APacCHRIE 2024 Conference
(May 24-26, 2024)

PROCEEDINGS – STAND-UP PAPER PRESENTATION

Paper Presentation
Table of Content

11:00 – 12:30, May 26, 2024, Concurrent Session 4

Customer experience quality and complexity in smart hotels: Findings from a mixed method approach 869
Exploring the perceived performance of smart hotels customers: the impact of value enhancement and service innovation on experience satisfaction and loyalty 873
Unveiling determinants shaping guests' acceptance of 878
singapore smart hotel technology 878
The effects of robot type and task objectivity in robot service failure 895
Generative AI inspiration and hotel recommendation acceptance: Does anxiety over lack of transparency matter? 910
Exploring the effect of conspicuous consumption motives on ambivalent attitudes and intentions to revisit vegan restaurants among non-vegan diners 926
Shared kitchen as a collaborative space for food entrepreneurs 942
Flagship Store Experiences and Customer Attitudes and Behaviors: Application of Franchising Coffee Shops 945
Unlocking clarity: A systematic review of functional beverage in the hospitality industry 951
Exploring cultural hybridity of western classical music and local culture: a case study on Shodoshima, Japan 952
The effects of Chinese tourists' sense of safety on storytelling in outbound tourism 953
Understanding the tourism-environment nexus: New insights from an instrumental variable quantile regression analysis 959
The effects of social factors on online food delivery workers' well-being: An application of complexity theory 967
Cryptocurrencies and central bank digital currency (CBDC): Rethinking the concept of the digital divide in tourism research 973
Lover's Travelling Desynchronicity and Their Destination Satisfaction: The Mediating Role of Destination Image 979
A multi-group analysis of postmodern and traditional tourist groups to explore the impact of cultural heritage revitalisation experiences quality on destination image and destination advocacy 995
The congruence of foodie and gastronomy city: A case study in Macao 1000
Research on the perception of destination coolness among generation Z tourists: Based on self-identity theory 1004
The Effect of Folklore Festival Personality on Tourists' Perception of Festival Identity and Place Attachment: A Study from the Perspective of Emotional Solidarity 1011
Tourism experience in Kyoto City: A comparative analysis before and after COVID-19 utilizing TripAdvisor reviews 1017

Unrealistic optimism: How to make hotel consumers book early 1022
Relationship between work-family conflict and job burnout: Moderating effect of employee resilience 1037
Unlocking wellness tourism: Insights from Malaysian small and medium enterprises (SMEs) 1042
Train with hotel managers: Evaluation of practical experiential learning outcomes for hospitality major students through 360-degree feedback 1048
Hospitality students' occupational embeddedness and career commitment 1062
Do you plan to continue your career in the hospitality industry following the internship? Examining the impacts of regulatory foci and psychological contract violation 1069
How ambition and commitment influence hospitality employees' career withdrawal intentions: A latent change score modeling approach 1084
Enhancing personality assessments for better hiring decisions: Interviewer-reported, self-reported, and machine learning-inferred? 1085
The coping mechanism for the perception of overqualification in the hospitality industry 1099
Exploring tourist perceptions and experiences: A study of beach tourism in Phuket Island 1115
Can attractions influence decisions to build more hotels in the community? Evidence of 2.4 km^2 spatial analysis from Thailand 1116
What are the most important to me? Exploring outbound study destination of Hong Kong for Mainland Chinese people 1121
From the Individual to the Collective: Analyzing the Self-Expansion Behavior of K-POP Fans' Music Tourism Journey 1127
Effect of Participants' Perceptions of Festival Coolness on Memorable Festival Experience, Momentary Happiness, Destination Love, and Destination Advocacy 1138

13:30 – 15:00, May 26, 2024, Concurrent Session 5

Optimizing resources for smart tourism development: A sequential explanatory study of selected smart cities in the Philippines 1142
Evaluation of enabling and deterring policies for island sustainable tourism 1155
Extending the taxonomy of tourism products 1167
Creative Lanna in value vo-vreation: A developing tourist destination of Phrae Province, Thailand 1172
Residents' behavioral intention towards tourism in globally important agricultural heritage systems 1186
Level of implementation on the accessibility compliance for PWDs among selected hotels in Muntinlupa City 1191
Inclusive hospitality experiences: Perspectives from families with autism spectrum disorder 1206
Exploring the impact of the digital nomadic lifestyle on destination Image and travel intentions: A moderated mediation analysis of perceived risk 1213
Sustainable farm-to-table dining as a travel motivator in the Philippines 1221
Unpacking tourist gaze in heritage hotels using text-mining of online reviews 1238
Navigating online review persuasion: The interplay of spatial distance and message type 1243
Near or distant? The impact of the spacial distance and review type on visiting intentions 1253

Online hotel reviews and travellers' two-phased journey: Investigating boundary conditions for the decoy effect in hotel booking platforms ... 1264
Healing experiences at resort hotels and customers' eudaimonic well-being ... 1265
A study of destination determinants of sauna tourism in japan: From a questionnaire survey ... 1280
Slow-wellness destination for holistic Well-Being: A novel conceptual paradigm ... 1285
The impact of wellness tourism experiences on tourists' inspiration and subsequent travel decision-making ... 1312
The Resilience of the Luxury Retail Industry in Macau Amidst the Pandemic: Insights into Consumer Behavior ... 1321
The spotlight of chinese middle-class spenders: A comparison between luxury products and luxury hotel services ... 1340
Silent hotel customers: A study of the active communication behavior of customers with high social anxiety ... 1348
Food communication ritual in the Filipino quick service restaurant in the United States of America (USA) ... 1358
Impact of face consciousness on tourist's green purchase behavior: Norm Activation Theory perspective ... 1369
Will joining the casino loyalty program lead to real customer loyalty? The effects of switching barriers and brand trust ... 1374
The attributes and formation of slow tourism experiences: A study of recreational snow-sport tourists in Japan ... 1381
Discovering regional functions at the travel destination: Application of LDA modeling ... 1393
Differentiating resident attitude towards domestic tourist: A segmentation analysis ... 1406
Parent-child study tour under the framework of service design: Enhancing parental roles and addressing Dual-subject needs ... 1423
Exploring Confucian Cultural Values and Customer Experiences in Luxury Hotels: Moments of Magic and Mistrial ... 1437
Assessing the impacts of free-roaming animals on tourist experiences: A cultural ecosystem services and disservices perspective ... 1450
Hostel attributes for foot pilgrims: Evidence from the camino de santiago ... 1455
Small business orientation of local lodging companies under the growth of the inbound tourism market: Quantitative analysis of firm performance trends in Kyoto ... 1457

15:45 – 17:15, May 26, 2024, Concurrent Session 6

Winning the race for competitive advantages through asymmetric dynamics of service quality: Introducing theory-driven asymmetric impact competitor analysis ... 1468
Causal inference for observational tourism and hospitality research: ... 1469
An application of the fractional imputation (FI) approach ... 1469
Could the Covid-19 have been managed differently: restaurant perspectives on operating in a hypothetical restriction-less Covid-19 environment ... 1484
Guestroom aesthetics and Booking intentions: The moderation of travel goal and expertise ... 1488
Battle with restaurant No-Shows: Optimizing cancellation policies and awareness campaigns for restaurants ... 1495

What factors play different roles in shaping attitudes vs. behavioral intentions toward food donation among restaurant managers: Application of behavioral reasoning theory 1508
Transformation toward responsible management: The case of domestic hotel 1523
Perceived job characteristics of the hotel industry: An application of the job characteristics model to turnover intention 1536
Development and effects analysis of Adult Sensory Education applying the Sapere method .. 1543
Dialects Drive Destinations: The effect of dialects in PR videos on the intention to visit Kyoto 1548
Catalyser or barrier? The roles of identity in digital nomads' e-WOM of a destination: Employing a behavioural reasoning theory 1552
The impact of social media on Filipino Gen Zs' travel decisions and intentions 1565
More is better? Effectiveness of auxiliary information on online travel agencies 1579
Sex tourism: Exploring the implication of transactional sex in the lived experiences, motivations and health-risks of transgender women 1592
Research on the capacity building of gateway communities: A case study of communities in qilian mountain national park, China 1610
The role of market knowledge in leadership- service delivery innovation relationship in travel agency industry 1625
Defensive versus Adaptive: Examining strategic decisions on short-term rental property design 1637
Understanding hospitality students' intentions to reduce food waste: Integrating cognitive and non-cognitive factors within the TPB-TIB framework 1638
Tourists' intention to use the hanok stay around the historical and cultural sites 1651
Hotel booking intentions among Chinese visitors in Thailand 1663
Families' stress coping strategies when traveling with children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder 1664
The role of changes in the relationship between leader-member exchange and newcomer deviance: A latent growth modeling approach 1669
Striving for performance bottom-line while being family-oriented? Employee responses to supervisor's bottom-line mentality and family-supportive behavior 1673
Does the foodservice environment affect employees' lung cancer susceptibility? 1682
Fast or slow: Impact of ChatGPT's response time on consumer evaluation 1688

Customer experience quality and complexity in smart hotels: Findings from a mixed method approach

Qiu Xuejie
School of Hotel and Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Hao Fei
School of Hotel and Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Li Hengyun
School of Hotel and Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Abstract:
Ensuring customer experience quality (CEQ) in smart hotels is a pressing issue. This study, grounded in complexity theory and cue theory, explores factors influencing CEQ in smart hotels, analyzing causal combinations and asymmetric relationships. Customers prioritize eight aspects, with manual, intelligent services, and supporting environment as key conditions.

Keywords: Smart Hotels; Customer Experience Quality (CEQ); Content Analysis; fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA); Configuration Path

1. Introduction

The development and construction of smart hotels is a key means to adapt to the upgrading of tourism consumption in the digital era. It is also an important way to promote the recovery and sustainable development of the hotel industry under the normalization of the epidemic. How to effectively ensure customer experience quality (CEQ) is a hot issue of concern for smart hotel management and academia. The existing literature provides limited insights into CEQ in smart hotels, which cannot meet the intense management practices required by reality. However, CEQ in the context of smart hotels is a very complex system that is the result of coupling multiple factors. Previous studies have mostly focused on the net effect of variables, making it difficult to answer questions such as which factors are acting together and in what way for the emergence of a certain outcome. Based on complexity theory and cue theory, this study adopts the configuration path and takes smart hotels as the research object.

This paper aims to analyze smart hotels, explore factors influencing CEQ, and propose strategies to optimize customer experience quality. Specific research objectives include:

(1) identifying the evaluation factors of smart hotel customers;

(2) determining the core components or necessary conditions that influence customers' positive experiences;

(3) exploring the configurations that optimize customer experience quality.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Smart hotel

Our lifestyles and the hotel sector are changing as a result of technology (Kim & Han, 2020). The fields of artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, IoT, VR, and AR have revolutionized customer service and aided in the shift of tourism and hotel businesses from "Internet +" to "Smart +," allowing for the reengineering of business processes (Kong et al., 2023). A smart hotel ecosystem has been conceptualized by Buhalis and Leung (2018) to create a link between stakeholders, hotel operators, and patrons. Smart hotels are defined as lodging establishments that integrate a range of cutting-edge technologies and provide guests with unconventional and technology-focused experiences (Wong et al., 2024).

2.2. Customer experience quality(CEQ)

In the service sector, the focus has shifted from Service Quality (SQ) to CEQ. As living standards rise, consumers prioritize spiritual fulfillment over material needs, seeking experiences that satisfy their unique emotional desires (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). The hotel industry, a prime example of an experience-based service environment (Ryu et al., 2020), offers a comprehensive customer journey, encompassing interactions with products, services, and organizations. These interactions shape customers' perceptions and evaluations (Gentile et al., 2007). The challenge lies in pinpointing the specific characteristics that enhance the experience and understanding how they influence consumer perceived value (Walls et al., 2013).

3. Methodology

This study employs NVivo 12.0 for qualitative content analysis of online reviews, delving into the implicit antecedents of customer experience quality. FsQCA is used to capture the intricate interrelationships within the emergence of customer experience quality in smart hotels. Guided by theoretical sampling, six representative hotels(Flyzoo Hotel in Hangzhou, China; Chase Walker Hotel in Taiwan, China; Henn-na Hotel in Tokyo, Japan; Aloft Cupertino in California, USA; Yotel in New York, USA; and Yotel in Singapore) offering intelligent services are selected, and their user experience quality data is collected from multiple social media platforms(Ctrip, Fliggy, TripAdvisor, Agoda, and Booking.com). Using Java and adhering to http protocol, 39,754 original reviews are retrieved, providing comprehensive data coverage for the analysis.

4. Results

A mixed research approach was used in this study. First, the influencing factors were extracted by coding layer by layer from the online review materials of smart hotels through content analysis. Then, the raw data are transformed into standardized data after coding assignment. The coded data are analyzed using fsQCA to obtain effective configuration paths for CEQ in different smart hotel contexts. Finally, the research results of this thesis are obtained as follows. (1) Customers' evaluation of the smart hotel experience focuses on eight aspects, including manual service, perceived value, safeguard service, location, intelligent service, self-motivation, supporting environment, and food and beverage quality. (2) Any single factor cannot be a necessary condition for optimizing customer experience. However, it is worth noting that low-value attribute is an "almost always necessary" condition, which means that low-value attribute is closely related to non-high CEQ. (3) Sufficient conditions analysis identified nine different groupings of eight determinants that produce high or non-high CEQ. There are two two-factor-driven configurations and two three-factor-driven configurations in the high CEQ path. Manual service, intelligent service, and supporting environment mostly appear as core conditions of CEQ, while value attributes, security service, geographical location, self-motivation, and beverage quality usually appear as marginal conditions. (4) The paths of CEQ of smart hotels exist in two directions of promotion and hindrance, and the study identifies a total of six paths that can achieve high CEQ of smart hotels and three paths that can achieve non-high CEQ.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Based on a qualitative perspective, this thesis exploratively identifies the dimensions of customer experience evaluation concerns in the context of smart hotels and systematically and effectively mines the decision model of smart hotel evaluation, which enriches the theoretical connotation of CEQ and expands the research horizon of topics related to smart hotels. This study addresses the limitations of the existing literature by providing a novel conceptual and empirical framework that complements the important practical knowledge of customer experience management in smart hotels. In addition, the research method of fsQCA is applied to deeply explore the homogeneity of CEQ in smart hotels, focusing on the synergistic effect and priority of multiple factors of hotel experience. It enhances scholars to have a more comprehensive and systematic cognitive structure in this field and provides new ideas for empirical research on smart services and customer experience in hotels.

REFERENCES

Buhalis, D., & Leung, R. (2018). Smart hospitality—interconnectivity and interoperability towards an ecosystem. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 71, 41–50. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2017.11.011

Gentile, C., Spiller, N., & Noci, G. (2007). How to sustain the customer experience: An overview of experience components that co-create value with the customer. *European Management Journal*, 25(5), 395–410. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2007.08.005

Kim, J.J., & Han, H.(2020). Hotel of the future: exploring the attributes of a smart hotel adopting a mixed-methods approach. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 37(7), 804–822. https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2020.1835788

Kong, H., Wang, K., Qiu, X., Cheung, C., & Bu, N. (2023). 30 years of artificial intelligence (AI)research relating to the hospitality and tourism industry. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 35(6), 2157–2177. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-03-2022-0354

Pine, B.J., & Gilmore, J.H. (1998). Welcome to the experience economy. *Harvard business review*, 76(4), 97–105.

Ryu, K., Roy, P. A., Kim, H. (Lina), & Ryu, H. B. (2020). The resident participation in endogenous rural tourism projects: a case study of Kumbalangi in Kerala, India. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 37(1), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2019.1687389

Walls, R. (2013). A cross-sectional examination of hotel consumer experience and relative effects on consumer values. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 32, 179–192. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2012.04.009

Wong, I.A., Xiao, Y., Lin, Z.(C)., Sun, D., Huang, J.(D)., & Liu, M. (2024). Smart hotels but not necessarily smart decisions: the smartness paradox. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, ahead-of-print (ahead-of-print). https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-06-2023-0832

Exploring the perceived performance of smart hotels customers: the impact of value enhancement and service innovation on experience satisfaction and loyalty

Anna Dai
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Macau University of Science and Technology

Lin Yingtong
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Macau University of Science and Technology

Wei Zuoneng
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Macau University of Science and Technology

Abstract:
With the popularization of mobile internet and artificial intelligence technology, smart hotels have gradually become one of the development trends of future hotels, providing guests with a better accommodation experience, improving hotel service quality and customer satisfaction, and reducing labor costs. Therefore, this study aims to understand the perceived performance of consumers towards smart hotels and explore the role of perceived performance in customer value enhancement and perceived service innovation, while considering the impact on experience satisfaction and experience loyalty.

Keywords: Smart hotels, Perceived performance, Value enhancement, Perceived service innovation

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background

The technological revolution has taken over various aspects of people's daily lives (Anderson et al., 2018), and the hotel industry cannot avoid the infiltration of new technologies (Brochado et al., 2016). Smart hotels can be described as accommodation businesses that actively and comprehensively utilize advanced technology to interact with guests and provide services, while minimizing manpower (Piccoli et al., 2017).

In recent years, research on smart hotels has mainly focused on the preparation stage of the hotel industry's decision to adopt new technologies, as well as estimating the potential impact on consumers through technological attributes. This study will explore the perceived performance and value enhancement of smart hotels from the perspective of consumers, as well as the impact of service innovation on experience satisfaction and loyalty.

1.2. Research Purpose

First, understand the main factors that affect the perceived performance of tourists towards smart hotels, as well as the relative importance of these factors, in order to understand the impact on the value enhancement of tourists and perceived service innovation. Second, based on the perception of tourists towards the value enhancement and service innovation of smart hotels, and the impact on tourist experience satisfaction and loyalty, practical measures are proposed to retain repeat customers for smart hotels, as well as relevant suggestions for hotel development.

2. Literature Review

***2.1.** Smart Hotels*

This study adopted the practical commercial definition of smart hotels proposed by Jaremen et al. (2016). A smart hotel refers to a hotel that implements advanced information and communication technology to achieve service automation and improve customer service efficiency, which is more related to intelligent technology than to intelligent organizations.

***2.2.** Perceived Performance*

Capturing the perceived performance formed by specific attributes can enable practitioners to establish their strategies and maximize the consumer experience (Severt et al., 2007). This study takes the sub dimensions of service quality and SERVQUAL as performance attributes from the consumer perspective, and incorporates sustainability, fun, and aesthetics into the construction of perceived performance dimensions for smart hotels (Kim &Han, 2020; Papagiannidis & Davlembayeva, 2022).

***2.3.** Value Enhancement*

The value in management literature can be generally divided into shareholder value, stakeholder value, and customer value. From these values, customer value is considered the fundamental source of the other two forms of value (Treacy & Wiersima, 1995). Numerous studies have emphasized the importance of customer value in driving success, as well as its relationship with other core concepts.

***2.4.** Perceived Service Innovation*

Service innovation means new things that are beneficial to the target audience, creating value for current and future customers, and bringing competitive advantages to the enterprise (Parr, 2020). Although many hotel industry brands have adopted different types of technologies, there is not much research on how hotel industry guests perceive the various technologies adopted in the hotel industry.

***2.5.** Experience Satisfaction and Loyalty*

Satisfaction is an evaluation of the quality of all previous relationships between buyers and sellers (Crosby et al., 1990). The experiential satisfaction discussed in this study is an extension of the concept of service satisfaction, but experiential satisfaction focuses on consumers' overall evaluation of the post consumption experience. Jones and Sasser (1995) identified two types of customer loyalty: long-term loyalty and short-term loyalty. Long term loyalty is true loyalty, and customers are not easily influenced by external factors to change their views on products or services, while short-term loyalty is the opposite.

3. Methodology

3.1. Sample Source

In the selection of samples, it is necessary to select tourists who have stayed in smart hotels within one year as respondents. This study selected one hotel in each of the three cities in mainland China that meets the standards of smart hotels for questionnaire distribution.

3.2. *Questionnaire Design and Collection*

This study completed the distribution of questionnaires to respondents offline in the form of paper questionnaires. The questionnaire is divided into two parts in total. The first part is the measurement of the variables proposed in this study. The second part is the demographic data section.

3.3. Questionnaire Prediction and Distribution

This study conducted a pre-test of the questionnaire and ultimately received 95 valid questionnaires. By using SPSS software to test the reliability of the data, this study found that the predicted results of the questionnaire met the standard values. The formal testing of this study resulted in a total of 496 valid questionnaires. Perform statistical analysis on the collected valid questionnaire data using SmartPLS 4.0 software.

4. Results

4.1. Research Findings

This study found that perceived performance has a positive impact on value enhancement and perceived service innovation, perceived service innovation has a positive impact on value enhancement and experience satisfaction, value enhancement has a positive impact on experience satisfaction and experience loyalty, and experience satisfaction has a positive impact on experience loyalty. The hypothesis test result of the positive impact of perceived service innovation on experience loyalty is not supported.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and implications

Firstly, this study for the first time incorporates the concept of perceived performance into research related to smart hotels, and explores it by combining satisfaction and loyalty.

Furthermore, this study provides theoretical support for promoting the upgrading of the smart hotel industry, and also helps to expand research on the combined impact of new technologies with the hotel industry, as well as in the fields of service marketing and management. In addition, this study proposes the following suggestions for hotel practitioners: enhance the fun, ease of use, interactivity, and sense of control of the user experience, emphasize sustainable development and efficiency, introduce smart technology into daily management, strengthen technological innovation and customer participation, optimize services through data-driven approaches, focus on target customer preferences.

5.2. Research Implications

This study examines the consumer behavior of customers and their perceived performance towards smart hotels from a macro perspective, which helps promote interdisciplinary communication and cooperation. This study helps smart hotels better meet customer needs and provide more personalized services, thereby improving customer satisfaction and loyalty to the hotel. In addition, this study contributes to promoting digital transformation of hotels and advancing the entire industry.

5.3. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

Firstly, the conclusions of this study have certain regional limitations. Furthermore, this study did not conduct a horizontal analysis and comparison by combining individual demographic information. Future research can further analyze the perspectives of different population characteristic samples on smart hotels. Finally, future research can explore the impact of personal technology preferences and attitudes on customer evaluation of smart hotels.

REFERENCES

Anderson, J. C., & Narus, J. A. (1998). Business marketing: understand what customers value. Harvard business review, 76, 53-67.

Brochado, A., Rita, P., & Margarido, A. (2016). High tech meets high touch in upscale hotels. Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology, 7(4), 347-365.

Jaremen, D., Jędrasiak, M., & Rapacz, A. (2016). The concept of smart hotels as an innovation on the hospitality industry market-case study of Puro Hotel in Wrocław. Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego Ekonomiczne Problemy Turystyki, 36(4).

Kim, J. J., Han, H., & Ariza-Montes, A. (2021). The impact of hotel attributes, well-being perception, and attitudes on brand loyalty: Examining the moderating role of COVID-19 pandemic. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 62, 102634.

Piccoli, G., Lui, T. W., & Grün, B. (2017). The impact of IT-enabled customer service systems on service personalization, customer service perceptions, and hotel performance. Tourism Management, 59, 349-362.

Severt, D., Wang, Y., Chen, P. J., & Breiter, D. (2007). Examining the motivation, perceived performance, and behavioral intentions of convention attendees: Evidence from a regional conference. Tourism management, 28(2), 399-408.

Unveiling determinants shaping guests' acceptance of singapore smart hotel technology

Choo, Poh Wai
Hospitality and Tourism Studies
SHATEC, The International Hotel and Tourism School (Singapore)

Seah, Lim Jin Victor
Hospitality and Tourism Studies
SHATEC, The International Hotel and Tourism School (Singapore)

Joshua, Isaac
Hospitality and Tourism Studies
SHATEC, The International Hotel and Tourism School (Singapore)

Abstract:

The objective of this study is to provide theoretical justification for the three determining factors of technology readiness (TR), perceived trust (PT), and anthropomorphic robot (AR) having a positive influence on the technology acceptance model (TAM). Thus, shaping guest attitude (ATT) leads to guest intention to use (ITU) smart hotels. This study has reviewed thirty (30) related literature published between 1986 and 2024 through the systematic three-stage meta-analysis method. The assimilated meta-analysis result has identified a TAM research gap. To close the gap, this study proposes that TAM should be the mediating variable between TR, PT, AR, and ATT leading to ITU Singapore Smart Hotel Technology. The proposed extended TAM provides academic and practical contributions to an effective guest acceptance to use Singapore smart hotel technology which complements Singapore's 'Smart Hotel Technology Guide 2019' for hoteliers and researchers to overcome problems from increased ASIAN market competition, manpower shortage, and changing customer expectations.

Keywords: Technology Readiness, Perceived Trust, Anthropomorphic Robot, Extended Technology Acceptance Model, Attitude, Intention to Use.

1. Introduction

This study aims to improve guest behavioral intention to use (ITU) Singapore Smart Hotel Technology. Owing to the need to remedy the problem of increased ASIAN market competition, manpower shortage, and evolving customer expectations (STB & SHA, 2019), this study attempts to design an effective extended technology acceptance model (TAM) for hoteliers and researchers to increase the feasibility of exploring and applying new extended knowledge related to the determining factors of guests' acceptance to use Singapore smart hotel technology. In the Singapore hotel industry transformation map 2025 (MTI, 2022 Oct), hotel operators can look forward to a full suite of resources such as a smart hotel technology guide and hotel industry digital plan to help in their smart hotel transformation journey (IMDA, 2018). In addition, the Singapore Hotel Association (SHA) formed the Hotel Innovation Committee (HIC) to regulate 'smart hotel technology guide 2019' to help hotels with the know-how to kick-start their smart hotel transformation through the smart hotel technology roadmap (STB, 2017 Nov) in becoming 'manpower lean; eliminating non-value-adding processes and activities; driving the top line efficiently and effectively' (STB & SHA, 2019). To develop a continuous talent pipeline to fuel the smart hotel industry, SHATEC has an unwavering commitment to providing education, training, and innovation for fresh school leavers and career switchers (SHATEC, 2023). This will play an important role in Singapore's development as a Smart Nation in 2030 (Smart Nation Singapore, 2021).

The accommodation sector is a pillar of the tourism industry, calling for innovation and technological improvements to become 'smart.' (Yang, Song, Cheung, & Guan, 2021). The accommodation sector in Singapore contributed a 16% share of tourism receipts (TR), which was S$3.31 billion from January to September 2023. (STAN, 2024a). Based on STAN (2024a), accommodation was the second major contributor to tourism receipts (Figure 1). For 2024, the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) projects visitor arrivals to reach between 15 and 16 million, contributing US$26 to US$27.5 billion in tourism receipts (Raguraman, 2024). Singapore has 449 licensed hotels ranging from small (<100 rooms) to medium (101-299 rooms) and large (>300 rooms) (STAN, 2024b).

Figure 1: Jan- Sept 2023 Tourism Receipts by Industry
Source: Singapore Tourism Analytic Network (2024a)
A higher level of smart hotel operation technology improves employee productivity and guest service delivery, ultimately increasing organisational profitability (Iranmanesh, Ghobakhloo, Nilashi, Tseng, Yadegaridehkordi & Leung, 2022). The rise of smart hotels is to meet the evolving needs and preferences of today's tech-savvy guests, which is a necessity in the 21st century (Özen & Katlav, 2023). Guests' evolving needs **and** preferences should not be ignored while smart hotel operators in Singapore identify and explore next-generation system

capabilities and technological solutions suited to each organization's needs. The research relating to guests' evolving needs to accept the level of smartness of hotels is underexplored (Han, Hou, Wu, & Lai, 2021). Singapore hotel operators should not assume that all smart hotel technology products (e.g. anthropomorphic robots, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, self-service software, and Internet of Things) adoptions in each hotel division especially the rooms division and food and beverage division will meet the guests' evolving needs from various geographical segments of the Singapore tourism market. Hoteliers and researchers should focus on the guests evolving need to use smart hotel technology products from five (5) of Singapore's key revenue-generated tourism markets (figure 2), led by Indonesia (2.3 million), China (1.4 million), Malaysia (1.1 million), Australia (1.1 million), and India (1.1 million) in 2023 (STAN, 2024a).

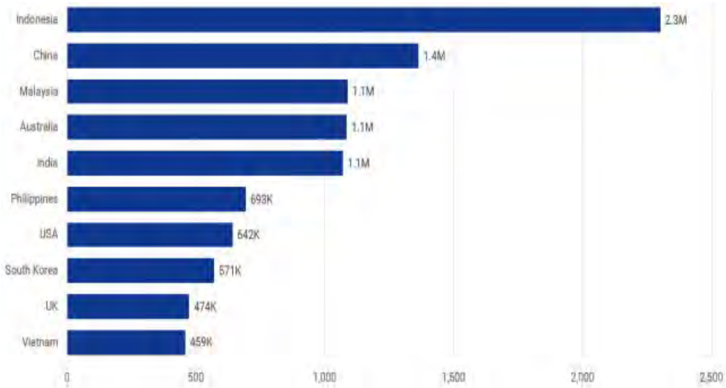


Figure 2: Visitor Arrival Markets (Jan -Dec 2023)
Source: Singapore Tourism Analytic Network (2024a)

This research aims to perform a systematic literature review of articles published in the selected academic journals that provide high-quality quantitative evidence-informed management knowledge (Transfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003) of relevant determining factors influencing guests' acceptance of Singapore smart hotel technology. A systematic three-stage meta-analysis (Ain, Giovanni, DeLone, & Waheed, 2019) is the methodology used for this study to ensure a structured, logical, and transparent approach to the development of SIX (6) research questions.

(1) Does technology readiness (TR) influence the technology acceptance model (TAM)?
(2) Does perceived trust (PT) influence the technology acceptance model (TAM)?
(3) Does anthropomorphic robot (AR) influence the technology acceptance model (TAM)?
(4) Does the technology acceptance Model (TAM) influence the attitude (ATT)?
(5) Does attitude (ATT) influence intention to use (ITU)?
(6) Does the technology acceptance model (TAM) mediate the relationship between technology acceptance (TR), perceived trust (PT) anthropomorphic robot (AR), and attitude (ATT)?

The remaining part of the paper is organised as follows: section 2.0, literature review; section 3.0, methodology and research; section 4.0, results; section 5.0, discussion, and conclusion.

2. Literature Review

A literature review provides the basis for current knowledge, allowing this study to identify relevant theories, methods, and gaps (Snyder, 2019) in the existing TAM research (Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1989), thus this study has proposed a new extended TAM conceptual module with SIX (6) research questions to review the literature.

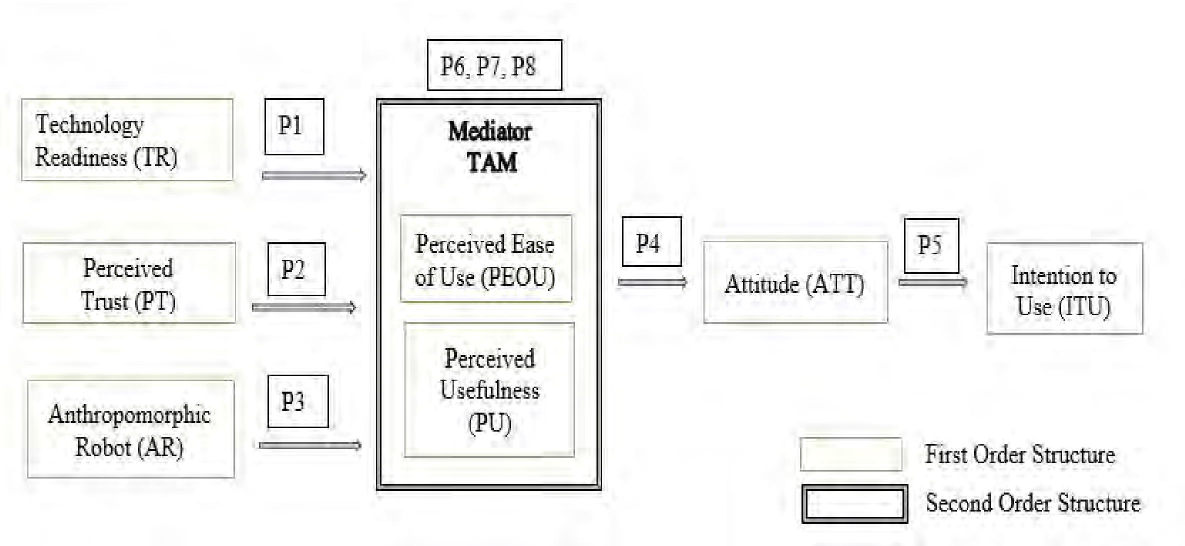


Figure 3. Proposed Extended TAM conceptual module.

2.1 Technological Acceptance Model (TAM)

Technological Acceptance Model (TAM) was introduced by Davis (1986). The primary objective of TAM underpins the acceptance of technology. TAM adopts the theory of reasoned action (TRA) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). The original TAM has a gap in providing tangible guidance to engage users to adopt emerging technology acceptance (Saari, Tossavainen, Kaipainen., & Mäkinen, 2022). Although TAM has been criticized for its knowledge gap (s) and its oversaturation (Sun, Lee, Law, & Hyun, 2020), the underpinning theoretical foundation of TAM has been widely extended to include virtual reality (Sagnier, Loup-Escande, Lourdeaux, Thouvenin, & Valléry, 2020), artificial intelligence (Sohn & Kwon, 2020), social robots (Saari et al.,2022), e-learning (Wang, Dai, Zhu, Yu, & Gu, 2023) and smart hotels (Çallı, Çallı, Çallı, & Çallı., 2022).

In TAM, perceived ease of use (PEOU) is also postulated as it influences perceived usefulness (PU) and both variables influence a positive attitude of users (ATT) (Kim & Han 2022) leading to guests' intention to use (ITU) smart hotel technology (Çallı et al., 2022).

2.1.1 Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU)

Perceived ease of use is defined as “the extent to which the potential user believes the system or technology would be free of effort” (Davis et al., 1989). Calli et al. (2022) acknowledged that the quality of hotel-service robots should be easy to use and easier to learn to use within a short time.

2.1.2 Perceived Usefulness (PU)

Perceived usefulness is the 'degree to which the individual user believes that using a technology would enhance their performance' (Davis et al., 1989). Users would use a system that they believe would increase their performance. On the contrary, users would decline to use a system that they believe would decrease their performance. Calli et al. (2022) acknowledged that quality-of-hotel-service robots should be useful in many things, time-saving, enhancing speed and efficiency of task (s).

2.2 Determining Factors of Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

Limited studies have investigated the relationship between determining factors and TAM framework in the smart hotel context (Yang, Song, Cheung, & Guan, 2021; Huang, 2022; Odekerken-Schröder, Mennens, Steins, & Mahr, 2022). This study posits the three (3) determining factors representing TPA as shown below.

Technology readiness (TR) (Yang et al., 2021)
Perceived trust (PT) (Huang, 2022)
Anthropomorphism robot (AR) (Odekerken-Schröder et al., 2022)
The proposed relationship between TPA and TAM (Figure 3) is deemed appropriate for this study. The justification for TPA is organised as follows leading to the attitude (ATT) and intention to use (ITU) smart hotel technology.

2.2.1 Technology Readiness (TR)

Technology Readiness (TR) refers to consumers' propensity to embrace and use new technologies (Parasuraman and Colby, 2015). High-tech savvy guests are young and early middle-aged adults, and they have higher TR with the perceived usefulness of smart hotel technology (Yang, Song, Cheung, & Guan, 2021). Singapore smart hotel operators should explore the know-how high tech-savvy customers feel towards smart technology-based hotel amenities to predict their technology readiness to accept it. Smart technology-based hotel amenities with a higher level of guest comfort could differentiate a hotel (Kim & Han, 2022). Thus, Singapore smart hotel operators can overcome market competition, manpower shortage, and changing high-tech savvy customer expectations (STB & SHA, 2019).

2.2.2 Perceived Trust (PT)

Perceived Trust (PT) encompasses the guests' belief in the reliability of services or information hotel service robots provide regarding quality, privacy protection, and security (Huang, 2022). Perceived trust has been applied to online websites, tourism, and self-service hotels (Huang, 2022). Perceived trust has been examined as a key factor in accepting emerging artificial intelligence (AI) technology (Choung, David, & Ross. 2023). To increase perceived trust (PT), hotel operators should explore and design interactive hotel robots that are easy to use, useful, and helpful regardless of age group (Huang, 2022).

2.2.3 Anthropomorphic Robot (AR)

Anthropomorphic robots (AR) are designed with the capability to have thoughts and convey emotions to create customer value (Odekerken-Schröder, Mennens, Steins, & Mahr, 2022). Anthropomorphism describes a main feature of humanoid robots and has its roots in the Greek words “anthropos” (human) and “morphe” (shape or form) (Ding, Lee, Legendre, & Madera, 2022). AR is designed to support humans in undertaking mechanical and analytical tasks (Tuomi & Ascenção,2023). Thus, humans can focus more on customized and personalized service (Jiang, Xu, Sun, & Zhang, 2022).

2.3 Attitude (ATT)

Attitude (ATT) plays a key factor in affecting guests’ decisions to use smart technology amenities at smart hotels (Han, Hou, Wu, & Lai, 2021). Smart hotel guests should have a positive attitude receiving the evolving smart interactive technology amenities such as voice-activated devices, facial recognition, service robots, smart rooms, virtual reality headsets, mobile key technology, and automated check-in/out (Yang et al., 2021; Zhang, Lu, Chi, Lu, & Cobanoglu, 2024; Calli et al., 2022; Choi, Choi, Oh, & Kim, 2020; Fuentes-Moraleda, Díaz-Perez, Orea-Giner, Muñoz- Mazon, & Villace-Molinero, 2020).

2.4 Intention To Use (ITU)

Intention to use (ITU) is a customer's psychological state which creates their ‘immediate determinant behavior’ (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Nguyen, Nguyen, Nguyen, & Nguyen, 2022) to accept staying at smart hotels (Kim, & Han, 2020). Customers with a higher intention to use emerging smart hotel technology have positive perceptions, thus creating a loyalty-based relationship to stay at smart hotels (Belanche, Casaló, & Flavián, 2021). This present study adopted the concept of ‘intention to use’ by understanding guests' positive intention to use smart hotel technology.

3. Methodology

The methodology for this study is a systematic three-stage meta-analysis approach (Ain, Vaia, DeLone, & Waheed, 2019). The planning approach identifies relevant determinants of know-how users have come to accept and use a technology acceptance model. Thus, leading to the development of SIX (6) research questions. The research protocol exploration has identified thirty (30) empirical academic journals from 1986 to 2024 through multiple keyword searches on major research databases such as Science Direct, MDPI, Emerald Insight, Sage, and Springer. The method is used to systematically assimilate explicit knowledge concerning the individual-level unit analysis of hotel guests’ perspectives on TAM coined by Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw (1989)

Planning	Conducting	Reporting

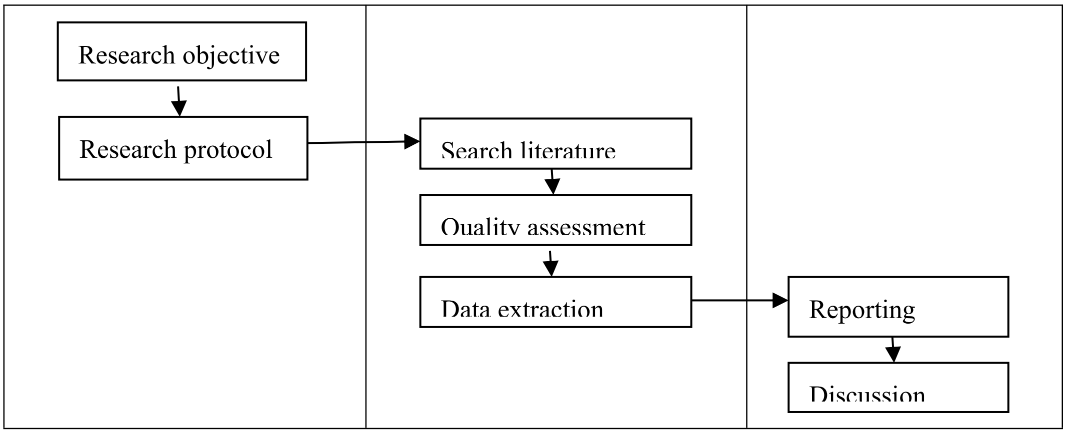


Figure 4: Systematic three-stage meta-analysis approach
Source: Ain, Vaia, DeLone and Waheed (2019)

Searching, assessing, and extracting quality data from existing literature are recommended before employing any empirical studies (Booth, Sutton, & Papaioannou, 2016). This can be done by reporting and discussing the TAM meta-analysis, a key research tool in developing high-quality quantitative evidence-informed management knowledge (Transfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003). This yearly progressive exploration from 1986 to 2024 began with a search for articles related to determinants of knowing how users have come to accept and use David's (1989) TAM. After that, these usable articles were then scanned again for those that have utilized a two-step process of TAM comprising perceived ease of use (PEU) and perceived usefulness (PU).

3.1. Assessment of Measuring Proposed Extended TAM conceptual module

This study posits a total of six (6) developed latent constructs (Table 1). **The** developed five (5) constructs with the first (lower) order structure are conceptualized with a reflective measurement approach comprising technology readiness (TR), perceived trust (PT), anthropomorphic robot (AR), attitude (ATT), and intention to use (ITU). The multi-dimensional technology acceptance model (TAM) includes the first (lower) order structure for two (2) separate dimensions comprising three (3) items of perceived ease of use (PEOU) and four (4) items of perceived usefulness (PU). The reflective-formative construct of the second (higher) order structure layer employs a multi-dimensional TAM structure including the overall single measurement of seven (7) items (Table 1).

3.1.1 Measurement

SHATEC, Singapore's Hospitality and Tourism Studies department consisting of eight (8) academicians conducted a peer review on a total of twenty-eight (28) measurement items from six (6) developed latent constructs.

Table 1: Measurement Items

Constructs	**Source**	**Items**	**Questions**

Technology Readiness (TR)		Yang et.al., (2021)	TR1	I can usually figure out new smart hotel technology products without help from others
			TR2	I can keep up with the latest smart hotel technology product developments
			TR3	I enjoy the challenge of figuring out smart hotel technology products
			TR4	I have fewer problems than other people in making smart hotel technology products work for me
			TR5	I am among the first in my circle of friends to acquire new smart hotel technology products
Perceived Trust (PT)		Huang (2022)	PT1	I feel the service provided by the smart hotel technology products is real
			PT2	I think the service provided by the smart hotel technology products is clear and reliable
			PT3	I feel it is trustworthy to use smart hotel technology products to provide services in hotels
			PT4	I feel smart hotel technology products can provide customer service
Anthropomorphic Robot (AR)		Odekerken-Schröder et.al., (2022)	AR1	The smart robot has a mind of its own
			AR2	The smart robot has a conscious
			AR3	The smart robot has its own free will
			AR4	The smart robot experiences emotions
			AR5	The smart robot has intentions
Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)	Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU)	Çallı, et. Al., 2022)	PEOU1	I think I will know quickly how to use the smart hotel technology products
			PEOU2	I find the smart hotel technology products easy to use
			PEOU3	I think I can use the smart hotel technology products without any help
	Perceived Usefulness (PU)		PU1	The use of smart hotel technology products in services would be useful
			PU2	The use of smart hotel technology products in services can help me with many things
			PU3	Using smart hotel technology products in services will save me time

		PU4	I think things will be done quickly with the use of smart hotel technology products in services
Attitude (ATT)	Çallı, et. al., 2022)	ATT1	My attitude toward smart hotel technology products in general are
		ATT2	My attitude toward being served by smart hotel technology products in a hotel is
		ATT3	My attitude toward engaging or interacting with smart hotel technology products are
Intention to Use (ITU)	Çallı, et. al., 2022)	ITU1	I will likely make a reservation at this smart hotel
		ITU2	I will consider making a reservation at this smart hotel
		ITU3	I want to make a reservation at this smart hotel
		ITU4	I am willing to recommend this smart hotel to my friends and relatives

4. Results

The proposed extended TAM conceptual module is the three (3) determining factors of TPA that hotel operators should be measuring - guests' technology readiness (TR), perceived trust (T), and anthropomorphic robot (AR)

4.1 Research Propositions

This study proposes a new extended TAM theoretical model as a mediating variable between TPA (TR, PT, AR) and AR, leading to ITU, thus, closing the existing TAM literature gap in the context of smart hotel technology (SHT).

4.1.1 Technology Readiness (TR) and Technology Acceptance Module (TAM)

Technology readiness (TR) is the strong determining factor of the perceived ease of use (PEOU) and perceived usefulness (PU) of TAM. (Kampa, 2023; Kelly, Kaye, & Oviedo-Trespalacios, 2023; Kim & Han, 2022; Yang et al., 2021; Chiu, & Cho, 2021). Singapore smart hotel guests' TR to adopt user-friendly SHT that works for them plays a major role when predicting their PEOU and PU. Based on these arguments, a research proposition is suggested:
P1: Technology readiness (TR) positively influences the TAM.

4.1.2 Perceived Trust (PT) and Technology Acceptance Module (TAM)

Perceived trust (PT) is the strong determining factor of the perceived ease of use (PEOU) and perceived usefulness (PU) of TAM. (Kelly et al.,2023; Huang, 2022; Seo, & Lee, 2021; Singh, Sahni, & Kovid, 2021). Hotel guests' PT on the reliability of Singapore SHT plays a major role when predicting their PEOU and PU. Based on these arguments, a research proposition is suggested:
P2: Perceived trust (PR) positively influences the TAM.

4.1.3 Anthropomorphic Robot (AR) and Technology Acceptance Module (TAM)
Anthropomorphic robot (AR) is the strong determining factor of PU and PEOU of TAM (Li, Wang, & Song, 2023; Blut, Wang, Wünderlich, & Brock, 2021). Singapore smart hotel operations should improve the capability of interaction between AR and hotel guests to create value-creation opportunities, thus playing a major role in predicting hotel guests' PEOU and PU. The rapport connection could only be done if hotel guests perceived that AR has a high level of mind of its own, consciousness, emotions, and intention (Blut et al., 2021). Based on these arguments, a research proposition is suggested:
P3: Anthropomorphic robot (AR) positively influences the TAM.

4.1.4 Technology Acceptance Module (TAM) and Attitude (ATT)
TAM positively influences Attitude (Kim, & Han, 2022; Na, Heo, Han, Shin, & Roh,2022; Kelly, Kaye, & Oviedo-Trespalacios, 2023; Li, Wang, & Song, 2023; Calli et al., 2022). Singapore SHT products (e.g. anthropomorphic robots, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, self-service software, and Internet of Things) should be easy and useful to influence hotel guests' positive attitude toward staying at Singapore Smart Hotel. Based on these arguments, a research proposition is suggested:
P4: TAM positively influences the attitude (ATT).

4.1.5 Attitude (ATT) and Intention to Use (BI)
Attitude positively influences Intention to use (Molinillo, Rejón-Guardia, & Anaya-Sánchez, 2023; Parvez, Arasli, Ozturen, Lodhi, & Ongsakul, 2022; Kim, & Han, 2022; Kim, Montes, & Han, 2021). A positive attitude from Singapore hotel guests toward using SHT products (e.g. anthropomorphic robots, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, self-service software, and Internet of Things) creates return hotel stay intention and they continue to recommend smart hotels to friends and relatives (Çallı, et. al., 2022). Based on these arguments, a research proposition is suggested:
P5: Attitude (ATT) has a positive influence on intention to use (ITU).

4.1.6 Technology Acceptance Module (TAM) as Mediator
TAM mediates between determining factors and Attitude (Shamout, Elayan, Rawashdeh, Kurdi, & Alshurideh, 2022; Blut, Wang, Wünderlich, & Brock, 2021; Kim, & Song, 2022). The proposed extended TAM consisting of hotel guests' perceived ease of use (PEOU) and perceived usefulness (PU) enhances the positive mediation between the determinant factors of TPA (TR, PT, AR) and ATT. Based on these arguments, this study proposed serial

mediating variables (PEOU and PU) related to TAM that are expected to have mediating effects on the relationships among variables:
P6: TAM mediates the relationship between technology readiness (TR) and attitude (ATT).
P7: TAM mediates the relationship between perceived trust (PT) and attitude (ATT).
P8: TAM mediates the relationship between anthropomorphic robot (AR) and attitude (ATT).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion and Implication
In the past, there were three separate studies of determining factors namely technology readiness (Kampa, 2023; Kelly, Kaye, & Oviedo-Trespalacios, 2023; Kim & Han, 2022; Yang et al., 2021; Chiu, & Cho, 2021), perceived trust (Kelly et al.,2023; Huang, 2022; Seo, & Lee, 2021; Singh, Sahni, & Kovid, 2021) and anthropomorphic robot (Li, Wang, & Song, 2023; Blut, Wang, Wünderlich, & Brock, 2021) on Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) leading to guest attitude (ATT) and intention to use (ITU) (Çallı, et. al., 2022) in smart hotel technology (SHT). These three (3) separate studies of determining factors to TAM are combined in this study, thus providing significant contributions to:

5.1.1 Academic Implications
In the assimilated meta-analysis of TAM between 1986 and 2024, this study identified the TAM gap. The gap is limited studies relating to determining factors for TAM (Yang et al., 2021; Huang, 2022; Odekerken-Schröder et al., 2022). Positive determining factors affect guests' decisions, thus creating an 'immediate determinant behaviour' (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Nguyen et al., 2022) of hotel guest acceptance to use SHT (Yang, et al., 2021). The proposed research framework is to be empirically tested to create an enriched evidence-based knowledge of extended TAM that integrates all structural relationships such as determining factors of TPA (technology readiness, perceived trust, anthropomorphic robot) on TAM (perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness); TAM on attitude; attitude on intention to use; and TAM mediates between TPA and attitude.

5.1.2 Practical Implications
In practice, this study attempts to aid hotel operators and management in making concentrated decisions on their adoption of smart technology in its endeavors to manage the right synergy of pooling collective and creative updated intelligence/knowledge from hotel guests. This intelligence/knowledge from various targeted geographical segment(s) of hotel guests is the know-how of determining factors - TPR (technology readiness, perceived trust, anthropomorphic robot) – that bring about a significant use of SHT products. Smart hotels could continuously replenish outdated/obsolete knowledge from evolving high-tech savvy guests who need to accept the level of smartness of hotels. Thus, create new knowledge to innovate new SHT products (e.g. anthropomorphic robots, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, self-service software, and the internet of things) for each hotel division, especially the rooms division and food and beverage division.

5.3. Conclusion

Continuously pooling collective and creative new intelligence/knowledge from five (5) of Singapore's key revenue-generated tourism markets - Indonesia, China, Malaysia, Australia, and India - to accept the level of smartness of hotels is to bring about improved differentiated SHT products. Thus, Singapore smart hotel operators can overcome market competition, manpower shortage, and changing high-tech savvy customer expectations. At the same time, smart hotels can avoid costly investment mistakes with wrong SHT products in each hotel division, especially the rooms division and food and beverage division.

5.4 Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

This review of the related SHT literature has provided a set of testable propositions, derived from thirty (30) top-quality journals aimed at understanding determinants of guests' acceptance to use Singapore smart hotel technology (SHT) products. The propositions of this study have not been empirically tested quantitively in the Singapore SHT industry setting. It should be empirically tested in the context of Singapore SHT to answer the six (6) developed research questions for this study. The research proposition related to extended TAM involves individuals as the 'customer' unit analysis. TAM-based research has been "survey-dominated" (Wu & Du, 2012). Survey methodology cannot by itself provide sufficient explanations of determining factors' of TPR (technology readiness, perceived trust, robot anthropomorphic) that could contribute to a significant use of SHT products. Therefore, mixed-method studies in extended TAM research are needed.

REFERENCES

Ain, N., Vaia, G., DeLone, W. H., & Waheed, M. (2019). Two decades of research on business intelligence system adoption, utilization, and success–A systematic literature review. *Decision Support Systems*, *125*, 113113

Ajzen, I. & Fishbein, M. (1980), Understanding Attitudes and Predicting Social Behaviour, Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall.

Belanche, D., Casaló, L. V., & Flavián, C. (2021). Frontline robots in tourism and hospitality: service enhancement or cost reduction? *Electronic Markets*, 31(3), 477-492.

Blut, M., Wang, C., Wünderlich, N. V., & Brock, C. (2021). Understanding anthropomorphism in service provision: a meta-analysis of physical robots, chatbots, and other AI. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *49*, 632-658.

Booth, A., Sutton,A., & Papaioannou, D. (2016). Systematic Approach to a Successful Literature Review (2nd Ed), London: Sage.

Çallı, B. A., Çallı, L., Çallı, D. S., & Çallı, F. (2022). The impact of different types of service robots usage in hotels on guests' intention to stay. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*, 14(1), 53-68.

Chiu, W., & Cho, H. (2021). The role of technology readiness in individuals' intention to use health and fitness applications: a comparison between users and non-users. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 33(3), 807-825.

Choi, Y., Choi, M., Oh, M., & Kim, S. (2020). Service robots in hotels: understanding the service quality perceptions of human-robot interaction. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 29(6), 613-635.

Choung, H., David, P., & Ross, A. (2023). Trust in AI and its role in the acceptance of AI technologies. *International Journal of Human–Computer Interaction*, *39*(9), 1727-1739.

Davis, F. D. (1989). Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technology. *MIS quarterly*, 319-340.

Davis, F. D., Bagozzi, R. P., & Warshaw, P. R. (1989). User acceptance of computer technology: A comparison of two theoretical models. *Management Science*, *35*(8), 982-1003.

Ding, A., Lee, R. H., Legendre, T. S., & Madera, J. (2022). Anthropomorphism in hospitality and tourism: A systematic review and agenda for future research. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 52, 404-415.

Fang, J., & Partovi, F. Y. (2022). Technology planning in the hotel industry. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 44, 101018.

Fuentes-Moraleda, L., Díaz-Pérez, P., Orea-Giner, A., Muñoz-Mazón, A., & Villacé-Molinero, T. (2020). Interaction between hotel service robots and humans: A hotel-specific Service Robot Acceptance Model (sRAM). *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 36, 100751.

Han, D., Hou, H., Wu, H., & Lai, J. H. (2021). Modelling tourists' acceptance of hotel experience-enhancement Smart technologies. *Sustainability*, 13(8), 4462.

Huang, T. (2022). What affects the acceptance and use of hotel service robots by elderly customers?. *Sustainability*, 14(23), 16102.

IMDA (2018) Hotel Digital Industry Plan, *Infocomm Media Development Authority*, Retrieved March 1, 2024 https://www.imda.gov.sg/-/media/imda/files/programme/smes-go-digital/industry-digital-plans/hotel-idp/hotel-idp.pdf

Iranmanesh, M., Ghobakhloo, M., Nilashi, M., Tseng, M. L., Yadegaridehkordi, E., & Leung, N. (2022). Applications of disruptive digital technologies in hotel industry: A systematic review. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 107, 103304.

Jiang, H., Xu, M., Sun, P., & Zhang, J. (2022). Humanoid service robots versus human employee: how consumers react to functionally and culturally mixed products. *International Journal of Emerging Markets*, 17(4), 987-1007.

Kampa, R. K. (2023). Combining technology readiness and acceptance model for investigating the acceptance of m-learning in higher education in India. *Asian Association of Open Universities Journal*, *18*(2), 105-120.

Kelly, S., Kaye, S. A., & Oviedo-Trespalacios, O. (2023). What factors contribute to the acceptance of artificial intelligence? A systematic review. *Telematics and Informatics*, *77*, 101925.

Kim, J. J., & Han, H. (2022). Hotel service innovation with smart technologies: exploring consumers' readiness and behaviors. *Sustainability*, *14*(10), 5746.

Kim, J. J., & Han, H. (2020). Hotel of the future: exploring the attributes of a smart hotel adopting a mixed-methods approach. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 37(7), 804-822.

Kim, J. J., Montes, A. A., & Han, H. (2021). The role of expected benefits towards smart hotels in shaping customer behavior: comparison by age and gender. *Sustainability*, 13(4), 1698.

Kim, R., & Song, H. D. (2022). Examining the influence of teaching presence and task-technology fit on continuance intention to use MOOCs. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, *31*(4), 395-408.

Li, Y., Wang, C., & Song, B. (2023). Customer acceptance of service robots under different service settings. *Journal of Service Theory and Practice*, 33(1), 46-71.

Molinillo, S., Rejón-Guardia, F., & Anaya-Sánchez, R. (2023). Exploring the antecedents of customers' willingness to use service robots in restaurants. *Service Business*, *17*(1), 167-193.

MTI (2022, Oct). Speech by MOS Alvin Tan at the Launch Event of Hotel Industry Transformation Map (ITM) 2025, The Food & Hotel Asia (FHA) - Hotel, Restaurant & Café

(HoReCa) Opening Ceremony, *Ministry of Trade and Industry Singapore*. Retrieved February 18, 2024 from https://www.mti.gov.sg/Newsroom/Speeches/2022/10/Speech-by-MOS-Alvin-Tan-at-the-Launch-Event-of-Hotel-ITM-2025-and-FHA-HoReCa-Opening-Ceremony.

Na, S., Heo, S., Han, S., Shin, Y., & Roh, Y. (2022). Acceptance model of artificial intelligence (AI)-based technologies in construction firms: Applying the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) in combination with the Technology–Organisation–Environment (TOE) framework. *Buildings*, *12*(2), 90.

Nguyen, H. V., Vu, T. D., Nguyen, B. K., Nguyen, T. M. N., Do, B., & Nguyen, N. (2022). Evaluating the impact of e-service quality on customer intention to use video teller machine services. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, *8*(3), 167.

Odekerken-Schröder, G., Mennens, K., Steins, M., & Mahr, D. (2021). The service triad: an empirical study of service robots, customers, and frontline employees. *Journal of Service Management*, 33(2), 246-292.

Özen, İ. A., & Katlav, E. Ö. (2023). Aspect-based sentiment analysis on online customer reviews: a case study of technology-supported hotels. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*, 14(2), 102-120.

Parasuraman, A., & Colby, C. L. (2015). An updated and streamlined technology readiness index: TRI 2.0. *Journal of Service Research*, 18(1), 59-74.

Parvez, M. O., Arasli, H., Ozturen, A., Lodhi, R. N., & Ongsakul, V. (2022). Antecedents of human-robot collaboration: theoretical extension of the technology acceptance model. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*, *13*(2), 240-263.

Raguraman, A (2024, January). Tourism recovery to keep momentum in 2024, with tourist spend nearing pre-Covid numbers: STB, *The Straits Times,* Retrieved March 1, 2024, from https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/consumer/tourism-recovery-to-keep-momentum-in-2024-with-tourist-spend-nearing-pre-covid-numbers-stb#:~:text=Visitor%20arrivals%20are%20forecast%20to%20hit%2015%20million,to%20be%20between%20%2424.5%20billion%20and%20%2426%20billion.

Sagnier, C., Loup-Escande, E., Lourdeaux, D., Thouvenin, I., & Vallléry, G. (2020). User acceptance of virtual reality: an extended technology acceptance model. *International Journal of Human–Computer Interaction*, 36(11), 993-1007.

Saari, U. A., Tossavainen, A., Kaipainen, K., & Mäkinen, S. J. (2022). Exploring factors influencing the acceptance of social robots among early adopters and mass market representatives. *Robotics and Autonomous Systems*, 151, 104033.

Seo, K. H., & Lee, J. H. (2021). The emergence of service robots at restaurants: Integrating trust, perceived risk, and satisfaction. *Sustainability*, 13(8), 4431.

Singh, S., Sahni, M. M., & Kovid, R. K. (2021). Exploring trust and responsiveness as antecedents for intention to use FinTech services. *International Journal of Economics and Business Research*, *21*(2), 254-268.

Shamout, M., Elayan, M., Rawashdeh, A., Kurdi, B., & Alshurideh, M. (2022). E-HRM practices and sustainable competitive advantage from HR practitioner's perspective: A mediated moderation analysis. *International Journal of Data and Network Science*, *6*(1), 165-178.

Smart Nation Singapore (2021) national-ai-strategy.pdf, Retrieved March 1, 2024, from https://www.smartnation.gov.sg.

Sohn, K., & Kwon, O. (2020). Technology acceptance theories and factors influencing artificial Intelligence-based intelligent products. *Telematics and Informatics*, *47*, 101324.

STAN (2024a). Media Release: Tourism Performance 2023, *Singapore Tourism Analytic Network.* Retrieved March 1, 2024, from https://www.stb.gov.sg/content/dam/stb/documents/mediareleases/YIR_Annex%20A.pdf

STAN (2024b). Number of licensed accommodation, *Singapore Tourism Analytic Network.* Retrieved March 9, 2023, Retrieved March 1, 2024, from https://stan.stb.gov.sg/public/sense/app/4285bed1-c7e1-445d-90b3-ce637640e290/sheet/bd22eba9-c7b9-4071-8a1b-dfbd232bac27/state/analysis

SHATEC (2023) Milestone, *The International Hotel and Tourism School, Singapore.* Retrieved March 1, 2024, https://www.shatec.sg/milestones/

STB (2017, Nov). New Initiatives to Advance Transformation across Hotel Industry, *Singapore Tourism Board*. Retrieved March 1, 2024, from
, 2022,
https://www.stb.gov.sg/content/stb/en/media-centre/media-releases/new-initiatives-to-advance-transformation-across-hotel-industry.html

STB and SHA (2019). Smart Hotel Technology Guide 2019, *Singapore Tourism Board and Singapore Hotel Association.* Retrieved March 1, 2024, https://www.stb.gov.sg/content/dam/stb/documents/industries/hotel/Smart%20Hotel%20Technology%20Guide%202019.pdf

Sun, S., Lee, P. C., Law, R., & Hyun, S. S. (2020). An investigation of the moderating effects of current job position level and hotel work experience between technology readiness and technology acceptance. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 90, 102633.

Snyder, H. (2019). Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and guidelines. *Journal of business research*, *104*, 333-339.

Tranfield, D., Denyer, D., & Smart, P. (2003). Towards a methodology for developing evidence-informed management knowledge by means of systematic review. *British journal of management*, 14(3), 207-222.

Tuomi, A., & Ascenção, M. P. (2023). Intelligent automation in hospitality: exploring the relative automatability of frontline food service tasks. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, *6*(1), 151-173.

Yang, H., Song, H., Cheung, C., & Guan, J. (2021). How to enhance hotel guests' acceptance and experience of smart hotel technology: An examination of visiting intentions. *International journal of hospitality management*, *97*, 103000.

Venkatesh, V., & Davis, F. D. (2000). A theoretical extension of the technology acceptance model: Four longitudinal field studies. *Management Science*, 46(2), 186-204.

Wang, C., Dai, J., Zhu, K., Yu, T., & Gu, X. (2023). Understanding the continuance intention of college students toward new E-learning spaces based on an integrated model of the TAM and TTF. *International Journal of Human–Computer Interaction*, 1-14.

Wu, J., & Du, H. (2012). Toward a better understanding of behavioral intention and system usage constructs. *European Journal of Information Systems*, 21(6), 680–698.

Zhang, X., Tavitiyaman, P., & Tsang, W. Y. (2023). Preferences of technology amenities, satisfaction and behavioral intention: The perspective of hotel guests in Hong Kong. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 24(5), 545-575.

Zhang, T., Lu, L., Chi, O. H., Lu, C., & Cobanoglu, C. (2024). Smart Service Interactional Experience for Family Travelers: Scale Development and Validation. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 10963480231226085.

The effects of robot type and task objectivity in robot service failure

Huang, Huiling
Department of Integrated Resort and Tourism Management

University of Macau
Chen, Faye Feier
Department of Integrated Resort and Tourism Management
University of Macau

Liu, Stephanie Q.
Department of Human Sciences
The Ohio State University

Xing, Yuqing
Department of Integrated Resort and Tourism Management
University of Macau

Abstract:

Service robots exert considerable influence within the hospitality industry, fundamentally shaping customer experiences. This influence is contingent upon the varying degrees of anthropomorphism exhibited by these robots and the diverse tasks they undertake, ranging from objective to subjective. However, it remains unclear how customers perceive different types of service robots (humanoid vs. nonhumanoid) when performing objective versus subjective tasks and the consequent impact on customer dissatisfaction in the event of a robot service failure. Through two experimental studies, this research reveals that humanoid service robots are perceived as more capable of subjective tasks, thereby amplifying customer dissatisfaction when such tasks fail. In contrast, both humanoid and nonhumanoid service robots are perceived as equally capable of objective tasks, resulting in similar levels of customer dissatisfaction subsequent to a failed objective task. Furthermore, this research identifies negative expectancy violation as the underlying mechanism explaining the influence of robot type on customer dissatisfaction following a failed subjective task.

Keywords: Robot service failure, Anthropomorphism, Task objectivity, Mind perception, Negative expectancy violation, Experimental design

1. Introduction

AI has seen rapid advancements and extensive adoption in the hospitality industry, manifesting in various forms such as service robots and virtual chatbots (Chi et al., 2020; Lv et al., 2021). However, it is crucial to acknowledge that despite their increasing prominence, service robots are not error-free (Ho, et al., 2020). Therefore, gaining a deeper understanding of customer responses to service failures attributed to robots is imperative for devising effective strategies to alleviate customer dissatisfaction (Choi et al., 2021; Kim & So, 2023).

The anthropomorphic design of robots—whereby they embody humanlike features—potentially shapes how customers perceive and react to robot service failures (Cheng, 2023; Fan et al., 2020; Yam et al., 2021). Humans possess a propensity to ascribe human traits to non-human entities, a tendency accentuated in the case of robots resembling humans, termed humanoid robots, compared to those lacking human features, known as non-humanoid robots. Service tasks encompass a broad spectrum; some are objective, such as airport or hotel check-ins, while others are subjective, like entertainment or local cuisine recommendations (Castelo et al., 2019). This dichotomy raises some intriguing questions: Do customers discern discrepancies in the capabilities of these two types of service robots across objective versus subjective tasks? Moreover, how do such disparities in perception influence customer dissatisfaction amid service failures? What underlying mechanism elucidates these effects?

This research sheds light on these research questions by investigating the impact of robot type (nonhumanoid vs. humanoid) and task objectivity (objective vs. subjective) on customer dissatisfaction stemming from robot service failures. Drawing on theories of mind perceptions and expectancy violation, we posit that humanoid service robots are perceived as more capable of subjective tasks than their nonhumanoid counterparts, and as a result, thereby resulting in heightened dissatisfaction among customers in the event of a failure in such tasks. Conversely, we contend that the anthropomorphism effect should not extend to service failures in objective tasks, given that both humanoid and nonhumanoid service robots are perceived as equally capable of objective tasks. Furthermore, we examine negative expectancy violation as the mechanism driving the joint effects of robot type and task objectivity on customer dissatisfaction.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Service robots and service failures in the hospitality and tourism industries

In recent years, there has been a substantial surge in the integration of service robots within the hospitality and tourism industries (Tussyadiah & Miller, 2019; Van Doorn et al., 2017). Despite the widespread use of service robots, there persists customer resistance towards robotic services, posing a significant challenge to their seamless integration (Fu et al., 2022; Tussyadiah et al., 2020).

