used to convey quality and exclusivity (e.g., high-end, personalized, gourmet, customized) coupled with other design elements that enables a luxurious experience are some examples. Marketing managers have extended these practices to pricing strategies that has been effective, seeing that prices communicate more than numerical value to the customer. There are symbolic meanings associated with the digits of a price that can convey different messages (Schindler & Kibarian, 2001) to the consumer. In particular, establishing a price with the rightmost digit as 9 has been a cherished tradition in pricing strategy that has endured to the present times. Such convention in pricing has been consistently shown to influence purchase decision (Bambauer-Sachse & Grewal, 2011; Lynn et al., 2013) due to the fact that consumers either underestimate the actual value of the product (Coulter, 2001) or associate such as indicative of discount and sale (Schindler & Kibarian, 2001). Underestimation occurs because of the flaws in cognitive processing, causing consumers to selectively pay attention on portion of the price rather than the entire amount (Bizer & Schindler, 2005). Whenever a price has an ending with the digit 9, consumers tend to disregard it, and focus on the first digits of the price (Coulter, 2001). Alternatively, consumers may have developed learned associations of pricing with the rightmost digit as 9 signaling discount and value image. Thus, the most immediate response to such pricing, is the value and discount image (Guéguen & Legohérel, 2004). However, these responses have been extensively examined in the

context of lower-priced products, as establishing price endings has been associated with “lower quality image” of the service or product being sold. This can be potentially dangerous as establishing price endings in the luxury market, it can backfire and yield negative image, resulting in lower brand equity. Limited evidence exists, but it suggests that 9 ending prices tend to signal poor quality in the luxury market (Naipaul & Parsa, 2001). Though, it remains unclear how this may operate in the Chinese luxury market, as results reported are primarily from Western consumers.

It is reasonable to assert that differences may exist in a context that is culturally different as symbolic meaning of digits vary substantially between countries. In Chinese, price endings are concentrated around the digit 8, as it phonetically resembles luck and fortune. In fact, many organizations emphasize the use of price endings with 8, be it in the accommodation market (Jeong & Crompton, 2017), or daily products (Westjohn et al., 2017). Asian consumers tend to respond favorably to such pricing strategy (Boyol Ngan et al., 2022; Boyol Ngan et al., 2018), and as such, it may exhibit similar response to luxury products. Thus, the present study aims to examine the perceptions of 8 ending prices and whether it influences purchase intentions in the luxury market.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Factors influencing purchase behavior in tourism luxury

The purchase of luxury goods is mainly affected by the product itself, service, shopping environment and price. First is the impact of luxury itself, the quality, rarity, social function and expensive of the product (Heine, 2009). The second is the impact of service. When customers feel good service experience, they have higher purchase intention (Lee, 2017). However, some studies have also found that consumers' sense of social exclusion increases, and their purchase behavior increases (Lan, 2017). Then there is the impact of shopping environment, different shopping places and environments, consumers' purchase intentions are also different. The relationship between the availability of luxury goods in online sales and purchase intention is inverted U-shaped (Shan & Cui, 2020), while offline sales will be affected by a series of factors, such as in-store smell (Verma, 2014) decoration, service, lighting (Bagdare, 2018). However, one of the most important factors in luxury is price. Price has always played a key role in the luxury fashion market (Dion & Arnould, 2011; Kapferer et al., 2014; Kapferer & Bastien, 2012; Kapferer & Laurent, 2016) and Aiello (2018) believe that the setting of luxury prices is a very complicated and difficult task. Consumers tend to associate high prices with high quality because high prices are associated with the uniqueness and prestige of luxury goods and luxury brands (Aiello et al., 2018). However, in the specific luxury price strategy, the price setting is controversial. Some researchers believe that adopting an odd pricing strategy (establishing a price that is just below the round pricing, with the rightmost digit as 9) can make people think of price discount, reduce guilt, and increase the possibility of purchase (Choi et al., 2014). However, among high-priced products, the study found that the 9-end pricing had no significant effect on the promotion of purchasing behavior (Dikcius & Katkuvienė, 2014). Contrasting these results, a recent study has found that luxury consumers tend to prefer odd prices and often result in increased purchase behavior (Fraccaro et al., 2021). Considering these differences in results, further scientific enquiry is necessary to clarify the role of odd-pricing strategies in the luxury segment. In fact, even pricing managers in the luxury market are not consistent in their pricing strategy when it comes to establish the rightmost digit of a price (Fraccaro et al., 2021).

2.2 Price ending strategy

Consumers' understanding of price information is often inaccurate (Levrini & Jeffman dos Santos, 2021) and their decisions are often influenced by merchants' pricing strategies. Among different pricing strategies, the pricing ending strategy is the most widely used one, such as establishing a price just below a round number (Ortega & Tabares, 2023). The most common form is establishing a price that ends with a 9 or 99, especially in low-end consumer goods or Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), that can significantly promote consumers' purchase behavior (Strulov-Shlain, 2022). However, for commodity markets, several studies have shown differences in pricing from Western countries. In Asian countries such as China, Japan and Malaysia, the most common price ending is number 8 rather than number 9 (Nguyen et al., 2007; Schindler, 2009) seeing that the pronunciation of the number 8 in Chinese is similar to "fa", which is associated with fortune and luck, conveying favourable connotations. To that end, it pricing managers targeting the Chinese market tends to adopt this pricing strategy (Boyol Ngan et al., 2022; Boyol Ngan et al., 2018). Clear, this type of price ending strategy in the Asian market appears to differ from the one in the Western market and impacts consumers' differently due to the cultural differences in meanings associated to numbers. As conventionally outlined in the literature, this phenomenon has been termed as the price image effect, which suggests that different price ending convey to consumers different images. When consumers are presented with a price that has the rightmost digit as 9 or 99, they often associate the product to be on sale or discount (Schindler & Kibarian, 2001). Apart from the price perception resulting from price endings, it can also communicate impressions of the quality of the product or service being offered. Generally, lower prices tend to lead consumers to associate them with lower quality. By establishing a price that ends in 9 or 99, it signals consumers an image of low price and poor quality. Conversely, a price ending in 0 tends to create an impression of higher quality among consumers (Fraccaro & Macé, 2020). In the Asian market, these connotations are perceived differently, as the quality image of 8-ending pricing has been overlooked. In fact, the image associated with 8-ending prices are typically related to luck and superstition as denoted earlier.

2.3 Superstition

Superstition refers to unfounded beliefs and behaviors that deviate from science (Vyse, 1997). Rudski (2003) divides superstitions into four categories: one is the world view and values formed by superstitions; the other is traditional secular superstitions (such as black cats bringing bad luck); the third is individual mystical experience, such as superpowers; and the fourth is personal superstitions, such as lucky numbers and lucky ornaments (Rudski, 2003). This paper studies lucky numbers in superstitions. Superstition has an impact on all aspects of people's lives. For example, people try to avoid going to the hospital to see a doctor on 13th, because 13th is considered to be an unlucky day (Protty et al., 2016); Chinese listed companies prefer to use the lucky number 8 in their stock codes (Hirshleifer et al., 2018). Empirical studies have found that people have greater activation and activity in the right brain region when they see lucky dates, which is physiological evidence that people can be influenced by superstitions in their daily lives (Rao et al., 2013). In the retail market, if people can feel lucky when shopping, their purchase intention will increase (Liu, 2021). However, no studies have looked at the effect of lucky numbers on luxury purchases in the tourism industry in the context of superstitious psychology. In traditional Chinese culture, the number 8 is considered a lucky number and is believed to bring good luck (Bhattacharya et al., 2018). Therefore, we posit that consumers exhibiting a higher

degree of superstition are more inclined to consider purchasing luxury goods when presented with a price ending that includes the number 8.

2.4 Price Consciousness and Purchase Behavior

Although price endings play a critical role in shaping consumer purchasing behavior (Chang & Chen, 2014), another influential factor that works in conjunction with price endings is price consciousness (Chang & Chen, 2014). Previous studies have found that individuals with high price consciousness are more interested in price information and use it as an important means to evaluate commodity value (Bogomolova et al., 2020). Therefore, price consciousness plays a critical role in determining consumers' purchase decision (Rihn et al., 2018). Price consciousness refers to the extent to which consumers are concerned about buying products at low prices (Lichtenstein et al., 1993). Then, consumers with high price consciousness will pay high attention to price information (Kukar-Kinney et al., 2007). In addition, price consciousness is also the subjective experience of consumers (Chang & Chen, 2014). Therefore, there are great individual differences in the attention and reaction of each consumer to price, which is because each person has different understanding of objective price. The understanding of price information is also different (Lichtenstein et al., 1988; Alford & Biswas, 2002). Eye-tracking studies have found that price-sensitive consumers pay more attention to the price of products, and like to carefully compare the relationship between the cost of products and the benefits they bring (Behe et al., 2014).

Economic theory suggests that there is a negative correlation between high price consciousness and the willingness to purchase high-priced goods (Rihn et al., 2018). As we all know, luxury goods are usually high-priced goods, so consumers with high price consciousness show less luxury purchasing behavior (Kim & Lee, 2011). Similarly, in the second-hand luxury goods market, cheap prices are also an important factor affecting consumers' purchase of second-hand luxury goods (Turunen & Pöyry, 2019). The psychological mechanism may be that price-oriented consumers are often unwilling to pay for the extra value of goods and are good at comparing different products in different markets. Ultimately, consumers with low price consciousness tend to pay less attention to price when shopping (Lyonski & Durvasula, 2013).

3 Methodology

3.1 Research design

The present study employed a single factor between-subject experimental design with three different price ending levels - 000, 888, 999 - to explore the effect of different price endings on luxury purchase intention and perceptions. Three luxury bags were used as the experimental stimuli, and the pictures were retrieved from the XXX. Prices were established with reference to similar products found on Tmall Taobao, a Chinese online shopping platform (ranging from 7,500-yuan to 9,500-yuan). While the leftmost digits remain unchanged, the price endings were changed to 000, 888 and 999. There were in total 9 different conditions, as each picture has three different price endings (see figure 1).

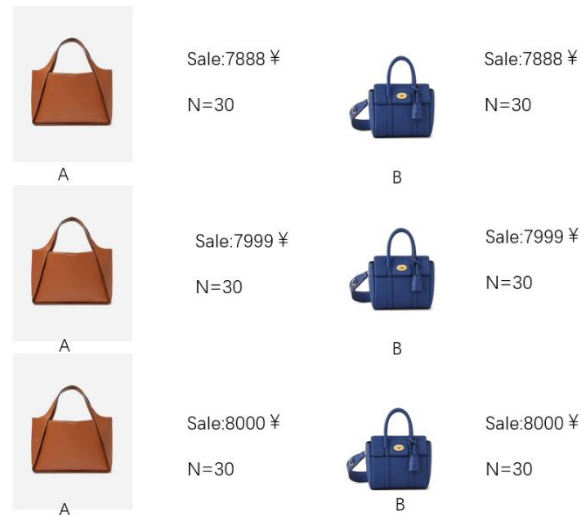


Figure 1.

3.2 Sample and Sampling

Participants of the present study consisted of travellers that have engaged in acquisition of luxury goods and services in the past 12 months during their trip. Recruitment of participants were done through Tencent questionnaire, one of the most popular and widely used online platform, to ensure the successful reach of the targetted sample. Participant's consent was sought prior to the actual data collection, and those who meet the inclusion criteria received a monetary compensation upon the completion of the survey. A total of 343 subjects were randomly assigned to one of the conditions (6 groups) in each group. Each participant was subjected to only one price tag and one luxury bag, and had to respond to a questionnaire (see figure 2).



Figure 2.

3.3 Measures

The first part measured participants perceived luxury characteristics of the product based on 10 items (Uniqueness, Quality, Prestige, Expensiveness)(Fraccaro & Macé, 2020). The second part measured price-ending connotations, the price image with 8 scale items. The third part measured participant's purchase intention based on 3 items (Shan et al., 2020). Response format to all scales were based on a 7-point likert scale. Finally participants reported their demographic information (e.g. Age, gender, education, travel behavior and consumption behavior) at the end of the questionnaire.

3.3.1 Price consciousness Scale

The price consciousness scale compiled by Fraccaro and Mace (2020) was adopted. There are 5 items in the scale, and Likert-7 scores are used (1= strongly disagree, 7= strongly agree). This study uses the total score of all items as the evaluation index of the scale, that is, the higher the score, the stronger the price consciousness. In this study, the *Cronbach's α* of this scale was 0.905.

3.3.2 Superstition Scale

The superstition scale compiled by (Westjohn et al., 2017) was adopted. There are 5 items in the scale, and Likert-7 scores are used (1= strongly disagree, 7= strongly agree). In this study, the total score of all items was used as the evaluation index of the scale, that is, the higher the score, the higher the level of superstition. In this study, the *Cronbach's α* of this scale was 0.85.

3.3.3 Luxury goods purchase intention Scale

The luxury goods purchase intention scale compiled by Shan and Cui (2020) was adopted. There are 3 items in the scale, and Likert-7 scores are used (0= strongly disagree, 7= strongly agree). This study uses the total score of all items as the evaluation index of the scale, that is, the higher the score, the stronger the purchase intention of consumers. In this study, the *Cronbach's α* of this scale was 0.945.

3.4 Statistical analyses

Prior to the actual data analysis, demographic information of the participants will be reported, followed by the exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis to ensure the validity of the measures employed in the present study.

Subsequently, several analyses of variance (ANOVA) will be conducted to compare the different price ending connotations across different price endings (x888, x999, x000). Finally, similar analyses using ANOVA will be employed to determine differences in purchase intentions based on the price endings.

4 Results

4.1 Descriptive Analyses

Table 1. Demographic information of participants

		N	%
Gender	Male	103	30
	Female	240	70
Age	18-25 years old	121	35.3
	26-35 years old	196	57.1
	36-45 years old	25	7.3
	46-55 years old	1	0.3
	55 years old and above	0	0
Education background	High school/technical secondary school and below	17	5
	Junior college	53	15.5
	Bachelor	238	69.4
	Graduate and above	35	10.2
Marital status	Unmarried	178	51.9
	Married	163	47.5
	Divorced	2	0.6

4.2 Common method deviation test

We performed unrotated principal component analysis for all items and obtained 9 common factors with eigen roots greater than 1, explaining that the largest common factor can explain 32.02% of the total variation, less than the critical value of 40%. Therefore, the data in this study are not affected by common methodological bias.

4.3 the moderated role of price ending and superstition

Table 2. Means based on the price endings by participants superstitious believes and price consciousness levels

Average of PI	Column Labels				Low PC Total	Average PC		Average PC Total	High PC		High PC Total	Grand Total	
	Low PC		Average Sup	High Sup		Low Sup	Average Sup		High Sup				
	Price Ending	Low Sup											
0	4.508	4.623	4.705	4.612	4.141	4.448	4.667	4.419	3.912	4.338	4.6423	4.297	4.442
8	4.486	4.809	5.039	4.777	4.571	4.662	4.726	4.653	4.625	4.567	4.5304	4.575	4.668
9	4.497	4.716	4.872	4.694	4.356	4.554	4.696	4.535	4.269	4.453	4.586	4.436	4.555
Grand Total	4.497	4.716	4.872	4.695	4.356	4.555	4.696	4.536	4.269	4.454	4.586	4.436	4.556

In order to investigate different levels of superstition belief, visual binning was applied so that the scores were divided into three categories: Low, Medium, and High (Table 2). We find that PC is negatively correlated with purchase intention, that is, the higher the PC, the lower PI. The moderating effect analysis shows that price ending-8, Sup and their interaction have moderating effect on purchase intention. When people face different price ending, the relationship between PC and PI is different. When the price ending is 8, the PI is significantly higher than the ending of 0 and 9. Those with higher levels of superstition showed a higher willingness to buy. Price ending and Sup regulate the negative relationship between PC and PI. We find that in the low PI group, the purchase intention of price ending 8* high superstition level (M=5.039) is significantly higher than that of other groups. This shows that when the price ending is 8, the effect of PC on PI is reduced. When the Sup level of individuals is high and the price ending is 8, PC has the lowest influence on PI, and people's PI is the strongest.

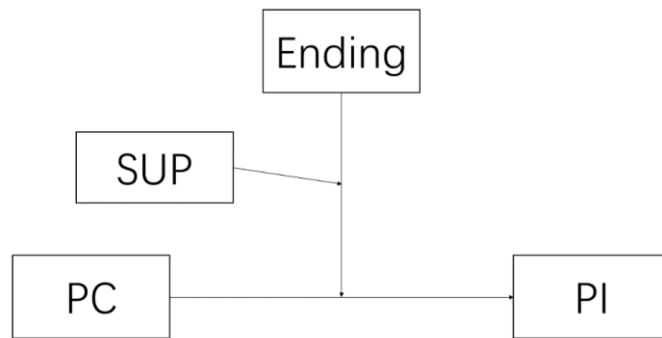


Figure 3. Conceptual Model

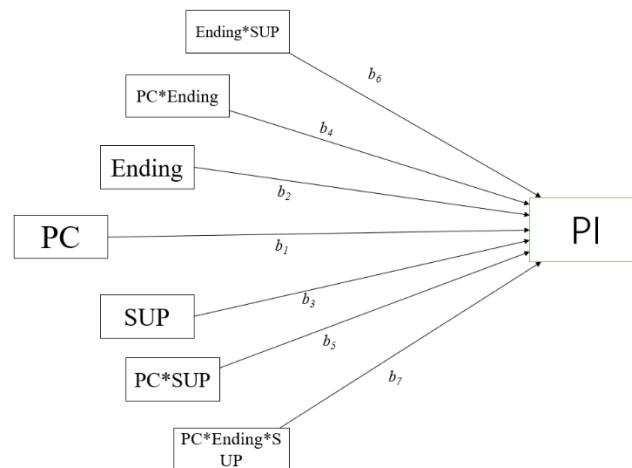


Figure 4. Statistical diagram of the current model

All variables were standardized, Model 3 in the Process was used to test the interaction of PC and price ending on PI, and the research model was shown in Figure 3. And the role of SUP in regulating this interaction. The results are shown in Table 2. In the model, PC ($b_1 = -0.12$, $t = 2.00$, $P < 0.05$) and price ending ($b_2 = -0.10$, $t = -1.34$, $P > 0.05$) have negative predictive effects on PI. Sup ($b_3 = 0.13$, $t = 1.74$, $P > 0.05$) has a positive predictive effect on PI, and the interaction term between PC and price ending ($b_4 = 0.00$, $t = 0.01$, $P > 0.05$) has a positive correlation with PI.

Table 3. Results of the moderated moderation

	Model		
	β	t	95%CI
Constant	0.02	0.31	-0.12,0.17
PC	-0.12	-2.00*	-0.23, -0.00
Ending	-0.10	-1.34	-0.25,0.05
PC*Ending	0.00	0.01	-0.12,0.12
SUP	0.13	1.74	-0.02,0.27
PC*SUP	-0.02	-0.61	-0.09,0.05
Ending*SUP	0.03	0.45	-0.09,0.15
PC*Ending*SUP	0.07	2.02*	0.00,0.14
R^2		0.57	
F		33.33***	

What is most noteworthy is that in the model, the interaction terms of PC, price ending and SUP are significantly correlated with PI ($b_7 = 0.07$, $t = 2.02$, $P < 0.05$). Simple effect analysis showed that the interaction terms of 8 ending and price consciousness ($\beta = -0.23$, $t = -2.15$, $P < 0.05$) were significantly associated with PI at high SUP level. At the medium SUP level, 9 price ending and PC interaction terms ($\beta = -0.12$, $t = -2.00$, $P < 0.05$) were significantly associated with PI. With the increase of SUP level, the interaction effect of 8 price ending and PC on PI is enhanced. The results show that there is a significant negative correlation between PC and PI under the condition of 8 price ending - high SUP. The slope difference test of the regression equation found a significant difference between the 8 price ending - high SUP level - and the other three conditions.

5 Discussion

The present study was set out to examine the impact of 8-ending prices on consumers purchase behavior based on their superstitious beliefs and price consciousness. It is clearly evident from the results of the present study, simply examining price endings would not yield significant differences in purchase behavior, it has to take into consideration the individual characteristics – price consciousness and superstitious beliefs. However, simply taking into account these individual characteristics separately, would neither lead to significant impact of purchase behavior. That is, individuals characterized by low price consciousness do not inherently exhibit an increased purchase intention as depicted by Rihn et al. (2019).

Similarly, those with high levels of superstitious beliefs do not automatically translate into a higher purchase intention. While previous studies have shown that 8-ending prices may appeal to consumers (Westjohn et al., 2017), it is not sufficient in itself to influence purchase behavior as shown by the results of the present study. All in all, auspicious connotations resulting from price endings (i.e., 8-ending) do not automatically warrant increased purchase intentions.

It's only when all these factors are considered together that enables a more comprehensive understanding of the underlying psychological mechanism of how price endings influence consumer behavior in the luxury market. It is no doubt that the study reinforces the importance of the cultural significance of 8 ending prices, as it has been shown to influence purchase intentions the most amongst consumers who hold superstitious beliefs and are low price consciousness. With these results, it can provide luxury brands to better segment their target audience much more efficiently. Marketing

campaigns should be directed to these psychological traits (low price consciousness and superstitious), as shown in the present study, it can boost sales and enhance consumer engagement. Additionally, for brand management, using specific price endings (i.e., 8-ending) associated with luck and prosperity can reinforce the brand identity, and can align with the image of exclusivity that luxury brands seek to convey.

6 Limitations and Future Research

Despite providing valuable insights, as in every piece of research, there are some limitations that need to be made aware of, and the present study is no exception. The context of research is limited to luxury retail and certain consumer traits. Further research could be expanded and explore the generalizability of these findings across different luxury product categories while examining other consumer traits. Likewise, the cultural context is also limited to China, thus constraining the representativeness of the results to this particular market. Subsequent studies could encompass a more “culturally diverse” sample and replicate the present study to confirm whether similar results are observed. Finally, the current study relied on self-reported behavioral intentions, that may not fully reflect actual consumption behavior. It would be beneficial to include actual purchase behavior (e.g. observational data, panel data from actual stores) to validate the findings obtained in the present study.

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A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF PROXIMITY TOURISM RESEARCH

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Abstract

Proximity tourism is increasingly recognized as a sustainable and responsible form of travel. This study conducted a systematic review of 45 high-quality journal articles on proximity tourism that were published in the Web of Science (WOS) and Scopus databases between 2016 and the search date. Using a qualitative review approach, nine key research themes related to proximity tourism were identified. The study also examined the geographical locations, the theories used, the research methods, the contributions and the limitations found in the review articles. The findings highlight how proximity tourism expands traditional perspectives on tourism and provides valuable insights into sustainable development issues, with a predominantly qualitative research approach. Overall, the study identifies existing gaps and proposes a future research agenda for the study of proximity tourism.

Keywords: proximity tourism, proximity travel, sustainability, everyday life, systematic review

Introduction

A decade ago, Soria & Coit (2013) first introduced the concept of 'proximity tourism' theoretically, exploring how to harness the potential of proximity tourists and enhance the value of everyday environments by reconstructing the concepts of differentiation, visitor experience and spatial identity. Tourism has become increasingly aware of its social, cultural and environmental responsibilities in the context of modernity and postmodernity in tourism studies (Mowforth & Munt, 2015). At the same time, aesthetic needs in tourism tend to be experiential, participatory and pleasurable, with a focus on leisure (Campbell, 1987). In the tourism literature, a growing body of research on proximity tourism reflects the trend towards the everyday nature of tourism, breaking the inevitable link between otherness and geographical distance in traditional conceptions of tourism, and demonstrating the nature of the paradigm shift in tourism research in response to people's lifestyles, social development and technological advances (Uriely, 2005). For example, residents can experience differences in the concepts of people, amenities, nature, time and rhythm in a proximate environment (Martínez-Hernández, Mínguez, & Yubero, 2021). Meanwhile, proximity tourism can be used as an alternative strategy to overtourism to spread tourists over a larger area and achieve the overall sustainability of regional tourism (Kádár & Klaniczay, 2022). These examples confirm the value of the concept of proximity tourism in tourism research.

Proximity tourism has been defined as a multidimensional concept, both physical and abstract, that applies to tourism and travel in proximity (Díaz-Soria, 2017). It usually takes place in environments that are relatively close to, or even the same as, the familiar everyday environment (Jeuring, 2017), and uses low-carbon modes of transport (Rantala et al., 2020). The earliest concepts of proximity tourism, such as 'staycation' and 'microdomestic tourism', were primarily concerned with geographical proximity (Canavan, 2013; Molz, 2009). Proximity tourism was first conceptualized at a theoretical level by Soria & Coit (2013). Scholars first focused on aspects of proximity and intra-regional tourism in a special issue of *Tourism Geographies* published in 2016 (Jeuring & Díaz-Soria, 2017). Díaz-Soria (2017) explains proximity tourism as a

complex concept with multiple dimensions, both physical and abstract. The potential of proximity tourism to contribute to the sustainable development of the tourism and hospitality industry and to reduce the environmental impact of tourism has received increasing attention (Romagosa, 2020) due to the growing awareness of the global mobility restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic (Rantala et al., 2020) and the growing global climatic, social and economic uncertainties (Lebrun, Corbel, & Bouchet, 2021). Although (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2022) has recently conceptualized proximity travel through the principles of tourism and travel subsidiarity, the researchers note that the conceptualization of proximity tourism remains fragmented (Figure 1).

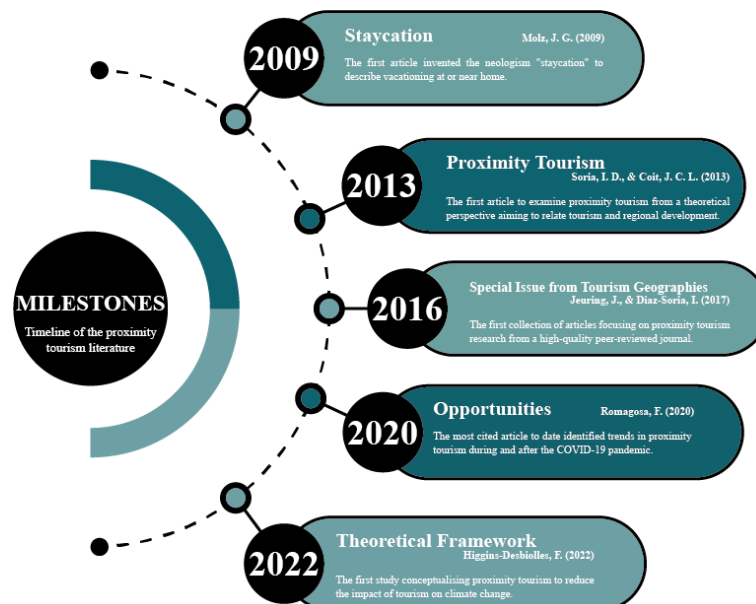


Figure 1. Major milestones of the proximity tourism research

As a concept that differs from traditional forms of tourism and emphasizes proximity, sustainability and the intersection of the everyday with tourism, research on proximity tourism remains diverse in terms of the concepts adopted, theoretical frameworks applied, methodologies used, research sites and study samples. Although Salmela et al. (2021) summarized research on this topic using qualitative analysis, the results of the literature review were limited due to challenges in defining search terms (Table 1). In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the conceptualization of proximity tourism and the field of tourism research, this study provides a systematic literature review. This is the first systematic review of proximity tourism research since 2009, when proximity challenged the applicability of tourism mobility and the traditional binary system of tourism (Sharma, 2009). This paper has three main purposes: 1) to identify emerging research themes in proximity tourism, 2) to explore the conceptualization of proximity tourism, and 3) to identify future research directions. This review not only enriches the literature on proximity tourism, but also provides a timely and useful overview of scientific advances in proximity tourism research.

Table 1. Reviews of the proximity tourism research

Author(s)	Title	Journal	Citations	Purpose	Methods	Findings	Year covered
Salmela et al. (2021).	Proximity tourism: A thematic literature review	Matkailututkimus	13	Explore the emerging analytical discussions in the published research on proximity tourism.	Qualitative: thematic analysis	Five themes of proximity tourism.	2009-2021

Literature review

Proximity is a broad concept with multiple dimensions, both physical and abstract (King et al., 2018). Molz (2009) offers one of the earliest conceptualizations of proximity based on the sense of pace, focusing on how slowing down or staying still is given particular ideological and moral significance in the cultural imagination. Sharma (2009) builds on this by examining how stillness and vacation are represented and politicized in American culture, challenging mobility and the dominant values of speed. From the perspective of distance perception, Larsen & Guiver (2013) explored the extent to which visitors understand distance. Their findings suggest a tendency to view distance as a relative dimension, emphasizing experiential rather than physical distance, and show that physical and mental distance are themselves relevant to understanding the meaning of distance (Pirie, 2009).

The link between sustainability and proximity is strong (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2017) and can be traced back to slow-motion research (Gardner, 2009). Proximity tourism is highly beneficial from the perspectives of tourism development, both at the level of local and regional economies and at the level of reducing the impact of tourism on climate change (Hollenhorst, Houge-Mackenzie, & Ostergren, 2014). From the perspective of consumer behavior, proximity tourism can promote pro-community and pro-environmental behavior among tourists, as well as a desire to protect specific (often local) sites (Kyle, Mowen, & Tarrant, 2004). In conclusion, proximity tourism contributes to reducing the carbon footprint of tourism, ensuring social justice in tourism, building resilience in the face of future crises, and serving people's well-being and quality of life (Romagosa, 2020).

Methodology

In this study, a systematic literature review was conducted to gain insights into proximity tourism through a three-step review process (Gomezelj, 2016): 1) keyword searching the literature in selected databases through a standard process (Crossan & Apaydin, 2010); 2) screening and synthesizing the existing literature according to the latest guidelines (Hosseini, Cortes Macias, & Almeida Garcia, 2023); and 3) mapping the organizational framework in line with previous studies (Rajasekaram, Hewege, & Perera, 2022).

The review process began with a review of seminal articles to clarify the theoretical background of the research scope of the concept (Table 2). Seven seminal articles from a special issue of *Tourism Geographies* on proximity tourism published in 2016 were used in this study (Jeuring & Diaz-Soria, 2017). The article by Biddulph (2017) was excluded from this collection of articles because the focus of the study was not proximity tourism or the proximity of tourism (Salmela et al., 2021). These academic articles published in this high-level journal constituted the scope of the initial research (Jimenez-Caballero & Molina, 2017). The search, screening and synthesis phases of the review in this study were conducted by the first author, and the co-authors of this study were consulted throughout the systematic evaluation process.