Anthropomorphism has emerged as a prominent factor attracting considerable attention due to its influential role in affecting customers' acceptance of service robots and evaluations of robotic services (Christou et al., 2020). Previous research suggests that anthropomorphism is a subconscious inclination that becomes particularly pronounced when these agents possess human-like attributes, including humanoid appearances, names, or lifelike movements (Murphy et al., 2021). Service robots can be classified into two types: humanoid and nonhumanoid robots (Choi et al., 2021; Huang & Liu, 2022). The former exhibits moderately human-like appearances and incorporates human physical features, whereas the latter typically exhibits machine-like appearances and lacks human-like characteristics.

When confronted with a robot service failure, previous research investigating the role of anthropomorphism in shaping customer responses has yielded mixed findings. One stream of research suggests that anthropomorphism can attenuate customers' negative reactions following such failures (Fan et al., 2020; Yam et al., 2021). However, an alternate line of research suggests that anthropomorphism may backfire when robot service failures occur (Cheng, 2023; Choi et al., 2021). This strand of research draws on attribution theory and posits that robots with higher anthropomorphism are perceived to exert greater control over service outcomes, thus being held more accountable for service failures. Nevertheless, these studies have largely overlooked the role of task type in shaping the effects of anthropomorphism in the occurrence of robot service failures.

2.2. Mind perceptions of service robots and anthropomorphism

Mind perception encompasses the cognitive process through which individuals infer mental states and capacities in themselves and others (Gray et al., 2007). When ascribing minds to other entities, individuals typically consider two psychological capabilities: experience and agency (Gray et al., 2007). Experience denotes the capacity to feel emotions and sensations (e.g., pleasure and hunger), whereas agency refers to the ability to think, plan, and act (Gray et al., 2007). Adult humans are generally perceived to possess both agency and experience (Gray & Wegner, 2012). In the case of machines such as robots, individuals are likely to attribute them with certain agency abilities but with very limited or even no experience abilities due to their inherent characteristics (Bigman & Gray, 2018).

Notably, humanlike features embedded in nonhuman agents often enhance consumers' tendency to anthropomorphize, leading them to attribute human characteristics, such as experience and agency, to these agents (Srinivasan & Sarial-Abi, 2021). For example, self-driving cars equipped with a humanlike voice are perceived as more agentic and engender greater trust (Waytz et al., 2014). Regarding robots, increased anthropomorphism may heighten perceptions of experience but not agency (Yam et al., 2021). Indeed, as suggested by Huang and Rust (2021), when robots attain a certain level of cognitive development, individuals tend to attribute comparable intelligence and cognitive capability, which are associated with agency.

By synthesizing previous findings and considering the attributes of humanoid versus nonhumanoid robots, we posit that consumers may expect humanoid service robots to possess greater experience abilities, but comparable agency abilities compared to nonhumanoid service robots. How will these differences in mind perceptions between humanoid and nonhumanoid service robots influence customer dissatisfaction following a robot service failure? We answer this question by taking task objectivity into consideration, an aspect that has received limited attention in the existing hospitality and tourism literature.

2.3. *Task objectivity*

Prior research classifies tasks into two types: objective and subjective, based on the extent to which a task can be measured, evaluated, or performed based on objective criteria (Castelo et al., 2019). Objective tasks are characterized by their quantifiable and logical nature, allowing for relatively standardized and consistent measurement and evaluation (Castelo et al., 2019). Conversely, subjective tasks rely on personal opinions, emotional sentiments, or interpretations, often influenced by individual perspectives and prone to variation among individuals (Castelo et al., 2019). Previous studies indicate that objective tasks typically involve logical, rule-based analysis and are linked to cognitive abilities, while subjective tasks involve gut instincts and require emotional aptitude (Inbar et al., 2010). In the hospitality and tourism industries, certain tasks, such as cleaning service and check-in/out, predominantly necessitate cognitive abilities, whereas others, such as customer entertainment and restaurant recommendations, demand an understanding of customers' emotions and the ability to provide personal opinions (Lin et al., 2022).

Given that subjective tasks are commonly associated with "experience" abilities, and objective tasks require "agency" abilities (Inbar et al., 2010), entities possessing more experience abilities will be perceived as more capable of performing subjective tasks, while those with greater agency abilities will be perceived as more capable of handling objective tasks. Consistent with this perspective, previous research demonstrates that machines are perceived as less effective than human beings in tasks requiring emotions and sociability (Castelo et al., 2019; Waytz & Norton, 2014). The increase of anthropomorphism in robots may lead individuals to attribute more unique human characteristics, such as emotions, to these nonhuman agents (Choi et al., 2021; Yam, et al., 2021). Given that humanoid (vs. nonhumanoid) service robots tend to be perceived as possessing higher levels of experience abilities (Yam, et al., 2021), they should be expected to excel in subjective tasks. In contrast, as humanoid and nonhumanoid service robots are perceived as equally agentic (Yam, et al., 2021), they should be equally capable of handling objective tasks. Therefore, we propose that:

H1: Humanoid (vs. nonhumanoid) service robots are perceived as more capable of performing subjective tasks.

H2: Humanoid and nonhumanoid service robots are perceived as equally capable of performing objective tasks.

***2.4.** Consumer dissatisfaction following robot service failures and the underlying mechanism*

The expectancy violation theory suggests that individuals hold certain expectations regarding how others should behave, and deviations from those expectations elicit cognitive and emotional responses (Burgoon & Psychology, 1993; Burgoon, 2015). Positively violating expectations can generate a halo effect, resulting in favorable evaluations and consequences (Park et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2022). Conversely, negative expectancy violation, such as service failures, often leads to unfavorable consequences, including customer dissatisfaction (Zhang et al., 2024), the emergence of brand hate (Yang et al., 2022), and detrimental effects on a company's reputation (Reuber & Fischer, 2010).

Previous research has started to employ the expectancy violation theory within the realm of human-AI interaction, offering insights into how expectations and violations concerning AI agents shape user experiences and assessments, particularly in the failure context (Arikan et al., 2023; Choi et al., 2021; Leo & Huh, 2020). For instance, Leo and Huh (2020) show that customers often perceive human service providers as possessing superior performance capabilities compared to robots, resulting in increased instances of expectation violations and heightened dissatisfaction when service failure happens.

Drawing from the aforementioned evidence, failing to accomplish a subjective task can be construed as an experience-related failure, whereas the failure to fulfill an objective task tends to be perceived as an agency-related failure. As previously highlighted, humanoid service robots are expected to excel in subjective tasks compared to their nonhumanoid counterparts. From the perspective of expectancy violation, we posit that a failure in a subjective task resulting from a humanoid (vs. nonhumanoid) service robot is more discordant with consumers' expectations, leading to heightened dissatisfaction with the robot's performance. In contrast, when faced with a failure in an objective task, consumers are likely to express similar levels of dissatisfaction regardless of robot type, given their comparable expectations regarding perceived capabilities across these service robots. Furthermore, we propose negative expectancy violation as the underlying mechanism explaining the impact of robot type on consumer dissatisfaction following a failed subjective task. Therefore, we propose that:

H3: Following a failed subjective task, customer dissatisfaction will be greater when the service failure is caused by a humanoid (vs. nonhumanoid) service robot.

H4: Following a failed objective task, customer dissatisfaction will be unaffected by robot type.

H5: Negative expectancy violation will mediate the impact of robot type on customer dissatisfaction subsequent to a failed subjective task.

3. Study 1

3.1. Study design

Study 1 aimed to examine customers' perceived capability of humanoid versus nonhumanoid service robots in performing subjective and objective tasks (testing H1 and H2). We employed a one-factor (robot type: non-humanoid vs. humanoid) between-subjects experimental design. One hundred and sixty-seven U.S. adults, recruited from Prolific, participated in the experiment (M_{age} = 44.4, 58.1% = male).

3.2. Procedure and measurements

Before conducting Study 1, a pilot study was conducted to identify subjective and objective tasks in the hospitality and tourism industries. Seven service tasks that are commonly encountered within the airport setting were selected (Lin et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2022). Finally, we identified three subjective tasks: entertainment service, concierge service, and complaint handling service and three objective tasks: check-in service, delivery service, and cleaning service, which were further examined in Study 1.

In study 1, participants were asked to evaluate a newly developed service robot in an airport. First, participants were exposed to one of the two service robots and asked to indicate their perceived experience and perceived agency. Following prior studies (Huang & Liu, 2022; Seo, 2022), robot type was manipulated with its physical appearance and name (see Appendix A). Specifically, the humanoid service robot had fundamental physical attributes of human such as arms and a head and was named Alex, and participants in this condition were also informed that the robot would be delighted to assist passengers. Conversely, the nonhumanoid service robot did not have any human-like features and was named RX05, and participants in this condition were informed that the robot was programmed to assist passengers.

Perceived experience was captured by asking participants to indicate their agreement with statements about whether the service robot can "experience emotions," "have desires," and "be happy" (Cronbach's α = 0.94, adapted from Yam et al., 2020). Perceived agency was assessed based on participants' agreement with statements about whether the service robot can "carry out actions," "think," "plan its actions," and "remember things" (Cronbach's α = 0.67, adapted from Yam et al., 2020). Subsequently, participants were asked to indicate their perceived capability of the service robot in performing the designated tasks in the airport setting (not capable/capable; not appropriate/appropriate, r = 0.84, adapted from Lin et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2022). These tasks encompassed three subjective and three objective tasks identified in the pilot study.

To assess the robot type manipulation, we asked participants to indicate the degree to which they thought the service robot resembles a human (look like a human being/looks like a machine; humanlike/machine-like, have features of a human being/do not have any features of a human being; reverse-coded, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.92$), adapted from (Mende et al., 2019). Moreover, participants were asked to assess the realism of the robot. All variables were measured using a 7-point Likert scale. The results showed that our manipulations were successful (details omitted for brevity).

3.3. *Results*

3.3.1. Perceived capability

Results from one-way ANOVA on perceived capability showed that the humanoid (vs. nonhumanoid) service robot was perceived as more capable in performing subjective tasks: (a) entertainment service: $M_{non\text{-}humanoid} = 4.42$, $M_{humanoid} = 5.45$; $F(1, 165) = 14.72$, $p < 0.001$; (b) concierge service: $M_{non\text{-}humanoid} = 5.48$, $M_{humanoid} = 5.90$; $F(1, 165) = 3.92$, $p < 0.05$); (c) complaint handling service: $M_{non\text{-}humanoid} = 4.38$, $M_{humanoid} = 5.15$; $F(1, 165) = 8.96$, $p < 0.05$). Conversely, humanoid and nonhumanoid service robots were perceived as equally capable of performing objective tasks: (a) check-in service: $M_{non\text{-}humanoid} = 5.83$, $M_{humanoid} = 5.93$; $F(1, 165) = 0.24$, $p = 0.62$; (b) delivery service: $M_{non\text{-}humanoid} = 5.20$, $M_{humanoid} = 5.61$; $F(1, 165) = 2.51$, $p = 0.12$; (c) cleaning service: $M_{non\text{-}humanoid} = 5.40$, $M_{humanoid} = 5.47$; $F(1, 165) = 0.08$, $p = 0.78$).

4. Study 2

4.1. *Study design*

To test H3-H5, Study 2 used a 2 (robot type: non-humanoid vs. humanoid) × 2 (task objectivity: objective vs. subjective) between-subjects experimental design. Two hundred and twenty U.S. adults were recruited from Prolific ($M_{age} = 42.4$, 56.8% = female).

4.2. *Procedures and measurement*

In this study, participants imagined themselves as passengers who stayed at an airport where they used service robots to perform certain tasks but encountered a robot service failure (see Appendix B for the scenarios). Based on the findings of Study 1, entertainment service and check-in service were selected to manipulate subjective and objective tasks, respectively. Robot type was manipulated by using its physical appearance and name and the inclusion of self-introduction of robots (Huang & Liu, 2022; Seo, 2022). The physical appearance and names of robots were consistent with the ones used in Study 1 (see Appendix A).

Customer dissatisfaction was assessed by asking participants to indicate their agreements about four items (sample items: “I feel unhappy about my robotic experience in this hotel,” “I am not pleased with this robot's performance," Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.87$), adapted from Bougie et al. (2003). Negative expectancy violation was measured by asking participants to rate their agreement with three statements (sample items: "I think the robot failure can be expected," reverse-coded, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.67$), adapted from Bettencourt et al. (1997) and Stiegert et al. (2021).

The manipulation check for task type was consistent with the pilot study. The manipulation check for robot type was consistent with Study 1 (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.90$). The realism of stimuli was assessed by asking participants to indicate the realism of "the robot" and "the scenario" ($r = 0.64$). All variables were measured using a 7-point Likert scale. The results showed that our manipulations were successful (details omitted for brevity).

4.3. *Results*

4.3.1. Customer dissatisfaction

The two-way ANOVA on customer dissatisfaction indicated a main effect of robot type ($F(1, 216) = 4.3$, $p < 0.05$). Importantly, there was a significant two-way interaction between robot type and task objectivity ($F(1, 216) = 4.00$, $p < 0.05$), represented in Figure 1. The simple effect analysis revealed that when following a failed subjective task, participants reported greater dissatisfaction when the service failure was caused by a humanoid (vs. nonhumanoid) service robot ($M_{non\text{-}humanoid} = 4.15$, $M_{humanoid} = 4.92$; $F(1, 216) = 8.06$, $p < 0.05$). In contrast, when following a failed objective task, participants reported similar levels of dissatisfaction regardless of robot type ($M_{non\text{-}humanoid} = 4.78$, $M_{humanoid} = 4.79$; $F(1, 216) = 0.003$, $p = 0.96$).

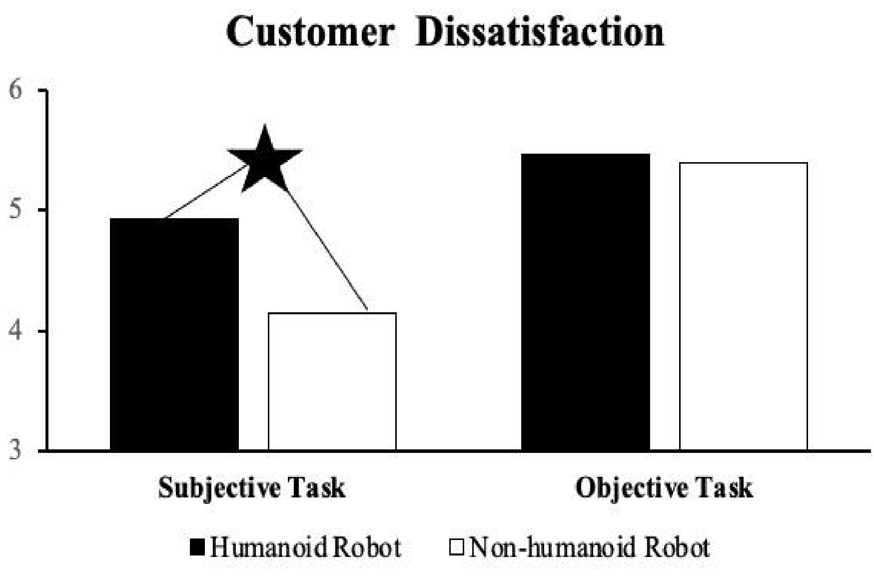


Figure 1. The interaction effect of robot type and task objectivity on customer dissatisfaction.

4.3.2. Mediating analyses

Using PROCESS Model 8 (Hayes, 2017), the bootstrapping results demonstrate that negative expectancy violation mediated the impact of robot type on customer dissatisfaction following a robot service failure in the subjective task condition (indirect effect = −0.0670, 95% CI = [−0.1535, −0.0043]) but not in the objective task condition (indirect effect = −0.0100, 95% CI = [− 0.0695, 0.0325]), displayed in Figure 2.

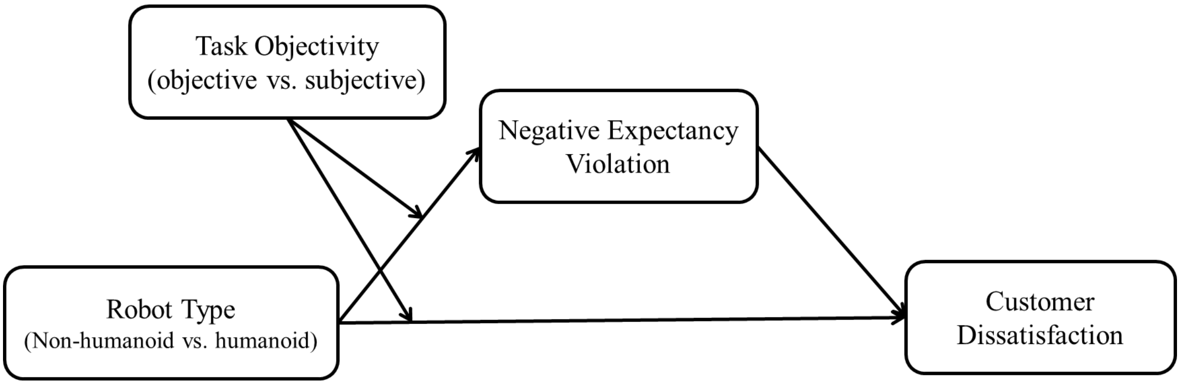


Figure 2. The moderated mediation model (Study 2).

5. Conclusion and discussion

5.1. Theoretical implications

Previous research suggests that the effects of robot anthropomorphism can be illuminated by functional factors, including perceived usefulness (Blut et al., 2021), perceived interactivity (Kim et al., 2022), perceived ease of use (Sheehan et al., 2020), or affective factors such as emotional attachment (Zhang & Rau, 2023), feeling of fear (Gray & Wegner, 2012), and the threat of human identity (Mende et al., 2019). This work extends this stream of research by incorporating the concept of task objectivity and demonstrating that mind perceptions of service robots—experience and agency—conferred by anthropomorphism will influence customers' perceived capability of robots in performing objective and subjective tasks, which subsequently affect customer dissatisfaction following a robot service failure. While service tasks in the hospitality and tourism industries might vary in terms of their levels of objectivity, the concept of task objectivity has received little attention. One exception is the study by Castelo et al. (2019) that examines the role of task objectivity in influencing customer reliance on AI agents versus human agents. Our findings extend their work by shedding light on the significant role of task objectivity in shaping customers' perceived capability of different types of service robots.

Second, this work advances the literature on robot service failure by investigating the joint effects of robot type and task objectivity on customer dissatisfaction in the robot service failure context. Previous research suggests that customer responses following a robot service failure can be influenced by the anthropomorphism of robots (Fan et al., 2020; Yam et al., 2021), perceived severity of the robot failure (Yang et al., 2022), service failure type (Choi et al., 2021). Moreover, previous research examining the impact of anthropomorphism on customer responses toward a robot service failure has yielded mixed findings. Our research complements this growing literature by demonstrating that customer dissatisfaction is contingent on the interaction between robot type and the nature of task objectivity. We find that anthropomorphizing service robots could be a double-edged sword when dealing with subjective tasks. On the one hand, anthropomorphizing service robots can amplify customers' capability perceptions of service robots in performing subjective tasks, which has been shown to increase customer acceptance of robotic services (Lin et al., 2020). On the other hand, however, the heightened perceived capability of service robots leads to a greater negative expectancy violation when failing a subjective task, thus intensifying customers' dissatisfaction.

***5.2.** Managerial implications*

The current research offers several important managerial implications for the hospitality industry, which is increasingly relying on robotic solutions to enhance customer service. First, the findings suggest that hospitality managers should recognize the distinction between humanoid and nonhumanoid service robots and deploy them strategically in different service tasks. As our findings indicate, humanoid service robots will increase customer expectations with subjective service tasks, but eventually amplify the negative consequences when service failures occur. Therefore, for tasks with a high degree of subjectivity – such as personal concierge services or customer complaint resolutions – nonhumanoid robots might be preferred to manage expectations and mitigate dissatisfaction in case of service failure. The research results further show that customer expectations regarding the performance of humanoid and nonhumanoid robots in objective tasks do not significantly differ. Consequently, both categories of robots are deemed suitable for service tasks characterized by a low degree of subjectivity, such as processing hotel check-outs or managing payment transactions in restaurants, given that the probability of violating customer expectations appears to be equivalent.

Moreover, the nuanced expectations customers hold for humanoid robots suggest that they need to incorporate advanced behavioral algorithms that align with customer expectations. Our findings indicate that when humanoid service robots fail in subjective service tasks, the dissatisfaction is acute because customers subconsciously expect human-like empathy and feeling capability (i.e., experience) from these anthropomorphic robots. For example, in a luxury hotel setting, if a humanoid concierge robot is unable to provide satisfactory recommendations for dining or entertainment, which is a highly subjective task, customers may feel a heightened sense of disappointment, stemming from an expectation of personalized interaction similar to that of a human concierge. To address this issue, hospitality companies should invest in advanced AI technology that enables humanoid robots to recognize emotional cues and offer appropriate empathetic responses to better perform subjective service tasks.

5.3. *Limitations and future research*
The current research relied upon scenario-based studies to capture customers' dissatisfaction levels. Future research may test the robot anthropomorphism effect in real hospitality service settings with varied task objectivity levels and record customers' actual responses such as complaints and tipping behaviors.

Appendix A. Stimuli

Humanoid robot **Nonhumanoid robot**

Appendix B. Scenarios of Study 2.

A failed subjective task caused by a nonhumanoid service robot:

You and your friends are at an airport waiting for departure. As you look around, you notice that this airport adopts robots to offer entertainment services such as telling jokes, singing, and playing games with passengers. This robot employee's name is RX 05. It offers entertainment services at this airport. You approach it and touch the screen, and RX 05 responds: "Welcome to our airport. This is RX05, which is programmed to assist passengers. How may I help you?"

With ample time until your flight, you and your friends decide to play with the robot. You follow the instructions and verbally ask the robot to tell a one-liner joke. However, RX 05 responds: "Failed, could you please say it again?" After a few more tries, RX 05 responds: "Sorry, I cannot understand. Please try other entertainment options or let me connect to the supervisor."

A failed objective task caused by a humanoid service robot:

You and your friends just arrived at an airport. As you look around, you notice that this airport adopts robots to help customers check-in**.** This robot employee's name is Alex**.** He offers check-in/out service at this airport. You approach Alex and touch the screen, and Alex responds: "Welcome to our airport. My name is Alex. Just like a human, I am very happy to assist you. How may I help you?".

As the lines for the check-in counters with human services are quite long, you and your friends decide to ask Alex to help you check-in. You follow the instructions and scan your ID at the specified location on the screen. However, Alex responds: "Failed, could you please try again?" After a few more scans, Alex responds: "Sorry, I cannot complete the check-in for you. Please hold on and I will connect you to the supervisor."

References

Blut, M., Wang, C., Wünderlich, N. V., & Brock, C. (2021). Understanding anthropomorphism in service provision: a meta-analysis of physical robots, chatbots, and other AI. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *49*, 632-658.

Castelo, N., Bos, M. W., & Lehmann, D. R. (2019). Task-dependent algorithm aversion. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *56*(5), 809-825.

Cheng, L. K. (2023). Effects of service robots' anthropomorphism on consumers' attribution toward and forgiveness of service failure. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, *22*(1), 67-81.

Choi, S., Mattila, A. S., & Bolton, L. E. (2021). To err is human (-oid): how do consumers react to robot service failure and recovery? *Journal of Service Research*, *24*(3), 354-371.

Christou, P., Simillidou, A., & Stylianou, M. C. (2020). Tourists' perceptions regarding the use of anthropomorphic robots in tourism and hospitality. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *32*(11), 3665–3683.

Douglas, B. D., Ewell, P. J., & Brauer, M. (2023). Data quality in online human-subjects research: Comparisons between Mturk, prolific, CloudResearch, Qualtrics, and Sona. *PLoS One*, *18*(3).

Fan, A., Wu, L. (Laurie), Miao, L., & Mattila, A. S. (2019). When does technology anthropomorphism help alleviate customer dissatisfaction after a service failure?- The moderating role of consumer technology self-efficacy and interdependent self-construal. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, *29*(3), 269–290.

Hong, J.-W., Cruz, I., & Williams, D. (2021). AI, You can drive my car: How we evaluate human drivers vs. self-driving cars. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *125*, 106944.

Huang, H., & Liu, S. Q. (2022). Are consumers more attracted to restaurants featuring humanoid or non-humanoid service robots? *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *107*, 103310.

Huang, M.-H., & Rust, R. T. (2020). Engaged to a robot? The role of AI in service. *Journal of Service Research*, *24*(1), 30–41.

Inbar, Y., Cone, J., & Gilovich, T. (2010). People's intuitions about intuitive insight and intuitive choice. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *99*(2), 232.

Koksal, I. (2020). *How travel apps are using AI to personalize the experience*. Forbes. https://www.forbes.com/sites/ilkerkoksal/2020/04/04/how-travel-apps-are-using-ai-to-personalize-the-experience/?sh=1b6fe2a0f216 (retrieved 14 January 2024).

Leo, X., & Huh, Y. E. (2020). Who gets the blame for service failures? Attribution of responsibility toward robot versus human service providers and service firms. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *113*, 106520.

Lin, H., Chi, O. H., & Gursoy, D. (2020). Antecedents of customers' acceptance of artificially intelligent robotic device use in hospitality services. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, *29*(5), 530-549.

Lin, M., Cui, X., Wang, J., Wu, G., & Lin, J. (2022). Promotors or inhibitors? Role of task type on the effect of humanoid service robots on consumers' use intention. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, *31*(6), 710-729.

Lu, L., Zhang, P., & Zhang, T. (2021). Leveraging "human-likeness" of robotic service at restaurants. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *94*, 102823.

Lv, X., Liu, Y., Luo, J., Liu, Y., & Li, C. (2021). Does a cute artificial intelligence assistant soften the blow? The impact of cuteness on customer tolerance of assistant service failure. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *87*, 103114.

Mende, M., Scott, M. L., van Doorn, J., Grewal, D., & Shanks, I. (2019). Service robots rising: How humanoid robots influence service experiences and elicit compensatory consumer responses. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *56*(4), 535-556.

Murphy, J., Gretzel, U., & Pesonen, J. (2021). Marketing robot services in hospitality and tourism: the role of anthropomorphism. *Future of Tourism Marketing*, 16-27.

Qiu, H., Li, M., Shu, B., & Bai, B. (2019). Enhancing hospitality experience with Service Robots: The mediating role of Rapport Building. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, *29*(3), 247-268.

Reuber, A. R., & Fischer, E. (2009). Organizations behaving badly: When are discreditable actions likely to damage organizational reputation? *Journal of Business Ethics*, *93*(1), 39-50.

Seo, S. (2022). When female (male) robot is talking to me: Effect of service robots' gender and anthropomorphism on customer satisfaction. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *102*, 103166.

Stiegert, P., Täuber, S., Leliveld, M. C., & Oehmichen, J. (2021). The stereotype rub-off effect-Organizational stereotypes modulate behavioural expectations, expectancy violation and punishment after transgressions. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *165*, 127-138.

Tussyadiah, I. P., Zach, F. J., & Wang, J. (2020). Do travelers trust intelligent service robots? *Annals of Tourism Research*, *81*, 102886.

Van Doorn, J., Mende, M., Noble, S. M., Hulland, J., Ostrom, A. L., Grewal, D., & Petersen, J. A. (2017). Domo arigato Mr. Roboto: Emergence of automated social presence in organizational frontlines and customers' service experiences. *Journal of Service Research*, *20*(1), 43-58.

Wang, X., Hwang, Y., & Guchait, P. (2023). When robot (vs. human) employees say “sorry” following service failure. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, *24*(4), 540-562.

Yam, K. C., Bigman, Y., & Gray, K. (2021). Reducing the uncanny valley by dehumanizing humanoid robots. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *125*, 106945.

Yam, K. C., Bigman, Y. E., Tang, P. M., Ilies, R., De Cremer, D., Soh, H., & Gray, K. (2021). Robots at work: People prefer-and forgive-service robots with perceived feelings. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *106*(10), 1557.

Yang, H., Xu, H., Zhang, Y., Liang, Y., & Lyu, T. (2022). Exploring the effect of humor in robot failure. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *95*, 103425.

Yang, J., & Mundel, J. (2021). Effects of brand feedback to negative eWOM on brand love/hate: An expectancy violation approach. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, *31*(2), 279–292.

Generative AI inspiration and hotel recommendation acceptance: Does anxiety over lack of transparency matter?

Huang Guoqiong Ivanka
School of Hotel & Tourism Management
the Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Wong Ipkin Anthony
Faculty of Business Administration
University of Macau

Zhang Chen Jason
School of Hotel & Tourism Management
the Hong Kong Polytechnic University
and
Department of Computing
the Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Liang Qilin
School of Tourism Management
Zhuhai City Polytechnic

Abstract:

The advent of generative AI excels in autonomously producing innovative content for business purposes. How Gen AI inspires people to make decisions in the hospitality industry remains understudied. Drawing on theories of customer inspiration and fear acquisition, our study analyzed 424 questionnaires and found that the advanced ability of Gen AI to generate creative content can inspire customers and increase their willingness to accept its hotel recommendations. Nevertheless, the process of customer inspiration may face challenges due to anxiety arising from a lack of transparency. Theoretical and practical implications on how to leverage Gen AI in hotels are discussed.

Keywords: Generative AI, inspiration, fear acquisition, lack of transparency, hotel recommendations

1. Introduction

Generative AI, utilizes a large language model to produce text that closely resembles human-generated content, often to the point that it is difficult to discern the difference between the two (Radford et al., 2019). The nascent iteration of Gen AI integrates augmented creativity into conventional competencies like memory, monitoring, and calculation, and companies adopting it continue to pull ahead. By this means, Gen AI could also enrich customer experiences and strengthen business-client bonds (Maslej et al., 2023). From the customer perspective, Gen AI's novel and customized content has the potential to inspire consumers by unveiling novel possibilities and catalysing ideation beyond conventional decision-making. For example, Wong et al. (2023) suggest Gen AI can augment customer decision-making across pre-trip, en-route, and post-trip stages by offering customized recommendations, heightening decision efficiency and creativity.

However, there are widespread controversies surrounding the contents and recommendations made by Gen AI. Adverse perceptions frequently stem from beliefs that AI lacks accurate comprehension (Kidd & Birhane, 2023), struggles with recognizing individual uniqueness (Longoni, Bonezzi, & Morewedge, 2019; Longoni & Cian, 2020), exhibits inadequate empathy (Liu, Mittal, Yang, & Bruckman, 2022; Lv, Yang, Qin, Cao, & Xu, 2022), and evokes lower source trust (Sands, Campbell, Plangger, & Ferraro, 2022). Utilizing AI in decision-making also elicits liability concerns. Li and Huang (2020) further delineated lack of transparency anxiety imposing the most serious concerns among academia and practitioners.

Anxiety over lack of transparency for Gen AI content, often referred to as the "black box problem," signifies a critical differentiator from other technologies, leading to apprehension and mistrust among stakeholders (Franzoni, 2023; von Eschenbach, 2021). In other words, although Gen AI recommendations are welcomed (Youn & Cho, 2023), a lack of transparency in Gen AI content could impede trust and future usage. The issue deserves investigations in the field given the major challenge it poses to practitioners and customers. Hence, the present study focuses on a question that remains widely debated: What enables or hinders consumer acceptance of Gen AI recommendations?

Building upon customer inspiration theory (Böttger, Rudolph, Evanschitzky, & Pfrang, 2017) and fear acquisition theory (Hofmann, 2008; Poulton, Caspi, & Moffitt, 2023; Rachman, 1977), we argue that Gen AI's powerful capabilities in generating creative content and assisting decision making can inspire customers to increase their acceptance for AI-recommended hotel choices, in which Gen AI inspiration plays a mediating role. Additionally, customers' lack of transparency anxiety toward Gen AI might negatively moderate customers' inspiration and recommendation acceptance intention.

Customer inspiration theory (Böttger et al., 2017) views customers as recipients of inspiration and defines customer inspiration as a temporary motivational state that helps the customer to transform marketing-induced ideas received externally (e.g., from Gen AI) into an internal pursuit or even an actual action towards a relevant goal (e.g., accepting Gen AI recommendations to book a hotel). Tourists can be inspired by their travel experiences, which have the potential to increase their level of engagement (He, Liu, & Li, 2023). In a similar vein, customer inspiration can also be conceptualized as the transition from being inspired by Gen AI, a state of mind arising from the source of inspiration, to being inspired to realize a new idea by following Gen AI recommendations on hotel choices, a state of intention that motivates the recipient of the inspiration to engage in a particular behaviour (Izogo & Mpinganjira, 2020). However, considering concerns about hallucination and lack of transparency in AI recommendations, the present work draws on the theory of fear acquisition (Hofmann, 2008; Poulton et al., 2023; Rachman, 1977) to understand how lack of transparency in Gen AI would condition the customer inspiration and acceptance process. This process of acquiring anxiety indirectly can subsequently have a negative impact on the influence of inspiration and the willingness to accept recommendations from Gen AI (Youn & Cho, 2023).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Gen AI anthropomorphism and inspiration

Mirroring Gen AI's creativity, customer inspiration has become a salient marketing construct, as motivated states unveil novel possibilities that can catalyze ideation (Rauschnabel, Felix, & Hinsch, 2019). Customer inspiration encompasses two discrete components: a cognitive "inspired by" state and an intentional "inspired to" state (Böttger et al., 2017; Ki, Park, & Kim, 2022). The "inspired by" state signifies deliberation, while the "inspired to" state denotes implementation (Böttger et al., 2017; Gollwitzer, 1990). In terms of antecedents, the theory further postulates that the characteristics of the inspiration source may be a crucial factor in determining customer inspiration (Böttger et al., 2017; Thrash, Moldovan, Oleynick, & Maruskin, 2014). The most inspiring sources possess three distinct characteristics: content that can arouse inspiration, such as a revolutionary concept; the potential to encourage one's creativity; and a robust approach to generating desire capacity (Böttger et al., 2017).

As Gen AI fulfils these requisites and spearheads revolutionary industry transformations, it could profoundly inspire consumers (Mondal, Das, & Vrana, 2023). A crucial factor in Gen AI to inspire consumers and elevate acceptance is its high degree of anthropomorphism, enabling it to cultivate intimate rapport with customers (Kühne & Peter, 2022). Anthropomorphism is the act of attributing human-like characteristics, names, appearances, mental states, and actions to entities that are not human (Salles, Evers, & Farisco, 2020). AI with highly anthropomorphic traits generates more positive attitudes, increasing consumer willingness to accept its recommendations in hedonic contexts (Youn & Cho, 2023). Technology companies are increasingly attributing human-like characteristics to Gen AI, such as intelligence, sentience, and empathy, to generate greater financial rewards (Kidd & Birhane, 2023). Hence, attributing anthropomorphic characteristics to nonhuman entities such as Gen AI significantly impacts how users perceive and behave towards them.

In the hospitality and tourism industry, Gen AI can act as a virtual personal assistant or friend to navigate on a tourist's behalf among abundant information and data, while providing highly customized, innovative, and efficient suggestions for their journey (Gursoy, Li, &

Song, 2023; Wong et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2024). These novel Gen AI functionalities and advantages are unprecedented in the tourism industry. As an inspiring source, Gen AI can undoubtedly compel consumer attention and spark an "inspired by" to "inspired to" progression, elevating acceptance intention toward its recommendations. Given that Gen AI's advanced anthropomorphic attributes render a major advancement that could assist tourists' decision-making process by furnishing customized recommendations including accommodation selections, it follows that inspired customers are more likely to accept Gen AI recommendations. Hence, the following hypotheses were proposed:

Hypothesis 1: "Inspired by" Gen AI mediates the relationship between Gen AI anthropomorphism and its recommendation acceptance intentions among customers.
Hypothesis 2: "Inspired to" use Gen AI mediates the relationship between Gen AI anthropomorphism and its recommendation acceptance intentions among customers.
Hypothesis 3: Customers who are inspired by Gen AI are more likely to be inspired to use Gen AI for making hotel selection decisions.

2.2. Transparency anxiety in Gen AI

Anxiety is a ubiquitous human emotion, and for some, it becomes aversive when disproportionate to threats or persistent beyond danger (Poulton et al., 2023). Anxiety and fear are adaptive emotions that can rapidly and aggressively react to an imminent threat. Regarding AI, Li and Huang (2020) note that customers' fear of the lack of transparency of AI output is a critical factor impeding their adoption of AI. Of AI ethical principles, transparency elicits the most concern about hallucination, followed by privacy (Khan et al., 2022). While privacy issues are extensively discussed (Davenport, Guha, Grewal, & Bressgott, 2020), customers' anxiety toward insufficient transparency remains less examined (Haresamudram, Larsson, & Heintz, 2023). Transparency in Gen AI facilitates the detection and resolution of issues arising from misfitted or underfitted models; incorrectly configured hyperparameters, settings, and inputs (algorithmic issues); and improperly trained datasets (input issues).

Some people tolerate insufficient transparency because AI can empower them. In other words, there is a symbiotic relationship between AI growth and authority control (Beraja, Kao, Yang, & Yuchtman, 2023), whereby they mutually strengthen one another. Greater tolerance (i.e., lower anxiety levels) regarding lack of transparency could also apply to customers who feel empowered by humanized General AI, inspired and open to accepting its recommendations. In contrast, people with higher levels of anxiety over transparency in Gen AI are seeking a means to combat the monetization of personal data (Crain, 2018), which lies at the heart of power disparities. Enhanced transparency can sever the ties to power imbalances, thereby addressing the ethical concerns associated with commercial surveillance and misuse (Crain, 2018). Growing concerns about transparency issues have led to increased customer skepticism and a reduced willingness to embrace the outputs of Gen AI.

Hypothesis 4: Lack of transparency anxiety moderates the relationship between anthropomorphism and being “inspired by” Gen AI, in that the relationship weakens when anxiety over lack of transparency is high.

Transparency is necessary to minimize biases. Gen AI can be considered more rational (Chen, Liu, Shan, & Zhong, 2023) since it can be designed to mitigate some human cognitive bias in decision-making (Binz & Schulz, 2023). For customers with a higher level of anxiety about transparency, inadequate transparency in Gen AI undermines their trust in its outputs and interferes with the human decision-making process (Chowdhury, Joel-Edgar, Dey, Bhattacharya, & Kharlamov, 2023). Existing research reveals AI biases disproportionately disadvantage certain groups, for example categorizing black faces as gorillas (Grant & Hill, 2023) or Asians as blinkers (Wade, 2010), and exhibiting sexism in hiring (Meechang, Leelawat, Tang, Kodaka, & Chintanapakdee, 2020). Individuals concerned with the lack of transparency in Gen AI tend to distrust it, leading to unsure feelings about its human-like qualities and a reduced openness to new ideas. Conversely, those who are comfortable with this opacity and who experience less anxiety are more likely to trust and relate to human-like AI, making them more receptive to its influence and inspiration.

Vorm and Combs (2022) proposed to accentuate the critical role of transparency in technology acceptance by enhancing the effect of technology features such as anthropomorphism. Anthropomorphic Gen AI can improve the informational basis to help humans make intelligent decisions, leading to greater acceptance of Gen AI recommendations. Furthermore, a high level of anxiety concerning the lack of transparency in Gen AI diminishes the willingness to accept anthropomorphic recommendations, as it is difficult for people to trust AI if it does not sufficiently demonstrate transparency. In contrast, if customers experience a low level of transparency anxiety, they should be more willing to accept AI recommendations that have a strong anthropomorphic character.

Hypothesis 5: Anxiety over the lack of transparency moderates the relationship between anthropomorphism and Gen AI recommendation acceptance, in that the relationship weakens when the anxiety is high.

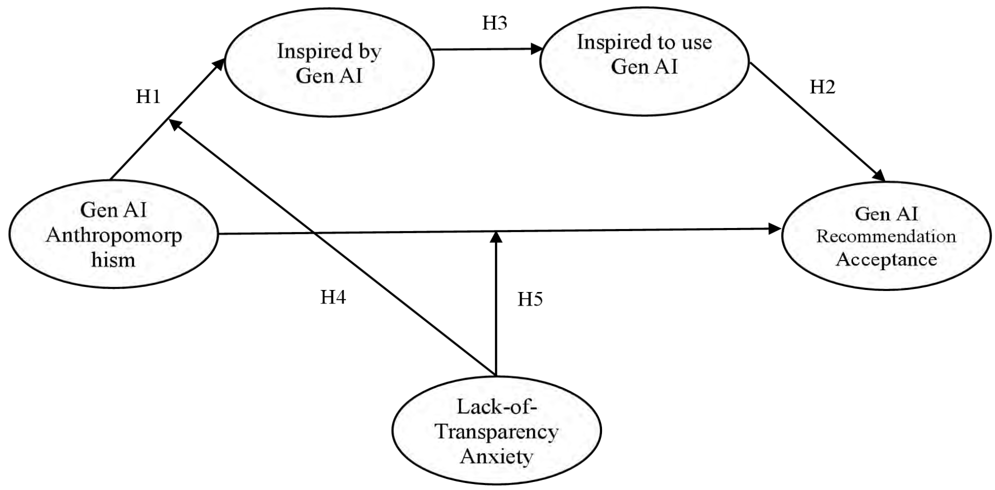


Figure 1. Research Framework

3. Methodology

3.1. Sampling Procedure

A total of 424 complete and usable questionnaires were collected in August 2023. The majority of respondents were aged between 21 and 40 years (79.0%), with a gender distribution of 44.8% males and 55.2% females. Over 83.7% of respondents had a bachelor's degree or higher, and 59.4% had a monthly income between 5,000 and 20,000 yuan. About 50.2% of respondents had stayed in a hotel 1–5 times in the past year. The most frequently used Gen AI software included ChatGPT (64.7%), Ernie Bot (17.3%), NewBing (9.1%), and LUGE (2.4%), with 69.2% of consumers would consult Gen AI before booking a hotel in the future.

3.2. Measurement

The Gen AI anthropomorphism scale was adopted with modification in using a four-item scale adopted from the literature (Pelau, Dabija, & Ene, 2021; Sinha, Singh, Gupta, & Singh, 2020). Items were evaluated on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The scale was quite reliable (Cronbach's alpha [α] = 0.83). Gen AI inspiration was measured using a 10-item scale from Böttger et al. (2017), which included two key variables: inspired by and inspired to. Each item was evaluated on a 9-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 9 (strongly agree); and both scales demonstrated good reliability ($\alpha \geq 0.83$). Gen AI recommendation acceptance intention was evaluated using a scale from Pelau et al. (2021) and Venkatesh et al. (2012), which used a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Results demonstrated acceptable reliability ($\alpha = .62$). Lack of transparency anxiety was measured using a three-item scale adapted from Li and Huang (2020), rated on a 5-point scale, with results demonstrating sufficient reliability ($\alpha = .85$). The research objectives were clarified at the beginning of each questionnaire, and annotations indicated to respondents that each item referred to the respective Gen AI application the respondent mentioned in the first section.

4. Results

The research model was tested using the partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS 4.0, with results shown in Table 3. To test the proposed research hypotheses, we also controlled for age, gender, and frequency of hotel stays in the past year. Gen AI anthropomorphism had a significant positive effect on both *inspired by* ($\beta = .52$, $p < .001$) and recommendation acceptance intention ($\beta = .19$, $p <. 001$). *Inspired by* also had a positive impact on *inspired to* ($\beta = .77$, $p < .001$). We also calculated the indirect effects of the model. The results showed that the two mediators, namely, Gen AI inspired by and inspired to, exhibited significant multiple mediation effects between Gen AI anthropomorphism and Gen AI recommendation acceptance intention. Specifically, the results were as follows: Gen AI anthropomorphism→ inspired by → inspired to → Gen AI recommendation acceptance intention (indirect effect: $\beta = .21$, $p <. 001$). These results support Hypotheses 1–3.

In the mediation model, Gen AI anthropomorphism explained 28% of the variance in *inspired by* ($R^2_{\text{inspired by}} = .28$), while *inspired by* explained 59% of the variance of *inspired to* ($R^2_{\text{inspired to}} = .59$). The model explained 40% of the variance in recommendation acceptance ($R^2_{\text{recommendation acceptance}} = .40$). The results indicated that the anthropomorphism of Gen AI correlated with Gen AI inspiration, which in turn influenced customer acceptance of Gen AI. The framework demonstrated that Gen AI *inspired by* and *inspired to* states partially mediated the effect of anthropomorphism on recommendation acceptance intention, demonstrating that the inspiring capability of Gen AI indeed significantly impacts consumer decisions.

Subsequently, this study tested the moderating effect of lack-of-transparency anxiety on the relationships between Gen AI anthropomorphism, inspired by, and acceptance intention. However, it did not significantly moderate the relationship between Gen AI anthropomorphism and recommendation acceptance intention. Lack-of-transparency anxiety significantly moderated the relationship between Gen AI anthropomorphism and inspired by state ($\beta_{\text{Gen AI anthropomorphism} \times \text{lack-of-transparency anxiety} \rightarrow \text{inspired by}} = -.13$, p<0.01), but not the relationship between Gen AI anthropomorphism and recommendation acceptance ($\beta_{\text{Gen AI anthropomorphism} \times \text{lack-of-transparency anxiety} \rightarrow \text{recommendation acceptance}} = -.04$, $p > 0.05$). The results supported Hypothesis 4 but not Hypothesis 5. The explanatory power of the moderated mediation model is strong ($R^2_{\text{inspired by}} = .33$; $R^2_{\text{inspired to}} = .59$; $R^2_{\text{recommendation acceptance}} = .40$)

Following the simple slope procedure of Aiken et al. (1991), we redefined the high and low moderators of lack of transparency anxiety by using the plus and minus one standard deviation from the mean to graphically describe the moderating effects. In Figure 2, the higher the level of lack-of-transparency anxiety, the lesser the impact of Gen AI anthropomorphism on *inspired by*, and the lower the level of lack-of-transparency anxiety, the greater its impact.

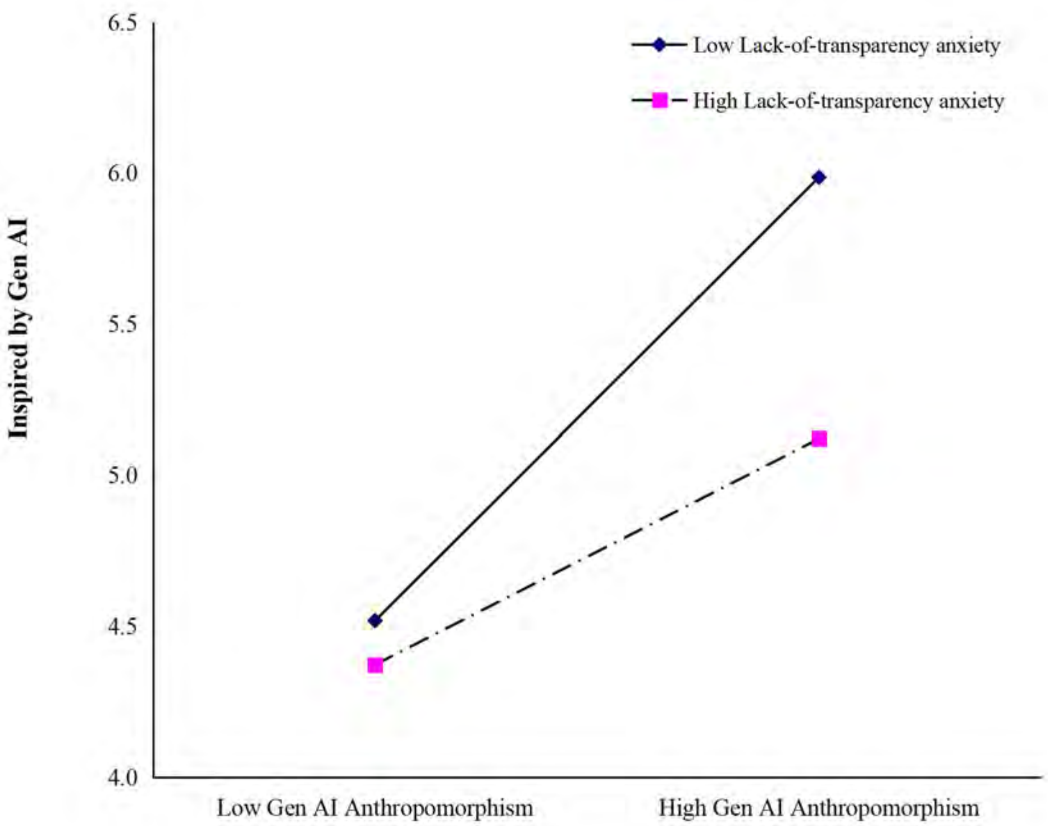


Figure 2. Anthropomorphism × lack of transparency anxiety on inspired by Gen AI.

Table 1: Results of structural equation path estimations

Path	Model 1_Mediating Effect			Model 2_Moderating Effect		
	Gen AI inspired by state	Gen AI inspired to state	Gen AI recommendation acceptance intention	Gen AI inspired by state	Gen AI inspired to state	Gen AI recommendation acceptance intention
Control						
Age			−.09			−.09
Gender			−.07			−.08
Hotel stay history			−.01			−.01
Main effect						
Gen AI Anthropomorphism	.52***		.19***	.44***		.20***
Gen AI Inspired by state		.77***			.77***	
Gen AI Inspired to state			.53***			.53***
Moderating effect						
Lack-of-transparency anxiety					−.23***	−.01
Gen AI Anthropomorphism × Lack-of-transparency anxiety					−.13**	−.04
R^2	.28	.59	.40	.33	.59	.40
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)		.08			.08	
Normed Fit Index (NFI)		.80			.80	

Note: ***p < .001; **p < .01.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Theoretical implications

Customer inspiration is at the center of marketing (Böttger et al., 2017). The present research contributes to the existing literature by examining and expanding customer inspiration (Böttger et al., 2017) and fear acquisition theories (Hofmann, 2008; Poulton et al., 2023; Rachman, 1977) in understanding how inspiration from Gen AI could unfold as a means for hotel selection. Findings of the present work enrich the extant literature on customer inspiration, expanding the series of studies on influencer inspiration (Ki et al., 2022), destination inspiration (Tsaur, Yen, & Lin, 2022), wellness inspiration (He et al., 2023), and Gen AI inspiration. Doing so opens a new forum of discussion on Gen AI and how such an intelligent device could inspire customers to seek new opportunities and make autonomous decisions.

The findings provide strong support that customer inspiration significantly partially mediates the relationship between Gen AI anthropomorphism and customers' acceptance intention for its recommendations. The conceptual and operational nuance of Gen AI recommendation acceptance is noteworthy as it steers away from the taken-for-granted technology acceptance concept (Venkatesh, 2000) to recommendation acceptance. Accordingly, this research takes Vorm and Combs' (2022) intelligent technology acceptance model a step further to acknowledge the importance of anthropomorphism and inspiration of generative content via such an autonomous device.

Nevertheless, the process of customer inspiration may face challenges such as Gen AI hallucinations and anxiety arising from a lack of transparency. Another significant theoretical implication of this study is the introduction of the lack-of-transparency anxiety as a potential risk factor related to fear acquisition theory (Hofmann, 2008; Poulton et al., 2023; Rachman, 1977), which also complements consumer inspiration theory (Böttger et al., 2017). The lack of transparency in Gen AI outputs can negatively moderate the customer inspiration process. In other words, Gen AI risks distorting customers' beliefs if it conveys inspiring content with subtle hallucinations while adopting an assertive anthropomorphic tone claiming intellectual competence (Kidd & Birhane, 2023). Customers experiencing a lack of transparency in the functioning of Gen AI may feel anxious and have difficulty being inspired by anthropomorphized Gen AI.

However, anxiety about the lack of transparency in Gen AI does not significantly negatively moderate the relationship between Gen AI anthropomorphism and recommendation acceptance intention. This result aligns with findings by Youn and Cho (2023), which suggest customers may be less concerned with issues in hedonic settings like hotel selection. Two possible explanations for this finding are discussed. First, hotel operations are often standardized, so consumers are unconcerned about service quality if they communicate specific requirements to Gen AI. Second, hotel choice represents a hedonic setting, eliciting less anxiety in consumers (Youn & Cho, 2023). This insight may point to a new direction of Gen AI acceptance in which customers may crave uncertainty in hedonic settings, as recent research suggests (Mvondo, Jing, & Hussain, 2023; Shen, Hsee, & Talloen, 2019).

5.2. Practical implications

Consumers can now avoid the need to continually input or choose specific search steps to get hotel information. Alternatively, one prompt can lead Gen AI to generate service comparisons (Wong et al., 2023), while Gen AI could even offer comprehensive, streamlined, and motivating decision recommendations. An important area for future study and hoteliers to focus on is how hotels can differentiate themselves from their competitors in this process. Hoteliers can propose means to teach guests how to explore hotel facilities and other benefits (e.g., security and safety control, in-hotel medical service, pick-up and delivery service, and more) that add value to a hotel stay. This approach could help a hotel to gain a competitive advantage over other hotels and enable guests to recognize the hotel's unique value offerings.

Failure of operators to acquire knowledge regarding Gen AI marketing may lead to the loss of these users (Law, Lin, Ye, & Fong, 2023). In addition, the majority of Gen AIs presently necessitate memberships, which impedes client outreach via conventional search engine advertisements. Accordingly, it is time for operators to reframe their marketing strategy to better tailor their efforts to customers who rely on AI generative recommendations. Further investigation is particularly necessary into the strategies that new hotels can employ to market themselves.

To address concerns about inadequate transparency of AI, hoteliers should also be aware that AI experts are currently focusing on the development of explainable AI (Ali et al., 2023; Bauer, von Zahn, & Hinz, 2023). As explainable AI improves, it has the potential to alter users' comprehension of information and their vision of the world. Addressing transparency concerns by implementing explainable AI can influence how users prioritize accessible information, resulting in changes to their mental models (Bauer et al., 2023). This approach, in turn, may increase acceptance and adoption of Gen AI.

5.3. Limitations and Future Studies

This project has two primary limitations. We mainly discussed Gen AI as a service provider, but Huang and Rust (2022) suggest AI has the potential to assume the customer role in the future. Future studies could also consider investigating relationships not only in human–AI interactions but also between AI agents interacting with each other. Additionally, respondents were primarily Chinese Gen AI users, so future research could collect data across countries to identify potential differences. Beyond measuring customer intention, field experiments could be used to study whether Gen AI influences consumer booking behavior in practice.

REFERENCES

Ali, S., Abuhmed, T., El-Sappagh, S., Muhammad, K., Alonso-Moral, J. M., Confalonieri, R., et al. (2023). Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI): What we know and what is left to attain Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence. *Information Fusion, 99*, 101805.

Bauer, K., von Zahn, M., & Hinz, O. (2023). Expl (AI) ned: The impact of explainable artificial intelligence on users' information processing. *Information Systems Research*.

Beraja, M., Kao, A., Yang, D. Y., & Yuchtman, N. (2023). AI-tocracy*. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 138*(3), 1349-1402.

Binz, M., & Schulz, E. (2023). Using cognitive psychology to understand GPT-3. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 120*(6), e2218523120.

Böttger, T., Rudolph, T., Evanschitzky, H., & Pfrang, T. (2017). Customer inspiration: Conceptualization, scale development, and validation. *Journal of Marketing, 81*(6), 116-131.

Böttger, T. M., Rudolph, T., Evanschitzky, H., & Pfrang, T. (2017). Customer Inspiration: Conceptualization, Scale Development, and Validation. *Journal of Marketing, 81*, 116 - 131.

Chen, Y., Liu, T. X., Shan, Y., & Zhong, S. (2023). The Emergence of Economic Rationality of GPT. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2305.12763*.

Chowdhury, S., Joel-Edgar, S., Dey, P. K., Bhattacharya, S., & Kharlamov, A. (2023). Embedding transparency in artificial intelligence machine learning models: managerial implications on predicting and explaining employee turnover. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 34*(14), 2732-2764.

Crain, M. (2018). The limits of transparency: Data brokers and commodification. *new media & society, 20*(1), 88-104.

Davenport, T., Guha, A., Grewal, D., & Bressgott, T. (2020). How artificial intelligence will change the future of marketing. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 48*, 24-42.

Franzoni, V. (2023). *From black box to glass box: advancing transparency in artificial intelligence systems for ethical and trustworthy AI.* Paper presented at the International Conference on Computational Science and Its Applications.

Gollwitzer, P. M. (1990). Action phases and mind-sets. *hyogo university of teacher education journal*.

Grant, N., & Hill, K. (2023). Google's Photo App Still Can't Find Gorillas. And Neither Can Apple's. Retrieved 0825, 2023, from https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/22/technology/ai-photo-labels-google-apple.html#:~:text=But%20a%20couple%20of%20months,echoes%20centuries%20of%20racist%20tropes.

Gursoy, D., Li, Y., & Song, H. (2023). ChatGPT and the hospitality and tourism industry: an overview of current trends and future research directions. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management, 32*, 579 - 592.

Haresamudram, K., Larsson, S., & Heintz, F. (2023). Three levels of AI transparency. *Computer, 56*(2), 93-100.

He, M., Liu, B., & Li, Y. (2023). Tourist Inspiration: How the Wellness Tourism Experience Inspires Tourist Engagement. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research, 47*(7), 1115-1135.

Hofmann, S. G. (2008). Cognitive processes during fear acquisition and extinction in animals and humans: Implications for exposure therapy of anxiety disorders. *Clinical psychology review, 28*(2), 199-210.

Huang, M.-H., & Rust, R. T. (2022). AI as customer. *Journal of Service Management, 33*(2), 210-220.

Izogo, E. E., & Mpinganjira, M. (2020). Behavioral consequences of customer inspiration: the role of social media inspirational content and cultural orientation. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing, 14*, 431-459.

Khan, A. A., Badshah, S., Liang, P., Waseem, M., Khan, B., Ahmad, A., et al. (2022). *Ethics of AI: A Systematic Literature Review of Principles and Challenges*. Paper presented at the Proceedings of the 26th International Conference on Evaluation and Assessment in Software Engineering. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1145/3530019.3531329

Ki, C.-W., Park, S.-S., & Kim, Y.-K. (2022). Investigating the mechanism through which consumers are “inspired by” social media influencers and “inspired to” adopt influencers’ exemplars as social defaults. *Journal of Business Research*.

Kidd, C., & Birhane, A. (2023). How AI can distort human beliefs. *Science, 380*(6651), 1222-1223.

Kühne, R., & Peter, J. (2022). Anthropomorphism in human–robot interactions: a multidimensional conceptualization. *Communication Theory, 33*(1), 42-52.

Law, R., Lin, K. J., Ye, H., & Fong, D. K. C. (2023). Artificial intelligence research in hospitality: a state-of-the-art review and future directions. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, ahead-of-print*(ahead-of-print).

Li, J., & Huang, J.-S. (2020). Dimensions of artificial intelligence anxiety based on the integrated fear acquisition theory. *Technology in Society, 63*, 101410.

Liu, Y., Mittal, A., Yang, D., & Bruckman, A. (2022). *Will AI Console Me when I Lose my Pet? Understanding Perceptions of AI-Mediated Email Writing*. Paper presented at the Proceedings of the 2022 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems.

Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1145/3491102.3517731

Longoni, C., Bonezzi, A., & Morewedge, C. K. (2019). Resistance to Medical Artificial Intelligence. *Journal of Consumer Research, 46*(4), 629-650.

Longoni, C., & Cian, L. (2020). Artificial Intelligence in Utilitarian vs. Hedonic Contexts: The "Word-of-Machine" Effect. *Journal of Marketing*.

Lv, X., Yang, Y., Qin, D., Cao, X., & Xu, H. (2022). Artificial intelligence service recovery: The role of empathic response in hospitality customers' continuous usage intention. *Computers in Human Behavior, 126*, 106993.

Maslej, N., Fattorini, L., Brynjolfsson, E., Etchemendy, J., Ligett, K., Lyons, T., et al. (2023). *Artificial intelligence index report 2023*. Stanford, CA: AI Index Steering Committee,

Institute for Human-Centered AI, Stanford University.

Meechang, K., Leelawat, N., Tang, J., Kodaka, A., & Chintanapakdee, C. (2020). The acceptance of using information technology for disaster risk management: A systematic review. *Engineering Journal, 24*(4), 111-132.

Mondal, S. R., Das, S., & Vrana, V. G. (2023). How to Bell the Cat? A Theoretical Review of Generative Artificial Intelligence towards Digital Disruption in All Walks of Life. *Technologies*.

Mvondo, G. F. N., Jing, F., & Hussain, K. (2023). What's in the box? Investigating the benefits and risks of the blind box selling strategy. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 71*, 103189.

Pelau, C., Dabija, D.-C., & Ene, I. (2021). What makes an AI device human-like? The role of interaction quality, empathy and perceived psychological anthropomorphic characteristics in the acceptance of artificial intelligence in the service industry. *Computers in Human Behavior, 122*, 106855.

Poulton, R., Caspi, A., & Moffitt, T. E. (2023). Fear and anxiety: Lessons learned from the Dunedin longitudinal study. *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews, 148*, 105118.

Rachman, S. (1977). The conditioning theory of fearacquisition: A critical examination. *Behaviour Research and Therapy, 15*(5), 375-387.

Radford, A., Wu, J., Child, R., Luan, D., Amodei, D., & Sutskever, I. (2019). Language models are unsupervised multitask learners. *OpenAI blog, 1*(8), 9.

Rauschnabel, P. A., Felix, R., & Hinsch, C. (2019). Augmented reality marketing: How mobile AR-apps can improve brands through inspiration. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*.

Salles, A., Evers, K., & Farisco, M. (2020). Anthropomorphism in AI. *AJOB Neuroscience, 11*(2), 88-95.

Sands, S., Campbell, C. L., Plangger, K., & Ferraro, C. (2022). Unreal influence: leveraging AI in influencer marketing. *European Journal of Marketing, 56*(6), 1721-1747.

Shen, L., Hsee, C. K., & Talloen, J. H. (2019). The fun and function of uncertainty: Uncertain incentives reinforce repetition decisions. *Journal of Consumer Research, 46*(1), 69-81.

Sinha, N., Singh, P., Gupta, M., & Singh, P. (2020). Robotics at workplace: An integrated Twitter analytics – SEM based approach for behavioral intention to accept. *International Journal of Information Management, 55*, 102210.

Thrash, T. M., Moldovan, E. G., Oleynick, V. C., & Maruskin, L. A. (2014). The Psychology of Inspiration. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass, 8*, 495-510.

Tsaur, S.-H., Yen, C.-H., & Lin, Y.-S. (2022). Destination inspiration: Scale development and validation. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 39*(5), 484-500.

Venkatesh, V. (2000). Determinants of perceived ease of use: Integrating control, intrinsic motivation, and emotion into the technology acceptance model. *Information Systems Research, 11*(4), 342-365.

Venkatesh, V., Thong, J. Y. L., & Xu, X. (2012). Consumer Acceptance and Use of Information Technology: Extending the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology. *MIS Quarterly, 36*(1), 157-178.

von Eschenbach, W. J. (2021). Transparency and the Black Box Problem: Why We Do Not Trust AI. *Philosophy & Technology, 34*(4), 1607-1622.

Vorm, E. S., & Combs, D. J. Y. (2022). Integrating transparency, trust, and acceptance: The intelligent systems technology acceptance model (ISTAM). *International Journal of Human–Computer Interaction, 38*(18-20), 1828-1845.

Wade, L. (2010). HP software doesn't see black people. from https://tinyurl.com/cwccd9dc

Wong, I. A., Lian, Q. L., & Sun, D. (2023). Autonomous travel decision-making: An early glimpse into ChatGPT and generative AI. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 56*, 253-263.

Youn, K., & Cho, M. (2023). Business types matter: New insights into the effects of anthropomorphic cues in AI chatbots. *Journal of Services Marketing, 37*(8), 1032-1045.

Zhang, J., Chen, Q., Lu, J., Wang, X., Liu, L., & Feng, Y. (2024). Emotional expression by artificial intelligence chatbots to improve customer satisfaction: Underlying mechanism and boundary conditions. *Tourism Management, 100*, 104835.

Exploring the effect of conspicuous consumption motives on ambivalent attitudes and intentions to revisit vegan restaurants among non-vegan diners

Moon, Chanwoo
College of Hotel and Tourism Management
Kyung Hee University

Cho, Meehee
College of Hotel and Tourism Management
Kyung Hee University

Abstract:

While there is a growing trend in individuals adopting vegan diets, the vegan restaurant industry has seen numerous openings and closures. Therefore, this study investigates the key factors influencing non-vegans' intentions to revisit vegan restaurants, drawing from the social comparison theory. Our findings emphasize the importance of the need for uniqueness and desire for access to elite social strata in shaping conspicuous consumption motives, thus enhancing non-vegans' ambivalent attitudes. Interestingly, this study reveals that non-vegans' ambivalent attitudes positively impact their revisit intentions for vegan restaurants, and this effect was notably enhanced by the perceived objective authenticity.

Keywords: Non-vegans, vegan restaurants, conspicuous consumption motives, ambivalent attitudes, revisit intentions, social comparison theory

1. Introduction

Amid rising concerns for environmental sustainability, animal welfare, and personal health, the consumption of vegan products and eco-friendly dietary choices has surged (Kotebagilu, Bhatia, & Piramanayagam, 2023). The global vegan food market reached $16.7 billion in 2022 and is expected to hit $49.6 billion by 2032, with a projected CAGR of 11.8% from 2023 to 2032 (Acumen Research and Consulting, 2023). Despite this growth, many vegan restaurants have closed at a rate matching their openings (Mitchell, 2023). Surprisingly, around 90% of vegan food consumers are non-vegans, according to the NPD Group (2019). This suggests that most patrons are either trying vegan cuisine for the first time or are flexitarians. Thus, vegan restaurants must cater to both vegan and non-vegan clientele for sustainability.

Our study delves into the phenomenon of 'fake vegans'—individuals who outwardly exhibit vegan behavior without adhering to a genuine vegan diet (Southan, 2013). Dining at vegan restaurants is perceived as a way to demonstrate concern for animal welfare or the environment, appealing particularly to those aiming to project an ethical image (McPherson, 2018). This inclination aligns closely with the concept of ‘conspicuous consumption,’ which refers to ostentatious displays of wealth, fame, or distinctive tastes to elevate social status (Veblen, 1899). Based on the social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954), individuals strive to distinguish themselves from lower social classes while emulating behaviors of higher social classes. In this regard, non-vegans’ conspicuous consumption motives can be driven by the ‘desire for access to elite social strata’ and ‘need for uniqueness.’

This study posits that the conspicuous consumption motives of non-vegans contribute to their ambivalent attitudes towards dining at vegan restaurants. The term ‘ambivalence’ refers to an emotional response resulting from conflicting situations (Otnes, Lowrey, & Shrum, 1997). Non-vegans who self-identify as meat-eaters but engage in conspicuous consumption at vegan restaurants are more likely to harbor ambivalent attitudes toward dining at such establishments because the selection of vegan menu items often diverges from their personal preferences. Furthermore, ambivalent attitudes arising from such conflicting situations can lead to inconsistent and discontinuous reactions toward a particular decision (Tuu & Olsen, 2010). Therefore, this study assumes that the ambivalent attitudes of non-vegan consumers toward dining at vegan restaurants decrease their intentions to revisit such establishments. To mitigate this negative effect, this study explores authenticity as a strategic approach. Authenticity has been linked to improved customer satisfaction and loyalty in the restaurant industry (Meng & Choi, 2017; Premordia & Gál, 2023). Thus, we assume that perceived vegan restaurants’ authenticity by non-vegans can moderate the adverse impact of ambivalent attitudes on their revisit intentions.

Through a sample representing non-vegan diners who have dined at vegan restaurants within the past year, our research model, as illustrated in Figure 1, is validated by 1) assessing the influence of the ‘desire for access to elite social strata’ and ‘need for uniqueness’ on ‘conspicuous consumption motives’; 2) examining how ‘conspicuous consumption motives’ affect ‘ambivalent attitudes,’ subsequently influencing revisit intentions for vegan restaurants; and 3) exploring authenticity’s moderating role in the relationship between ‘ambivalence’ and revisit intentions for vegan restaurants.

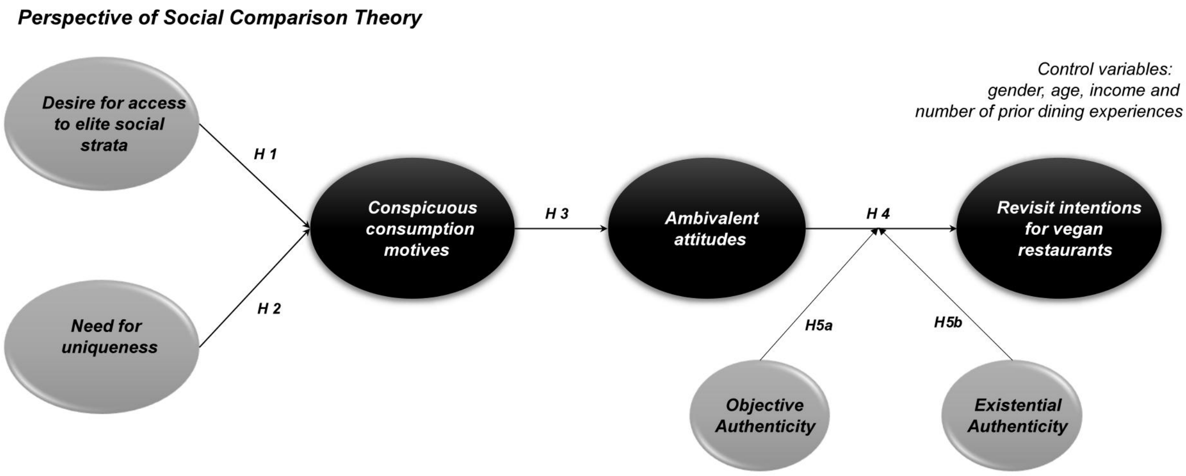


Figure 1. Research model

2. Literature Review

2.1. Social comparison theory

The Social Comparison Theory, initially formulated by Festinger (1954), posits that individuals naturally compare their possessions with those of others to assess their current status. Expanding on this notion, scholars have explored individuals' consumption behavior through two distinct scenarios (Yang & Mattila, 2014; Das *et al.*, 2021). In the first scenario, individuals strive to distinguish themselves from those in lower social classes, often leveraging 'uniqueness' to elevate their status (Kumar *et al.*, 2022). Conversely, the second scenario suggests that individuals seek to emulate behaviors of those in higher social classes (Yang & Mattila, 2014). An early study by Hayakawa & Venieris (1977) argued that when faced with complex conspicuous choices, consumers may seek guidance from elite social strata or opt for a unique path to set themselves apart. Within these frameworks, individuals actively seek association with a reference social group and differentiate themselves by acquiring products recognized as social signifiers (Das *et al.*, 2021).

2.2. Antecedents of conspicuous consumption motives: desire for access to elite social strata & need for uniqueness

Literature has identified two primary antecedents of conspicuous consumption: the 'desire for access to elite social strata' and the 'need for uniqueness' (Kluge & Fassnacht, 2015; Kumar *et al.*, 2022). The desire for access to elite social strata stems from the bandwagon effect, which describes the increasing demand for a product as it becomes more prevalent among reference group members (Leibenstein, 1950). Another critical antecedent of conspicuous consumption is the 'need for uniqueness,' often seen as an anti-conformity trait triggered when increased similarity with others elicits a negative emotional response or unsatisfactory self-evaluation (Chan, Berger, & Van Boven, 2012). This phenomenon can be explained by the snob effect, where demand for a product diminishes due to its widespread consumption (Leibenstein, 1950). Several studies have shown that within the restaurant context, consumers express their distinctiveness by choosing rare, novel, or sustainable menu items (e.g., vegetarian cuisine) to convey their beliefs and values and project their social image (Shin *et al.*, 2019; Norris, Russen, & Taylor, 2022). Drawing upon theoretical foundations and empirical evidence, this study suggests that the desire for access to elite social strata and the need for uniqueness among non-vegans significantly enhance their motives for conspicuous consumption, particularly in the context of dining at vegan restaurants. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 1: Non-vegans' desire for access to elite social strata positively influences conspicuous consumption motives for dining at vegan restaurants.

Hypothesis 2: Non-vegan's need for uniqueness positively influences conspicuous consumption motives for dining at vegan restaurants.

2.3. Consequence of conspicuous consumption motives: Ambivalent attitudes

Ambivalent attitudes arise in situations characterized by internal conflicts where individuals hold conflicting evaluations or beliefs about a specific object (Martinez *et al.*, 2005). This study anticipates that non-vegans' conspicuous consumption motives significantly increase their ambivalent attitudes toward dining at vegan restaurants. Our rationale is rooted in Ireland's (1998) concept of two distinct product utilities. The first type, termed 'fundamental' utility, relates to individual self-satisfaction, particularly derived from the desirable consumption of products in terms of price or functionality. The second type, identified as 'social' utility, involves the association of the product with social status. Since many conspicuous products often lack fundamental utility but fulfill social utility, consumers frequently develop ambivalent attitudes toward those products (Barsyte & Fennis, 2023).

Non-vegans motivated by conspicuous consumption when dining at vegan restaurants may not necessarily adhere to a genuine vegan dietary lifestyle. Consequently, they are more likely to experience conflicting evaluations and perceptions of their dining experiences at such establishments. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis **3:** Non-vegans' conspicuous consumption motives positively affect ambivalent attitudes toward dining at vegan restaurants.

2.4. Non-vegans' ambivalent attitudes and their revisit intentions for vegan restaurants

Previous research has demonstrated that individuals' ambivalent attitudes lead to unfavorable outcomes, such as reduced loyalty and intentions to revisit. For instance, Ahmad & Sun (2018) found that psychological discomfort, characterized by conflicting perceptions, prompted consumers to engage in negative electronic word-of-mouth and resulted in lower intentions for repeat purchases. Similarly, Peng & Chen (2021) provided empirical evidence that ambivalence among patrons of luxury restaurants led to an increase in reservation session abandonment. **In an effort to interpret this consistent finding**, they referred to an earlier study by Cacioppo, Gardner, & Berntson (1997), which suggests that even when individuals hold both positive and negative perceptions of an object, their negative evaluations are more likely to exert greater influence, ultimately overshadowing the positive ones. This implies that negative aspects of ambivalent attitudes play a more significant role in shaping consumers' behavior (Peng & Chen, 2021). Therefore, this study posits that the non-vegan consumers' ambivalent attitudes significantly decrease their revisit intentions for vegan restaurants. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4**: Non-vegans' ambivalent attitudes negatively affect their revisit intentions for vegan restaurants.**

2.5. Moderating effects of authenticity

'Authenticity' denotes something recognized as original, sincere, actual, or genuine (Berger, 1973). Our approach is based on the two types of authenticity (object-oriented & experience-oriented) outlined by Wang (1999). In the context of vegan restaurants, 'objective authenticity' can be conceptualized as the genuineness of vegan cuisine, evaluated by product traits and adherence to traditional vegan cooking and service methods (e.g., abstaining from the use of animal products in both food ingredients and offerings). Meanwhile, 'existential authenticity' can be described as a personal and subjective sense of vegan dining experiences, encompassing feelings of connection with a vegan lifestyle and encountering a diverse spectrum of lived experiences (Meng & Choi, 2017). The fundamental concept of authenticity suggests that individuals express positive emotional and attitudinal responses when they perceive alignment between their expectations and the attributes of a particular product or service (Vannini, 2006).Thus, restaurant customers experiencing a sense of high authenticity are inclined to encounter more positive emotions throughout their dining experiences (Jang, Ha, & Park, 2012). prior studies have shown a positive relationship between restaurant authenticity and perceived quality (Lu, Chi, & Liu, 2015), perceived value (Jang, Ha, & Park, 2012), and customer satisfaction and loyalty (Meng & Choi, 2017). In particular, Meng & Choi (2017) demonstrated that perceived **authenticity of theme** restaurant servicescape strengthened the positive effect of consumer emotion on satisfaction.

Building upon the existing evidence, we assume that when non-vegan customers perceive the food and dining experience at vegan restaurants as authentic, they are more likely to experience heightened positive emotions, thereby increasing their revisit intentions. Consequently, when non-vegan consumers perceive a vegan restaurant as possessing both objective and existential authenticity, the negative effect of their ambivalent attitudes on revisit intentions can be alleviated. Thus, the following hypotheses are posited:

Hypothesis 5**:** Authenticity [‘objective authenticity’(H5a) & ‘existential authenticity’(H5b)], perceived by non-vegans, moderates the effect of ambivalent attitudes on their revisit intentions for vegan restaurants.

3. Methodology

3.1. Survey instrument development

A thorough research review process was undertaken to design the survey questionnaire for the study. Seven constructs were assessed using a total of 29 items (refer to Table 1). Each item was rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1= “strongly disagree” to 7= “strongly agree”). The last section of the survey questionnaire included additional items concerning respondents’ socio-demographic characteristics (gender, age, and monthly income), as well as details about their frequency of previous visits to vegan restaurants and average expenditure.

Table 1. Survey items

Constructs	***References***
Desire for access to elite social strata Opting for vegan restaurants aligns with the perceived lifestyle of individuals I aspire to emulate. Selecting vegan restaurants allows me to embody the values and traits esteemed by those I admire. Diners at vegan restaurants are held in high regard by the individuals I seek to emulate. Choosing vegan restaurants enables me to showcase my ethical stance to those I aspire to resemble.	Shi & Jiang (2023)
Need for uniqueness Selecting vegan restaurants serves as a distinctive expression compared to mainstream non-vegan options. When dining at vegan restaurants, I prioritize finding dishes that set me apart from conventional non-vegan choices. My personal uniqueness is enhanced through the exploration of vegan dining experiences. I opt for vegan restaurants to cultivate a more individualized identity instead of conforming to typical non-vegan options. Preferring vegan dining options over conventional non-vegan choices satisfies my need for uniqueness.	Cardello *et al.* (2019)
Conspicuous consumption motives I enjoy sharing my dining experiences at vegan restaurants on social media	Thoumrungroje

platforms to impress others. I seek for my friends to be aware of my dining experiences at vegan restaurants. It is important for me to receive feedback from others regarding my dining experiences at vegan restaurants. I strive to create a positive impression of myself by dining at vegan restaurants.	(2014)
Ambivalent attitudes I experience strong mixed emotions both in favor of and against dining at vegan restaurants. I feel conflicted when considering dining at vegan restaurants. I find myself indecisive about whether to dine at vegan restaurants. I harbor feelings of ambivalence toward dining at vegan restaurants.	Peng & Chen (2021)
Revisit intentions I am highly inclined to choose vegan restaurants again in the future. I am open to considering vegan restaurants as an option in the future. I intend to dine at vegan restaurants again soon. I have concrete plans to dine at vegan restaurants in the near future.	Ruiz-Equihua *et al.* (2023)
Objective authenticity I am confident that all dishes at vegan restaurants are prepared with meat-free ingredients. I believe that chefs at vegan restaurants are dedicated to adhering to vegan cooking methods. I am certain that ingredients used in vegan dishes are sourced exclusively from plant-based origins. I perceive the vegan menus offered by vegan restaurants to be genuinely authentic.	Sidali, Capitello, & Manurung (2021)
Existential authenticity I feel true to myself while enjoying meaningful dining experiences at vegan restaurants. Dining at vegan restaurants allows me to fully embrace the vegan dietary lifestyle. While dining at vegan restaurants, I feel a deep connection with the related theme. I experience a sense of calm and peace in the atmosphere of vegan restaurants.	Le *et al.* (2021)

3.2. Data collection and sampling

A prominent online market research firm located in South Korea was engaged to facilitate the data collection process for the study. Over a two-week period in July 2023, the online survey company conducted the survey using a comprehensive database of individual profiles compiled from various survey projects. A purposive sampling method was employed to obtain responses from individuals identified as non-vegans who had previous dining experiences at vegan restaurants certified by the Korea Agency of Vegan Certification and Services. Out of a total of 210 responses received, two were excluded due to incomplete information. Consequently, 208 responses were utilized for analysis.

The majority of respondents were female (67.3%), with most falling within the 20 to 29 age range (44.7%), followed by the 30 to 39 age range (24%). The largest proportion of respondents held or were pursuing a four-year bachelor's degree (71.6%). Office workers comprised the most commonly cited occupational group (46.6%). In terms of monthly income, 33.7% fell in the $3,000 to less than $5,000 range, followed by 17.3% in the $5,000 to less than $10,000 range, and 9.6% earning over $10,000. The most frequent visitation to vegan restaurants was 1-2 visits every 6 months (48.1%), followed by 1-2 visits every 3 months (19.7%). The majority of respondents reported spending between $20 to less than $50 when dining at vegan restaurants (50.5%), followed by 28.4% spending between $50 to less than $80, and 12% spending more than $80

3.3. Data analysis
Our proposed research model was validated utilizing Partial Least Squares (PLS)-Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). PLS-SEM analysis is characterized by less rigid criteria concerning sample size, residual distribution for model validation, and scale measures compared to conventional covariance-based SEM analyses (Hair *et al.*, 2021). Additionally, PLS-SEM has gained recognition as a more suitable method for examining moderating factors assessed using continuous variables (Hair *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, our study employed Smart PLS 4.0 software to evaluate both the measurement and structural models.

4. Results

4.1. Validity and reliability test of the study measures
All factor loadings for the measurement items exceeded the cutoff criterion of 0.70, ranging from 0.711 to 0.945. Furthermore, Cronbach's α coefficients (ranging from 0.886 to 0.947), Rho_A values (ranging from 0.895 to 0.948), and composite reliability values (ranging from 0.921 to 0.962) for all constructs surpassed the threshold of 0.7, indicating robust internal consistency reliability. In addition, all values of average variance extracted (AVE) (ranging from 0.741 to 0.862) exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.5, thus establishing convergent validity (Hair *et al.*, 2021).

Discriminant validity of the study constructs was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) criterion. All HTMT ratios were below the specified threshold of 0.85, and the square roots of the AVEs exceeded the highest correlation coefficient between the constructs, confirming discriminant validity as suggested by Hair *et al.* (2021).

4.2. Testing hypotheses 1 through 4

The PLS-SEM structural model underwent evaluation based on R^2 values, indicating its explanatory capacity for each endogenous construct. The results revealed that it accounted for 57.0% of the variance in 'conspicuous consumption motives,' 11.79% of the variance in 'ambivalence,' and 64.2% of the variance in 'revisit intentions.' Additionally, Q^2 values ranging from 0.079 to 0.456 exceeded zero for all endogenous constructs, confirming the attainment of predictive relevance (Hair *et al.*, 2021).

The outcomes of testing Hypotheses 1 through 4 are demonstrated in Table 2. 'Desire for access to elite social strata' exhibited a significant positive effect on 'conspicuous consumption motives' (γ=0.530, t=7.458, $p<0.001$). Additionally, the 'need for uniqueness' was found to significantly increase 'conspicuous consumption motives' for dining at vegan restaurants (γ=0.251, t=3.560, $p<0.001$). Thus, both Hypotheses 1 and 2 were supported. The 'conspicuous consumption motives' of non-vegans demonstrated a significantly positive impact on their 'ambivalent attitudes' toward dining at vegan restaurants (γ=0.345, t=4.977, $p<0.001$). Surprisingly, non-vegans' 'ambivalent attitudes' significantly increased their 'revisit intentions' for vegan restaurants (γ=0.319, t=5.137, $p<0.001$), contradicting the assumption of a negative relationship between these variables. Therefore, while Hypothesis 3 was supported, Hypothesis 4 was not.

Table 2. Direct effects: Hypotheses 1 through 4

	Independent variable	Dependent variable	Path Coefficient	*t*-value	*Results*
H 1	Desire for access to elite social strata	Conspicuous consumption motives	0.530	7.458***	***Supported***
H 2	Need for uniqueness		0.251	3.560***	***Supported***
H 3	Conspicuous consumption motives	Ambivalent attitudes	0.345	4.977***	***Supported***
H 4	Ambivalent attitudes	Revisit intentions	0.319	5.137***	***Not Supported***

Notes: * $p<0.05$, ***$p<0.001$, ***$p<0.001$

4.3. Testing hypothesis 5

As presented in Table 3, 'objective authenticity' significantly moderated the relationship between 'ambivalent attitudes' and 'revisit intentions' (γ=0.155, t=2.262, $p<0.05$). However, 'existential authenticity' exerted no significant moderating effect on the relationship between 'ambivalent attitudes' and 'revisit intentions' (γ=0.111, t=1.451, p>0.05). Thus, Hypothesis 5a was supported, whereas Hypothesis 5b was not supported.

Table 3. Moderating effects: Hypothesis 5

Dependent variable	Independent variables	Path Coeff	t-value	*p-value*	Results
Revisit intentions [R^2= 0.642]	Ambivalent attitudes	0.319	5.137	0.000***	
	Objective authenticity (OAT)	0.172	2.861	0.004**	
	Existential authenticity (EAT)	0.377	5.998	0.000***	
	Ambivalent attitudes × OAT	**0.155**	**2.262**	**0.024***	***H5a: Supported***
	Ambivalent attitudes × EAT	**0.111**	**1.451**	**0.147**	***H5b: Not Supported***
	Age	-0.002	0.046	0.964	
	Gender	0.161	1.628	0.104	
	Monthly income	-0.068	1.407	0.159	
	Number of prior visits	0.270	5.336	0.000***	

Notes: * p<0.05, ***p<0.001, ***p<0.00

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and implications

This research explores the intricate dynamics of conspicuous consumption motives among non-vegans, particularly within the context of dining at vegan restaurants, an area less explored in existing literature. Drawing from the social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954), the study reveals that non-vegans' desires for access to elite social strata and the need for uniqueness significantly influence their conspicuous consumption motives. Moreover, the influence of the 'desire for access to elite social strata' on conspicuous consumption motives outweighed that of the 'need for uniqueness' on conspicuous consumption motives. This finding suggests that non-vegans' propensity for conspicuous consumption associated with dining at vegan restaurants may stem more from their aspirations to bolster their ethical image and social status than to express their uniqueness.

This study has identified 'ambivalent attitudes' as an outcome arising from 'conspicuous consumption motives,' particularly concerning dining at vegan restaurants. Previous research has emphasized the multifaceted nature of 'conspicuous consumption,' highlighting its potential to result in both positive outcomes, such as subjective well-being and perceptions of elevated social status (Kumar *et al.*, 2022), and negative consequences, including feelings of regret over financial loss or guilt (Lambert & Desmond, 2013). Thus, it is important to address 'ambivalent attitudes,' which encompasses both the positive and negative ramifications of 'conspicuous consumption.' However, this aspect has been largely overlooked in the existing literature. Hence, this study has the potential to broaden the scope of relevant research by furnishing empirical evidence for the significant relationship between ‘conspicuous consumption’ and ‘ambivalent attitudes,’ specifically within the context of dining at vegan restaurants.

Contrary to previous beliefs, non-vegans’ ambivalent attitudes significantly increased their revisit intentions for vegan restaurants. This contradicts previous findings suggesting that ambivalent attitudes typically lead to unfavorable outcomes in consumer behavior. This study cautiously concludes that the impact of ambivalent attitudes on consumer behavioral intention may vary depending on the context. Despite non-vegans experiencing high ambivalent attitudes about dining at vegan restaurants, their exposure to gastronomic and cultural experiences, coupled with support from subjective norms and social groups, may increase the likelihood of their revisit intentions for vegan restaurants.

The relationship between ambivalent attitudes and revisit intentions for vegan restaurants was found to be significantly moderated by objective authenticity, while existential authenticity did not yield a significant moderation effect. Robinson & Clifford (2012) contended that existential authenticity is assessed by consumer perceptions of a purely philosophical concept, intricately interwoven with their knowledge, expectations, and aspirations. Thus, ‘existential authenticity’ can play a significant role in shaping favorable perceptions and behavior intentions, depending on customers’ depth of knowledge and background for authenticity assessments. In this context, it is plausible that because our respondents, identified as non-vegans, may not possess sufficient expertise or deep knowledge of veganism or vegan philosophy, their dining experiences and evaluations might not be significantly influenced by existential authenticity.

Based on these findings, this study offers several practical implications for vegan restaurants. First, creating visually appealing and unique menus is crucial to attract non-vegan consumers seeking to portray a desirable ethical image. Leveraging social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook to showcase these dishes can encourage non-vegans to engage and share their experiences, aligning with their aspirations for environmental and animal welfare consciousness. Second, collaborating with influencers and social elites who endorse veganism can elevate the desire for access to elite social circles among non-vegan consumers. Sharing such endorsements on social media platforms can enhance the restaurant’s appeal to those aspiring to prestigious social circles.

This study found that objective authenticity positively moderates the relationship between non-vegans’ ambivalent attitudes and their revisit intentions for vegan restaurants. To enhance perceived objective authenticity among non-vegans at vegan restaurants, the concept of an open kitchen may be beneficial. This is because an open kitchen fosters a sense of trust regarding food preparation by allowing customers to gather more information than a closed kitchen (Akarsu, Marvi, & Foroudi, 2023). In addition, vegan restaurants can also boost their credibility with non-vegan patrons by highlighting collaborations with local farmers and trusted suppliers on their website. This transparency will foster trust among customers, reinforcing the restaurants' commitment to authenticity.

5.2. Limitations and recommendations for future studies

It is crucial to acknowledge the limitations of this study. Data collection was limited to non-vegans in South Korea, potentially introducing bias due to specific cultural influences in Korea. Future studies should employ more robust methodologies spanning diverse geographical regions to mitigate this potential bias. Furthermore, while ambivalent attitudes emerged as a significant outcome of conspicuous consumption motives in dining at vegan restaurants, other crucial factors associated with conspicuous consumption may also exist. This insight emphasizes the necessity of conducting further investigation within this particular context to enhance the relevant knowledge base.

REFERENCES

Acumen Research and Consulting. (2023). Vegan Food Market Size-Global Industry, Share, Analysis, Trends and Forecast 2023–2032. Retrieved on 20 February 2024 from https://www.acumenresearchandconsulting.com/vegan-food-market

Ahmad, W., & Sun, J. (2018). Modeling consumer distrust of online hotel reviews. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *71*, 77-90.

Akarsu, T.N., Marvi, R., & Foroudi, P. (2023). Service failure research in the hospitality and tourism industry: a synopsis of past, present and future dynamics from 2001 to 2020. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *35*(1), 186-217.

Barsyte, J., & Fennis, B.M. (2023). When innovation backfires: Preference for predictability moderates the spillover of functional food ambivalence to the entire parent category. *Journal of Business Research*, *158*, 113670.

Berger, P.L. (1973). Sincerity and authenticity in modern society. *The public interest*, *31*, 81.

Cacioppo, J.T., Gardner, W.L., & Berntson, G.G. (1997). Beyond bipolar conceptualizations and measures: The case of attitudes and evaluative space. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *1*(1), 3-25.

Cardello, AV., Chheang, S.L., Hedderley, D.I., Guo, L.F., Hunter, D.C., & Jaeger, S.R. (2019). Toward a new scale to measure consumers'"need for uniqueness" in foods and beverages: The 31-item FBNFU scale. *Food quality and preference, 72*, 159-171.

Chan, C., Berger, J., & Van Boven, L. (2012). Identifiable but not identical: Combining social identity and uniqueness motives in choice. *Journal of Consumer research*, *39*(3), 561-573.

Das, M., Habib, M., Saha, V., & Jebarajakirthy, C. (2021). Bandwagon vs snob luxuries: Targeting consumers based on uniqueness dominance. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, *61*, 102582.

Festinger, L. (1954). A theory of social comparison processes. *Human relations*, *7*(2), 117-140.

Hair Jr, J., Hair Jr, J.F., Hult, G.T.M., Ringle, C.M., & Sarstedt, M. (2021). *A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM)*. Sage publications.

Hayakawa, H., & Venieris, Y. (2016). Consumer interdependence via reference groups. *Behavioral Interactions, Markets, and Economic Dynamics: Topics in Behavioral Economics*, 81-99.

Ireland, N.J. (1998). Status-seeking, income taxation and efficiency. *Journal of Public Economics*, *70*(1), 99-113.

Jang, S.S., Ha, J., & Park, K. (2012). Effects of ethnic authenticity: Investigating Korean restaurant customers in the US. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *31*(3), 990-1003.

Kluge, P.N., & Fassnacht, M. (2015). Selling luxury goods online: effects of online accessibility and price display. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, *43*(10/11), 1065-1082.

Kotebagilu, N.P., Bhatia, S., & Piramanayagam, S. (2023). A qualitative investigation on Indian vegan food service providers' perspective of trends, challenges and the future of vegan consumption. *International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Science*, *34*, 100824.

Kumar, B., Bagozzi, R.P., Manrai, A.K., & Manrai, L.A. (2022). Conspicuous consumption: A meta-analytic review of its antecedents, consequences, and moderators. *Journal of Retailing*, *98*(3), 471-485.

Lambert, A., & Desmond, J. (2013). Loyal now, but not forever! A study of narcissism and male consumer–brand relationships. *Psychology & Marketing*, *30*(8), 690-706.

Le, T.H., Arcodia, C., Novais, M.A., Kralj, A., & Phan, T.C. (2021). Exploring the multi-dimensionality of authenticity in dining experiences using online reviews. *Tourism Management*, *85*, 104292.

Leibenstein, H. (1950). Bandwagon, snob, and Veblen effects in the theory of consumers' demand. The quarterly journal of economics, 64(2), 183-207.

Lu, L., Chi, C.G., & Liu, Y. (2015). Authenticity, involvement, and image: Evaluating tourist experiences at historic districts. *Tourism management*, *50*, 85-96.

Martinez, M.D., Craig, S.C., Kane, J.G., & Gainous, J. (2005). Ambivalence and value conflict: A test of two issues. In *Ambivalence, politics and public policy* (pp. 63-82). New York: Palgrave Macmillan US.

McPherson, T. (2018). The ethical basis for veganism. *The Oxford handbook of food ethics*, 209-240.

Meng, B., & Choi, K. (2017). Theme restaurants' servicescape in developing quality of life: The moderating effect of perceived authenticity. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *65*, 89-99.

Mitchell, A. (2023). LA Vegan Restaurant Closures, August 2023. Retrieved on 20 February 2024 from https://vegoutmag.com/food-and-drink/la-vegan-restaurant-closures-august-2023/

Norris, C.L., Russen, M., & Taylor Jr, S. (2023). Expanding the experiential value scale to predict independent restaurant dining intent. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, *6*(2), 613-631.

Otnes, C., Lowrey, T.M., & Shrum, L.J. (1997). Toward an understanding of consumer ambivalence. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *24*(1), 80-93.

Peng, N., & Chen, A. (2021). Consumers' luxury restaurant reservation session abandonment behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic: The influence of luxury restaurant attachment, emotional ambivalence, and luxury consumption goals. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *94*, 102891.

Premordia, I., & Gál, T. (2023). Food neophilics' choice of an ethnic restaurant: The moderating role of authenticity. *Plos one*, *18*(5), e0281453.

Robinson, R.N., & Clifford, C. (2012). Authenticity and festival foodservice experiences. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *39*(2), 571-600.

Ruiz-Equihua, D., Romero, J., Loureiro, S.M.C., & Ali, M. (2023). Human–robot interactions in the restaurant setting: the role of social cognition, psychological ownership and anthropomorphism. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *35*(6), 1966-1985.

Shi, J., & Jiang, Z. (2023). Willingness to pay a premium price for green products: does a reference group matter?. *Environment, Development and Sustainability, 25*(8), 8699-8727.

Shin, Y.H., Im, J., Jung, S.E., & Severt, K. (2019). Motivations behind consumers' organic menu choices: The role of environmental concern, social value, and health consciousness. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, *20*(1), 107-122.

Sidali, K.L., Capitello, R., & Manurung, A.J.T. (2021). Development and validation of the perceived authenticity scale for cheese specialties with protected designation of origin. *Foods*, *10*(2), 248.

Southan, R. (2013). Conspicuous Consumption. Retrieved on 20 February 2024 from https://thenewinquiry.com/conspicuous-consumption/

Tbe NPD Group. (2019). Plant-based Foods: Will They Stay or Will They Go?. Retrieved on 20 February 2024 from https://www.npd.com/news/press-releases/2019/plant-based-foods-will-they-stay-or-will-they-go/

Thoumrungroje, A. (2014). The influence of social media intensity and EWOM on conspicuous consumption. *Procedia-Social and behavioral sciences, 148*, 7-15.

Tuu, H.H., & Olsen, S.O. (2010). Ambivalence and involvement in the satisfaction–repurchase loyalty relationship. *Australasian Marketing Journal*, *18*(3), 151-158.

Vannini, P. (2006). Dead poets' society: Teaching, publish-or-perish, and professors' experiences of authenticity. *Symbolic interaction*, *29*(2), 235-257.

Veblen, T. (1899). Mr. Cummings's Strictures on" The Theory of the Leisure Class". *Journal of Political Economy*, *8*(1), 106-117.

Wang, N. (1999). Rethinking authenticity in tourism experience. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *26*(2), 349-370.

Yang, W., & Mattila, A.S. (2014). Do affluent customers care when luxury brands go mass? The role of product type and status seeking on luxury brand attitude. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *26*(4), 526-543.

Shared kitchen as a collaborative space for food entrepreneurs

Woo, Linda
School of Hotel and Tourism Management
Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Shih, Yi Teng
School of Design
Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Paek, Soyon
Division of Business Administration
Yonsei University

Abstract:
Digitalization has recently changed the traditional working style that individuals can work without being employed. These individuals and small entrepreneurs have mostly used coworking spaces, including shared kitchens, to share facilities at lower prices. Studies on entrepreneurship have focused on the social functioning of coworking spaces and found that innovation is derived from knowledge sharing and collaborations between users of coworking spaces. This study investigates shared kitchens as spaces for interactions and collaborations between food entrepreneurs.

Keywords: Shared Kitchen, Entrepreneurship, Collaboration, Food & Beverage

1. Introduction

The surge in foodies has led to the rise of food entrepreneurs, given that foods are relatively easy to produce and sell (Kline, Shah, & Rubright, 2014). These entrepreneurs can start their food businesses swiftly with shared kitchens, which are coworking spaces specifically designed for food production. Compared to other types of coworking spaces, shared kitchens as collaborative spaces that could drive food business innovation have been less emphasized by academia and industry. Users of shared kitchens have diverse backgrounds, such as part-time hobbyists, professional chefs, restaurant operators, and IT companies (e.g., food delivery app companies). This indicates that collaborations between coworking space users may hardly occur in shared kitchens. Moreover, the literature on coworking spaces has identified knowledge sharing and resources for collaboration and success of coworking spaces (Bouncken, Laudien, Fredrich, & Görmar, 2018; Clifton, Füzi, & Loudon, 2022). However, we still know little about what kinds of forms of coworking spaces can stimulate knowledge sharing and collaboration. Thus, this study aims to investigate whether, how, and why food entrepreneurs interact and collaborate in shared kitchens to increase their success.

2. Literature Review

A new type of workforce, the so-called gig economy workers, has emerged with the widespread sharing economy and digital globalization. The gig economy requires digital platforms that connect providers (i.e., independent workers) directly with individual customers or companies (Charlton, 2021). To complete time-limited and irregular tasks, independent workers work in the third space, such as coworking spaces, using their laptops (De Stefano, 2015). As long as they connect via digital platforms, they can work anywhere and at any time. However, they tend to lose identity, productivity, and satisfaction due to a lack of social interactions with others (Bueno, Rodríguez-Baltanás, & Gallego, 2018). Due to the negative influence of isolation, the success of independent workers is mainly dependent on joining networks for sharing relevant information and resources (Orel & Alonso Almeida, 2019).

From this perspective, coworking spaces should be identified as mediators that create networks and foster knowledge exchanges for independent workers (Parrino, 2015). Although some coworking spaces provide physical areas for social gathering, they often lack supportive systems or mechanisms to stimulate a high frequency of interactions and collaborations among coworking space users (Orel & Alonso Almeida, 2019). Shared kitchens are no exception, and the problems of a lack of socialization seem to be more serious. The existing studies have not clarified how coworking spaces should construct mediation mechanisms that assist in identifying users, enhancing their interactions, and creating collaborations between users.

3. Methodology

A qualitative research approach, interviews, will be used to collect the data. Unstructured interviews will be conducted with observed shared kitchen owners and users. Through in-depth interviews, the researchers will identify whether shared kitchen owners operate any tools that can connect users. The researchers will then focus on mediation mechanisms that can accelerate responses, interaction, and effectiveness between shared kitchen users. Based on the agreement of interviewees, the interviews will be recorded and transcribed. The transcriptions will be analyzed using 1) content analysis to find users' satisfaction with using shared kitchens and motivations of collaborations with other users and 2) thematic analysis.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the analysis, various themes are expected to be included in shared kitchens' platforms, such as sharing food ingredients, customers' data, and distribution channels

(Faithfull, 2019). Shared kitchen users will share their experiences and gather best practices from other members via the digital platform. Socialization on the digital platform will allow users to take on the challenges of new markets and concepts with limited risk. Furthermore, this study will contribute to knowledge building on entrepreneurship and support food business practitioners involved in shared kitchens. The findings of this study can be used for food operations and entrepreneurship in the hospitality and tourism industry.

REFERENCES

Bouncken, R. B., Laudien, S. M., Fredrich, V., & Görmar, L. (2018). Coopetition in coworking-spaces: value creation and appropriation tensions in an entrepreneurial space. *Review of Managerial Science*, *12*, 385-410.

Bueno, S., Rodríguez-Baltanás, G., & Gallego, M. D. (2018). Coworking spaces: A new way of achieving productivity. *Journal of Facilities Management*, *16*(4), 452-466.

Charlton, E. (2021, September). What is the gig economy and what's the deal for gig workers. In *World Economic Forum*.

Clifton, N., Füzi, A., & Loudon, G. (2022). Coworking in the digital economy: Context, motivations, and outcomes. *Futures*, *135*, 102439.

De Stefano, V. (2015). The rise of the just-in-time workforce: On-demand work, crowdwork, and labor protection in the gig-economy. *Comp. Lab. L. & Pol'y J.*, *37*, 471.

Kline, C., Shah, N., & Rubright, H. (2014). Applying the positive theory of social entrepreneurship to understand food entrepreneurs and their operations. *Tourism Planning & Development*, *11*(3), 330-342.

Orel, M., & Alonso Almeida, M. D. M. (2019). The ambience of collaboration in coworking environments. *Journal of Corporate Real Estate*, *21*(4), 273-289.

Parrino, L. (2015). Coworking: assessing the role of proximity in knowledge exchange. *Knowledge Management Research & Practice*, *13*, 261-271.

Flagship Store Experiences and Customer Attitudes and Behaviors: Application of Franchising Coffee Shops

Lee, Jieun
Graduate School of Human Environmental Sciences
Major in Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Management
Yonsei University

Yang, Jeong Seok
Graduate School of Human Environmental Sciences
Major in Hotel
Restaurant and Institutional Management
Yonsei University

Ham, Sunny
Dept of food nutrition
Yonsei University

Abstract:

Currently, Café is leading experiences beyond just coffee drinking spaces. It means that the flagship store is a space that provides experiences and not only represents the brand's identity and storytelling, but also serves as a local landmark. Accordingly, this study intends to analyze these effects by applying the experiential economy theory, focusing on franchise flagship café users. Through this study, we intend to present useful marketing strategy methods for the highly competitive coffee industry.

Keywords: Franchise chain cafe, Flagship store, experiential economy theory, brand attitude, behavioral intention

1. Introduction

Recently, Café is transforming into experience-providing spaces that can satisfy customers' emotions and lifestyles, rather than simply drinking coffee (Lee, 2013). The flagship store is one of the effective marketing methods of the brand (Ahn, 2021). It is a store that differentiates itself from ordinary stores, as if a store that can represent a brand is expressed in flagpole (Ji, 2023).

The flagship store is based on the unique characteristics of the brand, it provides not only opportunities for a wide range of experiences, but also communication between the brand and the consumer by considering the lifestyle and needs of consumers and changes of consuming trend (Jeon, 2021).

In order to take competitive advantage in the saturated coffee shop market, it is necessary to understand consumers' needs in detail, and efforts must be made to meet them (Lee, 2015).

Accordingly, recent franchise cafe are gradually expanding their concept stores that take advantage of brand characteristics and local commercial districts, unlike the past, which put emphasis on standardized brand image only.

Therefore, it is needed to understand how flagship store experiences of the franchise cafe effect on consumer's brand attitudes and behavioral intentions

2. Literature Review

2.1. Experience Economy

Experience marketing factors (sensory experience, emotional experience, cognitive experience, behavioral experience, relational experience) in the restaurant flagship store influence brand attitude (Lee, 2015).

Experience marketing factors of luxury fashion brand cafes all affect consumers' brand attitude and intention to continue using the cafe brand (Lee & Jeong, 2022).

The customer experience factor of the flagship store as a complex cultural space for eating out has a positive effect on emotional immersion (Choi & Huh, 2015).

Most of the prior studies on the marketing effectiveness of the flagship store focused on Schmitt's strategic experience module (1999), which focuses on strengthening the brand image through experience and inducing purchases. However, this study differentiated it from the prior studies by adopting the experiential economy theory centered on providing special experiences for consumer participation (Ji, 2023).

Pine and Gilmore's experiential economy theory consists of four elements. First, Entertainment experiences encompass all things that make us feel joyful and intrigued. Music listening, reading, and attending performances are among the oldest and most advanced forms of such experiences. Today, the most common form of these experiences involves passively absorbing the experience (Park, Park & Cha, 2007). Consumers engaging in entertainment experiences seek to enjoy themselves (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

Second, Educational Experience. Unlike entertainment experiences, educational experiences involve actively absorbing the experience. Education, which shares information and enhances knowledge or skills, requires the active participation of both mind and body, making it active. Knowledge about a product gained through interaction with staff in a store also falls under educational experiences, and consumers participating in educational experiences desire to learn (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Third, Esthetic Experience. Esthetic experiences are those in which consumers immerse themselves in an environment or activity without directly intervening in the experience, such as visiting art galleries or museums, or appreciating natural landscapes (Kim, 2020; Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Therefore, it involves consumers experiencing and appreciating esthetically pleasing elements in a store (Park, Park & Cha, 2007), and those participating in esthetic experiences simply wish to remain there.

Finally Escapist experiences involve consumers actively participating and fully immersing themselves in the experience (Kim, 2020; Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Casinos, chat rooms, and virtual reality headsets are examples of this. Consumers engaging in escapist experiences not only seek liberation from their daily lives but also venture in search of valuable places and activities (Park, Park & Cha, 2007). Consumers participating in escapist experiences wish to take action (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

2.2. *Brand attitude*

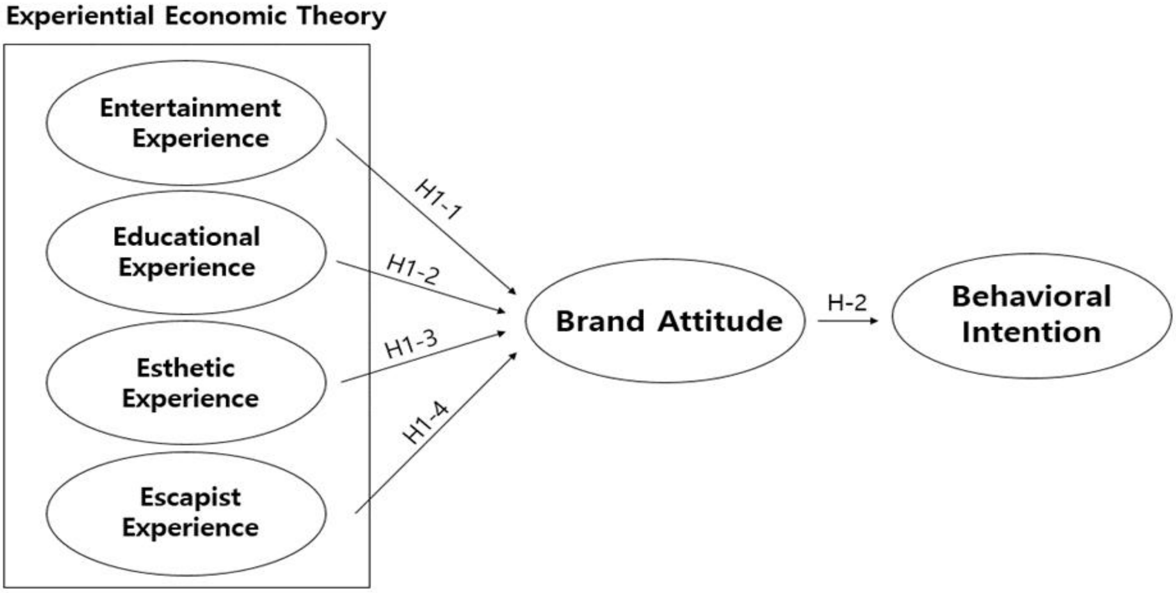
Brand attitude refers to a consumer's tendency or predisposition to consistently react favorably or unfavorably towards a target. It is a personal evaluation of a brand and is used to understand or predict consumer behavior in making brand choices (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Ahn, 2022).

When consumers are satisfied with a particular brand and their liking for it increases, they tend to purchase that preferred brand. Brand attitude is crucial in purchasing decisions as it leads to actual purchases (Ko & Jean, 2019; Choi & Yang, 2014; Low & Lamb, 2000).

2.3 Behavioral intention

Behavioral intention is a factor used to predict behavior and is a key determinant in predicting and explaining various social behaviors (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

Behavioral intention is defined as the will or belief to plan and change future actions, such as revisiting, purchasing, and recommending intentions, based on emotional reactions related to evaluations of products or services and consumption behaviors (Lee et al., 2011). It is defined as customer loyalty towards a company (Ahn, 2012; Gu, 1995) and signals whether a customer will maintain a relationship with one company or switch to another (Zeithaml et al., 1996)



Hypothesis formulation

Hypothesis H1-1 : The entertainment experience will be positively related to brand attitude.

Hypothesis H1-2 :The educational experience will be positively related to brand attitude.

Hypothesis H1-3 : The aesthetic experience will be positively related to brand attitude.

Hypothesis H1-4 : The Escapist experience will be positively related to brand attitude.

Hypothesis H2 : The brand attitude will be positively related to behavioral intention.

3. Methodology

3.1. Measurement

The purpose of this study is to confirm the relationship between the experience factors of franchise café flagship stores and brand attitudes and behavioral intentions.
In order to achieve this research purpose, a survey will be conducted on consumers who have visited the flagship within the last six months.
SPSS 26.0 and AMOS 26.0 will be used to verify the research model and research hypothesis based on the collected data, and first, frequency analysis is conducted to find out the demographic characteristics and usage patterns of the collected data. Second, look at Cronbach's α to determine the reliability of the measurement questions and perform confirmatory factor analysis to determine the validity. Next, confirmatory factor analysis, correlation coefficient, and structural equation model analysis are performed to verify the

concentration validity of related variables and discriminant validity between each variable, and to verify the research hypothesis.

REFERENCES

Ajzen, I. (1980). Understanding attitudes and predictiing social behavior. *Englewood cliffs*.
G. J, Ahn. (2021). Research on affordance design characteristics that appear in fashion flagship stores. Master's thesis at Hanyang University Graduate School.
H. J, Ji (2023). The effect of theme park experience economic factors (4Es) on pleasure, attitude and SNS behavioral intentions. PhD thesis, graduate school of Pukyong National University.
H. S, Lee. (2015). The influence relationship between coffee shop selection attributes, coffee cocktail preferences and menu selection behaviors. *Tourism research,* 30(7), 301-318.
J. A, Lee (2015). The Effects of Experience at a Food Service Flagship Store on Brand Attitudes and Behavioral Intentions*, Hotel Management Research*, 24(1), 83, 1-22
J. H, Lee & D. M, Lee, M. J, Lee, S.H, Lim. (2011), Analysis of the causal relationship between emotional factors such as dominance, ventilation, and pleasure of online and offline store shopping customers, and the influence of these factors on the degree of behavior, *Marketing Management Research*, 16(1):100-110.
J. R, Ko & H. M, Jeon. (2019). The Effect of Consumers' Self-Consistency on Brand Attitudes and Behavioral Intentions for Chain Coffee: Mediating Effects of Functional Consistency. *Hotel Tourism Research*, 21(3), 239-255.
Kim Gull. (2020). The Impact of 4Es of Experiential Economy Theory on Enterprise and Brand Image and Loyalty - Focusing on the Complex Cultural Space of Enterprise*. Brand Design Studies,* 18(3), 341-352.
K. S, Choi & T. S, Yang. (2014). The influence of brand personality and self-consistency of fast food restaurants in Jeju on brand attitude. *Hotel tourism research*, 16(5), 246-266.
Low, G. S., & Lamb Jr, C. W. (2000). The measurement and dimensionality of brand associations. *Journal of product & brand management*, 9(6), 350-370.
M. H, Gu. (1995). Research on relationship marketing in the tourist hotel service industry, PhD thesis, graduate school of Kyunggi University.
Pine, B. J., & Gilmore, J. H. (1998). *Welcome to the experience economy* (Vol. 76, No. 4, pp. 97-105). Cambridge, MA, USA: Harvard Business Review Press.
S. H, Ahn (2012). The Effects of Functional Consistency and Self Consistency on Customer Value, Consumption Sentiment, and Formation of Behavioral Intention: Targeting Coffee Shop Users
S. K, Park, J.H, Park & T. H, Cha (2007). The Effects of Experience Factors (4Es) on Experience Pleasure, Satisfaction, and Revisiting: Focusing on Fine and Gilmore's Experience Economy. *Advertising Research*, (76), 55-78.

S. M, Lee & Y. K, Jeong (2022). The influence of experiential marketing factors of luxury fashion brand cafes on brand attitude and intention to continue using. *Hotel tourism research*, 24(5), 5-18.

S. R, Choi & K. S, Heo (2015). A study on the effect of flagship store customer experience as a complex cultural space for eating out on emotional immersion and brand loyalty. *Food Service Management Study*, 18(6), 53-74.

S. Y, Jeon. & H. K, Song. & Y. S, Hwang. (2022). A study on the regional expression characteristics of the flagship store. *Journal of the Korean Society of Interior Design,* 31(5), 31-42.

W. J, Lee. (2013). A review of the characteristics of visual expression elements in coffee shop brand design. *Brand design studies*, 11(3), 271-280.

Zeithaml, V. A., Berry, L. L., & Parasuraman, A. (1996). The behavioral consequences of service quality. *Journal of marketing*, *60*(2), 31-46.

Unlocking clarity: A systematic review of functional beverage in the hospitality industry

Hwang, Eun Min (Min)
Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management
University of South Alabama

Kim, Eojina
Howard Feiertag Department of Hospitality & Tourism Management
Virginia Tech

Kim, Jaewook
Conrad N. Hilton College of Global Hospitality Leadership
University of Houston

Lee, Harold S
College of Merchandising, Hospitality & Tourism
University of North Texas

Abstract:

With consumers' growing interest in health and well-being, numerous market studies have highlighted the potential of functional beverages and segmented their market. Nonetheless, there is a scarcity of attempts to construct a unified definition for functional beverages. Utilizing articles identified in the Web of Science database between 2004 and 2023, the study conducted a systematic review and revealed five key themes regarding functional beverages. The study proposes a definition for functional beverages as tailored drinks containing specific ingredients that offer additional values or benefits, such as energy boost, mental clarity, or immune support, in addition to their nutritional content.

Keywords: Functional beverage, Restaurant, Social learning, Semantic analysis

Exploring cultural hybridity of western classical music and local culture: a case study on Shodoshima, Japan

Amos Chiya
Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences
Hiroshima University

Carolin Funck
Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences
Hiroshima University

Abstract:

This study explores the intersection of Western or European classical music and local food culture on Shodoshima. It examines the perceptions of the island residents towards the Takamatsu Musica Antiqua Festival on Shodoshima and its role in promoting and representing Shodoshima as a food and culinary island. It also explores the perceptions of the residents towards a fusion culture encompassing elements of Western classical music and the local food culture. The study adopts a focused ethnographic approach, with additional qualitative semi-structured interviews with local community members. The researcher spent a total of 9 weeks on Shodoshima, directly interacting with local residents, farmers, and stakeholders. Findings reveal that despite a lack of self-perception as a food island among locals, there is a positive reception towards the concept of cultural hybridity and a desire for cultural fusion for the promotion of local tourism. The interest in the integration of classical music with local food culture suggests an emerging identity that combines these cultural elements to promote Shodoshima's cultural and touristic appeal. This research contributes to the current discourse on cultural hybridity in tourism studies by exploring a unique case of the cross-cultural hybridity and integration where Western classical music and Japanese local food culture combines. It underscores the creative potential of combining disparate cultural elements to foster new cultural experiences as a strategy for enhancing destination appeal.

The effects of Chinese tourists' sense of safety on storytelling in outbound tourism

Guo, Ce
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Macau University of Science and Technology

Chen, Haoran
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Macau University of Science and Technology

Pai, Chen-Kou
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Macau University of Science and Technology

Abstract:

Tourist safety is a global issue that affects tourists' travel decisions. In this context, this study adopts cognitive appraisal theory to reveal the interactions between tourists' sense of safety and their emotional involvement, destination image, and storytelling intentions by surveying Chinese tourists who have traveled to Thailand within the previous six months. The results will help destinations create a safer travel environment for tourists, thus bringing positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

Keywords: Cognitive appraisal theory, Tourists' sense of safety, Emotional involvement, Destination image, Storytelling intention

1. Introduction

In the wake of the pandemic and multiple security incidents, tourists' safety is increasingly becoming a global issue affecting destination choice, as concerned tourists are placing greater emphasis on their safety when making travel decisions. As the dominant framework for exploring emotional experience, cognitive appraisal theory (CAT) explains that individuals' cognitive appraisal of tourism activities will affect their emotional responses, and then affect their behavior and decision-making (Choi & Choi, 2019).

Security refers to the degree to which a person feels safe and protected in a particular environment. Previous studies have shown that when a destination provides tourists with reliable, efficient, and considerate security measures, tourists are more able to fully enjoy the experience brought by the journey and thus show higher emotional involvement and commitment to the destination (Aimon & Zulvianti, 2023). In turn, this makes them more likely to form a positive image of the destination and develop storytelling intentions.

Few studies have looked at the safety concerns and subsequent behaviors of Chinese tourists considering travel abroad. To fill this research gap, this study aims to determine the elements affecting Chinese tourists' sense of safety and to explore the impact these elements have on Chinese tourists' emotional involvement, destination image, and, ultimately, their storytelling intentions.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Cognitive appraisal theory

The application of cognitive appraisal theory is mainly used to explain how people affect their emotions and behaviors by evaluating their travel experiences (Manthiou & Hyun, 2017). In tourism, CAT can understand how tourists process and interpret information during their travel and how this information affects their emotional states and subsequent behaviors (Tuerlan & Scott, 2021). In addition, CAT has also been used to study how tourists evaluate travel risks and safety and how these evaluations affect their travel decisions (Salman et al., 2022). For example, cognitive appraisal of health and safety issues may affect whether people choose to go to a certain tourist destination (Agyeiwaah et al., 2022).

2.2. Tourists' sense of safety

Sense of safety refers to the emotional experience elicited in individuals based on the extent to which the external environment and security conditions fulfill their security needs (Adam, 2015). Tourists' anticipated safety reflects their pre-travel perceptions of the safety of their destination, which is shaped by information obtained through various channels (Tasci & Gartner, 2007; Pai et al., 2024). Additionally, tourists' perceptions of the safety of their destinations can be influenced by their past travel experiences (Clifford et al., 2018). Therefore, it is crucial to comprehend and establish the elements comprising Chinese tourists' sense of safety.

2.3. Emotional involvement

Emotional involvement is defined as the mental state of motivation, arousal, and interest between an individual and recreational activities or travel destinations at any given time (Havitz & Dimanche, 1990). When tourists are in a relatively safe and stable tourist destination, they are able to have more positive and pleasant emotional experiences (Ratnasari et al., 2019). However, the relationship between safety and emotional involvement has not been fully explored, and safety may be an important factor affecting tourists' emotional involvement in a destination.

2.4. Destination image

Fakeye and Crompton (1991) defined destination image as an individual's psychological perception of a specific destination. Feeling safe at a destination is believed to have a positive impact on a tourist's overall perception of a destination (Xie et al., 2020), which increases tourists' identification with the destination and makes them more likely to form positive associations with it, thus promoting the formation of a positive image (Aksari et al., 2012).

2.5. Storytelling intention

Storytelling intention refers to a tourist's inclination to share their travel experiences and promote the destination through word of mouth or social media (Guleria et al., 2024). After returning from travel, tourists frequently want to share want to share their travel experiences through narratives given on online platforms or in person (Sana et al., 2023). However, the desire to tell a story about their travel experience may be impacted by the tourist's sense of security at their travel destination. Tourists are only able to maximize their travel experiences when they perceive their destinations as safe (Cater et al., 2021).

3. Methodology

This study will focus on Chinese tourists who have been to Thailand for travel withing the six months prior to the beginning of the study. As a case study, Thailand is an appropriate setting for this study because of the permanent mutual visa exemption policy between China and Thailand, which means that the number of Chinese tourists visiting Thailand provides a representative sample for empirical research.

Purpose sampling will be used to collect the data in this study. The questionnaire is divided into two parts. The first part employs a 7-point Likert scale with questions for each variable selected from previous relevant literature and adjusted as necessary (Biswas et al., 2021; Wei et al., 2024; Manthiou et al., 2017; Zou & Men, 2020) totaling 35 measurement questions. The second part gathers demographic information, including gender, region, age, and education level. A pre-survey will be conducted to ensure the validity of the questionnaire. The goal is to obtain data from 500 valid questionnaires, which will be analyzed using SPSS 23.0 and Smart PLS3.0.

4. Expected Conclusions and Contributions

The expected theoretical contribution of this study includes the attempt to analyze and understand the psychological process and behavioral patterns of Chinese tourists based on the CAT, confirmation of the elements affecting Chinese tourists' sense of destination security, filling of the research gap on tourists' sense of security and its impact on subsequent behavior, and provision of empirical analysis for future theoretical studies on tourists' emotional involvement, destination image, and storytelling intentions. It is also expected that the results of this study will provide a new direction for future research in related fields.

In a practical sense, the expected findings will help destination marketing organizations and tourism stakeholders develop strategies for enhancing the perceived safety of destinations and creating an emotional experience for visitors. In turn, this may produce positive destination images and increase the likelihood of tourists' promoting the destination through storytelling and word of mouth.

REFERENCES

Adam, I. (2015). Backpackers' risk perceptions and risk reduction strategies in Ghana. *Tourism Management*, *49*, 99-108.

Agyeiwaah, E., Adam, I., Dayour, F., & Badu Baiden, F. (2021). Perceived impacts of COVID-19 on risk perceptions, emotions, and travel intentions: evidence from Macau higher educational institutions. *Tourism Recreation Research*, *46*(2), 195-211.

Aimon, H., & Zulvianti, N. (2023). Do Sustainable Tourism Development, Psychological Safety, and Halal Friendly Destination Performance Lead to Tourist Electronic Word of Mouth? The Role of Tourist Satisfaction. *International Journal of Sustainable Development & Planning*, *18*(4).

Aksari, N. M. A., Hede, A.-M., & Burgess, S. (2012). Exploring destination identity and destination image in the new age of tourism: A case study of brand Bali. *E-Journal of Tourism. 3 (1)*, 18-22.

Biswas, C., Deb, S. K., Hasan, A. A.-T., & Khandakar, M. S. A. (2021). Mediating effect of tourists' emotional involvement on the relationship between destination attributes and tourist satisfaction. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, *4*(4), 490-510.

Cater, C., Albayrak, T., Caber, M., & Taylor, S. (2021). Flow, satisfaction and storytelling: A causal relationship? Evidence from scuba diving in Turkey. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *24*(12), 1749-1767.

Choi, H., & Choi, H. C. (2019). Investigating tourists' fun-eliciting process toward tourism destination sites: An application of cognitive appraisal theory. *Journal of Travel Research*, *58*(5), 732-744.

Clifford, K. M., Brander, R. W., Trimble, S., & Houser, C. (2018). Beach safety knowledge of visiting international study abroad students to Australia. *Tourism Management*, *69*, 487-497.

Fakeye, P. C., & Crompton, J. L. (1991). Image differences between prospective, first-time, and repeat visitors to the Lower Rio Grande Valley. *Journal of travel research*, *30*(2), 10-16.

Guleria, A., Joshi, R., & Adil, M. (2024). Impact of memorable tourism experiences on tourists' storytelling intentions: an empirical investigation. *International Journal of Tourism Cities*.

Havitz, M. E., & Dimanche, F. (1990). Propositions for testing the involvement construct in recreational and tourism contexts. *Leisure Sciences*, *12*(2), 179-195.

Manthiou, A., Kang, J., & Hyun, S. S. (2017). An integration of cognitive appraisal theory and script theory in the luxury cruise sector: The bridging role of recollection and storytelling. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, *34*(8), 1071-1088.

Pai, C. K., Guo, C., & Chen, H. (2024). Exploring the Factors Influencing Tourists' Outbound Travel Intentions in the Post-COVID-19 Era. *Journal of China Tourism Research*, 1-23.

Ratnasari, R. T., Gunawan, S., Mawardi, I., & Kirana, K. C. (2021). Emotional experience on behavioral intention for halal tourism. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, *12*(4), 864-881.

Salman, A., Kamerkar, U., Jaafar, M., & Mohamad, D. (2022). Empirical analysis of COVID-19 induced socio cognitive factors and its impact on residents of Penang Island. *International Journal of Tourism Cities*, *8*(1), 210-222.

Sana, Chakraborty, S., Adil, M., & Sadiq, M. (2023). Ecotourism experience: A systematic review and future research agenda. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*.

Su, L., Pan, L., Wen, J., & Phau, I. (2023). Effects of tourism experiences on tourists' subjective well-being through recollection and storytelling. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, *29*(4), 479-497.

Tasci, A. D., & Gartner, W. C. (2007). Destination image and its functional relationships. *Journal of travel research*, *45*(4), 413-425.

Tuerlan, T., Li, S., & Scott, N. (2021). Customer emotion research in hospitality and tourism: conceptualization, measurements, antecedents and consequences. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *33*(8), 2741-2772.

Wei, J., Zhou, L., & Li, L. (2024). A study on the impact of tourism destination image and local attachment on the revisit intention: The moderating effect of perceived risk. *Plos one*, *19*(1), e0296524.

Xie, C., Huang, Q., Lin, Z., & Chen, Y. (2020). Destination risk perception, image and satisfaction: The moderating effects of public opinion climate of risk. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, *44*, 122-130.

Zou, Y., & Meng, F. (2020). Chinese tourists' sense of safety: Perceptions of expected and experienced destination safety. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *23*(15), 1886-1899.

Understanding the tourism-environment nexus: New insights from an instrumental variable quantile regression analysis

Chi, Junwook
School of Travel Industry Management
Shidler College of Business, University of Hawaii

Abstract:
This paper re-examines the relationship between tourism development, environmental degradation, economic growth, and trade openness. The panel data used in the study includes 81 countries, with 40 high-income, 24 middle-income, and 17 low-income countries. Our results reveal that tourism growth and environmental degradation are relinked at higher quantiles, suggesting that policies aimed at promoting tourism growth may not be environmentally sustainable in the long run. Furthermore, we find that the long-run effects of tourism on environmental degradation differ significantly among various income groups and quantiles. Specifically, low-income countries exhibit a strong positive correlation between tourism and environmental degradation at the low and middle quantiles.

Keywords: Tourism development, Environmental Kuznets curve, Instrumental variable quantile regression for panel data, Real income

1. Introduction

Recent studies have questioned whether environmental pollution ultimately increases with income in the long term (e.g., Murthy and Gambhir, 2018; Llorca and Meunié, 2009). They argue that delinking is followed by a stage of relinking, which supports an N-shaped Kuznets curve between economic growth and environmental degradation. In this study, we employ the instrumental variable quantile regression for panel data (IV-QRPD), proposed by Powell (2022), to investigate whether environmental degradation can be relinked with tourism growth. Assessing the overall shape of the Kuznets curve can provide valuable insight into the validity of the tourism-induced EKC across various income groups of countries.

2. Literature Review

The original EKC hypothesis suggests that environmental degradation initially escalates during the initial phases of tourism development, but then decreases after a certain turning point is reached. This decoupling of environmental effects from tourism development is referred to as the delinking hypothesis. The rationale for this hypothesis is that, in the early stages of development, creating jobs and income sources may take priority over maintaining environmental quality, leading to rapid environmental deterioration. As income increases, however, people tend to place greater value on the environment and enforce more stringent environmental regulations, resulting in a decline in environmental degradation (Jha and Murthy, 2003).

However, the delinking between tourism development and environmental degradation may only be transitory and could be followed by a relinking phase (phase 3). Recent research has indicated that the scale effect of sustainable development could eventually lead to a relinking between the two, forming an N-shape relationship (Murthy and Gambhir, 2018). As technological or economic advancements approach their upper limits, there can be a growing need for a more intensive application of environmental policies, which can increase the cost of implementing green technologies. In this scenario, growth and environmental degradation become linked again. The debate on whether environmental degradation becomes relinked with tourism development after an initial inverted U-shape relationship remains open. Figure 1 illustrates the delinking and relinking hypotheses with respect to the tourism-environment nexus.

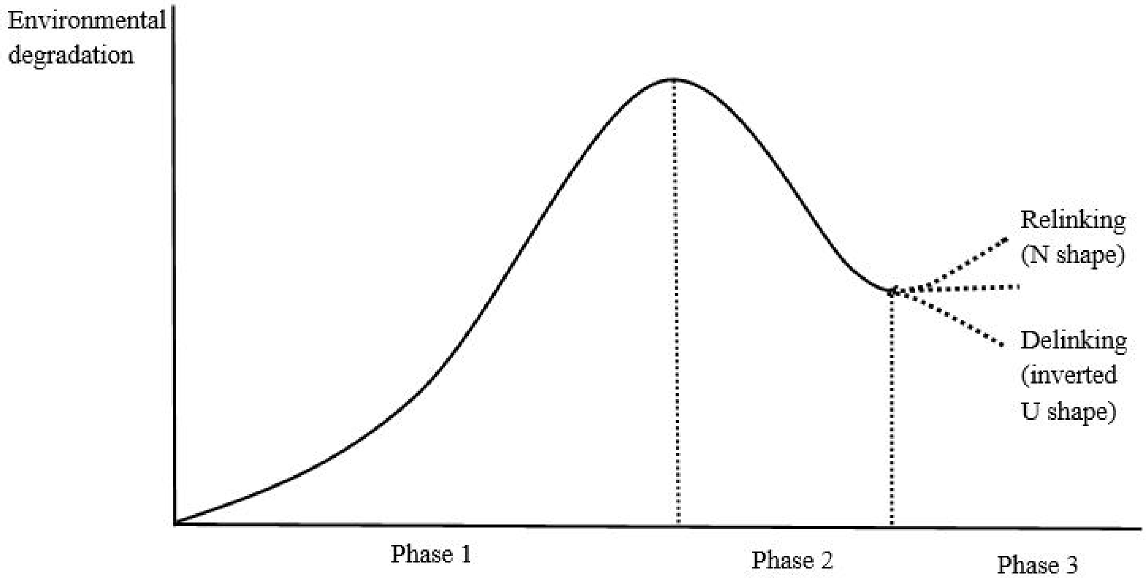


Figure 1. The hypothesis of delinking and relinking between tourism development and environmental quality.

3. Methodology

We apply the quantile regression estimator to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the linkage between tourism and environmental degradation. Unlike conventional conditional mean regression, the quantile panel approach captures the properties of the whole conditional distribution of all variables, eliminating the need for distributional assumptions. By using the conditional median, the quantile regression is less susceptible to outliers in the data, making it a preferred estimator in the presence of outliers (Koenker, 2005). Examining the tourism-induced EKC hypothesis at different quantiles of the conditional distribution of carbon emissions can produce more robust and comprehensive results at varying levels of environmental degradation.

4. Results

Our preliminary results show a positive association between economic growth and environmental degradation across all quantiles, with this relationship being statistically significant at the 5% level. These results suggest that as GDP increases, environmental quality tends to deteriorate in all sample groups. Our findings are in line with the previous research by Paramati et al. (2017), which also showed that economic growth contributes significantly to CO_2 emissions in both full and sub-samples of EU countries. Regarding the magnitude of the effect, our results indicate that GDP has a greater impact on environmental degradation in low-income economies compared to middle- and high-income economies. However, the environmental effect of income inequality is found to vary considerably across different income groups.

Table 1. Results of the heterogeneous panel non-causality test.

Causality	*Full sample*		*Sub-samples*					
			High-income economies		Middle-income economies		Low-income economies	
	Zbar-Stat.	P-value	Zbar-Stat.	P-value	Zbar-Stat.	P-value	Zbar-Stat.	P-value
$tr_{it} \rightarrow co_{it}$	10.87	0.00**	7.43	0.00**	7.27	0.00**	3.70	0.00**
$co_{it} \rightarrow tr_{it}$	2.16	0.03**	0.11	0.90	1.91	0.05**	1.64	0.03**
$gdp_{it} \rightarrow co_{it}$	14.39	0.00**	10.32	0.00**	7.43	0.00**	6.74	0.00**
$co_{it} \rightarrow gdp_{it}$	2.97	0.00**	0.09	0.92	3.03	0.00**	2.74	0.01**
$gini_{it} \rightarrow co_{it}$	12.71	0.00**	7.45	0.00**	8.77	0.00**	5.90	0.00**
$co_{it} \rightarrow gini_{it}$	1.49	0.13	1.54	0.12	1.13	0.25	0.73	0.46
$to_{it} \rightarrow co_{it}$	6.38	0.00**	0.94	0.34	3.98	0.00**	5.37	0.00**
$co_{it} \rightarrow to_{it}$	4.78	0.00**	1.34	0.17	4.98	0.00**	2.06	0.03**

Note: ** and * indicate significance at the 5% and 10% significance levels, respectively. The panel non-causality test uses the null hypothesis that one variable does not Granger cause the other variable.

Table 2. Results of the IV-QRPD model.