The data used in this study were obtained from the WOS and Scopus databases, as

these are highly recommended scientific databases for systematic analyses (Santos-Rojo, Llopis-Amorós, & García-García, 2023). First, a "title - abstract - keyword" search was performed in both databases using Boolean logic for scientific articles that were published within a given date range (Table 3). Second, according to Hwang & Tsai (2011), the systematic literature review should focus on high quality publications in the research area. Therefore, in this study, only high quality articles included in the Tourism, Hospitality, and Leisure Research category of the Journal Citation Reports (JCR) were used in this study (Fakfare, Lee, & Han, 2022). Finally, according to the eligibility criteria for the research objectives, the articles had to fit both the theoretical framework of proximity travel circuits (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2022) and the definition of proximity tourism (Diaz-Soria, 2017).

Table 2. Seminal papers on proximity tourism research

Author(s)	Journal	Citations	Key words	Eligibility
Jeuring & Diaz-Soria (2017)	Tourism Geographies	18	Proximity tourism, intraregional tourism, familiarity, otherness, everyday life, dichotomies, tourist experiences, home and away	Included
Chen & Chen (2017)	Tourism Geographies	18	Tourist place, meaning, everyday life, tourism mobilities, myth, China	Included
Griffin (2017)	Tourism Geographies	18	VFR travel, hosting, immigration, integration, intra-regional travel, Canada, narrative analysis, destination marketing	Included
Szytniewski, Spierings, & van der Velde (2017)	Tourism Geographies	30	Socio-cultural proximity, encounters with differences, cross-border practices, intraregional tourism, shopping tourism, daily life, qualitative study	Included
Kaaristo & Rhoden (2017)	Tourism Geographies	27	Mundane, tourism mobilities, everyday life, boating, canals, narrowboat, food, hygiene, ethnography	Included
Diaz-Soria (2017)	Tourism Geographies	35	Barcelona, guided tours, otherness, proximity, proximity tourism, qualitative methodology, tourist experience, tourist gaze, usual environment	Included
Jeuring & Haarsen (2017)	Tourism Geographies	50	Proximity tourism, destination attractiveness, regional tourism development, distance, motivations, vacation preferences, Friesland, The Netherlands	Included
Biddulph (2017)	Tourism Geographies	6	Tourism geographies, back regions, livelihoods, territorialization, pro-poor tourism, Cambodia	Excluded

Table 3. Search strings

Database	Search scope	Search string	Date range	JCR categories
WOS	Topic	(proximity OR staycation OR intraregional OR intra-regional OR	January 2016 to the search date (7 July, 2023)	Hospitality, leisure, sport & tourism
Scopus	Article title, Abstract,	"everyday life") AND (tour* OR travel* OR trip OR vacation OR		
	Keywords	holiday)		

Remark: AND and OR are Boolean operators that can be used to combine search terms to broaden or narrow the search. The asterisk * is a wildcard character that represents any group of characters, including no character.

The researchers searched the literature in both databases from January 2016 to July 2023, yielding 427 records. The researchers removed 159 duplicates and 2 records of editorial material, and imported the remaining 266 records into Endnote software for data management. The researchers identified, screened, validated and analyzed each article according to the PRISMA review process (Page et al., 2021) (Figure 2) and the inclusion and exclusion criteria adapted from Vada et al. (2020) and Zhang & Wang (2021) (Table 4). After four rounds of screening, the researchers retained 45 articles that met the criteria.

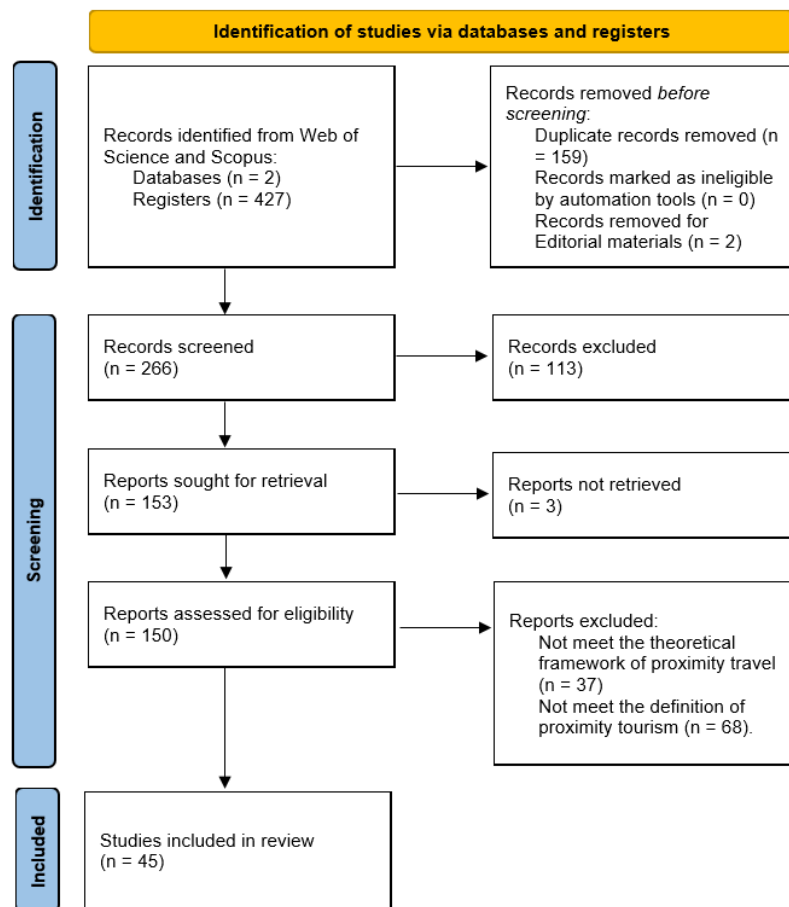


Figure 2. Literature selection process

Table 4. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Criterion	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Quality	Available in WOS, Scopus	Not available in WOS, Scopus
Sector	Hospitality, leisure, and tourism category in JCR	Other categories in JCR
Type	Article, proceeding paper, letter, note, review	Editorial material
Relevance	Theoretical framework of proximity travel Definition of proximity tourism	Unrelated to the theoretical framework of proximity travel Unrelated to the definition of proximity tourism

This study coded 45 academic articles using thematic analysis because there was no previous consensus on the meaning of the term (Martínez-Hernández, Mínguez, & Yubero, 2021). The study created a Microsoft Excel database table in which the researchers listed the details of the 45 academic articles reviewed according to a taxonomy of article title, author, journal, year of publication, number of citations, theories, definitions, research topics, travel circuits, tourism domains, methodology, samples, findings, implications and future research areas (Fakfare, Lee, & Han, 2022; Hosany, Sthapit, & Björk, 2022). In addition, the researchers conducted a visual content analysis (Tomaž & Walanchalee, 2020) of 45 academic articles following the methodological recommendations of Hosany, Sthapit, & Björk (2022). The researchers also conducted a word cloud analysis to confirm the results of the study (Fakfare, Lee, & Han, 2022).

Results

Descriptive statistics

The 45 academic articles published in high quality journals from 2016 to the present that were included in the systematic review are presented in a distribution and trend graph (Figure 3). At the time, research in this area was still in its infancy, with only 6 articles published in journals listed in the JCR's tourism, hospitality, and leisure research catalog prior to 2016 (Canavan, 2013; Hollenhorst, Houge-Mackenzie, & Ostergren, 2014; Huang, Chen, & Lin, 2013; Larsen & Guiver, 2013; Molz, 2009; Soria & Coit, 2013). The dynamics of the number of articles published showed a gradual increase from 2016, when 2 articles were published. The year with the highest number of articles was 2017, with 11 additional articles. Although there was a slight decrease in the number of publications between 2018 and 2020, after the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis in 2020, research on proximity tourism regained a lot of academic attention. In 2020 there were 2 articles, in 2021 there were 5 articles, in 2022 there were 9 articles and in 2023 there were 4 articles published between January and July. The trend line indicates an increasing research interest in proximity tourism in the hospitality and tourism industry.

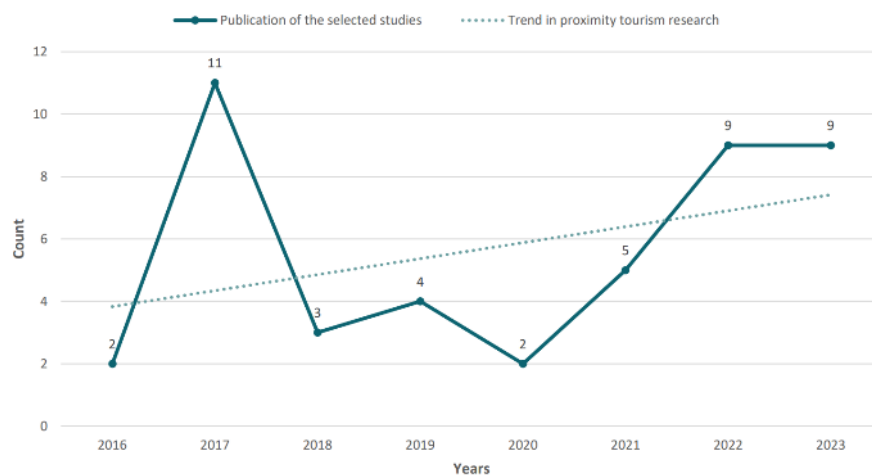
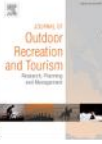
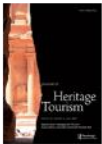


Figure 3. Year of publication of the selected studies

18 high quality journals have published academic articles on proximity tourism research (Table 5). These journals are listed in the JCR catalog of Tourism, Hospitality and Leisure Research. According to Molina-Collado et al. (2022), the average number of citations per publication represents the impact of a journal. Thus, the three most influential journals in the field of proximity tourism research are the Journal of Sustainable Tourism (average citations 29.67 per article), Tourism Geographies (average citations 25.73 per article) and Current Issues in Tourism (average citations 21.75 per article).

Table 5. Journals in the field of proximity tourism in tourism and hospitality

	Rank	Journal	No. of papers	Citations	Average citations/publication
	1	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	3	89	29.67
	2	Tourism Geographies	15	386	25.73
	3	Current Issues in Tourism	4	87	21.75
	4	International Journal of Tourism Research	1	19	19
	4	Journal of Vacation Marketing	1	19	19
	6	Tourist Studies	2	24	12
	7	Tourism Management Perspectives	2	23	11.5
	8	Annals of Tourism Research	3	30	10

	9	Tourism Economics	1	9	9
	10	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	2	16	8
	11	Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism	1	6	6
	12	Journal of Destination Marketing & Management	2	10	5
	13	Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism	2	8	4
	13	Tourism Recreation Research	2	8	4
	15	Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research	1	3	3
	15	Journal of Heritage Tourism	1	3	3
	17	Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change	1	1	1



The 45 papers included in the analysis came from academic institutions in 19 different countries around the world, based on the attribution of first authorship (Figure 4). The majority of articles were published in countries in the Global North. It is important to note that the majority of studies ($n=7$) from the Global South were published during and after the COVID-19 crisis. Jelmer H.G. Jeuring from the University of Groningen is the author with the most publications in the field of proximity tourism research ($n=4$). The 15 most cited articles in the field of proximity tourism are listed in Table 6. It is worth noting that the authors of the seminal articles, which helped to frame the research for this study are among the most influential authors in the field of proximity tourism research. The literature was also analyzed according to the average number of citations per year (Table 6). We found that the articles by Romagosa (2020) and Wong, Lin, & Kou (2023) were evaluated as the most influential. Specifically, the article by Romagosa (2020) describes the potential of proximity tourism to enhance the resilience of tourism SMEs, promote sustainable tourism development and reduce the environmental hazards of tourism. The study by Wong, Lin, & Kou (2023) evaluates the effectiveness of staycation programs in promoting learning opportunities and restorative benefits in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic from a positive psychology perspective and proposes a model for promoting psychological sustainability through proximity tourism. These most influential articles show that proximity tourism not only enhances the resilience of tourism, but also promotes the psychological resilience of tourists.

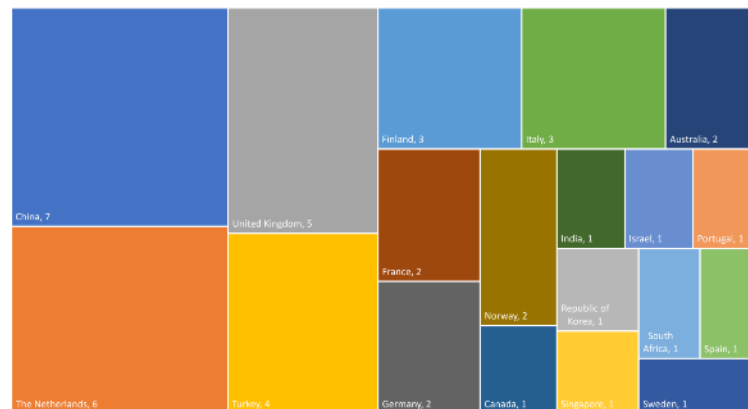


Figure 4. Institutional contributions to proximity tourism research in different countries

Table 6. Top 15 most cited studies

Rank	Author(s)/Years	Journal	Times Cite	Average citations per year
1	Romagosa (2020)	Tourism Geographies	149	37.25
2	Ormond & Sulianti (2017)	Current Issues in Tourism	79	11.28
3	Jeuring & Haurtsen (2017)	Tourism Geographies	50	7.14
4	Puhakka, Piikänen, & Siikamäki (2017)	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	38	5.42
5	Díaz-Soria (2017)	Tourism Geographies	35	5
6	Szytniewski, Spierings, & van der Velde (2017)	Tourism Geographies	30	4.28
7	Kauristo & Rhoden (2017)	Tourism Geographies	27	3.86
8	Janta & Christou (2019)	Annals of Tourism Research	26	5.2
9	Wong, Lin, & Kou (2023)	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	26	26
10	Jeuring (2018)	Tourism Recreation Research	25	4.17
11	Chang (2016)	International Journal of Tourism Research	19	2.38
11	Bausch & Unseld (2018)	Journal of Vacation Marketing	19	3.17
13	Griffin (2017)	Tourism Geographies	18	2.57
13	Chen & Chen (2017)	Tourism Geographies	18	2.57
13	Jeuring & Díaz-Soria (2017)	Tourism Geographies	18	2.57

Emergent research themes, travel circuits and tourism domains

Based on Fakfare, P., et al.'s (2022) and Higgins-Desbiolles, F.'s (2022) framework for categorizing tourism research and the framework for categorizing travel circuits, the researchers identified nine research themes (e.g., economics, environment, experience, management, marketing, psychology, sustainable development, tourism development and urban planning) with details in Appendix A and five categories (e.g., local touring and recreation, domestic travel, regionalism, diaspora travel & visiting friends & relatives (VFR) & rationalized international travel and general group) of travel circuits in the literature (Appendix A and Figure 5).

Appendix A shows the distribution of themes and related publications on proximity tourism over the last eight years. The study finds that experience studies were the most prominent category, accounting for 44% of the papers reviewed (Figure 5). Other popular themes included psychology (16%) and sustainable development (9%). Each of these research themes demonstrates the dynamic development of research on proximity tourism, particularly the change in research trends in the four years during and after the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 6). Research on proximity tourism has unveiled the emergence of studies in urban planning, sustainability and psychology (focusing mainly on proximity and resilience) in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, reflecting the potential of proximity to drive tourism literature in the contemporary era.

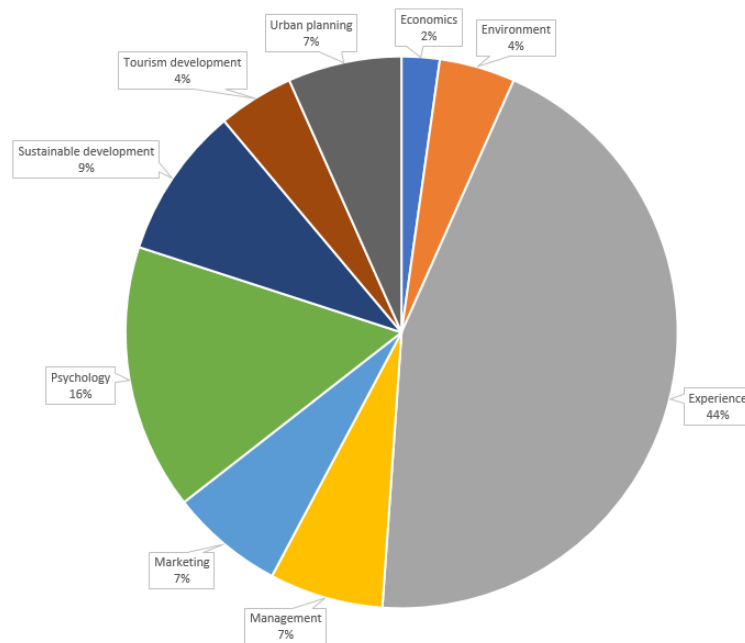


Figure 5. Identified research themes

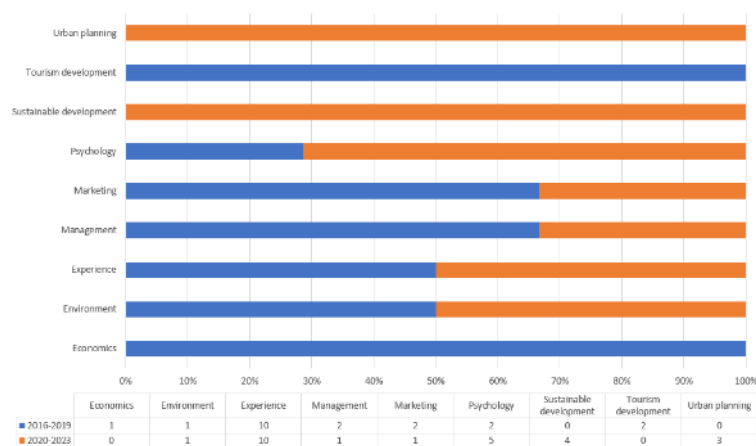


Figure 6. Research trends by themes

Research on proximity tourism covers to five proximity travel circuits (Figure 7) (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2022). For the circuit of local tourism and leisure (48.89%), studies focused mainly on local hotels or destinations such as staycations and proximity tourism destinations. The second circuit is related to domestic travel (13.33%), studies were mainly conducted under the theme of tourist experience, exploring the motivations, behaviors and experiences of proximity tourist experience. For the regionalism (15.56%), articles are distributed across specific tourism domains such as intraregional tourism, medical tourism, film tourism, urban tourism and sports tourism. In terms of diaspora travel, VFR & rationalized international travel accounts for (15.56%), these articles focus on specific travel contexts such as hosting VFRs, ancestral tourism and educational-tourism. Finally, the general group represents 6.66%, all the articles were conceptual in nature.

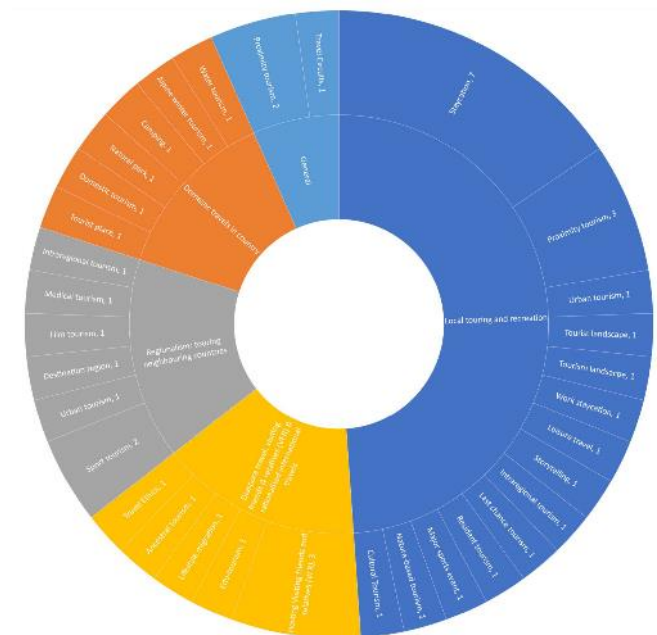


Figure 7. Identified proximity travel circuits

In the case of tourism domains, the systematic analysis reported on the popularity and justification of the term, as evidenced by the extensive research background in the field of proximity tourism (Figure 8). Staycations (16%), proximity tourism (11%) and hosting VFRs (7%) were the most popular domains, followed by urban tourism (4%), sports tourism (4%) and intraregional tourism (4%). It is interesting to note that from 2020 to the present, the focus of research and related publications on proximity tourism has been mainly on proximity, sustainable and experiential tourism, such as staycation, urban tourism, proximity tourism, resident tourism, last chance tourism, domestic tourism and educational tourism (Figure 9). This trend is in line with the Romagosa's (2020) view that the COVID-19 crisis has contributed to the direction of proximity in tourism. The scholar calls for proximity tourism that can be used in tourism planning and management policies at all scales in both developed and emerging economies to achieve sustainability and resilience in tourism development.

Conceptualization of proximity tourism research

Researchers did not reach a consensus on the concept of proximity tourism (Table 8). Diaz-Soria's (2017) definition of proximity tourism was used by five studies. This was followed by Jeuring & Diaz-Soria (2017) and Jeuring (2018), whose definitions were adopted by two studies in each case. Other studies used the definitions of Soria & Coit (2013), Rantala et al. (2020) and Hoogendoorn & Hammett (2021). It is worth noting that the sustainability aspect of the concept of proximity tourism has been highlighted as a result of the experience of global mobility restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2022).

Table 8. Conceptualization of proximity tourism

Author(s)	Definition of proximity tourism	No. of papers referencing these definitions
Soria & Coit (2013)	A concept of vacation near home, the most extreme form of which is the staycation.	1
Diaz-Soria (2017)	A multi-dimensional concept that is both physical and abstract for tourism and travel close to home.	5
Jeuring & Diaz-Soria (2017)	A concept for doing tourism and travelling near home.	2
Jeuring (2018)	Touristic experiences that take place within everyday life without the need for long-distance travel.	2
Rantala et al. (2020)	A form of tourism that focuses on local destinations, short distances and lower-carbon modes of transportation.	1
Hoogendoorn & Hammett (2021)	A form of tourism occurs within the locale of residence in relation to social or psychological distance.	1

Most studies (n=33) tended to view proximity tourism as a phenomenon (Richards, 2016). This is an indication that the concept of proximity tourism is still largely underdeveloped. These 33 studies on proximity tourism tended to examine different concepts/dimensions (Figure 8). According to the systematic (word-cloud) analysis, everyday life (n=24, 14.29%) was the most frequently discussed concept, followed by geographical proximity (n=17, 10.12%), social proximity (n=9, 5.36%), environmental consciousness (n=8, 4.76%) and cultural proximity (n=7, 4.17%). The literature suggests that the tourist experience is a key aspect when investigating issues of proximity tourism (Jeuring & Diaz-Soria, 2017). Overall, the generic dimensions of proximity tourism research are consistent with the definitions of proximity tourism by Diaz-Soria (2017), Jeuring (2018) and Rantala et al. (2020).



Figure 8. Word-cloud analysis of dimensions of the concept of proximity tourism

Of the 45 academic articles from high quality tourism, hospitality and leisure research journals, 14 studies related proximity tourism to other theories (Table 9). These 14 studies used 22 theories. Fourteen of these theories came from psychology, followed by four theories from sociology and then theories from consumer behavior, philosophy, politics and geography.

Table 9. Underlying theories used to understand proximity tourism

Area of study	Underlying theories	Author(s)	No. of studies
Health Psychology	Protection motivation theory (PMT)	Yan, Shen, & Hu (2022), Pichierri, Petruzzellis, & Passaro (2023).	2
Humanistic psychology	Travel motivation theory	Lin et al. (2021).	1
Cognitive psychology	Attention restoration theory (ART)	Lin et al. (2021), Wong, Lin, & Kou (2023).	2
	Psychological capital (PsyCap) theory	Lin et al. (2021), Wong, Lin, & Kou (2023).	2
Positive psychology	Conservation of resources (COR) theory	Misra et al. (2022).	1
	Psychological well-being theory	Özyurt (2023).	1
	Self-determination theory	Özyurt (2023).	1
	Personal expressiveness theory	Özyurt (2023).	1
Consumer behavior	Involvement theory	Lin et al. (2021)	1
Philosophy	Proximity theory	Hales & Caton (2017).	1
Politics	Black swan theory	Romagosa (2020).	1
	Escape-seeking theory	Chang (2016).	1
Social psychology	Intergroup contact theory (ICT)	Gelbman (2019).	1
	Problem behavior theory (PBT)	Au, Tsang, & Fung (2021).	1
	Tourist gaze	Hoogendoorn & Hammett (2021), Diaz-Soria (2017).	2
Sociology	Generational theory	Akış İlhan, Özoğul Balyalı, & Günay Aktaş (2022).	1
	Transformative learning theory	Wong, Lin, & Kou (2023).	1
Humanistic geography	Tuan's theory on the tourist and the resident's points of view	Diaz-Soria (2017).	1

Methods used to analyze proximity tourism

Of the 45 academic articles from high quality journals, 42 (93.33%) were empirical and the remaining 3 (6.67%) were conceptual (Table 10). Of the 42 empirical papers, the majority used qualitative methods (n=26, 61.9%), followed by quantitative methods (28.58%), with mixed methods being the least used (9.52%). Primary data (n=35, 83.33%) remained the dominant data type in the empirical papers. Three studies combined primary data with secondary data, which contributed to increase the credibility of the studies (Eshetu, Yeshitela, & Sieber, 2021). As interviews were the primary qualitative research method, thematic analysis was the most commonly used data analysis technique (Figure 9). However, quantitative studies primarily used surveys to collect data and rigorous analytical techniques to analyze the data (Figure 10). Of these studies, 37 (88.1%) were cross-sectional studies. These cross-sectional studies were mainly conducted in the on-site phase (n=21), followed by the post-visit phase (n=13) and the pre-visit phase (n=3) (Figure 11). However, there were also five longitudinal studies, all of which focused on citizenship, immigration or tourism marketing strategies in countries of the Global North.

Table 10. Distribution of conceptual and empirical papers

Distributions	Frequency	Percentage
Article types		
Conceptual papers	3	6.67%
Empirical papers	42	93.33%
Methodology		
Quantitative	12	28.58%
Qualitative	26	61.90%
Mixed	4	9.52%
Data types		
Primary	35	83.33%
Secondary	4	9.52%
Primary & Secondary	3	7.15%

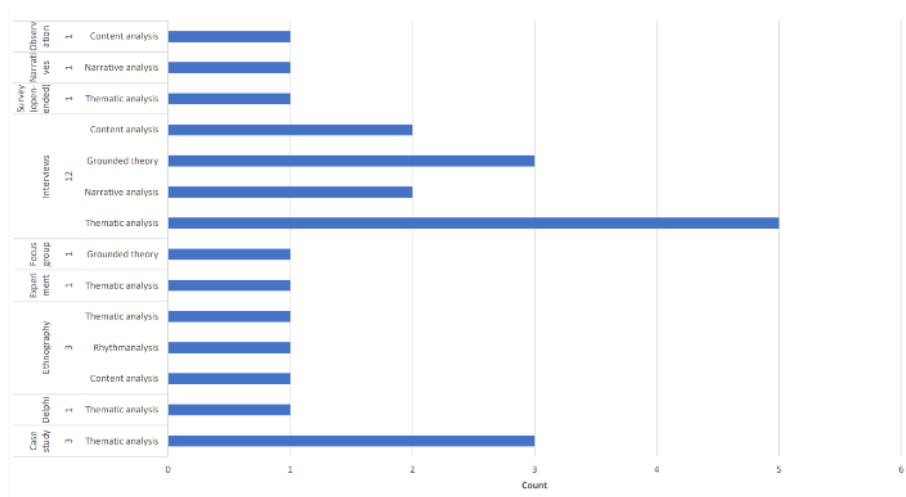


Figure 9. Qualitative methods employed in the selected studies

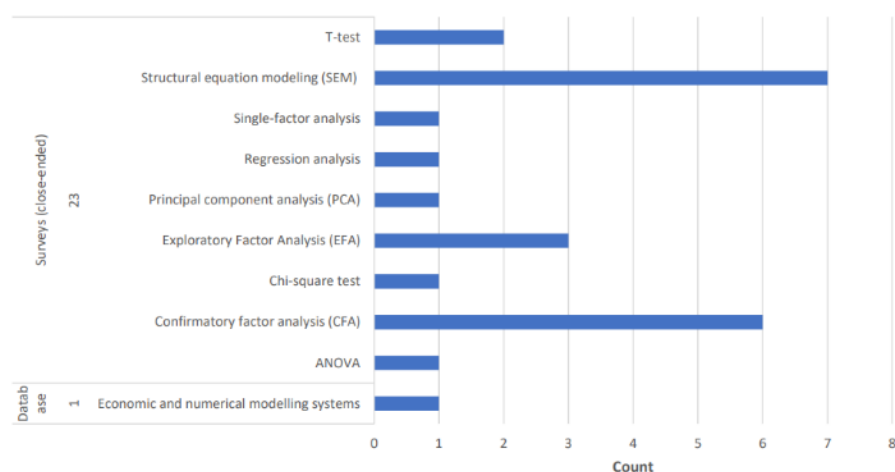


Figure 10. Quantitative methods employed in the selected studies

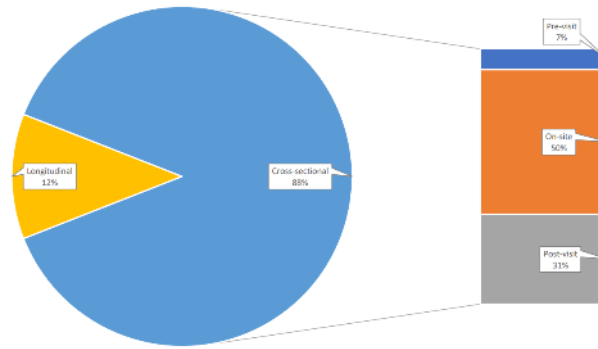


Figure 11. Research design for selected studies

Research locations and samples

The research sample of 30 empirical studies also focused on countries in the Global North (Figure 12). Only 12 studies were conducted on proximity tourists and stakeholders in countries in the Global South, such as China, Malaysia, Indonesia, South Africa and India. However, only a few of these studies ($n=3$, 14.29%) were conducted before the COVID-19 crisis, and two of them used Chinese samples from within China (Chang, 2016; Chen & Chen, 2017). The remaining studies used Indonesian samples from within Indonesia and Indonesian and Malaysian samples from within Malaysia (Ormond & Sulianti, 2017) (Figure 13). The number of proximity tourism study samples from developing countries ($n=9$, 34.62%) increased significantly after the COVID-19 crisis (Figure 14). Considering this parameter, the interest in proximity tourism is gradually increasing among scholars from developed and emerging countries, despite the lifting of global travel restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

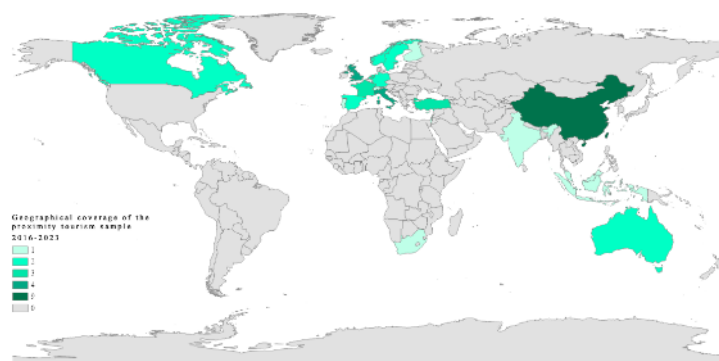


Figure 12. Location of research samples (2016-2023)

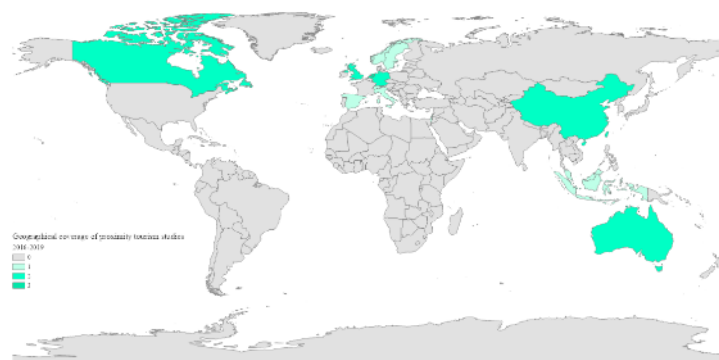


Figure 13. Location of research samples (2016-2019)

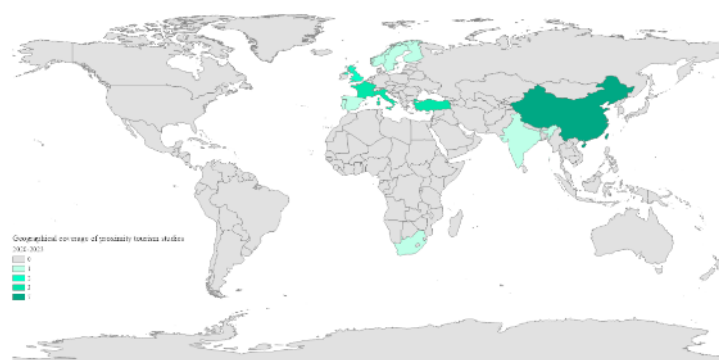


Figure 14. Location of research samples (2020-present)

In terms of research perspectives, more than half of the empirical articles examined the topic from the demand side (e.g., local tourists, domestic tourists, cross-border tourists, migrants, VFRs, and educational tourists; $n=32$, 76.2%), followed by multiple perspectives ($n=5$, 11.9%), academic perspectives ($n=2$, 4.76%), and the supply side (e.g., business, $n=2$, 4.76%, and government, $n=1$, 2.38%).