	Variable	Low quantile			Middle quantile			High quantile		
		τ =0.1	τ =0.2	τ =0.3	τ =0.4	τ =0.5	τ =0.6	τ =0.7	τ =0.8	τ =0.9
Full sample	tr_{it}	0.06**	0.03	0.06**	0.01	0.26**	0.47**	0.52**	0.43**	0.41**
		(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.00)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.09)	(0.09)
	tr_{it}^2	-0.08**	-0.02**	0.00	-0.02	-0.04**	-0.09**	-0.09**	-0.10**	-0.07**
		(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)
	tr_{it}^3	0.01	0.00**	0.00**	-0.00**	0.01**	0.01**	0.00**	0.01**	0.00*
		(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
	gdp_{it}	1.16**	1.28**	1.25**	1.26**	1.14**	1.06**	0.97**	1.01**	0.86**
		(0.04)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.01)	(0.02)
	$gini_{it}$	-0.71**	-0.45**	-0.60**	-0.55**	-0.65**	-0.65**	-1.09**	-0.90**	-0.12**
		(0.05)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.01)
	to_{it}	-0.00	0.02	0.07**	-0.05	0.08**	-0.05**	0.06**	0.03	0.33**
		(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.01)	(0.05)	(0.00)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.10)
	High-income economies									
	tr_{it}	-0.21	0.54*	0.64	0.19	0.88	-2.34	0.30	1.75**	1.08**
		(0.15)	(0.32)	(0.41)	(0.50)	(0.65)	(2.18)	(0.77)	(0.39)	(0.23)
	tr_{it}^2	-0.01	-0.20**	-0.14*	-0.07	-0.18	-0.30	-0.38*	-0.31**	-0.07
		(0.03)	(0.01)	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.11)	(0.34)	(0.20)	(0.05)	(0.11)
	tr_{it}^3	0.00	0.01**	0.02**	0.00	0.02**	-0.01	-0.01*	0.01**	0.01
		(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.01)
	gdp_{it}	0.59**	0.63**	0.73**	0.79**	0.70**	0.81**	0.63**	0.72**	0.61**
		(0.04)	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.10)	(0.03)	(0.04)
	$gini_{it}$	-0.95**	-0.75**	-0.73**	-0.83**	-0.87**	-0.72**	0.37*	-0.39**	-0.36**
		(0.04)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.11)	(0.21)	(0.06)	(0.07)
	to_{it}	0.11**	-0.12**	-0.23**	-0.17**	-0.10**	-0.21**	-0.28**	-0.28**	-0.22**
		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)

Sub-samples										
	Middle-income economies									
	tr_{it}	0.14**	0.41	0.14**	0.10**	-0.04**	0.03	0.52**	1.71**	-0.44
		(0.00)	(0.35)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.04)	(0.18)	(0.09)	(0.06)
	tr_{it}^2	-0.18**	0.05	-0.15**	-0.49**	0.17**	-0.02	-0.07	-0.01	-0.00
		(0.01)	(0.09)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.05)	(0.01)	(0.03)
	tr_{it}^3	0.01**	0.00	-0.01**	0.03**	0.02**	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
		(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
	gdp_{it}	0.76**	0.90**	0.96**	0.94**	0.80**	1.01**	0.76**	0.90**	0.72**
		(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.05)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.01)
	$gini_{it}$	-1.90**	-1.51**	-1.16**	-1.47**	-1.58**	-1.68**	-1.57**	-1.56**	-0.02**
		(0.01)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.12)	(0.08)	(0.01)	(0.06)	(0.02)	(0.01)
	to_{it}	-0.31**	0.02**	0.27**	0.19**	0.38**	0.34**	0.20**	0.17**	0.30**
		(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.04)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
	Low-income economies									
	tr_{it}	0.71**	0.02**	0.84**	0.57**	0.36**	0.21**	0.26*	0.17	0.12**
		(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.14)	(0.12)	(0.15)	(0.09)	(0.15)	(0.04)	(0.05)
	tr_{it}^2	-0.06**	-0.02**	-0.03**	-0.12**	-0.09**	-0.11**	-0.10**	-0.11**	-0.01
		(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.03)
	tr_{it}^3	0.01**	0.01**	0.01**	0.01**	0.01**	0.01**	-0.00	0.01**	-0.01*
		(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
	gdp_{it}	1.24**	1.27**	1.55**	1.42**	1.48**	1.55**	1.73**	1.61**	1.51**
		(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.07)	(0.04)
	$gini_{it}$	1.95**	1.77**	0.84**	-1.08**	-1.10**	-1.85**	-1.20**	-1.05**	-1.13**
		(0.04)	(0.01)	(0.07)	(0.12)	(1.11)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.16)	(0.15)
	to_{it}	0.37**	0.45**	0.45**	0.51**	0.87**	0.91**	0.70**	0.89**	0.84**
		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.01)	(0.06)	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.03)

Note: ** and * indicate significance at the 5% and 10% significance levels, respectively. Standard errors are shown in parentheses.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

For the full sample, the quantile regression estimator reveals that tourism growth and environmental degradation are relinked at higher quantiles, validating the N-shape Kuznets curve hypothesis. Initially, tourism contributes to environmental degradation, but it decreases after the first turning point. However, environmental quality starts deteriorating again once it reaches the second turning point. These results contradict the past findings (e.g., Arbulú et al., 2015; Paramati et al., 2017; Danish and Wang, 2018; Bella, 2018; Işik et al., 2020), validating the relinking hypothesis between tourism growth and environmental degradation. Thus, policies aimed at promoting tourism growth may not be environmentally sustainable in the long run. Based on these findings, policymakers should consider diversifying the economy by investing in other industries that are less reliant on tourism, which could help reduce the negative environmental impacts associated with tourism growth. Our study also emphasizes the importance of employing a flexible functional form to verify the curvature of the Kuznets curve.

Our results show that the long-run linkage between tourism and environmental quality is not homogeneous across different income groups. Specifically, we find that in high-income countries, the association between tourism and environmental degradation is not statistically significant in 7 out of 9 quantiles. However, in middle- and low-income countries, tourism development appears to have a significant impact on environmental degradation. Notably, low-income countries exhibit a strong positive association between tourism and CO_2 emissions at the low and middle quantiles. Therefore, policymakers in low-income countries should consider implementing more effective travel and tourism policies to mitigate the environmental damage caused by tourism activities.

Furthermore, the short-run causalities between variables vary across high-, middle-, and low-income economies. Our results indicate a significant one-way causal effect from tourism to CO_2 emissions in high-income countries. In middle- and low-income countries, there is a two-way causal relationship between tourism and carbon emissions, as well as strong bidirectional causality between trade openness and carbon emissions. Therefore, policymakers in developing countries should consider both tourism development and trade openness simultaneously when developing environmental policies for sustainable development. To consider the interconnectedness of economic growth, trade openness, and environmental protection, integrated policies for sustainable tourism development should be considered. For example, policymakers could incentivize the adoption of sustainable tourism practices by providing financial support for eco-friendly initiatives (e.g., green financing for tourism businesses).

REFERENCES

Arbulú I, Lozano J, Rey-Maquieira J (2015) Tourism and solid waste generation in Europe: A panel data assessment of the Environmental Kuznets Curve. *Waste Management 46*: 628–636.

Bella G (2018) Estimating the tourism induced environmental Kuznets curve in France. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism 26*(12): 2043–2052.

Danish, Wang, Z (2018) Dynamic relationship between tourism, economic growth, and environmental quality. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism 26*(11): 1928–1943.

Işik C, Ahmad M, Pata UK, Ongan S, Radulescu M, Adedoyin FF, Bayraktaroğlu E, Aydın S, Ongan A (2020) An evaluation of the tourism-induced environmental Kuznets curve (T-EKC) hypothesis: evidence from G7 Countries. *Sustainability 12*(2020): 1–11.

Llorca M, Meunié A (2009) SO2 emissions and the environmental Kuznets curve: the case of Chinese provinces. *Journal of Chinese Economic and Business Studies 7*(1): 1–16.

Jha R, Murthy KB (2003) An inverse global environmental Kuznets curve. *Journal of Comparative Economics 31*(2): 352–368.

Murthy KV, Gambhir S (2018) Analyzing environmental Kuznets curve and pollution haven hypothesis in India in the context of domestic and global policy change. *Australasian Accounting, Business and Finance Journal 12*(2): 134–156.

Powell D (2022) Quantile regression with nonadditive fixed effects. *Empirical Economics 63*(5): 2675-2691.

Koenker R (2005) Quantile regression. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Paramati SR, Alam MS, Chen CF (2017) The effects of tourism on economic growth and CO2 emissions: a comparison between developed and developing economies. *Journal of Travel Research 56*(6): 712–724.

Paramati SR, Shahbaz M, Alam MS (2017) Does tourism degrade environmental quality? A comparative study of Eastern and Western European Union. *Transportation Research Part D: Transport and Environment 50*: 1–13.

The effects of social factors on online food delivery workers' well-being: An application of complexity theory

Pearl M. C. LIN
School of Hotel and Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Wai Ching Wilson AU
Faculty of International Management and Tourism, City University of Macau
Macau Department of Work, Employment and Organisation
University of Strathclyde

Tom BAUM
School of Tourism and Hospitality
University of Johannesburg

Summer J. XIA
School of Hotel and Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Abstract:
The study aims to investigate how social characteristics of gig works and family expectation predict online food delivery workers' well-being. Four social characteristics of gig works were yielded from 30 in-depth interviews with online food-delivery workers. Their effects on workers' well-being were triggered by one's family expectation. The findings expand the current understanding on gig economy employment and provide implications for businesses and legal sectors in the hospitality industry.

Keywords: Gig economy, food delivery, workers' well-being, family expectation, social characteristics, complexity theory

1. Introduction

The gig economy has presented a new technological solution for businesses to better benefit from pooled human resources. The most prominent sector of such a business model is online food-delivery (OFD) service, with iiMedia Research Group (2020) estimating that its market scale has been almost quadrupled in 2019 from 2016. Despite the exponential growth, some scholars doubted whether its success is temporary and cannot sustain (Zhao & Bacao, 2020) due to its unique employment structure.

The gig economy has attracted scholarly attention regarding its implications as a potential employment structure in the hospitality industry (Healy, Nicolson, & Pekarek, 2017).

Proponents of this type of economy see it through a post-Fordist lens and commend it for building a constellation of social ties in the society (Straughan, Bissell, & Gorman-Murray, 2021). However, it has faced criticism from scholars who view it on the basis of Taylorism (Ahsan, 2020), wherein scientific management links workers' pay and performance. Such a Talyoristic working environment generates work-family conflicts (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2009). Gandini (2019) highlighted that the gig economy repurposes and fences off social relationships in the society to transform them into relations of production, obstructing one's development of social recognitions.

From the above discussions, social characteristics of the gig economy may determine OFD workers' well-being, thereby shedding lights on the ongoing debates over the sustainability of the gig economy. Hence, drawing on trait-activation theory and complexity theory, this study aims to identify social characteristics of OFD work and examine their effects on OFD workers' well-being.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The trait-activation theory

The trait-activation theory (TAT) recognizes social workplace features in the formation of worker's attitudes and psychological states (e.g., well-being) (Tett & Burnett, 2003). Specifically, the theory posits that workers' personal traits and the situations in which these traits are expressed influence their attitudes and psychological states. Personal traits require relevant situational cues to trigger and workers processing specific traits can better recognize these cues and react accordingly.

Within the field of vocational psychology, family influence has widely been recognized as an important social factor. Fouad et al. (2016) asserted that individuals who perceive higher family expectation to support their family tend to place high value on external aspects of work such as monetary compensations or promotion opportunities. Lee and Yu (2023) reaffirmed family expectation as a proximal factor in hospitality work-related decision, because it serves a work stressor that focuses workers to pursue works with undesired conditions such as long hours and holiday work. However, how it functions as a trait for workers to value specific social characteristics of gig works remains unknown.

2.2. Complexity theory

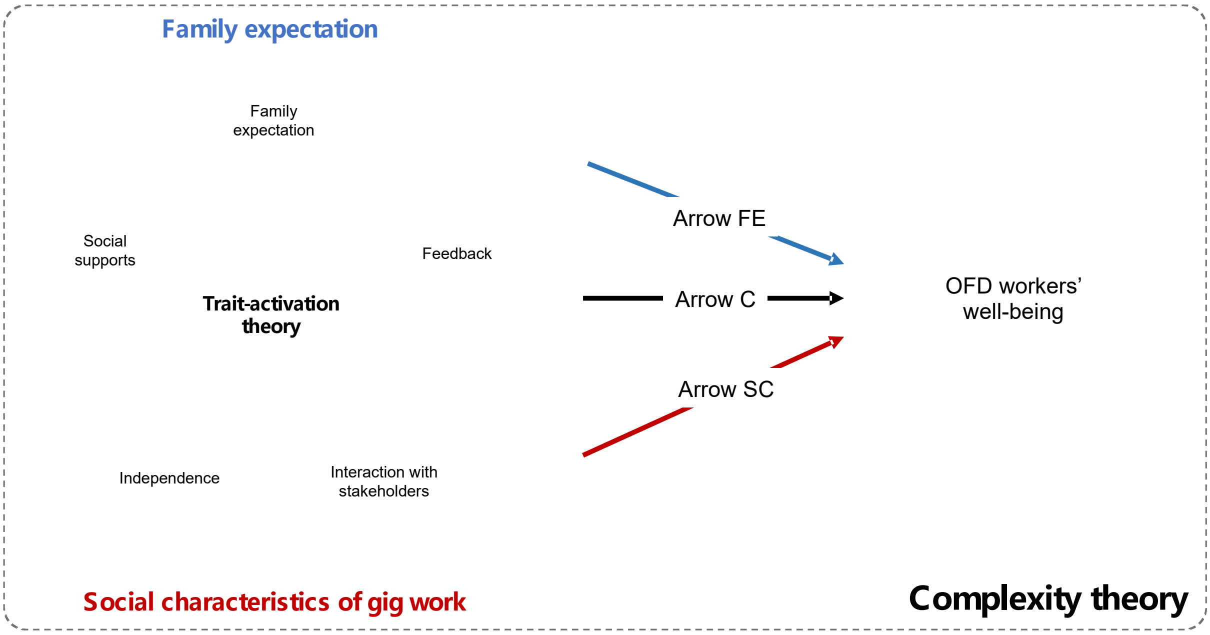
Scholars have used TAT to study how workers' attitudes and behaviors are formed through a person-situation interactionist perspective. They utilized methodological approaches such as structural equation modelling and regression analysis to explore the moderating effect of situational cues or personal traits, which challenges the tenets of TAT emphasizing the coexistence of personal factors and situational cues (Tett & Burnett, 2003). Tett et al. (2021) called for new methodological approach to capture this complex interaction through a person-situation interactionist perspective.

Complexity theory utilizes a complex science approach to understand intricate interactions among predictors in social phenomena (Baggio, 2008). Complexity theory captures patterns of multiple-conjunctural causations and identifies combinations sufficient for outcomes (Pappas & Woodside, 2021), aligning with the interactionist perspective of TAT that recognizes the co-existence of personal traits (family expectations) and situational cues (social job characteristics) in predicting workers' attitudes (well-being). A Venn diagram was created to illustrate the research model (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Proposed research model

3. Methodology

The first step involves in-depth interviews with 30 OFD workers to explore the social



4. Results

4.1. Profile of the respondents

The obvious gender imbalance, with male (90.4%) largely outnumbering female (9.6%), implies a food-delivery job as a male-dominated occupation. The age of respondents ranged from 18 to 63. They work 54.7 hours averagely a week and 57.7% of them earned between RMB4,001 to RMB8,000 monthly.

4.2. fsQCA results

The results suggested social support and family expectation were the necessary conditions for OFD workers' well-being, reaffirming their important role in one's well-being (e.g., Khallad & Jabr, 2016). Besides, the sufficient condition analysis identified three configurational models for high OFD worker's well-being and one configurational model for low well-being. The results implied that the effect of interdependence on OFD workers' well-being was twofold. Specifically, its absence and presence were simultaneously identified by M2 and M3, respectively. The predictive validity of the models was also checked by using the holdout sample (n=400) to verify the models obtained from the subsample (n=400).

Table 1. Configurational models for OFD workers' well-being

Models	Raw coverage	Unique coverage	Consistency
High OFD workers' well-being			
M1. SS*ID*IA*FB*FE	.659	.130	.801
M2. SS*~ID*IA*FB*FE	.661	.133	.781
M3. SS*IA*FB	.359	.016	.815
Solution coverage = .807			
Solution consistency = .769			
Low OFD workers' well-being			
M1. ~SS*ID*IA*FB*~FE	.254	.254	.823
Solution coverage = .254			
Solution consistency = .823			

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion

As presented in Table 2, the fsQCA results supported all six major tenets of complexity theory, suggesting that complexity theory explains the proposed configurational model for predicting high/low OFD workers' well-being in the gig economy based on the combinations of the four social characteristics and family expectation.

Tenet	Supporting evidence
Tenet 1: The insufficiency principle	Family expectation (FE) is a necessary condition, but their absence can also obtain high scores (M3).
Tenet 2: The recipe principle	Five conditions (M1) and three conditions (M3) offer a sufficient and consistent condition for simulating high OFD workers' well-being.
Tenet 3: The equifinality principle	M1 is a sufficient, but not a necessary model for simulating high OFD workers' well-being. It combines with the two other models for achieving a higher solution consistency.
Tenet 4: The causal asymmetry principle	The configuration models for stimulating high OFD workers' well-being are not mirror of the configuration models for stimulating low OFD workers' well-being.
Tenet 5: The multi-finality principle	Interdependence (ID) acts both positively (M1) and negatively (M2) for stimulating high OFD workers' well-being.
Tenet 6: The non-full coverage principle	All solution coverages are less than 1.00, suggesting that a particular configuration model only accurately predicts some but not all cases.

Table 2. Evaluation with key tenets of complexity theory

5.2. Implications

Theoretically, this study extends the investigations on the gig economy to the social aspects by focusing on how workers' social trait (i.e., family expectation) and the social characteristics of gig workers influence their well-being in the gig economy. Methodologically, this study illustrates complexity theory as a potential replacement for the reductionist analysis to recognize the person-situation interactionist standpoint emphasized by trait-activation theory. Practically, this study holds practical implications for online platforms, traditional hospitality businesses, and governmental authorities to better promote sustainability in the hospitality employment market.

5.3. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

The qualitative analysis method in this study relies on subjective interpretations on the interview data. In order to reduce the confounding effects of different demographic or behavioral variables, the configurational model assessment is limited to a sample of Chinese OFD workers. Hence, the results should be generated with caution to boarder contexts, as individual perceptions of social characteristics, family expectations, and well-being may widely vary across sociodemographic factors.

REFERENCES

Ahsan, M. (2020). Entrepreneurship and ethics in the sharing economy: A critical perspective. Journal of Business Ethics, 161(1), 19-33.

Baggio, R. (2008). Symptoms of complexity in a tourism system. Tourism Analysis, 13(1), 1-20.

Fouad, N. A., Kim, S. Y., Ghosh, A., Chang, W. H., & Figueiredo, C. (2016). Family influence on career decision making: Validation in India and the United States. Journal of Career Assessment, 24(1), 197-212.

Gandini, A. (2019). Labour process theory and the gig economy. Human relations, 72(6), 1039-1056.

Healy, J., Nicholson, D., & Pekarek, A. (2017). Should we take the gig economy seriously?. Labour & Industry: a journal of the social and economic relations of work, 27(3), 232-248.

Khallad, Y., & Jabr, F. (2016). Effects of perceived social support and family demands on college students' mental well-being: A cross-cultural investigation. International Journal of Psychology, 51(5), 348-355.

Kreiner, G. E., Hollensbe, E. C., & Sheep, M. L. (2009). Balancing borders and bridges: Negotiating the work-home interface via boundary work tactics. Academy of management journal, 52(4), 704-730.

Lee, L., & Yu, H. (2023). Socioeconomic diversity in the hospitality industry: the relationship between social class background, family expectations and career outcomes. International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management.

Pappas, I. O., & Woodside, A. G. (2021). Fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA): Guidelines for research practice in Information Systems and marketing. International Journal of Information Management, 58, 102310.

Straughan, E. R., Bissell, D., & Gorman-Murray, A. (2021). Friends disconnected: How mobile work transforms friendships through absence and presence. Area, 53(1), 13-20.

Tett, R. P., & Burnett, D. D. (2003). A personality trait-based interactionist model of job performance. Journal of Applied psychology, 88(3), 500.

Tett, R. P., Toich, M. J., & Ozkum, S. B. (2021). Trait activation theory: A review of the literature and applications to five lines of personality dynamics research. Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 8, 199-233.

iiMedia Research. (2020). A special study on food delivery market in China during the COVID-19 epidemic in 2020. Retrieved from https://www.iimedia.cn/c400/70742.html

Zhao, Y., & Bacao, F. (2020). What factors determining customer continuingly using food delivery apps during 2019 novel coronavirus pandemic period?. International Journal of Hospitality Management, 91, 102683.

Cryptocurrencies and central bank digital currency (CBDC): Rethinking the concept of the digital divide in tourism research

Zemenu Amare Ayalew
School of Hootel and Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Sabastian Filep
School of Hootel and Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Seongseop (Sam) Kim
School of Hootel and Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Abstract:

The tourism industry is increasingly relying on emerging technologies, including digital currencies, which represent innovative trends in the sector for payment and settlements. Despite their growing popularity, no research has been conducted to conceptualize digital currencies within the digital divide framework. Therefore, through an integrative literature review, this study introduces a new digital divide framework combines access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Digital Currencies (DCs) for demand and supply tourism research. Moreover, the study highlights the interplay between divides in ICT and DCs and points out directions for future research.

Keywords: Digital Divide, Information Communication Technology, Digital currency, Cryptocurrency, CBDC.

1. Introduction

Technological advancements have played a crucial role in expanding the hospitality and tourism industry and, in turn, its contribution to the global economy (Deb et al., 2022; Troisi et al., 2023; Xiang, 2018). The growth of e-commerce, online access to tourism products and services, and the emergence of new digital tourism trends such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), the metaverse, and digital payment methods have been identified as key factors for the industry's growth (Buhalis et al., 2023; Frenzel et al., 2022; Roziqin et al., 2023). However, not everyone has benefited equally from these technological breakthroughs (Wu & Yang, 2023). Tourists, businesses, and destinations are heavily hindered by lack of equal access to emerging technological trends – the digital divide.

Previous studies intended to relate the digital divide only to access, skill, and meaningful usage of ICT (see Carlisle et al. 2023). Access to ICT alone, however, might not fully explain the contemporary digital divide in tourism, as many emerging technologies have been applied in the sector with the potential to create a gap between those who have and do not have the technologies in terms of physical access to, skill, and meaningful use. Besides the ICT divide, the emergence of digital financial technologies, primarily digital currencies (DCs) have the potential to create another form of digital divide, “digital divide 2.0,” as described by French & Baduqui (2022).

Thus, a literature review was conducted to understand the digital divide in the context of digital currencies among tourists, businesses, and destinations. This review identified gaps in the current literature, leading to the proposal of a new comprehensive framework for the digital divide in the hospitality and tourism context. Since theoretical and empirical research in this area is essential, future research directions were suggested.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The concept of digital divide – earlier understanding

Digital divide refers to the “gaps in ICT access” (OECD, 2001, p. 5). Over time, various definitions have been proposed to describe this concept. However, scholars have attempted to re-conceptualize it by considering not only physical access to technology, but also digital skills and users’ attitudes towards digital technologies (Van Deursen & Van Dijk, 2010). As a result, the concept has been further refined to include physical access, skill gaps, motives, and the capabilities for meaningful usage (Van Deursen & Helsper, 2015). Since then, researchers have identified and applied three levels of the digital divide that go beyond mere possession of ICT: the first level involves physical access to ICT due to socio-economic conditions; the second level includes internet and computer skills, as well as motives; and the third level pertains to the meaningful use of ICT and the resulting economic, social, and political disparities (Hargittai, 2002; Van Dijk, 2006; Van Dijk & Hacker, 2003). Despite these advancements, most digital divide models and empirical studies have primarily focused on ICT access, overlooking the broader scope and depth of the digital divide. This limited understanding is also most common in the context of hospitality and tourism research except the recent studies which focused on emerging technologies (Carlisle et al., 2023; Dhakal and Tjokro, 2024; Frenzel et al., 2022).

3. Methodology

This study used an integrative literature review process aiming at identifying relevant researches to be applied for analysis and a conceptual framework development (Torraco, 2005; Whittemore Knafl, 2005). An integrative literature review process is important to assess, critique and synthesized previous literatures to explain emerging topics for the purpose of modifying the existing or develop new conceptual frameworks (Synder, 2019). Since integrative literature review involves the process of describing and synthesizing previous researches in a given field, it should be meticulous and follow certain methodological approach with stated standards and procedures towards research inclusion and exclusion process (Lee et al. 2022).

4. Results

4.1 Digital divide in the age of DCs: An integrated conceptual framework
A modified conceptual model of the digital divide has been proposed. In the modified model, access to DC can be defined as physical access to the infrastructures, similar to the ICT case. Thus, access includes the physical accessibility of either cryptocurrencies or CBDCs, skills, and users' attitudes towards digital payment platforms. Moreover, beyond the infrastructure, basic financial and digital skills are required to operate digital currency apps, which could have a potential impact on the digital skill divide (second-level divide). Additionally, travel-related financial planning skills could facilitate the meaningful use of digital currencies. Therefore, differences in these factors could create a digital divide, which is the combination of access, skill, and meaningful usage of both ICT and digital currencies. Finally, the initial economic, social, and political conditions of the tourists, destinations, and geographies greatly determine both ICT and DC divides of the physical access, skill, and meaningful usage.

The updated framework underscores the significant role of the ICT divide in shaping disparities related to access, skills, and meaningful usage of DC. This relationship is underpinned by the fact that access to DC is fundamentally contingent upon the availability of ICT services, including the access to, skills in, and usage of computers, smartphones, and internet connectivity, which constitute the essential technological infrastructure (Ramkrishna & Loganathan, 2023). Based on Minghetti and Buhalis (2010), the extent of the CT and DC digital divides can vary from high to low. The proposed framework is also adaptable for use in demand and supply research within the field of tourism

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and implications (Future research agendas)
Based on the literature reviewed and conceptualizations, three principal research themes have been identified. The first theme will be analysing access to DC among tourists, businesses, and destinations, drawing parallels with ICT access in the digital divide. It is critical to assess the accessibility of digital currencies for diverse tourist demographics and various destinations, digital financial skill divides, and the motivations for meaningful use of DCs in hospitality and tourism research. Furthermore, examining the empirical relationship between the ICT divide and digital currency access is crucial, as limited ICT access may impede access and utilization of digital currencies.

The other theme could focus on the second and third levels of the digital divide. Once people have access to ICT and DCs, differences in their digital skills, usage, and attitude become the primary contributors to the digital divide (Van Deursen & Van Dijks, 2010). Digital currency platforms tend to require advanced skills, sophisticated technology, high security, financial management abilities, and internet and digital financial skills. Therefore, researchers ought to examine the impact of skill gaps and attitudes on the digital divide between tourists and destinations.

The third theme of discussion could be on the impact of digital divides on the economic, social, and political circumstances of tourists, businesses, and destinations. In this context, digital divides may significantly influence the conditions of stakeholders within the industry. Furthermore, research and policy-making efforts should examine the effects of divides in ICT and DCs on the competitiveness of tourism destinations and businesses. This includes the customization and tailoring of product and service delivery, marketing strategies, destination visibility, and the enhancement of customer experiences.

5.2. Conclusion

Technology has brought about a revolution in the hospitality and tourism industry. Digital currencies, cryptocurrencies, and CBDCs have become the new normal, particularly in payment and settlement, supporting the sector's growth. The use of digital currencies in tourism has been progressing, especially during the pandemic, due to the need to limit physical contact and the spread of the virus (Kim et al., 2023; Maleepumpun, 2023). However, the impact of these currencies on the digital divide between tourists and destinations in the demand and supply was not well-researched. To address digital divides resulting from access, skill, and usage, a new framework was proposed, building on Minghetti and Buhalis's (2010) study of the general ICT divide. The new framework has also defined access, skill, and meaningful use of DCs and highlights the interplay between ICT and digital currency divide. The primary aim of this new framework is to encourage future empirical research and conceptualization of emerging technologies concerning the digital divide.

5.3. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

In the current study, the analysis of the digital divide was limited to the use of digital currencies (DCs) and information and communication technologies (ICT). As a result, emerging technologies such as Metaverse, augmented reality (AR), and virtual reality (VR) were not included in the scope of this research. Future researchers could consider re-conceptualizing the digital divide in the context of hospitality and tourism by exploring the implications of these trending technologies that are gaining traction in the industry. This deeper understanding of emerging technologies would provide valuable insights for addressing the digital divide in the sector.

REFERENCES

Buhalis, D., Leung, D., & Lin, M. (2023). Metaverse as a disruptive technology revolutionising tourism management and marketing. *Tourism Management*, *97*, 104724.

Carlisle, S., Ivanov, S., & Dijkmans, C. (2023). The digital skills divide: evidence from the European tourism industry. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, *9*(2), 240-266.

Deb, S. K., Nafi, S. M., & Valeri, M. (2022). Promoting tourism business through digital marketing in the new normal era: a sustainable approach. *European Journal of Innovation Management, 27*(3), 775-799.

Dhakal, S. P., & Tjokro, S. P. (2024). Tourism enterprises in Indonesia and the fourth industrial revolution–are they ready?. *Tourism Recreation Research*, *49*(2), 439-444.

French, A. M., & Baduqui, G. (2019). *The Digital Divide 2.0: Fintech versus traditional financial services*. Emergent Research Forum (ERF). https://web.archive.org/web/20220803150937id_/https://aisel.aisnet.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1399&context=amcis2019

Frenzel, F., Giddy, J., & Frisch, T. (2022). Digital technology, tourism and geographies of inequality. *Tourism Geographies*, *24*(6-7), 923-933.

Hargittai, E. (2002). Beyond logs and surveys: In-depth measures of people's web use skills. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and technology*, *53*(14), 1239-1244.

Kim, J. J., Kim, S., Hailu, T. B., Ryu, H. B., & Han, H. (2023). Does central bank digital currency (CBDC) payment create the opportunity for the tourism industry?. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 10963480231158773.

Lee, S. M. F., Filep, S., Vada, S., & King, B. (2022). Webcam travel: a preliminary examination of psychological well-being. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 14673584221145818.

Maleepumpun, K. (2023). Factors Affecting the Acceptance of CBDCs in the Tourism Industry: A Structural Equation Modeling Approach. *Service, Leisure, Sport, Tourism & Education*, *1*(3).

Snyder, H. (2019). Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and guidelines. *Journal of Business Research*, *104*, 333-339.

Minghetti, V., & Buhalis, D. (2010). Digital divide in tourism. *Journal of Travel Research*, *49*(3), 267-281.

Ramkrishna, V. M., & Loganathan, V. (2023). Is Digital Currency a Payment Disruption Mechanism?. *Fintech and Cryptocurrency*, 173-191.

Roziqin, A., Kurniawan, A. S., Hijri, Y. S., & Kismartini, K. (2023). Research trends of digital tourism: a bibliometric analysis. *Tourism Critiques: Practice and Theory*. Vol. ahead-of-print No. ahead-of-print. https://doi.org/10.1108/TRC-11-2022-0028

Torraco, R. J. (2005). Writing integrative literature reviews: Guidelines and examples. *Human resource development review*, *4*(3), 356-367.

Troisi, O., Visvizi, A., & Grimaldi, M. (2023). Digitalizing business models in hospitality ecosystems: toward data-driven innovation. *European Journal of Innovation Management*, *26*(7), 242-277.

Van Deursen, A. J., & Helsper, E. J. (2015). The third-level digital divide: Who benefits most from being online?. In *Communication and Information Technologies Annual* (pp. 29-52). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Van Deursen, A. V., & Van Dijk, J. A. (2010). Measuring internet skills. *International Journal of Human-computer Interaction*, *26*(10), 891-916.

Van Dijk, J. A. (2006). Digital divide research, achievements and shortcomings. *Poetics*, *34*(4-5), 221-235.

Van Dijk, J., & Hacker, K. (2003). The digital divide as a complex and dynamic phenomenon. *The Information Society*, *19*(4), 315-326.

Whittemore, R., & Knafl, K. (2005). The integrative review: updated methodology. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *52*(5), 546-553.

Wu, X., & Yang, Y. (2023). Digital divide and senior travel consumption: an empirical study from China. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, *28*(4), 306-322.

Xiang, Z. (2018). From digitization to the age of acceleration: On information technology and tourism. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, *25*, 147-150.

Lover's Travelling Desynchronicity and Their Destination Satisfaction: The Mediating Role of Destination Image

Zhou, Tao
Department of Integrated Resort and Tourism Management
University of Macau

Liu, Chao
Department of Integrated Resort and Tourism Management
University of Macau

Xing, Yuqing
Department of Integrated Resort and Tourism Management
University of Macau

Abstract:

It is widely believed that travelling with a romantic partner can bring wonderful experience. However, a number of studies that conflicts cause lower satisfaction among couples. This research examines the relationship between travelling desynchronicity of couples and travelling satisfaction. The result demonstrates that travelling desynchronicity influences the overall destination image of lovers subjectively, and the overall image is straightly linked to satisfaction. Proactive communication can help release the adverse effect of desynchronicity. These findings can provide better understanding of romantic travel and insights for lovers and tourism service providers to enhance the satisfaction of romantic trips.

Keywords: Romantic tourism; Travelling desynchronicity; Destination image; Travelling satisfaction

1. Introduction

Going on a journey with a romantic partner is commonly seen as a joyful and unforgettable adventure that brings to life the romantic dreams and desires of couples (Kim & Agrusa,2005). However, there is evidence showing that travelling with the lover is not always a pleasant experience. Conflicts can happen at any time during the trip. For example, according to Hao et al.(2023), lover's desynchronicity can straightly have an impact on travelling satisfaction, which means conflicts will cause a bad travelling experience.

Although some past literature have studied on the topic of lover's travelling satisfaction, most studies have explored the association between destination characteristics and tourists' satisfaction after the decision-making process,such as accommodation, honeymoon privileges, hospitality of local residents, dining experience, service providers, accessibility and local tour products(Lee et al., 2020). Few studies were conducted to check the impacts of lovers' personal differences on travelling satisfaction.

Destination image is commonly conceptualised as a mental or attitudinal construct consisting of the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a tourist holds of a destination (Crompton, 1979). Past research has shown that tourists' emotional experiences act as antecedents of perceived overall image and satisfaction evaluations（Prayag et al., 2017). Given this context, the aim of this research is to determine whether the desynchronicity of lovers would influence tourist satisfaction through the overall image of a destination. Specifically, this study has a twofold purpose: (1) to examine the impacts of lovers' desynchronicity of lovers on travelling satisfaction among affective geography theory through overall image. (2) to find the mediators between lovers' desynchronicity and overall image. Quantitative method is used to check our hyphothesized model and online survey via Quatrics is used to collect the data from mainly Chinese lovers.

In general, this research contributes to tourism area on two perspectives. Theoretically, The impact of traveling synchronicity on the romantic tour experience of couples is explored, and evidence is provided to support this relationship. Practically, this research provide the lovers with understanding the impacts of their desynchronicity on travelling, which can help to avoid conflicts and achieve better travelling experience.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Traveling synchronicity and travel satisfaction

Travel companionship is the prevalent mode of travel, encompassing family excursions and trips with friends or partners. (Lee, et al., 2020). Among them, traveling with a romantic partner is also an important form of companion travel. Traveling with a romantic partner is often considered a joyful and memorable experience, fulfilling couples' romantic fantasies (Kim & Agrusa, 2005).

Research has shown that the travel companionship between romantic partners can enhance travel satisfaction. The intimate relationship and emotional connection between romantic partners can promote cooperation and shared experiences, increasing the fun and satisfaction of the trip (Song et al., 2018). Furthermore, the intimate relationship between romantic partners can provide mutual support and understanding, reducing stress and conflicts during travel (Durko & Petrick, 2016). Joint planning and decision-making of travel activities can also enhance the sense of intimacy and satisfaction between travel companions (Su et al., 2021).

However, the travel companionship between romantic partners may also face some challenges. Conflicts and differences during travel may negatively impact travel satisfaction (Huang, Qu, & Montgomery, 2017). The differences in travel preferences between partners are an important factor. This includes the differing preferences between men and women (this study) and individuals having different tastes and personalities (Chen & Mak, 2020), which can lead to asynchrony during the travel process and trigger conflicts. Specifically, disagreements in decision-making regarding activities and budgets can lead to stress and tension (Durko & Petrick, 2016). Differences in personal preferences and interests during travel may also lead to conflicts and dissatisfaction (Zhao et al., 2018). Therefore, traveling with a romantic partner does not always guarantee a pleasant travel experience and may instead evoke negative emotions such as fear, sadness, or even disgust for the partner (Servidio & Ruffolo, 2016). Thus, the synchronicity between romantic partners during travel may significantly influence travel satisfaction. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: Traveling synchronicity has a positive impact on travel satisfaction among romantic partners.

2.2 Traveling synchronicity and overall image

Martineau (1958) introduced the concept that human behavior is influenced by perceived image rather than objective reality. In the context of tourism, destination image refers to the beliefs, ideas, and impressions individuals hold about the attributes and activities available at a particular destination (Richardson & Crompton, 1988). Recent research has expanded this concept by considering destination image as a multidimensional construct that includes both rational and emotional interpretations by tourists (Martin & Bosque, 2008).

The affective image represents the emotional response of tourists towards a destination (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997). Gartner (1993) suggests that the affective component of destination image becomes particularly relevant during the evaluation stage of destination selection. Tourist destinations frequently elicit a variety of emotional responses, including feelings of enjoyment or exhilaration (Walmsley & Young, 1998)

The overall image of a tourism destination can be defined as the comprehensive impression retained in a traveler's memory, shaped by perceived attributes linked to that particular destination (Beerli & Martin, 2004). Past studies have indicated that this destination image plays a crucial role in shaping tourist satisfaction and behaviors, impacting choices of destination, subsequent assessments, and future intentions to revisit (Bigné et al., 2001). A favorable perception of a specific tourism destination is likely to lead to positive evaluations and an enhanced likelihood of a return visit.

While many studies in tourism literature focus primarily on the cognitive component of destination image, the equally important affective image has often been overlooked. Tourists not only visit places but also seek specific emotional experiences (Germann Molz & Buda, 2022). Certain emotions can be symbolically attributed to a destination, shaping its image. Consequently, it can be inferred that traveling as a couple elicits a range of emotions that contribute to the formation of an affective image of the destination. This supports the findings of Baloglu and McCleary (1999) that emotional images have a significant impact on the overall destination image. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2: Traveling synchronicity has a positive impact on the overall image among romantic partners.

2.3 The mediating role of the overall image

The tourism destination image encompasses the perceived attributes associated with a destination and represents the overall impression held by travelers (Beerli & Martin, 2004). Extensive research has consistently demonstrated the significant role of destination image in influencing tourist satisfaction and subsequent behaviors, such as destination choice, evaluations, and future intentions (Court & Lupton, 1997).

Satisfaction, on the other hand, refers to the post-purchase assessment made by tourists regarding their experience at the destination (Oliver, 1980). Previous studies have consistently highlighted the critical impact of destination image on tourist satisfaction (Kandampully & Suharatanto, 2000). A more favorable destination image is likely to result in a higher level of satisfaction. Prayag (2009) further examined the interrelationships between destination image, satisfaction, and future behavioral intentions, providing additional support for the direct influence of destination image on tourist satisfaction.

Building upon Hypothesis 2, which states that travel synchronization has a positive impact on the overall destination image among romantic partners, we propose that the overall destination image acts as a mediator in the relationship between travel desynchronicity and travel satisfaction. This hypothesis suggests that travel desynchronicity influences the formation of the overall destination image, which in turn affects the level of satisfaction experienced by travelers. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3: The overall image acts as a mediator in the relationship between Traveling synchronicity and Traveling Satisfaction.

2.4 The moderating role of proactive communication

As Kang and Hsu (2004) previously noted in their study, partners in a relationship, whether male or female, rarely share the same holiday desires and requirements. However, in order to plan their trips, they must reach a consensus, making the decision negotiation process an important part of the shared planning process. Proactive communication plays an important role in this process.

Research has demonstrated that engaging in open negotiations and discussions can help to reduce tensions and conflicts pertaining to tasks and processes(Chen&Mak, 2020). Expressing the ideas and feelings more clearly, honestly and openly may lead to more happier emotional experience, leading to a better overall image of the same destination. The lovers' perceived image on the destination can be straightly influenced because they hold different emotions during the trip depending on the communication effectiveness.

Accordingly, We hypothesize that different levels of communication effectiveness can have different influence on lovers' emotional travelling experience. The moderating effect of proactive communication is promoted:

H4: Proactive communiction moderates the relationship between their structure of travelling (de)synchronicity and overall image.

2.5 The moderating role of personal independence

The interlinkages between tourists' personality traits and other variables are widely discussed but still have remained complex(Otoo et al.,.2021). However, people have differences because of different personalities. It is believed that Individuals who exhibit a higher level of independence are likely to experience less severe desynchronicity, as group dynamics are mainly shaped by the interdependence between dyads (Chen & Mak, 2020). Because people who are more independent in daily life are likely to care less about others' views and concentrate more about their own feelings(Singelis, 1994), they may be influenced less by the desynchronicity and have weaker emotional connections with the overall image.

On the other hand, from the affective geography perspective, tourists often associate a specific destination with self-oriented emotions such as self-realization, self-assurance, exploration, or personal fulfillment. There is a correlation between tourists' affection for a place and their aspiration to cultivate self-love(Molz&Buda, 2022). More independent people tend to search for self-love when visiting a destination but not to link it with their lovers. So the effect of lovers' desynchronicity will be weaker. Accordingly, the following hypothese is proposed：

H5: Personal independence moderates the relationship between their structure of travelling (de)synchronicity and overall image.

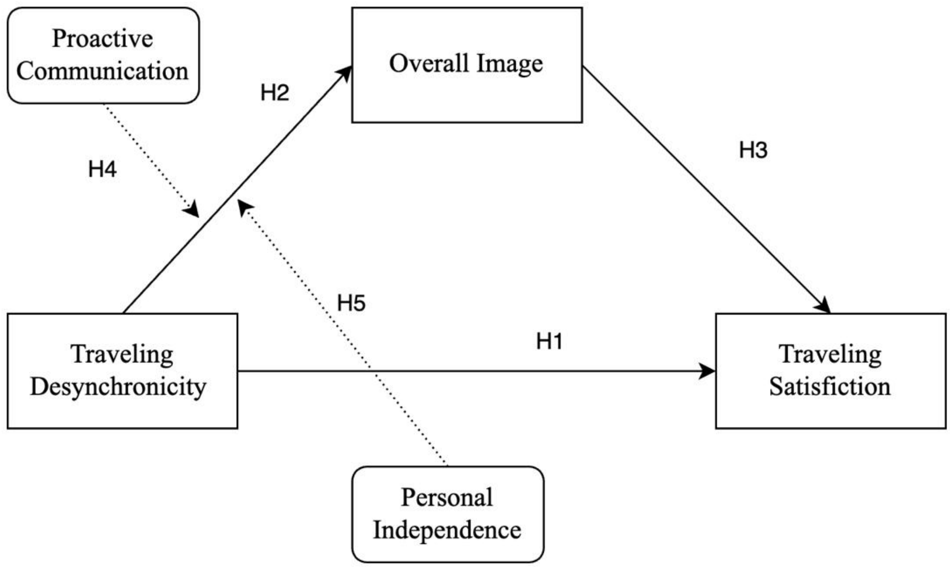


Fig. 1. *Conceptual framework*

3. Methodology

3.1 Sampling procedure

The target population of this study consists of couples and romantic partners; therefore, we included these specific groups in our sample frame. For our main study, an online survey method was employed. Initially, we developed a questionnaire using Qualtrics. Subsequently, we collected data through various social media platforms such as WeChat group chats, Moments, Xiaohongshu, Weibo, and others. The questionnaire was then distributed to a randomly selected group of respondents. Given the substantial number of respondents on the distributed platforms, we randomly selected participants who fulfilled the following criteria: being in a relationship and having traveled with their partners. We extended invitations to those individuals who met these criteria, requesting their participation in completing the questionnaires. Participants who successfully completed the survey were rewarded with a WeChat red packet or other incentives. Additionally, respondents were provided with clear survey objectives and instructions.

The online survey required less than 5 minutes to complete. Data collection for this study took place from early to mid-November 2023. The questionnaire was initially developed in English, and to ensure the accuracy of the Chinese version, two team members performed back-translation. To evaluate the questionnaire's reliability, a pilot test was conducted with a sample of 10 respondents. Based on the findings from the pilot test, certain items were rephrased accordingly.

A total of 120 responses were received for the questionnaire, excluding one participant who disagreed with the informed consent form and one participant with an unusually short response time. Thus, a total of 118 valid samples were collected.

As presented in Table 1, the majority of respondents (73.73%) chose "Synchronicity" (n=87), while 31 respondents (26.27%) selected "Desynchronicity." In terms of gender distribution, there were 34 male respondents (28.82%) and 84 female respondents (71.18%). Regarding educational attainment, 6.77% of the participants had a "High school and below" level, 46.61% held a "Bachelor" degree, 30.51% had a "Master" degree, and 16.11% possessed a "Doctor" degree. Among all respondents, 77.2% fell within the age range of 20 to 40, and 77.11% reported a monthly income level between \$5,000 and \$20,000. Additionally, we controlled for variables such as "length of the relationship" and "travel frequency." Specifically, 75.4% of the respondents reported a relationship length of 10 years, and 83.1% indicated having traveled with their partner 15 times or less.

Table 1

Samples

	Obs	**Percentage**
Traveling desynchronicity		
Desynchronicity	31	26.27
Synchronicity	87	73.73
Gender		
Male	34	28.82
Female	84	71.18
Education		
High school and below	8	6.77
Bachelor	55	46.61
Master	36	30.51
Doctor	19	16.11
Monthly Income		
Below 5000	11	9.32
5000-8000	38	32.2
8000-15000	42	35.59
15000-20000	11	9.32
Over 20000	16	13.56

3.2 Measures

This study employed established measures that were previously developed in prior studies. Each item on the scales was evaluated using a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

First, we presented two scenarios to the experimental group. The first scenario involved the following situation: "Imagine that you and your partner are on vacation at a scenic spot. After spending some time at one of the attractions, you express your desire to move on to the next spot, as you feel satisfied with the current location. However, your partner, who is still enjoying the attraction, insists on staying and expresses a desire to continue exploring it." In contrast, the second scenario was framed as the same premise as the first one but the hypothetical partner, upon learning of the participant's preference, agrees with his or her decision and expresses a willingness to proceed to the next attraction together.

Following the presentation of the scenario, participants were instructed to imagine themselves in the described situation and subsequently provide their feedback on their travel satisfaction. Traveling satisfaction, serving as the dependent variable influenced by the causal effect of traveling desynchronicity, was assessed using three items adapted from Lee, Jeon, and Kim (2011). These items included statements such as "I am very satisfied with the tour," "I have enjoyed myself during the tour," and "I am looking forward to the next trip." Participants indicated their level of agreement with these statements on a seven-point Likert scale.

In order to ensure that respondents understood and engaged with the presented scenario (Viglia & Dolnicar, 2020), two manipulation check questions were included. The first question aimed to assess whether respondents perceived a divergence of opinions between themselves and their partner during the trip. This response option was coded as 0 and labeled as "Desynchronicity." The second question evaluated whether respondents perceived that they and their partner held the same opinion during the trip. This response option was coded as 1 and labeled as "Synchronicity."

The "Overall Image" scale in this study draws upon previous research conducted by Assaker & Hallak (2013) and Petrick (2004). To measure the overall impression of the trip, four items were utilized. These items assessed participants' perceptions related to the dimensions of "Unpleasant-Pleasant," "Distressing-Relaxing," "Dull-Exciting," and "Negative-Positive." Participants indicated their level of agreement with these items on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree).

In this study, it was hypothesized that individuals' personal independence and proactive communication styles may influence their baseline relationships. To measure personal independence, four items were adapted from Singelis' study (1994). The participants were presented with the following four statements: "Even with my partner, I act the same way as I prefer", "I'd rather say no directly to my partner, even with the risk of misunderstanding", "Independence is very important to me in a romantic relationship", "Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me in a romantic relationship". In addition, proactive communication style was assessed using a three-item scale derived from the studies of Liu and Min (2020) and William et al. (1996). The participants were presented with the following statements: "I will express my opinion and preferences directly", "I will avoid expressing my opinion and preferences unclearly", "I usually will give an accurate answer". These items were designed to capture participants' tendencies towards expressing their opinions and preferences in a proactive manner. Participants indicated their level of agreement with these statements on a seven-point Likert scale.

In this study, we took into account several factors that previous literature and qualitative findings suggest may influence travel satisfaction (Su et al., 2021). These factors were included as control variables prior to introducing the experimental setup. First, we controlled for the length of time respondents had known their partner. Previous relationships and the duration of knowing one's partner can impact individuals' perceptions of their travels (Rojas-de-Gracia & Alarcón-Urbistondo, 2020). Similarly, we controlled for the number of times respondents had previously traveled with their partner. Lovers' previous travel experiences can influence their judgments even in manipulated scenarios (Durko & Petrick, 2016; Su et al., 2021). Additionally, this travel experience is believed to help couples avoid conflicts, which in turn may affect their travel satisfaction (Smith, Pitts, Litvin, & Agrawal, 2017).Furthermore, we considered respondents' demographic differences as potential sources of heterogeneity in their reflections. Therefore, we controlled for gender, age, and educational background of the participants (Rojas-de-Gracia & Alarcón-Urbistondo, 2020). By including these control variables, we aimed to account for potential confounding factors and isolate the effects of the experimental setup on travel satisfaction.

3.3 Data diagnostics and model

In this study, the reliability and validity of the scales were assessed before conducting the regression analysis. The following findings were obtained for the scales, as shown in Tables 2 and 3: Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.78 to 0.934, indicating good internal consistency reliability. The KMO and Bartlett tests were conducted and showed significant correlations among the variables, indicating that the data were suitable for factor analysis. These tests further support the internal consistency of the scales. The standardized factor loadings for all items in the questionnaire were above 0.60, surpassing the recommended critical value of 0.50. This demonstrates that the items were highly related to their respective constructs. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was examined, and all values were above the critical threshold of 0.50. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the scales used in the study have acceptable reliability and validity, supporting their use in subsequent regression analysis.

Table 2

Results of all measurements

Constructs	**Factor loading**	**Cronbach's α**	**CR**	**AVE**

Overall Image		0.914	0.9397	0.7957
1 Unpleasant–Pleasant	0.8711			
2 Distressing–Relaxing	0.866			
3 Dull–Exciting	0.9232			
4 Negative-Positive	0.9066			
Traveling Satisfiction		0.934	0.9584	0.8849
5 Very satisfied with the tour	0.942			
6 Enjoyed myself from the tour	0.95			
7 Look forward to the next trip	0.93			
Proactive Communication		0.78	0.8722	0.6949
8 Express my opinion and preferences directly	0.845			
9 Avoid expressing my opinion and preferences unclearly	0.79			
10 Usually will give an accurate answer	0.864			
Personal Independence		0.803	0.8711	0.6283
11 Act the same way as I prefer	0.789			
12 Say no directly to my partner even with the risk of misunderstanding	0.821			
13 Independency is very important to me in relationship	0.777			
14 Take care of myself is a primary concern	0.783			

This example investigates the mediating role of Overall Image in the relationship between Traveling Desynchronicity and Traveling Satisfaction. The regression method employed is based on Hayes' (2013) research. The independent variable (X) is "Traveling Desynchronicity," which is a categorical variable. The mediator variable (M) is "Overall Image," while the dependent variable (Y) is "Traveling Satisfaction." Additionally, the study explores the moderating effects of Proactive Communication and Personal Independence. All variables, including Personal Independence, the mediator, dependent, and moderator variables, are continuous. For the analysis, a Bootstrap-based mediation test was conducted using the SPSS macro (PROCESS version 4.2). The confidence level was set at 95%, and the Bootstrap procedure involved 5000 resamples.

Table 3

Means, standard deviation and correlations

		Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1	Traveling	0.74	0.44	1				

	Desynchronicity							
2	Overall Image	5.78	1.17	0.30***	1			
3	Traveling Satisfiction	5.9	1.19	0.28***	0.86***	1		
4	Proactive Communication	5.7	1.13	0.06	0.55***	0.51***	1	
5	Personal Independence	5.15	1.27	0.12	0.24***	0.25***	0.41***	1

Note: *, **, and *** indicates a significance level at 5%, 1%, and 0.1%, respectively.

3. Results

The study findings reveal that the Overall Image acts as a complete mediator in the relationship between Traveling Desynchronicity and Traveling Satisfaction. Furthermore, Proactive Communication exhibits a moderating effect on the relationship between Traveling Desynchronicity and the Overall Image to a certain degree. Detailed results can be found in Table 4.

In the analysis of the mediating effect (Model 1), the results indicated that Traveling Desynchronicity had a positive effect on Traveling Satisfaction, although it was not statistically significant and did not strongly support Hypothesis 1 ($\beta = 0.0751$, $p > 0.05$). However, it was found that Traveling Desynchronicity had a significant positive effect on Overall Image ($\beta = 0.7379$, $p < .001$), and Overall Image had a significant positive effect on Traveling Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.8620$, $p < .001$). These findings provide strong support for Hypotheses 2 and 3.

In the moderated effects model (Model 2), the results revealed that Traveling Desynchronicity had a significant positive effect on Overall Image ($\beta = 0.8252$, $p < .001$). Furthermore, the interaction effect of Traveling Desynchronicity and Proactive Communication was significant ($\beta = 0.3696$, $p < .05$), providing strong support for Hypothesis 4. However, the interaction effect of Traveling Desynchronicity and Personal Independence was not significant ($\beta = 0.1494$, $p > .05$), indicating that Hypothesis 5 was not supported.

To analyze the interactions, we followed Aiken et al.'s (1991) approach and employed a simple slope procedure. The moderator and independent variables were classified as high or low based on deviations of +/- standard deviations (SD) from the mean. Figure 2 illustrates that the effect of Proactive Communication on Overall Image was positive.

Table 4

Results of structural equation path estimations

Path	Model 1_Mediating Effect		Model 1_Moderating Effect	
	Overall Image	Traveling Satisfiction	Overall Image	Traveling Satisfiction
Main effect				
Traveling Desynchronicity	.7379***	0.0751	.8252***	0.0751
Overall Image		.8620***		.8620***
Moderating effect				
Traveling Desynchronicity x Proactive Communication				0.3696*
Traveling Desynchronicity x Personal Independence				0.1494
R2	0.1546	0.1545	0.4387	0.7587

Note: *, **, and *** indicates a significance level at 5%, 1%, and 0.1%, respectively.

Furthermore, we conducted additional analyses to investigate the potential factors contributing to the nonsignificant moderating effect of Personal Independence. Specifically, we evaluated each of the four items used to measure Personal Independence individually to determine if any of them exhibited a significant effect. Interestingly, while the negative effects of travel desynchronization remained consistent in terms of magnitude, we discovered that none of the items demonstrated a significant moderating effect.

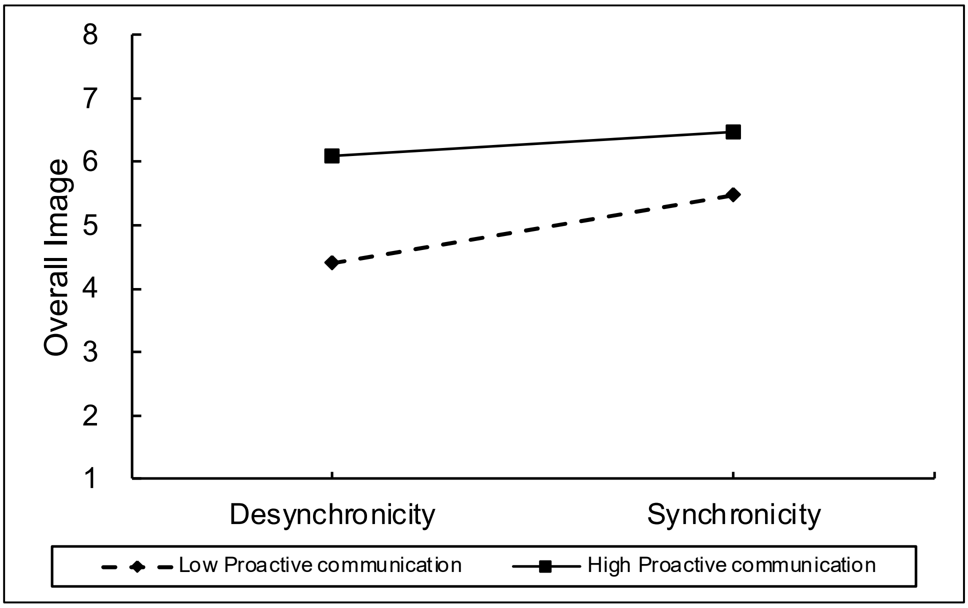


Fig. 2. *The Moderating Effect of Proactive Communication*

Previous studies have underscored the significance of interdependence in the context of partnered travel (Chen & Mak, 2020). Building upon this existing research, our study contributes by highlighting the detrimental effects of interpersonal factors, specifically the presence of travel asynchrony, on lovers' experiences during their journeys.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and implications

Our quantitative study aimed to examine the mediating role of overall image in the relationship between travel asynchrony and travel satisfaction. Additionally, this study explored the moderating effects of proactive communication and personal independence. Our findings revealed a positive impact of travel asynchrony on travel satisfaction.

The results indicate that travel asynchrony has a significant positive influence on overall image ($\beta = 0.8252$, $p < .001$), and overall image has a significant positive effect on travel satisfaction. These findings suggest that when couples experience travel asynchrony, it can affect their overall perception of the trip, which in turn influences their satisfaction with the travel experience.

Regarding the moderating effects, the results demonstrate a significant interaction between travel asynchrony and proactive communication. This implies that proactive communication can mitigate the negative impact of travel asynchrony on overall image. However, the interaction between travel asynchrony and personal independence was not found to be significant. We speculate that in intimate relationships, if both individuals have a strong sense of personal independence, it may lead to a tendency of cold handling of conflicts when they arise. This implies that although maintaining personal independence can offer advantages in terms of individual freedom, it may not necessarily mitigate the adverse effects of travel asynchrony on the overall image and subsequent satisfaction.

It is crucial to emphasize that our investigation centered on the impact of travel asynchrony on the satisfaction of romantic travel, with a particular focus on the mediating function of the overall image. Subsequent research endeavors could delve into supplementary elements that might contribute to travel satisfaction within romantic partnerships, including but not limited to trust, intimacy, or mutual experiences.In conclusion, our study highlights the significance of travel asynchrony in shaping the overall image of a trip and its subsequent impact on travel satisfaction. Proactive communication plays a crucial role in mitigating the negative effects of travel asynchrony, while personal independence may not necessarily provide the same benefits. These findings contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics of romantic travel and provide insights for couples and travel service providers to enhance the satisfaction of romantic getaways.

5.3. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

The study's exclusive focus on Chinese participants raises concerns regarding the external validity of its findings. To bolster cross-cultural generalizability, forthcoming research endeavors should adopt a more inclusive approach by incorporating participants from Western nations. This approach would facilitate an examination of potential cultural variations in the impact of travel synchronicity on destination satisfaction. Another methodological consideration pertains to the absence of control for the temporal dimension of couples' relationships. Categorizing couples based on varying durations of togetherness would permit a nuanced exploration of synchronicity levels among couples in different relationship stages and their differential influence on travel satisfaction.

Furthermore, the study's neglect of the intention to revisit the destination represents a notable gap in the literature. Subsequent research could systematically probe whether heightened travel satisfaction, arising from enhanced travel synchronicity among romantic partners, engenders a higher intention to revisit the destination. In leveraging advanced text-mining methodologies, researchers can extract and analyze pertinent variables from couples' travel blogs, providing a more nuanced understanding of factors influencing romantic partners' travel satisfaction. In addition, semantic differential scale and Likert scale are mixed together while assessing image items during survey. The questionnaire design can be improved maybe by developing a more systematical scale linking image and travelling desynchronicity.

In the realm of practical application, if finance permits, field experiments tracking the affective and relational dynamics of traveling couples across multiple trips could offer invaluable insights into the intricate mechanisms at play in authentic, real-life scenarios. Addressing these methodological limitations and pursuing these avenues in future research endeavors would undoubtedly enrich the scholarly discourse on the influence of travel synchronicity on the travel satisfaction of romantic partners.

References

Chen, X., & Mak, B. (2020). Understanding Chinese girlfriend getaways: an interdependence perspective. *Annals of Tourism Research,* 81, 102878.

Cromption, John L.(1979). An Assessment of the Image of Mexico as a Vacation Destination and the Influence of Geographical Location Upon That Image. *Journal of Travel Research, 17*(4), 18-23.

Durko, A. M., & Petrick, J. F. (2016). Travel as relationship therapy: Examining the effect of vacation satisfaction applied to the investment model. *Journal of Travel Research, 55*(7), 904–918. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287515592970

Hao, S., Peng, L., Wijaya, W. A., & Liu, B. (2023). Not that into you? Lovers' traveling desynchronicity and its effects on the traveling satisfaction. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 54, 404–414.

Huang, Y., Qu, H., & Montgomery, D. (2017). The meanings of destination: AQ method approach. *Journal of Travel Research, 56*(6), 793–807. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287516663652

Kang, S. K., & Hsu, C. H. (2004). Spousal conflict level and resolution in Family Vacation Destination Selection. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, *28*(4), 408–424.

Kim, S. S., & Agrusa, J. (2005). The positioning of overseas honeymoon destinations. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 32(4), 887–904.

Lee, J.-S., Fakfare, P., & Han, H. (2020). Honeymoon tourism: Exploring must-be, hybrid and value-added quality attributes. *Tourism Management*, 76, 103958-.

Germann Molz, J., & Buda, D. M. (2022). Attuning to affect and emotion in tourism studies. *Tourism Geographies,* 24(2-3), 187-197.

Otoo, F. E., Kim, S., Agrusa, J., & Lema, J. (2021). Classification of senior tourists according to personality traits. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, *26*(5), 539-556.

Prayag, G., Hosany, S., Muskat, B., & Del Chiappa, G. (2017). Understanding the Relationships between Tourists' Emotional Experiences, Perceived Overall Image, Satisfaction, and Intention to Recommend. *Journal of Travel Research*, 56(1), 41-54.

Servidio, R., & Ruffolo, I. (2016). Exploring the relationship between emotions and memorable tourism experiences through narratives. *Tourism Management Perspectives, 20*, 151–160. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2016.07.010

Singelis, T. M. (1994). The measurement of independent and interdependent self-construals. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 20, 580–591.

Song, H., Wang, Y., & Sparks, B. A. (2018). How do young Chinese friendship groups make travel decisions? A content and interaction process analysis. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 35*(6), 772–785. https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2017.1421117

Su, L., Cheng, J., & Huang, Y. (2021). How do group size and group familiarity influence tourist satisfaction? The mediating role of perceived value. *Journal of Travel Research, 60*(8), 1821–1840. https://doi.org/10.1177/004728752096638

Zhao, X., Lu, X., Liu, Y., Lin, J., & An, J. (2018). Tourist movement patterns understanding from the perspective of travel party size using mobile tracking data: Acase study of xi'an, China. *Tourism Management, 69*, 368–383. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2018.06.026

A multi-group analysis of postmodern and traditional tourist groups to explore the impact of cultural heritage revitalisation experiences quality on destination image and destination advocacy

Long, Zhiqian
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Macau University of Science and Technology

Tu, Chuanji
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Macau University of Science and Technology

Chen, Tianqi
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Macau University of Science and Technology

Abstract:
In this study, post-modern and traditional tourists were selected as research subjects, and a multi-group comparative analysis was employed to investigate the specific influence relationship between tourists' experience quality of cultural heritage rejuvenation, destination image, and destination advocacy. The results revealed significant differences in the antecedents of different hypothetical paths between post-modern and traditional tourists' experience quality of cultural heritage rejuvenation. This study provides a theoretical foundation for cultural heritage tourism destinations to achieve sustainable high-quality development.

Keywords: Cultural heritage tourism, Cultural heritage rejuvenation experience quality, Post-modern tourists, Destination image, Destination advocacy

1. Introduction

Renovating cultural heritage is a crucial approach to safeguarding and utilizing cultural heritage (Bullen & Love, 2011). The quality of visitor experience has emerged as a significant factor influencing the image of tourist destinations and destination advocacy. Enhancing and optimizing tourists' experience in renovating cultural heritage will contribute to improving the destination's image (Kim, 2018), thereby fostering word-of-mouth recommendations from tourists and enhancing other forms of destination advocacy. In light of the prevailing postmodernist trend, addressing how to enhance the experiential quality for both postmodernist and traditional tourists in activating cultural heritage, as well as improving their perception of the destination and support for it, has become a pivotal concern for cultural heritage management organization. However, no research has been conducted from the perspective of the differences between postmodern and traditional tourists. In addition, in terms of research on the cultural heritage rejuvenation experience quality, previous studies have focused more on cultural heritage destinations in Mainland China, and no research has been conducted on the Historic Centre of Macao which has more culturally diverse. Therefore, this study selects the Historic Centre of Macao as the research object to explore the relationship between the cultural heritage rejuvenation experience quality, destination image and destination advocacy from the perspective of the differences between postmodern and traditional tourists.

2. Literature Review

2.1.Cultural heritage rejuvenation experience quality

The concept of cultural heritage rejuvenation refers to the rational utilization process based on effective conservation of cultural heritage within a specific geospace (Tang & He, 2020). The quality of cultural heritage rejuvenation experience specifically pertains to tourists' evaluation of their experiences in engaging with activated cultural heritage during tourism activities and is determined by comparing tourists' needs and expectations for such activation (Zhou et al., 2023). This study aims to explore three dimensions related to the experience quality of cultural heritage rejuvenation: (1) Museum rejuvenation experience quality; (2) Former site rejuvenation experience quality; (3) Cultural products rejuvenation experience quality (Tang & He, 2020).

2.2.Post-modern tourists

Post-modern tourists are characterized as fluid, adaptable, and subjective individuals (Maoz & Bekerman, 2010). Compared to traditional tourists, postmodern tourists are more active that they have their own travel patterns and are looking for symbolic tourism benefits (Wang et al., 2023). The increase in the number of post-modern tourists reflects the changing needs of today's tourists, which requires changes in cultural heritage destinations to enhance the tourism experience quality of tourists.

2.3 Destination Image

The destination image is considered to be the manifestation of an individual or a group's comprehensive understanding, preconceptions, imaginative perceptions, and emotional thoughts about a specific place (Lawson & Baud-Bovy, 1977). It represents tourists' attitudes formed based on their confidence, ideas, and impressions of the tourist destination (Crompton, 1979).