Discussion

Albeit the concept of proximity tourism has received scholarly attention, this study represents the first systematic review of the concept. The research purposes of this article are to identify emerging research themes, explore conceptualizations and present a future research agenda. To achieve these three research purposes, the article used a qualitative review approach to analyze 45 journal articles published in high quality tourism, hospitality and leisure research journals. The study found that 1) developing countries are underrepresented among existing research institutions and lead authors; 2) research on proximity tourism is still organized around experiential themes and local dimensions of tourism, and is fragmented in terms of the tourism sectors studied; 3) the conceptualization of proximity tourism remains largely unexplored; 4) the existing studies have not clearly articulated the theoretical underpinnings, and only a limited

number of psychological theories have been applied to tourist experience studies in tourism research; 5) the empirical studies have been based on qualitative studies and cross-sectional studies in the field; and 6) the focus of the studies has been mainly on the tourist perspective, the geography of the studies has been mainly in developed countries, and the research samples have been mainly from Western cultures. The findings are discussed in detail below.

Research characteristics and context

The analysis of research themes, travel circuits and tourism domains revealed the main characteristics of research on proximity tourism research (Appendix A). Although nine themes emerged from the literature, experience, psychology and sustainability were clearly the three key themes.

First, experiential research appeared in 44% of the literature reviewed. As one of the main research themes, experience includes a number of studies related to the behavior and experience of proximity tourists. During the review period, the researchers analyzed the tourist experience in terms of different travel circuits and tourism domains, such as nature-based tourism (Puhakka, Pitkänen, & Siikamäki, 2017), proximity tourism (Diaz-Soria, 2017), intraregional tourism (Szytniewski, Spierings, & van der Velde, 2017), water tourism (Kaaristo & Rhoden, 2017), hosting VFR (Janta & Christou, 2019), alpine winter tourism (Bausch & Unseld, 2018), staycation (Jacobsen et al., 2023), sport tourism (King et al., 2018), resident tourism (Hoogendoorn & Hammett, 2021), domestic tourism (Guan et al., 2022), ancestral tourism (Prince, 2022) and last chance tourism (Paiva et al., 2023). While these findings are indicative of the extensive research experience associated with the development of proximity tourism, articles discussing tourist experiences at the circuits of generic proximity travel only refer to years prior to the COVID-19 crisis (Jeuring & Diaz-Soria, 2017). Few scholars have explored, at the circuits of generic proximity travel, how experiences in times of 'uncertainty' affect the attitudes and behaviors of proximity tourists, especially in terms of the antecedents and consequences of the experience. Therefore, future research should seek to explore the physical, psychological and social experiences of proximity travel circuits at the level of generic proximity tourist experiences before, during and after the trip. For example, well-being benefits, exceptional habits and aspirational intimacy may deserve special attention (Humbracht, Cohen, & Williams, 2022; McManus, 2020; Puhakka, Pitkänen, & Siikamäki, 2017). In conclusion, investigating the generic dimensions of the proximity tourist experience and tourist behavior would be an interesting research agenda for future studies.

Psychology was the next theme discussed in 16% of the articles reviewed. Psychology included seven articles related to motivations and perceptions of proximity tourism. Four of these articles dealt with motivations for proximity tourism during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is worth noting that two theories from positive psychology, namely PsyCap theory and COR theory, dominated and were strongly emphasized in the issue of proximity tourism during the COVID-19 crisis (Lin et al., 2021; Wong, Lin, & Kou, 2023). Three studies investigating the paradigm of proximity travel motivation before and after the COVID-19 pandemic were also identified in the review analyses (Chang, 2016; Jacobsen & Antonson, 2017; Özyurt, 2023). Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, positive psychology was not at the forefront of research discussions on proximity tourism. Therefore, the application of positive psychology theories in the context of generic proximity tourism could be considered in future research to examine individuals' travel intentions.

Sustainable development was the third most common theme in the reviewed

literature (9%). From a sustainable development perspective, the articles in this theme relate to the sustainable development of the travelling landscape and the tourism industry, mentioning 'health impacts', 'economic impacts', 'social impacts' and 'environmental impacts'. For example, the study by Pappalepore & Gravari-Barbas (2022) analyzes whether new forms of localized tourism have emerged as a result of the pandemic, how these have been fostered and promoted by the tourism industry, and the implications of these trends for the sustainable development of tourism. It is worth noting that the studies under this theme have all been examined from the perspective of the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on tourism. Future research is likely to focus on theoretical applications as well as theoretical discussion of how sustainable development of tourism and tourism destinations can be achieved through proximity tourism.

Existing studies focus primarily on the local touring and recreation circuit, with more rapid and concentrated development of proximity tourism research from both an experiential and psychological perspective during and after the COVID-19 crisis (Figure 7). The surge in interest can be attributed to prevailing academic trends and fashions. A fascination with mathematical modeling exercises and a commitment to conform to established theoretical norms characterize the trend. Therefore, the balance of this trend needs to be critically assessed. Future research is suggested to examine tourism lifestyles after the COVID-19 crisis, taking into account the well-being aspects of proximity tourism (i.e., less tired, refreshing opportunities) in relation to quantified carbon reductions and the 17 areas of coherence of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2022; Paiva et al., 2023; Romagosa, 2020).

Theoretical frameworks

Existing studies used 52 theories or concepts to examine proximity tourism from the perspective of different stakeholders, such as the supply side, the demand side and the community side (Figure 16). In terms of theoretical underpinnings, scholars have used theories or concepts from a variety of disciplines to support their research, including tourism studies, psychological theories, sociological theories, geography, philosophy, politics, consumer behavior studies, cultural studies and gender studies (Bertacchini, Nuccio, & Durio, 2021; Diaz-Soria, 2017; Gelbman, 2019; Giddy & Hoogendoorn, 2018; Hales & Caton, 2017; Janta & Christou, 2019; Kramer, 2023; Lin et al., 2021; Romagosa, 2020). Theories or concepts identified from different stakeholder perspectives are evolving as the global socioeconomic environment influences tourism development. For example, between 2016 and 2019, studies on proximity tourism have generally used basic tourism theories or concepts such as tourism motivation, tourist experience, tourist perception, satisfaction, and destination marketing and management. While research during this period has examined different proximity travel circuits, questions about proximity tourism have been explored around specific tourism domains. Almost half (48%) of the studies between 2020 and the search date highlighted the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, but all of them confirmed the positive role and development potential of proximity tourism at a theoretical or conceptual level. Recent studies have tended to take a broader and more prospective view in explaining the concepts related to the proximity tourism (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2022; Meneghello, 2023; Pappalepore & Gravari-Barbas, 2022). This suggests that even after the COVID-19 crisis, research and practice in the field of proximity tourism will continue to grow.

[illegible]

It is worth noting that in proximity tourism, the same theories or variables can be used to examine issues across different proximity travel circuits and can be explored from different tourism domains. For example, cultural proximity has been used to identify proximity travel motivations for both regional and domestic travel (Chang, 2016; Guan et al., 2022). In contrast, different theories or variables may be applied to the same area of research domain. For example, socio-emotional distress, travel involvement, psychological distress, touristic learning and life satisfaction were used to examine issues related to proximity tourism among local residents during the COVID-19 pandemic (Lin et al., 2021; Wong, Lin, & Kou, 2023). Therefore, this review suggests that future research could compare the results of previous studies in similar research areas and identify the most appropriate theory for a particular topic.

Proximity tourism research is mainly conducted using qualitative methods: traditional exploratory methods such as interview, ethnography, case study, focus group, Delphi and observation are used to gain insights into different proximity tourism phenomena. Future researchers should use qualitative methods to explain the emerging aspects of proximity tourism, such as tourist choice behavior, psychological impacts and tourist behavior, responsible tourist behavior and the adoption of virtual tourism technologies.

Conclusion

This study provides an overview of current academic research on proximity tourism and synthesizes 45 high quality articles from academic journals in tourism, hospitality and leisure studies using a systematic literature review. The findings of this study include the identification of emerging research themes in proximity tourism, the conceptualization of proximity tourism and a future research agenda.

In terms of theoretical contributions, the main aim of this review is to present a comprehensive framework on the topic of proximity tourism. Specifically, the contribution of this review to existing research on proximity tourism focuses on two main areas. First, this study discusses the current dynamics of proximity tourism in relation to the research topic, demonstrating an in-depth analysis of the research on the topic. This study also provides a platform for future researchers interested in studying proximity tourism through the research framework constructed for proximity tourism. Secondly, this study identifies research areas that have not been fully explored in proximity tourism research and provides recommendations for future research in these areas. In terms of practical implications, this review provides insights for tourism marketers and managers in developing strategies and policies to promote proximity tourism.

In terms of limitations in the choice of research terminology and the scope of the study, the study is similar to other systematic literature reviews. First, the search criteria used in this review may not have been comprehensive enough and may have excluded some relevant articles. Second, the article only reviewed academic papers included in the JCR Catalogue of tourism, hospitality and leisure research category from 2016 to date were reviewed using the WOS and Scopus databases. These papers may not include all research on proximity tourism. Finally, in future studies, researchers can expand the data sources by including literature from the Google Scholar database (Pathmanandakumar, Chenoli, & Goh, 2021).

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Appendix A: research themes, travel circuits and tourism domains.

Research themes	No. of papers	Travel circuits	Tourism domains	Author(s)/Citations	Purpose	Sample	Key dimensions/Variables	Findings
Economics	1	Local touring and recreation	Cultural tourism	Bertacchini, Nuccio, & Durio (2017)9	Investigate patterns of museum attendance by residents of metropolitan areas at near-home destinations.	76,000 subscribers' transactional data	Gender; Socioeconomic status; Loyalty; Moral legitimacy of flying for family reasons; Unsettling obligations towards flying for work-related reasons; The moral force of a fast-paced, hypermobile life; Proximal relations as drivers of climate change care and responsibility; Local touring and recreation; Domestic travels in country; Regionalism: touring neighbouring countries;	Presents a relatively original profile of the typical urban visitor to out-of-town museums.
Environment	2	Diaspora travel, visiting friends & relatives (VFR) & rationalized international travels	Travel ethics	Hales & Caron (2017)14	Offer a reading of proximity ethics as a novel way of understanding the moral dilemmas that underpin decisions of whether or not to fly.	n.a.		Presents the role of proximity ethics in encouraging or discouraging people's problematic flying practices.
		General	Travel circuits	Higgins-Deshusses (2022)2	Introduce the concept of subsidiarity in tourism and travel circuits.	n.a.		Conceptualization of proximity travel through the principle of tourism and travel subsidiarity.

Local touring and recreation	Nature-based tourism	Puhakka, Pitkanen, & Suksamäki (2017):38	Examine health and well-being benefits perceived by visitors	4206 visitors	Psychological and occupational well-being; Intellectual well-being; Escape; Social well-being; physical well-being; Sensory satisfaction.	rationalized international travels.	1) Confirms the positive effects of protected areas for visitors' psychological, physical, and social health and well-being; 2) Supports the literature on well-being by revealing dimensions of protected areas can offer; 3) Extends the well-being benefit dimensions by adding a dimension of escape.
Local touring and recreation	Proximity tourism	Díaz-Soria (2017):35	Define the proximity tourist and how he/she builds a tourist approach.	93 local tourists	Educational; Expert; Recreational; Tourist; Curiosity.		1) Classification of proximate tourist experience. 2) Contribution to Urry & Larsen (2011)'s theory of the tourist gaze and Tuan (1990)'s theory of the tourist and the resident's approaches of the territory by identifying the process of subjective construction of otherness.
Regional/sau: touring neighboring countries	Intraregional tourism	Szytniewski, Spierings, & van der Velde (2017):30	Analyze feelings of socio-cultural proximity and distance with a specific focus on the tourist experience in cross-border shopping and everyday life practices in border regions.	10 cross-border shoppers	Affective proximity and distance; Normative proximity and distance; Interactive proximity and distance.		1) Conceptualization of tourist experience in a cross-border shopping tourism context. 2) Supports Edensor (2007)'s perspective by identifying a fluid interpretation of the exotic and the mundane in a geographical proximity context.

Domestic travels in country	Water tourism	Kaariisto & Rhoden (2017):27	Explore the interface between mobilities paradigm and the mundane tourist activities.	15 leisure boaters	Embodied movements; Gastronomic experiences; Personal hygiene practices.	Contribution to the literature on waterways tourism and leisure by applying the mobilities perspective to the case of canal tourism.
Diaspora travel, visiting friends & relatives (VFR) & rationalized international travels	Hosting Visiting friends and relatives (VFR)	Janta & Christou (2019):26	Explore the experiences of hosting segment of Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) mobilities.	20 female foreign citizens	Culture; Intimacy; Identity.	1) Presents dimensions of transformative social practices among hosts and guests. 2) Contribution to the tourism gender studies by analyzing VFR hosting experience.
Domestic travels in country	Alpine winter tourism	Bausch & Unseld (2018):19	Identify consumers' motivations and expectations when taking a winter holiday trip.	60 local participants	Motivations for winter travel; Expectations for winter holiday destinations; The triggering factors of Alpine winter holiday travel.	Contribution to the winter tourism studies by identifying consumers' expectations, triggering factors and target destination types of winter season holiday trips.
Diaspora travel, visiting friends & relatives (VFR) & rationalized international travels	Hosting Visiting friends and relatives (VFR)	Griffin (2017):18	Explore the experiences of immigrants with intra-regional travel when they host VFRs.	6 immigrants	Hosting and intra-regional travel; Tailored experiences; Enduring benefits; Community implications.	Contribution to Cohen & Cohen (2012)'s perspectives by co-constructing narratives of immigrants' hosting and intra-regional travel.
General	Proximity tourism	Jouring & Diaz-Soria (2017):18	Discuss various aspects of proximity and intraregional tourism.	n.a.	n.a.	1) Contribution to the literature on the sustainable development of

Domestic travels in country	Camping	Ranidu & Varley (2019)/10	Explore the philosophical resonance of wild camping.	n.a.	Lightness; Heaviness; Clearing.	1) Summarizes the dimensions of wild campers' experience. 2) Categorizes wild camping as tourism through its core concept. 1) Categorization of local sport tourist experience dimensions. 2) Supports Chen & Chen (2017)'s perspective by confirming that the experience of the mundane or the spectacular cannot be assumed. 3) Contribution to proximate tourism studies by identifying the liminal state of tourist experiences from everyday life. 4) Extends Diaz-Sobera (2017)'s motivation for proximate tourist by adding the new dimension of leisure lifestyle. 5) Supports Rickly & Vidon (2017)'s view by confirming that lifestyle proximity promotes strong connections of local participants to the local environment and influenced their attitudes towards its use.
Local touring and recreation	Major sports event	King et al (2018)/8	Explore the interplay between the hosting of major sports events and leisure spaces, community and practices of local established sporting communities.	19 local cyclists	Place identity; Insider experiences; Interactions with the everyday.	Four realms of experience; Extends the 4Is model of experience in the direction of low arousal and mundane experience.
Domestic travels in country	Natural Park	Lebrun, Su, & Bouchet (2021a)/6	Explore the experience lived by domestic tourists while visiting the natural parks protected in their country.	500 domestic tourists		

Regionalism: touring neighbouring countries	Sport tourism	McManus (2020) 4	Explore the significance of touristic trips by football fans.	A group of fans	Collective performances of liminality; Initiation and communities; Individual exceptional body practices.	Challenges the paradoxical nature of tourism being 'away' by proposing the concept of an 'exceptional habit'.
	Local touring and recreation	Hoogendoorn & Hammett (2021) 4	Explore the definition of proximity tourism in terms of social or psychological rather than spatial (Euclidean) distance/proximity.	200 local residents	The motivations of resident tourists; The experiences of resident tourists; The resident tourists' perceptions.	1) Supports Richards (2016)'s concept of 'resident tourists' 2) Contribution to Urry (1990)'s theory of the tourist gaze by discovering examples of resident tourists' touristic gaze practices. 1) Contribution to the literature on tourists' perception of the destination environment by proposing the concept of SAHH. 2) Explores the influences of origin-destination relationship and tourist-destination relationship simultaneously on tourists' destination perception by using the destination familiarity and the cultural proximity measurements. 3) Challenges Kuhneman & Tversky (1979)'s point theory by confirming the boundary between "home" and "away" is vanishing in a well-connected world.
	Domestic travels in country	Guan et al. (2022) 4	Develop a novel concept of sense of away-from-home (SAHH).	460 domestic tourists	Sense of away- from-home; Destination familiarity; Cultural proximity between domestic tourists' homes and the destination.	

Local touring and recreation	Staycation	Moon & Chan (2022)23	Explore what drives millennials' staycation consumption and experiential components of staycation experiences during the coronavirus pandemic.	25 millennial residents	Millennials' fantasy of travelling; Millennials' ordinary-extraordinary staycation experience.	1) Presents a theoretical framework of millennials' staycation experience. 2) Contribution to the staycation-related literature by providing evidence of millennials' staycation motivations. 3) Contribution to staycation-related literature by discovering the duality of staycation experience.
						1) Supports the notion of heritage by identifying dimensions of ancestral tourists' experience. 2) Confirms Ramshaw (2014) and Ponja, Buller, & Airey (2003) by highlighting the relationship between the mundanity of heritage tourism sites and tourist experience.
Diaspora travel, visiting friends & relatives (VFR) & rationalized international travels	Ancestral tourism	Prince (2022)23	Explore the performances and affective entanglements that make genealogy meaningful in the present during travels to an ancestral homeland.	40 ancestral tourists	Family encounters; Being part of ordinary Sweden; Visiting places of personal meaning; Finding historical context.	1) Contribution to the literature on migrant visits by introducing and conceptualizing the concept of aspirational intimacy. 2) Extends Larsen (2008)'s work on the de-exoticization of tourism by demonstrating digital contact in daily life and the touristic practices of migrant visits. Extends the role of digital storytelling in fueling tourists' last-chance tourism experiences
Diaspora travel, visiting friends & relatives (VFR) & rationalized international travels	Hosting Visiting friends and relatives (VFR)	Humbracht, Cohen, & Williams (2022)20	Explore the shifting qualities and intimacies of migrant personal relationships developed across diverse means for maintaining relationships.	45 migrants and VFRs	Anxiety and aspirations for normal intimacy; Intimacy and aligning aspirations of self; Rhythmic intimacy and optimistic change.	1) Contribution to the literature on migrant visits by introducing and conceptualizing the concept of aspirational intimacy. 2) Extends Larsen (2008)'s work on the de-exoticization of tourism by demonstrating digital contact in daily life and the touristic practices of migrant visits. Extends the role of digital storytelling in fueling tourists' last-chance tourism experiences
Local touring and recreation	Last chance tourism	Paiva et al. (2023)20	Explore the possibilities of turning last chance tourism	19 local participants	Last chance tourism experiences;	

Management	3	experiences into hopeful tourism experiences.	Proximity and controlled environments; Digital narratives.	and pro-environmental behavioral intentions.
Regionalism: touring neighboring countries	Ormond & Sulianti (2017)79	Examine South-South intra-regional medical travelers' motivations, preparations and practices.	'Travelers' socio-economic diversity; Everyday informal economies and social care networks; Travel frequency.	1) Challenges the "Northern bias" of South-South regional tourists by discussing the South-South intra-regional medical travel flows' potential of economic development. 2) Explains how formal and informal care economies are made possible by medical travel flows and make medical travel flows possible.
Regionalism: touring neighboring countries	Gelman (2019)9	Examine and analyze how, why, under what circumstances, and to what extent a cross border sport tourism event can contribute to the promotion of a message of peace between two countries.	Organizational; Social dimension; Media.	Presents a typological model of sport tourism and peace management in a contested destination.
Local touring and recreation	Au, Tsang, & Fung (2021)3	Examine jaysaycationer behaviors to complement the overly optimistic discussion of staycations in the literature.	Drivers of jaysaycation behavior; Types of jaysaycationers; Workers' emotional responses.	1) Presents a theoretical framework of jaysaycationer experience. 2) Identifies the drivers and types of staycationers. 3) Contribution to Jessor & Jessor (1977)'s problem behavior theory by identifying common connections between individual and environmental causes.

Marketing	3	Local touring and recreation	Intraregional tourism	Jouring (2016)25	Disentangle various contradictions present in the discourse of regional tourism marketing.	13 marketing strategy documents	Differentiation versus homogenization; Internal versus external orientation.	4) Enriches studies on the hotel worker's emotional responses by identifying the relationship between the jaycustomer's behavior and the hotel workers' negative responses. 1) Insights on the contradictory dimensions of discourse in regional tourism marketing strategies. 2) Explains the destination positioning discourses and the simultaneous contradictions in terms of its potential impact by constructing five themes.
		Domestic travels in country	Tourist place	Chen & Chen (2017)18	Explore the underlying relations between the (re)production of the meanings of tourist places and everyday life.	15 domestic tourists and 6 local tour guides	Historical and cultural meanings in traditional Chinese culture; People's daily conversations and practices.	1) Identifies the relationship between the (re)production of the meanings of tourist places and everyday life. 2) Contribution to Larsen, Urry, & Axhausen (2007)'s perspective on the de-differentiation of tourism.
Psychology	7	Local touring and recreation	Storytelling	Helljakka & Raitakönen (2023)20	Investigate how storytelling connects to popular culture tourism and regional tourism development.	150 Instagram posts	Mobility of playthings and players; Playscapes; Popular storytelling.	Presents a theoretical framework for popular culture tourism by illustrating how storytelling connects regional tourism development and popular culture tourism.
		Local touring and recreation	Staycation	Wong, Lin, & Kuo (2023)26	Gauge the effectiveness of staycation programs in cultivating learning opportunities and restorative benefits with an	409 local tourists	Socio-cultural distress; Touristic learning; Restoration.	1) Presents an integrated model that takes psychological distress, transformative learning,

			emphasis on temporal positive psychological outcomes amid the COVID-19 pandemic.	Travel motivation; Psychological capital.	restoration, and psychological capital into account. 2) The three-stage process light on a new form of mental and psychological sustainability. 3) Contribution to the positive psychology research by exploring a new aspect (PsyCap with HHOPE).
Regionalism: touring neighboring countries	Film tourism	Chang (2016) & 19	Investigate the relationships of TV drama series, cultural proximity, travel motivation and the moderating effect of enduring involvement in this relationship.	TV drama series; Travel motivation; Cultural proximity; Enduring involvement.	Contribution to the literature on travel motivation of TV drama series viewers by presenting a framework on the moderating effect of enduring involvement on both relationships of TV drama series-travel motivation and cultural proximity-travel motivation.
Local touring and recreation	Staycation	Lin et al. (2021) & 18	Assess a transformative process leading from travel motivation and restoration to fortifying psychological capital and wellbeing.	Travel motivation; Psychological capital; Life satisfaction; Travel involvement; Psychological distress.	Develops an integrated nomination network that uses travel as a way to attain better well-being through an improved PsyCap level.
Local touring and recreation	Leisure travel	Jacobson & Antenson (2017) & 8	Investigate local leisure travelers' and domestic tourists' motivations for taking summer trips along a national tourism route of Sweden.	Sightseeing and outdoor life; Getting away and travelling around; A quick route to family and friends.	Contribution to academic research on domestic holidaymaking and local leisure excursions by identifying tourists' motivation.

						1) Contribution to the literature on staycation by elucidating the psychological mechanism behind tourists' choices during a pandemic. 2) Extends the Problem Motivation Theory (PMT) by finding that individuals' perceived risk reluctance during a pandemic enhanced their attachment to their home community and their intention to take up a staycation. 3) Evidence for the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourists' decision-making and behavior. Contribution to the literature of work staycation by proposing a framework on the effects of teleworking, perceived stress, work staycation and destination image on employees' perceived well-being.
	Local touring and recreation	Staycation	Piddieri, Petruzzellis, & Passaro (2023):4	Examine the psychological effects of the pandemic on individuals' staycation intention.	230 residents	Risk aversion; Perceived control over the disease; Community attachment; Staycation intention.
	Local touring and recreation	Work staycation	Misra et al. (2022):3	Explore the association between teleworking and its impact on the psychological well-being of the respondents.	245 employees	Teleworking; Psychological well-being; Destination images; Perception towards staycation.
	Diaspora travel, visiting friends & relatives (VFR) & rationalized international travels	Lifestyle migration	Özyurt (2023):1	Examine international lifestyle migrants' eudaimonic motivations and experiences.	18 permanent immigrants	Autonomy; Environmental mastery; Personal growth; Purpose in life; Positive relations; Self-acceptance.
Sustainable development	General	Proximity tourism	Romaguosa (2020):149	Introduce the concept of degrowth in the sustainable tourism development.	n.a.	1) Conceptualization of well-being-oriented lifestyle migration. 2) Classifies lifestyle migrants into hedonic or eudaimonic well-being or both. Proposes the role of proximity tourism in sustainable tourism development.

Local touring and recreation	Tourist landscape	Atağül İlhan, Özgül Balyalı, & Günay Aktaş (2022):5	Find out how Generation Z perceives the tourism landscape and to discuss how landscape dimensions can be used in strategic tourism planning studies.	48 students from Generation Z	Physical landscape; Human landscape; Perceptual landscape.	Contribution to the literature on the tourist experiences by examining the dimensions of landscape perception from the perspective of Generation Z.
Local touring and recreation	Tourist landscape	Meneghello (2023):1	Explore tourist landscapes by adopting the blended concept of dwelling-in-motion.	176 stakeholders	Enhance; Mobilize; Discover; Enjoy.	1) Introduces a tourism theory that includes the complex relational dimensions of the tourist landscape. 2) Describes the proximity tourism by adapting the dwelling-in-motion concept. 1) Confirms the trends of local tourism in urban tourism through a better distribution of tourism in time and space, through the development of alternative and local offers beyond the main tourist attractions, through the inclusion of tourism in everyday life, and through the inclusion of local residents in tourism and low-carbon local mobilities. 2) Challenges the traditional definitions of the tourist by involving local residents in proximity tourism. 3) Challenges the conventional definition of tourism by the United Nations World Tourism
Local touring and recreation	Urban tourism	Pappalepore & Chiavari-Barbas (2022):0	Analyze whether new forms of localized tourism have developed as a result of the pandemic, how these have been nurtured and encouraged by the tourism industry and the implications of these trends for the sustainable development of tourism.	20 experts	Local residents as potential customers; Metropolis as a tourism destination for local residents; The scope for a more sustainable urban tourism.	

Tourism development	2	Local touring and recreation	Proximity tourism	Jeuring & Haarlem (2017):50	Disentangle the ways that subjectivities of distance and proximity affect the image and attractiveness of destinations that are physically close to home.	Push; Pull; Keep; Repel.	Organization in the context of urban tourism. 1) Contribution to Jeuring (2016)'s perspectives by dividing respondents into four categories. 2) Supports Spierings & van der Velde (2013)'s concept of the keep and repel factors of travel motivations. 3) Supports Tibbert et al. (2013)'s study on the attitude-behavior gap.
	Urban planning	3	Local touring and recreation	Proximity tourism	Jeuring (2018):5	Explore small- and medium-sized enterprise (SME)-resident relationships.	Being a tourist; Discovery and innovation; Life course experiences and ambassadorship.
Urban planning	3	Regionalism: touring neighboring countries	Destination region	Park & Song (2021):6	Explore how the new path creation of a regional tourism destination reshapes people's cognitive and affective images of the destination on a metropolitan scale.	Cognitive image of destination region; Affective destination image; Cultural familiarity; Structure of the cognitive image of a destination region.	1) Extends the structure of the cognitive image in a broader destination region context. 2) Contribution to the literature on destination region image by developing a measurement scale.
		Diaspora travel, visiting friends & relatives (VFR) & rationalized international travels	Edu-tourism	Iranmanesh & Akshami Mousavi (2023):2	Explore the dynamism of the relationships between edu-tourists (students) of higher education institutes and their associated urban contexts.	Commercial activities; Hotels and related amenities; Residences/dormitories; Education;	1) Calculates the activities of edu-tourists in the host communities of higher education institutes. 2) Presents the value of edu-tourism in developing urban space and urban tourism.