2.4 Destination Advocacy

The concept of destination advocacy is derived from brand advocacy and examines tourists' endorsement of a specific destination (Kumar & Kaushik, 2017), encompassing both active promotion of the destination and the readiness to handle criticism regarding the destination (Lever et al., 2023).

3. Methodology

3.1. Measurement

The Historic Centre of Macao is selected as the sample collection site, and the actual distribution points for the questionnaires are at the entrance of the Macao Museum and at the Ruins of St. Paul's. The convenience sampling was applied in this study. During the distribution of questionnaires, the investigator provided a brief explanation regarding the purpose and utilization of the questionnaire. Respondents are required to assign scores ranging from 1-7 to each item in order to quantify their inner perceptions accurately. Finally, the data is inputted into SPSS 20 and Smart-PLS 3 for further analysis.

4. Results

4.1. Hypothesis model testing

H1a: The path coefficient value is 0.130<0.2, T=2.860, P<0.05, which indicates that the museum rejuvenation experience quality has a positive influence on the destination image.
H1b: The path coefficient value is 0.365>0.2, T=7.557, P<0.001, which indicates that the former site rejuvenation experience quality has a positive influence on the destination image.
H1c: The path coefficient value is 0.222>0.2, T=4.694, P<0.001, which indicates that the cultural product rejuvenation experience quality has a positive influence on destination image.
H2a: The path coefficient value is -0.064<0.2, T=1.433, P>0.05, which indicates that the museum rejuvenation experience quality fails to have a positive impact on destination advocacy.
H2b: The path coefficient value is 0.025<0.2, T=0.517, P>0.05, which indicates that the quality of former site rejuvenation experience fails to produce a positive impact on destination advocacy.
H2c: The path coefficient value is 0.129<0.2 T=2.173, P<0.05, which indicates that the cultural product rejuvenation experience quality positively influences the destination advocacy, but it is not significant.
H3: The coefficient value of the path of destination image to destination advocacy is 0.625>0.2, T=17.789,P<0.001, it indicates that destination image has a positive influence on destination advocacy.

4.2. Comparative Analysis of Multiple Groups

Based on the results of the multi-cluster comparative analyses, it was found that the path coefficients for the impact of the museum rejuvenation experience quality on destination image and destination advocacy tended to be stronger for post-modern tourists compared to traditional tourists. However, in terms of the path coefficients of the impact of the cultural products rejuvenation experience quality on destination advocacy, the path coefficients of the traditional tourists are higher than those of the post-modern tourists. And in terms of the coefficients of the path of influence of the former site rejuvenation experience quality on the destination image and destination advocacy, there is not much difference between the values of the post-modern and the traditional tourists.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and implications

Theoretically, this study is the first to empirically examine the impact of multi-group comparative analysis on the quality of experience in cultural heritage rejuvenation, thereby introducing a novel perspective for investigating the influence of experience quality in cultural heritage rejuvenation. The moderating effect of post-modern tourists on the relationship between experience quality and cultural heritage activation is confirmed, providing a theoretical foundation for further research on the influence of experience quality of cultural heritage rejuvenation.

Practically, the experience quality of cultural heritage rejuvenation measures the actual tourist experience in cultural heritage destinations from three perspectives: museums, relics, and cultural products. This study elucidates the disparity between post-modern tourists and traditional tourists in terms of their experience quality across these three aspects, with a focus on destination image and destination advocacy through multi-group comparative analysis. It provides valuable insights for managers of cultural heritage destinations to develop tailored strategies for different tourist groups in order to enhance the quality of tourist experiences and stimulate advocacy behaviors.

5.2. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

The limitation of this study is that the data collection was limited to a single cultural heritage destination situated in the historic city of Macao. Secondly, the survey primarily just included Chinese tourists. Future research should place more emphasis on studying international tourists.

REFERENCES

Bullen, P. A., & Love, P. E. (2011). Adaptive reuse of heritage buildings. *Structural survey, 29*(5), 411-421.

Crompton, J. L. (1979). An assessment of the image of Mexico as a vacation destination and the influence of geographical location upon that image. *Journal of travel research, 17*(4), 18-23.

Kim, J. H. (2018). The impact of memorable tourism experiences on loyalty behaviors: The mediating effects of destination image and satisfaction. *Journal of Travel Research, 57*(7), 856-870.

Kumar, V., & Kaushik, A. K. (2017). Achieving destination advocacy and destination loyalty through destination brand identification. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 34*(9), 1247-1260

Lawson, F., & Baud-Bovy, M. (1977). Tourism and recreation development, a handbook of physical planning. Architectural Press.

Lever, M. W., Elliot, S., & Joppe, M. (2023). Pride and promotion: Exploring relationships between national identification, destination advocacy, tourism ethnocentrism and destination image. *Journal of Vacation Marketing, 29*(4), 537-554.

Maoz, D., & Bekerman, Z. (2010). Searching for Jewish answers in Indian resorts: The postmodern traveler. *Annals of Tourism Research, 37*(2), 423-439.

Tang, P., & He, J.M. (2020). The influence of cultural heritage Rejuvenation experience quality on visitors' destination loyalty: a serial multiple mediation model. *Nankai Business Review,* 23(5), 76-87.

Wang, S., Lai, I. K. W., & Wong, J. W. C. (2023). The impact of pluralistic values on postmodern tourists' behavioural intention towards renovated heritage sites. *Tourism Management Perspectives, 49*, 101175.

Zhou, Q., Pu, Y., & Su, C. (2023). The mediating roles of memorable tourism experiences and destination image in the correlation between cultural heritage rejuvenation experience quality and revisiting intention. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics, 35*(6), 1313-1329.

The congruence of foodie and gastronomy city: A case study in Macao

Xu, Ye
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Macau University of Science and Technology

Xia, Fangyu
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Macau University of Science and Technology

Yuan, Xinzhou
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Macau University of Science and Technology

Li, Yunyi
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Macau University of Science and Technology

Zhang, Haonan
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Macau University of Science and Technology

Abstract:
In order to enhance the promotion of food tourism destinations, it is crucial to grasp the psychology of tourists whose main focus is on culinary experiences. Therefore, the objective of this research is to investigate the psychological link between food enthusiasts and food tourism spots. The study will examine the relationship between self-congruity, memorable food tourism experiences, perceived risk, and destination loyalty.

Keywords: Foodie;Self-congruity, Memorable food tourism experience, Destination Loyalty

1. Introduction

Food, an essential component of the travel journey, doesn't just fulfill individuals' bodily requirements but also offers a diverse sensory adventure that triggers favorable feelings towards the location, forming a unique bond with the place (Di-Clemente et al., 2019). Past studies have explored the origins of destination loyalty (Ding & Hung, 2021), and the elements impacting loyalty encompass more than just contentment, incorporating visitors' recollections and perceived value (Aw et al., 2019). As the number of travelers seeking to fulfill their travel desires by immersing themselves in and relishing local delicacies continues to rise (Carvalho et al., 2021), Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) actively market destinations as prime food tourism hubs through diverse initiatives. Research conducted in the past indicates that following a positive food tourism encounter, tourists frequently recollect and hold onto the memory of the experience and the location (Park & Widyanta, 2022). Therefore, food plays a crucial role in shaping the tourism journey and serves as a prime conduit for visitors to gain insight into the destination. However, the potential impact of perceived risk on foodies was not considered in these studies. Foodie who travel for culinary experiences are perceived to have a higher tolerance for risks due to their deep passion for gastronomy compared to regular tourists. Hence, a research study examining the correlation between perceived risks, self-congruity, memorable food tourism experience, and destination loyalty from a foodie standpoint is crucial.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Self-congruity

Self-congruity, as described by Usakli and Baloglu (2011), is an expansion of one's self-concept. It pertains to how closely a consumer's self-image aligns with their perception of a product, brand, store, destination, or the typical user of said product (Shamah et al., 2018). Prior studies on tourism have indicated that self-congruity may influence the tourism experience (Fu et al., 2017), perceived value (Aw et al., 2019), and loyalty (Shin et al., 2018). Nevertheless, there is a need for further enhancement and exploration of current research on self-congruity within food tourism destinations to enhance our comprehension of tourists' perceptions and experiences.

2.2. Memorable food tourism experience

In the study by Kim (2012), the concept of memorable tourism experience (MTE) was introduced as the recollection of a positive experience at a travel destination, along with an individual's personal evaluation of the tourism experience post-trip. Building upon this idea, researchers in the field of food tourism, Stone et al. (2022) further investigated the reasons behind the strong impact of food experiences on travelers' memories during their journeys, finding that those who engage in food-related tourism activities tend to have a more vivid recollection of their culinary adventures compared to other types of travelers.

2.3. Perceived risk

Hasan et al. (2017) conducted a critical review of the concept of "perceived risk" in relation to travellers' perceptions of crisis. The study found that most current research defines perceived risk as consumers' perceptions of uncertainty and the likelihood of adverse consequences.Perceived risks in the realm of food tourism have also garnered significant attention. Al-Ansi et al. (2019) identified various categories of perceived risks associated with halal food, including health risk, psychological risk, environmental risk, social risk, quality risk, financial risk, and time risk.

2.4. Destination loyalty

According to Oliver (1999), loyalty is a profound dedication to reacquiring a product or service later on, resulting in recurring acquisitions of the identical brand. The research also outlined four phases of consumer loyalty: cognitive loyalty, pertaining to the individual's perception of the merchandise; affective loyalty, denoting a surge in dedication; intentional loyalty, reflecting behavioral intent; and action loyalty, the execution of said intention. Moore et al. (2017) regard loyalty as a pledge to a particular destination, venue, or brand.

3. Methodology

This study used quantitative research methods to design a questionnaire. All variables were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), and all measurement items were derived from past studies. This study assigned three trained assistants to distribute self-filling questionnaires at 17 restaurants in Macao from November 9 to December 4, 2023. In the end, a grand total of 413 questionnaires were gathered, out of which 389 questionnaires were deemed valid, boasting an impressive efficacy rate of 94.1%.

4. Results

Among all the respondents, the proportion of female respondents is slightly higher than that of male respondents, and the age range of respondents is mostly between 18 and 35 years old. Most respondents come to Macao with their family or friends. After path analysis of the structural equation model, we found that self-congruity had positive effects on memorable food tourism experiences, and destination loyalty; the relationship between memorable food tourism experiences and destination loyalty was not supported; the negative moderating relationship between perceived risk in memorable food tourism experiences and destination loyalty was supported.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The emotional and psychological bond between foodie and food tourism destinations is explored in this research, affirming the negative moderating impact of perceived risk.This research contributes theoretically to the subsequent studies on food tourism and offers relevant and helpful suggestions for destination marketing organizations and restaurant operators.

REFERENCES

Al-Ansi, A., Olya, H. G. T., & Han, H. (2019). Effect of general risk on trust, satisfaction, and recommendation intention for halal food. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 83*, 210–219.

Aw, E. C.-X., Flynn, L. R., & Chong, H. X. (2019). Antecedents and consequences of self-congruity: replication and extension. *The Journal of Consumer Marketing, 36*(1), 102–112.

Carvalho, M., Kastenholz, E., & Carneiro, M. J. (2021). Interaction as a Central Element of Co-Creative Wine Tourism Experiences—Evidence from Bairrada, a Portuguese Wine-Producing Region. *Sustainability (Basel, Switzerland), 13*(16), 9374-.

Di-Clemente, E., Hernández-Mogollón, J. M., & Campón-Cerro, A. M. (2019). Food-based experiences as antecedents of destination loyalty. *British Food Journal (1966), 121*(7), 1495–1507.

Ding, H.-M., & Hung, K.-P. (2021). The antecedents of visitors' flow experience and its influence on memory and behavioral intentions in the music festival context. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, 19*, 100551-.

Fu, X., Kang, J., & Tasci, A. (2017). Self-congruity and flow as antecedents of attitude and loyalty towards a theme park brand. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 34*(9), 1261–1273.

Hasan, Md. K., Ismail, A. R., & Islam, MD. F. (2017). Tourist risk perceptions and revisit intention: A critical review of literature. *Cogent Business & Management, 4*(1), 1412874-.

Kim, J.-H., Ritchie, J. R. B., & McCormick, B. (2012). Development of a Scale to Measure Memorable Tourism Experiences. *Journal of Travel Research, 51*(1), 12–25.

Moore, S. A., Rodger, K., & Taplin, R. H. (2017). Developing a better understanding of the complexities of visitor loyalty to Karijini National Park, Western Australia. *Tourism Management (1982), 62*, 20–28.

Oliver, R. L. (1999). Whence consumer loyalty? *Journal of Marketing, 63*, 33–44.

Park, E., & Widyanta, A. (2022). Food tourism experience and changing destination foodscape: An exploratory study of an emerging food destination. *Tourism Management Perspectives, 42,* 100964-.

Shamah, R. A. M., Mason, M. C., Moretti, A., & Raggiotto, F. (2018). Investigating the antecedents of African fast food customers' loyalty: A self-congruity perspective. *Journal of Business Research, 86*, 446–456.

Shin, H., Lee, H., & Perdue, R. R. (2018). The congruity effects of commercial brand sponsorship in a regional event. *Tourism Management (1982), 67*, 168–179.

Stone, M. J., Migacz, S., & Sthapit, E. (2022). Connections Between Culinary Tourism Experiences and Memory. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research (Washington, D.C.), 46*(4), 797–807.

Usakli, & Baloglu. (2011). Brand personality of tourist destinations: An application of self-congruity theory. *Tourism Management, 32*(1), 114- 127.

Research on the perception of destination coolness among generation Z tourists: Based on self-identity theory

Zhang, Jingsong
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Macau University of Science and Technology

Liang, Junying
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Macau University of Science and Technology

Lee, Jaeseok
Department of Tourism Management
Gangneung-Wonju National University

Pai, Chen-Kuo
[a]*Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management*
Macau University of Science and Technology

Abstract:

Currently, the concept of 'coolness' is increasingly associated with the consumption and travel behaviors of Generation Z. This study explores the influence mechanism of destination coolness, based on the self-identity. The results show that destination coolness consists of four dimensions: authentic, rebellious, original/iconic, and vibrant. The results also reveal that destination coolness has a positive impact on novelty experience, destination-self connection, self-identity, and destination advocacy. The present study provides tailored recommendations for destination marketers and policy makers.

Keywords: Generation Z, Destination Coolness, Novelty Experience, Destination-self Connection, Self-identity, Destination Advocacy

1. Introduction

In recent years, “cool” destinations have attracted millions of tourists every year, making the study of perceived coolness and cool cities a hot topic in the field of tourism. Scholars have begun to re-examine the importance of coolness. The preference of Generation Z for “coolness” is an innate group consciousness, and they want to express their personality and self-identity by pursuing and displaying fashionable culture (Van den Bergh et al., 2023). This study examines the mechanism of influence of destination coolness on destination advocacy from the perspective of Generation Z tourists in combination with self-identity theory.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Destination Coolness

Coolness is often described as an attitude, cognitive inspiration paradigm, or personality trait (Dar-Nimrod et al., 2012). It is associated with narcissism, hedonism, rebellious, irony, and detachment (Pountain & Robins, 2000). According to Warren and Campbell (2014), coolness is a positive characteristic that is attributed to the subjective, dynamic, and socially constructed nature of a cultural object, implying its appropriate autonomy. Chen and Chou (2019) investigated the concept of perceived coolness in creative tourism destinations with a focus on three dimensions: uniqueness, identification, and attractiveness. Kock (2021) constructed a four-dimensional scale to measure destinations coolness, including the attributes of authentic, rebellious, original/iconic, and vibrant. Importantly, the authentic of destination coolness refers to continuity rather than the authenticity of the travel experience. This statement emphasises the historical nature of the destination, akin to the concept of genealogy and the notion of traditional transmission (Morhart et al., 2015).

2.2. Novelty Experience

Mitas and Bastiaansen (2018) pointed out novelty experience refers to the extent to which an experience differs from an individual's expectations. Tourists often select destinations with distinct cultures and lifestyles to satisfy their desire for new experiences. Kim and Park (2019) argued that products with a cool factor evoke feelings of innovation and uniqueness, resulting in a positive user experience. Similarly, tourists can enjoy a more satisfying and memorable travel experience due to the perceived coolness in tourism and hospitality environments (Jamshidi et al., 2023).

2.3. Destination-self Connection

Kock (2021) recognizes the Destination-Self Connection as a strong relationship that an individual can build with a destination. This relationship highlights an individual's self-definition, self-validation, or self-goal enhancement (Escalas & Bettman, 2005). It emphasizes that destinations offer significant perceived value to tourists, enabling the integration of identities and destinations to form an emotional bond (Yu & Kim, 2020).

2.4. Self-identity

Self-identity is defined as an individual's perception of themselves in a particular or generalized role. It involves decision-making based on self-perceived standards (Stets & Burke, 2000). Self-identity theory focuses on how individuals form self-perceptions based on their past experiences, personality traits, and values (Hogg & Turner, 1985). Specifically, Gen Z tourists are often described as individualistic and focused on self-expression and self-image, suggesting a strong desire to showcase their unique perspectives and create a distinct identity within society (Van den Bergh et al., 2023).

2.5 Destination Advocacy

Destination advocacy is a collection of multiple advocacy behavior concepts of recommending a destination to others, revisiting intentions, place identification, rejection of alternatives and positive publicity (Lever et al., 2021). Tourists' advocacy behavior is influenced by their interaction and engagement with the services provided by a destination (Palmer et al., 2013). The aim is to increase positive word-of-mouth and future revisit intentions by increasing tourists' loyalty and satisfaction with the destination (Kumar & Kaushik, 2017).

3. Methodology

3.1. Data Collection

This quantitative study employed a questionnaire survey using convenience sampling. The composition of the questionnaire consisted of two parts: the first part consisted of 30 questions about the variables, which were taken from previous research in the relevant field, and the second part consisted of the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The interviewees were Generation Z tourists. A total of 600 questionnaires were recovered from the data; 539 were determined to be valid, producing an effective rate of 89.83%.

3.2. Measurement

SPSS 23 and Smart PLS 4.0 were used to analyze the demographic characteristics, reliability, validity, and hypotheses testing. A series of statistical analyses were conducted to determine the plausibility of the proposed research model and the significance of the hypotheses.

4. Results

4.1. Reliability Analysis and Validity Analysis

This research tested indicators such as Cronbach (α), composite reliability (CR), convergent validity (CV), and discriminant validity (DV). The results showed good level of reliability and validity on table 1 and table 2.

Table 1. Results of reliability analysis and validity analysis

Variable	**Cronbach Alpha**	**CR**	**AVE**
Authentic	0.798	0.881	0.713
Rebellious	0.755	0.859	0.670
Original/Iconic	0.708	0.837	0.632
Vibrant	0.725	0.844	0.646
Novelty Experience	0.753	0.834	0.502
Destination-self Connection	0.757	0.837	0.509

Self-identity	0.803	0.865	0.565
Destination Advocacy	0.701	0.808	0.514

Table 2 Result of Discriminant Validity (DV)

	Authentic	**Rebellious**	**Original/ Iconic**	**Vibrant**	**Novelty Experience**	**Destination-self Connection**	**Self-identity**	**Destination Advocacy**
Authentic	**0.844**							
Rebellious	0.137	**0.819**						
Original/Iconic	0.295	0.375	**0.795**					
Vibrant	0.201	0.307	0.225	**0.803**				
Novelty Experience	0.222	0.342	0.318	0.303	**0.709**			
Destination-self Connection	0.284	0.338	0.248	0.289	0.390	**0.713**		
Self-identity	0.180	0.349	0.212	0.404	0.330	0.539	**0.752**	
Destination Advocacy	0.297	0.211	0.265	0.276	0.323	0.482	0.442	**0.717**

4.2. Hypothesis Testing

The findings showed that all hypotheses are supported on figure 1.

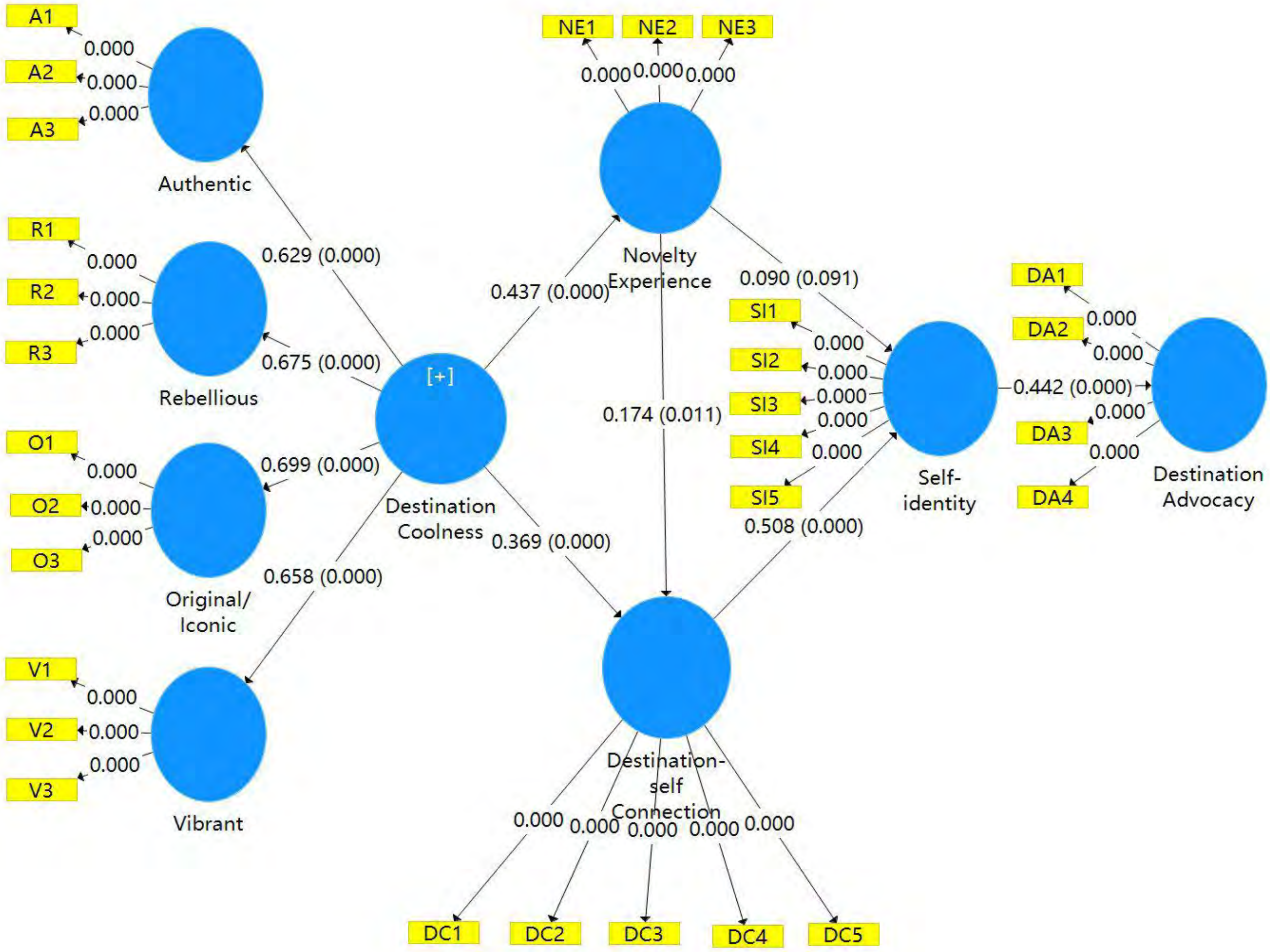


Figure 1. The results of PLS-SEM data analysis--P-Values and Path Coefficient

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and Implications

First, through a literature review, this study reorganizes the concept of “coolness” and provides a reasonable basis for bringing “perceived coolness” into tourism destination research. Secondly, this study applied self-identity theory into connection study between destinations and individual tourists. The current research verified the influencing mechanism, process of emotional reactions, and identity between people and places. Finally, the results of this study provide practical suggestions for the marketing application of “perceived coolness” in the tourism industry and the formation of identity. The results of the present study are expected to enhance the positive image and attractiveness of the destination, which in turn, facilitate the sustainable development of the destination.

5.2. Study Limitations and Suggestions for Future Studies

A limitation of this study is that most of the survey respondents were from mainland China, which means the results lack comprehensive understanding of the attitudes of different groups and have regional limitations. Future research should consider expanding the scope of survey participants to obtain more comprehensive and objective survey results.

REFERENCES

Chen, C.-F., & Chou, S.-H. (2019). Antecedents and consequences of perceived coolness for Generation Y in the context of creative tourism - A case study of the Pier 2 Art Center in Taiwan. *Tourism Management*, 72, 121–129.

Dar-Nimrod, I., Hansen, I. G., Proulx, T., Lehman, D. R., Chapman, B. P., & Duberstein, P. R. (2012). Coolness: An empirical investigation. *Journal of Individual Differences*.

Escalas, J. E., & Bettman, J. R. (2005). Self-construal, reference groups, and brand meaning. *Journal of consumer research*, 32(3), 378-389.

Hogg, M. A., & Turner, J. C. (1985). Interpersonal attraction, social identification and psychological group formation. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 15(1), 51–66.

Jamshidi, D., Rousta, A., & Shafei, R. (2023). Social media destination information features and destination loyalty: does perceived coolness and memorable tourism experiences matter? *Current Issues in Tourism*, 26(3), 407–428.

Kim, J., & Park, E. (2019). Beyond coolness: Predicting the technology adoption of interactive wearable devices. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 49, 114–119.

Kock, F. (2021). What makes a city cool? Understanding destination coolness and its implications for tourism. *Tourism Management*, 86, 104317.

Kumar, V., & Kaushik, A. K. (2017). Achieving destination advocacy and destination loyalty through destination brand identification. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 34(9), 1247-1260.

Lever, M. W., Elliot, S., & Joppe, M. (2021). Exploring destination advocacy behavior in a virtual travel community. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 38(5), 431-443.

Mitas, O., & Bastiaansen, M. (2018). Novelty: A mechanism of tourists' enjoyment. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 72, 98-108.

Morhart, F., Malär, L., Guèvremont, A., Girardin, F., & Grohmann, B. (2015). Brand authenticity: An integrative framework and measurement scale. *Journal of consumer psychology*, 25(2), 200-218.

Pountain, D., & Robins, D. (2013). Cool rules: Anatomy of an attitude. In *Emotions* (pp. 152-157). Routledge.

Stets, J. E., & Burke, P. J. (2000). Identity theory and social identity theory. *Social psychology quarterly*, 224-237.

Van den Bergh, J., De Pelsmacker, P., & Worsley, B. (2023). Beyond labels: segmenting the Gen Z market for more effective marketing. *Young Consumers*.

Warren, C., & Campbell, M. C. (2014). What makes things cool? How autonomy influences perceived coolness. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 41(2), 543-563.

Yu, E., & Kim, J. (2020). The relationship between self-city brand connection, city brand experience, and city brand ambassadors. *Sustainability*, 12(3), 982.

The Effect of Folklore Festival Personality on Tourists' Perception of Festival Identity and Place Attachment: A Study from the Perspective of Emotional Solidarity

Pai, Chen Kuo
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Macau University of Science and Technology

Wang, Wenlong
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Macau University of Science and Technology

Chen, Haoran
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Macau University of Science and Technology

Li, Tingting
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Macau University of Science and Technology

Abstract:

This research explores the antecedents (folklore festival personality) and consequences (festival identity and place attachment) of tourists' participation in folklore festivals from the perspective of emotional solidarity. This study conducted semi-structured interviews to identify folklore festival personality component, the results of which were then used to create a questionnaire to measure these items. This research contributes to theory and practice by providing empirical evidence of the relationships among folklore festival personality, festival identity, place attachment, and emotional solidarity.

Keywords: Folklore Festival Personality, Emotional Solidarity, Festival Identity, Place Attachment.

1. Introduction

With the experience economy's popularity, tourists' demands are diversified. People pay increasing attention to the experience a destination provides, hoping to establish an emotional connection with the destination to obtain immersive enjoyment. Folklore festivals as a form of tourism mainly provide cultural value. They have strong humanistic color and a thick cultural heritage. These factors make them an important factor in the tourism development process. (Mu et al., 2017). It interacts with tourists in various forms, such as parades, performances, and sacrificial activities, to give tourists a cultural and destination identity. Pilcher and Eade (2016) revealed the direct relationship between tourist demographic data of folk festivals and tourist motivation (Pilcher & Eade, 2016), to explore folk activities also has a research about the culture and the impact of national identity(Kifleyesus, 2007). However, there is a lack of relevant research on the characteristics of folk festivals themselves and the influence of folk festivals on emotions and behaviors from the perspective of tourists' perception. Therefore, the objective of this article is (1)to explore the personality traits of folk festivals, (2)discusses the relationship between folklore festival personality, tourists' festival identity, and local attachment from an emotional solidarity perspective. It also reveals how the folklore festival's personality affects tourists' feelings and shapes their festival identity and attachment to the folklore festival destination.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Folklore Festival Personality

Folklore festivals combine folklore values with opportunities to celebrate art and life (Holt, 1983). Previous research extended the festival personality from the brand personality, and the personality attributes of festivals have similar human personality traits (Quintal, 2020). Some research developed a four-dimensional festival personality scale (vitality, maturity, reputation, and openness and innovation) and studied the relationship between festival personality and tourist preferences. When tourists participate in festivals and the festival personality traits are consistent with them, tourists form emotional relationships with specific festivals (D'Astous, 2006). Creating a distinctive festival personality and identifying the personality characteristics that consumers give to festivals are the keys to festivals' success (Karagoz, & Ramkissoon, 2023). Therefore, when studying the relationship between folklore festival personality and tourist behavior, the unique personalities of the considered festivals must first be determined.

2.2 Emotional Solidarity

Solidarity is the cohesion of individuals in a group. This is expressed through ritualistic behaviors and deep-rooted beliefs, which contain three key structures: interaction, common beliefs, and common behaviors (Woosnam, 2011). Based on these three structures, a 10-item emotional solidarity scale (ESS) was created, consisting of three dimensions: emotional closeness, sympathetic understanding, and feeling welcomed (Woosnam, & Norman, 2010). Previous studies proved that the ESS significantly predicts the perceived impact of tourism development and destination safety on test subjects, and it can be used to investigate tourists' feelings (Ribeiro, 2018). Folklore festivals tend to attract tourists with various activities with local cultural characteristics, which will induce emotional solidarity. Through the participation and interaction of tourists, tourists' beliefs and behaviors will match the folklore festival personality.

2.3 Festival Identity

Identity is defined as a way for individuals or organizations to distinguish their social relationships (Stryker, & Burke, 2000). Festival identity can be understood as an individual's feelings toward a specific place or festival and the symbolic significance of a specific place or festival to an individual. That is, a specific place or festival involves an individual's sense of belonging, identity, and psychological feelings. Some studies have pointed out that festival participants' sense of identity with the festival venue and believe that the festival venue should be regarded as an essential element for the sustainable development of the festival (Lee & Chang, 2017). Therefore, exploring the impact of festival identity is helpful for improving tourists' loyalty and researching their future behavioral intentions.

2.4 Place Attachment

Place attachment is often described as the emotional connection between the self and the place, which involves interactions among emotion, cognition, and behavior (Gross, & Brown, 2008). A previous study found that in the context of religious festivals, place attachment significantly explained the three dimensions of emotional solidarity that residents and tourists experienced with one another (Woosnam et al., 2018). Therefore, this research can explore the impact of the folklore festival personality on place attachment in destinations from the emotional solidarity perspective.

3. Methodology

3.1 Measurement

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach and took tourists who watched Chaoshan YingGe dance as the research object. First, semi-structured interviews were conducted to fully understand the participants' views and experiences of folklore festivals. The information from the participants was sorted and summarized using content analysis to extract the folklore festivals' characteristics.

A questionnaire measurement tool was developed according to the characteristics of folklore festivals extracted from the interviews. The tool included questions about the characteristics of folklore festivals and emotional solidarity, as well as basic demographic information. A 7-point Likert scale was used to measure the variables. We collected data via an online questionnaire. The collected data were analyzed using a structural equation model to explore the relationships among folklore festival personality, emotional solidarity, festival identity, and place attachment. The researcher expects to conduct 20 interviews and collect 1,500 questionnaires.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

4.1 Theoretical Implications

This study enriches the literature on the application of emotional solidarity in tourism by innovatively defining and conceptualizing the "folklore festival personality." On this basis, it also constructs a new theoretical model for the festival personality. This model can enhance the understanding of the impact of folklore festivals on tourists' behavior and attitudes and serve as a basis and reference for subsequent research. Simultaneously, it provides a set of verified criteria with which to measure and evaluate the folklore festival personality.

4.2 Managerial Implications

First, this study clarifies the specific items of folklore festival personality that affect tourists, enabling folklore festival organizers to design and manage activities in a manner that enhances their festival's unique personality, thus offering tourists a better overall experience and a stronger festival identity. Secondly, the key role of emotional solidarity highlights the importance of interpersonal interactions. It can provide festival organizers with a different perspective to create a warm atmosphere and improve tourist satisfaction. Finally, the results of this study can be extended to various types of festival planning by adding unique folklore elements to shape the festival and establishing emotional bonds with potential tourists. This will eventually lead not only to an increase in repeat visits, but also to an increase in word-of-mouth recommendations, thereby enhancing the sustainability of the tourism industry.

4.3 Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

The samples of this study mainly come from specific regions and specific festivals surveyed by the institute. Folklore festivals have rich cultural connotations, and different types of folklore festivals contain different activities and contents, so the applicability and universality of the results of this study will be limited. Secondly, this study only explains tourists' festival identity and place attachment from the perspective of emotional solidarity, without delving into other potential regulatory variables. Therefore, future research can be more diverse sample investigation, improve the reliability of the results of the study and universality and also can further explore the regulatory mechanisms, such as tourists' familiarity with the connotation of the folklore festival.

References

D'Astous, A., Colbert, F., & d'Astous, E. (2006). The Personality of Cultural Festivals: Scale Development and Applications. International Journal of Arts Management, 8(2), 14–23.

Gross, M. J., & Brown, G. (2008). An empirical structural model of tourists and places: Progressing involvement and place attachment into tourism. Tourism Management (1982), 29(6), 1141–1151.

Hammarstrom, G. (2005). The construct of intergenerational solidarity in a lineage perspective: A discussion on underlying theoretical assumptions. Journal of Aging Studies, 19(1), 33–51.

HOLT, G. (1983). Folk Festivals: A Handbook for Organization and Management [Review of Folk Festivals: A Handbook for Organization and Management]. Appalachian Journal, 10(4), 399–400. Appalachian State University.

Karagöz, D., & Ramkissoon, H. (2023). Festival personality, satisfaction and loyalty: the moderating effect of involvement. International Journal of Event and Festival Management.

Kifleyesus, A. (2007). Folk-fairs and Festivals: Cultural Conservation and National Identity Formation in Eritrea (Fêtes populaires et festivals. Préservation culturelle et formation de l'identité nationale en Érythrée). Cahiers d'etudes Africaines, 47(186), 249–276.

Lee, T. H., & Chang, P.-S. (2017). Examining the relationships among festivalscape, experiences, and identity: evidence from two Taiwanese aboriginal festivals. Leisure Studies, 36(4), 453–467.

Mu X Q, Chen Y L, & Guo X Y. (2017). Research on tourism development strategies of ethnic minority folk festivals in Yunnan. Fujian Quality Control, 5, 262-.

Patwardhan, V., Ribeiro, M. A., Payini, V., Woosnam, K. M., Mallya, J., & Gopalakrishnan, P. (2020). Visitors' Place Attachment and Destination Loyalty: Examining the Roles of Emotional Solidarity and Perceived Safety. Journal of Travel Research, 59(1), 3–21.

Pilcher, D. R., & Eade, N. (2016). Understanding the audience: Purbeck Folk Festival. International Journal of Event and Festival Management, 7(1), 21–49.

Quintal, V., Lwin, M., Phau, I., & Sood, A. (2020). Festival Personality and How It Influences Visitor Attitude and Intention. Event Management, 24(6), 665–684.

Ribeiro, M. A., Woosnam, K. M., Pinto, P., & Silva, J. A. (2018). Tourists' Destination Loyalty through Emotional Solidarity with Residents: An Integrative Moderated Mediation Model. Journal of Travel Research, 57(3), 279–295.

Stryker, S., & Burke, P. J. (2000). The Past, Present, and Future of an Identity Theory. Social Psychology Quarterly, 63(4), 284–297.

Woosnam, K. M., & Norman, W. C. (2010). Measuring Residents' Emotional Solidarity with Tourists: Scale Development of Durkheim's Theoretical Constructs. Journal of Travel Research, 49(3), 365–380.

Woosnam, K. M. (2011). Testing a Model of Durkheim's Theory of Emotional Solidarity among Residents of a Tourism Community. Journal of Travel Research, 50(5), 546–558.

Woosnam, K. M., Aleshinloye, K. D., Strzelecka, M., & Erul, E. (2018). The Role of Place Attachment in Developing Emotional Solidarity with Residents. Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research (Washington, D.C.), 42(7), 1058–1066.

Tourism experience in Kyoto City: A comparative analysis before and after COVID-19 utilizing TripAdvisor reviews

Choi, Sunkyung
Department of Transdisciplinary Science and Engineering
School of Environment and Society
Tokyo Institute of Technology

Nishioka, Masaya
Planning Department
Central Consultant Inc.

Ito, Hirohito
Planning Department
Central Consultant Inc.

Nakamura, Maki
Planning Department
Central Consultant Inc.

Li, Kai
Planning Department
Central Consultant Inc.

Hanaoka, Shinya
Department of Transdisciplinary Science and Engineering
School of Environment and Society
Tokyo Institute of Technology

Abstract:

With travel restrictions, border closures, and social distancing measures in place during the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a significant decrease in the arrival of inbound tourists, leading to challenges for the tourism industry in Japan. This research delves into TripAdvisor reviews from inbound tourists regarding key tourist destinations and excursions in Kyoto, Japan, to explore differences in travel before and after COVID-19. The results showed that the keyword experience was mentioned greatly after COVID-19 closely linked with nature, history, and culture. The reviews after COVID-19 tours revealed a higher volume of keywords as hidden, local, and centered around food. The results suggest the importance of local municipalities and tourism destinations to provide travel experiences on discovering hidden gems as well as local gastronomy.

Keywords: Post-COVID-19 tourism, Tourism experience, Experiential tourism, Text mining, TripAdvisor, Kyoto

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has precipitated significant shifts in people's lifestyles and values, consequently impacting the tourism industry. Before the onset of COVID-19, Kyoto City stood as a prominent tourist destination in Japan, drawing both domestic and inbound tourists. In 2019, approximately 53.52 million tourists visited the city, including 3.8 million inbound overnight tourists. However, the city has been experiencing the adverse effects of over-tourism, prompting the implementation of measures to address congestion and transportation usage within the area. This study examines how experiential tourism in Kyoto City has changed over time during the pandemic, using TripAdvisor reviews on attractions and tours written in English as a basis. The study also discusses on factors that influence tourist attractions and tours and analyzes the words that often appear together in the reviews.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Inbound tourism in Japan and tourist satisfaction

There are a few studies on before-COVID-19 tourism trends in Japan. Kishikawa et al. (2018) found that Europeans prioritize cultural experiences, Asians focus on shopping, Australian travelers are interested in skiing, and Chinese travelers lean toward pharmaceutical purchases. Yagi and Kikuchi (2019) found that satisfaction with Japanese food significantly influenced overall travel satisfaction and the intention to revisit while shopping satisfaction was crucial for first-time tourists.

2.2. Travel experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic

Murase (2022) surveyed changes in consumer behavior due to the GoTo campaign. Respondents prioritized high-quality facilities, word-of-mouth, and hot spring quality. Oguchi et al. (2022) examined rural tourism's shift amid COVID-19. Kozu et al. (2023) identified factors attracting tourists to ski resorts, including social distancing and disinfection. Mitsuhashi (2022) noted shifts in tourism motivation after COVID-19. Males favored unusual experiences and cultural exchange, while females emphasized such experiences, local exchange, and freedom. Koshiji et al. (2023) analyzed tourist experiences in Kanazawa City after COVID-19, noting decreased winter foreign tourist visits and increased spring visits, with minimal seasonal impact on tourist distribution.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data collection

The data was collected from reviews of TripAdvisor concerning tourist attractions and tours in Kyoto City. Octparse's web scraping and cloning were utilized to collect review data for tourist attractions and tours from TripAdvisor. Within TripAdvisor, reviews offered by tourists are associated with various attributes such as rating, review content, date of visit, travel companions, hometown, and others.

3.2. Data cleaning

The postings without word-of-mouth or postings were excluded from the analysis dataset. The postings that could not be extracted properly are those affected by the settings of the posters, such as incomplete registration of attribute information like the time of visit.

3.3. Co-occurrence of words and phrases

In this study, before and after-COVID-19 word-of-mouth data collected from TripAdvisor are utilized for analysis. After the data cleaning, text mining was conducted using a tool called KHCoder to analyze the text data.

4. Results

4.1. Co-occurrence relationship of frequent words on attractions before and after COVID-19

The co-occurrence of frequently occurring words on tourist attractions before and after COVID-19 was visualized in Figures 1 and 2. The results revealed that there were several groups with common frequencies, such as "temples and shrines," "crowded," and "gardens," before and after COVID-19, and that words with high co-occurrence with these groups were also generally common.

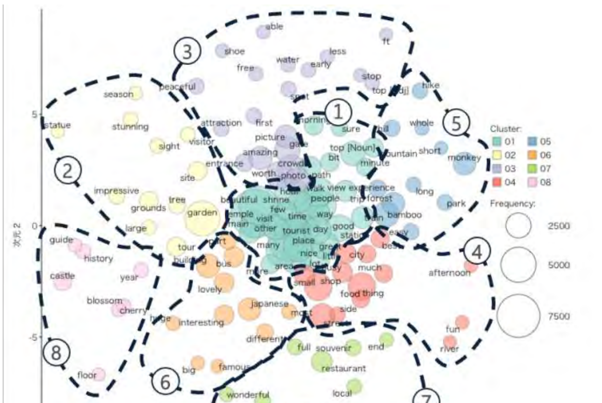


Figure 1. Co-occurrence relationship of frequently occurring words and phrases in word-of-mouth of tourist attractions before COVID-19

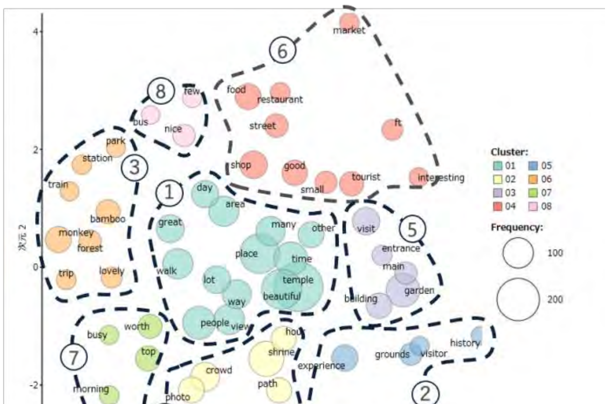


Figure 2. Co-occurrence relationship of frequently occurring words and phrases in word-of-mouth of tourist attractions after COVID-19

4.1. Co-occurrence relationship of frequent words on experience before and after COVID-19

However, the words with high co-occurrence in the "experience" group changed between the before and after COVID-19 periods as in Figure 3 and Figure 4. Figure 3 shows that the word "experience" was co-occurring with "beautiful," and "temple." The second group included words such as "crowd," "mountain," and "nature." Figure 4 depicts that the word "experience" is associated with "beautiful," "memory," "nature," "spring" and others as in the first group. The second group shows some words such as "historical," "history," "destination," "must-visit" and other words. Some keywords such as food, restaurants, large number of people, trains, and stations, and bamboo paths were included before COVID-19, but these groups were absent after COVID-19.

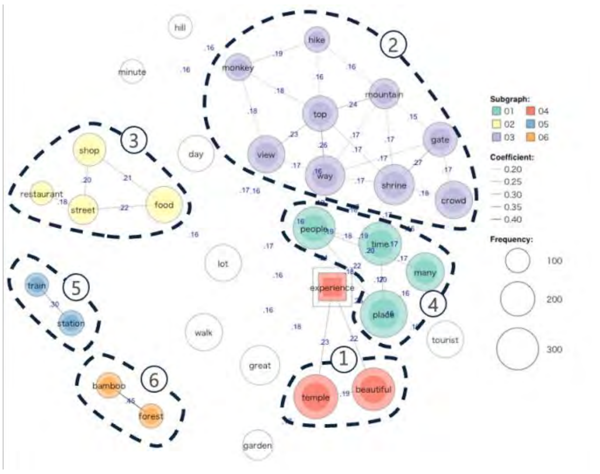


Figure 3. Co-occurrence of highly rated word-of-mouth about the experience before COVID-19

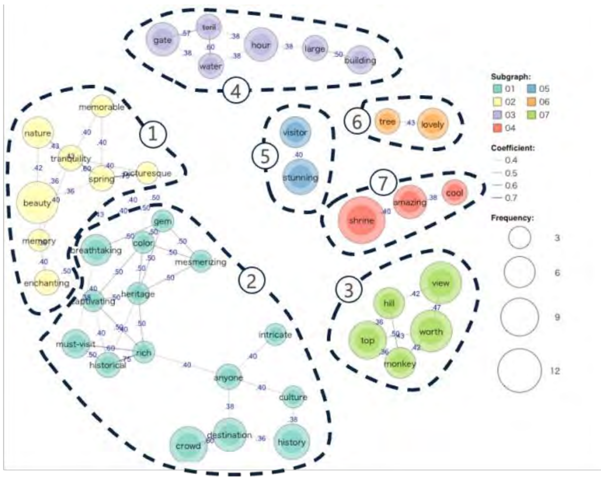


Figure 4. Co-occurrence of highly rated word-of-mouth about the experience after COVID-19

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and implications

Although each municipality acknowledges the changes in the preferences of inbound tourists to Japan after COVID-19, there have been few policies and measures reflecting the change. The study results show the changes in the content of experiential tourism which assists plan more targeted policies and measures for assessment and selection.

d tourism.

5.2. Conclusion

This study examines TripAdvisor reviews provided by inbound travelers regarding popular tourist destinations and tours in Kyoto to identify keywords and variables that have changed before and after COVID-19. Analysis of tourist site evaluations reveals a notable increase in the use of the term "experience" since the COVID-19 era, particularly associated with aspects like "nature," "history," and "culture." This analysis underscores the importance of discovering hidden gems, indulging in local cuisine, and engaging with local gastronomy in the after-COVID-19 tourism in Japan.

5.3. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

There are various avenues for future research. While this study concentrated on tourist attractions and tours in Kyoto City, it's crucial to expand comparisons on a national level and across other regions to understand seasonal variations. Furthermore, text mining techniques such as topic modeling and sentiment analysis could be applied to conduct a comprehensive analysis of data.

REFERENCES

Kishikawa, Y., Tagawa, S., & Negishi, K. (2018). A study on travel purpose and consumption trend of visitors to Japan. *Transactions of the Japan Society for Production Management,* 25(1), 143-149. (in Japanese)

Koshiji, Y., Morisaki, Y., & Fujio, S. (2023). Basic analysis on tourism dynamics of foreign visitors to Japan using mesh-type inbound data: A study on Kanazawa City, Ishikawa Prefecture, Japan. *Journal of AI and Data Science*, 4(3), 990-996. (in Japanese)

Kozu, H., Saito, S., & Tsujimura, Y. (2023). A study on factors attracting customers to tourist facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Global Tourism Research*, 8, 27-32.

Mitsuhashi, Y. (2022). Changes in tourism motivation before and after the outbreak of novel coronavirus infection. *Journal of Japan Society of Tourism Research*, 63, 1-12. (in Japanese)

Murase, Y. (2022). Behavioral change of travelers and management's response to the new coronavirus: Targeting the 2020 goTo Travel project period. *Journal of Contemporary Society*, 20, 105-115. (in Japanese)

Oguchi, K., Yamaguchi, K., & Nagata, Y. (2022). Micro tourism in the COVID-19: Relationship between tourism motive and destination choice. *Transactions of the Japan Society of International Tourism*, (29), 77-84. (in Japanese)

Yagi, K., & Kikuchi, R. (2019). Determinants of travel satisfaction and intention to return to Japan among foreign visitors to Japan: Using individual data from the "Survey on Consumption Trends of Foreign Visitors to Japan". *Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 91(2), 257-262. (in Japanese)

Unrealistic optimism: How to make hotel consumers book early

Jang, Yisak
Lester E. Kabacoff School of Hotel
Restaurant and Tourism Administration
University of New Orleans

Min, Kyeong Sam
Department of Management and Marketing
University of New Orleans

Green, Yvette
Lester E. Kabacoff School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Administration
University of New Orleans

Abstract:

Hotel consumers' unrealistic optimism leads them to postpone booking until the last minute to get a better price. Thus, this research uses three experimental designs to examine how to reduce hotel bookers' optimism to make them book early. Study 1 found that people's price change predictions are nearly identical to predictions based on the best-case situation. Study 2 indicated that popularity cues motivate consumers to book now, but only when they can pay later. Study 3 also suggested that when the hotel's price is relatively high, supply-driven scarcity cues make individuals not postpone booking than demand-driven ones.

Keywords: Unrealistic optimism, Optimism reduction, Scarcity cues, Pay later, Price level

1. Introduction

People generally tend to believe that they are more likely than others to experience positive events in the future (Tanner & Carlson, 2009). Hotel booking is no exception: Hotel consumers' unrealistic optimism may lead them to believe they can take advantage of price reductions, such as last-minute deals, if they postpone their booking decisions. The popularity of last-minute booking on online travel agency (OTA) sites or apps is rapidly growing (Thomas, 2022).

However, although the last-minute booking may help travelers save money, it does not always produce the intended results. They are likely to suffer from stress because of the uncertainties associated with price changes, or they may even pay more due to increased demand. Additionally, the last-minute deal can be a double-edged sword for hotels. It has been well-documented that the deal instantly boosts hotels' occupancy rates and revenues

(Chen & Schwartz, 2013). However, it eventually increases consumers' expectations for a better deal and prevents them from booking a room in advance. In other words, the frequent use of last-minute deals can hurt hotels' profitability in the long run (Yang & Leung, 2018). For that reason, it is essential to find a way to reduce consumers' optimism and encourage them to book early.

Due to its importance and relevance to our daily lives, studies from multiple disciplines, including psychology, economics, and retail marketing, have explored the optimistic tendency of human nature (e.g., Buehler et al., 2010; Newby-Clark et al., 2000; Tanner & Carlson, 2009). However, such approaches may be limited in their application to the context of hotel bookings due to the distinct nature of the hotel industry. First, unlike ordinary retail products, hotels have a limited supply of rooms available for a specific date. Second, hotel products are perishable, as they cannot be stored and sold later. Because of perishability, hotels may sell their unsold rooms at the last minute at a discounted price, and this characteristic could make hotel consumers more optimistic. Likewise, as these unique characteristics of hotel products play a crucial role in the booking decision-making process, hotel marketers need customized optimism reduction strategies different from those used in other domains. However, little is known about how to reduce hotel consumers' optimism to make them book early.

To fill this research gap, this study explores whether unrealistic optimism occurs in the context of hotel bookings and investigates how consumers' optimism can be reduced. More specifically, the objectives of this research are (1) to examine whether hotel consumers' price change predictions are usually optimistic, (2) to test the joint influence of popularity cues and delays in payments on consumers' intention to book now, and (3) to investigate whether scarcity cue type and price level jointly affect consumers' intention to postpone.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Unrealistic Optimism

Individuals tend to hold a confident belief that they are more likely than others to encounter positive events in the future – an error in judgment referred to as ‘‘unrealistic optimism’’ (Weinstein, 1980). Their optimistic views seem to occur because individuals' future-focused thinking increases the likelihood of positive outcomes from the upcoming event (Buehler et al., 2010). Although this problem has been frequently reported, only a few interventions have been identified to successfully mitigate individuals' optimism.

One effective optimism reduction strategy is to encourage individuals to take an outside view (Buehler et al., 2010; Newby-Clark et al., 2000). When people predict a future event from a third-person rather than a first-person perspective, they are less likely to focus on pursuing a goal. Instead, they try to envision the upcoming event objectively by considering potential barriers that can negatively impact their performance, thus producing more realistic predictions.

Building on this optimism reduction strategy, Tanner and Carlson (2009) tested the "consider-the-ideal-first" technique. They found that estimates of future behavior (i.e., the standard condition) are similar to those made by people who assume that conditions will be ideal (i.e., ideal world). However, when people initially estimate their future behavior in an ideal world, they subsequently provide more realistic estimates. When they make these subsequent real-world predictions (i.e., the ideal-first condition), they recognize that they do not live in the ideal world. As a result, they try to stay away from their ideal estimates by providing less optimistic estimates of future behavior. Based on these suppositions, the following is hypothesized:

H1 Consumers' predictions of their future hotel price changes are optimistic such that:
H1a Significantly more people in the "standard" condition will predict the hotel price would go down than those in the "ideal-first" condition; and
H1b "Ideal-world" prediction does not differ from the "standard condition" prediction.

2.2. Popularity Cues and Delays in Payments from a Hyperbolic Discounting Perspective

Scarcity is defined as a threat to an individual's accessibility to a product or service (Hamilton et al., 2019). According to Cialdini (2021), scarcity leads consumers' attention to a current/immediate problem, making it more difficult to fully understand future outcomes. As people's future-focused thinking increases their optimism about upcoming events (Buehler et al., 2010), this study proposes that scarcity cues (popularity vs. scarcity cues) decrease consumers' optimism about their future hotel price change.

The theoretical foundation for delays in payments (i.e., pay later) is hyperbolic discounting, which argues that individuals have an inherent immediacy bias, wanting to receive immediate gains (or avoid immediate losses) and giving less weight to future consequences (Ainslie, 2001). This tendency for people to attach too little weight to non-vivid events leads them to view near-term and long-term events quite differently (Crompton, 2016). For instance, when buying a car, consumers may prefer to pay more for a five-year installment payment schedule rather than an immediate full payment. Thus, this study proposes that popularity cues would increase consumers' intention to book now only when they can pay later, as deferred payments receive much less weight. However, popularity cues would not increase consumers' intention to book now when they should pay now, as they receive much more pressure from vivid/immediate losses (i.e., payments) than non-vivid/future losses (i.e., possible price increases due to the popularity). Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2a Popularity cues have a significantly positive effect on intention to book now.

H2b The time of payment moderates the effect of popularity cues on intention to book now such that when people pay later, they have a significantly greater intention to book now under the "popularity cue" than under the "no cue" condition; however, when people pay now, they exhibit no such differences in intention to book now.

2.3. Two Types of Scarcity Cues and Price Levels

While scarcity can result from a limited supply or high demand, the two types of scarcity produce different outcomes. Supply-driven scarcity cues ("scarcity cue" - e.g., limited quantity, limited edition) increase the perception that the product is rare, exclusive, or unique (Barton et al., 2022). In contrast, demand-driven scarcity cues ("popularity cue" - e.g., best seller, selling fast) improve the perception that the product is preferred by a majority.

According to Barton et al. (2022), the effectiveness of these scarcity cues depends on the level of product involvement. For high-involvement products, they found that purchase intentions increased when consumers were presented with a supply-driven scarcity cue (e.g., "This wine is a limited edition") rather than a demand-driven scarcity cue (e.g., "This wine is a best seller"). High-involvement products are generally acquired to meet consumers' goals of seeking uniqueness (Wu & Lee, 2016), so supply-driven scarcity cues signaling exclusiveness can give consumers the impression that they are special. Wealthy consumers also find supply-driven, rather than demand-driven, scarcity cues more desirable (Sharma & Alter, 2012).

In contrast, for low-involvement products, Barton et al. (2022) hypothesized that purchase intentions would be higher when consumers were offered a demand-driven scarcity cue rather than a supply-driven scarcity cue. Because low-involvement products are typically purchased to meet consumers' goals of seeking social conformity, they predicted that demand-driven scarcity cues signaling popularity would be more effective in making consumers feel that they fit into society. Like consumers with low product involvement, consumers who lack resources seek social conformity instead of uniqueness (Sharma & Alter, 2012). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3 Consumers' booking intentions will be jointly determined by scarcity cues and price. When the hotel rate is relatively expensive, supply-driven scarcity cues (vs. demand-driven scarcity cues) decrease their intention to postpone booking. However, when the hotel rate is relatively inexpensive, demand-driven scarcity cues (vs. supply-driven scarcity cues) reduce their intention to postpone.

3. Study 1

The first study examined whether hotel consumers are optimistic by exploring their predictions of future price change [H1a, H1b].

3.1. Methods

Research Design and Participants. This study employed a one-way factorial design (request condition: standard vs. ideal-first) by adapting previous research by Tanner and Carson (2009), with price change prediction as a dependent variable. One hundred and seven participants were recruited through an online crowdsourcing platform. The participants were eligible if they were adults who lived in the United States.

Procedure. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: either the standard request or the ideal-first condition, and answered just the focal question or the ideal world and focal questions. Participants in the standard condition read and answered the following scenario and question:

> Imagine you would go on a solo leisure trip in 1 month. You search online and find a hotel with the desired features. If you wait until the last minute, the hotel price could decrease or increase depending on the demand. You are deciding when to book.
>
> [Focal Question] Q. How do you think the hotel price might change if you wait?
>
> *I think the hotel price would:*

- *Go down.*
- *Be the same.*
- *Go up.*

To minimize order effects, the order of the three prediction options was randomized. In the ideal-first condition, the participants read and answered two sets of scenarios and questions in a row:

> *First Scenario*
> Imagine, **in an ideal world,** you would go on a solo leisure trip.. (the same hereafter as the scenario used in the standard condition).
>
> [Ideal-world Question] Q. **In the ideal world**, how do you think the hotel price might change if you wait?
>
> *Second Scenario*
> (The same scenario is used as in the standard condition.)
>
> [Focal Question] (The same question is used as in the standard condition.)

This study used the "in an ideal world" phrase for the first scenario in the ideal-first condition. Other than this, it was the same as the scenario used in the standard condition. The second scenario in the ideal-first condition was identical to that used in the standard condition.

3.2. Results

Sample Profile. Among the 107 participants, 69.2% were male and 30.8% were female. A total of 72.9% of participants held a bachelor's degree or higher, and 44.8% had annual household incomes between $40,000 and $79,999.

Testing of Hypotheses. The objectives of Study 1 were to examine whether consumers' focal question predictions would depend on the condition (standard vs. ideal-first) [H1a] and to investigate whether ideal-world predictions significantly differ from standard condition predictions [H2b]. To test the hypotheses, the study performed a series of chi-square tests. The results revealed a significant difference in predictions based on the condition ($\chi 2 = 24.045$; $p < 0.01$; see Table 1).

Table 1

Price Change Predictions by Condition

	I think the hotel price would			Total
	go down	be the same	go up	
Focal predictions:				
Standard condition	25 (43.9%)	16 (28.1%)	16 (28.1%)	57 (100.0%)
Ideal-first condition	6 (12.2%)	6 (12.2%)	37 (75.5%)	49 (100.0%)
Ideal-world prediction	26 (53.1%)	6 (12.2%)	17 (34.7%)	49 (100.0%)

Under the "standard" condition, participants most often predicted the hotel price would "go down" (43.9%), followed by "be the same" (28.1%) and "go up" (28.1%). On the contrary, under the "ideal-first" condition, most participants predicted that the hotel price would "go up" (75.5%), followed by "be the same" (12.2%) and "go down" (12.2%). This study further conducted post-hoc analyses using partitioning, which involves dividing contingency tables of greater than 2 × 2 into a set of smaller 2 × 2 sub-tables for statistical significance (Sharpe, 2015). As shown in Table 2, the results of the chi-square test were statistically significant ($\chi 2 = 12.727$, $p < 0.01$), showing that a significantly larger proportion of participants in the "standard" condition (43.9%) chose the "go down" option than participants in the "ideal-first" condition (12.2%). Thus, H1a was supported.

Table 2

Price Change Predictions (go down vs. be the same & go up) Cross-tabulated with Condition (Standard vs. Ideal-first)

	I think the hotel price would		Total	χ2 / p
	go down	be the same & go up		
Focal predictions:				
Standard condition	25 (43.9%)	32 (56.1%)	57 (100.0%)	12.727 / 0.000
Ideal-first condition	6 (12.2%)	43 (87.8%)	49 (100.0%)	

As predicted, the second follow-up chi-square test (see Table 3) showed that the ideal-world prediction did not differ from the standard condition prediction ($\chi 2 = 0.894$, $p= 0.344$). Thus, H1b was supported.

Table 3

Price Change Predictions (go down vs. be the same & go up) Cross-tabulated with Prediction (Focal Prediction in the Standard Condition vs. Ideal-world Prediction)

	I think the hotel price would			
	go down	be the same & go up	Total	χ2 / p
Focal prediction in the standard condition	25 (43.9%)	32 (56.1%)	57 (100.0%)	0.894 / 0.344
Ideal-world prediction	26 (53.1%)	23 (46.9%)	49 (100.0%)	

3.3. Discussion

The results revealed no difference between the focal prediction in the standard condition and the ideal-world prediction. These results indicate that people's predictions are nearly identical to those based on the best-case or ideal situation (H1b). In contrast, when they predict a future event in an ideal world, their second prediction is less likely to be optimistic (H1a). When they make this prediction, participants recognize that they do not live in the ideal world, so they offer a more realistic prediction. Studies 2 and 3 further examine more practical optimism reduction strategies.

4. Study 2

This research investigates the impact of scarcity as an optimism reduction strategy in Studies 2 and 3. Specifically, the second study examines whether popularity cues and delays in payments jointly influence consumers' intention to book now [H2a, H2b].

4.1. Methods

Research Design and Participants. This study adopted a 2 (popularity cue: no cue vs. popularity cue) × 2 (time of payment: pay now vs. pay later) between-subjects scenario-based experimental approach, with intention to book now as a dependent variable. One hundred and forty-four participants were recruited through a web-based crowdsourcing site. The sample size was calculated using G*Power 3.1.

Procedure. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions. In each experimental condition, participants were instructed to imagine that they would go on a solo leisure trip in one month and choose a hotel after searching online. Participants were told that the hotel price could go down or up, depending on the demand, and they needed to decide when to book. The popularity cue was manipulated at two levels (no cue vs. popularity cue). Specifically, information about the popularity of chosen dates in the “popularity cue” condition was presented as “In high demand! Booked 10 times in the last 24 hours,” while participants in the “no cue” condition were not provided with any information about the popularity. Participants were further told that the hotel provided either the ‘pay now’ (the pay now condition) or ‘pay later’ (the pay later condition) option for their booking. After reading the scenario, the participants were asked to answer two manipulation check questions. Next, participants’ intention to book now was measured using three statements adapted from Lien et al. (2015), such as “The probability that I would book this hotel today is high,” using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree).

4.2. Results

Sample Profile. Among the 144 participants, 68.7% were male, and 31.3% were female. A total of 89.6% of participants held a bachelor’s degree or higher, and 41.7% had annual household incomes between \$80,000 and \$119,999.

Testing of Hypotheses. To test the hypotheses, a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. Hypothesis 2a predicted that a popularity cue would increase people’s intention to book now. The results showed that the main effect of the popularity cue was statistically significant (F (1,140) = 4.301, p <.05). Participants’ intention to book now in the “popularity cue” group was significantly higher than that in the “no cue” group ($M_{\text{no cue}}$ = 5.30 vs. $M_{\text{pay later}}$ = 5.59). Thus, Hypothesis 2a was supported. Hypothesis 2b proposed that the effect of the popularity cue on intention to book now would depend on the time of payment. The results revealed that there was a statistically significant interaction between popularity cue and time of payment on intention to book now (F (1, 140) = 6.240, p <.05). Participants with the pay later option had a significantly greater intention to book now in the ‘popularity cue’ condition compared to the ‘no cue’ condition (p <.05; $M_{\text{popularity cue \& pay later}}$ = 5.81 vs. $M_{\text{no cue \& pay later}}$ = 5.16). However, participants with the pay now option exhibited no such difference in intention to book now (p = 1; $M_{\text{popularity cue \& pay now}}$ = 5.42 vs. $M_{\text{no cue \& pay now}}$ = 5.36). Hence, Hypothesis 2b was supported. This interaction is visualized in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Interaction Effect of Popularity Cue and Delays in Payments on Intention to Book Now

4.3. Discussion

The results indicated that the popularity cue motivates consumers to book now (H2a). However, the effect of the popularity cue would depend on the time of payment (H2b). It turned out that consumers would book now only when they could pay later, as they give less weight to future payments.

5. Study 3

The third study explores whether scarcity cue type and price level jointly influence consumers' intention to postpone bookings [H3].

5.1. Methods

Research Design and Participants. Study 3 used a 2 (scarcity cue type: demand-driven vs. supply-driven) × 2 (price level: inexpensive vs. expensive) between-subjects online scenario-based experimental design, intention to postpone booking as a dependent variable. Two hundred and twenty-two participants were recruited via an online crowdsourcing platform.

Procedure. Similar to Study 2, each participant was randomly assigned to one of four conditions. Participants were instructed to imagine that they were planning to go on a solo leisure trip in one month. Then, participants were told that they chose a hotel with a nightly room rate of $156 or $424 after searching online, and the hotel price could go down or up depending on the demand. The room rates used in the scenarios, $156 and $424, were based on the 2023 U.S. annual average daily rate (ADR) for the entire hotels and the luxury scale hotels, respectively (STR, 2024). In the scenario, the hotel signaled one of the two cues to indicate its availability. Specifically, the information about availability in the "demand-driven" condition was presented as "In high demand! Selling Fast: This is a popular choice," while the information in the "supply-driven" condition was presented as "Limited supply! Only a few rooms left on our site." Price was manipulated at two levels: $156 (inexpensive) and $424 (expensive). After reading the scenario, the participants were asked to answer two manipulation check questions. Next, respondents were asked to indicate their intention to postpone ("I would postpone booking the hotel room to get a better price, rather than booking now") on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree).