Regionalism: touring neighboring countries	Urban tourism	Kramer (2023)	Study practices and places of Mule in urban tourism	84 regional tourists	Sports; Offices; Sites and street names; Health; Festivals, concerts and events. 3) Supports Ashworth (2009)'s perspectives. 4) Contribution to Eldridge (2019)'s study by identifying the impact of edu-tourists' nightlife.
			Field of tension; Quality of perception; Telling moment; Place appropriation; Recreation; Holiday satisfaction.		1) Contribution to the literature on urban tourism by identifying dimensions of Mule experiences. 2) Explain the phenomenon of Mule in urban tourism by strengthening the understanding of sitting practices and place production.

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF TOUR GUIDING TO SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: THE MYANMAR CONTEXT

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Abstract

This paper aims to examine tour guides' perceptions on their performance that helps drive economic growth and social sustainability in the Myanmar context. Specific attention is also given to the extent of the guides' contributions to community development in rural areas and promoting the conservation of cultural heritage. Based on the face-to-face interview with 15 professional tour guides in Pagan, Inlay, and Yangon, the research reveals that the respondents possibly increase local consumption and production of local products through optional tours. Because of their experiences working as a resource person with foreign visitors and other travel suppliers, the experienced guides assist local communities in providing trainings on language skills and visitor experiences as well as the product development for community-based tourism. At a Buddhist monastery, the guides explain cultural sensitivity to foreign visitors and monitor their responsible behaviour. Therefore, the contributions of tour guides to local communities and visited destinations should be addressed and incorporated in curriculum content for tour guiding and community-based tourism programs.

Keywords: Tour guide; sustainability; community development; social and economic development; Myanmar.

Introduction

Tour guides have played an important role in delivering positive travel experiences and promoting a destination image through interpretive guiding services (Hu, 2007). There has been a shift away from tour guides leading the group, organising safety and providing information to playing multiple roles related to mediation between host and community members, visitor management, and sustainability (Hu & Wall, 2012; Weiler & Kim, 2011).

Being a contributor to a visitor experience, intercultural exchange, and resource management at protected areas, tour guides can enhance visitors' understanding and valuing of local communities, cultures and environments (Gurung et al., 1996; Pu *et al.*, 2022). More recent studies indicate that the guides have contributed to resource management by enhancing visitors' understanding of natural, ecological and cultural values for protected areas which subsequently influence visitors' behaviour in the environment and heritage conservation (Jamaliah *et al.*, 2021; Mustafa, 2019).

It is argued that the contributions of tour guides to sustainability outcomes are problematic. Tour guides are viewed as being in high contact with visitors, protected

area managers, local businesses, and communities in destinations - their performance results are linked to various stakeholders in the tourism industry. However, research in tour guides' contributions to sustainable tourism has received little attention from the tourism academic community despite the widely acknowledged benefits and significant roles they have played in the tourism system (Rabotic, 2011). Tour guiding still represents an underrated, undervalued, and underutilised profession which is why Pond named its subjects as 'orphan of the industry' (1993, p.47). Many aspects of sustainability such as the improved economy, environment and social outcomes are viewed as being controlled by other stakeholders through licensing, regulations, and law enforcement which are largely beyond the influence of tour guides (Weiler & Black, 2015). Notably, visitor access and ecotourism activities in protected areas are mainly controlled by protected area managers, local and regional government authorities, indigenous people, and tour operators. Accordingly, the guiding profession may feel relatively powerless to make a difference in contributing to sustainability outcomes (Weiler & Black, 2015).

Research gap exists for theoretically-driven research on the relationship between tour guides and other stakeholders, especially destinations and host communities (Black, Weiler & Chen, 2019). Weiler and Black (2015) called for empirical studies for measuring both role importance and guide performance, particularly in developing countries, in order to better understand the changes of our society today. Given the research gap, the tour guides' contributions to sustainability in Myanmar, where a large proportion of international tourists use guided tours, become a subject of investigation.

This paper examines the unexplored, unexplained, and unaddressed contributions of tour guiding in a Myanmar context, one of the least-developed countries in Asia, where tour guides have been a key player in driving socio-economic development in visited areas, especially in peripheral destinations. It is noted that the Myanmar government has developed and adopted "Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (MSDP): 2018-2030" in September 2018. The MSDP is the statement of Myanmar's National Level Development Vision – a comprehensive and achievable strategic vision that searches resonance in the Sustainable Development Goals laid down by the UN. The MSDP provides a strategy, delivering an entire framework for coordination and collaboration among all ministries, all States and Regions to march through a similar way towards the capability of a peaceful, prosperous and democratic Myanmar (MOFP, 2018). Therefore, the MSDP is the integration and distillation of existing plans and priorities. Furthermore, the MSDP mediates between local developmental needs and global sustainable development agenda by aligning MSDP action plans with global SDG targets.

Today, digital technologies have been an important tool that helps potential tourists to learn about different destination, their attractions and activities, and amenities. However, the advanced technologies and coverage of the high-speed internet in Myanmar are not easily accessible and stable so far. This is due to their present weak infrastructure, superstructure, accessibility and availability of information and other

safety and security concerns (Li & Li, 2017; Zin New Myint, 2017). Furthermore, in response to the implementation of strict new laws after the military coup at the start of February 2021, foreign visitors on a tourist visa are prohibited to stay at unregistered guesthouses, hotels, or Airbnb in Myanmar (Borkar, 2023). In other words, they must stay in a hotel or registered guesthouses by laws. In this context, the foreign visitors mostly rely on the services provided by inbound tour operators. Thus, the role of tour guides is significantly important for the international tourists especially in Myanmar.

Among the important roles of tour guides, interpretation has acquired the greatest concentration of the scholars (Hu & Wall, 2012; Weiler & Black, 2015). A tour guide can respond to individual differences and adjust the presentation in accordance with tourist requirements such as using examples or make comparisons to things that tourists are intimate with or interested in. They can use techniques in verbal communication such as using non-technical languages, storytelling, personification and using non-verbal communication such as visual aids, facial expressions, and gestures (Cohen, 1985; Pond, 1993). For the time being, any digital technologies cannot substitute the functions of a human guide in acting sensitively to deal with visitors of different political, religious, geographical, and socio-cultural backgrounds (Nazli, 2020).

This paper explores the relationship between tour guiding and destination/host communities in developing countries. The paper aims to examine tour guides' perceptions on their performance that contributes to local economic development and social sustainability in the Myanmar context. Specific attention is also given to the extent of the guides' performance supporting the local economy and influencing heritage conservation in cultural destinations.

Literature Review

The contributions of tour guides to socio-economic sustainability to destinations and local communities are reviewed. Ormsby & Mannle (2006) stated that local guides in rural Madagascar who have strong local ties and social mediation skills were able to create a positive understanding and social interaction with host communities. The guides potentially build self-esteem among locals as a result of visitors' interest in their traditions and lifestyles as framed within a socially relaxed atmosphere. The residents perceive the park guides as having a positive influence in getting park officials to support community development projects.

Over the years, the park guides have provided training classes about guiding methods, meeting visitors at the airport, promoting an intercultural exchange with international tourists, map reading, first aids, and creating a positive understanding and knowledge of fauna and flora. Importantly, guides provide a valuable service by explaining the park's goals to visitors and community members and by relieving some of the workload that otherwise would fall on park staff (Ormsby & Mannle, 2006). The guides' association of Masoala, Madagascar, has the ability to bring development and conservation together. Visitor entrance fees are used for the developed projects including road improvement, constructions of table for a primary school, well and

public toilet construction and building rehabilitation (Ormsby & Mannle, 2006).

Through their strong relationships with the local communities, local guides can assist local residents in developing their products and help visitors to buy them or engage in their services (Epler Wood, 2007; Ormsby & Mannle, 2006). Pereira & Mykletun (2012) comment on the potential role of guides in 'engendering an appreciation for local products' and assisting local artisans to produce goods that meet visitors' expectations. Such small contributions can have long-term effects in an area's economy and culture preservation.

The value of interpretive guiding in stimulating conservation philanthropy is another tour guides' contribution to environmental protection. The well-designed and delivered interpretation by guides during the ecotourism experience at the Galapagos National Park significantly increased visitors' knowledge of host-protected areas, resulted in supportive attitudes towards resource management as well as their pro-environmental behaviour. Accordingly, 78 percent of visitors at the end of the trip did make a donation to the Galapagos Conservation Fund. Their willingness to support financial support conservation was correlated with visitors' positive attitudes towards the local authorities' management actions and strength of intention towards philanthropy (Powell & Ham, 2008).

Methodology

Qualitative research was used to examine the guiding performance in sustainability that contributes to the increase of economic prosperity and social development for destinations/local communities in Myanmar.

The face-to-face interview in Burmese language with 15 professional tour guides were conducted for three weeks in February 2020 at three leading cultural destinations including Pagan, Inlay, and Yangon. During the data collection process, the Union of Myanmar Travel Association (UMTA), namely the Myanmar Tour Guides Associations (MTGA) and two regional guide associations: The Bagan Tour Guides Associations (BTGA) and the Southern Shan State Tour Guides Association (SSTGA), actively provided support to the second researcher by nominating and communicating informants to be interviewed. Of five experienced tour guides in each city were recommended for the interviews in person. Table 1. Shows summary demographic characteristics (namely gender, age, work experience, workplace location and specialized tours) of respondents.

Table 1. Demographic profiles of respondents

Code	Interviews	Gender	Age	Work experience	Workplace location	Remarks: Specialised tours or association position
Il-1	01	Male	30	10 years	Inlay	Trekking & Eco-tourism Guide
Il-2	02	Male	30	10 years	Inlay	Secretary, SSTGA
Il-3	03	Male	28	5 years	Inlay	Community-based tourism (CBT) & Eco-tourism Guide
Il-4	04	Male	35	15 years	Inlay	Free Independent Traveler (FIT) Guide
Il-5	05	Female	45	20 years	Inlay	River Cruise Guide
Bg-1	06	Male	55	27years	Bagan	Chairman, BTGA
Bg-2	07	Male	65	35 years	Bagan	Ex-Chairman, MTGA & BTGA
Bg-3	08	Male	40	18 years	Bagan	Executive Committee, BTGA
Bg-4	09	Male	32	5 years	Bagan	Bike Guide
Bg-5	10	Female	30	5 years	Bagan	Community-based tourism & Photo Guide
Yg-1	11	Male	50	25 years	Yangon	Chairman, MTGA
Yg-2	12	Male	52	24 years	Yangon	Tour Guide Trainer
Yg-3	13	Female	62	25 years	Yangon	Tour Guide Trainer
Yg-4	14	Female	45	20 years	Yangon	Tour Guide Trainer
Yg-5	15	Male	30	10 years	Yangon	Bird Watching Guide

The Southern Shan State Tour Guides Association (SSTGA)

The Bagan Tour Guides Associations (BTGA)

The Myanmar Tour Guides Associations (MTGA)

Among the 15 experienced informants, three got master's degree representing 20%, two completed a graduate diploma with the percentage of 13.3% and the rest have obtained their bachelor's degree representing 66.7% accordingly. In terms of guiding language, the majority (66.7%) were English language speaking guides and one each guide for Spanish, Japanese, Italian, German, and French and English with the percentage of 6.6%, totally 33.3% accordingly. In terms of the specialized tours, the experienced tour guides worked for responsible tour companies offering luxury and cultural tours; ecotourism and community-based tourism; cultural tours; creative tourism; and cultural tours and outbound accordingly.

Based on such snowball method, the selected experts were asked to voice their performance in promoting socio-economic sustainability for destinations/local communities. Each of the interview took about 15 to 20 minutes on average. Based on UNWTO's sustainable tourism development as a frame, the pre-structured interview questions address tour guiding's contributions to economic benefits for local businesses and communities, social services provided to the community, intercultural exchange, and conservation for cultural heritage and traditional values. Also, some additional

questions were raised to gain insights into the value of cultural context.

Following are main interview questions adopted from Hu's research thesis (2007) on tour guides and sustainable development in Hainan, China. Such questions are used for the tour guide interview.

- 1) As a tour guide, what do you think of your roles and responsibilities to promote tourism development?
- 2) What have you done to contribute to the growth of tourism businesses in visited areas?
- 3) In what way have you promoted social and cultural conservation of the host communities?
- 4) How do you help promote a positive understanding and knowledge of cultures between the host and your clients?
- 5) How do you involve in the development of community-based tourism?

The researcher took notes for the key points of the interviewee. On the other hand, the whole conversation was also recorded by an audio recorder as a major source for detailed and intensive listening to be able to conduct the content analysis. The thematic analysis is used to decrypt the collected data to identify patterns, related themes, relations, and patterned meanings along with the entire dataset. After conducting all interviews, the audio recording files were carefully and intensively listened, transcribed in to interviews scripts files, and extracted and highlighted on the common phrases for same issues, patterns as well as themes. The operation of analysis commenced with the familiarization of the data and examined to highlight the key salient points (words), themes, and actual words used to see the patterns and interesting data which are mainly pertaining to the research questions. All of them were marked, noted, and coded and eventually translated into English language and interpreted in accordance with a deductive approach.

Results and Discussions

After outlining the deductive thematic analysis, five relevant themes of tour guides' contributions to host communities and visited destinations have emerged from the interview, as shown in Figure 1.

Promotion of local consumption and production

1. Promoting tourist destinations through optional tours
2. Driving economic growth by supporting small local businesses

Resource Person

1. Delivering tour guiding lectures and seminars on heritage values
2. Developing products and services for community-based tourism
3. Advisor for souvenir producers and small tourism enterprises
4. Active team member for acquiring Bagan World Heritage List
5. Reviving traditional Myanmar lacquerware

Destination exploration

1. Engaging in exploring new destinations for trekking routes, biking tours for photo tours
2. Establishing a destination for community-based tourism

Enhancing visitors' understanding of social and cultural values

1. Interpret the idiosyncratic nature and traditions of local communities
2. Influencing and monitoring visitors' responsible behavior at destinations

Prosocial behavior and Buddhism

1. Participating in organizing local pagoda festivals
2. Teaching English to disadvantaged children and local employees
3. Philanthropy in health care program and infrastructure development for local communities

Figure 1. Summary of tour guides' contributions to host communities and visited destinations

Promotion of local consumption and production

The research findings reveal that tour guides do not only deliver visitor experiences, but they are also responsible for making sure the trip could fulfil a travel itinerary. Tour guides can contribute to the local economy and promote social development at destinations.

With regards to the support for the local economic development, tour guiding plays a significant role in promoting destinations to visitors and increasing consumption and production of local products and services through optional tours, contributing to local businesses and communities. The guides potentially foster local economy of the visited destinations during the guided tours such as bringing tourists to floating farms, encouraging and insisting tourists to buy local products, foods, transportation and other services.

Resource person for Tour guiding, community-based tourism, and heritage conservation

Due to their experiences working as a resource person with foreign visitors and other travel suppliers in tourism, the senior guides potentially assist local communities in providing in-depth knowledge, invaluable insights, and perspective on tour guide trainings, seminars, and consulting services for the establishment of community-based

tourism destinations.

The Interviewee No. 6 and 7 actively participated in the long process of achieving the UNESCO World Heritage. They are always keenly taking part in the leading role for the new generation tour guides by lecturing and writing their knowledge and experience.

“I always educate young tour guides and tourism related persons to understand the real value of tangible and intangible cultural heritages in Bagan. If they know the authentic value, they are eager to conserve those heritages as much as they can.” ... “Moreover, as a very senior tour guide who was born and grown up in Bagan and also as a Chairman of Bagan Tour Guides Association, I actively participated in the long process of acquiring Bagan World Heritage (Bagan was listed in the UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 2019)”.

“Through my articles and essays, I always try to convince and educate local people, new generation tour guides and those who are working at the tourism related businesses to understand and value the authentic value of our cultural heritages, traditions, customs and socio-cultural norms. After understanding the authentic values, all stakeholders will be convinced to participate in the process of conservation the tangible and intangible cultural essences and heritages” “Besides, as a milestone, I had a chance to participate in the long journey acquiring the UNESCO World Heritage for Bagan”. (Interviewee-7) (Interviewee-6)

Interestingly, the respondent No.10 stresses her actions pertaining to the cultural performances at the CBT accommodations to be more unique and attractive based on the cultural essence of the Bagan era. The villages which are interested in establishing CBT destinations,

“I have been participating actively in providing trainings and consulting to conserve their cultural heritages and essences to show up visitors as major attractions and how to create an amazing and unforgettable entertainment mingling with the unique culture of those particular areas instead of imitating others’ cultural performances at the villages which are interested in establishing CBT destinations”. (Interviewee-10)

The Interviewee No. 7, an Ex-Chairman of (MTGA) and (BTGA) and also a famous author in Myanmar who has been sharing his knowledge and experience especially for the youth tour guides and other ordinary readers.

“I prefer writing to teaching. I usually share my knowledge, opinion, experience and insights through articles and essays for the new generation tour guides and those who are working in the tourism industry”. (Interviewee 7)

Through their connections made with local residents in the villages, the guides assist local artisans with concepts of quality and authenticity in souvenirs and provide a valuable social service by assisting locals in their challenges. The Interviewee No. (8) initiated a kind of hand painting based on the basic sketches of painting on the Lacquerware products.

“After the Saffron Revolution in 2007, the foreign visitor arrivals to Bagan declined dramatically. The workers from the lacquerware workshop were facing difficulties to survive because of reducing production. I suggested one of the sketch painters from the lacquerware workshop to draw some beautiful patterns of paintings on the outer side of hands of the domestic visitors”
“That business became more and more successful gradually. Nowadays, it became a symbol of visiting Bagan for the domestic travellers and for some youth foreign tourists. Nowadays, you can see over twenty hand painting shops in front of every famous temples and pagodas”. (Interviewee-8)

Moreover, the Interviewee No. (12) has introduced to local bamboo product makers with advanced technologies to be able to innovate more value-added outputs.

“I always encourage bamboo farmers to innovate their products such as making bamboo umbrellas, making Shan Traditional papers and other attractive products by providing ideas and technological know-hows”.

For many low-income developing countries, only education and law enforcement may not be the best solution to convince locals to take part actively in the conservation of cultural and environmental resources, as one respondent remarked:

“Education and law enforcement are not the best solutions. We need to think about what sort of income and benefits they [community members] will get by following regulations. We also need to create other opportunities for their survival”. (Interviewee -15).

It is important to create an extra source of income along with reducing social and economic inequality, as the best model across the world even at the Amazon rain forests in South America (Pereira & Mykletun, 2012). In this regard, it is needed to speed up harmonious cooperation and collaboration among governmental departments, civil society organisations and related stakeholders.

Destination exploration

Because of their first-hand experiences associated with visitors and local suppliers in visited destinations, tour guides have been involved in creating an attraction by exploring new tourism products and activities, especially for a new bike route in Inlay and Bagan. By doing so the guides can provide some economic development for local residents, as one of the tour guides explained:

“I always actively participate in exploring new tourism products, new destinations, new trekking paths and new bike routes as a regional one who is widely known about regional geography cooperating travel and tour agencies. I actively participated in finding the bike route from Aung Pan to Inn Dein together with other regional tour guides by the sponsorship of Khiri Travel”. (Interviewee-2)

Enhancing visitors' understanding of social and cultural values

Competent tour guides who lead the group into rural and peripheral areas potentially instruct and make their group adhere to positive behaviour while visiting the site. Given a role model for visitors, tour guides motivate the visitors' responsible behaviour on-site and during their trip. The guides provide a valuable service by explaining appropriate dress and conducts to non-Buddhist visitors when visiting temples in Myanmar. They also help to monitor visitors' responsible behaviour at destinations and report to the concerned authorities for disrespectful actions.

The engaging technique of the Interviewee No. (4) is distinguish with other tour guides. Being a FIT guide, he can arrange the trip plan negotiating with his clients. He always introduces and engages with the local culture and people through wedding, ordination and funeral ceremonies to be able to interpret the essence of the tradition, custom and culture.

“To explore the different ways of life of local people of other regions is one of the major objectives of traveling especially for youths globally. During the tours and trekking, whenever they see a rural wedding or ordination or funeral, they are very inquisitive to know the tradition and culture of local ethnic groups. I always try my best to explain them the idiosyncratic nature and traditions of local people”. (Interviewee-4)

Prosocial behaviour and Buddhism

Prosocial behaviour is mostly referred to a kind of behaviour that benefits others or the society as a whole (Lay & Hoppmann, 2015). The prosocial value is connected with major religions in the world, meaning that the religions foster prosocial behaviour at individual level (Einolf, 2011; Guo, Liu, & Tian, 2018). The result of Yeung's study (2017) on religious prosociality showed that religious people are more charitable motivations, and more volunteering than non-religious people. Moreover, the religious individuals are more likely to dedicate their time to help other in real context without the concerned authority (Blogowska, Lambert, & Saroglou, 2013).

Tour guides adopt sustainable tourism practices based on their local religious wisdom and experiences shaping their prosocial behaviors (Hu et al., 2022). The Buddhists in Myanmar have a required action called Dana which includes giving back to the community, sharing with those in need, and selfless giving without anticipation

of return or benefits to the giver. Additionally, the givers can volunteer their time and efforts for philanthropy based on Buddhist practices of Theravada Buddhism and merit-making (Dove, 2017).

The experienced tour guides actively share their in-depth knowledge, foreign language skills and experiences to novice guides and local staff for tourism related companies in remoted areas which are not accessible and affordable to go big cities to study a foreign language. Being the present Chairman of the (MTGA), the Interviewee No. (11) initiates in organising educational talks, seminars, panel discussions, conferences, and special language trainings to upgrade and update the knowledge and skills of tour guides across the Nation.

The value of interpretive guiding in philanthropic support of pagoda festivals (to lure international and domestic tourists) and reviving hand painting on the lacquerware products are another tour guides' contribution to cultural conservation.

Both the Interviewees, No. 6, the Chairman of BTGA and No.7 actively initiated and took part in the long process of attempts to hold pagoda festivals and sport events cooperating with other stakeholders including local authorities.

“I participated in the long process of attempts to be able to hold local pagoda festivals and sport events mingling with traditional and cultural atmosphere as one of the pioneer initiators”. (Interviewee-6)

“.....by collaboration and cooperation with local authorities, town elders, hoteliers, travel agencies, transport association and tour guides, I initiated to be able to hold some popular pagoda festivals such as Manuha Pagoda Festival, Ananda Pagoda Festival, and Lawkananda Boat Racing to create income generations by attracting both international and national tourists”. (Interviewee-7)

Another interesting action of an Interviewee is focusing on the philanthropic activities cooperating with the Travel Agencies and tour guide colleagues.

“I always actively participate in some special activities of the travel agencies which are working with me; such as health care programs for the local communities for optical and skin diseases, and building bridges, water tanks for clean drinking water, library, clinics and primary schools”. (Interviewee-14)

Conclusion

While research in tour guides' contributions to sustainable tourism has received little attention from policy makers and other stakeholders in the tourism industry, it is argued that the importance of tour guides as a contributor to sustainable tourism in developing countries, especially in Myanmar is undeniable. As one of the key players in the tourism systems, Myanmar tour guides potentially help drive economic growth in rural areas

while promoting intercultural exchange between hosts and guests and monitoring the visitors' responsible behaviour at destinations.

The contributions of tour guides in promoting a more responsible tourism practice should be highlighted and incorporated into tour guiding training, seminars, recruitment practices, quality assurance system, and other reward schemes for sustainable tourism practices in Myanmar and also other developing countries, especially in Southeast Asia, where tour guides can help tourism move towards sustainability.

As tour guides are at the front of the operations and responsible for what actually happens during the travel experience. It is thus important to raise public awareness of their roles and contributions to sustainable development for community-based tourism and ecotourism in rural and peripheral areas. Curriculum content for tour guiding should incorporate the concept of sustainability that tour guides potentially contribute to visited destinations and local communities. Because of their experiences working as a resource person with foreign visitors, local communities, and local suppliers at the destinations, tour guides can provide in-depth knowledge, useful insights and perspectives, especially on interpretation in tour guiding, consumer behaviour, visitor experiences, and product development for community-based tourism.

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STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE INVENTORY MANAGEMENT IN SMES OF THE FASHION RETAIL INDUSTRY

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1. Introduction

Inventory management is critical to any successful business organization, particularly in the fashion industry (Lee & Kleiner, 2001). It involves overseeing the flow of goods from manufacturers to customers, ensuring that the right product is available at the right time in quantity. Effective inventory management helps businesses reduce costs, maximize profitability, and improve customer satisfaction. In the fashion industry, inventory management is especially crucial due to the rapid changing trends and styles that consumers demand. Significantly, the development of technology goes swiftly. A system to handle inventory management facilitates a business's supply chain and operation notably (Plinere, D. & Borisov, A., 2015). As the results from Koh et al. (2006) proved, the technology applied to inventory management could provide valuable data, and it helped in better control of storing and delivering inventories. It caused a decrease in inventory costs and improved the profit margin as well.

On the other hand, while many existing studies have explored inventory management practices in larger fashion companies (Caro & Gallien, 2010; Chan et al., 2016), there is a significant gap in knowledge regarding Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the fashion industry. Further, this paper will examine the inventory management of the fashion retail SMEs in Macao. According to the impressions from the majority, the gaming industry is the most important and the largest in Macao, regardless of the aspects of tax revenue to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which exceeds 60% of the total GDP or employed population, which is 18.5% of the total labor force (DSEC, 2023; DSEC, 2019). Needless to say, it is a fact. However, many years of the Policy Address from the Macao chief executive emphasized the importance of the diversification of the economy. The government expects to utilize the benefits from the gaming industry to stimulate other industries to boost the whole economy and get it balanced. Retail is always one of the focus industries to be developed and subsidized (Macao Government, 2023; Jornal San Wa Ou, 2011).

In addition, based on the encouragement of the government and the policies, there were 1,636 establishments/entities under the retail industry in the market, and out of the total, there were 909 establishments/entities belonging to fashion retail in 2021. Most were running under the type of SMEs (DSEC, 2021). Nevertheless, similar to other SMEs, the fashion retail SMEs in Macao have a challenging operating environment compared to other sizable companies, such as lack of capital, lack of technology in operation, absence of training and good career prospect provided to employees leads to difficulty in hiring labor, suffering expensive rent (Abdulsaleh &

Worthington, 2013; Yoshino, & Taghizadeh-Hesary, 2016; Macao Daily, 2022; Jornal San Wa Ou, 2022).

Throughout the interviews, we found that most interviewees still manage their inventory manually by using Excel spreadsheets or applying the simple and rough inventory system. Therefore, this study aims to investigate fashion retail SMEs' inventory management practices and identify improvement areas.

The research objectives of this study are as follows:

- I. To understand the key challenges faced by fashion SMEs regarding inventory management.
- II. To analyze the strategies employed by fashion SMEs to manage their inventory efficiently.
- III. To explore the factors influencing fashion SMEs' decision-making processes related to inventory management.
- IV. To examine the role of technology and information systems in fashion inventory management for SMEs.
- V. To understand how fashion SMEs handle returns, defects, and product lifecycle management within their inventory operations.
- VI. To identify best practices and recommendations for improving fashion inventory management among SMEs.

2. Literature review

2.1 Inventory management

Inventory management is essential in operating a business, especially a retail business. The management has to determine the patterns of inventories, the quantities of inventories, and the time for replenishment (Silver, 1981), as the surfeit or shortage will also put the business in trouble, whether it will harm the company's reputation or disappoint the customers (Bonney, 1994). Hence, effective inventory management is crucial in minimizing inventory costs, increasing efficiency, and improving customer service (Abu Zwaïda et al., 2021). If there is systemic inventory management in place, it can make the whole supply chain more pellucid and efficient, and it would even ease figuring out the reasons for the inventory shortage and avoid it (Holm et al., 2015).

In previous decades, inventory management was managed through manual processes or simple spreadsheets (Ballard, 1996). However, with the advancement of technology, inventory management has evolved into more sophisticated systems (Giannoccaro & Pontrandolfo, 2002). Using the technology makes the entire inventory management process more structured and reliable (Atieh et al., 2016). Many inventory management systems are used, such as bar codes, Quick Response (QR), and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID). Bar codes and QR have been used for a while already. Furthermore, RFID has also been widely used in operation recently, especially applying to inventory management in the retail industry. RFID is a tag with data and can facilitate the reduction of inventory costs, provides accurate information, and abridge the lead time of inventories (Shim, 2003; Bagchi et al., 2007).

2.2 The characteristics of fashion retail industry and inventory management

Appropriate strategic goals of fashion retailers can determine the success or failure of the business. Retailers must be concerned about suppliers, market channel selections, inventory management, store operations, pricing strategies, selling strategies, and product operations (Wen et al., 2019). Furthermore, short lead times, high volatility, and low predictability are the main characteristics of the fashion retail industry that make inventory management even more challenging (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006; Hines, 2001; Hoffman, 2007).

Bin et al. (2017) found the importance of inventory management in the fashion retail industry and the need to align inventory levels with customer demand. The studies of Ismail et al. (2015) and Andersen et al. (2020) also stated that in order to maintain the competitiveness of a fashion retail shop, a stable supply of products is essential; if there are available items and products provided to customers whenever they come to the shop, indeed, it is advantageous to gain more customers and enhance the level of customers satisfaction and the customers' loyalty (Ismail et al., 2015; Andersen et al., 2020).

When the retail industry was growing speedily, one of the critical factors in winning the market was technological innovation (Koh et al., 2006). Koh et al. (2006) highlighted that a helpful technology system could assist the retail business to exact inventory management; for instance, with valuable data and information, it can reduce inventory costs by having better control over storing and delivering inventories, enhance the internal security, and even use the data to refine the sales floor design with the suitable size and patterns of the products to affect the consumer behavior.

2.3 SME features and challenges

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can be determined by the number of employers or the annual turnover (Audretsch, 1999; Berisha & Pula, 2015). Regardless of the company's size or the diversification of the types of business, SMEs are getting many constraints and need help to compete with scalable companies. SMEs obtain limitations on the resources, no matter on financial or non-financial ones. It leads to the difficulty of paying high rent for a better location and expansion, providing good prospects and offering to employ good personnel in the labor market, and creating a clear organizational chart for delegating the jobs and responsibilities (Geschka, 1997; Abdulsaleh & Worthington, 2013).

Even Zeithaml et al. (2008) mentioned that suitable items and the correct quantity of products are the main factors for a business to be successful. When a company can maintain a reasonable level of inventory and can provide customers once they want, it will give a positive image to customers and enhance customer satisfaction. This idea is hard to apply to SMEs. As discussed, they obtain limited resources, whether financial or human capital. In addition, the absence of financial resources usually causes the lack of information technology used in SMEs; since information technology is costly and the workforce's limitations, it is challenging for SMEs to hire a related expert to handle

the system or provide the relevant training to employees. Those are the reasons to explain why information technology is not commonly used in SMEs (Welsh & White, 1981; Bili & Raymone, 1993; Shah et al., 2020).

2.4 Retail fashion industry in Macao

Gaming is the most critical industry in Macao unquestionably. Nevertheless, in recent years, the chief executive's policy address highlighted (Macao Government, 2023) that the economy should prevent over-concentrating and relying solely on the gaming industry. The Macao government also wants to diversify the economy, using the existing advantages of the gaming industry to stimulate other businesses in Macao. Thus, some policies have been set to create more opportunities and assist other industries in the market to balance the whole business environment. The Retail industry is one of the crucial areas that the Macao government wants to develop and enlarge (Jornal San Wa Ou, 2011; DSEC, 2021).

Yet, according to the statistics data of the Macao Statistical Department, 909 establishments/entities were under the fashion retail industry in 2021 (DSEC, 2021), compared with the total number of overall establishments/entities in the entire retail industry was 1,636. The fashion retail industry is relatively competitive. Furthermore, the data also indicated an increment of 25.9% of increase year-on-year in adult clothing retail sales, and most of Macao's fashion retail stores operate as SMEs (DSEC, 2023). Further to the features and constraints illustrated in 2.3 above, SMEs in Macao also encounter similar challenges, such as a lack of capital, payment of expensive rent, difficulty in hiring staff, and a need of information technology in operation or inventory management (Macao Daily, 2022; Jornal San Wa Ou, 2022).

3. Methodology

This research paper aims to investigate inventory management practices in small and medium-sized fashion enterprises (SMEs). The methodology utilized for this study involves conducting in-depth interviews with shop owners from different fashion SMEs. A purposive sampling approach was employed to carefully select a diverse group of participants, resulting in a total of six shop owners being interviewed.

The semi-structured interviews were designed based on a comprehensive questionnaire, which focused on six main objectives:

- I. Understanding Key Challenges: The first objective aimed to explore the primary challenges faced by fashion SMEs concerning inventory management. Participants were encouraged to share their experiences and provide insights into the difficulties they encounter in maintaining efficient inventory systems.
- II. Analyzing Strategies Employed: The second objective delved into the strategies fashion SMEs employ to manage their inventory efficiently. Participants were asked to describe their inventory control methods, demand forecasting techniques, and approaches to optimizing stock levels.

- III. Exploring Decision-Making Factors: The third objective sought to investigate the factors influencing fashion SMEs' decision-making processes related to inventory management. This included factors such as market trends, supplier relationships, and customer demands.
- IV. Role of Technology and Information Systems: The fourth objective focused on understanding the role of technology and information systems in fashion inventory management for SMEs. Participants were asked about the software, tools, and technology they use to streamline their inventory operations.
- V. Handling Returns, Defects, and Product Lifecycle Management: The fifth objective aimed to uncover how fashion SMEs handle returns, defects, and product lifecycle management within their inventory operations. Participants were encouraged to share their procedures for dealing with faulty items and managing end-of-life products.
- VI. Identifying Best Practices and Recommendations: The final objective was to identify best practices and recommendations for improving fashion inventory management among SMEs. Participants were asked to provide suggestions and insights into how inventory management processes could be enhanced for greater efficiency and profitability.

Thematic analysis will be used to analyze the interview data, enabling the researchers to identify common themes and patterns across the responses. The findings from this study will contribute to the existing knowledge on fashion inventory management in SMEs, providing valuable insights to both practitioners and researchers, and offering practical recommendations to enhance inventory management practices within the fashion industry.

4. Results and findings

Factors affecting the decision-making processes related to inventory management manual, periodic, and perpetual inventory are the most popular inventory system in the retail industry. Some SMEs (Small and medium-sized enterprises) retail shops in Macao with limited inventory may apply the manual method to keeping track of their inventory, while others may use a Point of Sale (POS) system.

4.1 Suppliers and Minimum order quantity

Fashion retailers in Macao usually purchase and sell clothes from Korea and/or Japan. They order directly from the suppliers in Korea, Japan or Hong Kong at the beginning of the season. Inventory control which includes forecasting and ordering stocks under the inventory system is crucial to the success of the retail business. Different suppliers have different policies on the ordering system. Some retailers purchase the products from one single supplier with different brands and manufacturers while others may search for different retailers for different brands. In the past, minimum order quantity (MOQ) was usually in practice. However, the requirement of the MOQ has been altered in recent decade which help the small retail shops easier in managing their inventory.

4.2 Forecasting and decision making on orders

The decision making for the inventory management fundamentally is based on the retailers' past experience, customers' needs, price and market trend. In this way, retailers are more proficient and keener on the decision of ordering the type of products they are going to sell in the coming season. More types of products can be supplied by different suppliers nowadays and more information will be provided to the retailers before ordering. With the advancement of the ordering system, retailers can forecast the stock more accurately in lowering down the risk of business as a whole.

4.3 Lead time and replenishment

Unlike some other products, the lead time in fashion retail shops is very influential in which it may affect the effectiveness of predicting sales and the operation efficiency. For the initial ordering, it is easier for the retailers to have a better control on the lead time. When it comes to replenishment, the lead time may take two to three weeks more in the middle of the season which may reduce the customers' desire for the purchase. Therefore, some retail shops may give up the replenishment especially when the delivery charge is high.

4.4 Hoard of inventories

The space used for storing inventory in small retail shops is very limited so it is prominent to have an inventory management on the hoard of inventories at the end of the season. Since suppliers are not responsible for the unsold goods of the retailers or sales return is usually not allowed under this situation, retailers have to make a more accurate forecast on the style and quantity they order at the beginning of the season.

4.5 Strategies employed in managing inventory

4.5.1 Ordering Stock

In order to drive the efficiency of the inventory system, retail shops may not only use the traditional way to handle with their inventory, but also applying inventory system with the help of other sources:

a. Traditional

Clothes are ordered and purchased directly from the suppliers in Korea, Japan and Hong Kong before the next season. The new arrivals will be displayed in the shops and consumers can buy the clothes directly in the shops. The lead time under this way is usually longer when the retail shops have to wait for the customers to come to the shops physically and buy the clothes.

b. Online

The clothes are shown online through different social media such as Facebook, Instagram and WeChat. The shops will collect the customers' order and purchase the clothes from the suppliers. Some shops will only confirm the order upon the full payment while some may have a request on a deposit. With this practice, the retail shops can guarantee the sales and the lead time is shorter so that the inventory system is more

efficient.

c. Try and order

Some customers may not feel comfortable in ordering the clothes when they can only see the clothes in the social media. Therefore, except showing the clothes online, some retail shops also provide samples for the consumers to fit before placing an order. The shops found that using this way can increase the sales more. The consumers would deposit a certain percentage of the full price when they made the order and pay the rest at the time they get the clothes. A lot more fashion retail shops tend to implement this way so as to have a better inventory management. As a result, the lead time is longer than just selling the clothes online but the sales can be increased.

When retail stores are not using the traditional way in ordering goods, the hoard of inventories can be reduced accordingly. This can further reduce the riskiness that the retail stores have to face among the competitors.

4.5.2 Hoard of inventories

Even though more and more retail shops use some non-traditional ways to handle their inventory system, there are still some shops applying the conventional way or it is not possible for the shops to apply the new ways in full. As a result, they have to experience a hoard of inventories at the end of the season. When the clothes cannot be sold after three months, they would usually be regarded as the hoard of inventories. Most of the retail shops are not willing to make a lost on those unsold clothes. Therefore, they would give a discount such as 30% off to the customers and price reduction is usually the most effective way in clearing the unpopular clothes. Some shops give more discount to the customers who buy more. The retail shops also try to promote more through online platforms to attract the customers with a good discount. Furthermore, some retail shops would offer small gifts to the customers. With a vast of strategies in clearing the hoard of inventories, it can help the retail shops reduce the lost at the end of the season.

Since there is not much space for the hoard of inventories and customers will not like outdated fashion, most of the shops will not put them in the store in the next season and they will not keep the stock.

4.6 Challenges in inventory management

4.6.1 Cost of inventory and space

The Fashion retail industry in Macao is very competitive. In order to be prominent, retail shops have to sell clothes with unique styles and a variety of choices have to be provided to different customers. However, most of the retail shops are small in size and the turnover of the stock has to be fast so as to keep the products updated. The merchandiser or owner of the shops have to be very sensitive to the market trend and the customers' preferences so that the sales can be assured. If there is any wrong decision or forecasting made on the purchase and the inventory cannot be sold, more outdated clothes will be accumulated and a hoard of inventories will be resulted. The hoard of inventories not only tightens up cash within the business, it will also occupy a

lot of space in which the shop cannot afford. Under this situation, they have to bear the cost of goods and rent in which it can be a double lost for the retail shops.

4.6.2 Suppliers

In spite of a higher flexibility of the MOQ, retail shops still have to order a fixed amount of inventory for the purchases. At the end of the season, there will still some clothes left unsold which will put pressure on the inventory management.

When the suppliers are in Hong Kong, the lead time for the replenishment is very short and it can help the retail shops control the inventory easily. However, if the stocks have to be ordered from Korea or Japan, the lead time will be much longer and the suppliers sometimes may not be able to satisfy the order when the quantity required is small. This can be a challenge to the shops when they have to make decision on reordering.

As more and more retail shops incline on the use of social media, it will be at the disadvantage to those who do not use them. Some shops who are operated by young people can make use of the information system for the ordering and understand more about the preferences of the customers. In this way, they can have a better inventory management system which can definitely reduce the business risk. However, even though some retail shops use social media for promotion, they may not be willing to pay and less services and functions can be used. As a result, the inventory system will be weakened.

Some small and traditional retail shops use manual inventory system which may take a lot more time in handling the inventory and payment settlement when compared with those retail shops using POS system. Some shops may not afford to pay for the POS system and some may think that it is sufficient to use the manual inventory system to handle the business. With insufficient capital and use of updated inventory system, the development of the industry will be hindered.

5. Conclusion and future research

More than 50 percent of retail stores in Macao belong to fashion retail and it is important to understand more about their whole operation for their development and sustainability. There are several key factors such as lack of capital, lack of technology in operation, absence of training, expensive rent, that can affect the decision making of the business. It is also due to different operating challenges that may lead to the discontinuation of the fashion retail stores. One of the challenges must be the inventory management system. In the management of inventory, it can include the cost and space control of the inventory, the availability of the suppliers, the strategies employed in handling the inventory from purchase to sale of the products.

Since the local fashion retail stores are usually operated under SMEs, resources are very limited. Besides, the industry is very competitive. Unlike those international famous brands, small shops do not have sufficient capital to support a very powerful inventory management system. As a result, small retail shops usually apply the manual

inventory management system or simple POS which is not effective and efficient enough to handle with larger amount of inventory. A number of uncertainties or risks are confronted in the business transactions of the retail stores. Firstly, retail shops have to deal with different ordering system of different suppliers which may increase the risk that they have to order more than they need. Besides, the experience in managing the lead time and replenishment can also greatly affect the amount of their business. Secondly, when part of the inventory cannot be sold, the hoard of inventories would definitely affect the profit margin of the business and capital can be tight up. The extra space needed to store unsold or off season products in the shop can be a big burden to the retail shops and different ways are applied in getting rid of them. Thirdly, with the rapid development of technology and the change of the customers' consumption pattern, different types of social media have been used to promote the products. Not only marketing and promotion can be deployed through social media, it can help in taking order from customers which is a definite advantage for the retail shops. However, there is no free lunch in the business world. The retail shops have to pay for the social media and more sophisticated functions they use, more amount it involves.

With consumers' increase usage of worldwide online purchase, retail shops in Macao have to face more and more challenges in their business. In this research, it is found that the inventory management system applied in the retail shops in Macao is not consistent. Some may still insist on using manual inventory management system while some shops use POS system. In addition, there is a continuous increase in the use of technology in the industry which can enhance their operation and the image. Though there is improvement in the operation of the small business, some of the problems mentioned in this research still have to be solved through the change of the strategies of the retail shops in the future.

An exploratory research about the inventory management system applied by the small fashion retail shops in Macao was conducted in this paper. Further research in finding out possible solutions can be done in the future so that it can help the retail shops improve the inventory management system to be more effective and efficient. Except exploring the recent situation of clothes retail shops, it is also valuable to explore the inventory management system in other merchandizing industries.

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RESTAURANT MENUS AS A MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING TOOL: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW (2004-2023)

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Abstract

This study conducted a comprehensive and systematic review of 120 peer-reviewed articles that examined various aspects of menus. The articles were carefully selected from reputable journals that were rated A or above by the Australian Business School Deans Council (ABDC) for the period from 2004 to April 2023. The review was conducted to assess the current state of research in the field. Publication details, such as the source, year of publication, author, and country of the selected journals, were carefully analyzed. This review provides a comprehensive overview of the development of menu-related research during the specified time period. It also introduces signaling theory as a research framework for menu research, focusing on specific scenarios. This approach helps to identify dominant themes, shifts in research focus, and contributions from different regions, thereby enhancing our nuanced understanding of the dynamics of the field. This systematic review not only analyzes current research trends in menus but also aims to identify gaps in the literature and suggest potential areas for future research.

Keywords: restaurant; menu; management; systematic review; signaling theory

1. Introduction

In the realm of the foodservice industry, menus function as potent marketing tools, playing a pivotal role in shaping the dining experience and facilitating effective communication between restaurants and consumers. The essence of a restaurant's concept, philosophy, and culinary expertise are encapsulated within its menus (Malik, 2023). The menus effectively convey the restaurant's commitment to delivering an exceptional dining experience, artfully showcasing the chef's creative prowess through their thoughtful design and content presentation.

With their visually appealing aesthetics, meticulous organization, and alluring descriptions, menus seamlessly weave together a narrative that immerses consumers into the restaurant's culinary offerings (Palasca, 2023). Acting as navigational guides, menus steer customers through a diverse array of choices, adroitly taking into consideration dietary preferences and budgetary constraints. This facilitates a distinctive and memorable journey, empowering customers to express their gastronomic inclinations, explore novel cuisines, and tailor their dining experiences to their individual tastes (Bonfanti et al., 2023).

Moreover, menus assume a role as marketing tools, affording restaurants the opportunity to communicate their distinctive selling points and stand out in a

competitive dining landscape (Poulston & Yiu, 2011). By strategically highlighting signature dishes, seasonal delicacies, and innovative culinary concepts, menus entice customers to explore and partake in the restaurant's offerings, enticing them with a rich and diverse gastronomic journey (Ozdemir & Caliskan, 2014). This interplay not only reflects customer preferences but also underscores their cultural affiliations, culminating in a vibrant and interactive exchange between customers and the dining establishment.

Beyond their role as guides and immersive elements, menus serve as informative instruments, enabling consumers to make well-informed decisions. They offer crucial insights into ingredients, preparation methods, and flavor profiles, empowering patrons to navigate their options and select dishes that align with their preferences (Fakih et al., 2016). In this way, menus bridge the gap between the culinary innovativeness of chefs and the expectations and preferences of consumers, facilitating a dynamic discourse between these two essential stakeholders.

Essentially, the menu operates as a communicative signal bridging the interaction between the restaurant manager and the consumer (Magnini & Kim, 2016). Within the context of the foodservice industry, menus can be comprehensively elucidated through the lens of signaling theory.

Despite the vital role menus play as essential conduits of information between restaurants and consumers, the research examining how menus effectively fulfill this role remains remarkably sparse. This is especially true when scrutinized through the lens of signaling theory. Consequently, the primary objective of this study is to bridge this significant research gap by conducting a comprehensive systematic review. This review aims to accentuate menus' intrinsic function as potent vehicles for transmitting signals. Simultaneously, it seeks to meticulously survey the existing literature concerning menus. By adopting the vantage point provided by signaling theory, we endeavor to uncover the nuanced ways through which menus convey information, shape customer perceptions, guide decision-making processes, and elevate the overall dining experience. This investigative endeavor strives to provide an all-encompassing comprehension of the pivotal role and substantial influence of menus within the broader landscape of the foodservice industry.

2. Literature review

2.1 Menu management perspective

A menu functions as a concise yet informative compendium of culinary offerings, allowing customers to promptly discern the scope of dishes available and their corresponding costs. However, its role transcends mere practicality. From the restaurateurs' standpoint, the menu transforms into a strategic handbook, encapsulating not just the gastronomic repertoire, but also the restaurant's conceptual identity, human resource management, financial strategies, and other pivotal insights (McCall & Lynn, 2008). Creating a menu, however, is a nuanced process, often involving intricate rounds of communication and negotiation among diverse management facets (Kotschevar &

Withrow, 2008). As depicted in Figure I-1, this journey from menu inception to distribution intriguingly mirrors the wealth of managerial information encoded within the very fabric of the "menu" itself.

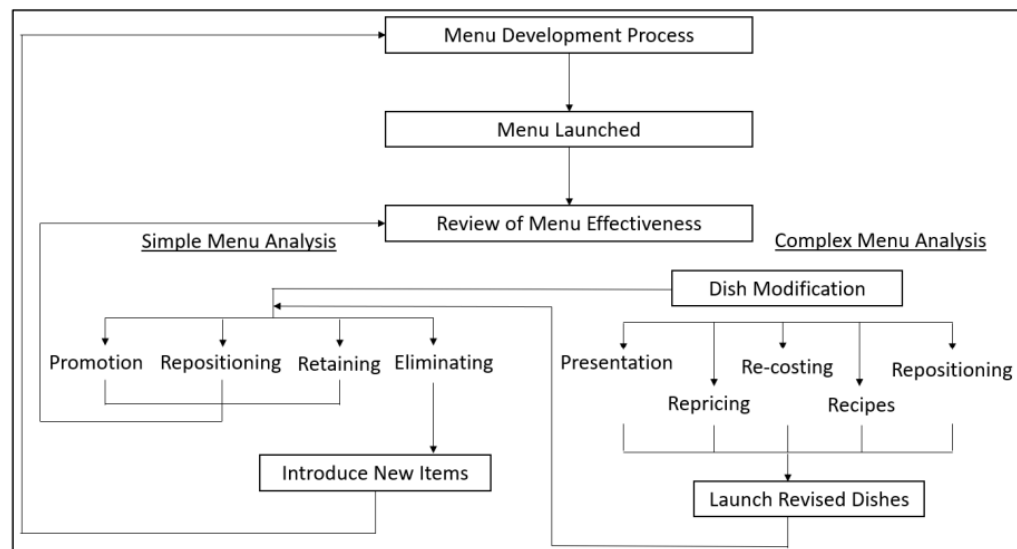


Figure 1. Menu development and analysis (Jones & Miffl, 2001)

In the academic arena, the prevailing spotlight on menu management primarily illuminates facets like menu planning (Malik & Kumar, 2012; Ozdemir & Caliskan, 2015; Seyitoglu, 2017), menu design (Güzeller & Özeydin, 2021; Ngan et al., 2022), menu analysis (Linassi et al., 2016; Nemeschansky et al., 2020), menu pricing (Kimes & Beard, 2013; E. S. Yim et al., 2014), menu costs (Salem-Mhamdia & Ghadhab, 2012; Yatsenko, 2020).

2.2 Menu and customer perspective

Shifting the focus from the menu management perspective to that of the customer, the discourse surrounding menus has historically leaned towards consumer-oriented viewpoints, attracting more pronounced scholarly attention compared to management-centric approaches. These inquiries predominantly revolve around facets such as menu presentation and order preferences (Bernstein et al., 2008; Ghadban & Fayad, 2021; Hammond et al., 2013; Rosalin & Soetanto, 2006), customer satisfaction (Baiomy et al., 2019; Choi et al., 2010; Lee et al., 2005), and patron loyalty (Pavesic, 2005; Tarigan et al., 2020). Particularly within the realm of menu presentation, meticulous investigations delve into menu design, encompassing elements such as food placement, visual aesthetics (Bacon & Krpan, 2018; Baiomy et al., 2019; Fikri & Ramadhan, 2011; Filimonau et al., 2017; Filimonau & Krivcova, 2017; Reynolds et al., 2005), menu labels (Larson et al., 2018; Nguyen et al., 2018), purchase preference (Chen et al., 2021; Ghaffar et al., 2019; Şahin, 2020; Yim & Yoo, 2020), menu item descriptions (Baiomy et al., 2019).

Central to menu design are elements like item arrangement, visual imagery utilization, and the composition of menu covers, significantly influencing patrons' dining experience and overall satisfaction (Baiomy et al., 2019). Additionally, the nutritional attributes of food items presented in menu design, coupled with food pricing, menu cover aesthetics, and font choices, distinctly influence customers' selections (Hwang & Lorenzen, 2008; Magnini & Kim, 2016; Parsa & Njite, 2004).

2.3 Signaling Theory

Currently, signaling theory has garnered significant attention across various disciplines for its profound insights into asymmetric information dissemination (Spence, 1978b). This theory posits that effective communication involves transmitting information to recipients when information is unevenly distributed between senders and receivers. Within the realm of restaurants, menus serve as multifaceted communication tools, embodying signals that convey complex messages to patrons. This pivotal role can be visually comprehended through the illustrative framework depicted in Figure 2.

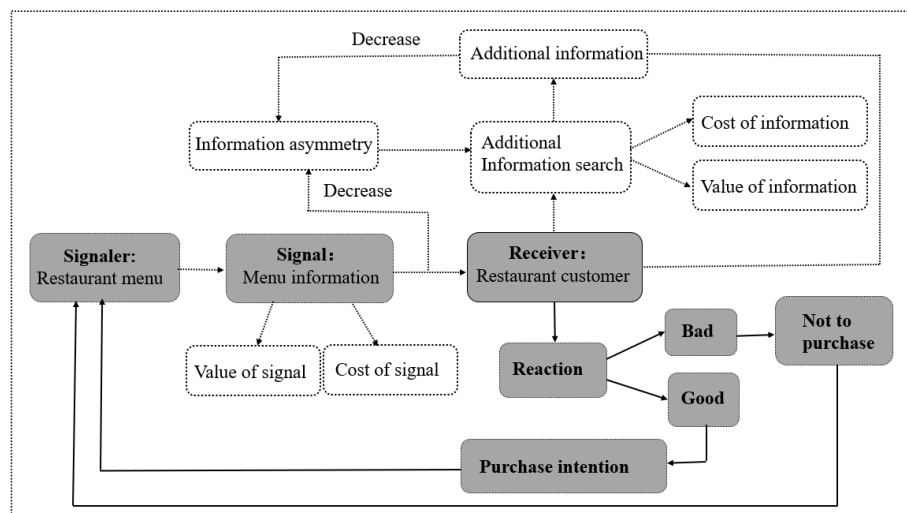


Figure 2. An expanded framework for signal theory

Within the context of the foodservice industry, menus can be comprehensively elucidated through the lens of signaling theory, a conceptual framework derived from economics and adopted across various disciplines (Spence, 1978). Signal theory contends that communication involves transmitting information to recipients, often in contexts where information is asymmetrically distributed between the sender and receiver. In the realm of restaurants, menus function as integral tools of communication, embodying signals that convey multifaceted messages to patrons.

This research advances the application of ST to address the gap highlighted earlier. The enlarged framework, an amalgamation of Karasek & Bryant's (2012) and Keppeler & Papenfuß's (2021) research, rectifies existing models (see Figure 2). The prior paradigm overlooks the circular signal-to-receiver process, wherein information asymmetry emerges post signal transmission but prior to reception. To mitigate

erroneous quality judgments due to this asymmetry, recipients proactively seek supplementary information. This emerges when beneficial, influencing the receiver's response to the signal and impacting the signaler's decision to retransmit. This approach, grounded in signal theory, introduces reaction as a transmission element, forming a circular process. It, however, assumes pervasive asymmetry and disregards signal costs and value.

In this refined theoretical framework, inspired by Karasek & Bryant's (2012) and Keppeler & Papenfuss's (2021) studies, the newly integrated elements are depicted in Figure 2. The restaurant menu transmits the signal to consumers, encompassing menu type, design, and information adequacy. Information asymmetry arises from differing knowledge, skills, preferences, cognitive ability, and tech familiarity among consumers. Following an information search, customers respond, influencing the subsequent management strategy of the restaurant menu.

3. Method

3.1 Systematic literature review

3.2 Data collection

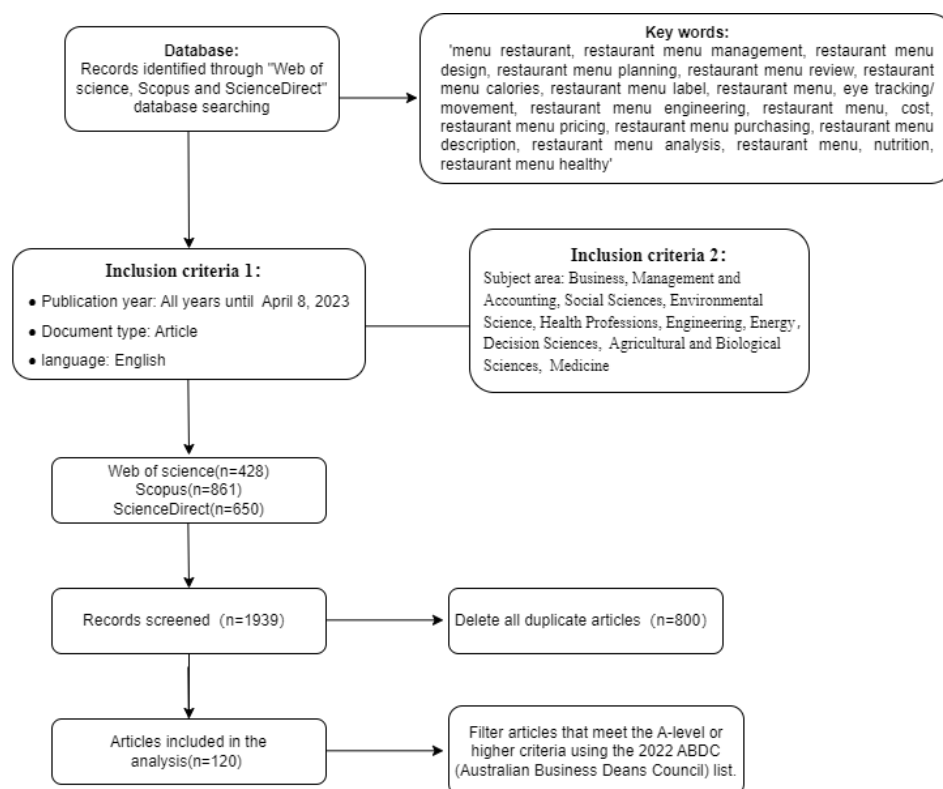


Figure 3. The flowchart of selected article for this systematic review

The present study aims to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the SCOPUS, Web of Science, and ScienceDirect databases in the field of tourism and hospitality from 2004 to 2022. The analyzed documents are sourced from the 2023 ABDC list of the

Australian database, specifically those that have been ranked above the A level. The key words include ' *menu restaurant, restaurant menu management, restaurant menu design, restaurant menu planning, restaurant menu review, restaurant menu calories, restaurant menu label, restaurant menu eye tracking/ movement, restaurant menu engineering, restaurant menu cost, restaurant menu pricing, restaurant menu purchasing, restaurant menu description, restaurant menu analysis, restaurant menu nutrition, restaurant menu healthy* '.

3.3 Data analysis

The current study employed a two-stage approach to data analysis, consisting of a descriptive analysis and a thematic analysis. The preliminary stage of the analysis, adopting a descriptive approach, entailed the identification of keywords and the establishment of criteria for inclusion and exclusion. The assessment was conducted by impartial coders who thoroughly examined all the journal articles that were gathered. The subsequent stage of data analysis encompassed the implementation of a thematic analysis, a technique employed to recognize, scrutinize, and present themes within a given dataset (Prayag and Ryan, 2011). The present study employed VOSviewer and Citespace, computer-aided software programs that have gained popularity in systematic literature reviews within the tourism and hospitality fields, to conduct data analysis.

4. Findings

4.1 Attention

4.2.1 Keyword co-occurrence

A comprehensive keyword co-occurrence analysis concerning menu-related scholarly articles was conducted utilizing VOSviewer, aiming to decipher the prevailing thematic trajectory. The visualization of these findings is succinctly presented in Figure 4. Notably, the keywords enveloped within the yellow sector denote recurrent themes within the temporal framework spanning from 2012 to 2020. The magnitude of circle dimensions conveys the frequency of key co-occurrence with other terminologies, while connecting lines delineate the intricate interrelation between keywords. Noteworthy is the prominence of the yellow sector, representing the most recent research discourse. Specifically, within this sector, the focal terms encompass perception, impact, quality, behavior, choice, and corporate social responsibility (CSR), delineating the pivotal research domains from 2018 to the present.