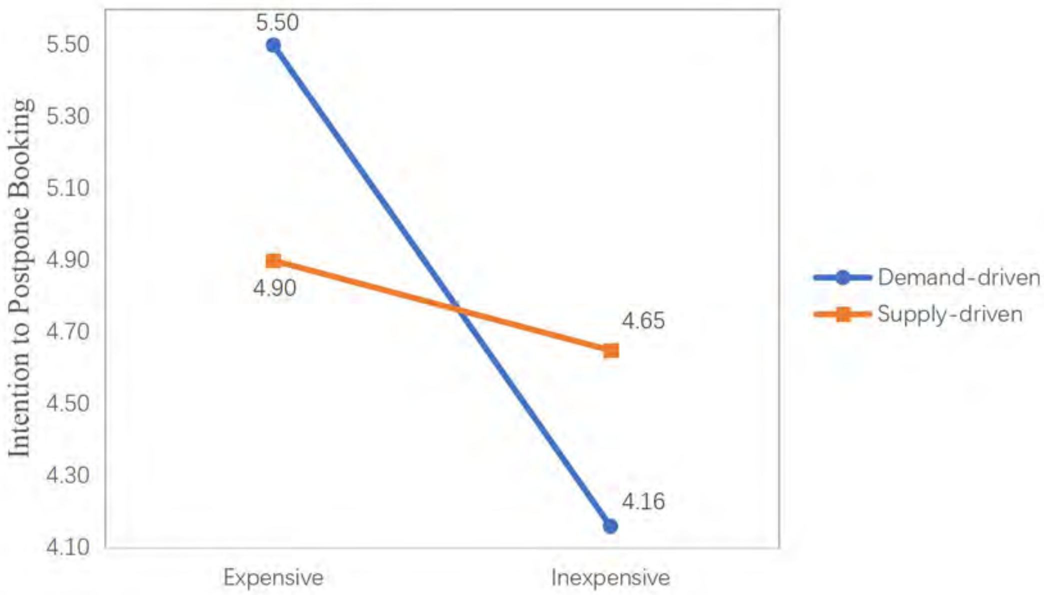
5.2. Results

Sample Profile. Among the 179 participants, 77.1% were male, close to 89.9% held a bachelor's degree or higher, and almost half had an annual household income between $40,000 and $79,999.

Testing of Hypothesis. To test Hypothesis 3, a two-way ANOVA was conducted. Hypothesis 3 proposed that the effect of scarcity cue type on intention to postpone would depend on the level of price. The results indicated that the main effect of scarcity cue type was not statistically significant ($F\ (1,175) = .056$, $p = .814$, $M_{supply\text{-}driven} = 4.78$ vs. $M_{demand\text{-}driven} = 4.82$). The results revealed a significant scarcity cue type × price level interaction effect on intention to postpone ($F\ (1, 175) = 5.061$, $p < .05$). In the "expensive" condition, participants had a marginally lower intention to postpone with a supply-driven scarcity cue than with a demand-driven scarcity cue ($p = .080$, $M_{supply\text{-}driven\ \&\ expensive} = 4.90$ vs. $M_{demand\text{-}driven\ \&\ expensive} = 5.50$). However, in the "inexpensive" condition, participants exhibited no such differences in intention to postpone ($p = .157$, $M_{supply\text{-}driven\ \&\ inexpensive} = 4.65$ vs. $M_{demand\text{-}driven\ \&\ inexpensive} = 4.16$). Thus, H3 was partially supported. The interaction effect is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Interaction Effect of Scarcity Cue Type and Price Level on Intention to Postpone Booking



5.3. Discussion

The results suggest that when the hotel price is relatively high, a supply-driven scarcity cue (e.g., Limited supply!) will make individuals have significantly less intention to postpone than a demand-driven scarcity cue.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

6.1. General Discussion

Through three studies, this study provides meaningful insight into how to make optimistic hotel consumers book early. First, Study 1 found that consumers' predictions of their future hotel price change are generally optimistic. Study 1 also suggested that optimism interventions, such as the consider-the-ideal-first technique, can decrease hotel customers' optimism and, thus, increase their intention to book now. In Studies 2 and 3, this research introduces other optimism interventions that are more applicable than the consider-the-ideal-first technique in the context of hotel bookings. Second, Study 2 showed that the popularity cue motivates individuals to book now when they can pay later, but not when they should pay now (H2a). These results demonstrate that the effectiveness of 'pay later' can be enhanced only with a popularity cue. Finally, Study 3 found that when the hotel price level is relatively high, a supply-driven scarcity cue will make consumers have significantly less intention to postpone than a demand-driven scarcity cue.

6.2. Theoretical Implications

This study makes several significant theoretical contributions. First, the study contributes to the literature on unrealistic optimism by investigating consumers' predictions of their future price changes in the context of hotel bookings. The existing literature defines optimistic predictions as individuals' overestimation of their ability to complete a future task quickly that they can control (Buehler et al., 2010; Min & Arkes, 2012; Newby-Clark et al., 2000). However, in contrast to prior research that primarily deals with optimistic time estimates, this study shifts its focus to optimistic price change predictions that consumers cannot control. Such approaches provide new insights into whether consumers' predictions are optimistic in the context of hotel bookings.

Second, this study is one of the pioneering studies investigating the moderating role of deferred payments. Even though much research has explored how consumers make online hotel booking decisions (e.g., Assaker & O'Connor, 2023), little attention has been devoted to the moderating role of a new payment option such as 'pay later' in their decisions. Challenging the common belief that the signaling of popularity will motivate individuals to make a prompt booking decision, this study demonstrates that the popularity cue's effectiveness can be enhanced only with the 'pay later' option from a hyperbolic discounting perspective.

Finally, this study introduces and tests scarcity as a new optimism reduction strategy in hotel products, where supply is always fixed. Previous studies (Barton et al., 2022; Wu & Lee, 2016) suggested that, at high price levels, supply-driven scarcity cues (e.g., limited edition) are more effective and persuasive for ordinary retail products but specific research attention to tourism products, such as hotel rooms, has been sporadic. Thus, this study represents a critical step toward understanding how people respond to different types of scarcity cues in the hotel booking setting, where every hotel always has a fixed supply.

6.3. Practical Implications

This study offers several notable implications for hotel marketers. First, this research helps marketers better communicate with optimistic consumers to drive advance bookings. The study revealed that consumers generally hold an optimistic belief that a hotel room's price will decrease over time. However, their optimism can be reduced by letting them take an outside and objective view (i.e., contrasting predictions with ideal-world predictions). Therefore, marketers could consider providing objective data to make consumers view their bookings more objectively. For example, hotels could show statistical figures indicating that the best or ideal case (i.e., price reduction) is unusual for a specific date.

Second, this study demonstrates that signaling the popularity of chosen dates is not a panacea to make hotel consumers book early. This study revealed that popularity cues (i.e., the number of bookings) result in greater intentions to book now only when consumers can pay later. For example, using the catchphrase "In high demand! Secure your room today without worrying about pre-payment" would be a more persuasive marketing strategy than either "In high demand!" or "In high demand! Pay Now" to motivate consumers to book early.

Finally, the findings demonstrate that marketers should be careful about offering scarcity cues. The results showed that not all scarcity cues are created equal. For example, when consumers are booking a relatively expensive room, they are more likely to look for a cue that helps them meet their needs for exclusiveness (e.g., Limited supply!) rather than a cue that helps them meet their needs for social approval (e.g., In high demand!). Thus, marketers may prefer to offer personalized scarcity cues to their customers depending on the price level.

6.4. Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study is not free from limitations. First, the study used hypothetical scenarios and measured consumers' booking intentions instead of actual booking decisions. A scenario-based approach helps to systematically test various factors and situations influencing booking decisions. However, it can be argued that the findings may not be fully generalizable (Kim & Jang, 2014). It would be interesting to study the effects of different scarcity cues on actual behavior in a more realistic setting. In addition, this study evaluated only scarcity cues as an optimism reduction strategy. While signaling scarcity cues is one of the most widely used tactics, other optimism reduction strategies may also influence hotel consumers' behaviors. For example, consumers' optimism can decrease if they are reminded of relevant past experiences or if they are guided to uncover potential barriers that can negatively impact the outcome of future behavior (Min & Arkes, 2012). Future researchers will have ample opportunities to study these new strategies.

REFERENCES

Ainslie, G. (2001). Breakdown of will. Cambridge University Press.

Assaker, G., & O'Connor, P. (2023). The importance of green certification labels/badges in online hotel booking choice: A conjoint investigation of consumers' preferences pre-and post-COVID-19. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, *64*(4), 401-414.

Barton, B., Zlatevska, N., & Oppewal, H. (2022). Scarcity tactics in marketing: A meta-analysis of product scarcity effects on consumer purchase intentions. *Journal of Retailing*, *98*(4), 741-758.

Buehler, R., Griffin, D., & Peetz, J. (2010). The planning fallacy: Cognitive, motivational, and social origins. In *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* (Vol. 43, pp. 1-62). Academic Press.

Chen, C.-C., & Schwartz, Z. (2013). On revenue management and last minute booking dynamics. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 25*, 7-22.

Cialdini, R. B. (2021). *Influence: The psychology of persuasion*. HarperCollins Publishers.

Crompton, J. L. (2016). Implications of prospect theory for the pricing of leisure services. *Leisure Sciences*, *38*(4), 315-337.

Hamilton, R., Thompson, D., Bone, S., Chaplin, L. N., Griskevicius, V., Goldsmith, K., ... & Zhu, M. (2019). The effects of scarcity on consumer decision journeys. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *47*, 532-550.

Kim, J. H., & Jang, S. S. (2014). A scenario-based experiment and a field study: A comparative examination for service failure and recovery. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *41*, 125-132.

Lien, C. H., Wen, M. J., Huang, L. C., & Wu, K. L. (2015). Online hotel booking: The effects of brand image, price, trust and value on purchase intentions. *Asia Pacific Management Review*, *20*(4), 210-218.

Min, K. S., & Arkes, H. R. (2012). When is difficult planning good planning? The effects of scenario-based planning on optimistic prediction bias. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *42*(11), 2701-2729.

Newby-Clark, I. R. (2005). Plans and predictions for exercise frequency change. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, *27*(2), 97–106.

Newby-Clark, I. R., Ross, M., Buehler, R., Koehler, D. J., & Griffin, D. (2000). People focus on optimistic scenarios and disregard pessimistic scenarios while predicting task completion times. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied*, *6*(3), 171-182.

Sharma, E., & Alter, A. L. (2012). Financial deprivation prompts consumers to seek scarce goods. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *39*(3), 545-560.

Sharpe, D. (2015). Your chi-square test is statistically significant: now what?. *Practical assessment, research & evaluation*, *20*(8), n8.

STR (2024). *U.S. hotel commentary - December/Full-year 2023*. https://str.com/data-insights-blog/us-hotel-commentary-december-full-year-2023

Tanner, R. J., & Carlson, K. A. (2009). Unrealistically optimistic consumers: A selective hypothesis testing account for optimism in predictions of future behavior. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *35*(5), 810-822.

Thomas, J. (January 4, 2022). Over 60 online travel booking statistics. https://www.stratosjets.com/blog/online-travel-statistics/

Weinstein, N. D. (1980). Unrealistic optimism about future life events. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *39*(5), 806.

Wu, L., & Lee, C. (2016). Limited edition for me and best seller for you: The impact of scarcity versus popularity cues on self versus other-purchase behavior. *Journal of Retailing*, *92*(4), 486-499.

Yang, Y., & Leung, X. Y. (2018). A better last-minute hotel deal via app? Cross-channel price disparities between HotelTonight and OTAs. *Tourism Management*, *68*, 198-209.

Relationship between work-family conflict and job burnout: Moderating effect of employee resilience

Wang, Chih-Hung
Graduate Program of Sustainable Tourism and Recreation Management
National Taichung University of Education

Luoh, Hsiang-Fei
Department of Restaurant, Hotel and Institutional Management
Fu Jen Catholic University

Abstract:

Frontline hotel positions are characterized by anti-social working hours, and employees often face work-family conflict. Work-family conflict often leads to undesirable consequences such as job burnout. This study explores the relationship between work-family conflict and job burnout among front-line hotel employees. Employee resilience is a moderating variable to explore its moderating effect on the relationship between work-family conflict and job burnout. A structured questionnaire and convenience sampling on frontline employees of the hotel industry in Taiwan were used to collect data. A total of 263 valid questionnaires were received. Results show that both work-to-family and family-to-work conflicts positively affect job burnout. Employee resilience moderates the effect of work-to-family and family-to-work conflicts on job burnout. The effect of work-to-family and family-to-work conflicts on job burnout for the sample with high employee resilience is lower than the sample with low employee resilience.

Keywords: Hotel, Frontline Employee, Work-family Conflict, Job Burnout, Employee Resilience

1. Introduction

Frontline positions in the hotel industry are characterized by anti-social working hours. While the public is enjoying their holidays, it is also the time frontline workers must return to work. Employees in the hotel industry often need to strike a balance between work and family. Work-family conflict may occur if work and family demands are not balanced (Netemeyer et al., 1996). Whether the conflict arises from work-to-family inference or family-to-work inference, it can lead to physical and mental fatigue for frontline employees. If frontline employees cannot overcome job burnout, it may eventually lead to employee dissatisfaction with their job (e.g., Zhao et al., 2011) and turnover intention (e.g., Chen et al., 2018). Hotels must also pay expensive recruitment, selection, and training costs for high turnover rates.

Resilience is the ability of a person to show positive adaptive patterns in significant adversity or risky environments (Masten, 2001). If frontline employees in the hotel industry have strong resilience, they should be able to successfully find resources and methods to overcome or adapt to adversity. Therefore, more resilient frontline employees should be able to avoid burnout (Ogungbamila et al., 2019). Reviewing the existing literature, few studies currently explore whether employee resilience can reduce the impact of work-family conflict on job burnout. This study aims to explore the relationship between work-family conflict and job burnout among front-line hotel employees. Employee resilience is used as a moderating variable to explore its moderating effect on the relationship between work-family conflict and job burnout.

2. Literature Review

Kahn et al. (1964) indicated that work-family conflict refers to a certain degree of incompatibility between work and family domains, resulting in conflict and pressure between roles. Frone et al. (1992) argued that work-family conflict is a two-way concept and can be divided into two situations: work interference with family (WIF) and family interference with work (FIW). The former refers to personal problems and responsibilities at work that interfere with the performance of family obligations, and these unfulfilled family obligations will, in turn, interfere with their work situation. The latter refers to when personal family problems and responsibilities interfere with completing work tasks, and these unfinished work tasks will, in turn, interfere with their family life. Netemeyer et al. (1996) indicated that work-family conflict is a form of role conflict caused by the demands of work content and time investment and hinders the performance of family-related responsibilities. Therefore, work-family conflict is considered an inability to simultaneously resolve conflicts arising from balancing work and family roles.

Frone et al. (1992) integrated past research and proposed a model of work-family conflict. They believe that work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict lead to family and work distress respectively, which in turn leads to overall personal depression. Role stress (role ambiguity and role conflict) often triggers job burnout (Wen et al., 2020). Existing research has also confirmed that work-family conflict (work-to-family conflict, family-to-work conflict) positively affects job burnout (O'Neill & Follmer, 2020). Based on this, this study expects:
H1: Work-family conflict has a positive effect on job burnout.
H1a: Work-to-family conflict has a positive effect on job burnout.
H2a: Family-to-work conflict has a positive effect on job burnout.
Kuntz et al. (2016) defined employee resilience as "the capacity of employees to utilize resources to continually adapt and flourish at work, even when faced with challenging circumstances" (Kuntz et al., 2016, p. 460). Even when faced with work-family conflict situations, employees with higher employee resilience will seek resources and methods to overcome this adversity. Therefore, this study expects:

H2: Employee resilience moderates the relationship between work-family conflict and job burnout.
H2a: Employee resilience moderates the relationship between work-to-family conflict and job burnout.
H2b: Employee resilience moderates the relationship between family-to-work conflict and job burnout.

3. Methodology

3.1 Data Collection and Sampling

The respondents of this study were frontline employees of the hotel industry in Taiwan. As the authors could not obtain complete contact information for the population, the purposive sampling method was implemented, and a structured questionnaire was used to collect data in January and February 2024. A total of 284 completed questionnaires were collected from 17 different hotels located in Taipei (8 hotels), Taichung (5 hotels), and Kaohsiung (4 hotels), with a total of 263 valid questionnaires, having removed 21 invalid ones.

3.2. Measurement

We adopted the scales of work-family conflict (WFC) (5 items) and family-work conflict (FWC) (5 items) proposed by Netemeyer et al. (1996) to measure work-family conflict. We adopted the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) scale proposed by Maslach and Jackson (1981) to measure job burnout. The MBI scale consists of three components: emotional exhaustion (9 items), depersonalization (5 items), and reduced personal accomplishment (8 items). We adopted the Employee Resilience Scale (9 items) proposed by Näswall et al. (2019) to measure employee resilience. These scales were scored using a five-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.”

4. Results

4.1. Profile of the respondents

Most of the participants were female (65.4%), young (aged 21-30 (27.4%) and 31-40 (25.5%)), university or college graduates (63.9%), and single (60.8%). In addition, most earned NT$30,001-40,000 a month (42.6%) (followed by NT$40,001-50,000 a month (23.6%)), had worked at their current company for three years or less (42.6%) and worked in the food and beverage department (61.6%) (followed by the customer service department (26.2%)).

4.2 Hypotheses testing

We used structural equation modeling to test our hypotheses. The results show that the model fits the data to an acceptable degree. The results also show that the factor loading value of each item has reached a significant level and is greater than 0.70, indicating that each factor (latent variable) has convergent validity. In addition, the average variance extracts (AVEs) of all latent variables are larger than 0.5, and the compose reliabilities (CRs) of all latent variables are larger than 0.7, indicating that the latent variables in the research model have been equipped with good convergent validity and internal consistency.

The path coefficient of work-family conflict on job burnout is 0.413 ($p < 0.05$), which means a significant and positive relationship exists. The path coefficients of work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict on job burnout are 0.526 ($p < 0.05$) and 0.314 ($p < 0.05$), respectively, which means these relationships are significant and positive. This study used cluster analysis to divide the sample into high and low employee resilience based on employee resilience. The path coefficients between work-family conflict and job burnout for high and low employee resilience groups are 0.326 ($p < 0.05$) and 0.511 ($p < 0.05$). The path coefficients between work-to-family conflict and job burnout for high and low employee resilience groups are 0.408 ($p < 0.05$) and 0.612 ($p < 0.05$). The path coefficients between family-to-work conflict and job burnout for high and low employee resilience groups are 0.118 ($p < 0.05$) and 0.422 ($p < 0.05$).

5. Conclusion

Results show that both work-to-family and family-to-work conflicts positively affect job burnout. Employee resilience moderates the effect of work-to-family and family-to-work conflicts on job burnout. The effect of work-to-family and family-to-work conflicts on job burnout for the sample with high employee resilience is lower than the sample with low employee resilience. It is recommended that hotels should consider employees' resilience traits when recruiting. If employees with higher employee resilience can be hired, the negative impact of work-family conflict on job burnout can be slightly alleviated.

REFERENCES

Chen, H., Ayoun, B., & Eyoun, K. (2018). Work-Family conflict and turnover intentions: A study comparing China and U.S. hotel employees. *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality and Tourism, 17*(2), 247-269.

Frone, M. R., Russell, M., & Copper, M. L. (1992). Antecedents and outcomes of work-family conflict: Testing a model of the work-family interface. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 77*(1), 65-78.

Kahn, R. L., Wolfe, D. M., Quinn, R. P., Snoek, J. D., & Rosenthal, R. A. (1964). *Organizational stress: Study in role conflict and ambiguity*. New York, NY: Wiley.

Kuntz, J. C., Näswall, K., & Malinen, S. (2016). Resilient employees in resilient organizations: flourishing beyond adversity. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology: Perspectives on Science and Practice, 9*(2), 456-462.

Maslach, C., & Jackson, S. E. (1981). The measurement of experienced burnout. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 2*(2), 99-113.

Näswall, K., Malinen, S., Kuntz, J., & Hodliffe, M. (2019). Employee resilience: Development and validation of a measure. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 34*(5), 353-367.

Netemeyer, R. G., Boles, J. S., & McMurrian, R. (1996). Development and validation of work-family conflict and family-work conflict scales. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 81*(4), 400-410.

Ogungbamila, B., Ogobuchi, K. A., & Ogungbamila, A. (2019). Resilience, emotional intelligence and burnout in hotel employees. *Journal of Organisation and Human Behaviour, 8*(2/3), 44-55.

O'Neill, J. W., & Follmer, K. (2020). A multilevel review of hospitality industry work-family conflict research and a strategy for future research. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research, 44*(1), 3-44.

Wen, B., Zhou, X., Hu, Y., & Zhang, X. (2020). Role stress and turnover intention of front-line hotel employees: The roles of burnout and service climate. *Frontiers in Psychology, 11*, 36.

Zhao, X., Qu, H., & Ghiselli, R. (2011). Examining the relationship of work-family conflict to job and life satisfaction: A case of hotel sales managers. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 30*(1), 46-54.

Unlocking wellness tourism: Insights from Malaysian small and medium enterprises (SMEs)

Lai, Mun Yee
School of Hospitality and Service Management
Sunway University, Malaysia

Stephenson, Marcus. L.
School of Hospitality and Service Management
Sunway University, Malaysia

Trupp, Alexander
School of Hospitality and Service Management
Sunway University, Malaysia

Abstract:

During the pandemic, Malaysian wellness tourism SMEs experienced income declines and closures. This study, employing resilience theory, examines their challenges and survival tactics. Interviews with 17 stakeholders reveal issues like reduced tourism and skill shortages. Strategies encompass diversification, traditional healing integration, reshaping wellness perceptions, focusing on sustainability, and digital advertising.

Keywords: Wellness Tourism, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), Resilience Theory, Stakeholders.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background:

Wellness tourism in Malaysia, listed among the Top 10 markets in Asia Pacific, contributed USD$4.88 billion (RM$20.5 billion) to the economy in 2019, attracting 8.3 million tourists (Tourism Malaysia, 2019). Despite its appeal for beauty, spa, medical, and spiritual tourism, SMEs in this sector faced significant pandemic-related challenges, including operational difficulties, income decline, increased unemployment, and numerous business closures.

Malaysia offers diverse wellness tourism experiences, including luxury spas, traditional healing practices, eco-wellness experiences, yoga, and healthy culinary offerings. Penang and Langkawi are prominent hubs with beaches, rainforests, cultural heritage, and wellness-focused products, attracting wellness tourists globally.

1.2 Research Objectives:

1. Examine the challenges faced by SMEs in Malaysia's wellness tourism sector amidst global health crises and economic downturns.
2. Explore the coping mechanisms and resilience strategies adopted by SMEs to navigate challenges and ensure sustainability.
3. Provide recommendations to enhance the resilience and competitiveness of Malaysia's wellness tourism sector in the recovery phrase.

This research contributes to academic and practical insights, aligning with Malaysia's developmental goals and global sustainability objectives. It supports policymakers, industry stakeholders, and researchers in fostering sustainable growth within Malaysia's wellness tourism sector amidst dynamic global conditions.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Resilience Theory

Resilience theory, drawing from evolutionary concepts such as 'variation', 'selection', and 'retention', providing a framework for understanding how organizations respond to challenges and select effective strategies that contribute to organizational success and long-term sustainability (Campbell, 1965). Belitski et al. (2022) explore organizational responses to external shocks and disruptions, emphasising the importance of functionality and adaptability. Núñez-Ríos et al. (2022) offer sector-specific insights into resilience within tourism SMEs, identifying vulnerabilities and proposing adaptive strategies for long-term sustainability planning. Consequently, comprehending resilience aids in analysing how SMEs in Malaysia's wellness tourism sector respond to global challenges.

2.2. Conceptualization

The study investigates resilience strategies in Malaysia's wellness tourism SMEs amid economic downturns, pandemic, and market uncertainties. Interview questions align with the research objectives, exploring business profiles, customer preferences, challenges faced, coping strategies, resilience outcomes, sustainability practices, and the future outlook.

3. Methodology

The research utilised 17 semi-structured interviews with SMEs stakeholders, including owners, managers, and employees, ensuring flexibility in knowledge exchange (Velardo & Elliott, 2021). This study investigates the impact of global health crises and economic downturns on SMEs in Malaysia's wellness tourism sector, recruiting participants from various establishments in Penang and Langkawi. Purposeful and snowball sampling methods ensured diverse representation.

3.1. Data Collection

Interviews were conducted from 14th to 20th, January 2024, by four researchers using interview guides, resulting in detailed insights. Transcripts were produced for all interviews, one conducted in Bahasa Malaysia and translated professionally. Validity and reliability were ensured through inter-rater reliability checks and triangulation of coding.

3.2. Thematic Analysis Using Nvivo

Thematic analysis, supported by Nvivo software, involved familiarising with data, generating codes, searching for themes, reviewing and defining themes, and write-up the narrative. These analytical steps of uncovering relevant codes and developing overarching themes related to challenges, coping strategies, and resilience factors within the dataset. The methodology adhered to university ethics guidelines, aiming to provide robust findings supporting SMEs in wellness tourism.

4. Results

4.1. Profile of Respondents

We interviewed 17 stakeholders from Penang and Langkawi's wellness tourism sectors, offering diverse services like yoga, spa treatments, and massage. This diversity enriches our understanding of SMEs challenges and resilience. Spas in Penang blend traditional and modern techniques, while Langkawi prioritses wellness relaxation (see Table 1).

Table 1. Profile of Wellness Tourism Stakeholders from Langkawi and Penang

Participant	Gender	Participant's Profile	Industry Experience	Type of SMEs (Employee count)	Nature of Wellness Offering
PENANG					
P1	M	Employer	20+ years	Small (7 staff)	Spa & Massage
P2	M	Owner	10+ years	Medium (70 staff)	Spa & Massage
P3	M	Owner	30+ years	Micro (4 staff)	Yoga & Meditation
P4	M	Employee	5 years	Small (30 staff)	Spa & Massage
P5	F	Employee	10+ years	Small (6-10 staff)	Spa & Massage
P6	M	Owner	10+ years	Medium (70 staff)	Therapy & Spa
P7	M	Owner	10+ years	Medium (50 staff)	Therapy & Spa
LANGKAWI					
L1	F	Owner's Daughter	20+ years	Small (20+ staff)	Spa only
L2	F	Owner	10+ years	Small (13 staff)	Spa only

L3	F	Owner’s Daughter	15 years	Micro (4 staff)	Malay Massage & Spa
L4	M	Employee	2 years	Small (11 staff)	Spa & Massage
L5	F	Owner’s Daughter	13 years	Small (11 staff)	Malay Massage & Spa
L6	F	Owner	23 years	Micro (3 staff)	Spa & Massage
L7	M	Employee	3 years	Small (7 staff)	Spa & Massage
L8	F	Employee	9 years	Small (10 staff)	Spa & Massage
L9	M	Owner’s Son	10 years	Small (10 staff)	Massage & Beauty
L10	F	Owner	25 years	Small (10 staff)	Spa & Massage

Note: SMEs definition in Malaysia Service Industry: Micro: <5 full-time employees, Small: 5 to <30 full-time employees, Medium: 30 to ≤75 full-time employees.

4.2. Results and Comparative Perspective

The findings highlight challenges facing wellness SMEs in Penang and Langkawi and suggest upgrading their wellness practices and resilience strategies (see below Table 2).

Challenges: Both regions contend with market competition, rising costs, workforce shortages, and regulatory compliance, yet coping strategies vary due to regional factors. In Langkawi, cultural stereotypes complicate staff recruitment and tourists’ perceptions of massages, while Penang struggles with the absence of a unique Malaysian wellness brand, limited tourist arrivals, and the perceived low status of wellness careers.

Evolution of Wellness and Spa Identity: Malaysia is transitioning towards holistic wellness practices, emphasising health and mental rejuvenation alongside traditional spa services. There's a push for a unique Malaysian spa identity, incorporating distinctive Urutan techniques blending Chinese, Malayan, and Indian influences.

Resilience Strategies: Tailoring strategies to regional differences are crucial for sustaining and growing the wellness tourism in both regions. Penang prioritises digitalisation and diverse offerings, benefiting from government support and talent development, while Langkawi focuses on accessibility, sustainable practices, niche targeting, and shifting perceptions. Recognising and leveraging these differences is crucial for long-term industry resilience and success.

Table 2. Challenges, Coping, and Resilience in Wellness Tourism in Penang and Langkawi

Challenges	Coping Mechanisms Employed	Resilience Strategies
Penang: • Increased competition. • Lack of distinct Malaysian wellness brand. • Rising costs. • Limited tourist influx. • Workforce shortage.	**Penang:** • Enhancing digital marketing strategies. • Diversifying offerings. • Developing Malaysian Urutan wellness brand. • Targeting local and international customers. • Partnering with spa academy for certified courses, shifting wellness profession perceptions.	**Penang:** • Innovative service packages. • Locally sourcing ingredients, herbs, oil. • Creating a unique Malaysian wellness identity, distinct from Bali and Indonesia. • Partnering with local businesses, and the state tourism board. • Maintaining loyal, skilled staff with competitive compensation.
Langkawi: • Infrastructure limitations. • Rising costs. • Seasonal tourism dependence. • Compliance and licensing issues. • Workforce shortage and cultural perceptions.	**Langkawi:** • Increased flights, busses, ferry. • Sustainability practices, shift towards organic local products. • Targeting niche wellness markets, seasonal based. • Conform to new regulations like wearing gloves during treatments. • Government strict protocols against unethical service, dispelling misconception about wellness and sexuality.	**Langkawi:** • State tourism board support. • Expand product line to include local massage oils for export. • Prioritise local repeat customers, including post-pregnancy massages. • Prioritise hygiene and safety. • Emphasise positivity, communication, and learning.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Intense Market Competition: It's crucial to differentiate traditional spa services from holistic wellness offerings. This can be achieved through staff training on holistic practices, promoting unique Malaysian spa identities, and collaborating with local businesses and tourism boards.

Financial Resilience Amidst Disruptions: To navigate financial strains during closures and reduced tourism, cost-cutting measures, innovative service packages, and staff upskilling are vital. Sustainable practices can help reduce costs.

Regulatory Compliance and Branding: Adapting to regulations while preserving Malaysia's spa identity is essential. Collaboration with governmental bodies and industry associations can aid in this process.

Strategies enhance Malaysia's wellness tourism, embracing resilience theory principles for sustainable growth. Limitations affect generalizability.

REFERENCES

Belitski, M., Guenther, C., Kritikos, A. S., & Thurik, R. (2022). Economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on entrepreneurship and small businesses. *Small Business Economics*, 1-17.

Campbell, D. T. (1965). Variation and selective retention in socio-cultural evolution. *Social Change in Developing Area*.

Núñez-Ríos, J. E., Sánchez-García, J. Y., Soto-Pérez, M., Olivares-Benitez, E., & Rojas, O. G. (2022). Components to foster organizational resilience in tourism SMEs. *Business Process Management Journal*, *28*(1), 208-235. https://doi.org/10.1108/BPMJ-12-2020-0580

Tourism Malaysia. (2019). *MATTA and AMSPA Committed to Promote Wellness Tourism in Malaysia*. Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board. Retrieved 1/4/24 from https://shorturl.at/nqvxU

Velardo, S., & Elliott, S. (2021). Co-interviewing in qualitative social research: Prospects, merits and considerations. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *20*, 16094069211054920.

Train with hotel managers: Evaluation of practical experiential learning outcomes for hospitality major students through 360-degree feedback

Lin, Fang-Yi
Department of Tourism
Shih Hsin University

Abstract:

Retention and attraction of talented employees are crucial challenges for the lodging industry. Utilizing rich employee relations can enhance corporate training, and engaging hospitality major students in practical experiential learning through participation in hotel manager training can serve as an effective strategy for corporate training. Grounded in Experiential Learning Theory, this study assesses student outcomes using 360-degree feedback. The results indicate that experiential learning in manager training not only cultivates professional competencies in learners within the training context but also enhances students' resilience, problem-solving skills, communication abilities, proactiveness, and industry awareness. Additionally, it provides substantial assistance to corporate manager training.

Keywords: Lodging Industry, Training for Managers, 360-degree Feedback, Hospitality Major Students, Practical Experiential Learning

1. Introduction

The lodging industry is facing challenges in attracting and retaining quality employees. Research suggests that improved industry employability post-internship may positively influence students' retention in the hospitality industry (Chen, Shen, & Gosling, 2021). Experiential learning correlates positively with learning outcomes, as students actively engage, create meaning from real-life contexts, and develop the desired professional competencies to address real-world business challenges (Liang, 2021; Quibrantar & Ezezika, 2023). Liang (2021) addressed that the instructional methods commonly used in hospitality education, where learning by doing often imparts practical industry knowledge and skills to European and Asian students.

However, research on the effectiveness of different types of experiential learning is limited (Quibrantar & Ezezika, 2023). Moreover, experiential learning is relatively challenging to implement in higher education due to the specific contextual facilities and equipment required. Hence, many higher education curriculum designs involve arranging internships for students in work environments (Cunha, Martins, & Mendonça, 2023). Hospitality major students entering the industry expect their professional work to be meaningful and valuable. Effective experiential learning requires a mutual commitment from students, internship institutions (such as hotels), and schools to cultivate professional competencies in real-world contexts (Zopiatis & Constanti, 2012). Assessing whether students gain meaningful internship training experiences requires identifying stakeholders' expectations of internship training experiences (Aquino, 2014).

On the other hand, achieving organizational goals requires cross-functional integration and interdepartmental collaboration. Mutual understanding among different positions facilitates concept integration, learning expansion, and collaboration. Implementing corporate training through rich employee relations enhances employees' willingness to exert additional effort and take on extra tasks (Hernaus, Černe, & Škerlavaj, 2021). It is suggested that cross-training mechanisms within organizations incorporate teaching methods, trainees' learning strategies, and the size of trained members to evaluate the effectiveness of training (Hernaus, et al., 2021).

Internal corporate training can incorporate various stimulating elements to enhance training effectiveness, such as the rich employee relations training method. In the experiential learning of hospitality major students, in addition to frontline services (food and beverage service staff, room attendants), learning scenarios that allow students to experience the meaning of industry work, such as managerial training, can be introduced. Through participation in corporate managerial training, students experience the skills that industry managers need to strengthen. This enables students to enhance their professionalism in industry work through participation in managerial training and observe their future career prospects from interacting with managers. By incorporating student participation, corporate training can potentially stimulate and activate training effectiveness. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to introduce experiential learning methods into hotel managerial training, allowing hospitality major students to learn in such specific learning contexts. Furthermore, it aims to examine the impact of introducing such experiential learning methods on students' outcomes in industry learning and the assistance provided to students in corporate management training.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Organizational training

Organizations allocate funds for training to enhance performance, yet training remains a costly investment (Cunha, Martins, & Mendonça, 2023; Urbancová, Vrabcová, Hudáková, & Petrů, 2021). Training is the process of imparting the professional knowledge and skills required to perform specific duties to new or existing employees (Cunha, Martins, & Mendonça, 2023). Horng and Lin's (2013) review highlights the increasing focus of hotels on employee training and career development to retain top talents; however, it is crucial to ensure the effectiveness of such training efforts. Evaluating training effectiveness is challenging as it is difficult to quantify, necessitating the accuracy of instructional goals and the controllability of training outcomes (Urbancová et al., 2021). Organizations utilize assessment data from supervisors, subordinates, colleagues, and employees themselves for training development feedback and to assess training effectiveness (Horng & Lin, 2013; Urbancová et al., 2021).

Enhancing training methods and tools can significantly impact the effectiveness of training programs. Hotels commonly utilize group seminars, on-the-job training, and videos; however, these traditional training methods may not be effective for certain positions and learning content (Harris & Cannon, 1999). Motivation and willingness for further employee training may require activating elements and adjusting training modalities (Urbancová et al., 2021). Harris and Cannon (1999) propose that employing diverse communication methods in training could be an effective training strategy.

2.2. Student engagement in Hospitality Industry learning

Due to the nature of the hospitality industry, internship, as an experiential learning activity, was integrated into curricula around the 1980s, with a significant increase in hospitality internship-related research around the 2000s. Hospitality students' internships often adopt a mentorship role, guiding learners to acquire specific professional knowledge and skills (Zopiatis, Papadopoulos, & Theofanous, 2021). In the study by Zopiatis and Constanti (2012), learning in hospitality internships is segmented using Kolb's Experiential Learning Model into four parts: feeling, watching, thinking, and doing, thereby connecting learners with real-world work situations. Fuchs (2022) mentions in the literature that engaging in experiential learning within the industry enhances abilities in communication, problem-solving, teamwork, and decision-making.

2.3. Experiential Learning Theory

Educational scholar John Dewey (1859-1952) emphasized the importance of experience and the process of experiencing in learning, proposing Empirical Philosophy. According to Dewey, learning requires reflection to deepen experiences, and learners internalize their learning outcomes based on their constructed learning experiences (Wu, 2009). Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) is used to explain learning, growth, and development, particularly emphasizing the crucial role of "experience" in learning (Kolb, Boyatzis, & Mainemelis, 2001). ELT comprises four stages of the learning cycle: Concrete experience, Abstract conceptualization, Reflective observation, and Active experimentation. Direct or concrete experience forms the basis for reflective observation, which can transform learned material into abstract concepts, leading to new action ideas for learners (Kolb et al., 2001).

Miettinen (2000) pointed out that Kolb's four-stage model of experiential learning provides a comprehensive learning pattern for understanding the basic principles of experiential learning. However, under the Kolb model, Dewey's concepts of reactive thought and action need to be more fully explained to understand the meaning of experience. Under the concept of ELT, improper learning practices may lead to: (1) learning only simple knowledge and skills, (2) learners' inability to adapt to new environments or solve new problems, or (3) limited learning scope (Wu, 2009).

2.4. Practical experiential learning

Practical experiential learning (also known as experiential learning) refers to the process of learning through experience, where learners engage in experiential situations that enable them to learn by doing; through active reflection in specific contexts, learners can connect concepts and theories and apply them (Cunha, Martins, & Mendonça, 2023; Wu, 2009). Employing methods of practical experiential learning can reduce the gap between learning and application, facilitating the acquisition of skills, attitudes, and attributes required for employment (Cunha, Martins, & Mendonça, 2023; Lu, 2021). Moreover, experiential learning aids learners in problem identification, critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and enhancing learning outcomes (Arjmandi, Woo, Mankelow, Loho, Shahbaz, Auckaili, & Thambyah, 2023; Liang, 2021; Martin, 2024).

Experiential learning methods can be implemented through simulated scenario tools, yielding positive learning outcomes (Adib, 2024). In the context of the hospitality industry, experiential learning is commonly conducted in real service situations (Cunha et al., 2023). The learning outcomes of experiential learning can be assessed using qualitative analysis methods such as peer learning, peer assessment, self-reflection, and focus interviews to understand experiences and knowledge in specific learning domains (Arjmandi et al., Martin, 2024).

2.5. 360-degree feedback

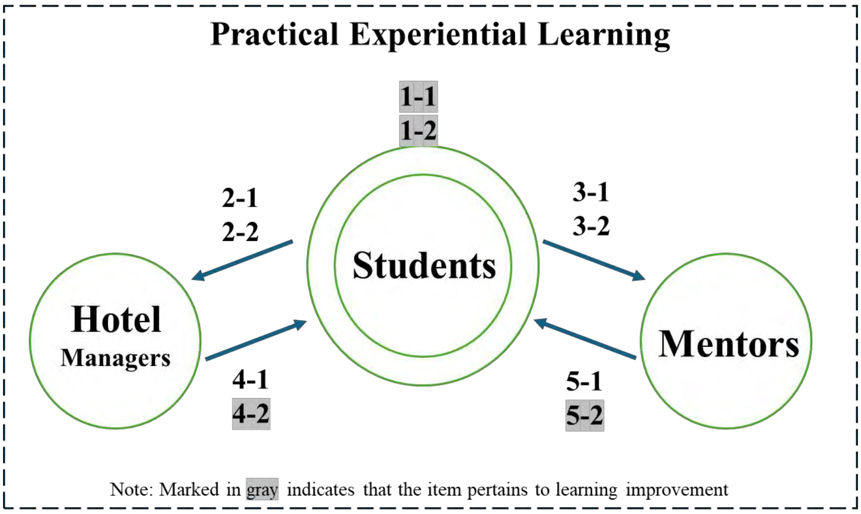
360-degree feedback is an assessment method that collects feedback from oneself, supervisors, colleagues, subordinates, and potentially clients, providing meaningful input from multiple assessors (Carson, 2006). The process of 360-degree feedback can offer valuable information for organizations and relevant individuals and is commonly used for performance appraisal (Carson, 2006). It has also been utilized for cross-functional team and collaborative feedback purposes (Sikes, Jestes, LeClair-Smith, & Yates, 2015). When there is inconsistency between self-assessment and assessments by others, individuals may be motivated to make changes to align their self-perception with external feedback. Additionally, users of feedback are more likely to be motivated or driven to change when they have a more appropriate attitude towards utilizing feedback (Atwater & Brett, 2005).

3. Methodology

3.1. Research model

Drawing upon the literature reviewed earlier, it is apparent that the assessment of learning outcomes in experiential learning approaches may involve qualitative analysis, such as self-assessment and peer assessment. Building upon this, the present study adopts a multi-faceted assessment approach based on 360-degree feedback, utilizing both self-assessment and peer assessment (stakeholders) to investigate the impact of students' participation in practical experiential learning through hotel group manager training on their learning growth and the benefits derived from participating in the training program.

Table 1:
Conceptual information of the research



	Evaluator	Evaluatee	Evaluation Items
1	**Student**	**Student**	**1-1 Learning growth in training course content** **1-2 Learning growth in role positioning in training participation**
2	**Student**	**Hotel Manager**	**2-1 Evaluation of assistance needed for hotel manager learning** **2-2 Learning attributes students can learn from hotel managers**
3	**Student**	**Mentor**	**3-1 Evaluation of mentor's assistance in learning** **3-2 Learning attributes students can learn from mentors**
4	**Hotel Manager**	**Student**	**4-1 Assistance with training program** **4-2 Learning growth in students' learning**
5	**Mentor**	**Student**	**5-1 Assistance with training program** **5-2 Learning growth in students' learning**

Note 1: Self-evaluation items: 1-1 for individual professional course learning growth, 1-2 for individual role learning growth, 2-2 & 3-2 for learning growth after interaction with others.
Note 2: Peer evaluation items: 4-1 & 5-1 for assistance with student training courses, 4-2 & 5-2 for student growth in learning.
Note 3: Clarification items: 2-1 for student role in training, 3-1 for assistance needed by students in training learning.

3.2. Research background

The background of this study is set as follows: Students are arranged to participate in internal management training courses within a hotel group, where they will be paired with specific departmental executives (e.g., students assisting the room department manager; students assisting the food and beverage department manager, etc.). In their role as participants in the corporate management training course, students act as both trainees and assist in facilitating communication and document processing for the departmental managers during the course, thereby aiding in the promotion of managerial learning and training outcomes.

The hotel group collaborating in this study holds a certain level of representation in the scale and operation of the Taiwanese hotel industry. The students participating in the internal training of the hotel group are all sophomore and junior students majoring in hospitality management and related education. They participate in two hotel training courses, scheduled according to the working conditions of the managers within the hotel. Each course is completed within one month, with a duration of 7-8 days.

3.3. Data collection and analysis

This study employs student learning journals and post-training evaluation questionnaires for data collection. Both types of data consist of open-ended questions, prompting respondents to provide textual responses. Data collection is proceeded only with the consent of the respondents for use in the study. The qualitative textual data of this study are analyzed using content analysis, wherein conceptualization and coding are conducted based on the thematic relevance of the content, and concepts are classified accordingly (Lin, Yen, & Chen, 2005). The data for this study are examined by three researchers to determine the frequency of relevant concepts, thus summarizing the related research findings.

Table 2:

Data collection methods for the study

	Evaluator	**Evaluation Tool**	**Evaluation Items**
1	**Student**	**Learning Journal Assessment**	● **Learning progress in training course** ● **Learning status during this training session**
2	**Student**	**End-of-course Mentors Evaluation Questionnaire**	● **Mentor 's assistance in learning** ● **Attributes students can learn from the mentor**
		End-of-course Managers Evaluation Questionnaire	● **Manager's assistance in learning** **Attributes students can learn from the manager**
3	**Mentor**	**End-of-course Mentors Evaluation Questionnaire**	● **Assistance provided to in-house training** ● **Student growth** ● **Best qualities (characteristics)**
	Hotel Manager	**End-of-course Managers Evaluation**	

Questionnaire

4. Results

4.1. Background information of study participants

In this study, two management training courses within the hotel group were attended by the same 10 students and assisted by 2 mentors. The number of managers participating in the two courses was 19 and 23, respectively. The majority of participating managers were female (approximately 70%), with ages ranging mostly from 30 to 39 years old. The managers participating in the training courses spanned across different levels, including entry-level, middle-level, and top-level management. The departments involved in the training covered not only top-level decision-makers but also included areas such as room, food and beverage, logistics, and events management. In this experiential learning program, each student assisted approximately 2 managers.

Table 3:
Participant information

			Course 1 (7 Days)		Course 2 (8 Days)	
			Count	%	Count	%
1	Students				n=10	
	Gender	Male	1	10.00%	1	10.00%
		Female	9	90.00%	9	90.00%
2	Hotel managers			n=19		n=23
	Gender	Male	6	31.58%	6	26.09%
		Female	13	68.42%	17	73.91%
	Age	20-29	3	15.79%	5	21.74%
		30-39	8	42.11%	11	47.83%
		40-49	2	10.53%	3	13.04%
		50-59	5	26.32%	4	17.39%
	Position	Top-level	3	15.79%	3	13.04%
		Middle-level	6	31.58%	14	60.87%
		Entry-level	10	52.63%	6	26.09%
	Department	Top-level	2	10.53%	2	8.70%
		Room	5	26.32%	5	21.74%
		Food and Beverage	5	26.32%	4	17.39%
		Logistics	3	15.79%	3	13.04%
		Event Management	4	21.05%	9	39.13%
3	Mentors (Female)				n=2	

Note: Position: Top-level managers (CEO, General Manager, Director), Middle-level managers (Manager, Assistant Manager), Entry-level managers (Team Leader)

4.2. Student evaluation of experiential learnings

The following research findings are based on the analysis of 15-day learning journals from 10 students.

4.2.1. Learning growth in hotel manager training "courses"

Before participating in the courses, students expressed concerns and nervousness, fearing they might not be able to keep up with the curriculum. However, they also conveyed their expectations for participating in the hotel training courses. The actual training courses made students feel they acquired new knowledge and found it interesting, and they expressed that the courses could lay the foundation for their future professional careers.

> *"I am worried about falling behind in the course progress, and there will be a check on learning outcomes at the end of the course. The course should have a certain level of difficulty."*

> *"For the company, educational training is really important. I am very happy to participate in such a practical course."*

> *"The course is designed for hotel executives. It may not be something I currently need, but it is still a new experience for me."*

> *"This course will be very helpful for my future career, and it is something I have never been exposed to before."*

> *"It is very different from the usual way of attending classes at school. I am honored to attend classes with executives. It's a great and unique experience."*

4.2.2. Learning growth in "role orientation" in hotel training participation

In this experiential learning, students transitioned from nervousness to confidence, clearly understanding the roles they played in this corporate training. After completing the experiential learning, students reported actively serving as a bridge of communication between managers, sharing their perspectives, assisting managers in understanding assigned activities, gaining recognition from managers, and learning from other students' interaction patterns, which contributed significantly to their growth in the classroom. Students expressed their desire to genuinely assist in the hotel training program and hoped to truly help the managers. Through sharing experiences with managers during the learning process, they gained a deeper understanding of the actual operation and related case responses within the hotel.

> *"Gradually found the role I played and learned practical knowledge through internal corporate training. However, synchronizing understanding, learning, and producing results during the course was challenging."*

"Learned from other classmates (other students) in guiding discussions and interacting with managers, demonstrating clear logic. The general manager shared a lot, which helped me learn a lot."

"Adjusted my interaction style with managers and learned about the actual operation of the hotel internally."

4.2.3. Student evaluation of manager learning status and characteristics to learn from managers

In this experiential learning, students independently evaluated managers' training status and gained a clearer understanding of their role: assisting in learning output and summarization, facilitating training discussions and focus, and aiding managers' understanding of training content. In this hotel training, students expressed characteristics they could learn from managers: affinity, proactivity, application in practical work, responsiveness, and self-learning.

"Sometimes managers may not understand what the teacher says or may have difficulty expressing their own thoughts, and I always try to help them."

"When managers express differing opinions, I consolidate everyone's opinions and select the best ideas."

"When making presentations this time, we discussed with each other, helped managers present the content they wanted, and made it easier for them to report."

4.2.4. Student evaluation of mentors' assistance and characteristics to learn from

The mentors played a crucial role in facilitating students' experiential learning in this study. Students reported that mentors assisted them in understanding the progress of the training, clarifying concepts in the course content, reminding them to pay attention to certain aspects of the training, and showing concern for each student's learning status. Throughout this learning process, students identified characteristics they could learn from mentors, including critical thinking, efficiency, and individual attention.

"It's not just about giving instructions but guiding us to think comprehensively and meticulously about the issues."

"Mentors reminded us of what to pay attention to both in class and after class."

"Mentors continuously showed concern for everyone's situation (understanding of the course, lunchtime, etc.) and provided quick guidance."

4.3. Manager evaluation of student experiential learning

The following findings were compiled from open-ended questionnaires completed by managers at the end of two training sessions, totaling 42 responses analyzed. Managers believed that students' assistance in the course included: (1) 71% of managers recognized students' assistance in organizing data, and (2) 47% of managers acknowledged that students' participation in corporate training provided different generational perspectives, suggestions, and creativity.

From the perspective of hotel managers, observations of student growth during the training participation included: (1) strengthening of personal traits (responsibility, initiative), (2) efficiency in handling assigned tasks, (3) understanding and focus on the course, (4) proactive communication skills, and (5) a more realistic understanding of industry operations. Among these, managers identified personal trait enhancement and efficiency in task completion as the most notable growth qualities.

4.4. Mentor evaluation of student experiential learning

Following the two training sessions, two mentors provided evaluations of student learning growth. The key findings from the mentors' perspectives are as follows. Mentors noted that students mainly helped in revitalizing interactions and discussions during the training sessions, guiding concepts and focusing discussions, and simplifying document and data organization for managers.

During this experiential learning journey, students demonstrated growth in: (1) interaction and communication with managers (from stiffness to natural interaction), (2) resilience (efficiency in handling reports and documents within a short time), (3) problem-solving abilities (proactively addressing areas of weakness or challenges), (4) synthesis and logical thinking skills, and (5) document presentation abilities. Mentors identified communication, resilience, and problem-solving abilities as the most notable areas of learning growth.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and implications

5.1.1. Enhancing student learning growth through experiential learning

Experiential learning facilitates a practical understanding of the qualities and competencies required in specific roles within real-life contexts. In this study, learners deepened and confirmed their learning changes and growth through reflection (learning journals) and feedback from peers. Excluding specific situational tasks, this study found that traits such as resilience, problem-solving, communication skills, proactiveness, and industry awareness are fostered through experiential learning. This finding is consistent with previous research (Arjmandi et al., 2023; Liang, 2021; Martin, 2024), which suggests that experiential learning enhances problem identification, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities.

5.1.2. Incorporating student support in corporate training for Win-Win outcomes
Students participating in corporate training introduce different training roles beyond the usual training involving colleagues at different levels within the organization. Serving as learning role models for students during training, they share practical industry experiences and insights. Additionally, student participation allows for an understanding of different generational perspectives and ideas during training. Therefore, corporate training becomes a form of knowledge transfer and intergenerational exchange, extending beyond the training itself. Consistent with Hernaus, Černe, and Škerlavaj (2021), executing corporate training through enriched employee relationships can enhance training effectiveness.

5.1.3. Adequate preparation and support mechanisms required for experiential learning
Introducing experiential learning into hotel management training contexts requires relevant preparation and support mechanisms to avoid disruption to existing training practices within the organization and to address students' unfamiliarity with the learning environment. This study found that clearly explaining the learning context to students (procedures and considerations), assisting in clarifying professional concepts, and providing individual attention to each student's learning can facilitate the smooth implementation of experiential learning. Similarly, as suggested by Fuchs (2022), effective training programs support the effectiveness of experiential learning by informing students of the organization's goals, tasks, and requirements, allowing them to develop skills effectively. Aquino (2014) also suggests that to facilitate genuine learning, mentors should explain organizational and operational issues unique to the organization to students before internships and provide regular feedback.

5.1.4. Demonstrating the effects of learning models through real interactions
In addition to learning professional skills in specific departmental contexts, learners also observe and understand the qualities exhibited by industry managers and mentors during interactions. For example, in this study, students identified traits such as the approachability and proactiveness of managers as qualities worth emulating, while they found mentors' critical thinking and efficiency to be noteworthy learning areas. This aligns with the learning process of experiential learning theory, emphasizing learning through observing situations, people, and things (Fuchs, 2022).

5.2. Conclusion
In this study, students participated in hotel management training courses and engaged in experiential learning. In the context of this study, students learned to understand their role and the corresponding qualities and abilities required for their roles. Through their own learning journals and feedback from learning peers, students recognized and confirmed their growth in such learning environments. If experiential learning is to be applied to other departments or industries, attention should also be paid to the guidance and support systems for learning. The contribution of this study lies in integrating experiential learning into hotel management training, which differs from the frontline service learning environments

prevalent in the hospitality industry. Students and managers learn together, supporting each other in management training.

5.3. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies
This study examined the learning outcomes brought by experiential learning to learners on a small scale (10 students). Therefore, it is unknown whether the same learning methods can also bring positive learning effects in larger-scale scenarios with more participants. More research is needed to examine the applicability of experiential learning methods in different instructional settings. This study used 360-degree feedback self-assessment and peer assessment (from managers and mentors) to examine learning growth and collected a large amount of qualitative data for exploratory concept investigation. It is recommended that future research incorporate quantitative research methods to facilitate understanding the relationships among variables such as learning methods, learning styles, and learning outcomes through statistical testing.

REFERENCES

Adib, H. (2024). Experiential learning in higher education: Assessing the role of business simulations in shaping student attitudes towards sustainability. The International *Journal of Management Education, 22*(2), 100968. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2024.100968

Aquino, C. (2014). More Hours, More Areas, Better Practicum Training….? P*rocedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 144*, 264-272. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.07.295

Atwater, L., & Brett, J. (2005). Antecedents and consequences of reactions to developmental 360° feedback. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 66*(3), 532-548. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2004.05.003

Arjmandi, M., Woo, M., Mankelow, C., Loho, T., Shahbaz, K., Auckaili, A., & Thambyah, A. (2023). Embedding computer programming into a chemical engineering course: The impact on experiential learning. *Education for Chemical Engineers, 43*, 50-57. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ece.2023.01.008

Carson, M. (2006). Saying it like it isn't: The pros and cons of 360-degree feedback. *Business Horizons, 49*(5), 395-402. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2006.01.004

Chen, T., Shen, C., & Gosling, M. (2021). To stay or not to stay? The causal effect of interns' career intention on enhanced employability and retention in the hospitality and tourism industry. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education, 28*, 100305. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhlste.2021.100305

Cunha, C., Martins, C., & Mendonça, V. (2023). Using extended reality in experiential learning for hospitality management education. *Procedia Computer Science, 219*, 634-641. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2023.01.333

Fuchs, K. (2022). An interview study to explore the perceived usefulness of in-house training programs in tourism and hospitality education. *Heliyon, 8*(12), e12547. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e12547

Harris, K., & Cannon, D. (1999). Opinions of training methods used in the hospitality industry: A call for review. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 14*(1), 79-96. https://doi.org/10.1016/0278-4319(95)00008-Z

Hernaus, T., Černe, M., & Škerlavaj, M. (2021). The interplay between relational job design and cross-training in predicting employee job/task citizenship performance. *Human Resource Development Quarterly, 32*(4), 625–646. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrdq.21427

Horng, S., & Lin, L. (2013). Training needs assessment in a hotel using 360 degree feedback to develop competency-based training programs. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 20*, 61-67. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2013.06.003

Liang, A. (2021). Examining the factors of experiential learning and teaching style: A case study of a hospitality and tourism program. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education, 29*, 100332. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhlste.2021.100332

Lin, J., Yen, C., & Chen, M. (2005). Qualitative research method: models and steps of interviewing. *Journal of Disability Research, 3*(2), 122-136. https://doi.org/10.30072/JDR.200506.0005

Lu, H. (2021). Enhancing university student employability through practical experiential learning in the sport industry: An industry-academia cooperation case from Taiwan. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education, 28*, 100301. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhlste.2021.100301

Kolb, D., Boyatzis, R., & Mainemelis, C. (2001). *Experiential learning theory: Previous research and new directions*. In R. J. Sternberg & L.-f. Zhang (Eds.), Perspectives on thinking, learning, and cognitive styles (pp. 227–247). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

Martin, A. (2024). Experiential learning in a problem-based course on urban forest planning and management. *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening, 95*, 128283. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ufug.2024.128283

Miettinen, R. (2000) The concept of experiential learning and John Dewey's theory of reflective thought and action, *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 19*(1), 54-72. https://doi.org/10.1080/026013700293458

Quibrantar, S., & Ezezika, O. (2023). Evaluating student engagement and experiential learning in global classrooms: A qualitative case study. *Studies in Educational Evaluation, 78*, 101290. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2023.101290

Sikes, D., Jestes, E., LeClair-Smith, C., & Yates, R. (2015). Using a 360° Feedback evaluation to enhance interprofessional collaboration. *Nurse Leader, 13*(4), 64-69. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mnl.2014.10.002

Urbancová, H., Vrabcová, P., Hudáková, M., & Petrů, G. (2021). Effective training evaluation: The role of factors influencing the evaluation of effectiveness of employee training and development. *Sustainability, 13*(5), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.3390/su13052721

Wu, M. (2009). The insights of John Dewey's Empirical Philosophy for curriculum and teaching. *Journal of University of Taipei. Education, 40*(1), 35-54. https://doi.org/10.6336/JUTe/2009.40(1)2

Zopiatis, A., & Constanti, P. (2012). Managing hospitality internship practices: a conceptual framework. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education, 24*(1), 44-51. https://doi.org/10.1080/10963758.2012.10696661

Zopiatis, A., Papadopoulos, C., & Theofanous, Y. (2021). A systematic review of literature on hospitality internships. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education, 28*, 100309. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhlste.2021.100309

Hospitality students' occupational embeddedness and career commitment

Hsieh, Yuchin (Jerrie)
International Hospitality and Service Innovation
Rochester Institute of Technology

Kesgin, Muhammet
International Hospitality and Service Innovation
Rochester Institute of Technology

Derya Dönmez-Kesgin
Calkins Road Middle School

Abstract:
This study examines the association between fit, links, sacrifice dimensions of occupational embeddedness, and career commitment among American and Turkish hospitality students, along with intergroup comparisons. Findings reveal positive associations between each dimension of occupational embeddedness and career commitment for both groups, with fit demonstrating a stronger connection. American students show higher levels of occupational embeddedness dimensions and career commitment compared to Turkish students.

Keywords: Occupational Embeddedness, Career Commitment, Hospitality Students

1. Introduction

Occupational embeddedness, as defined by Crossley et al. (2007), refers to "a construct comprising contextual and perceptual forces that tether individuals to their workplace, colleagues, and work-related issues" (p. 1031). In simpler terms, it denotes the factors that retain individuals in their current occupation (Cumming et al., 2023). Research indicates that employees with higher levels of occupational embeddedness are less inclined to voluntarily leave their organization, bolstering retention rates, attendance, organizational citizenship behavior, and job performance (Mitchell et al., 2001; Lee et al., 2014).

The hospitality industry has long struggled to recruit and retain talented employees (Richardson, 2009), as indicated by its high employee turnover rate, which stands at 86% among hospitality managers (Stalcup & Pearson, 2001). The impact of COVID-19 has exacerbated labor shortage issues, causing some employees to choose to leave the hospitality industry (DeMicco & Liu, 2021). Hospitality management students represent one potential labor source for the industry. However, studies have shown that many hospitality graduates either never pursued careers within the industry or left without plans to return (Zhang & Eringa, 2002). Blomme's (2006) study of hospitality graduates from a hotel school in the

Netherlands found that approximately 70% of the graduates were no longer in the hospitality industry six years after graduation, indicating a disparity in educational investment.

Hospitality students play a vital role in the hospitality workforce. However, the industry faces challenges in retaining them after graduation, highlighting the need to analyze factors and find solutions. In light of this, occupational embeddedness emerges as a promising framework for understanding employee turnover and retention dynamics. Accordingly, this study seeks to employ this innovative approach to explore the potential link between occupational embeddedness and career commitment among hospitality students across diverse cultural contexts, specifically within the United States and Turkey.

2. Literature Review

The hospitality industry is labor-intensive and has long faced challenges with labor shortages. Researchers addressing this issue have identified multiple variables (e.g., job satisfaction, job performance, work and life balance, organizational commitment, management support, job quality) associated with employee turnover. However, these variables only contribute a limited percentage of the variance (Zhang et al., 2012), indicating the need for a fresh perspective on exploring turnover. Occupational or job embeddedness theory emerges to respond to this need and serves as a new approach to delve into employee turnover.

Occupational embeddedness refers to a wide array of psychological, social, and financial factors that influence employee retention (Yao et al., 2004). These influences extend beyond the workplace, forming a network that individuals can become entangled in, making it challenging for them to leave their job (Mitchell et al., 2001). Mitchell et al. (2001) posited that occupational embeddedness consists of three components: fit, sacrifice, and links. "Fit" pertains to the degree of alignment between an individual's skills and the organization's requirements, as well as the congruence between personal interests and the rewards provided by the organization. “Sacrifice” entails the potential drawbacks individuals would encounter if they were to depart from their current organizations, such as losing out on pension plans or insurance benefits. “Links” signify the strength of relationships individuals have with their coworkers and the tasks they undertake, encompassing aspects like friendships and task interdependencies. The greater the number of strands an individual possesses within the three components, the more deeply entrenched they become, rendering it increasingly challenging for them to depart from their current job (Michell et al., 2001). Studies found that embedded employees are less likely to quit their jobs after controlling factors such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, or job alternatives (Jiang et al., 2001). Furthermore, employees embedded in their roles tend to respond less intensely to adverse events, such as being overlooked for promotion or not receiving a salary increase (Burton et al., 2010). Felps et al. investigated coworkers’ job embeddedness and job search behaviors, uncovering their impact on employee’s decisions to leave their jobs (Felps et al., 2009). Robinson et al. found that frontline hotel employees who perceive greater organizational sacrifice are less inclined to leave, while stronger community links outside the organization increase intentions to leave (Robinson et al., 2014).

Drawing upon the literature review above, this study proposes the following hypotheses:
H1: The fit dimension of occupational embeddedness has a positive influence on career commitment for sample 1 (H1a) and sample 2 (H1b) participants.
H2: The links dimension of occupational embeddedness has a positive influence on career commitment for sample 1 (H2a) and sample 2 (H2b) participants.
H3: The links dimension of occupational embeddedness has a positive influence on career commitment for sample 1 (H3a) and sample 2 (H3b) participants.
H4: Do sample 1 and sample 2 participants differ in their responses on occupational embeddedness dimensions of fit (H4a), links (H4b), sacrifice (H4c), and career commitment (H4d)?

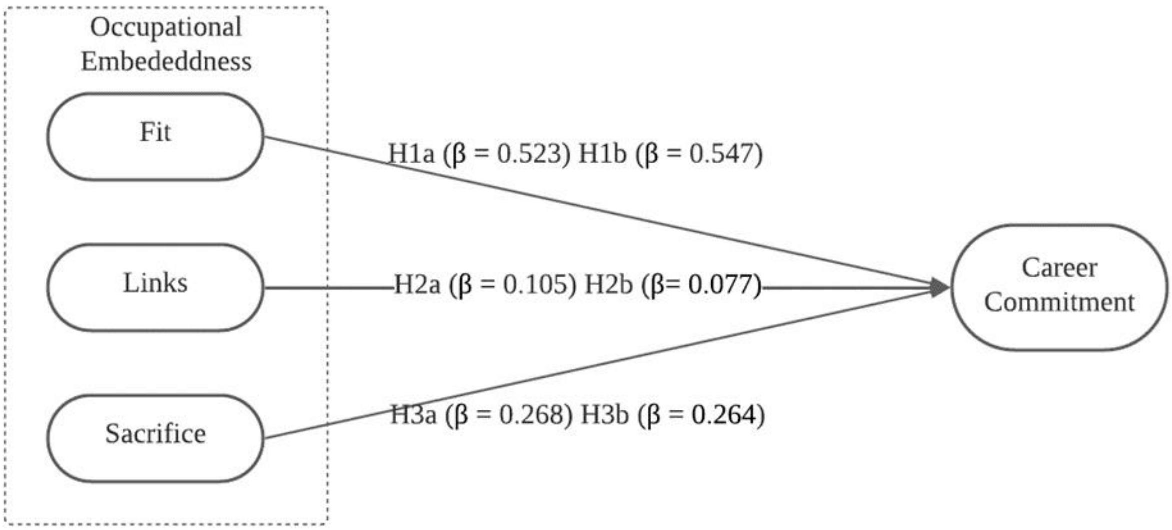
3. Methodology

A convenience sampling method was employed for data collection, gathering responses from hospitality students at universities in Turkey and the USA. An online survey was developed and distributed to hospitality students at these institutions. The survey comprised three sections: Section I included questions related to the three factors of occupational embeddedness adapted from Ng and Feldman (2009), consisting of five items for each of the fit and sacrifice dimensions and four items for the links dimension. Section II encompassed three questions regarding career commitment, while Section III asked for demographic information such as gender, academic year, and age.

4. Results

A total of 153 responses were collected from American hospitality students and 278 from Turkish hospitality students. Statistical analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics 28 and Smart Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (SmartPLS) 4.1.0.0. For model testing, SmartPLS was used due to the distributional assumptions not being within the recommended threshold, and the model consisted of reflective and formative constructs. Fit, sacrifice, and career commitment were modeled as reflective constructs, whereas links were modeled as a formative construct. The summary statistics were used to estimate the outer loadings of reflective and outer weights of formative constructs, indicator reliability, composite reliability, average variance extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity. LIN 4 was eliminated from the survey for both samples. Additionally, LIN 3 was removed for the US sample, and LIN 2 was removed for the Turkish sample due to low factor loading. Before assessing the structural model, Harman's one-factor test was used. The primary factor accounted for less than 50% of the variance (38.33%), indicating that there is no common methods bias (CMB) issue. BCa bootstrapping with 10,000 subsamples addressed non-normal data issues during structural model assessment for H1, H2, and H3 in both samples (MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012).

The proposed hypotheses H1, H2, and H3 for both samples were supported (see Figure 1). Of the three dimensions, FIT was found to have a stronger association with career commitment than the other two dimensions in both the US and Turkey samples.



a: USA sample; b: Turkey sample

Figure 1. Proposed Model

T-tests were conducted to determine whether there were any statistically significant differences between American and Turkish hospitality students on the three dimensions of occupational embeddedness and career commitment. On average, American students have higher scores on fit, links, sacrifice, and career commitment. Table 1 shows the results of T-tests, indicating that all mean score differences were significant.

Table 1: Results of T-Tests

	USA		Turkey						
	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	df	t value	Mean Difference	BCa 95% CI	p-val
Fit	4.43	0.57	3.45	0.63	392	10.281	0.98	0.815-1.15	0.001*
Links	11.84	0.06	7.44	0.83	392	2.919	4.40	1.393-7.521	0.004*
Sacrifice	3.85	0.06	3.06	0.60	392	8.366	0.78	0.610-0.956	0.001*
Career Commitment	5.62	0.10	4.24	0.11	392	8.262	1.37	1.069-1.681	0.001*

Note: $p < .05^{*}$

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this study reveal a positive relationship between the three dimensions of occupational embeddedness and career commitment among American and Turkish hospitality students. Regarding fit, hospitality educators should guide students to gain a comprehensive understanding of real hospitality work environments and encourage them to pursue internships to enhance their fit and, consequently, their commitment to hospitality career paths. Regarding sacrifice, hospitality employers should provide attractive employee benefits, promotional opportunities, competitive salaries, and respect to attract and retain talented hospitality students. Concerning links, the longer students work in the hospitality industry, the greater their commitment becomes.