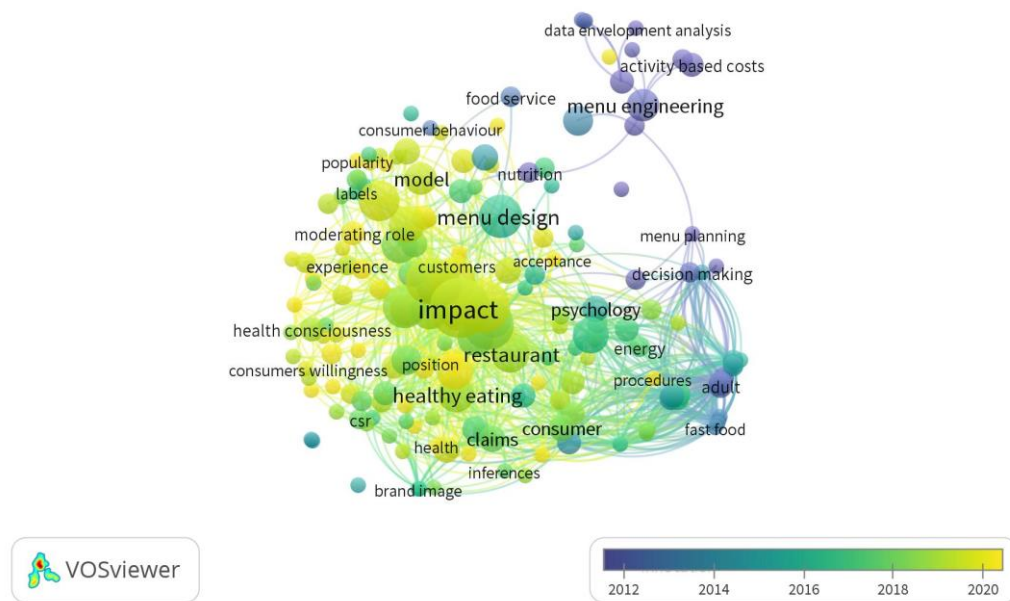


Figure 4. Data analysis from VOSviewer

4.1.1 Distribution of articles by year

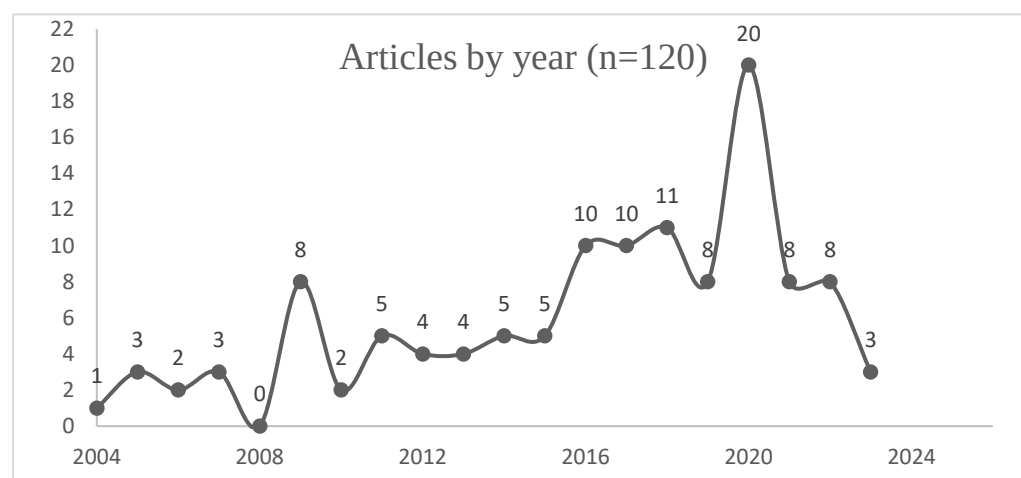


Figure 5. Menu-related articles by year

The distribution of years in Figure 5 illustrates the trends in menu research articles from 2004 to 2023. The output of research has increased steadily over the years. The first article in this discipline was published in 2004, and the annual publication rate remained relatively low, between two and five articles, until 2015. However, after 2016, there was a significant shift in publication patterns, most notably an extraordinary increase in the number of articles published in 2020, which peaked at 20 publications.

4.1.2 Distribution of articles by year

Since 2004, an analysis of 120 selected articles demonstrates the variety of research methods used in menu-related studies. The following describes the distribution of these strategies: 1 comprehensive literature review, comprising only 1% of the total articles; 7 qualitative studies, comprising approximately 6% of the corpus; 109 quantitative studies, comprising approximately 90% of the research pool; and only three studies employing a hybrid approach combining qualitative and quantitative methods. Notably, within the domain of quantitative research (n=109), an impressive 50 articles utilized experimental methods, constituting roughly 46% of all quantitative studies. Approximately 54% of the quantitative research corpus was comprised of the remaining 59 articles, which utilized a variety of quantitative methods.

Table 1 Distribution of articles by year

Research methods	No. of publication	Percentage of publications
review	1	1%
qualitative	7	6%
quantitative	109	90%
mixed method	3	3%
experimental design of quantitative methods	50	46%
Other research method of quantitative methods	59	54%

4.1.3 Distribution of articles by country

Only the top ten countries in terms of national contributions were included in the statistics. The United States emerged as the leader with the highest publication rate among these nations, accounting for 54% of the total number of articles. China, with a 7% share, is closely followed by South Korea at 6% and Australia at 5%. The United Kingdom (4%) is the largest contributor in Europe, followed by Canada (3%) and Taiwan (3%).

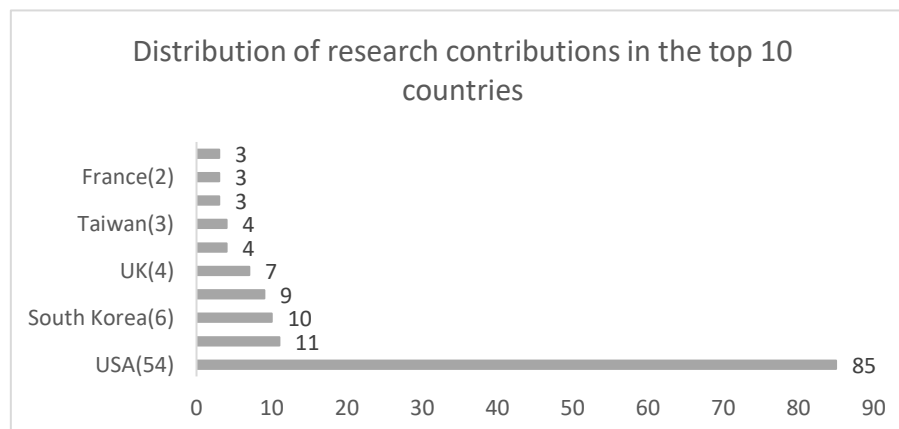


Figure 6. Distribution of articles by country

4.1.4 Distribution of articles by author contributions

The graphic emphasizes the prominent authors who have made significant contributions to the field of menu research, based on their prolific publication records. With an impressive portfolio of nine publications, Mattila stands out as the most prolific author in the field. Each of the esteemed researchers – Arendt, Mayer, Liu, Shoemaker, Shin, Raab, and Jang – has an impressive publication history, with each having authored four works. With three publications each, Jeong, Ham, and Jun have made significant contributions to the scholarly landscape.

Furthermore, the academic works of Parsa, Magnini, Bonn, Fang, and Kang, each of whom has authored two publications, have made a substantial impact on the field. It is essential to acknowledge the contributions of other researchers, such as Sun and a group of seventeen individuals, who have each made valuable contributions through their two publications. Despite space limitations preventing their incorporation in the figure, their research efforts are highly regarded and acknowledged within the academic community.

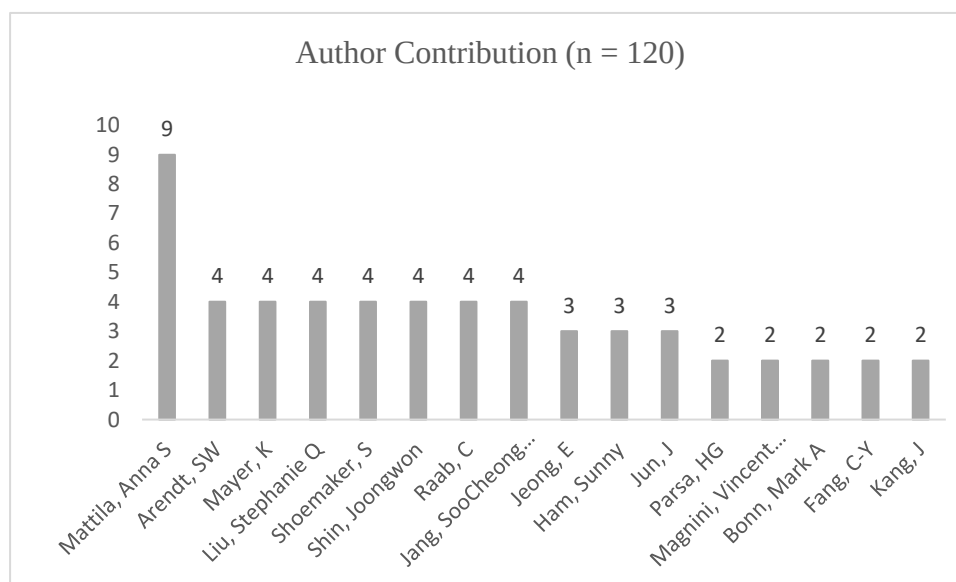


Figure 7. Author contribution

4.1.5 Distribution of articles by journal contributions

The distribution of articles across various journal categories demonstrates the predominance of hospitality-focused journals in menu research. The analysis of the dataset consisting of 120 articles reveals that they have been published in 26 different journals. The leading publication among these journals is the highly regarded International Journal of Hospitality Management, which features an impressive collection of 45 articles related to menus, accounting for a significant 38% of the corpus. The highly influential International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management ranks second with 18 published articles, accounting for 15% of the dataset.

Notable academic journals in the hospitality discipline include the prestigious Cornell

Hospitality Quarterly, as well as Appetite, Food Quality and Preference, Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management, and Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research. These esteemed journals have published nine, eight, five, five, five, and four articles, respectively, which have made significant scholarly contributions. They account for 8%, 7%, 4%, 4%, 4%, and 3% of the total research output, respectively.

In contrast, although prestigious journals such as the Annals of Tourism Research, the Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research, the International Journal of Forecasting, the Journal of Business Research, the Journal of Consumer Research, and the Journal of Interactive Marketing are highly regarded in the academic community, they had lower publication rates in the field of menu research, contributing only one article (The annual publication count across multiple journals, which is located at the end of this document).

The importance of hospitality-focused journals in promoting scholarship related to menus is evident in their widespread distribution. These specialized venues serve as primary platforms for researchers to share their findings and contribute to the scholarly discourse within their respective fields.

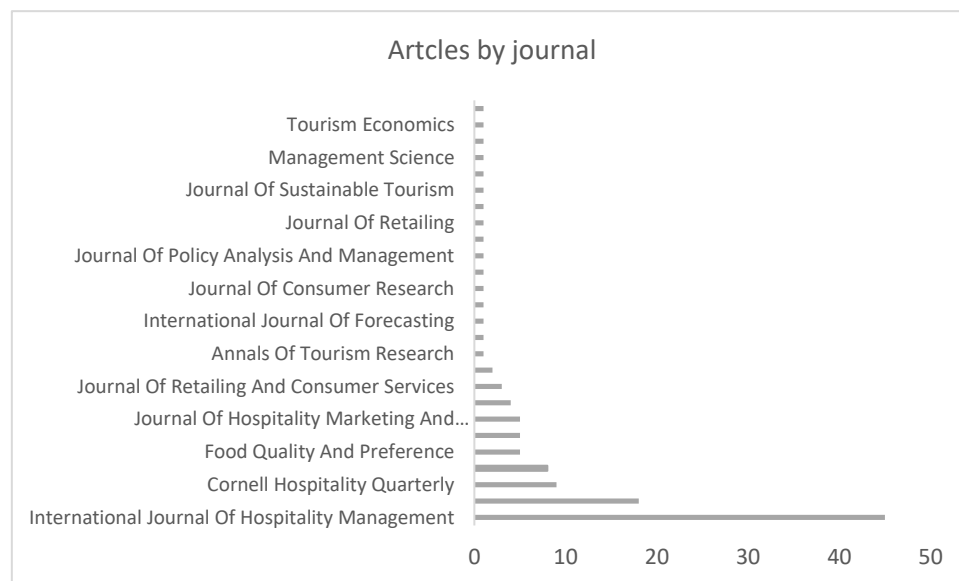


Figure 8. Journal contribution

5. Conclusions and discussion

This study conducted a comprehensive systematic review of 120 peer-reviewed articles focusing on various aspects of menus, offering a comprehensive exploration of this intricate research domain. The articles were meticulously selected from prestigious journals ranked A or above by the Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) between 2004 and April 2023. This extensive analysis aimed to not only capture the prevailing research trends but also to highlight potential gaps and avenues for future exploration.

By rigorously analyzing publication details, including journal sources, publication

years, authors, and countries, this review provided a comprehensive snapshot of the evolving landscape of menu-related research during the specified timeframe. This approach enabled the identification of dominant themes, shifts in research emphasis, and regional contributions, contributing to a nuanced understanding of the field's dynamics.

The significance of this systematic review lies in its capacity to identify the scope and limitations of the existing literature. While previous research has explored various dimensions of menus, this study has synthesized these disparate pieces into a cohesive narrative, guided by the lens of signaling theory. This theoretical framework lends a novel perspective, illuminating how menus operate as communication signals between restaurants and consumers, transcending their traditional role as mere lists of dishes.

Furthermore, this review identified a research gap in terms of examining menus from a signaling theory perspective. The adoption of signaling theory offers a novel vantage point that enriches our comprehension of menus' multifaceted roles in conveying identity, quality, pricing, and preferences. This theoretical foundation enhances the examination of menu-related dynamics within the broader context of consumer behaviors, business strategies, and the evolving culinary landscape.

6. Implications, limitation and future research

6.1 Theoretical implications

This systematic review holds significant theoretical contributions, deeply advancing our understanding of menus within the context of the foodservice industry. The incorporation of signaling theory, a concept traditionally rooted in economics but here extended to the domain of hospitality, constitutes a pivotal theoretical underpinning.

By applying signaling theory to the examination of menus, this review unveils a comprehensive framework that captures the intricate communication dynamics between restaurants and consumers. The traditional understanding of menus as static lists of dishes is transformed into a nuanced perspective where menus function as dynamic signals, conveying multifaceted messages beyond their apparent content. This theoretical extension allows us to comprehend how menus encapsulate not only culinary offerings but also the restaurant's identity, quality commitment, and pricing strategies.

Moreover, the integration of signaling theory enables us to decode the subtleties of menu design, presentation, and content. As consumers interpret various visual cues and textual descriptions, signaling theory offers a lens through which to understand how these cues become strategic messages, influencing consumers' perceptions and choices. This deeper comprehension of menu dynamics has implications not only for individual consumer behaviors but also for the competitive positioning of restaurants within the broader market.

Additionally, by exploring menus through the lens of signaling theory, this review emphasizes the role of menus in bridging information asymmetry between restaurants and consumers. This theoretical perspective accentuates how menus are instruments

that enable consumers to make informed choices by minimizing uncertainty and enhancing transparency. As consumers seek additional information to validate their choices, signaling theory provides a conceptual framework to understand this intricate decision-making process, thereby extending the scope of research from static menu attributes to the dynamic consumer decision journey.

Furthermore, this systematic review prompts us to reflect on the value of menus as strategic tools. Beyond their role in communicating identity and quality, menus serve as signals for consumers to infer the value proposition and unique selling points of restaurants. The application of signaling theory in this context reveals how menus convey not only factual information but also nuanced perceptions, influencing patrons' willingness to explore and engage with restaurant offerings.

6.3 Limitations and future research

Despite the meticulous approach taken in this systematic review, certain limitations need to be acknowledged. Firstly, it should be noted that the study's inclusion criteria only considered A-level papers from the ABDC list and relied on three databases - Web of Science, ScienceDirect, and Scopus. This approach may inadvertently introduce publication bias and limit the scope of the literature reviewed (Çakar & Aykol, 2023). There is a possibility that relevant studies from other sources or databases were unintentionally overlooked, which may have limited the scope of insights gained. Therefore, future reviews should consider broadening their scope to include a wider range of literature, such as conference papers, grey literature, and publications from non-traditional sources.

Secondly, the exclusive focus on the Signaling Theory and menu-related research may have limited the exploration of alternative theoretical perspectives and research domains. While the Signaling Theory framework provides a comprehensive lens for understanding the intricacies of menu functions, future research should consider integrating other relevant theories, such as consumer behavior models, marketing theories (Grönroos, 1982; Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). This interdisciplinary approach would result in a more comprehensive understanding of menus and their impact on customer experiences.

This systematic review highlights several promising avenues for future research. Firstly, there is a compelling need for more qualitative studies that explore the experiential aspects of menus. Gaining an understanding of how customers perceive and interpret menu elements, such as descriptions, layout, and design, would provide valuable insights into the psychological and emotional dimensions of the menu experience. Moreover, qualitative research could explore the cultural and societal factors that shape menu preferences and decision-making processes.

Secondly, future research should investigate the impact of emerging technologies on menu design and customer experiences. With the proliferation of digital menus, mobile apps, and interactive ordering systems, it is imperative to investigate their impact on customer satisfaction, decision-making, and engagement. Exploring the

potential of artificial intelligence, augmented reality, and personalized recommendations in menu design and customization could lead to innovative approaches within the culinary industry.

Furthermore, with the increasing focus on sustainability and health-conscious eating, it is important for future research to examine how sustainable practices and nutritional information can be incorporated into menus. Understanding how menu choices and descriptions can promote environmentally friendly options, support local sourcing, and accommodate diverse dietary preferences would contribute to the development of responsible and inclusive menus.

As the culinary landscape continues to evolve, it is crucial to examine the consequences of menu innovations in non-traditional dining settings. Research should investigate menus in the context of delivery and online platforms, pop-up restaurants, street food markets, and other emerging dining formats. Understanding how menus adapt to evolving environments and the implications for customer experiences and decision-making processes can provide valuable insights into the future of the culinary industry.

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EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL OF HEALTH TOURISM IN GAMING CITY: TOURISTS' PERCEPTIONS AND KEY STAKEHOLDERS' INSIGHTS

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Abstract

This research aims to investigate whether Macao has the potential to be developed into a health tourism destination by taking the first steps toward economic diversification. Mixed methods have been applied, including 16 in-depth interviews and a questionnaire survey with 493 participants. The content analysis and regression analysis revealed that social safety, service quality, cultural distance, and tourists' health views are the key factors in convincing Macao to become a health tourism destination. Besides, the study results also reflect that people's health views increased and became the primary reason for engaging in health tourism due to the epidemic. This study is one of the few that assesses Macao as a health tourism destination from a macro view, representing a new way of thinking about Macao's economic diversification and providing a more practical alternative for Macao's economic recovery following the epidemic. In addition, this study extends the application of ABC theory to the field of special interest tourism.

Keywords: Medical tourism, health consciousness, Covid-19, Macao, China, ABC theory

Chapter 1 Introduction

The pandemic of Covid-19 has lasted for three years, and all sectors of the economy globally are still under prolonged recovery (The World Bank, 2022). Macao, as a popular and only legalized gambling hub in China, is famous for its gaming and hospitality industries, revenue from which was the leading force for its GDP (Sheng & Gu, 2018). Since Macao government issued a serious immigration policy in early 2020 that intentional tourists are not allowed to visit Macao. As a result, Macao's GDP decreased incredibly and the unemployment rate kept rising continuously (DSEC, 2022). It is commonly believed that Macao's economic prosperity owes to the gaming industry, and various experienced foreign operators were attracted to invest in this land (Liu et al., 2015; Luo et al., 2019). However, the gaming and hospitality industry recovered very slowly (Lim & To, 2022), and much worse, no substitute industry could restart the engine of Macao's economy since this city is completely tourism-led. The discussion on economic diversification has never stopped, which is also a sustainability requirement in the tourism industry (Liu & Lin, 2022; Wan & Pinheiro, 2014). The outbreak of Covid-19 accidentally found that Macao must practice the transformation to sustainable development of tourism, instead of maintaining a sole-industry or single-product economic structure. As a positive response, the government started constructing the second public hospital, cooperating with Peking Union Medical College Hospital and planned to operate in 2023. The Chief Executive, Ho Isa Seng, tried to promote "medical + tourism" as a creative tourism mode and pursued developing the Big Health industry (China Travel News, 2021).

Medical tourism, or health tourism, appeared in the late twentieth century and expanded rapidly in some developing countries where medical service was affordable for most patients (Connell, 2013). A few Asian countries where the economy boomed in the early 21st century are becoming popular health tourism destinations with a high reputation among medical tourists (Lee & Kim, 2015). A wide variety of studies has been conducted on health tourism development, but more attention needs to be paid to

tourists' demands and requirements for the health tourism destination (Heung et al., 2011). As for Macao, some studies have discussed promoting traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) tourism to tourists, through which program tourists would be provided with TCM service (Lam et al., 2011). Yet, tourists' perceptions of Macao are necessary to be considered. This proposal will clearly disclose and specify tourists' perceptions and guide future health tourism development in Macao.

The proposal tries to figure out: (i) the factors that affect tourists' motivation and intention to travelling Macao, (ii) tourists' perceptions about Macao's advantages and disadvantages, and (iii) how is the potential that Macao could become a health tourism destination in the future. Data are gathered from industrial stakeholders based in Macao and tourists who have travelled to Macao within three years. Respondents are free to share their travelling through a specific assessment utilized by a questionnaire.

In pursuit of a systematic analysis of tourists' perceptions of Macao with the background of the pandemic, the ABC model that was widely discussed in terms of consumer behavior is applied in estimate tourist's behavior. Further, several factors that could influence the tourists' perceptions of health tourism destinations are specified as Macao's advantages and disadvantages. Finally, the quantitative method applied in this article is explained and how the data would be collected.

This study uses qualitative and quantitative research methods because there are two big groups: tourists from the target market and stakeholders in Macao who are experts and professionals in the industry or academia. In total of 16 stakeholders are invited to express their views about Macao's advantages and challenges in developing health tourism. This research is among the few studies that take a macroscopic view of the economic potential of Macao as a health-tourism destination, which also represents a new way of thinking about economic diversification and provides a more practical alternative for economic recovery as facing the post-pandemic era.

1.1 Research Questions

1. How are tourists motivated to visit Macao and what are their primary intentions?
2. From the stakeholders' perspective, what are Macao's advantages and disadvantages if it is decided to develop health tourism?
3. Based on tourists' perception, how is the potential of Macao to get tourists to believe it is an ideal health tourism destination?

Chapter 2 Literature Review

This study is divided into four parts: (i) a review of how the pandemic of COVID-19 dampened the profitability of the hospitality and tourism industry in Macao, and (ii) a summary of various definitions of "health tourism" from scholars and organizations and a global review of health tourism development situation, and (iii) illustration of how a series of factors people's perspectives based on the ABC model, and (iv) the hypotheses generalization about the factors that could affect people's perceptions to health tourism. The study attempts to apply them to tourism to discuss the changing ideology of health and the awareness of health tourism in the pandemic era. It incorporates a literature study, content analysis, and a series of expert and professional interviews. By comprehending the interview content and data collected through delivering the questionnaire, it is possible to understand better the current state of the health tourism business in the world and people's perspectives to target Macao as a health tourism destination.

2.1 Overview of the pandemic in Macao

Direct gambling surplus accounts for nearly 50% of Macao's GDP from 2015 to 2019. 39,406 thousand tourists visited Macao in 2019, and the properties' occupancy rate was around 90%, with total tourist consumption approaching MOP64,077 million. Nevertheless, all these tourist statistics data have dropped dramatically since the outbreak of Covid-19. The detailed information about a three-year change yield compared with 2019 is shown in Table 1.

Tourists' intention to visit Macao definitely decreased, and the backward reasons are worth exploring. Abbaspour et al. (2021) argued that people are likely to change their travel decisions due to the unknown risk. In early 2020, Covid-19 was utterly unknown and horrible because this kind of virus had never appeared and spread much faster than SARS that outbreaked in 2003. However, when the perceived risk of a trip goes higher, tourists may have a lower intention to travel (Agyeiwaah et al., 2021). Although Macao experienced several waves of Covid-19 infection expansion from 2020 to 2022, the total reported cases are still lower than two thousand with the population of around 680 thousand residents. The government recently relieved the inbound policy that international tourists from selected countries are technically allowed to visit Macao. Those who do not get approval for exemption from Macao Health Bureau must take a 10-day quarantine with a high charge (Government Information Bureau of Macau, 2022). Although China is generally been easing its harsh and rigorous restrictions since December 2022, international tourists' engagement with tourism is still very rare.

Table 1. 2019-2022 Tourism Statistics

Year	Tourist Arrivals (‘000)	Change%	Total Spending (Million MOP)	Change%	Average Occupancy %	Change%
2022 ^a	4,364.1	-85.55	13,336	-72.12	37.5	-58.70
2021	7,705.9	-80.44	24,453	-61.80	50.1	-44.82
2020	5,896.8	-85.04	11,938	-81.35	28.6	-68.50
2019	39,406	-	64,007	-	90.8	-

Data are from DSEC

a. Data from Q1 to Q3 of 2022 are compared with Q1 to Q3 of 2019

2.2 Health tourism worldwide

Henderson (2003) used “healthcare tourism” as a description of medical tourism, cosmetic surgery and wellness therapies through which tourists could improve their mental and physical health status. Connell (2013) stated that medical tourism is an umbrella term to describe tourists seeking for medical treatment benefit their health through travelling overseas, while there are many debates that medical tourism differs from health tourism which concerns with therapeutic procedures and the subjective is not a certain patient. A similar definition was adopted by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Medical tourists are considered to accept medical care in foreign countries as it is unavailable in their countries (CDC, 2019). Lee and Kim (2015) stated that health tourism is more extensively used as a broad and ordinate concept that describes all the healthcare programs tourists take during their trip. Medical and wellness tourism could be two branches of health tourism. The UNWTO (2018) officially integrated all those aspects mentioned before into one term, which is health tourism, and described it as “emerging, global, complex and rapidly changing”.

Before the outbreak of Covid-19, health tourism grew exponentially and became particularly crucial in many destinations (World Tourism Organization and European Travel Commission, 2018). Tourist destinations are shifting from traditional developed countries (e.g., the U.S., Germany, etc.) to developing countries (e.g., Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, etc.) because of the relatively lower labor cost, higher efficiency and similar advanced medical care (Lee & Kim, 2015; Tatum, 2020). The impetus for health tourism in developed countries once stemmed from the desire of people in less developed countries to have access to medical services in developed countries that were difficult to obtain in their own countries. However, as the cost of medical care in developed countries has risen, tourists are traveling to where they have access to obtain affordable, quality medical care (Chhabra et al., 2021). In brief, both developed and developing countries are earning profit from the health tourism industry (World Tourism Organization and European Travel Commission, 2018). The achievements of the development process in these countries are of great help when studying future market attitudes toward the development of recreational tourism in Macao.

A typical example is Malaysia, where the scare of international tourists (mainly from China, Britain, and America) visiting for medical treatment increased almost twice. A total of \$350 million was generated in medical tourism income in 2019. In terms of what these countries have achieved in developing health tourism, the cost of labor acceptable to most people, the level of advanced medical care and the wait time for available services are common conditions for the industrialization of this form of tourism. The Malaysian example is more specific and unique, as the quotes the commercial director of the Malaysian Healthcare Travel Council (MHTC), which has become a backbone of the development of wellness programs in all private hospitals worldwide (Tatum, 2020). Therefore, the achievements of the development process in these countries are of great help when studying future market attitudes towards the development of recreational tourism in Macao.

Nonetheless, the pandemic shattered illusions that the health tourism market would continue to prosper or recover immediately in the short term. Due to the lockdown policy conducted by global authorities, health tourism experienced a chilly winter in 2020. It is estimated that revenue generated from tourism decreased by 49.1% and only accounts for 5.5% of the global GDP (The World Travel & Tourism Council, 2021). Although the global is easing the anti-Covid restrictions to a different extent, those strict measures proposed by the government to combat viral infections are partially retained

because of their benefits for health maintenance (Chhabra et al., 2021). One fortunate point is the nature of health tourism, which is high profitability, remains the same. People's health consciousness is enormously improved through frequent and regular anti-pandemic measures, such as nucleic acid tests.

On the other hand, the market of health tourism is still there. Chhabra (2020) suggested that a sustainable tourism industry with novelty should be constructed after the end of the pandemic, with the mission of helping humans realize they are the link with knowledge and a holistic ecosystem. It must be directed with "health, self-development and social distance" and devoted to the "long-term health agenda" of tourism stakeholders and society.

2.3 Theoretical basis

In order to better understand people's attitude transformation upon the pandemic and how the contextual environment influences people's predictive behavior, the ABC model was adopted for this research. The ABC behavior theory, proposed by Guagnano et al. (1995), who suggested people's behavior is the result of an interaction between subjective attitude variables and environmental variables, is a concept that human behavior is affected by both internal factors, such as attitude, and external contextual elements. The "A" in the model refers to attitude that can be positive, negative, or neutral, which is a person's overall evaluation or feelings towards a specific object, person, or situation. The "B" represents behavior, which is the observable action or reaction a person engages in due to their attitude. And the "C" for context is the external factors and circumstances that influence the relationship between attitudes and behaviors. According to the ABC theory, the relationship between attitudes and behavior is highest when contextual environments are somewhat weak and weak when contextual influences are either highly negative or positive (Jackson, 2005). The ABC model's structural dynamics between attitudes (internal) and contextual (external) elements is a fundamental dimension. This model could reflect the intensity of the attitude-behavior relationship, highest when contextual pressures are neutral and near zero when contextual forces are incredibly positive or negative. Importantly, it suggests that consumer behavior results from both attitude and contextual factors and that behavior occurs when a positive attitude towards it is formed under contextual factors, which increase the predictability of behavior.

Many scholars have adopted the ABC theory in their research to predict an individual or a group of people's behavior. Sharifirad et al. (2013) explored the factors influencing Iranian high school students to consume fast food and concluded that attitudes are a stronger predictor than subjective norms. Groening et al. (2018) utilized the ABC theory to examine the relationship between green marketing and consumers' behavioral decisions. It is the most extensively accepted and recognized theory regarding behavioral research fields and explanation of the internal to external factors that affect green consumption-related decisions. In this study, internal factors regarding people's health beliefs ("attitude") and the contextual environment are mainly about the pandemic ("context") and its derivative events, such as the closure policy and the passport renewal suspension. Behavior is conceived a tourist finally visit Macao for health tourism. In addition, tourists' confidence that the destination's government can guarantee their safety and make them clear about contradictory information may directly influence a tourist's decision to implement or cancel their trip (Godovykh et al., 2021; Villacé-Molinero et al., 2021). This theory shall work well for the current study since it has managed to explain the relationship between environmental attitudes

and behavior, focusing on the attitude-behavior gap and the influence of contextual factors on consumer behavior.

Concerns about Macao's long-term as a single-industry economy and the exploration of economic diversification and sustainability of tourism development have never stopped (Gu et al., 2022; Kong & Chang, 2012; Lu, 2016; Wan & Li, 2013; Wang & Leou, 2015). Although the specific development directions discussed do not reflect a close identity, they are all developing valuable local resources in Macao that have not been fully or efficiently utilized, such as cultural resources. Moreover, an inevitable question in all discussions is that Chinese people will likely be Macao's largest tourist market for a long time. Therefore, all possibilities must consider the needs of mainland Chinese travelers. The impact of the pandemic on Macao's economy exceeded all expectations and is bound to increase the health consciousness of the entire society (Nicomedes & Avila, 2020). This research explores whether Macao can become a health tourism destination through the perspective from tourists and stakeholders, which plays an essential role in economic diversification consideration. Besides, with high profitability characteristics, health tourism might boost Macao's tourism revenue.