When comparing American and Turkish students, it is noteworthy that American students had higher mean scores in fit, links, sacrifice, and overall career commitment. This difference may be attributed to varying perceptions of the hospitality profession due to cultural disparities. Hospitality may be viewed less favorably as a profession in Turkey than in the USA, and addressing this concern is crucial to prevent it from becoming a psychological barrier for Turkish hospitality students committing to hospitality careers.

The study's results revealed a correlation between occupational embeddedness and hospitality students' career commitment. To optimize the return on investment in higher education, institutions may find it beneficial to integrate occupational embeddedness assessments into their career advisory services. This approach can empower students to make well-informed decisions regarding career exploration and the selection of hospitality majors, thereby enhancing their career prospects and overall satisfaction within the industry.

This study is limited to a convenience sample of hospitality students in the US and Turkey. Future research could improve generalizability by increasing the sample size and including participants from diverse cultural backgrounds. Additionally, expanding the model to incorporate variables like hotel internship experience, length of hospitality work years, personality traits, and perceptions of the hospitality industry could provide deeper insights into predicting students' career commitment.

REFERENCES

Blomme, R. J. (2006). *Eindrapportage Associate Degree*. The Hague: The Hotelschool The Hague.

Burton, J. P., Holtom, B. C., Sablynski, C. J., Mitchell, T. R., & Lee, T. W. (2010). The buffering effects of job embeddedness on negative shocks. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 76(1), 42–51.

Crossley, C. D., Bennett, R. J., Jex, S. M., & Burnfield, J. L. (2007). Development of a global measure of job embeddedness and integration into a traditional model of voluntary turnover. *The Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92(4), 1031-1042.

Cummings, M., & Zong, C., & Haug, C., & Leech, N. (2023). Higher education faculty and job embeddedness: validation of the occupational embeddedness scale. *Studies in Higher Education*,48 (6), 1-13.

DeMicco, F., & Liu, L. (2021). Labor shortages and increasing labor costs post-COVID-19: How future hospitality businesses are going to thrive? Retrieved from https://www.hospitalitynet.org/opinion/4106002.html

Felps, W., Mitchell, T. R., Herman, D. R., Lee, T. W., Holtom, B. C., & Harman, W. S. (2009). Turnover contagion: How coworkers' job embeddedness and job search behaviors influence quitting. *Academy of Management Journal*, 52(3), 545-561.

Jiang, K., Liu, D., McKay, P. F., Lee, T. W., & Mitchell, T. R. (2012). When and how is job embeddedness predictive of turnover? A meta-analytic investigation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 97(5), 1077-1096.

Lee, T. W., Burch, T. C., & Mitchell, T. R. (2014). The story of why we stay: A review of job embeddedness. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 1, 199-216.

MacKenzie, S. & Podsakoff, P. M. (2012). Common method bias in marketing: Causes, mechanisms, and procedural remedies. *Journal of Retailing*, 88(4), 542-555.

Mitchell, T. R., Holtom, B. C., Lee, T. W., Sablynski, C. J., & Erez, M. (2001). Why people stay: Using job embeddedness to predict voluntary turnover. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44(6), 1102-1121.

Ng, T. W. H., & Feldman, D. C. (2009). Occupational embeddedness and job performance. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 30(7), 863-891.

Richardson, S. (2009). Undergraduates' perceptions of tourism and hospitality as a career choice. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 28(3), 382-388.

Robinson, R. N. S., Kralj, A., Solnet, D. J., Goh, E., & Callan, V. (2014). Thinking job embeddedness not turnover: Towards a better understanding of frontline hotel worker retention. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 36, 101-109.

Stalcup, L. D., & Pearson, T. A. (2001). A model of the causes of management turnover in hotels. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 25, 17-30

Yao, X., Lee, T. W., Mitchell, T. R., Burton, J. P., & Sablynski, C. J. (2004). Job embeddedness: Current research and future directions. In R. Griffeth & P. Hom (Eds.), Innovative theory and empirical research on employee turnover (pp. 153–187). Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.

Zhang, R., & Eringa, K. (2022). Predicting hospitality management students' intention to enter employment in the hospitality industry on graduation: A person–environment fit perspective. *Research in Hospitality Management*, 12(2), 103-113.

Zhang, M., Fried, D.D., & Griffeth, R.W. (2012). A review of job embeddedness: Conceptual, measurement issues, and directions for future research. *Human Resource Management Review*, 22 (3), 220-231.

Do you plan to continue your career in the hospitality industry following the internship? Examining the impacts of regulatory foci and psychological contract violation

Zhuang, Wen-Long
Department of Culinary Arts and Hotel Management
Hungkuang University

Liu, Chi-Wei
Department of Culinary Arts and Hotel Management
Hungkuang University

Li, Yan Bei
Department of Culinary Arts and Hotel Management
Hungkuang University

Abstract:

This study examines the impact of regulatory foci on hospitality interns' intention to join the hospitality industry, with a focus on the moderating role of psychological contract violation. The findings suggest that both promotion focus and prevention focus positively influence interns' intention to join the hospitality industry. Furthermore, psychological contract violation positively moderates the correlation between interns' promotion focus and their intention to join the hospitality industry, as well as the association between prevention focus and the intention to join the hospitality industry.

Keywords: Regulatory foci, Psychological contract violation, Intention to join the hospitality

1. Introduction

With the continuous and vigorous development of the tourism sector, the hospitality and tourism service sector is facing a rapid increase in the demand for manpower (Tsai et al., 2017). This swift surge in demand poses challenges not only in terms of quantity but also highlights the pivotal role of employees in creating and delivering excellent services, especially in areas such as catering, accommodation, and related services (Haldorai et al., 2019). Moreover, forecasting and planning actions to improve customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry present significant challenges (Ruiz-Palomino et al., 2019). In this context, frontline employees are subject to numerous professional requirements (Lin et al., 2014). Essentially, the work attitude of employees in this sector becomes crucial within such an unpredictable environment. Consequently, the recruitment of suitable talents emerges as a primary concern for various organizations, representing a key strategy to establish a competitive advantage (Lu & Lu, 2020).

In higher education, it is not just about acquiring knowledge; it is a pivotal environment that fosters the holistic development of learners (Buckingham & Clifton, 2005). Beyond imparting subject-specific knowledge, higher education provides a diverse learning environment that inspires students to continuously develop and enhance themselves in various aspects. Given the industry's emphasis on work experience, internship programs have become standard in the curriculum of most tourism and hospitality departments worldwide (Belhassen et al., 2020). This is because the shift from academia to the professional workforce presents a significant challenge, a phenomenon observed even in the most advanced economies worldwide (Alp et al., 2023). Furthermore, internships enhance the quality of education in higher learning institutions by imparting students with practical and marketable skills, while also cultivating a comprehension of ethical practices within the professional workplace (Mensah et al., 2020).

It’s essential to highlight that the COVID-19 crisis has significantly influenced the hospitality sector in recent years (Birtch et al., 2021). This crisis not only has negative implications for the emotional and physical well-being of employees (Chong et al., 2020; Wanberg et al., 2020) but also presents a significant risk to the overall development and sustainability of the hospitality sector (Birtch et al., 2021). Students pursuing studies in hospitality or tourism encounter heightened difficulties in securing jobs or internships during the epidemic, underscoring the insecurity faced by current and future workers (Baum & Hai, 2020). An intriguing question arises as to whether students in hospitality or tourism will choose professions in the hospitality sector after completing their internships.

Hence, the management within the hospitality industry can contemplate the types of interns likely to continue working in the sector after completing their internship. Significantly, the regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1996) outlines two clear approaches to achieving goals: promotion focus and prevention focus. People exhibiting a promotion focus regard hopes and aspirations as their goals, whereas those with a prevention focus perceive responsibilities and obligations as their objectives. Individuals aligned with these two foci pursue their goals with enthusiasm or vigilance, respectively. The eager way involves ensuring positive outcomes and avoiding the lack of positive outcomes, while the vigilant way involves securing the lack of negative outcomes and ensuring the prevention of negative consequences (Higgins et al., 2001).

Some studies have indicated that regulatory foci can impact the conduct of employees in the hospitality industry, influencing aspects such as effort behavior and social loafing (Dai et al., 2020), employees’ engagement or burnout behavior (Dai et al., 2021a), workplace deviant behavior (Zhuang et al., 2023), and employee voice (Dai et al., 2021b). However, to our knowledge, it seems no existing literature that has examined the influence of regulatory foci among hospitality interns on their inclination to enter the hospitality industry. Does the orientation toward these two regulatory foci play a role in shaping interns' decisions regarding their inclination to initiate a career in the hospitality sector after finishing their internship? This question serves as the first research objective in this study.

Nonetheless, even if regulatory foci play a role in influencing the job choices of hospitality interns after completing their internship, could this association be influenced by contextual factors? With ongoing changes in organizational operations, the issue of psychological contract violation has garnered widespread attention (Nadin & Williams, 2012). If hospitality operators allow interns to experience psychological contract violations, it could significantly impact the company's operations. Therefore, is psychological contract violation a critical situational factor influencing the association between regulatory foci and the intention to select a job in the hospitality sector? This forms the second research objective in this study. In brief, this study seeks to investigate how regulatory foci affect the intention of hospitality interns to select a job in the hospitality industry after completing their internship, while also exploring the moderating role played by psychological contract violation. The work aspires that its findings can serve as a reference for hoteliers, relevant government ministries, and hospitality departments in universities.

2. Literature Review

Regulatory Focus Theory, abbreviated as RFT, asserts that individuals utilize distinct goal-striving strategies to attain desired consequences (Higgins, 1997, 2000). Both promotion focus and prevention focus are encompassed within regulatory focus, as proposed by Higgins (1998). Individuals demonstrating a promotion focus strategically align themselves with goal achievement., while those with a prevention focus typically emphasize maintenance (Crowe & Higgins, 1997). This indicates that individuals oriented toward prevention focus adhere to responsibilities and obligations in order to safeguard themselves and mitigate the risk of adverse consequences (Higgins, 1997). In alignment with Higgins' (1998) perspective, individuals embodying a promotion focus are notably responsive to the presence or absence of positive outcomes, while those adopting a prevention focus are keenly attuned to the presence or absence of adverse outcomes. Moreover, promotion focus perceives the appropriate strategic direction as "approach," while a prevention-oriented perspective considers "steering clear" as the appropriate strategic course (Das & Kumar, 2011). Higgins (2000) and Neubert et al. (2008) pointed out that it is clear that individuals emphasizing a promotion focus strive for goal attainment, whereas those emphasizing a prevention focus strive to avert errors or losses.

Following internships in the hospitality industry, one could explore interns' inclination to pursue careers in the same field by considering their promotion and prevention focuses. In accordance with RFT, the promotion focus of hospitality interns may lead them to present their best selves to ensure excellent performance, thereby achieving commendable results in their internship and deepening their willingness to persist in the hospitality sector. The prevention focus of hospitality interns, on the other hand, may drive them to avoid mistakes in their work, urging them to adhere to job responsibilities and garnering positive job evaluations, potentially boosting their inclination to remain in the hospitality sector. Accordingly, this research suggests the subsequent hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: The higher the promotion focus demonstrated by hospitality interns, the more evident their intention to join the hospitality industry.

Hypothesis 2: The higher the prevention focus demonstrated by hospitality interns, the more evident their intention to join the hospitality industry.

Psychological contract is a concept based on individual subjectivity, and the parties involved may not always share a consensus, distinguishing it from other frameworks such as implicit contracts based on societal norms or shared expectations (Rousseau, 1989; Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Psychological contract violation is characterized by the organization's inability to meet the obligations stipulated in an individual's psychological contract (Robinson & Morrison, 2000). According to Morrison and Robinson (1997), this definition centers on an individual's perception of whether the organization is meeting its obligations, prompting emotional and psychological evaluations of such breaches. In recent times, scholars have gradually turned their attention to the negative impact of psychological contract violation on the hospitality sector, making it a crucial issue within the field (Chen et al., 2021; Lim et al., 2023; Saleem et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2020). This heightened focus reflects a deep concern for the issues of psychological contract violation faced by employees in the work environment.

Should hospitality interns perceive a failure on the part of the internship organization to uphold its commitments, such as salary and benefits, it suggests a likelihood of them developing a negative perception of the organization. During instances characterized by significant psychological contract violation, hospitality interns may harbor dissatisfaction with the company and could develop a negative overall impression of the hospitality industry. At this point, even if they are dissatisfied with the company, the utility of promotion focus becomes crucial. To prove their capabilities, interns may strive to exceed the expected job performance of the internship organization. A prevention focus, geared towards averting workplace errors, might prompt hospitality interns to handle tasks cautiously in order to steer clear of potential reprimands from their superiors. Conversely, under conditions of minimal psychological contract violation, hospitality interns are prone to experience satisfaction with the company. At this point, the effects of promotion focus or prevention focus on the intention to select a job in the hospitality sector post-internship might not be as clearly evident. To summarize, this research suggests the subsequent hypotheses:

H3: The impact of psychological contract violation moderates the connection between promotion focus and the intention to join the hospitality industry among hospitality interns.

H4: The impact of psychological contract violation moderates the connection between prevention focus and the intention to join the hospitality industry among hospitality interns.

Drawing upon the aforementioned hypotheses, this study presents a research framework, depicted in Figure 1.

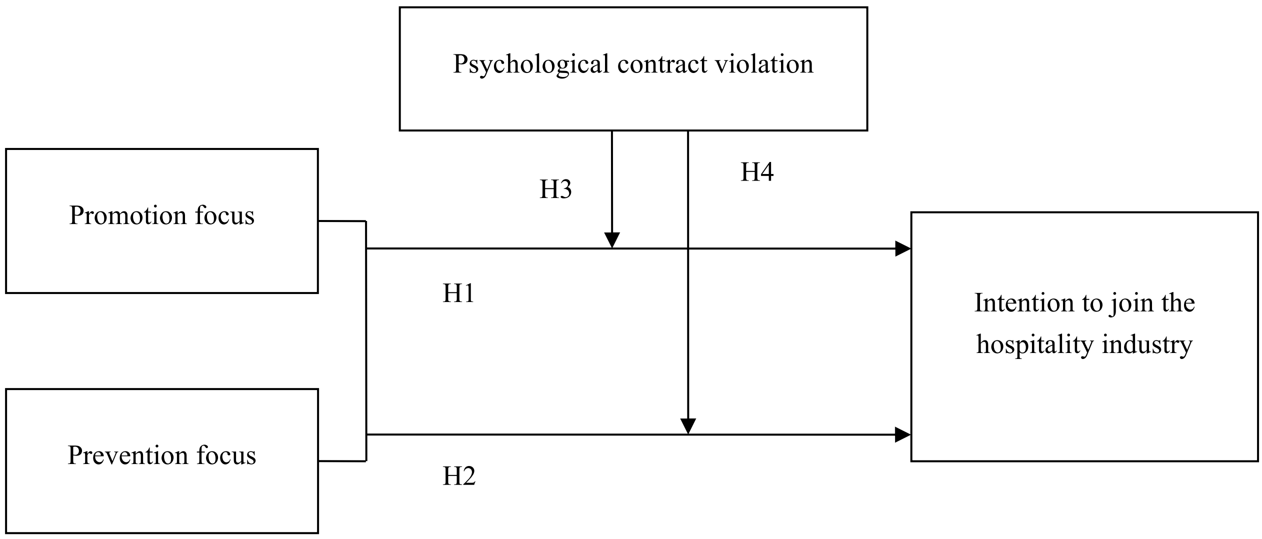


Figure 1 Research framework

3. Methodology

3.1. Sampling

This study includes interns as subjects (with at least 6 months of internship experience), specifically from five-star hotels and chain restaurants situated in Taiwan. The method employed is purposive sampling. This study officially distributed 600 questionnaires.

3.2. Measurement

The items measured in this study include gender, department, and years of involvement in the hospitality sector as three demographic variables. The scale formulated by Wallace and Chen (2006), comprises 12 items distributed across two factors: promotion focus and prevention focus, each encompassing 6 items. Measured through a scale created by Robinson and Morrison (2000), psychological contract violation comprises 4 items. Lastly, the study utilizes a 2-item questionnaire, created by Walsh et al. (2014), to evaluate students' intention to enter hospitality field. The measurement of the above-mentioned research variables is done using 5-point Likert scale.

4. Results

4.1. Profile of the respondents
A distribution of 600 intern questionnaires was conducted for this work, resulting in the collection of 434 internship questionnaires. With the exclusion of 15 invalid questionnaires, the remaining valid questionnaires numbered 419, yielding an effective response rate of 69.83%. The criteria for excluding invalid questionnaires included incompleteness, blank responses, omissions, multiple selections, failed to achieve sampling standards, and questionnaires with all scores being similar. Such questionnaires were deemed invalid in this study. Basing on the analysis results, a majority of the respondents were female, constituting 65.60%. Concerning internship departments, the majority were from the food and beverage department (66.80%). Concerning years of experience in the hospitality sector, the majority of respondents had fewer than 1 year of experience, amounting to 59.40%.

4.1. Hypothesis tests
To test Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2, this study employed intention to join the hospitality industry as the dependent variable, with gender, department, and years of involvement in the hospitality sector considered as control variables. This study addresses the negative impacts of multicollinearity, deviation scores, as prescribed by Aiken and West (1991), were applied to transform all continuous independent variables. Table 3 displays the analysis results for the regression model, where both promotion focus and prevention focus were incorporated as independent variables. The study found that promotion focus significantly influences the prediction of intention to join the hospitality industry ($\beta=0.41$, $p<0.001$). Thus, Hypothesis 1 is validated. Likewise, prevention focus significantly influences the prediction of intention to enter the hospitality sector ($\beta=0.19$, $p<0.001$), confirming the support for Hypothesis 2.

Table 3 Regression analysis for the impact of regulatory foci on the intention to join the hospitality industry.

Dependent variable / β / Independent variable	Intention to join the hospitality industry
Gender	0.06
Department	0.00
Years of involvement in the hospitality sector	0.05
Promotion focus	0.41***
Prevention focus	0.19***
R^2	0.30
Adj-R^2	0.29

F	35.54***

N＝419; *** $p < 0.001$.

To validate hypotheses 3 and 4, this work employs intention to enter the hospitality industry as the dependent variable, while controlling for gender, department, and years of experience in the hospitality sector. Independent variables encompass both promotion focus and prevention focus, with psychological contract violation assigned as the moderating variable. The outcomes of the regression analysis can be found in Table 4. The analysis reveals a noteworthy impact of the interaction term between promotion focus and psychological contract violation on the intention to enter the hospitality sector (β=0.09, p＜0.05). As shown in Figure 2, in situations with low psychological contract violation, hospitality interns' promotion focus positively influences their intention to enter the hospitality industry. In contrast, in situations with high psychological contract violation, the positive impact of promotion focus on the intention to enter the hospitality industry is more pronounced. Therefore, hypothesis 3 is supported. Based on the analysis findings, the interaction between prevention focus and psychological contract violation significantly influences the intention to enter the hospitality sector (β=0.10, p<0.05). Illustrated in Figure 3, when psychological contract violation is low, the prevention focus of hospitality interns positively affects the intention to enter the hospitality industry. Conversely, under high psychological contract violation conditions, the positive influence of prevention focus on the intention to enter the hospitality industry becomes more evident. Thus, there is support for Hypothesis 4.

Table 4 Regression analysis involving regulatory foci and psychological contract violation as predictors for the intention to enter the hospitality sector.

Dependent variable / β / Independent variable	Intention to join the hospitality industry	
	Model 1	Model 2
Gender	0.05	0.07
Department	-0.01	0.03
Years of involvement in the hospitality sector	0.06	0.02
Promotion focus	0.47***	-
Prevention focus	-	0.36*
Psychological contract violation	-0.19***	-0.14**
Promotion focus * psychological contract violation	0.09*	-
Prevention focus * psychological contract violation	-	0.10*
R^2	0.33	0.23
Adj-R^2	0.32	0.22
F	33.00***	20.38***

N＝419; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

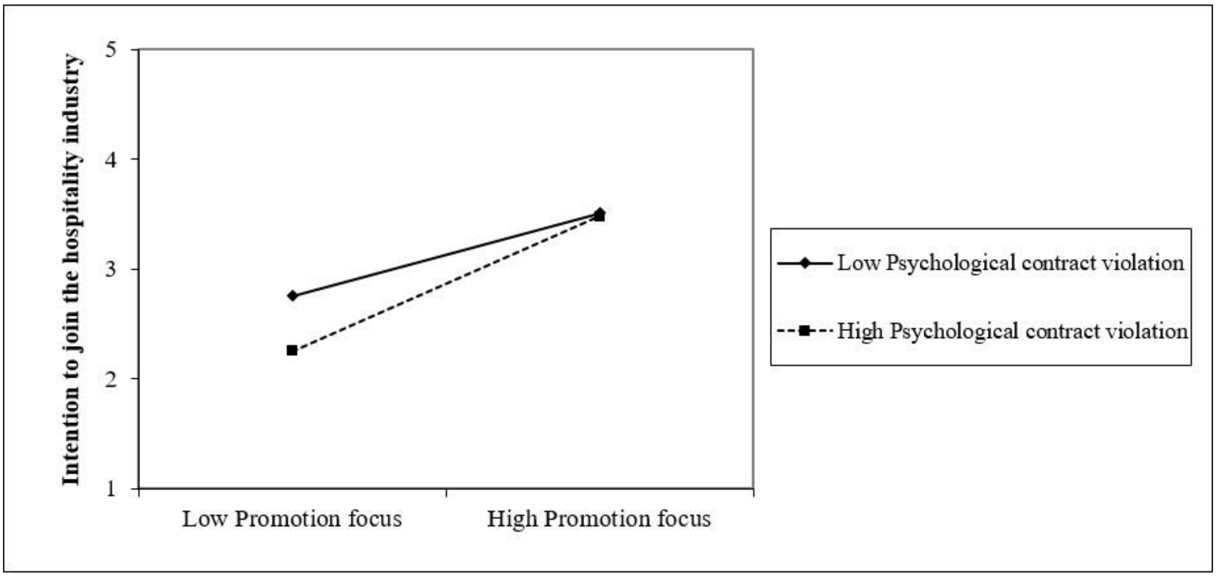


Figure 2 Moderating impact of psychological contract violation on the association between promotion focus and intention to enter the hospitality sector

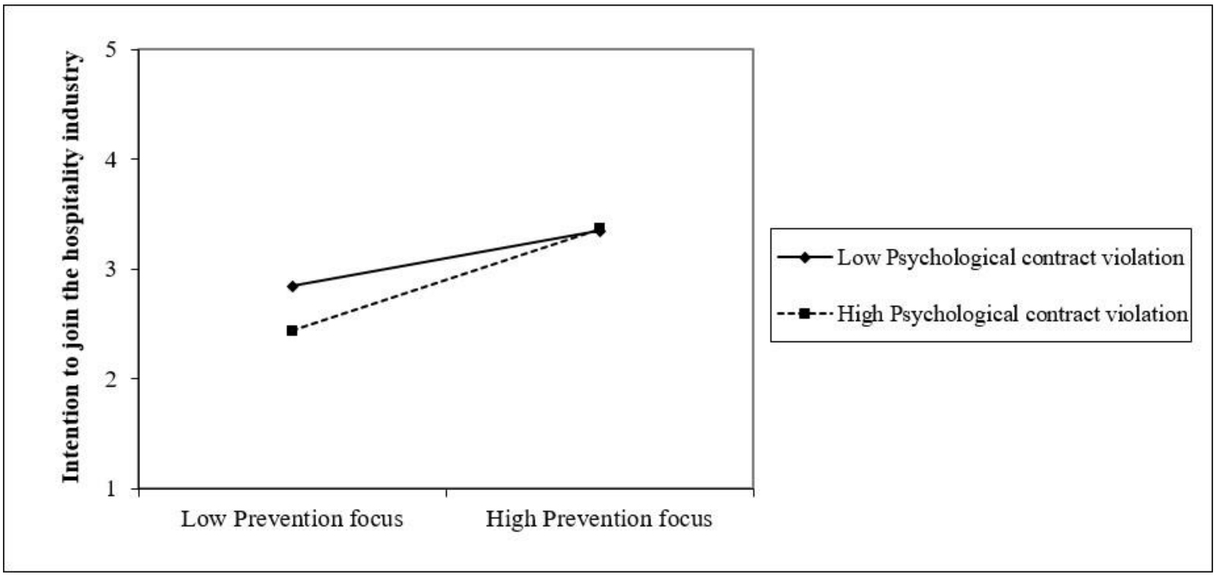


Figure 3 Moderating impact of psychological contract violation on the association between prevention focus and the intention to enter the hospitality sector.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and implications

The existing body of literature examining the factors influencing interns' intentions to pursue careers in the hospitality sector post-graduation within the hospitality and tourism field is notably constrained (e.g., Birtch et al., 2021; Farmaki, 2018; Kahraman & Alrawadieh, 2021;

Ng et al., 2023; Qu et al., 2021; Zhou et al., 2022). This study, akin to prior research in hospitality and tourism, endeavors to explore the determinants of interns' intentions to enter the hospitality industry after completing their studies. However, the distinctive contribution of this study lies in its adoption of the Regulatory Focus Theory (RFT) perspective, specifically scrutinizing the impact of regulatory foci and psychological contract violation on the intentions of hospitality interns to seek a profession in the industry post-graduation. The research design anticipates addressing prevalent gaps in the current literature within the hospitality and tourism domains. By concentrating on regulatory foci and psychological contract violation, this study aims to provide a more thorough examination of whether interns are inclined towards pursuing careers in the hospitality sector post-graduation, and it delves into the potential interactive effects between these two factors. This nuanced exploration is crucial for furnishing concrete and actionable recommendations, not only for academic scholars but also for practitioners in the hospitality industry. Therefore, this work has the potential to introduce novel theoretical perspectives and empirical insights into the ongoing discourse in the hospitality and tourism domain. As it endeavors to fill existing research gaps, it is poised to contribute substantively to the academic literature, inspire further scholarly inquiries, and offer pragmatic insights that can be readily applied within the dynamic landscape of the hospitality industry.

The research results indicate that the promotion and prevention focuses of hospitality interns are crucial in increasing their willingness to enter the hospitality sector after graduation. This holds significant implications for operators within the hospitality industry, as they need to pay attention to whether interns will continue to engage in hospitality industry work in the future. On a practical level, human resources department heads should collaborate with other department managers to determine talent needs and use the Workplace Regulatory Focus Scale for comprehensive assessment when selecting interns. Simultaneously, integrating situational tests aims to successfully recruit qualified and outstanding employees. Therefore, devising such sensible strategies not only ensures the foresight and success of the hospitality sector in selecting and nurturing new talent but also contributes to building a robust talent pool to address industry changes and future challenges.

This study found that in situations where psychological contract violation is lower among hospitality interns, both their emphasis on promotion and prevention contribute positively to the intention of choosing a job in the hospitality industry after graduation. Conversely, in situations with higher psychological contract violation, the positive influence of promotion focus and prevention focus on the intention to seek a profession a job in the hospitality sector after graduation is more pronounced among hospitality interns. However, overall, hospitality interns with low psychological contract violation generally exhibit a higher intention to seek a profession in the hospitality industry after graduation compared to those with high psychological contract violation. Therefore, to prevent the positive expectations of hospitality interns towards their internships from being impacted by psychological contract violation, the hospitality industry can strive in the following directions: Firstly, ensure clear communication of the company's expectations and roles for interns. This means that the company must clearly convey the expected performance of interns within the organization and explicitly define the responsibilities and roles they need to undertake during the internship. Such clear communication helps avoid any potential misunderstandings, ensuring alignment between both parties in understanding the expectations and goals of the internship. Secondly, provide sufficient pre-job training to enable interns to meet the requirements of the internship. In other words, companies can offer specially designed training courses to equip interns with the necessary skills, knowledge, and workflow. This training not only enhances the professional capabilities of interns but also improves their job performance during the internship. Finally, establish a positive work environment to help interns integrate into a collaborative team atmosphere and gain respect. In other words, creating an open, inclusive, and respectful work atmosphere can inspire interns to better unleash their individual and team potentials. If these practical recommendations are effectively implemented, they can help reduce psychological contract violation triggered by job uncertainty or expectation uncertainty, while fostering the development of positive working relationships and enhancing interns' sustained engagement in their work.

5.2. Conclusion

This study embarked on a thorough exploration of the existing literature, formulating four research hypotheses, and subsequent analysis confirmed the validity of each hypothesis. To delve into the specifics, the findings illuminate that heightened levels of both promotion focus and prevention focus among hospitality interns correlate with an increased inclination to seek a profession in the hospitality sector post-graduation. This emphasizes the significance of individual regulatory foci in shaping career aspirations within the hospitality industry.

Moreover, a noteworthy discovery of this research is the identification of psychological contract violation as a positive moderator in the connection between promotion focus and the intention to seek a profession in the hospitality industry. This implies that when hospitality interns exhibit a strong promotion focus, the impact on their intention to enter the industry is further influenced by the extent of perceived psychological contract violation. Similarly, the study uncovers that psychological contract violation plays a positive moderating role in the connection between prevention focus and the intention to enter the hospitality industry. This suggests that the connection between prevention focus and career intentions is nuanced by the interns' perceptions of psychological contract violation.

5.3. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

The subjects of this work are Taiwanese hospitality interns, and further investigation is needed to evaluate the applicability of the research findings in diverse cultural settings. Moreover, employer branding has become a critical tool for attracting and retaining outstanding employees in the current competitive business environment (Azhar et al., 2024). Future study could examine the effect of employer branding on the intention of hospitality interns to enter the hospitality industry after graduation. Furthermore, perceived overqualification indicates individuals believing that their proficiency, capabilities, and skills exceed the requisites for their role, a phenomenon frequently observed in the workplace (Li et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2020). This work suggests that future research could delve into the moderating influence of perceived overqualification in the connection between regulatory foci and the intention to seek a profession in the hospitality industry. Lastly, within the realm of employee psychological capital, employee resilience constitutes a component, denoting the ability to persistently adapt and flourish in the presence of challenges (Kuntz et al., 2016). This study posits that the resilience of hospitality interns may be an important situational variable in the connection between regulatory foci and the intention to enter the hospitality sector, warranting further in-depth exploration in future research.

REFERENCES

Alp, E., Karadeniz, O., Çağlar, A., & İslamoğlu, E. (2023). Does extending the internship period in vocational schools of higher education lead to better employment results?: the case of Turkey. *Education + Training*, *65*(3), 357-381.

Azhar, A., Rehman, N., Majeed, N., & Bano, S. (2024). Employer branding: A strategy to enhance organizational performance. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *116*, 103618.

Baum, T., & Hai, N. T. T. (2020). Hospitality, tourism, human rights and the impact of COVID-19. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *32*(7), 2397-2407.

Belhassen, Y., Caton, K., & Vahaba, C. (2020). Boot camps, bugs, and dreams: Metaphor analysis of internship experiences in the hospitality industry, *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, *27*, 100228.

Birtch, T. A., Chiang, F. F., Cai, Z., & Wang J. (2021). Am I choosing the right career? The implications of COVID-19 on the occupational attitudes of hospitality management students. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *95*, 102931.

Buckingham, M., & Clifton, D.O. (2005), Now, Discover Your Strengths: How to Develop Your Talents and Those of the People You Manage, Pocket Books, London.

Chen, H., Li, X., Chiu, T. S., & Chen, F. (2021). The impact of perceived justice on behavioral intentions of Cantonese Yum Cha consumers: The mediation role of psychological contract violation. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, *49*, 178-188.

Chong, S., Huang, Y., & Chang, C. H. D. (2020). Supporting Interdependent Telework

Employees: A Moderated-Mediation Model Linking Daily COVID-19 Task Setbacks to Next-Day Work Withdrawal. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *105*(12), 1408-1422.

Crowe, E., & Higgins, E. T. (1997). Regulatory focus and strategic inclinations: Promotion and prevention in decision making. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *69*(2), 117-132.

Dai, Y. D., Altinay, L., Zhuang, W. L., & Chen, K. T. (2021a). Work engagement and job burnout? Roles of regulatory foci, supervisors' organizational embodiment and psychological ownership. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, *46*, 114-122.

Dai, Y. D., Zhuang, W. L., Ko, A., & Okumus, F. (2020). The 'if-then' rules matter more? The roles of regulatory focus and leader-member exchange. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *90*, 102602.

Dai, Y. D., Zhuang, W. L., Yang, P. K., Wang, Y. J., & Huan, T. C. (2021b). Exploring hotel employees' regulatory foci and voice behavior: the moderating role of leader-member exchange. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *33*(1), 27-47.

Das, T. K., & Kumar, R. (2011). Regulatory focus and opportunism in the alliance development process. *Journal of Management*, *37*(3), 682-708.

Farmaki, A. (2018). Tourism and hospitality internships: A prologue to career intentions? *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, *23*, 50-58.

Haldorai, K., Kim, W. G., Pillai, S. G., Park, T., & Balasubramanian, K. (2019). Factors affecting hotel employees' attrition and turnover: Application of pull-push-mooring framework. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *83*, 46-55.

Higgins, E. T. (1996). The ''self digest'': self-knowledge serving self-regulatory functions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *71*(6), 1062-1083.

Higgins, E. T. (1997). Beyond pleasure and pain. *American Psychologist*, *52*(12), 1280-1300.

Higgins, E. T. (1998). Promotion and prevention: Regulatory focus as a motivational principle. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, 30*, 1-46.

Higgins, E. T. (2000). Making a good decision: Value from fit. *American Psychologist*, *55*(11), 1217-1230.

Higgins, E. T., Friedman, R. S., Harlow, R. E., Idson, L. C., Ayduk, O. N., & Taylor, A. (2001). Achievement orientations from subjective histories of success: promotion pride versus prevention pride. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *31*(1), 3-23.

Kahraman, O. C., & Alrawadieh, D. D. (2021). The impact of perceived education quality on tourism and hospitality students' career choice: The mediating effects of academic self-efficacy. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, *29*, 100333.

Kuntz, J., Näswall, K., & Malinen, S. (2016). Resilient employees in resilient organizations: Flourishing beyond adversity. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, *9*(2), 456-462.

Li, C. S., Liao, H., & Han, Y. (2022). I despise but also envy you: a dyadic investigation of perceived overqualification, perceived relative qualification, and knowledge hiding. *Personnel Psychology*, *75*(1), 91-118.

Lin, Y. S., Huang, W. S., Yang, C. T., & Chiang, M. J. (2014). Work-leisure conflict and its associations with well-being: The roles of social support, leisure participation and job burnout. *Tourism Management*, *45*, 244-252.

Lim, W. M., Srivastava, S., Jain, A. K., Malik, N., & Gupta, S. (2023). When employees feel betrayed: The mediating role of psychological contract violation on nepotism and workplace commitment in the hotel industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *108*, 103381.

Lu, A. C. C., & Lu, L. (2019). Drivers of hotel employee's voice behavior: a moderated mediation model. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *85*, 102340.

Mensah, C., Appietu, M. E., & Asimah, V. K. (2020). Work-based social support and hospitality internship satisfaction. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, *27*, 100242.

Morrison, E. W., & Robinson, S. L. (1997). When employees feel betrayed: A model of how psychological contract violation develops. *Academy of Management Review*, *22*, 226-256.

Nadin, S. J., & Williams, C. C. (2012). Psychological contract violation beyond an employees' perspective: The perspective of employers. *Employee Relations*, *34*(2), 110-125.

Neubert, M. J., Kacmar, K. M., Carlson, D. S., Chonko, L. B., & Roberts, J. A. (2008). Regulatory focus as a mediator of the influence of initiating structure and servant leadership on employee behavior. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *93*(6), 1220-1233.

Ng, K. S. P., Rao, Y., Lai, I. K. W., & Zhou, Y. Q. (2023). How internship environmental factors affect students' career intentions in the hotel industry through the reflective thinking processes. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, *32*, 100421.

Qu, H., Leung, H. Y., Huang, S. S., & He, J. (2021). Factors affecting hotel interns' satisfaction with internship experience and career intention in China. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, *28*, 100311.

Robinson, S. L., & Morrison, E. W. (2000). The development of psychological contract breach and violation: a longitudinal study. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *21*(5), 525-546.

Rousseau, D. M. (1989). Psychological and implied contracts in organizations. *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal*, *2*, 121-139.

Ruiz-Palomino, P., Hernández-Perlines, F., Jiménez-Estévez, P., & Gutiérrez-Broncano, S. (2019). CEO servant leadership and firm innovativeness in hotels: A multiple mediation model of encouragement of participation and employees' voice. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *31*(4), 1647-1665.

Saleem, S., Rasheed, M. I., Malik, M., & Okumus, F. (2021). Employee-fit and turnover intentions: The role of job engagement and psychological contract violation in the hospitality industry. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, *49*, 385-395.

Tsai, C. T. S., Hsu, H., & Yang, C. C. (2017). Career decision self-efficacy plays a crucial role in hospitality undergraduates' internship efficacy and career preparation. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, *21*(A), 61-68.

Wallace, J. C., & Chen, G. (2006). A multilevel integration of personality, climate, self-regulation, and performance. *Personnel Psychology*, *59*(3), 529-557.

Walsh, K., Chang, S., & Tse, E. C. Y. (2014). Understanding students' intentions to join the hospitality industry: The role of emotional intelligence, service orientation, and industry satisfaction. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, *56*(4), 369-382.

Yang, C., Chen, Y., Zhao, X. R., & Mattila, A. S. (2020). Unfolding deconstructive effects of negative shocks on psychological contract violation, organizational cynicism, and turnover intention. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *89*, 102591.

Zhang, J., Akhtar, M. N., Zhang, Y., & Sun, S. (2020). Are overqualified employees bad apples? A dual-pathway model of cyberloafing. *Internet Research*, *30*(1), 289-313.

Zhou, X., Hu, Y., Li, Y., & Wen, B. (2022). Why do hotel interns stay in the hospitality and tourism industry? An interactionist perspective of organizational socialization. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *34*(3), 1225-1245.

Zhuang, W. L., Yeh, S. S., Yeh, G. T., Huan, T. C. (2023). How to reduce hotel employees' workplace deviant behavior? The roles of paternalistic leadership and regulatory foci. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, First published online.

How ambition and commitment influence hospitality employees' career withdrawal intentions: A latent change score modeling approach

Zhu, Dan
School of Hospitality and Tourism
Auckland University of Technology

Doan, Tin
Department of Leadership and Human Resource Management
Northumbria University

Thawornlamlert, Pattamol Kanjanakan
Khon Kaen University International College
Khon Kaen University

Kim, Peter B.
School of Hospitality and Tourism
Auckland University of Technology

Park, In-Jo
Department of Psychology
Henan University

Abstract:

Drawing on self-determination and prospect theories, this research delves into how hospitality employees' ambition affects their career withdrawal intentions. Employing latent change score mediation modeling with longitudinal data collected in four waves over nine months, it was found that change in ambition influences change in career commitment, subsequently affecting change in withdrawal intentions. These findings advance our understanding of the mechanisms of career trajectory by shifting the research focus from a static, between-person perspective to dynamic, within-person changes in vocational attitudes. Practically, the study contributes to understanding the dynamics of career development and retention strategies in the hospitality industry.

Keywords: Ambition, Career withdrawal intentions, Career commitment, Latent change score modeling.

Enhancing personality assessments for better hiring decisions: Interviewer-reported, self-reported, and machine learning-inferred?

Lim, Juhwan
Department of Hospitality Management
Kansas State University

Jang, Jichul
Department of Hospitality Management
Kansas State University

Abstract:

Recruiting the right people based on their personality traits is crucial for hospitality businesses to overcome labor shortage problems and enhance competitive advantages post-pandemic. This study aims to empirically investigate the effects of three types of job candidates' Big-five personality traits, measured by interviewer-reported, self-reported, and machine learning-inferred, on hiring decisions. Moreover, a moderating role of the consistency level among three types of Big-five personality traits is examined. The results theoretically and practically contribute to personality identification literature by interpreting similarities and discrepancies in three types of personality assessment tools and capturing unique characteristics of each personality assessment tool.

Keywords: Big-five Personality Traits, Self-reported Personality, Interviewer-reported Personality, Machine Learning-inferred Personality, Hiring Decision, LinkedIn

1. Introduction

After the pandemic contaminated the hospitality industry, more than 80% of hospitality companies are still struggling to fill in 420 thousand job openings in 2023 in the United States, worsening service quality and customer satisfaction (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024). To overcome the labor shortage, finding and hiring the right people are the key challenges for hospitality companies (Carless, 2005). Among various factors, candidates' personality traits effectively show their fitness and competence with the company and job positions (Cook et al., 2020). Moreover, as hospitality employees' attitudes and soft skills are the main drivers of satisfying customers, hospitality employers increasingly pay attention to candidates' personality traits during the selection process (Doan et al., 2021). Prior studies adopting Big-five personality traits have provided empirical evidence that employees' personality traits are significantly associated with their job satisfaction and turnover intention (Ariyabuddhiphongs & Marican, 2015; Shiwen & Ahn, 2023).

While there is no golden criterion to understand human personality traits, employers can assess candidates' personality traits based on self-reported and interviewer-reported survey ratings (Connelly & Ones, 2010). Common findings of personality studies demonstrate that self-reported and interviewer-reported ratings are correlated (McCrae, 1982; Van Iddekinge et al., 2005). Nevertheless, a fundamental discrepancy between self-reported and interviewer-reported ratings still exists, possibly due to self-awareness bias and distorted perception of observers (Connelly & Ones, 2010; Hogan, 1991). Thus, prior studies suggested the utilization of multiple rating sources to fully understand targets' personality traits (Klinger & Siangchokyoo, 2024; Oh et al., 2011). Moreover, due to the advancement of information technology and artificial intelligence, employers can also evaluate candidates' personality traits using professional social media, such as LinkedIn (Tay et al., 2020). Accordingly, previous studies have confirmed the validity and reliability of Big-five personality traits from three sources (i.e., self-reported, interviewer-reported, and machine learning-inferred) in the hiring context (Barrick et al., 2020; Fan et al., 2023). However, an empirical and practical approach to investigating the relationships between three types of Big-five personality traits and hiring decisions and interpreting their agreement or difference is lacking.

Furthermore, since there are several tools to identify job candidates' personality traits, the ratings from the different tools might converge or not, forming the extent of consistent perceptions about candidates' personalities. Consistency level among the three personality assessment tools may enhance the positive evaluation of job candidates, as consistent information can reinforce interviewees' favorable image (Weisbuch et al., 2010). Conversely, it is also can be said that different rating patterns from three personality assessment tools might be helpful for employers in making hiring decisions because the different rating patterns capture various aspects of job candidates (Connelly & Ones, 2010; Oh et al., 2011). To test these speculations, this study adopts cue consistency theory which leads us to assume that the consistency level among three personality ratings would moderate the relationships between Big-five personality traits and hiring decisions. Cue consistency theory that posits consistent information from various sources leads to positive evaluation (Maheswaran & Chaiken, 1991). Testing a possible moderating role of the consistency level would help interviewers make better hiring decisions based on various types of personality assessment.

The primary goal of this study is to extend the reliability and validity evidence to empirically examine and compare the effects of three types of candidates' Big-five personality traits dimensions on hiring decisions. Moreover, possible moderating effects of the consistency level on the relationships between Big-five personality traits and hiring decisions are investigated. Based on the results, comparing different effects of three types of Big-five personality traits contributes to the personality identification literature by capturing the unique characteristics of each personality assessment tool. Moreover, examining the moderating effect of the consistency level emphasizes the complex nature of human personalities. Practically, this study provides empirical evidence for employers to fully understand job candidates' personality traits by utilizing multiple personality assessment tools for better hiring decisions.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Big-five personality traits and hiring decisions

During job interviews, while interviewers may want to evaluate job candidates' future job performance based on job candidates' answers and behaviors, future job performance cannot be readily predicted (Judge et al., 2000). Accordingly, interviewers utilize various aspects of job candidates, such as cognitive abilities, characteristics, knowledge, skills, and work experience, to assess interview performance and make better hiring decisions (Huffcutt et al., 2001; Raza & Carpenter, 1987). Among these factors, interviewers consider interviewees' personality traits as one of the strongest predictors of future job performance and thus try to identify and understand job candidates' personality traits (Barrick et al., 2000). Employees' personality traits play a more significant role in the hospitality industry than any other industry, as hospitality employees' soft skills and attitudes are the key to enhancing service quality and customer satisfaction (Doan et al., 2021). For instance, Silva (2006) showed that non-managerial hotel employees with greater levels of extraversion, conscientiousness, and emotional stability (neuroticism) are more likely to show organizational commitment. Possibly due to the importance of personality traits in the hospitality industry, hospitality employers may actively evaluate job candidates' personality traits to rate interview performance and attractiveness. Interviewers' evaluation of personality traits is a valuable source for figuring out job candidates' person-organization and person-job fit (P-O and P-J fit; Cable & Judge, 1997). Accordingly, job candidates who have a great level of P-O and P-J fit would be more likely to get job offers (Connelly & Ones, 2010). Taken together, it is expected that interviewer-reported Big-five personality traits measured during job interviews would influence hiring decisions made by interviewers:

H1: Interviewer-reported Big-five personality traits (neuroticism (*H1a*), extraversion (*H1b*), openness (*H1c*), agreeableness (*H1d*), and conscientiousness (*H1e*)) would be significantly related to interviewers' hiring decision.

While interviewer-reported Big-five personality traits may be the most significant factor when making hiring decisions, interviewers can use job candidates' self-reported Big-five personality traits as another useful source to alleviate any possible limitations of interviewers' Big-five personality perceptions. Interviewers are commonly required to evaluate job candidates who rarely meet before the job interview for a short time (Mount et al., 1994). This nature of job interviews may not provide enough time and environment for interviewers to fully understand interviewees' personality traits. Moreover, some personality traits that are deep-inherent and not apparent, such as emotional stability, cannot be easily recognized by others (i.e., interviewers; Connolly et al., 2007). Thus, I argue that interviewees' self-reported Big-five personality traits can provide additional information to fully understand their personality traits, thus influencing hiring decisions. By perceiving their personality traits as one of the signals of competency and strengths, interviewees may want to willingly show their personality traits based on their self-perceptions using surveys. Interviewees' self-reported ratings on Big-five personality traits offer employers what they miss during job interviews and help fully understand interviewees' viewpoints in terms of personality traits (Klinger & Siangchokyoo, 2024; Oh et al., 2011). Thus, self-reported Big-five personality traits can be used to evaluate job candidates' P-J and P-O fit, affecting hiring decisions by interviewers (Bowen et al., 1991; Cable & Judge, 1997). Thereby, the following hypotheses are suggested:

H2: Interviewees' self-reported Big-five personality traits (neuroticism (*H2a*), extraversion (*H2b*), openness (*H2c*), agreeableness (*H2d*), and conscientiousness (*H2e*)) would be significantly related to interviewers' hiring decision.

Another informative source for thoroughly recognizing job candidates' personality traits and making better hiring decisions can be found in job candidates' online professional social media, such as LinkedIn. With the advancement of information technology and artificial intelligence, job candidates promote their characteristics through online professional social media, and employers increasingly utilize online professional social media to evaluate job candidates (Roulin & Stronach, 2022). Employers can understand job candidates' personality traits by seeing various activities and postings that job candidates make on social media (Tay et al., 2020). For instance, pictures in which job candidates smile a lot and postings showing active action verbs can present job candidates' extroverted personalities to employers. Accordingly, job candidates' Big-five personality traits inferred from LinkedIn can be a valuable source for employers to evaluate job candidates and make hiring decisions (Fernandez et al., 2021). However, it may not be easy for employers to recognize the personality traits of numerous job candidates within a short time period. Recently, machine learning algorithms developed based on big data regarding personality traits have enabled employers and researchers to effectively measure Big-five personality traits through online social media (Humantic AI, 2024; Kong & Ding, 2024). Recent studies have confirmed the validity and reliability of machine learning-inferred Big-five personality traits in measuring targets' personality traits (Fan et al., 2023; Roulin & Stronach, 2022). Thus, I expect that machine learning-inferred Big-five personality traits from LinkedIn would have significant effects on hiring decisions made by employers. Accordingly, we hypothesize that:

H3: Machine learning-inferred Big-five personality traits (neuroticism (*H3a*), extraversion (*H3b*), openness (*H3c*), agreeableness (*H3d*), and conscientiousness (*H3e*)) would be significantly related to interviewers' hiring decision.

2.2 A moderating role of consistency level

Although ratings from three types of Big-five personality traits (i.e., interviewer-reported, self-reported, and machine learning-inferred) are moderately correlated, they can also be different from each other or consistent with each other (Connelly & Ones, 2010; Hogan, 1991). Based on this premise, I argue that the consistency level among the three personality assessment tools should be investigated because employers can utilize the ratings from different personality assessment tools when making hiring decisions (Oh et al., 2011). Someone might think consistent ratings across three personality assessment tools would increase the positive evaluation of interviewees because the consistent ratings fortify interviewees' reliable and honest images (Weisbuch et al., 2010). On the other hand, someone may argue that ratings from different assessment tools are not necessarily consistent; rather, inconsistent ratings can be more helpful by showing various aspects of job candidates' personality traits (Oh et al., 2011). To test these theoretical assumptions, cue consistency theory provides a theoretical framework by positing that when various cues about things or events have consistent attributes and/or have the same (i.e., constant) direction, the consistent cues are more actively used to create the perceptions and evaluations of the things or events (Anderson, 1981; Maheswaran & Chaiken, 1991). The reason behind the effect of consistent cues is that the information from consistent cues reinforces each other and enhances other's influences (Maheswaran & Chaiken, 1991; Slovic, 1966).

In terms of three types of personality traits, using self-reported Big-five personality traits as a truth ground (Fan et al., 2023), two consistency scores can be calculated: (1) between self-reported and interviewer-reported and (2) between self-reported and machine learning-inferred Big-five personality traits. Drawing upon cue consistency theory, if self-reported and interviewer-reported ratings are more correlated, the consistency level between the two ratings would reinforce interviewees' reliable and favorable image (Zuckerman et al., 1982), intensifying the positive effects of interviewer-reported Big-five personality traits on hiring decisions. On the other hand, if less correlated, the consistency level between two ratings would stimulate interviewers' judgments of deception (Weisbuch et al., 2010), mitigating the positive effects of interviewer-reported Big-five personality traits on hiring decisions. The same logic is applied to the consistency level between self-reported and machine learning-inferred Big-five personality traits, assuming that there could be differences or similarities in Big-five personality traits between those shown on LinkedIn pages and those measured by interviewees. Taken together, the following hypotheses are suggested:

H4: The consistency level between self-reported and interviewer-reported Big-five personality traits would significantly moderate the relationship between interviewer-reported Big-five personality traits (neuroticism (*H4a*), extraversion (*H4b*), openness (*H4c*), agreeableness (*H4d*), and conscientiousness (*H4e*)) and hiring decisions.

H5: The consistency level between self-reported and machine learning-inferred Big-five personality traits would significantly moderate the relationship between machine learning-inferred Big-five personality traits (neuroticism (*H5a*), extraversion (*H5b*), openness (*H5c*), agreeableness (*H5d*), and conscientiousness (*H5e*)) and hiring decisions.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants and procedures

We recruited ten interviewers and 106 interviewees who are seeking supervisory job opportunities in the hospitality industry from one of the universities in the mid-west U.S. and Prolific, a crowdsourcing platform, providing reliable panels (Viglia & Dolnicar, 2020). Before mock-up interviewees, interviewees were asked to take self-reporting survey to measure self-reported Big-five personality traits. During mock-up interviews, interviewers asked five semi-structured interview questions. After mock-up interviews, hiring decisions and interviewer-reported Big-five personality traits were assessed. Machine learning-inferred Big-five personality traits were measured by a researcher using a machine learning-based personality prediction model, that is Receptivity API, on participants' LinkedIn pages during the data collection period. Figure 1 illustrates the methodological framework.

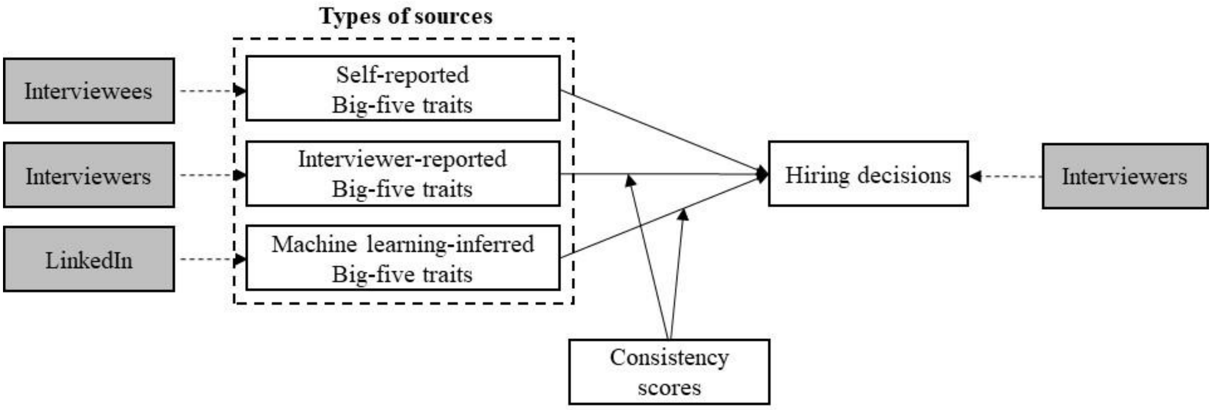


Figure 1. The methodological framework

3.2. Measurement

Interviewer-reported Big-five personality traits

Interviewer-reported Big-five personality traits were measured by using 25 items, 7-point Likert scale, developed by Yoo and Gretzel (2011).

Self-reported Big-five personality traits

Interviewees' self-reported Big-five personality traits (i.e., neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness) were measured by 25 items, 7-point Likert scale, developed by Yoo and Gretzel (2011). As Watson (1989) suggested, the same survey items were used for self-reported and interviewer-reported Big-five personality traits to effectively compare the validity of ratings made by interviewees and interviewers.

Machine learning-inferred Big-five personality traits

Receptiviti, a commercial machine learning-based personality traits prediction model, was utilized to measure machine learning-inferred Big-five personality traits from LinkedIn, ranging from 0 to 100 for each trait (Roulin & Stronach, 2022). Receptiviti infers Big-five personality traits based on psycholinguistic features from textual data (Figure 2; Mehta et al., 2020).

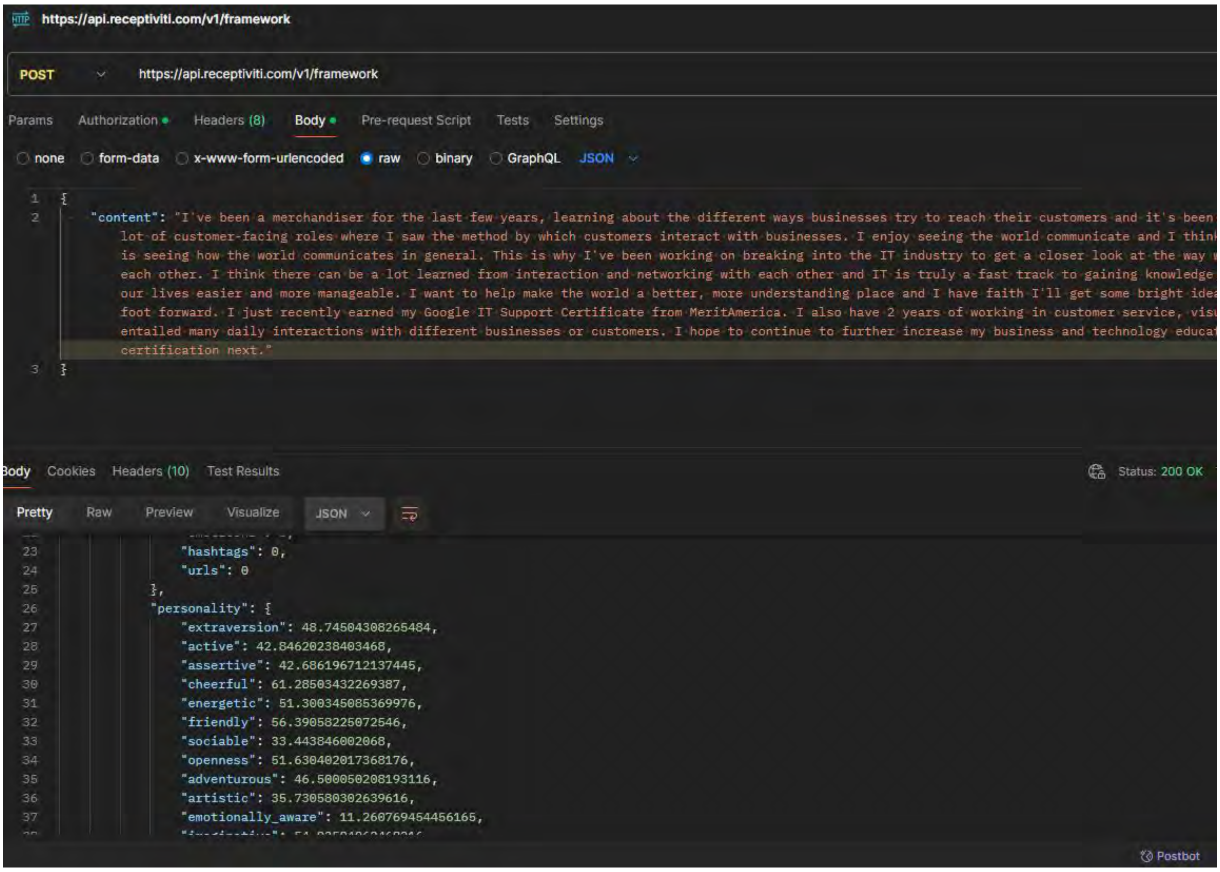


Figure 2. Example of using Receptiviti API

Consistency scores

As a moderator, consistency scores were measured by correlation coefficients of relevant variables (Rushton et al., 1981). Using self-reported Big-five personality traits as a truth ground, two consistency scores were calculated: (1) between self-reported and interviewer-reported and (2) between self-reported and machine learning-inferred Big-five personality traits.

Hiring decisions

Interviewers' hiring decisions were measured by asking two items, 7-point Likert scale, developed by Higgins and Judge (2004): "I would recommend extending a job offer to this candidate" and "Overall, I evaluate this candidate positively."

4. Results

Table 1 provides statistical information for hypothesis testing. Regression analyses were employed to test the effects of Big-five personality trait of three personality assessment types on hiring decisions. Among five dimensions of interviewer-reported Big-five personality trait, neuroticism (β = -.369, p < .01), extraversion (β = .270, p < .05), and agreeableness (β = .310, p < .01) traits were significantly associated with hiring decisions, supporting *H1a*, *H1b*, and *H1d*. Regarding self-reported-Big five personality traits, extraversion (β = .312, p < .01) and conscientiousness (β = .492, p < .05) had significant effects on hiring decisions. Thus, *H2b* and *H2e* were supported. Machine learning-inferred Big-five personality' neuroticism (β = -.072, p < .05), extraversion (β = .065, p < .05), and openness (β = .081, p < .05) traits were significantly related with hiring decisions, confirming *H3a*, *H3b*, and *H3c*. However, moderating effects of consistency level were not identified across three personality assessment tools. Thus, hypotheses regarding *H4* and *H5* were rejected. In the result table, consistency levels for three personality assessment types were not included because consistency levels (i.e., correlation coefficients) have singularity issues (high inter-correlation) with independent variables, thus their statistics were not calculated in the results even though their regression models were significant (Armstrong, 2019).

Table 1. Regression results

Models	**Model 1**		**Model 2**	**Model 3**	
Assessment types	Interviewer-reported		Self-reported	ML-inferred	
Constant	.851** (.835)	0.223 (0.870)	6.583** (1.672)	.694 (2.419)	2.891 (2.627)
Personality traits					
Neuroticism	-.369** (.099)	4.029 (3.903)	-.309 (.219)	-.072* (.033)	-24.265 (16.917)
Extraversion	.270* (.106)	-12.891 (8.401)	.312* (.123)	.065* (.026)	8.514 (14.485)
Openness	.267 (.142)	1.693 (5.506)	.087 (.212)	.081* (.033)	-18.676 (13.742)
Agreeableness	.310* (.131)	-4.655 (2.540)	.184 (.097)	.040 (.040)	-8.982 (8.555)
Conscientiousness	.150 (.134)	6.192 (4.439)	.492** (.155)	-.032 (.034)	-3.685 (6.376)
Interactions					
IA for neuroticism		-38.347 (34.708)			-100.385 (70.247)
IA for extraversion		52.309 (33.129)			-37.552 (64.061)
IA for openness		11.774 (45.580)			94.218 (69.090)
IA for agreeableness		71.609 (36.984)			-77.172 (73.083)

IA for conscientiousness		-51.066 (37.519)			36.183 (63.142)
F statistics	49.215**	26.760**	3.623**	2.593*	2.692**
Adjusted R^2	.697	.710	.111	.070	.139
Δ Adjusted R^2		.013			.069

Notes: Dependent variable = Hiring decisions; IA = Interaction (e.g., IA for openness = Openness dimension × Consistency level of openness dimension); ML = Machine learning; * p: <.05; ** p: <.01

5. Discussion

5.1. Discussion and implications

This study advances the current knowledge about personality assessment and personnel recruitment in several ways. First, this study contributes to the body of personality identification in the selection process by empirically investigating the relationships between three personality assessment tools (i.e., interviewer-reported, self-reported, and machine learning-inferred) and hiring decisions. Extraversion solely had a significant effect on hiring decisions across three assessment types, supported by prior studies saying employees with greater extraversion are more likely to build teamwork and job satisfaction (Cortina et al., 2000). The significance of extraversion is more evident in the hospitality industry, where active and energetic service provision is one of the most influential factors in enhancing service quality and satisfying customers (Doan et al., 2021).

In terms of agreeableness, it was significant solely in interviewer-reported ratings. This result may come from the awkward nature of job interviews, where interviewers often evaluate job candidates they meet for the first time (Mount et al., 1994). Thus, considering this aspect of job interviews, interviewees who present a greater level of agreeableness might receive higher scores in hiring decisions, signaling interpersonal warmth and cooperative attitudes. Conscientiousness was significant only in self-reported ratings. This might reflect the innate and private nature of conscientiousness that is hardly recognizable by others (Barrick et al., 2000). Thus, openness might not be effectively captured by interviewer-reported and machine learning-inferred ratings. Openness, which was exclusively significant in machine learning-inferred ratings, can be explained by the characteristics of social media, where job candidates publicly make postings and build networks with unknown people (Fernandez et al., 2021). These results show the characteristics of each personality assessment type and supplement personality identification literature by empirically examining the relationships between three personality assessment ratings and hiring decisions.

Second, our study contributes to cue consistency theory by applying the theory to the selection context and empirically confirming the insignificant moderating effect of the consistency level between Big-five personality traits and hiring decisions. Prior studies outside of the human resources context, commonly consumer behavior discipline, have shown that consistent information from various cues positively influences the overall evaluation and impression of the information (Akdeniz et al., 2013; Anderson, 1981; Miyazaki et al., 2005). For instance, Miyazaki et al. (2005) investigated how combinations of multiple cues about products (i.e., price and warranty) affect consumers' perceptions of product quality. The results showed that when price and warranty cues provide consistent information (e.g., high/low price and strong/weak warranty), consumers perceive a higher level of product quality than inconsistent information (e.g., high/low price and weak/strong warranty).

However, in the context of personality assessment, our result may emphasize the complex and sophisticated nature of human characteristics. In consumer behavior, customers consider a few things of apparent cues (e.g., price and warranty) for decision-making. Nonetheless, personality traits are formed based on countless neuropsychic and psychological factors, such as genetics and values (Allport, 1966; Roccas et al., 2002). Moreover, discrepancies among different types of personality assessment tools naturally exist due to their unique measurement system and biases (Connelly & Ones, 2010; Hogan, 1991). Thus, based on the results, the current study supports prior studies emphasizing the usage of multiple assessment tools in understanding personality traits (Hogan, 1991; Oh et al., 2011) rather than cue consistency theory.

Practically, this study provides effective guidance for hospitality employers to find the right people by utilizing three personality assessment tools. For instance, employers may refer to self-reported ratings for conscientiousness level over the other two assessment types, while machine learning-based personality traits can help measure openness levels on job candidates' LinkedIn pages. When identifying the agreeableness of job candidates, interviewer-reported ratings would be the most helpful. The relative importance of the three personality assessment tools may depend on the specific requirements of job positions and organizational culture in order to fully understand job candidates' personality traits. Apparently, since extraversion is the most powerful trait in predicting hiring decisions, employers will need to pay more attention to job candidates' energetic and active attitudes when making hiring decisions. Based on the insignificant effect of the consistency level, employers will want to utilize various sources of personality identification, rather than focusing on one source or consistent information from multiple sources to make better hiring decisions.

5.2. Limitations and future research

This study has several limitations. First, we used the Big Five personality framework to measure job candidates' personality traits due to its applicability and predictive validity. Still, more personality assessment frameworks exist, such as the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire, Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, and Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Thus, future studies may want to use various frameworks and compare them to make more generalizable results. Second, while this study utilized five primary dimensions of

Big-five personality traits (i.e., extraversion), there is an opportunity to use specific facets of each dimension (e.g., gregariousness, assertiveness, temperament, and vivacity facets for the extraversion dimension). Future research may want to measure personality traits using the facets for each dimension to provide more detailed implications. Third, while the current study examined the moderating effect of the consistency level of different personality assessment tools, there might be more meaningful moderators in the job interview context. For example, gender or ethnicity differences between interviewees and interviewers may affect the relationships between Big-five personality traits and hiring decisions in terms of diversity and inclusion. Future studies would supplement the body of personality assessment literature by identifying and empirically investigating various moderators.

REFERENCES

Akdeniz, B., Calantone, R. J., & Voorhees, C. M. (2013). Effectiveness of marketing cues on consumer perceptions of quality: The moderating roles of brand reputation and third-party information. *Psychology & Marketing*, *30*(1), 76-89.

Allport, G. W. (1966). Traits revisited. *American Psychologist, 21*, 1-10.

Anderson, N. (1981). *Foundations of information integration theory*. Academic Press.

Ariyabuddhiphongs, V., & Marican, S. (2015). Big Five personality traits and turnover intention among Thai hotel employees. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, *16*(4), 355-374.

Armstrong, R. A. (2019). Should Pearson's correlation coefficient be avoided?. *Ophthalmic and Physiological Optics*, *39*(5), 316-327.

Barrick, M. R., Patton, G. K., & Haugland, S. N. (2000). Accuracy of interviewer judgments of job applicant personality traits. *Personnel Psychology*, *53*(4), 925-951.