2.4 Hypothesis Generalization

In this study, environmental and attitudinal conditions were established, namely, tourists' willingness to engage with health tourism and tourists' willingness to use Macao as a health tourism destination. Identifying which factors may stimulate tourists to make the appropriate choices is crucial. Previous literature has argued the factors that might affect people's decision-making about which place they should choose as a health tourism destination. The hypotheses listed in the following context are the main factors regarding the destination selection that could drive or stimulate people to take health tourism, which is often mentioned in past studies.

2.4.1 Motivation and behavioral Intention

Motivation is defined as what pushes an individual to make certain decisions, engage in action and persevere in one's effort untiringly (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013). Tourist motivation is often utilized to explain why a tourist decides to take a trip to a specific destination (Luo & Ye, 2020). The relationship between motivation and revisit intention has been discussed by many studies (Huang & Hsu, 2009; Li et al., 2010; Pratminingsih et al., 2014). Numerous studies have demonstrated that tourists' motivation could positively influence their intention (Luo & Ye, 2020; Thi Khanh Chi, 2022). Nevertheless, dimensions or scenarios taken into account in motivation usually differs. Pratminingsih et al. (2014) estimated that tourists are motivated by some abstract reasons, such as relaxation and social interaction. Instead, some scholars believe tourists might have apparent and specific motivations for travelling (Huang & Hsu, 2009). Hence, whether the tourist motivation is multiple or single, here is to suppose the relationship between motivation and behavioral intention certainly exists but varies on different dimensions of motivation. The following hypothesis is stated:

H1: Motivation has a positive direct effect on tourists' behavioral intention to health tourism.

2.4.2 Service quality's relationship with motivation and intention

Traditionally, hotel service is terribly interlinked with tourists' intention (Singh, 2013), but the explorative orientation should not be confined in one dimension. As mentioned before, the leading force of medical tourists is transferring their ideal destination from developed to developing countries. Nonetheless, Ridderstaat et al. (2019) retorted that

conclusion because the U.S. kept generating revenue from medical tourists, and the market and interest increased steadily yearly. Tourists from high-ended class believe expenditure on advanced medical technology, definitive diagnosis and treatment provided by genius doctors are beneficial to their body health.

Service quality in health tourism not only refers to the service providers and consumption power but varies among tourists' various requirements, which explains why both developed and developing countries could play this game together. Plenty of studies believe tourists intend to visit a place or revisit it again mainly because of their striking and remarkable service (Abdulla et al., 2019; Chia & Liao, 2021). In other words, satisfaction on service quality would positively influence tourists' intentions and contributes to building long-term loyalty (Zarei & Maleki, 2019). Subsequently, the following hypothesis was made:

H2a: Tourist's perceived service quality directly influences tourists' motivation to health tourism.

H2b: Tourist's perceived service quality directly influences tourists' intention to health tourism.

2.4.3 Cultural distance, motivation and intention

Culture is discussed frequently as one of the core elements of tourism. Usually, tourists' interest in the destination is a pull force to their travel destination decision. If the destination's culture and history are highly similar to the origin of tourists, the pull effect could be more decisive (Wong, 2015). Macao's culture slightly differs from mainland China due to the history of colonization by the Portuguese. However, Macanese still keep their original culture and living habit, such as speaking Cantonese. After the reunification, mandarin became available for most youngsters, which is good news for Chinese tourists who do not understand Cantonese. Language issues could be one of the competitive advantages for a tourist destination (Ghosh & Mandal, 2019). For example, many medical tourists who live in China prefer going to where the language barriers do not exist or communications can go through smoothly (Chia & Liao, 2021).

Although medical or health services ought to be the prevailing tone in health tourism, engagement with some entertainment activities is widespread. Tourists are generally motivated by many special events, such as "enjoying the local culture" and other entertainment activities (Connell, 2013). There is plenty of historical architecture in the Portuguese style in Macao, and many exhibitions and roadshows are held near those attractions, which is very appealing to Chinese tourists. Accordingly, a hypothesis could be drawn:

H3a: Culture similarity has a positive direct effect on travel motivation to health tourism.

H3b: Culture similarity has a positive direct effect on travel intention to health tourism.

2.4.4 Perceived Safety and motivation

Destination security or safety always raises tourists' attention when assessing the risk of a potential trip to a particular destination (Yen et al., 2021). Besides, this term could also refer to a scenario where it concludes multiple threats linked with crime, terrorism, food, transportation, and natural catastrophes in the current study (Cham et al., 2021). Zou and Meng (2020) analyzed how Chinese tourists defined the word "safety" for their domestic trips. Five scenarios are stated: holistic environment, facilities and service, destination culture, safety information and concerns. Chinese tourists are likely to be

most concerned about safety information, mainly referring to the report and expert evaluation of local safety incidents. It is believed chiefly that perceived safety by tourists could positively influence the intention to travel (Liu et al., 2016; Zou & Meng, 2020).

Macao is considered one of China's top ten safest cities and reported crime cases decreased in recent years (DSEC, 2022; Global RCG, 2022). That is, the holistic environment of Macao is very safe for tourists. Although the pandemic has created a risky environment globally, many tourists are willing to stay where they feel comfortable and safe (Abbaspour et al., 2021). Macao reported less than two thousand Covid-19 cases till late 2022, so the risk of infection is also low. Therefore, the hypothesis was proposed:

H4: Perceived safety has a direct positive effect on the motivation of health tourism.

2.4.5 Health consciousness and health tourism intention

Health consciousness is defined as people's attention to their health status, and it is believed that an individual's health consciousness is positively correlated with different health behaviors (Gould, 1990). Lin (2014) conducted a research study on hot-spring tourists' behavior and suggested that tourists with higher-level health consciousness are more likely to be repeat tourists to the destination. Namely, a tourist's predictive behavior for seeking healthcare services or revisiting the destination could greatly depend on his health consciousness. Moreover, Peng et al. (2023) illustrated that tourists with strong health consciousness actively revisit where they previously sought medical service. This study estimates tourists who have travelling experience in Macao would revisit there with the primary purpose of health tourism, and tourists' health consciousness is certain to be stronger before the pandemic so that Macao could be an ideal destination. The following hypotheses are hence to be proposed:

H5a: Health consciousness has a positive direct effect on tourists' behavioral intention to health tourism.

H5b: Health consciousness has a positive direct effect on tourists' motivation to health tourism.

2.4.6 Intention to health tourism and destination potential

Destination potential in this study is defined as a measurement of how a tourist perceives a destination accessible to meet an individual special interest. Destination image is a classical concept discussed for many decades, representing a tourist's subjective perception of a particular place's attributives (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Hallmann et al., 2015). Lots of researchers believe destination image has a massive impact on tourists' behavior intention (Afshardoost & Eshaghi, 2020; Wang & Hsu, 2010). Many factors contributed to benefiting destination image and how tourism campaigns could ameliorate the facilities and services for further potential development (Chaulagain et al., 2019). Rajesh (2013) constructed a holistic framework to analyze tourist loyalty in the context of tourist perception, destination image and satisfaction. Discussions about destination image have never been more. Instead, more emphasis should be laid on tourists' perceived destination potential, and a destination ought to understand tourists' demands to attract and sustain visitors. This study intends to find out under what situation and conditions would tourist perceive Macao as an ideal health tourism destination, destination potential should be considered effect and consequence of their clear behavior intention. Thus, the last hypothesis is drawn:

H6: Tourist's behavior intention has a positive direct effect on perceived destination potential.

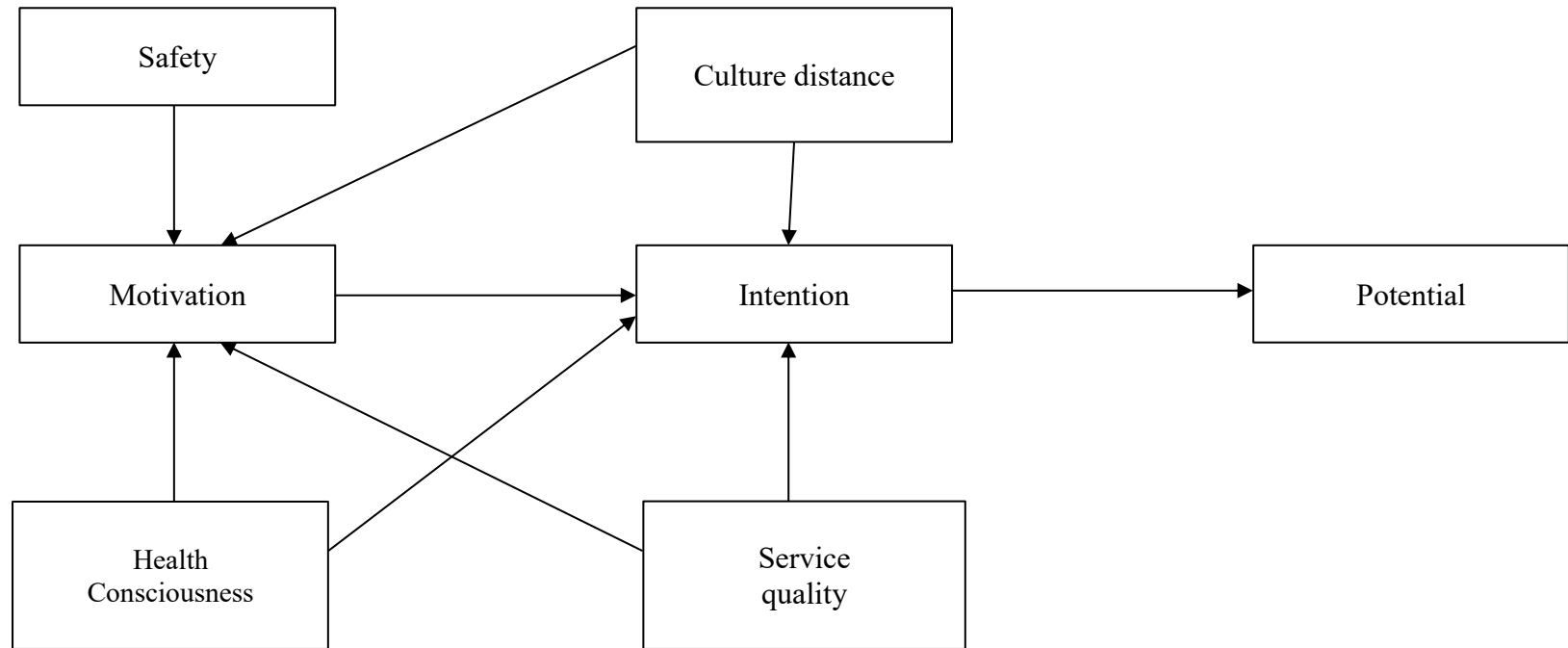


Figure 1. Research Framework

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Qualitative study

Analyzing the stakeholders' self-statement could not only illustrate their characteristics but also deeply understand their purpose, intention and possible resources that might be achieved to influence the decision-making process (Brugha & Varvasovszky, 2000). This study invited experts and professionals with a solid industrial background to attend a physical interview for voice sharing, which was recorded live. Then, the interview content was transcribed manually. The content analysis is adopted through thematic coding to analyze and report patterns in qualitative. Common themes are found and drawn from the transcriptions, which comprise a wide range of categories (Rubanovich et al., 2017). All the transcriptions are carefully reviewed several times to ensure all the raw text has been well-clarified into categories.

3.2 Quantitative study

The quantitative research aims to determine tourists' assessment of Macao's hospitality and tourism industry. The population of this study was Chinese tourists who travelled to Macao at least once within three years. An electronic questionnaire comprised 21 questions. Furthermore, several 7-point Likert scale questions are utilized to measure seven factors mentioned in this study that probably affect tourists' intention of health tourism, which is well-performed in reliability and validity (Dawes, 2008). The questionnaires were delivered through an online platform, Wen Juan Xing (WJX), so Chinese respondents have legal access to browse the website.

The snowball sampling method, favorable to enlarge the sample groups and utilize social networks to reach a larger target population more efficiently, was applied in data gathering (Cohen & Arieli, 2011). Respondents were strongly and sincerely advised to continue distributing the questionnaire to others who connected with them. The risk of infection with Covid-19 was reduced in this electronic way.

A questionnaire finished without earnestness would not be considered valid, and finishing time is another criterion. For example, a questionnaire where an unchanged number answered the Likert scale questions (e.g., all "7" or "1"), or the whole it is finished in 100 seconds, must lead to a null sheet. Only data of valid responses would be imported into IBM SPSS 26.0 and smartPLS for statistics analysis.

Table 2. Valid samples
List of deleted samples

Reason	No. of samples deleted
Duration spent less than 100 seconds*	53
Unreliable answer**	2
Total no. of deleted samples	55
Validity rate (N=548)	89.96%
Total no. of valid samples	493

Note. WJX help records how much time the respondent used to finish the questionnaire. The respondent keeps choosing one valid number, e.g., only scoring "7" for all questions.

Chapter 4 Qualitative Result

4.1 Language issues, geographic space and direction for health tourism

The language issues are remarked on and specified frequently rather than other factors. Macao government announced in 1999 that Chinese and Portuguese are both official languages with equal dignity. Cantonese, as a dialect with a long history in China, is the actual daily language in Macao. Yet, Macanese can now speak English and Mandarin fluently (Interviewees 1, 6 & 11). Mainland China tourists do not need to worry about communication issues. Besides, Macao society is friendly and tolerant, and very few discrimination cases have been detected and reported in recent years (Interviewees 2, 6, 7 & 8). Combined with the questionnaires' reflections, over half of the visitors supposed that they did not or seldom feel discriminated against when visiting Macao or encountered a few incidents of insecurity such as theft, pillage or sexual harassment.

Macao's land area (space for development) is the most widely cited serious drawback (Interviewees 1, 2, 5, 6, 10, 13 & 14) compared to the neighbor city, Hong Kong, which is about 37 times the land area of Macao. However, the respondents are generally optimistic about the administrative rights that Macao could share the administrative right of Hengqin island with Zhuhai government, which is believed to be accessible to compensate the shortage of land area (Interviewee 3, 5, 11, 13 & 16). Besides, handy transportation to reach Macao and proximity to south-east Asia where the tourism industry is developed, could be another significant benefit (Interviewees 1, 4, 11 & 12).

As mentioned in the definition of health tourism, the interviewees expressed their contrary viewpoints according to their perceived situations and conditions in Macao. Interviewees 2, 9 and 10 clearly stated that Macao should primarily promote wellness tourism since it needs to be clarified that Macao could meet tourists' medical demands. Medical tourism is highly suitable for Hong Kong where both public and private medical institutions are eligible to provide excellent service. Macao is a tolerant society where residents enjoy downshifting and competitions here are restricted in size and extent, which is an innate and ideal destination for tourists escaping from routines and relaxing, which is intensely along with the niche of the city to be a world center of tourism and leisure. Further, Macao is compatible with Chinese (more Cantonese) and Portuguese cultures, reflecting on the architecture, religions and local cuisines that helped the city be awarded one of the Creative Cities of Gastronomy. Food culture is accessible to the extent of a healthy diet and keeping fit.

It might work if Macao decides to develop wellness tourism, but the path will be challenging. Analyzing the feedback from visitors to Macao over the years is very important. Macao is a tiny city with limited tourist attractions, but what leads to such frequent tourists? For example, they think Macao's life makes them feel comfortable, or the residents are very hospitable with high zest. If the answers are positive, wellness tourism is a good option for tourism diversification at least -- Interviewee 2

"Wellness" as a concept could be closely combined with tourism, but medical treatment or invasive healthcare service may not and should be the goal of a trip. Wellness tourism embraces food diet, hotel staycation and TCM, through which tourists can enjoy the entire trip process. – Interviewee 9

On the contrary, the opinions of the two interviewees seem more vocal than others. They are pessimistic about Macao's natural landscape that are equal to other tourist destinations such as Guilin, Sanya and Taiwan. And they are inquiring about the waiting time, a bias of medical resources between cities and counties and whether the number of registered doctors in China could match up with such a vast population. Although Macao's medical resources are minimal, it is still superior to most cities in mainland China and could relieve the waiting time for Chinese patients.

Wellness tourism contributes to making the tourists relax, and a threshold for the destination refers to the natural landscape. For instance, tourists appreciate the sakura blossoms in Kyoto, the mountains and rivers in Guilin, the beaches on Hainan Island and the Sun Moon Lake in Taiwan. Although the government is now developing Coloane Island, creating a bay for leisure activities is hard. Moreover, the water quality of Hac Sa Beach could be better.
– Interviewee 14

Another group of interviewees' attitudes on the developing direction of health tourism is unclear. However, they expressed a positive perspective and praised the TCM industry in Macao (Interviewees 3, 6, 12, 14 & 16).

We suggest hotels could launch some TCM healthcare programs for tourists; however, it refers to some legal issues certainly that the government should make clear. – Interviewee 3

One of the most critical concepts in TCM is Yang-Sheng, which aims to preserve one's health or keep fit through some daily habits. In Macao, many medical students majoring in TCM who should have played an essential role in the health industries feel hard to get employed after graduation. However, most are currently compelled to work as school physicians with a finite salary and promotion chance. – Interviewee 6

The central government of China resolutely appreciates the development of TCM in Macao. The TCM industry is to recover from some specific illness but keep the whole body healthy. – Interviewee 12

I appreciate the development status of TCM in Macao, which is mainly based on governmental and civil acceptance.....Macao emphasizes TCM research and concentrates on the global effectiveness extension of TCM. Human resources and financial investment in TCM in Macao are unparalleled in other regions.....Many licensed TCM doctors, including many retired doctors from mainland China, work in Macao. Macao has an obvious capital advantage over TCM research institutions in other regions. – Interviewee 14

4.2 Medical resources in Macao

Many respondents discussed medical resource issues regarding medicine and drugs, medical equipment and manpower problems. However, it is technically agreed that Macanese preferred to go to Hong Kong when facing some severe diseases before the pandemic since they have a higher level of trust and dependence on medical conditions in Hong Kong. However, many experts also mentioned that Macao has adequate healthcare resources in terms of the index of the doctor density (Interviewees 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 14, 15).

The medical resources available in Macao are superior to most cities in mainland China and overseas countries. Another phenomenon is that many Macao residents are very willing to go to Hong Kong, and some overseas countries and engage in healthcare or medical services. Although Macao's current medical industry owns a few competitive advantages, many tourists believe that Macao needs to be bigger and that medical service there is less advanced than in Hong Kong and Japan. – Interviewee 6

Many Macao residents prefer to go to Hong Kong, mainland China or other foreign countries for medical treatment. In 2020, due to the pandemic of COVID-19, Macao was under closure measures. However, a predictive wave that local special medical needs could not be met did not appear. Some prevalent needs for medical service could be covered locally. – Interviewee 8

Several respondents mentioned that tourists are motivated by a few special vaccination requirements, such as the Gardasil-9 HPV vaccine (Interviewees 3, 6, 7, 9, 15 & 16). Since Hong Kong's infection waves are continuous and much more severe than in Macao, Chinese tourists who are merely motivated by vaccination would certainly visit Macao. Further, the importation approval process for new drugs, medical instruments and devices is quicker and more efficient in Macao compared to mainland China (Interviewees 2, 4, 6, 7 & 8).

The drugs and equipment utilized in Macao are the latest and relatively advanced because the approval process is faster than in Hong Kong, and there are no import restrictions. Macao government's supervision of hospitals or private clinics is serious with high requirements. As a result, few scandals in the industry were reported. So, the industrial reputation is very high, which helps win the trust of the tourists. —Interviewee 4

Easy access to advanced equipment and imported drugs is very critical when it comes to developing health tourism. Few people realized that Macao has faster and more convenient access to import new drugs than Hong Kong. Supposing a new kind of drug was officially registered inside the Europe Union countries or the US and had been allowed to enter the local market, the Macao government could directly import that drug in a very short time. —Interviewee 8

Opinions about the manpower issues in the healthcare industry sound slightly negative. Healthcare workers who were not trained professionally or adequately need more practice to boost their behavior (Interviewees 1, 2, 8, 11, 14 & 15). One respondent was concerned about a coming shortage of specialist doctors in Macao since many of them were cultivated during the colonization period. Now fresh blood to fill the gaps are insufficient (Interviewee 8). Interviewee 14 strongly advocated TCM resources listed in Macao's unique advantages. Some concepts in TCM are widely accepted by residents and adopted into daily life. Further thinking is that since TCM has been a heated topic globally, Macao should promote it to those potential medical tourists. To resolve the problem of training and ameliorating local doctors' skills, inviting retired or licensed doctors from the West and developed cities in mainland China to Macao for mentoring and training are put forward accounts (Interviewee 7, 11, 12, 13 & 14).

The actual amount of doctors based in Macao is considerable. A phenomenon I observed was that medical students felt hard to get employed after graduation, which supposed that Macao had adequate human resources in the medical industry. But why is there an inquiry that Macao needs more doctors? Licensed and legal medical institutions are very limited in Macao. Two public hospitals have yet to extend their scale in recent years, which means the number of hospital beds hardly changed. Doctors who have got their license have few chances to engage with training, and they might leave the job then even abandon the industry...

If Macao is open for medical tourists from mainland China, I wonder if current medical institutions could fully meet the demands. – Interviewee 1

If reviewing the development since the establishment of the special administrative area, Macao government paid very little attention to cultivating specialists, but insisted on training up those eligible to be general practitioners and devoted to developing a grass-root healthcare system, which is ought not to be a correct direction. It is not financial issues at all, but the perception of government. Macao's hospitals are currently highly thirsty for new-generation specialists. – Interviewee 8

Undoubtedly, it is inaccessible to increase the amount of hospital beds in the concise time since it regards the scale of hospitals, relevant manpower and governmental issues. Macao is still facing a threat from some severe kinds of natural disasters. In summer, typhoons could cause unexpected and unfortunate incidents, such as toppling trees or breaking down the main branches (Interviewees 1 & 7). According to previous experience, the government's ability to take emergent action needs to be better and quicker. Part of the interview content mentioned the typhoon Hato that happened in 2017, and their comments are as follows:

In 2017, Macao was raided by Typhoon Hato and a great number of injury accidents were reported. An essential problem was disclosed: Macao has insufficient hospital beds for patients during emergent disasters. And the government had no plan for such a disaster and responded very slowly. Summer was a hot season for tourists, and if they planned to be involved in some short-term healthcare programs that have to stay at the hospital, we must make sure that the beds are sufficient for other patients. — Interviewee 1

4.3 Policy, Government's Role and target market

Policy here is relevant to the governmental ambition of industry development, economic diversification and tourism sustainability. Health tourism is a workable and realistic direction for Macao to diversify its tourism industry (Interviewees 3, 5, 7, 11 & 16). However, which industry or organization is eligible to be the executant to provide healthcare service gave rise to a heated argument. Some interviewees are optimistic that the Macao government insists on maintaining stringent supervision of the whole medical industry, through which tourists are widely protected, although many private medical institutions and organizations often criticized it since they could not enjoy the same right as the public medical institutions (Interviewee 7). On the other hand, there are a few supporters of private medical institutions. Private medical have a

long history in Macao and is moderately respectable among the public (Interviewee 1). Current supervision, such as private clinics are legally not allowed to inject vaccines for patients, is too strict and becoming obsolete, which has inadvertently formed a transparent barrier to further development (Interviewees 2, 4, 6, 7, 8 & 10). Suppose the government is willing to reinforce private healthcare providers' involvement, engagement and passion for developing health tourism. In that case, those rigid policies must be rethought and could never tie the hands of the industry (Interviewees 1, 4, 6, 7 & 8).

When it comes to the industries integration, combination and transformation, the hospitality and tourism industry in Macao had better engage with health tourism promotion, which is not a perceived critical requirement from the target market, but a novel direction for hotels and tourism institutions (Interviewees 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10 & 11). The government must act as a coordinator in such a giant movement. Nevertheless, the Macao government is used to being conservative in making and implementing policies, often inviting criticism from the industries. Although appropriate economic diversification has been issued and discussed by the government for even one decade, there are no seeable and significant changes in the economy's structure. Tourism development could only be realized by integrating various sources from multiple industries. The government should issue a blueprint for health tourism and guide the industries exploring this field. To seek external sources, many interviewees mentioned that there is a strategic change that Hengqin Zone is established as a powerful platform for promoting Macao's local signature business. TCM is one of the representative products, gifted a distinctive mission to make up for Macao's shortage of land area (Interviewees 4, 7, 8, 14, 15 & 16). Macao government should guide the local corporations to extend their business to Hengqin, promoting the products made in Macao to be an international brand.

Another controversy involved a target market in which health tourism based in Macao should emphasize the mass market or high-end/luxury market might influence the government's eventual decision. Many interviewees insist that high labor costs impose restrictions on launching low-priced tourism programs and their relevant products. Tourists from the upper class are more likely to be concerned about their health status and more financially accessible to accept high-priced healthcare services (Interviewees 4, 14 & 16). One of health tourism's characteristics that come with birth is high profitability, and it must come true in Macao to be along with future development.

The rest of the interviewees agree that the government should develop health tourism for the massive market (Interviewees 6, 7, 8 & 15). China is the biggest pool for Macao's tourism. Health tourists with higher consumption habits may take another trip to the neighboring city, Hong Kong, or other countries with more progressive medical technologies and other tourist resources, such as Japan, Korea and Malaysia (Interviewees 2, 9, 10 & 11). Even if the government had launched a series of healthcare service with high costs, few Chinese tourists would have been attracted. Since cooperation between multiple industries is inevitable to develop health tourism, the government has to persuade the management and make it certain to generate profit from this new program; otherwise, health tourism could not be sustainable.

All the interview content supplements the industrial perspective of the research question mentioned in the literature review. And most of the interviewees' statements

take a further step to tourists' because they are more willing to suggest which factors could affect tourists' perceptions.

4.4 Quantitative result

4.4.1 Preliminary analysis

Table 3 presents the demographic details of respondents whose questionnaires were collected for this study. In total, 548 individuals from the Greater China Area participated either partially or fully in the questionnaire. Out of this, 493 samples were considered valid (as indicated in Table 2). The majority of participants are hailing from Shanghai (33.87%), followed by Shaanxi (14.60%), and cities within the GBA (13.38%). These numbers encompass 297 females and 185 males who took part in the study, while a small number of respondents opted not to disclose their gender. Of the respondents, more than half hold a bachelor's degree or higher, with only 0.8% of interviewees reporting no formal education experience. Notably, young adults (aged 19 to 25) appear to show a stronger interest and focus on healthcare activities compared to other age groups, even when compared to the older segment (55 years and above).

Table 3. Demographic information

Item (N=493)	N	%
Gender		
Female	185	37.53
Male	297	60.24
Transgender	2	0.41
Prefer not to say	9	1.83
Age		
18 years old and below	27	5.48
19 to 25 years old	176	35.70
26 to 35 years old	57	11.56
36 to 45 years old	65	13.18
45 to 55 years old	78	15.82
55 to 65 years old	37	7.51
66 years old and above	53	10.75
Times to visit Macao		
Only one	169	34.28
Two to three	147	29.82
Three to five	69	14.00
More than five	108	21.91
Education		
No formal education	4	0.81
Primary/Elementary education	30	6.09
Middle school	27	5.48
High school	52	10.55
Vocational training	102	20.69
Bachelor	199	40.37
Master	43	8.72
Doctoral	36	7.30
Health Status		

Disability	1	0.20
Chronic diseases without treatment	4	0.81
Get cold/flu/common disease	35	7.10
Undertreatment	49	9.94
Not clear	82	16.63
Mental illness	61	12.37
Mental and physical healthy	261	52.94
Income		
RMB 4,800 or lower	106	21.50
RMB 4,801- 9,600	89	18.05
RMB 9,601-14,400	78	15.82
RMB 14,001-19,200	53	10.75
RMB 19,201-24,000	39	7.91
RMB 24,001-28,800	40	8.11
RMB 28,801 and above	36	7.30
Prefer not to say/Not Applicable	52	10.55

4.5 Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

As a necessary procedure in statistics, EFA test is accessible to extract a small number of components from all the observed variables, and the result would be utilized to explain the relationship between those extracted components and observed factors (Hadi et al., 2016). The Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO) test and Bartlett's test, which directly and visually reflects the adequacy of sample gathering, are also conducted. Only when two conditions that the KMO value exceeds 0.5 and Bartlett's test result is significant can the sample collection is considered sufficient and adequate (Rasheed & Abadi, 2014). Notably, the value of Cronbach's alpha (α) measures a test or scale's internal consistency and indicates the degree of measurement inaccuracy in a survey (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). The index of measurement error is calculated by squaring this correlation and subtracting from 1.00, which means a higher Cronbach's α means items have intensive correlations with each other. The components under each variable are described and marked by factor loading. The result of EFA test is presented in Table 4. Figure 2 is a scatterplot graph which illustrates the correlation between observable variables.

Table 4. EFA Result

Measurement items	Factor loading
Service Quality	KMO=.733, $\chi^2=645.862$, $p<.0001$
SQ1: Comprehensive service	.784
SQ2: Professional service providers	.766
SQ3: Intention to return	.770
Safety	KMO=.883, $\chi^2=1234.277$, $p<.0001$
SA1: Feel safe when staying in Macao	.859
SA2: No discrimination	.844

SA3: Low risk of robbery, theft, etc.		.840
SA4: Willing to travel again next year		.832
SA5: Concern about get COVID		.746
Health Consciousness	KMO=.886, $\chi^2=1385.559$, $p<.0001$	
HC1: Keep healthy is the most important		.859
HC2: I can get enough medical resources in my living city		.873
HC3: Health belief becomes stronger after pandemic		.842
HC4: Willing to take medical treatment		.864
HC5: Look for extra medical resources unavailable in my living city		.752
Motivation	KMO=.878, $\chi^2=1283.668$, $p<.0001$	
MO1: Convenient transportation		.699
MO2: Various entertainment activities		.521
MO3: Lots of shopping mall		.787
MO4: Star hotels provide high-quality service		.799
MO5: Cuisines are appealing and delicious		.802
MO6: Many heritage attractions are located		.767
MO7: Wellness programs are famous		.693
Intention	KMO=.902, $\chi^2=1957.073$, $p<.0001$	
INT1: Go sightseeing for the natural landscape		.881
INT2: Accept wellness treatment		.872
INT3: Learn about the history and culture of Macao		.900
INT4: Relaxation		.898
INT5: Recuperation		.887
Culture Distance	KMO=.907, $\chi^2=1990.801$, $p<.0001$	
CUL1: I am in favor of Macao's culture and likely to		.907

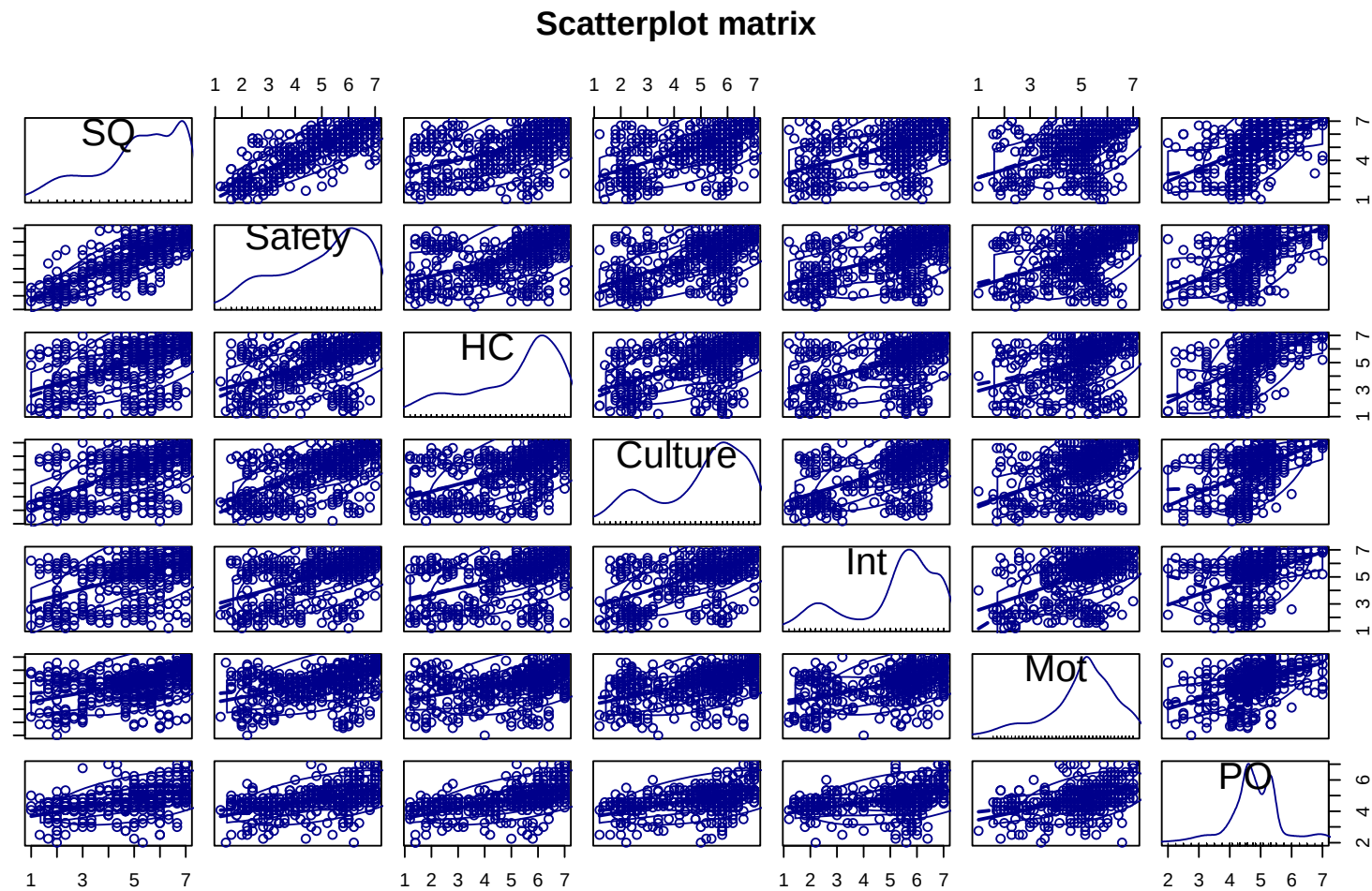
share my experience with others	
CUL2: Macao's culture is attractive to visitors	.902
CUL3: I always feel comfortable when I live in Macao	.897
CUL4: Macao's culture lends itself to relaxation and recuperation	.892
CUL5: Macao has independent but similar culture as mainland China	.847
Potential	KMO=.693, $\chi^2=257.158$, $p<0.001$
PO1: Willing to have a health tourism in Macao	.565
PO2: Medical resource is sufficient to develop health tourism	.729
PO3: Medical care in Macao could be better than my living city	.729
PO4: Available for some unique healthcare service	.755
Note. KMO = Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin; χ^2 =Chi-square.	

Table 5. Descriptive statistics

	Min	Max	μ	Median	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Service quality	1	7	5.10	5.33	(.85)						
2. Safety	1.2	7	5.01	5.40	.83	(.88)					
3. Health consciousness	1.2	7	5.10	5.60	.53	.53	(.89)				
4. Cultural distance	1.2	7	5.05	5.60	.59	.62	.55	(.93)			
5. Intention	1.2	7	5.15	5.60	.51	.53	.49	.59	(.93)		
6. Motivation	1	7	5.04	5.14	.47	.46	.42	.51	.51	(.85)	
7. Potential	2	7	4.84	4.83	.52	.54	.58	.53	.43	.49	(.62)

Note. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Cronbach's α is shown on the main diagonal.



Note. SQ = Service quality, HC = Health consciousness, Culture = Cultural distance, Int = Intention, Mot = Motivation, PO = destination potential

Figure 2. Scatterplot of Correlation

4.6 Assessment of the structural model

Table 6 presents the first-step regression analysis, which helps examine the hypotheses to be standing. The structural equation model (SEM) was analyzed by Amos 26.0 (shown in Table 7). The model fits the data well (goodness-of-fit index: $\chi^2 = 10.875$, $df = 4$, $\chi^2/df = 2.719$, GFI=0.98, AGFI=0.96, NFI=0.99, CFI=0.99, RMR=0.03, RMSEA=0.06). Unexpectedly, tourist perceived safety does not possess significant relationship with motivation to health tourism ($p > 0.05$), which results to the rejection of H4, while cultural distance ($\beta = 0.30$, $p < 0.001$), service quality ($\beta = 0.16$, $p < 0.05$), and health consciousness ($\beta = 0.13$, $p < 0.01$) are all positive predictors to motivation to health tourism, as well as to intention to health tourism. Motivation is examined as a positive antecedent to tourist intention, the relationship between which is significant in statistics. Consequently, five of six hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, H5, H6) proposed in this study are accepted, and only one hypothesis is rejected (H4).

Table 7 summarizes the indirect effect results and indicates that “motivation” indirectly influences destination potential through intention (95% CI = [0.052, 0.131]). And health consciousness (95% CI = [0.003, 0.022]), service quality (95% CI = [0.001, 0.025]) and cultural distance (95% CI = [0.011, 0.036]) could influence destination potential through motivation and tourist intention. Perceived safety and security have no direct effect on motivation, and it could not impact destination potential through either motivation or intention. Another interesting point is that when motivation is not accounted, health consciousness, service quality and cultural distance have a slightly more decisive influence on destination potential.

Table 6. Regression

	β	Std. Err	p
Safety → Motivation	0.08	0.06	0.27
Health consciousness → Motivation	0.13	0.04	**
Service quality → Motivation	0.16	0.05	*
Cultural distance → Motivation	0.30	0.04	***
Health consciousness → Intention	0.16	0.04	***
Motivation → Intention	0.22	0.05	***
Cultural distance → Intention	0.31	0.05	***
Service quality → Intention	0.13	0.04	***
Intention → Potential	0.43	0.02	***

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 7. Path analysis

	β	t	95%CI	
			Lower	Upper
Motivation → Intention → Potential	.091	4.528	.052	.131
Cultural distance → Intention → Potential	.089	4.556	.052	.129
Cultural distance → Motivation → Intention	.074	3.341	.036	.122
Health consciousness → Intention → Potential	.044	2.711	.014	.078
Service quality → Motivation → Intention	.040	2.014	.004	.082
Health consciousness → Motivation → Intention	.037	2.194	.008	.073
Service quality → Intention → Potential	.036	1.985	.002	.074
Cultural distance → Motivation → Intention → Potential	.022	3.339	.011	.036
Safety → Motivation → Intention	.020	1.011	-.016	.063
Service quality → Motivation → Intention → Potential	.012	1.977	.001	.025
Health consciousness → Motivation → Intention → Potential	.011	2.154	.003	.022
Safety → Motivation → Intention → Potential	.006	.994	-.005	.019

Chapter 5 Discussion

This study applied the ABC model as a fundamental theory and sought to create a framework that identified several factors involved within a tourist's attitude and perceived "contextual environment". Motivation, intention and health consciousness are definitely recognized as tourist attitudes, while the contextual environment in this study primarily refers to safety, service quality and cultural distance. The result has been consistent with the previous studies about factors impacting an individual's decision-making on health tourism destinations (Chia & Liao, 2021; Tapia et al., 2022; Zarei & Maleki, 2019).

There are two interesting findings based on this study. First, in the previous studies, safety and security were involved with very crucial factors when it decides to choose a health tourism destination. Chinese tourists usually favor a destination with the image of high security that is defined as few natural disasters and social criminals (Cham et al., 2021). Some tourism statistics have illustrated that tourists' attendance and engagement would decrease, particularly when they realize the destination is unsafe (Gergaud et al., 2018). Although respondents suppose that they generally feel safe when traveling to Macao without concern about encountering robbery or sexual harassment, safety does not influence their motivation to visit Macao for health tourism. Over half of the respondents have visited Macao more than twice, which destination should be familiar to them. A possible conjecture is that gaming city has reported minimal social movement or discrimination to non-local people, which is taken for granted by most Chinese tourists. They could be motivated by other factors except for safety.

Second, it is demonstrated that destination potential managed to be a consequence of intention. Motivation as the antecedent of intention has been commonly admitted by many researchers (Huang & Hsu, 2009; Pratminingsih et al., 2014), while intention often acts as the finish of tourists' perceived destination image or mental activities and the consequence of intention lacks for further studies (Peng et al., 2023; Zhang et al.,

2018). Destination potential examines the degree of recognition and willingness of respondents to the possible development of medical or healthcare activities in Macao, as well as how the tourists conceive Macao's potential to develop health tourism/become a health tourism destination based on the existing tourism industry. As stated by the analysis results of direct and indirect effects, tourists' motivation can positively affect their perception of destination potential through travel intentions.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

Many kinds of literature have ever mentioned how South Korea (Kim, 2021; Kim et al., 2011; Yu et al., 2011; Yu & Ko, 2012), Malaysia (Lee & Fernando, 2015; Moghavvemi et al., 2017; Nilashi et al., 2019) and Iran (Moghimehfar & Nasr-Esfahani, 2011; Momeni et al., 2018; Taheri et al., 2021) develop their health tourism through various cases and perspectives. However, more research is needed to explore whether Macao may be an ideal health tourism destination from stakeholders' and tourists' viewpoints (Lam et al., 2011). With the integration of content and data analysis results, Macao's future path to health tourism seems unequivocal.

Medical tourism might not be the best orientation of health tourism in Macao. Macao has a relatively puny healthcare system, with a limited number of hospitals and healthcare professionals, possibly inaccessible to handle a large quantity of medical tourists seeking treatment. Furthermore, the healthcare system in Macao may need to meet the high standards and expectations of medical tourists, particularly those from developed countries. Many medical tourists travel to other countries seeking specialized medical treatment unavailable in their home countries. Medical expertise and technology in Macao fail to provide such specialized treatment, which would make it less attractive to medical tourists. It is hard to make a U-turn immediately in Macao since the economy is heavily dependent on the tourism industry, which is mainly driven by the gambling industry. The development of the medical tourism industry may be different from the current economic structure of Macao, and it may also harm the current industries in place.

There may be concerns about the ethical implications of medical tourism in Macao. Some critics argue that medical tourism can exploit vulnerable populations and create an unequal distribution of medical resources. Besides, the medical tourism industry may need to be regulated better to ensure that medical tourists receive safe and effective medical treatment.

Following up with tourists' opinions and perceptions about Macao, wellness tourism is the terminal point for a slightly smooth way. First, Macao's unique cultural heritage, which combines traditional Chinese and Portuguese elements, can provide a rich and diverse wellness tourism offering. TCM products and appropriate treatment can attract wellness tourists seeking alternative medical treatment and relaxation. Moreover, the presence of Portuguese culture can provide a unique and exotic experience for wellness tourists. The hospitality industry has the capacity to provide high-quality accommodation and services for wellness tourists. Another phenomenon in the post-pandemic era is the increasing health consciousness among tourists is driving the demand for wellness tourism. The Covid-19 pandemic is horrible enough that it forces people to be more conscious of their health status both physically and mentally. This can be seen as an opportunity for Macao to capitalize on this trend and attract wellness tourists.

6.1 Theoretical contributions

Past literature on the potential of promoting health tourism at Macao was limited to TCM tourism (Lam et al., 2011). This paper shall be one of the few examining Macao's potential to be a health tourism destination from the tourists' perspective from a macroscopic view, and represents a novel way of thinking about Macao's economic diversification and offering a more practical alternative for economic recovery in the post-pandemic era. A qualitative analysis contributes to specifying and then summarizing the advantages and disadvantages of Macao systematically and of great help to future implementation.

Importantly, ABC theory is utilized to classify multiple factors into proper categories, construct a framework and explain tourists' attitudes and contextual environmental conditions to help tourists believe Macao owns the capacity to develop health tourism. It also extends the scope of ABC theory which was broadly applied to measure consumer behavior (Groening et al., 2018; Sharifirad et al., 2013). Two axes measure the attitude and contextual environment in the following coordination graph. The midpoint (4,4) is defined as a neutral attitude or does not favor or is sick of the holistic environment. All the spots are addressed by the average score based on the result of the Likert scale measurement. "Attitude" comprises of "motivation", "intention" and "health consciousness", while "context" involves safety, cultural distance and service quality. Figure 3 presents in the analysis delineates a graphical representation that offers insights into the patterns and inclinations of individuals concerning their travel choices. Distinct quadrants within the scatterplot allow for the interpretation of diverse preferences in travel behavior. The presence of data points in the first quadrant indicates a prevailing inclination towards wellness tourism, where individuals are more likely to embark on journeys that prioritize their well-being and holistic rejuvenation. Besides, data points situated in the fourth quadrant signify a propensity towards medical tourism, implying a strong preference for health-related interventions during travel. Conversely, the second quadrant, characterized by tourists thinking highly of Macao's macroenvironment but not motivated to take a health trip, signifies a realm of indecision where travelers have yet to make definitive choices regarding their trip's focus. Notably, spots in the third quadrant suggests that a group of tourists are not such satisfied with Macao's safety, service quality and they have relatively lower motivation and intention to health tourism than others, reflecting a relatively diminished propensity for health tourism. Figure 4 presents the preference to health tourism between different age clusters. The majority of three groups, interestingly, are willing to consider Macao as a well tourism destination. The elder people who age over 55 years old commonly tend to take a wellness trip, which might be related to their mental health and concept of health. The younger generation displays a noteworthy openness to embracing health tourism. Contrary to expectations, even forms of tourism involving invasive treatments, such as medical tourism, find a willing audience among many individuals. Simultaneously, when juxtaposed with the health priorities of middle-aged and elderly counterparts, the health-related demands of the younger generation appear comparatively less pressing. Evidently, a meager proportion of older individuals exhibit reluctance towards engaging with health tourism, emphasizing its widespread acceptance across age groups.

Furthermore, this study initially defined destination potential from a tourist perspective instead of using an old-fashioned term extracted from destination image and found that tourist attitude and contextual environment factors could influence how an individual identifies the destination's potential. Destination images were utilized and

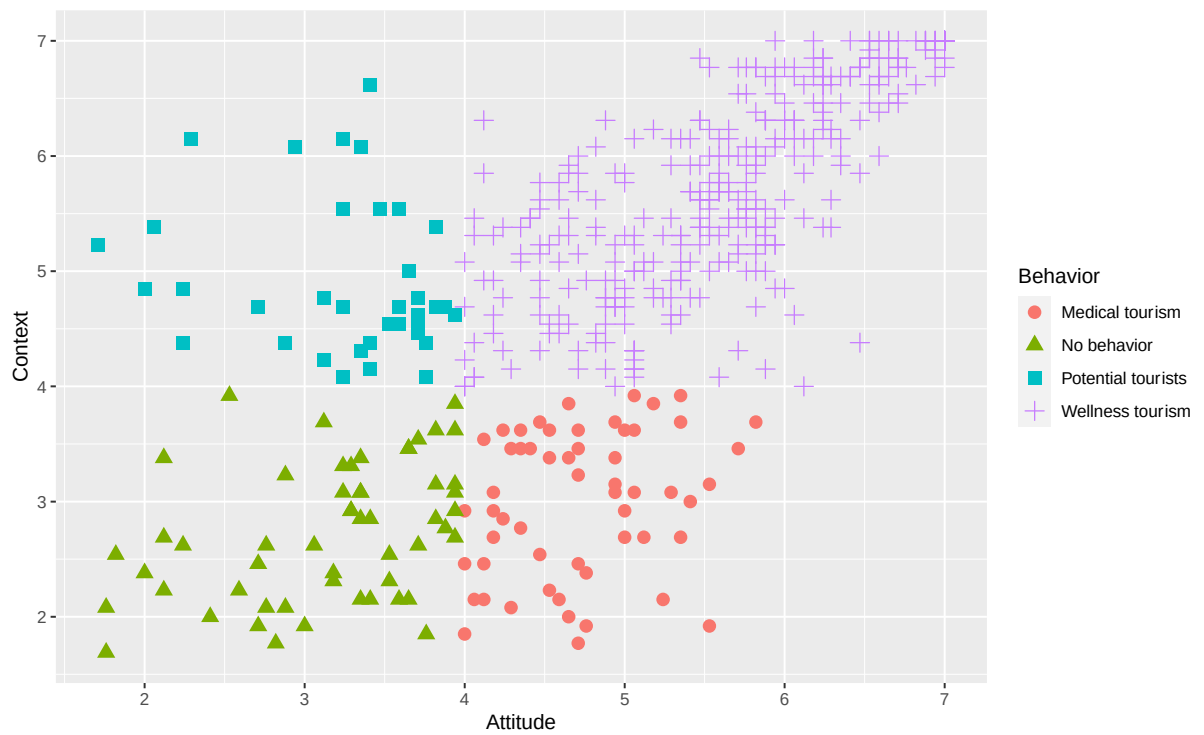


Figure 3. Potential Tourism behavior

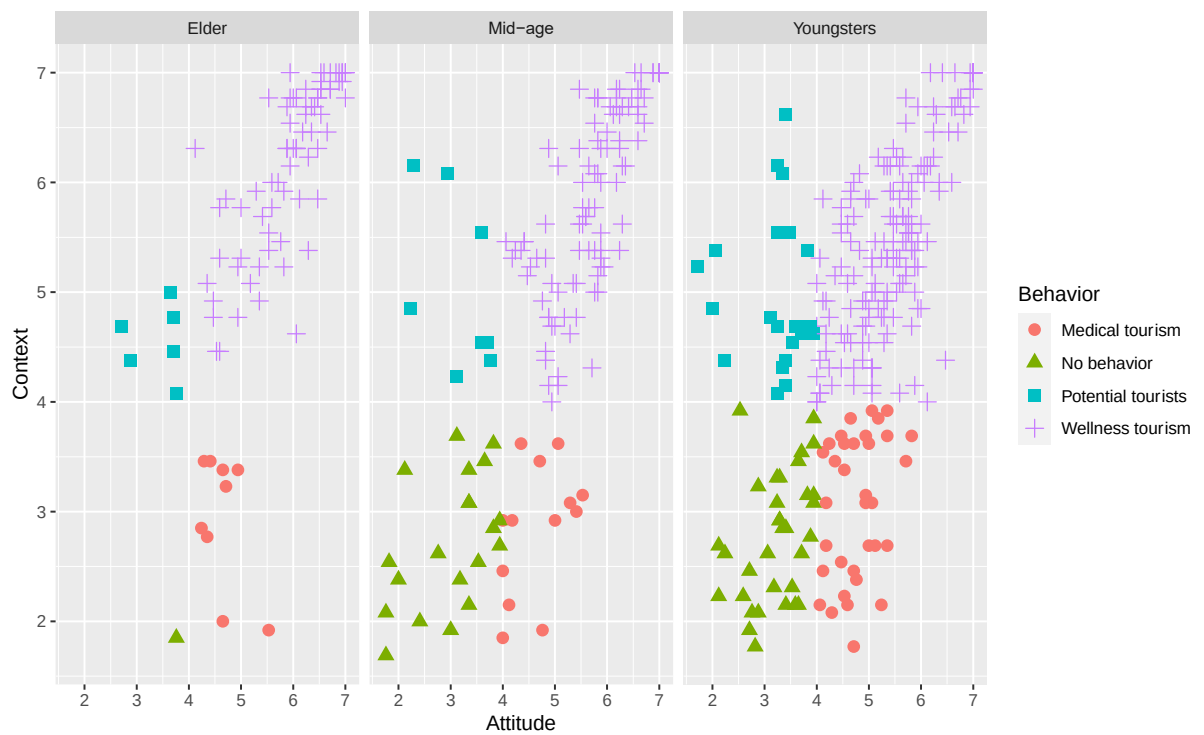


Figure 4. Revised ABC model

developed to specify and quantify the holistic assessment of a tourist to the destination, which is only based on experience and seems subjective but unclear. More research was needed to explore how tourists gauge the destination's potential for future development.

Although several studies agree that cultural similarity is fundamental for tourists to choose a health tourism destination, it has to be mentioned. Some scholars claim that cultural similarity is the least crucial motivating factor for medical tourists to decide where they want to visit (Zarei & Maleki, 2019). It is even believed that cultural similarity is only considered when the tourists are immigrants or foreigners returning to their country of origin (Jaapar et al., 2017). This study argues that Macao's cultural factors must be considered due to the specific historical context (transformation from a Portuguese colony to a SAR of China) and the microscopic research perspective.

6.2 Implication

Macao has several critical advantages in medicine that make it a competitive destination for health tourism. Firstly, Macao has a well-developed healthcare system, offering medical tourists access to quality medical services and advanced medical technology. The medical services in Macao are provided by experienced and highly trained medical professionals, including doctors, nurses, and other healthcare professionals, who provide top-notch medical services. In addition, Macao has a rich cultural heritage in TCM, offering medical tourists access to TCM treatments and therapies that are not widely available in other countries. Some benefits of TCM include its holistic approach to healthcare, emphasis on prevention, and use of natural remedies.

On the other hand, modern medicine, on the other hand, offers some special advantages such as quick access to the obtainment of novel registered medicine globally, attracting Chinese tourists and foreign investment, and serving as a hub for medical training and research in the region. Additionally, TCM and modern medicine can complement each other and offer a comprehensive healthcare system, meeting the population's diverse needs. Macao can leverage these strengths to position itself as a leading healthcare destination in the region.

Another advantage of Macao's healthcare system is its cost-effectiveness compared to other medical tourism destinations. Medical tourists looking for affordable medical treatments can find high-quality medical services at a lower cost in Macao, making it an attractive destination for cost-conscious medical tourists. The multilingual support provided by Macao's medical workforce is another advantage. Many medical professionals in Macao can speak several languages, including English, Chinese, and Portuguese, making communication with medical tourists easier and reducing the language barrier.

Macao's location is also an advantage in the development of health tourism. Macao is conveniently located near Hong Kong and mainland China, making it an accessible destination for medical tourists. This proximity to other major cities also provides medical tourists easy access to medical services and allows them to combine medical treatment with leisure activities.

In conclusion, Macao's combination of quality healthcare, experienced medical professionals, specialization in TCM, cost-effectiveness, multilingual support, and convenient location make it a competitive destination for health tourism. The Macao government and healthcare industry have recognized the potential of health tourism. They actively promote it through international exhibitions and conferences, online platforms, and media campaigns to attract medical tourists worldwide.

6.3 Limitations and future direction

The limitation of the study is inevitable. First, there needs to be more data and research available on the current state of health tourism in Macao and its potential for future development, making it difficult to accurately assess the industry and develop effective strategies for its development. Second, all the respondents invited to participate in the survey were Chinese tourists, and no international tourists were considered due to the border closure policy and the pandemic. Furthermore, more internal and external factors that could influence a tourist destination's transfer to a health tourism destination should be specified and discussed, which may help the study become more comprehensive.

Future research needs to consider the perspective of international tourists more comprehensively. The target market for future health tourism development in Macao should be broader than mainland China and Hong Kong. However, it also needs to refer to and learn from countries that have established a developed health tourism industry. Suggestions from international tourists and demand for wellness tourism can help Macau achieve moderate economic diversification and extend this potentially successful development model to other countries with a single economic structure. Moderate economic diversification is in line with the sustainable development goals pursued by the modern tourism industry, so it is not pursuing a particular city or country.

Appendices

Appendix A. Thematic Coding

Codes	Theme	Interviewee	Frequency
Cantonese, Mandarin and English are available in Macao.	Language	#1 #6 #11	3
Close to mainland China and could keep connected with south-east Asia.	Geographic advantage	#1 #4 #11	3
Convenient transportation.		#4 #11 #12	3
Limited geographic space.		#1 #2 #5 #6 #10 #13 #14	7
Qualified medical services are not available in mainland China.		#1 #7 #8	3
Primary doctor resources are sufficient and even somewhat surplus.	Medical resource	#1 #2 #3 #6 #7 #8 #14 #15	8
Macao lacks qualified and standard medical institutions.		#1	1
Accessible to advanced medical techniques and imported medicines.		#2 #4 #6 #7 #8	5
Staffed beds are not enough.		#1 #7	2
The medical staff needs more training to improve skills, particularly for specialists.		#1 #2 #8 #11 #14 #15	6
Free medical treatment for local residents.		#8	1
Few specialists work for public hospitals.		#8	1
Vaccine injection (e.g., HPV)		#3 #6 #7 #9 #15 #16	6
Public and private medical resources need to be combined.		#1 #2	2
Lack of international medical institution endorsement and large-scale medical institutes.		#2	1
“Internet+” model for medical service.		#6	1
Positioned as world-class tourism and leisure center.	City Positioning	#4 #11	2
awarded as the City of Gastronomy by UNESCO.		#10	1
Wellness tourism is more suitable for Macao.		#2 #9 #10	3
Medical tourism is more suitable for Macao.		#7 #14	2
Health tourism might be a chance for Macao.		#2 #5	2
Health tourism is a step to diversify the tourism industry.		#3 #5 #7 #11 #16	5

The direction of Macao's health tourism should be diverse besides medical tourism.		#8	1
MGTO positioned Macao to be world-class leisure and tourism center.		#10	1
Vast tourism market, especially Chinese tourists.	Market	#3 #6 #7	3
The market for supreme physical examination is expanding.		#4 #8	2
Visitors' intention to take health tourism items in Macao.		#10	1
Reconstruction after the Pandemic		#11	1
Friendly and intolerant society.	Society	#2 #6 #7 #8	4
Insufficient infrastructure and workforce.		#2 #5 #7	3
High reputation based on Macao's World Tourism Brand.		#5	1
Private medical institutions own long history and good reputation.		#1	1
To create a comfortable and even luxurious environment.		#1 #9	2
Increasing health belief among Macanese.		#11	1
Macao is not a society where competition is intense.		#2 #5	2
Chinese traditional medicine is with high popularity.	Chinese traditional medicine	#2 #3 #6 #12 #14	5
Chinese traditional medicine industry is strong in Macao.		#9 #12 #14 #16	4
Wellness tourism integrated with Chinese traditional medical services.		#6 #9 #16	3
Hengqin island offers broad space.	Hengqin Concept	#3 #5 #11 #13 #16	5
Casino hotels provide high-quality service.	Industry	#4	1
Sufficient tourism and leisure facilities.		#11	1
Hotels and resorts are attractive and helpful for physical examinations.		#3	1
Service industry employees are in a suitable manner.		#3 #6	2
The smiling service disappeared in Macao.		#8	1
Cooperation with hospitality and medical industries.		#1 #3 #4 #6 #8 #9 #10 #11 #15	9

Macao’s economy cannot live without the support of the gambling and tourism industry.		#9	1
Hotels as platforms for health tourism items.		#3 #6 #8 #10	4
More enthusiastic service personnel.		#3	1
Comfortable hotel rooms and fantastic sight view.		#3	1
Only the gambling industry and government could push the health tourism.		#9	1
“One Country, Two Systems”		#5 #11	2
Powerful financial base.		#8 #13 #14	3
Low ability to handle emergencies.		#1 #6	2
Effective governmental approval procedure.		#4	1
Extremely conservative administrative philosophy.		#7 #8 #16	3
Absence of relative policy that guidelines on how to develop health tourism.		#6 #7	2
Convenient immigration policy.	Politics & Government	#9 #11 #16	3
The VISA policy of China government affects how long people stay in Macao.		#6	1
Numerous limitations policies.		#1 #6 #7 #16	4
Make use of the GBA concept and relative platform.		#1 #5 #14 #15 #16	5
No supportive policy for private medical institutions.		#4 #7 #8 #14 #15	5
Limitations of legal provisions.		#6 #7	2
Overly strict government regulation.		#6 #7 #8 #10	4
Private medical institutions hope to have an opener market.	Private Medical Institutions	#1	1
Private medical institutions own long history and good reputation.		#1	1
Private medical institutions are developing very slowly.		#2 #4	2
Private medical institutions should play a proactive role in health tourism.		#6 #7 #8	3
Private hospitals could release package medical services.		#4 #6	2
Private medical institutions are supposed to have more space for development.		#1 #4 #6 #7 #8	5

Affordable tip cost and first-rate treatment model.	Cost	#4 #6 #7 #8 #15	5
High labour cost		#4 #13 #16	3
Higher cost matches up with higher-quality service.		#10	1
Healthcare costs should be lower than in Korea and Japan.		#11	1
Cuisine culture blended with health beliefs.	Culture	#2 #9 #10 #11	4
Encourage visitors to try new items.	Guest	#2	1
Pay attention to teenagers' and elders' mental health.		#3	1
Target the high-spending guests who do not want to travel around.		#14 #16	2
Patients' safety prior to everything.		#7	1
Talents from gastronomy and Chinese traditional medicine need to touch up and got cooperation.	Human resource	#10	1
Invite or recruit experienced and professional foreign doctors to work in Macao.		#7 #11 #12 #13 #14	5
Macao needs to cultivate a group of local experts.		#11	1
Industrial professionals must work hard with ambitious intelligence.		#2	1
Many human resources importation for high-quality medical tourism service demand.		#5	1

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