Bowen, D. E., Ledford Jr, G. E., & Nathan, B. R. (1991). Hiring for the organization, not the job. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, *5*(4), 35-51.

Carless, S. A. (2005). Person–job fit versus person–organization fit as predictors of organizational attraction and job acceptance intentions: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 78*(3), 411-429.

Connolly, J. J., Kavanagh, E. J., & Viswesvaran, C. (2007). The convergent validity between self and observer ratings of personality: A meta-analytic review. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, *15*(1), 110-117.

Connelly, B. S., & Ones, D. S. (2010). An other perspective on personality: Meta-analytic integration of observers' accuracy and predictive validity. *Psychological Bulletin, 136*(6), 1092-1122.

Cook, K. W., Vance, C. A., & Spector, P. E. (2000). The relation of candidate personality with selection-interview outcomes. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 30*(4), 867-885.

Cortina, J. M., Goldstein, N. B., Payne, S. C., Davison, H. K., & Gilliland, S. W. (2000). The incremental validity of interview scores over and above cognitive ability and conscientiousness scores. *Personnel Psychology, 53*(2), 325-351.

Doan, T., Kanjanakan, P., Zhu, D., & Kim, P. B. (2021). Consequences of employee personality in the hospitality context: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 33*(10), 3814-3832.

Fan, J., Sun, T., Liu, J., Zhao, T., Zhang, B., Chen, Z., Glorioso, M., & Hack, E. (2023). How well can an AI chatbot infer personality? Examining psychometric properties of machine-inferred personality scores. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 108*(8), 1277-1299.

Fernandez, S., Stöcklin, M., Terrier, L., & Kim, S. (2021). Using available signals on LinkedIn for personality assessment. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *93*, 104122.

Higgins, C. A., & Judge, T. A. (2004). The effect of applicant influences tactics on recruiter perceptions of fit and hiring recommendations: a field study. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *89*(4), 622-632.

Hogan, R. (1991). Personality and personality measurement. In M. D. Dunnette & L. M. Hough (Ed.), *Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology* (pp. 873-919). Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.

Huffcutt, A. I., Conway, J. M., Roth, P. L., & Stone, N. J. (2001). Identification and meta-analytic assessment of psychological constructs measured in employment interviews. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 86*(5), 897-913.

Judge, T. A., & Cable, D. M. (1997). Applicant personality, organizational culture, and organization attraction. *Personnel Psychology*, *50*(2), 359-394.

Judge, T. A., Cable, D. M., & Higgins, C. A. (2000). The employment interview: A review of recent research and recommendations for future research. *Human resource Management Review*, *10*(4), 383-406.

Klinger, R. L., & Siangchokyoo, N. (2024). Finding better raters: The role of observer personality on the validity of observer-reported personality in predicting job performance. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *108*, 104437.

Kong, Y., & Ding, H. (2024). Tools, potential, and pitfalls of social media screening: Social profiling in the era of AI-assisted recruiting. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, *38*(1), 33-65.

Maheswaran, D., & Chaiken, S. (1991). Promoting systematic processing in low-motivation settings: Effect of incongruent information on processing and judgment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 61*(1), 13-25.

McCrae, R. R. (1982). Consensual validation of personality traits: Evidence from self-reports and ratings. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 43*(2), 293-303.

Mehta, Y., Majumder, N., Gelbukh, A., & Cambria, E. (2020). Recent trends in deep learning based personality detection. *Artificial Intelligence Review*, *53*(4), 2313-2339.

Miyazaki, A. D., Grewal, D., & Goodstein, R. C. (2005). The effect of multiple extrinsic cues on quality perceptions: A matter of consistency. *Journal of Consume Research, 32*(1), 146-153.

Mount, M. K., Barrick, M. R., & Strauss, J. P. (1994). Validity of observer ratings of the big five personality factors. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 79*(2), 272-280.

Oh, I. S., Wang, G., & Mount, M. K. (2011). Validity of observer ratings of the five-factor model of personality traits: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 96*(4), 762-773.

Raza, S. M., & Carpenter, B. N. (1987). A model of hiring decisions in real employment interviews. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 72*(4), 596-603.

Roccas, S., Sagiv, L., Schwartz, S. H., & Knafo, A. (2002). The big five personality factors and personal values. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *28*(6), 789-801.

Roulin, N., & Stronach, R. (2022). LinkedIn-based assessments of applicant personality, cognitive ability, and likelihood of organizational citizenship behaviors: Comparing self-, other-, and language-based automated ratings. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, *30*(4), 503-525.

Rushton, J. P., Chrisjohn, R. D., & Fekken, G. C. (1981). The altruistic personality and the self-report altruism scale. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *2*(4), 293-302.

Shiwen, L., & Ahn, J. (2023). Role of employee personality traits in job performance in the restaurant food franchise context. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *113*, 103512.

Silva, P. (2006). Effects of disposition on hospitality employee job satisfaction and commitment. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 18*(4), 317-328.

Slovic, P. (1966). Cue-consistency and cue-utilization in judgment. *The American Journal of Psychology*, *79*(3), 427-434.

Tay, L., Woo, S. E., Hickman, L., & Saef, R. M. (2020). Psychometric and validity issues in machine learning approaches to personality assessment: A focus on social media text mining. *European Journal of Personality*, *34*(5), 826-844.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2024). *Industries at a glance*. Retrieved on 27 March 2024 from https://www.bls.gov/iag/tgs/iag70.htm

Van Iddekinge, C. H., Raymark, P. H., & Roth, P. L. (2005). Assessing personality with a structured employment interview: Construct-related validity and susceptibility to response inflation. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 90*(3), 536-552.

Viglia, G., & Dolnicar, S. (2020). A review of experiments in tourism and hospitality. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *80*, 102858.

Weisbuch, M., Ambady, N., Clarke, A. L., Achor, S., & Weele, J. V. V. (2010). On being consistent: The role of verbal–nonverbal consistency in first impressions. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, *32*(3), 261-268.

Zuckerman, M., Driver, R., & Koestner, R. (1982). Discrepancy as a cue to actual and perceived deception. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior, 7*, 95-100.

The coping mechanism for the perception of overqualification in the hospitality industry

Yu, Heyao (Chandler)
The School of Hospitality Management
The Pennsylvania State University

Yoko Negoro, Michael Tews
The School of Hospitality Management
The Pennsylvania State University

Abstract:

Perceived overqualification (POQ) occurs when employee qualifications surpass job requirements but are not effectively utilized. This study investigates POQ's impact on person-environment (P-E) fit via coping strategies moderated by procedural justice in the hotel industry. The results showed that active coping mediates the negative POQ-P-E fit relationship while distancing coping worsens it. High procedural justice reinforces the positive effect of active coping, enhancing work engagement, and reducing turnover intentions. These findings emphasize coping's role in managing POQ's effects, underscoring the importance of organizational support. The present study contributes theoretically and offers practical insights for addressing the coping mechanism of POQ. (100 words)

Keywords: Perceived overqualification, Person-Environment fit, Person-job fit , Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping, Prevention and Promotion focused coping, Procedural justice

1. **Introduction**

Industries worldwide struggle to effectively utilize overqualified workers, particularly in the hospitality industry, where job requirements often emphasize low skills and education (Peng et al., 2023; Xu et al., 2023; Yeşiltaş et al., 2023) . Perceived overqualification (POQ), defined as a subjectively evaluated mismatch between an employee's qualifications and job needs, leads to dissatisfaction and counterproductive work behavior (Liu & Wang, 2012). While POQ typically results in negative outcomes, previous reviews introduced that POQ may lead to positive work-related outcomes, such as increased creativity and extra-role performance (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021; Hu et al., 2015). Based on those findings, we expect that how employees cope with and justify POQ influences their perception of person-environment (P-E) fit , resulting in different work-related outcomes (Luksyte & Spitzmueller, 2016).

The Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping (TTSC) outlines how individuals employ coping strategies to manage stressful experiences (Lazarus &Folkman, 1984). This study aims to fill a research gap by examining how POQ is a stressor and influences P-E fit.

Through the lens of TTSC, the study investigates the role of coping strategies in mediating the effects of POQ on P-E fit, with procedural justice as an organizational moderator. The findings theoretically contribute by exploring the mechanisms linking POQ and P-E fit and offer practical insights for organizations to support employees positively in coping with POQ.

1. Literature Review

1.1. Perceived overqualification and P-E misfit

POQ, defined as having surplus skills and qualifications not required for the job, leads to a subjective mismatch between an individual's qualifications and their work environment (Luksyte & Spitzmueller, 2016). This mismatch, recognized as a type of P-E misfit, negatively impacts employee performance, leading to counterproductive work behaviors and turnover intentions (Liu & Wang, 2012; Shafique et al., 2023; Yeşiltaş et al., 2023). P-E fit refers to how well an individual's characteristics align with the demands and attributes of their work environment (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Liu and Wang (2012) claimed that the best theory to understand POQ is person-job (P-J) fit theory, which is known as one of the types of P-E fits (Liu & Wang, 2012).

P-J fit consists of two components: needs-supplies (N-S) fit and demands-abilities (D-A) fit. N-S fit assesses how well the environment meets individuals' goals and values, while D-A fit assesses the compatibility between employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities and the formal job requirements (Cable & Edwards, 2004). Previous research has consistently shown a strong negative relationship between overqualification and these fit dimensions, such that overqualified employees feel distinct from colleagues and lacking alignment with job demands and available resources (Hu et al., 2015; Luksyte et al., 2011; Martinez et al., 2014; Xu et al., 2023). Therefore, the present study proposes as follows:

Hypothesis 1: POQ is negatively related to P-E (demands-abilities and needs-supplies) fit.

1.2. Theoretical development - Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping (TTSC)

Recent studies have shown that employees can handle the mismatch caused by POQ differently, with some even benefiting from it (e.g., Maltarich et al., 2011; Van Dijk et al., 2020) While POQ is typically negatively related to job attitudinal outcomes like job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Harari et al., 2017), its impact on behavioral outcomes such as job performance can be both positive and negative (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021). Specifically, the relationship between POQ and job-related outcomes were shown as positive under certain conditions. For example, Deng et al. (2018) found that POQ positively affects job performance when employees perceive high interpersonal influences, and Hui et al. (2015) reported that POQ can enhance perceptions of task significance and extra-role behavior when employees perceive peers' high qualifications (Deng et al., 2018; Hu et al., 2015). These mixed findings suggest that how employees justify and cope with POQ may influence their P-E fit and job performance.

According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984) , TTSC suggests that stress arises from an individual's appraisal of a situation and their ability to cope with it (Biggs et al., 2017). The present study assumes that POQ should be seen as a stressor that evokes employees' negative emotions. Previous research on POQ has highlighted that a job that significantly mismatches one's qualifications can be a frustrating experience (Burris, 1983) and triggers a broader range of negative emotions (Fox & Spector, 2006). Therefore, we propose that POQ as a stressor triggering negative emotions in employees which evoke coping strategies to manage their situations drawing on TTSC framework.

***1.3.** Mediation mechanism of coping strategies*

Coping strategies can be categorized as "good coping" leading to positive outcomes and "bad coping" resulting in negative outcomes (Brown et al., 2005). Skinner et al. (2003) further clarified coping strategies into two distinct categories, built on regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997), such as promotion-focused, where individuals actively seek to align their situation with aspirations, and prevention-focused, which aims to prevent negative outcomes or maintain the status quo (Higgins, 1997; Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007).
Since promotion-focused coping encourages employees to challenge their issues and achieve their goals (Carver et al., 1989), we expect that it may buffer the P-E mismatch.

Specifically, one of the promotion-focused strategies, active coping, is a process of proactively taking steps to deal with stressors (Carver et al., 1989; Zhang et al., 2019). This strategy involves direct actions to remove or reduce the impact of the negative events. Performing coping strategies in proactive problem-solving allows individuals to take the initiative to manage challenging circumstances effectively (De Rijk et al., 1998). Kaplan (1983) conceptualized that individuals actively seek to enhance themselves or their environment to maintain higher levels of P-E fit, then called it as active coping (Kaplan, 1983). The proactive approach fosters flexibility in decision-making and effective adjustment to mismatches, leading to a more favourable alignment with P-E fit (Caplan & Van Harrison, 1993). Therefore, we hypothesize that the negative influence of POQ on P-E fit can be mitigated, and even improved, when employees engage in active coping strategies.
H2: Active coping (promotion-focused coping strategy) will mediate the relationship between POQ and P-E fit.

On the other hand, distancing coping, a prevention-focused strategy, involves emotionally detaching from stressors by creating psychological distance (Folkman et al., 1986). It is utilized when individuals perceive situation as a lack of control or resources to cope actively (Biggs et al., 2017; Folkman & Lazarus, 1988). Since relative deprivation theory suggests that individuals feel deprived when they perceive a gap between what they deserve and what they have (Smith & Pettigrew, 2015; Zoogah, 2010), POQ leads to a sense of deprivation and a lack of resources (Liu & Wang, 2012; Maynard et al., 2006). Thus, we assume that POQ employees are more likely to face unsolvable and helpless situations where they are inclined to rely on a distancing coping strategy.

In the meantime, employing distancing coping does not improve the perception of mismatch caused by POQ because it allows issues to persist and can impair the situation (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988). Furthermore, distancing coping can make individuals more sensitive to negative signals about their jobs and organizations, and it worsen their assessment of the work environment (Lanaj et al., 2012 ; Zhang et al., 2019). Therefore, using a distancing strategy may not only deplete emotional resources but also increase the perception of mismatch between POQ and P-E fit.

H3: Distancing (prevention-focused coping) will mediate the relationship between POQ and P-E fit.

1.4. *POQ and Procedural Justice*

The present study introduces procedural justice as a crucial moderator influencing the link between POQ and P-E fit. Procedural justice involves the use of consistent, accurate, and fairness in decision-making (Colquitt, 2001), and it significantly impacts stress appraisals in the workplace (Zhang et al., 2014). POQ employees often perceive high procedural injustice, reinforcing the mismatch caused by POQ (Liu & Wang, 2012). Particularly, procedural justice is introduced as essential in moderating promotion and prevention-focused regulations (Higgins, 1997; Johnson et al., 2010; Lee et al., 2017), such that high procedural justice motivates success, fostering promotion-focused regulation, while low procedural justice tends to evoke prevention-focused regulation as individuals aim to avoid social exploitation (Tyler & Blader, 2013; Zoogah, 2010). Specifically, in environments with high procedural justice, active coping is expected, whereas low procedural justice may lead to prevention-focused coping like distancing (Biggs et al., 2017; Folkman & Lazarus, 1988). Thus, we expect that high procedural justice encourages active coping, enhancing P-E fit, while low procedural justice strengthens the negative POQ-P-E fit relationship, facilitating distancing coping.

H4a: Procedural justice will moderate the indirect effect of perceived overqualification on P-E fit through promotion-focused coping, such as active coping, such that the indirect effect will be stronger when procedural justice is high (vs. low).

H4b: Procedural justice will moderate the indirect effect of perceived overqualification on P-E fit through prevention-focused coping, such as distancing, such that the indirect effect will be weaker when procedure justice is high (vs. low).

1.5. *Perceived overqualification and outcomes*

The study anticipates that two types of coping mechanisms will mediate the relationship between POQ and P-E fit, consequently impacting employee attitudes and behaviors. Previous research consistently shows that both D-A and N-S fits influence employee and organizational attitudes and behaviors, such as turnover intention and work engagement (Chen et al., 2014; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

1.5.1. Work engagement

Work engagement refers to employees' physical, cognitive, and emotional commitment to their work, fostering bonds with their tasks and colleagues (Kahn, 1990). Previous research indicates that a strong alignment between individuals and their work environment leads to increased task investment and active engagement (Kahn, 1990; Schaufeli et al., 2006). This positive relationship generates meaningful work experiences, enhancing overall engagement (Chen et al., 2014; Saleem et al., 2021a). Empirical studies consistently support a significant positive relationship between P-J fit and work engagement (Chatman, 1991; Chen et al., 2014). Therefore;

H5: P-E fit leads to work engagement

H6a: The indirect effect of POQ on work engagement is positive through active-coping and P-E fit.

H6b: The indirect effect of POQ on work engagement is negative through distancing and P-E fit.

1.5.2. Turnover intention

Employee turnover intention, a significant concern in both academia and industry, poses a major challenge in the hospitality (Park & Min, 2020 ; Saleem et al., 2021a; Tews et al., 2013). Extensive research confirms that turnover intention, the inclination to voluntarily leave an organization, can lead to adverse effects for individuals and organizations (Memon et al., 2015). P-E fit theory has emerged as a crucial framework for examining retention and turnover issues, as perceived lack of fit significantly undermines employees' intention to stay in their organizations (Boon & Biron, 2016; Dahling & Librizzi, 2015; Schneider et al., 1995). For instance , Boon et al. (2016) found that N-S fit significantly predicts employees' turnover intention (Boon & Biron, 2016). Previous studies in hospitality also show that P-J fits, are negatively associated with employee turnover intention (e.g., Saleem et al., 2021b).

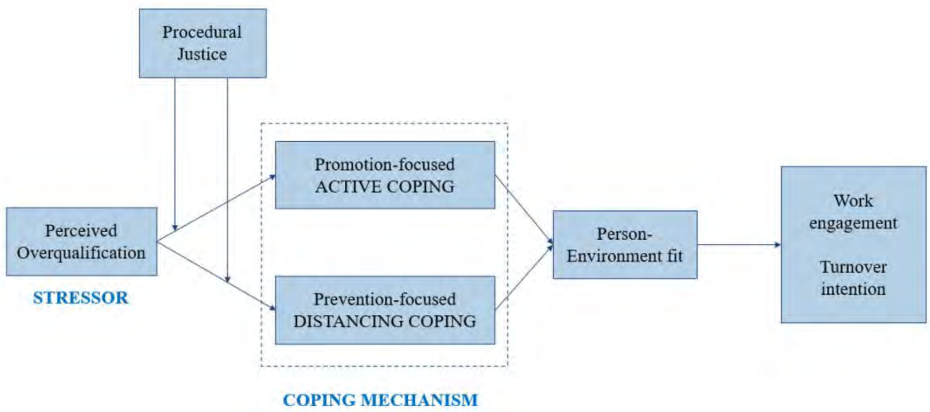
Therefore;

H7: P-E fit influences turnover intention

H8a: The indirect effect of POQ on turnover intention is negative through active coping and P-E fit.

H8b: The indirect effect of POQ on turnover intention is positive through distancing and P-E fit.

Figure 1 Conceptual Model



2. Methodology

2.1. Sample and Data Collection

The study was conducted in Jiangsu, China, involving Eleven four- and five-star hotels. Human resource directors from these hotels were contacted and agreed to assist with data collection. Frontline employees from departments like front desk, food and beverage, spa, housekeeping, and room service were recruited. A department was defined as a team reporting to the same manager (Kao et al., 2016). Each department had 4 to 22 employees, totaling 335 employees across 34 departments. To mitigate common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003), participants completed two surveys with a two-week gap. The first survey (Time 1) covered POQ, coping strategies, procedural justice, and demographics. The second survey (Time 2) included P-E fit, work engagement, and turnover intentions. Surveys were distributed before employees' shifts with support from the human resource department. The number of employees in each department ranged between four and twenty-two, providing sufficient statistical power at within- and between-department levels (George & James, 1993). A multilevel power analysis indicated sufficient statistical power for the study (Muthén & Muthén, 2002). The demographic profiles of participants were displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic profile of respondents

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	138	41.2
Female	197	58.8
Age (*M* = 29.02, *SD* = 10.77)		
18 - 20	67	20.0
21 - 30	151	45.1
31 - 40	57	17.0
41 - 50	43	12.8
51 - 60	17	5.1
Education		
Less than high school	36	10.7
High school/GED	46	13.7
Associate's degree	177	52.8
Bachelor's degree	76	22.7
Work experience (*M* = 4.1, *SD* = 2.37)		
Less than 1 year	17	5.1
1-3 years	104	31
4- 6 years	188	56.1
More than 6 years	27	8.1
Department		
Front desk	92	23
Food & beverage	113	30.1
Housekeeping	76	26.9
SPA		11.9
Room service		8.1

2.2. *Measurement*

The questionnaire is developed based on literature and back-translated into Chinese following Douglas & Craig's (2007) recommendations. The measurement scales are adapted from the previous studies, and adjustments are made to fit this research's setting. All items were assessed using a five-point Likert scale.

2.3. *Analytical Methods*

Multi-level path analyses were conducted in Mplus 8.1 to investigate the effect of procedural justice at the department level on coping strategies, P-E fits, and outcomes at the individual level. The γ_{wg} of procedural justice was 0.86, suggesting an acceptable level of within-group agreement. In addition, the ICC was 0.11, which provides sufficient department-level variance (Bliese, 2000). The multi-level moderated mediation model was examined by Bayesian estimator with 10,000 iterations (Zyphur & Oswald, 2015).

3. Results

A multilevel confirmatory factor analysis was used to investigate the construct validity. The eight-factor multi-level model showed an acceptable model fit (χ^2= 894.13, df = 409, comparative fit index (CFI)=0 .921, Tucker-Lewis index (TLI)=0 .906, root-mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)=0 .076, standardized root means square residual ($SRMR_{within}$) =0.046, and $SRMR_{between}$ = 0.01].

An unconditional model was conducted to capture the variances of coping strategies, P-E fits, work engagement, and turnover intentions at the employee and department levels. The results showed that approximately 10.8% and 9.0% of variances of distancing and active coping occur between different departments. Approximately 12.3% of variances in D-A fit and N-S fit occur at the department level. Lastly, the variances of work engagement and turnover intentions at the department level were about 10.3% and 12.7%, respectively.

The multi-level results are shown in Table 3. The model 1 and model 2 of Table 3 showed that the direct effects of POQ on D-A fit (γ = -0.26, *SE* = 0.08, $p < 0.01$) and on N-S fit (γ = -0.33, *SE* = 0.08, $p < 0.01$) were significant and negative, thereby supporting H1. As shown in model 3 and model 5, POQ was significantly related to active coping (γ = 0.33, *SE* = 0.09, $p < 0.01$), and active coping was significantly related to D-A fit (γ = 0.21, *SE* = 0.04, $p < 0.01$). The 95% 15,000 Bayesian credible interval for the indirect effect did not include 0 (effect = 0.07 95% CI = [0.01, 0.14]). Additionally, as shown in model 6, the effect of active coping on N-S fit was also significant and positive (γ = 0.26, *SE* = 0.05, $p < 0.01$). The Bayesian results showed that the indirect effect of POQ on N-S fit via active coping was also significant and positive (effect = 0 .09, 95% CI = [0.02, 0.15]), thereby supporting H2. The model 4 showed that the effect of POQ on distancing was significant and positive（γ = 0.22, *SE* = 0.08, $p < 0.05$). The model 5 and model 6 indicated that distancing was significantly related to D-A fit (γ = -0.24, *SE* = 0.05, $p < 0.01$) and N-S fit (γ = -0.20, *SE* = 0.06, $p < 0.05$). The Bayesian results showed that the indirect effects of POQ on D-A fit (effect = -0.05, 95% CI = [-0.10, -0.004]) and N-S fit (effect = -0.04, 95% CI = [-0.08, -0.003]) were both significant and negative, thereby supporting H3.

As shown in model 7 of Table 3, the results showed that procedural justice moderated the random slope between POQ and active coping (B = 0.86, *SE* = 0.08, $p < 0.01$). In addition, as shown in Table 4 and Figure 2, procedural justice moderated the indirect effects of POQ on D-A fit (moderated mediation index = 0.07, 95% CI = [0.02, 0.13]) and N-S fit (moderated mediation index = 0.09, 95% CI = [0 .02, 0.18]) through active coping. The simple slope analysis showed that the positive indirect effect of POQ on D-A fit was stronger when procedural justice was high (effect = 0.17, 95% CI = [0.05, 0.30]) than the condition that procedure justice was low (effect = 0.03, 95% CI = [-0.04, 0.11]). Additionally, the positive indirect effect of POQ on N-S fit was stronger when procedural justice was high (effect = 0.20, 95% CI = [0.09, 0.31]) than when procedural justice was low (effect = 0.03, 95% CI = [-0.05, 0.12], thereby supporting H4a.

The model 8 of Table 3 showed that procedural justice moderated the random slope between POQ and distancing (B = -0.49, *SE* = 0.09, $p < 0.01$). In addition, as shown in Table 4 and Figure 2, procedural justice moderated the indirect effects of POQ on D-A fit (moderated mediation index = 0.05, 95% CI = [0.004, 0.10]) and N-S fit (moderated mediation index = 0.04, 95% CI = [0.003, 0.008]) through distancing. The simple slope analysis showed that the negative indirect effect on D-A fit was weaker when procedural justice was high (effect = -0.05, 95% CI = [-0.13, 0.03] than when procedural justice was low (effect = -0.15, 95% CI = [-0.26, -0.05]). In addition, the negative indirect effect on N-S fit was weaker when procedural justice was high (effect = -0.04, 95% CI = [-0.09, 0.01] than when procedural justice was low (effect = -0.12, 95% CI = [-0.23, -0.02]), thereby supporting H4b.

The model 9 in Table 3 showed that the effects of D-A fit (γ = 15, *SE* = 0.03, $p < 0.01$) and N-S fit (γ = 0.66, *SE* = 0.04, $p < 0.01$) on work engagement were both significant and positive, thereby supporting H5a.

The model 10 in Table 3 showed that the effects of D-A fit (γ = 15, *SE* = 0.03, $p < 0.01$) on turnover intention was not significant (γ = -0.07, *SE* = 0.08, $p > 0.01$) while the effect of N-S fit (γ = -0.37, *SE* = 0.08, $p < 0.01$) on turnover intention was significant and negative. Therefore, H6a was partially supported.

Table 2. Descriptive and intervariable correlations

	Mean	Std.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Age	29.0	10.8	1											
2. Gender	0.58	0.50	-0.13*	1										
3. Tenure	4.10	2.37	0.36**		1									
4. Education	3.90	0.91	0.07	0.08	0.01	1								
5. Perceived overqualification	3.16	0.82	-0.18**	0.03	-0.23**	0.17**	1							
6. Distancing	3.42	0.87	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.06	0.21**	1						
7. Active coping	3.59	0.98	0.03	-0.01	-0.08	-0.06	0.24**	0.13*	1					
8. Demands-abilities fit	3.54	0.81	0.01	-0.07	0.02	-0.02	-0.15*	-0.19**	0.12*	1				
9. Needs-supplies fit	3.36	0.85	-0.08	0.07	-0.05	0.03	-0.32**	-0.36**	0.26**	0.63**	1			
10. Procedural justice	3.48	0.81	-0.18**	0.09	0.01	0.04	-0.26**	-0.37**	0.35**	0.16**	0.24**	1		
11. Work engagement	3.33	0.81	-0.04	-0.02	-0.02	0.03	-0.36**	-0.28**	0.28**	0.58**	0.58**	0.33**	1	
12. Turnover intention	2.93	0.95	0.10	-0.06	0.06	-0.04	0.35**	0.11*	-0.21**	-0.26**	-0.33**	-0.17**	-0.24**	1

Note. Employee-level N = 335, Department-level N = 34. $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$.

Table 3. Multi-level moderated mediation results

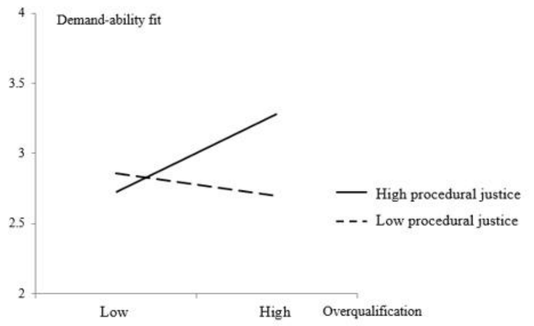
	Active coping		Distancing		DAF		NSF		WE	TNO
	Model 3	Model 7	Model 4	Model 8	Model 1	Model 5	Model 2	Model 6	Model 9	Model 10
Age	.01 (.01)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	- .00 (.00)	- .00 (.00)	- .00 (.00)	- .00 (.00)	.01* (.00)	-.01 (.01)
Gender	.09 (.09)	.07 (.06)	-.09 (.08)	-.08 (.09)	.08 (.08)	-11 (.09)	.12* (.06)	.11 (.07)	-.07 (.05)	.08 (.07)
Tenure	.07 (.08)	.08 (.09)	.09 (.08)	.08 (.09)	.07 (.06)	.07 (.06)	.10 (.09)	.09 (.08)	-.04 (.05)	.10 (.09)
Education	.09 (.06)	.09 (.07)	.08 (.09)	.10 (.11)	-.10 (.08)	-.10 (.08)	-.12 (.08)	-.13 (.08)	-.02 (.04)	-.06 (.04)
POQ	.33** (.09)	47**(.09)	.22** (.08)	.41**(.11)	-.26** (.08)	-.18* (.06)	-.33** (.08)	-.27** (.08)	-.13* (.05)	.17* (.09)
PJ		.53** (.10)		-.28** (.09)						
POQ*PJ		.86** (.08)		-.49**(.09)						
Active coping						.21** (.04)		.26** (.05)	.02 (.03)	-.02 (.06)
Distancing						-.24** (.05)		-.20** (.06)	-.05 (.04)	.11 (.07)
DAF									.15** (.03)	-.07 (.08)
NSF									.66** (.04)	-.37** (.08)

Note. Employee-level N = 335, Department-level N = 34. Coefficients are unstandardized and values in parentheses are standard errors. POQ = perceived overqualification; PJ = procedural justice; DAF = demands-abilities fit; NSF = needs-supplies fit; WE = work engagement; TNO = turnover intention. $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$.

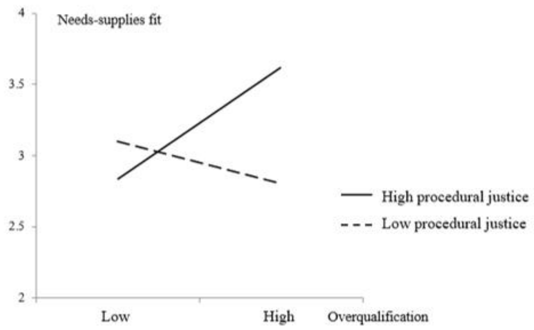
Table4. Conditional indirect effects of perceived overqualification on perceived fit.

	Demand-ability fit		Needs-supply fit	
	Coefficient	95% credible Interval	Coefficient	95% credible Interval
Conditional indirect effects via **active coping**				
POQ, Low PJ	0.03	(-0.04, 0.11)	0.03	(-0.05, 0.12)
POQ, High PJ	0.17**	(0.05, 0.30)	0.20**	(0.09, 0.31)
MMI	0.07**	(0.02, 0.13)	0.09**	(0.02, 0.18)
Conditional indirect effects via **distancing**				
POQ, Low PJ	-0.15**	(-0.26, 0.05)	-0.12**	(-0.23, -0.02)
POQ, High PJ	-0.05	(-0.13, 0.03)	-0.04	(-0.09, 0.01)
MMI	0.05**	(0.004, 0.10)	0.04**	(0.003, 0.08)

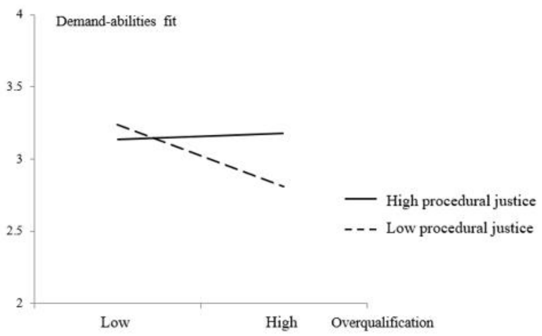
Figure 2. Conditional indirect effects of perceived overqualification on perceived fit.



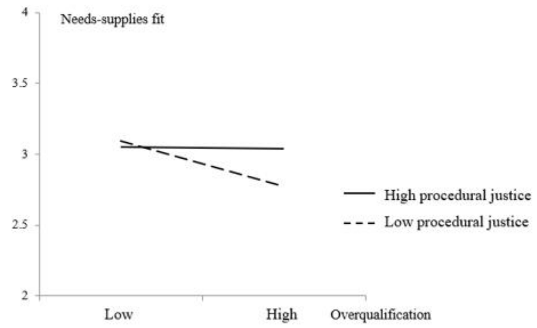
(a) Conditional indirect effect of perceived overqualification on demands-abilities fit through active coping



(b) Conditional indirect effect of perceived overqualification on needs-supplies fit through active coping



(c) Conditional indirect effect of perceived overqualification on demands-abilities fit through distancing



(d) Conditional indirect effect of perceived overqualification on needs-supplies fit through distancing

4. Discussion and Conclusion

4.1. Discussion and implications

The study revealed that active coping mediated the negative relationship between POQ and P-E fit, while distancing coping exacerbated the mismatch. Procedural justice moderated this relationship, reinforcing the positive impact of active coping under high procedural justice. These findings underscore the significance of organizational support in facilitating positive coping strategies among POQ employees. Additionally, while both D-A and N-S fits positively influenced work engagement, only N-S fit was negatively associated with turnover intentions, suggesting the importance of positive coping in enhancing perceived benefits and meaningfulness in situations of qualification mismatch.

These findings highlight the importance of coping strategies in mitigating the effects of POQ on P-E fit and work-related outcomes, emphasizing the role of organizational support mechanisms.

4.2. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

The first limitation of the present study is that the samples were collected exclusively from the Chinese hotel industry, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings due to specific cultural characteristics. Specifically, the previous study mentioned that the effectiveness of POQ is found differently in different cultural contexts (Luksyte et al., 2022) and how those coping strategies should be considered in different cultural contexts. In the meantime, the present study's insights apply to various industries and sample populations. Future research could explore how different cultural or industrial characteristics impact employees' POQ. Additionally, while this study focused on two coping strategies—active coping and distancing—future research could explore the varying effectiveness of different coping mechanisms introduced by the TTSC.

REFERENCES

Biggs, A., Brough, P., & Drummond, S. (2017). Lazarus and Folkman's Psychological Stress and Coping Theory. In C. L. Cooper & J. C. Quick (Eds.), *The Handbook of Stress and Health* (1st ed., pp. 349–364). Wiley. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118993811.ch21

Bliese, P. D. (2000). *Within-group agreement, non-independence, and reliability: Implications for data aggregation and analysis.* https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2000-16936-008

Boon, C., & Biron, M. (2016). Temporal issues in person–organization fit, person–job fit and turnover: The role of leader–member exchange. *Human Relations*, *69*(12), 2177– 2200. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726716636945

Brown, S. P., Westbrook, R. A., & Challagalla, G. (2005). Good Cope, Bad Cope: Adaptive and Maladaptive Coping Strategies Following a Critical Negative Work Event. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *90*(4), 792–798. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.90.4.792

Cable, D. M., & Edwards, J. R. (2004). Complementary and supplementary fit: A theoretical and empirical integration. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *89*(5), 822.

Caplan, R. D., & Van Harrison, R. (1993). Person-Environment Fit Theory: Some History, Recent Developments, and Future Directions. *Journal of Social Issues*, *49*(4), 253–275. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1993.tb01192.x

Carver, C. S., Scheier, M. F., & Weintraub, J. K. (1989). Assessing coping strategies: A theoretically based approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *56*(2), 267.

Chatman, J. A. (1991). Matching people and organizations: Selection and socialization in public accounting firms. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *36*(3), Article 3. https://doi.org/10.2307/2393204

Chen, C.-Y., Yen, C.-H., & Tsai, F. C. (2014). Job crafting and job engagement: The mediating role of person-job fit. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *37*, 21–28. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2013.10.006

Colquitt, J. A. (2001). On the dimensionality of organizational justice: A construct validation of a measure. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *86*, 386–400 . https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.86.3.386

Dahling, J. J., & Librizzi, U. A. (2015). Integrating the Theory of Work Adjustment and Attachment Theory to Predict Job Turnover Intentions. *Journal of Career Development*, *42*(3), 215–228. https://doi.org/10.1177/0894845314545169

De Rijk, A. E., Blanc, P. M. L., Schaufeli, W. B., & De Jonge, J. (1998). Active coping and need for control as moderators of the job demand–control model: Effects on burnout. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *71*(1), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8325.1998.tb00658.x

Deng, H., Guan, Y., Wu, C.-H., Erdogan, B., Bauer, T., & Yao, X. (2018). A Relational Model of Perceived Overqualification: The Moderating Role of Interpersonal Influence on Social Acceptance. *Journal of Management*, *44*(8), 3288–3310. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206316668237

Douglas, S. P., & Craig, S. C. (2007). Advertising across cultures. *The SAGE Handbook of Advertising*, 416–429.

Erdogan, B., & Bauer, T. N. (2021). Overqualification at Work: A Review and Synthesis of the Literature. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, *8*(1), 259–283. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-012420-055831

Erdogan, B., Karaeminogullari, A., Bauer, T. N., & Ellis, A. M. (2020). Perceived Overqualification at Work: Implications for Extra-Role Behaviors and Advice Network Centrality. *Journal of Management*, *46*(4), 583–606. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206318804331

Folkman, S., & Lazarus, R. S. (1988). Coping as a mediator of emotion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *54*(3), 466.

Folkman, S., Lazarus, R. S., Dunkel-Schetter, C., DeLongis, A., & Gruen, R. J. (1986). Dynamics of a stressful encounter: Cognitive appraisal, coping, and encounter outcomes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *50*(5), 992.

Fox, S., & Spector, P. E. (2006). The Many Roles of Control in a Stressor-Emotion Theory of Counterproductive Work Behavior. In *Research in Occupational Stress and Well-being* (Vol. 5, pp. 171–201). Emerald (MCB UP). https://doi.org/10.1016/S1479-3555(05)05005-5

George, J. M., & James, L. R. (1993). *Personality, affect, and behavior in groups revisited: Comment on aggregation, levels of analysis, and a recent application of within and between analysis.* https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1994-03738-001

Greenberg, J. (1987). A taxonomy of organizational justice theories. *Academy of Management Review*, *12*, 9–22. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1987.4306437

Harari, M. B., Manapragada, A., & Viswesvaran, C. (2017). Who thinks they're a big fish in a small pond and why does it matter? A meta-analysis of perceived overqualification. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *102*, 28–47. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2017.06.002

Higgins, E. T. (1997). Beyond pleasure and pain. *American Psychologist*, *52*(12), 1280.

Hu, J., Erdogan, B., Bauer, T. N., Jiang, K., Liu, S., & Li, Y. (2015). There are lots of big fish in this pond: The role of peer overqualification on task significance, perceived fit, and performance for overqualified employees. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *100*(4), 1228.

Johnson, R. E., Chang, C., & Rosen, C. C. (2010). "Who I Am Depends on How Fairly I'm Treated": Effects of Justice on Self-Identity and Regulatory Focus. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *40*(12), 3020–3058. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2010.00691.x

Kahn, W. A. (1990). PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITIONS OF PERSONAL ENGAGEMENT AND DISENGAGEMENT AT WORK. *Academy of Management Journal*, *33*(4), 692–724. https://doi.org/10.2307/256287

Kao, K.-Y., Spitzmueller, C., Cigularov, K., & Wu, H. (2016). Linking insomnia to workplace injuries: A moderated mediation model of supervisor safety priority and safety behavior. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *21*(1), 91.

Kaplan, S. (1983). A Model of Person-Environment Compatibility. *Environment and Behavior*, *15*(3), 311–332. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013916583153003

Kristof-Brown, A. L., Zimmerman, R. D., & Johnson, E. C. (2005). Consequences of Individuals' Fit at Work: A Meta-Analysis of Person–Job, Person–Organization, Person–Group, and Person–Supervisor Fit. *Personnel Psychology*, *58*(2), Article 2. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2005.00672.x

Lanaj, K., Chang, C.-H., & Johnson, R. E. (2012). Regulatory focus and work-related outcomes: A review and meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, *138*(5), 998.

Lee, K., Sharif, M., Scandura, T., & Kim, J. (2017). Procedural justice as a moderator of the relationship between organizational change intensity and commitment to organizational change. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, *30*(4), 501–524.

Liu, S., & Wang, M. (2012). Perceived Overqualification: A Review and Recommendations for Research and Practice. In P. L. Perrewé, J. R. B. Halbesleben, & C. C. Rosen (Eds.), *Research in Occupational Stress and Well-being* (Vol. 10, pp. 1–42). Emerald Group Publishing Limited. https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-3555(2012)0000010005

Luksyte, A., & Spitzmueller, C. (2016). When are overqualified employees creative? It depends on contextual factors. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *37*(5), 635–653. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2054

Luksyte, A., Spitzmueller, C., & Maynard, D. C. (2011). Why do overqualified incumbents deviate? Examining multiple mediators. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *16*(3), 279–296. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0022709

Maltarich, M. A., Reilly, G., & Nyberg, A. J. (2011). Objective and Subjective Overqualification: Distinctions, Relationships, and a Place for Each in the Literature. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, *4*(2), 236–239. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1754-9434.2011.01332.x

Martinez, P. G., Lengnick-Hall, M. L., & Kulkarni, M. (2014). Overqualified? A conceptual model of managers' perceptions of overqualification in selection decisions. *Personnel Review*, *43*(6), 957–974.

Maynard, D. C., Joseph, T. A., & Maynard, A. M. (2006). Underemployment, job attitudes, and turnover intentions. *Journal of Organizational Behavior : The International Journal of Industrial, Occupational and Organizational Psychology and Behavior*, *27*(4), 509–536.

Memon, M. A., Salleh, R., & Baharom, M. N. R. (2015). Linking person-job fit, person- organization fit, employee engagement and turnover intention: A three-step conceptual model. *Asian Social Science*, *11*(2), 313.

Muthén, L. K., & Muthén, B. O. (2002). How to Use a Monte Carlo Study to Decide on Sample Size and Determine Power. *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, *9*(4), 599–620. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15328007SEM0904_8

Park, J., & Min, H. K. (2020). Turnover intention in the hospitality industry: A meta- analysis. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *90*, 102599.

Peng, F., Li, Y., & Xu, W. (2023). Internship and career adaptability: Addressing occupational stigma and identity for hospitality management students. *Tourism Review*. https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-12-2022-0631

Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J.-Y., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *88*(5), 879.

Saleem, S., Rasheed, M. I., Malik, M., & Okumus, F. (2021a). Employee-fit and turnover intentions: The role of job engagement and psychological contract violation in the hospitality industry. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, *49*, 385–395.

Saleem, S., Rasheed, M. I., Malik, M., & Okumus, F. (2021b). Employee-fit and turnover intentions: The role of job engagement and psychological contract violation in the hospitality industry. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, *49*, 385–395.

Schaufeli, W. B., Bakker, A. B., & Salanova, M. (2006). The measurement of work engagement with a short questionnaire: A cross-national study. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, *66*(4), 701–716.

Schneider, B., Goldstiein, H. W., & Smith, D. B. (1995). The ASA framework: An update. *Personnel Psychology*, *48*(4), Article 4. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.1995.tb01780.x

Shafique, I., Kalyar, M. N., Ahmad, B., & Pierscieniak, A. (2023). Moral exclusion in hospitality: Testing a moderated mediation model of the relationship between perceived overqualification and knowledge-hiding behavior. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *35*(5), 1759–1778. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-01-2022-0067

Skinner, E. A., & Zimmer-Gembeck, M. J. (2007). The Development of Coping. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *58*(1), 119–144. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.58.110405.085705

Smith, H. J., & Pettigrew, T. F. (2015). Advances in Relative Deprivation Theory and Research. *Social Justice Research*, *28*(1), 1–6. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11211-014-0231-5

Tews, M. J., Michel, J. W., & Ellingson, J. E. (2013). The Impact of Coworker Support on Employee Turnover in the Hospitality Industry. *Group & Organization Management*, *38*(5), 630–653. https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601113503039

Tyler, T., & Blader, S. (2013). *Cooperation in groups: Procedural justice, social identity, and behavioral engagement*. Routledge. https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9780203782842/cooperation- groups-tom-tyler-steven-blader

Van Dijk, H., Shantz, A., & Alfes, K. (2020). Welcome to the bright side: Why, how, and when overqualification enhances performance. *Human Resource Management Review*, *30*(2), 100688. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2019.04.004

Xu, S ., (Cj) Lin, Z., He, M., & Wong, I. A . (2023). The perils of hospitality internship: A growth curve approach to job motivation change. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *35*(2), 492–511. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-12-2021-1525

Yeşiltaş, M., Arici, H. E., & Sormaz, Ü. (2023). Does perceived overqualification lead employees to further knowledge hiding? The role of relative deprivation and ego depletion. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *35*(5), 1880–1900. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-11-2021-1392

Zhang, Y., LePine, J. A., Buckman, B. R., & Wei, F. (2014). It's Not Fair … Or Is It? The Role of Justice and Leadership in Explaining Work Stressor–Job Performance Relationships. *Academy of Management Journal*, *57*(3), 675–697. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2011.1110

Zhang, Y., Zhang, Y., Ng, T. W. H., & Lam, S. S. K. (2019). Promotion- and prevention-focused coping: A meta-analytic examination of regulatory strategies in the work stress process. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *104*(10), 1296–1323. https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000404

Zoogah, D. B. (2010). Why should I be left behind? Employees' perceived relative deprivation and participation in development activities. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *95*(1), 159–173. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018019

Zyphur, M. J., & Oswald, F. L. (2015). Bayesian Estimation and Inference: A User's Guide. *Journal of Management*, *41*(2), 390–420. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206313501200

Exploring tourist perceptions and experiences: A study of beach tourism in Phuket Island

Khwanyuen, Krittabhas
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism
Prince of Songkla University

Sangkaew, Nichapat
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism
Prince of Songkla University

Karim, Md Rabiul
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism
Prince of Songkla University

Abstract:
This study investigates tourist perceptions of beach experiences in Phuket through analysis of online reviews. Objectives include identifying key terms used in reviews, assessing sentiment, and offering recommendations for tourism enhancement. Utilizing manual review analysis and sentiment analysis algorithms, 30 frequent terms were identified, with valence indicating positive or negative experiences. Findings reveal positive sentiments towards cleanliness, restaurants, and bars, but negative perceptions regarding water quality and boat disturbances. Recommendations include improving water quality and managing boat traffic. Limitations include data source and language constraints. Future research should explore additional platforms and socio-demographic factors, considering post-COVID-19 impacts on tourist behavior.

Keywords: Phuket, Beach, Destination image, Online reviews, Sentiment analysis

Can attractions influence decisions to build more hotels in the community? Evidence of 2.4 km^2 spatial analysis from Thailand

Chayanon Phucharoen
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism
Prince of Songkla University

Nichapat Sangkaew
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism
Prince of Songkla University

Aziz Nanthaamornphong
College of Computing
Prince of Songkla University

Abstract:

This study adopts a novel geospatial approach to explore hotel and attraction colocation in Thailand, diverging from traditional methods bound by administrative definitions. By leveraging Tobler's first law of geography, it offers a detailed analysis of tourism enterprise interrelations within a 2.4 km² radius. This method provides a more nuanced understanding of tourism agglomeration, underscoring the importance of spatial distribution in economic impact assessments, and challenging conventional colocation concepts to enhance tourism development strategies. We reveal two key insights. First, the density of hotels in a community is influenced more by attraction popularity than the sheer number of attractions. Second, less visited destination benefits more from numerous attractions, signaling a tourism shift from saturated primary provinces.

Keywords: Accommodations; Attraction; Google Map; Local community; Tourism Geography; User-Generated Content

1. Introduction

Existing research on hotel locations has primarily focused on demand-side factors, typically through surveys investigating how location impacts travelers' decisions on accommodation. Recent studies on tourism agglomeration emphasize the importance of the colocation of tourism-related businesses, such as hotels and attractions, highlighting a growing interest in the supply-side study of tourism (Valenzuela-Ortiz et al., 2022). Diverging from traditional methods that define colocation through administrative boundaries like regions or districts. By taking into account cross-border linkages and offering spatially confirmed proof of colocation, this technique generally enables a more comprehensive view of colocation than what administrative boundaries may overlook or incorrectly reflect. Our investigation advances this concept by employing Tobler's first law of geography (Miller, 2004). This approach allows us to verify the spatial distribution and interrelations of tourism enterprises as suggested by the tourism agglomeration framework, moving beyond the conventional definitions of colocation. We utilize publicly accessible spatial data from a Map application, specifically at the community level, to examine the statistical relationship between the presence and popularity of local attractions and the concentration of lodging within a 2.4 km^2 size of the community to test the unprecedented test of assumption of colocation between hotels and attractions in tourism agglomeration studies. In addition, existing literature has touched upon hotel dispersion in specific tourist destinations (Arkema et al., 2021; Miller, 2004; Rodríguez Rangel et al., 2020), this study focuses on all 66,659 communities across Thailand.

Our analysis aims to unpack the spatial dynamics between tourist accommodations and attractions, focusing on both the quantity of attractions and their popularity. Specifically, our objectives include: 1) assessing the statistical relationship between the existence of attractions and the proximity of hotels, and 2) determining whether the popularity of attractions within a community influences the colocation of nearby hotels**.**

2. Literature Review

According to the place utility framework (Wolpert, 1964, 1965), hotels should be near attractions as the proximity to attractions has been consistently shown to be one of the prominent factors tourists consider when selecting their hotels. Tourism agglomeration studies show that hotels near attractions have higher occupancy rates and profitability (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999). Canina, Enz, and (Harrison, 2005) found that proximity to popular attractions boosts a hotel's competitiveness and financial performance. (Yang et al., 2009) found that clustering tourism-related businesses, including hotels, in a specific area creates a synergistic environment that boosts destination attractiveness and generates sustained tourist interest and economic growth.

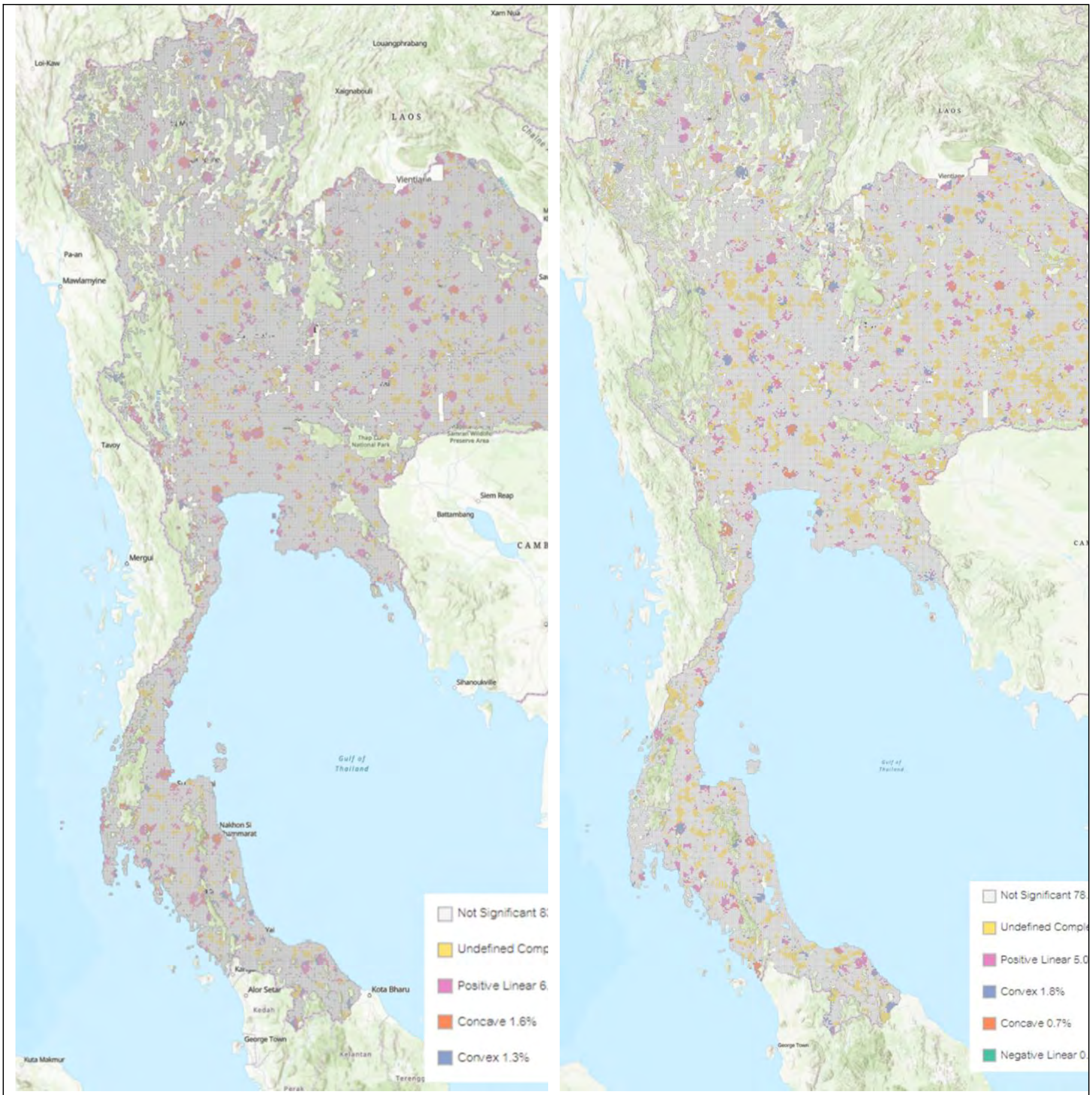
3. Methodology

By applying Tobler's first law of geography, which states that "everything is related to everything else, but near things are more related than distant things." This study strived to answer this question through the lens of the supply side by determining whether the proximity to attractions matters to hotel collocated. Rather than assuming the colocation through administrative boundaries or ignoring the plausible linkage of accommodation and attractions across administrative defined areas.

We conducted geospatial analysis using data extracted from Google Maps, focusing on the spatial distribution of tourist attractions and accommodations across Thailand (Gibson & Erle, 2006; Goodfriend, 2021; Mehta et al., 2019; Vandeviver, 2014). This paper employs local bivariate geospatial analysis (Guo, 2010) to investigate the relationship between attractions and hotels within communities, offering a distinct approach to discerning whether these relationships are positive, convex, concave, or complex**.**

4. Results

Our analysis revealed that the popularity of attractions, as indicated by user reviews, significantly influences the density of accommodations in local communities. Contrary to expectations, the sheer number of attractions has a weaker correlation with accommodation density. Additionally, we found differences between primary and less-visited tourist destinations, with less-visited provinces showing potential for tourism growth driven by increasing attraction popularity.



A geographic result of LBR analysis between the density of accommodation and attraction's popularity

A geographic result of LBR analysis between the density of accommodation and number of attractions

Figure 1. Geographic representation of LBR analysis between the density of accommodation and the number and popularity of attractions in the area

Figure 1, which illustrates the 2.4-km^2 community grids across the nation, distinctly highlights grids exhibiting high levels of correlations between the popularity of attractions and the density of accommodations. Strikingly, the grids displaying positive, concave, and convex relationships tend to form discernible clusters, while those with complex relationships appear more scattered. It is worth noting that in coastal areas, a small number of grids exhibited neither positive, concave, nor complex relationships, with most grids reporting a low correlation between the popularity of attractions and accommodation density in the communities. In contrast, the central area of Thailand shows a concave relationship, indicating a saturation point in the correlation between local area popularity and the availability of accommodations.

Our findings challenge traditional demand-driven narratives by highlighting the importance of supply side dynamics in shaping accommodation trends. Accommodations strategically position themselves based on the popularity of nearby attractions rather than simply proximity to a high number of attractions. Furthermore, less-visited tourist destinations present opportunities for tourism development, emphasizing the need for targeted promotional efforts to leverage increasing attraction popularity.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study contributes to a theoretical understanding of colocation between tourist attractions and accommodations. By focusing on Thailand as a case study, we provide insights into how accommodations strategically position themselves relative to attractions. Our findings offer practical implications for tourism development, suggesting the importance of considering attraction popularity in accommodation planning and promotion efforts.

Understanding the relationship between hotel location and the availability and popularity of attractions within a community has significant policy implications, both theoretically and practically. On a theoretical level, it advances the existing frameworks on spatial economics and location theory by providing nuanced insights into locational decisions about hotels at the community or micro-regional level. This could lead to the development of more sophisticated models that capture the complexities of these relationships, thereby enriching the academic discourse in the field. On a practical level, policymakers and urban planners can leverage this knowledge to make more informed decisions about zoning, infrastructure development, and tourism promotion. Knowing where hotels are likely to be situated in relation to attractions allows for the strategic placement of public amenities and services, such as public transport and safety measures, that can enhance the tourist experience while also benefiting local residents. It also assists in the development of more targeted marketing strategies for tourism boards. Further, this information could guide sustainable tourism efforts, helping to balance the economic benefits of tourism with the need to preserve cultural landmarks and natural attractions. Therefore, understanding the spatial relationship between hotels and attractions not only fills a scholarly gap but also has tangible, actionable implications for destination management and sustainable development.

However, the following limitations should be noted, while our study provides valuable insights, it is limited by its focus on Thailand's tourism landscape, which may not be generalizable to other regions. Additionally, the reliance on data from user-generated content platforms like Google Maps may introduce biases and inaccuracies. Future research could explore the role of attraction ratings in shaping accommodation trends and consider temporal changes in the tourism landscape.

REFERENCES

Arkema, K. K., Fisher, D. M., Wyatt, K., Wood, S. A., & Payne, H. J. (2021). Advancing sustainable development and protected area management with social media-based tourism data. *Sustainability*, *13*(5), 2427.

Crouch, G. I., & Ritchie, J. R. B. (1999). Tourism, Competitiveness, and Societal Prosperity. *Journal of Business Research*, *44*(3), 137-152. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963(97)00196-3

Gibson, R., & Erle, S. (2006). *Google maps hacks*. " O'Reilly Media, Inc.".

Goodfriend, S. (2021). A street view of occupation: Getting around Hebron on Google Maps. *Visual Anthropology Review*, *37*(2), 225-245.

Harrison, R. (2005). *Learning and development*. CIPD publishing.

Mehta, H., Kanani, P., & Lande, P. (2019). Google maps. *International Journal of Computer Applications*, *178*(8), 41-46.

Miller, H. J. (2004). Tobler's First Law and Spatial Analysis. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, *94*(2), 284-289. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8306.2004.09402005.x

Rodríguez Rangel, M. C., Sánchez Rivero, M., & Ramajo Hernández, J. (2020). A spatial analysis of intensity in tourism accommodation: An application for extremadura (Spain). *Economies*, *8*(2), 28.

Valenzuela-Ortiz, A., Chica-Olmo, J., & Castañeda, J.-A. (2022). Location factors and agglomeration economies in the hotel industry: the case of Spain. *European Journal of Management and Business Economics*, *ahead-of-print*(ahead-of-print). https://doi.org/10.1108/EJMBE-10-2021-0273

Vandeviver, C. (2014). Applying google maps and google street view in criminological research. *Crime Science*, *3*, 1-16.

Wolpert, J. (1964). THE DECISION PROCESS IN SPATIAL CONTEXT 1. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, *54*(4), 537-558. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8306.1964.tb01783.x

Wolpert, J. (1965). Behavioral aspects of the decision to migrate. *Papers of the Regional Science Association*, *15*(1), 159-169. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01947871

Yang, J., Qu, H., & Kim, W. G. (2009). Merger abnormal returns and payment methods of hospitality firms. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *28*(4), 579-585. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2009.03.007

What are the most important to me? Exploring outbound study destination of Hong Kong for Mainland Chinese people

(The work described in this paper was fully supported by a grant (SSHD-2022-280 (E)) from the College of Professional and Continuing Education, an affiliate of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University.)

Xu, Jing (Bill)
Division of Business and Hospitality Management
Hong Kong PolyU CPCE

Ma, Ka Yee
School of Hotel and Tourism Management
Hong Kong PolyU

Chan, Thomas YC
Division of Social Sciences, Humanities and Design
Hong Kong PolyU CPCE

Lee, Wing Stephanie
Division of Social Sciences, Humanities and Design
Hong Kong PolyU CPCE

Loh, Wai-keung Anthony
Division of Science, Engineering and Health Studies
Hong Kong PolyU CPCE

Abstract:

This study investigates the influential factors shaping mainland Chinese students' decision-making on pursuing overseas education, focusing on Hong Kong's emergence as a global hub for higher education. It offers valuable insights for academics, educators, marketers, and policymakers striving to attract a more diverse and talented cohort of non-local students. By analyzing these factors, the research aims to contribute to the development of effective strategies and initiatives that enhance Hong Kong's attractiveness as a premier destination for higher education.

Keywords: Outbound study; Social norms; Resources; Hong Kong; Mainland China

1. Introduction

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has underlined the importance of promoting Hong Kong as a worldwide higher education hub, emphasising the city's unique status as the only city with five universities listed in the top 100 (HKSAR Government, 2023). According to the QS Best Student Cities 2024 ranking, Hong Kong ranks fifth out of 49 Asian cities. According to statistics from the Hong Kong Immigration Department, the majority of non-local students in Hong Kong are from mainland China. Given this, the HKSAR government has announced intentions to expand the admission quota for non-local students to government-funded postsecondary educational institutions. Individual institutions will be allowed to double the non-local student quota up to 40% of overall admission capacity. In addition, the government has planned a $1 billion investment into the Government Scholarship Fund, which will take effect in the 2024-25 academic year, with the goal of attracting more bright persons to study and conduct research in Hong Kong. These incentives have encouraged more Mainland Chinese students to seek higher education in Hong Kong.

Given its long-standing success as a regional higher education hub (Huld, 2022), it is worthwhile to look into the aspects that make Hong Kong appealing to international students. Furthermore, it is critical to investigate the key factors and reasons that influence Mainland Chinese students' decision-making processes while selecting an overseas study destination. This study intends to provide insights and broaden our understanding of outbound or abroad education, with implications for academics, educators, marketers, and governments interested in attracting more outstanding non-local students

2. Literature Review

2.1. The context of Mainland Chinese students for their outbound studies

Mainland Chinese students have a rich history of seeking international education abroad. Based on data published by the Ministry of Education of China, a total of 6,560,600 students from Mainland China engaged in outbound studies between 1978 and 2019, prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic (Ministry of the People's Republic of China, 2020). Nevertheless, it remains uncertain whether the unwavering drive for Mainland Chinese individuals persists following the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.2. Factors influencing outbound studies and destination choice

Over the past few decades, pursuing higher education abroad has been increasingly popular globally. In 2019, around 6 million students studied outside of their own country (Juraev, 2021). In general, given the existing literature on outbound studies and study destinations, it has been determined that most of the factors can be categorized using the push and pull model (Dimmick & Leong, 2009; Lin & Liu, 2020; Nikou et.al, 2023; Yang, 2007, Yue & Lu, 2022). Push factors are related to the political, economic, and social situations in the home country, while pull factors are associated with the characteristics of the host country that make it appealing to students. According to Mazzaro's (2002) research, students' choice of overseas study destination is influenced by at least six pull factors: knowledge and awareness of the quality of the study destination, recommendations from reference groups, cost of tuition and living in the host country, living and social environment of the host country, geographic proximity to the destination country, and the presence of relatives and friends in the destination country. Jung et al. (2014) focused on the educational service quality and personal preferences of Asian students attending hotel schools in Switzerland. Gan & Kang (2022), on the other hand, found that some students' motivation to study abroad is to fulfil their undergraduate course requirement, as some universities made overseas study/exchange as mandatory item before graduation; also, their study revealed other motivations of pursuing overseas studies from the perspective of students from the west (like United States) is to gain international experiences, develop personally, and gain a competitive advantage in the employability.

Researchers also investigated the motivations of mainland Chinese students who study abroad in Hong Kong and other parts of the world. For example, Gao (2008) discovered that the majority of Mainland Chinese students were drawn to Hong Kong because of its location and culture connection with mainland China. In a more recent study on the same topic, Guan et al. (2023) investigated the pull factors that influence Mainland Chinese students' decisions to study abroad in the post-COVID-19 era. According to the study, Mainland students prioritise "tuition cost," "living cost," "tuition language," and "Chinese employment prospects" when choosing an outbound study destination, whereas parents prioritise "tuition cost," "living costs," "tuition language," and "world ranking of institutions" when selecting an outbound study destination for their children. The study concluded that resources and the quality of the study location are important determinants.

3. Methodology

A qualitative approach was adopted via purposive sampling and referral sampling methods. A screening question was asked to specify whether the Mainland Chinese respondents, who were at least 18 years old and agreed to participate in the study, had themselves, or their parents or important people surrounding them to consider outbound studies (e.g., Hong Kong as a destination) in the future. Parents would consider their children for further studies in this regard. As a result, there were 160 people who actively participated in. 57.5% were female and the major age group was between 36 and 45 years old (43.8%). Their responses were collected online, thereby being not lengthy but straightforward. They were requested to elaborate on the important factors that might be considered for their or others' decisions. Responses were collected online and translated to English. Content analysis was used to code the data and identify major themes regarding factors of consideration.

4. Results

As a result of content analysis, there were three major important factors for outbound studies and destination choice: 1) Social norms, 2) Resources, and 3) Quality of outbound study destinations. The following sub-sections will further illustrate.

4.1 Social norms

Social norms are an expectation that the majority of society accepts on how to act or think (Petzold & Peter, 2015). In this study, it represents an important factor due to the fact that many respondents highlighted it, particularly when discussing the influence of their 1) relatives, 2) people around them, and 3) people with outbound study experiences. Representative quotes for 1) included *"Relatives are more reliable," "We can listen to the advice given by relatives,"* and*" The advice of relatives is quite important".* Typical quotes for 2) had *"The opinions of people around me can be taken as references," "The opinions of people around me are important,"* and *"As parents, we hope that the people around us can show greater respect toward our child regarding this decision to study outbound. This is crucial as it greatly affects how both the child and I are perceived by others."* Lastly, selected quotes for 3) included *"You can learn from those who have already been there, and these suggestions are very important in order to avoid committing unnecessary mistakes,"* and *"Hope to consider everyone's experiences and opinions comprehensively."*

4.2 Resources

Resources for outbound study were mainly found to include financial support from students' families, for tuition fees, living expenses in the host nation, and travel costs. Financial consideration plays a crucial role in a student's decision (or parent's decision for their children) to study in a specific destination (Nikou et.al, 2023). The importance of this factor is supported by the following quotes: *"Studying outbound costs a lot every year. The family's financial conditions are important," "The consumption level and whether the family can afford it at the* *study outbound destination are extremely important for the choice"* and *"It requires a certain level of financial capability in the family to support their child to study outbound.*

4.3 Quality of outbound study destinations
As students and parents see international education as a way to gain global skills and experiences, the quality of the study destination and institutions will directly influence their decision of destination choice (Nikou et.al, 2023). A well-known institution with a high-quality education system will be more attractive to students than a mediocre institution with less well-known faculty members (Nikou et.al, 2023). The significance of the outbound study destination's quality has been demonstrated by the following quotes: ***"We would only consider*** *schools with sufficient competitive faculty members,"* ***"****The quality of the study destination is an important aspect of studying outbound****"*** **and** ***"H****ighly competitive faculty is inseparable from academic performance.****"***

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and implications
This study investigated the factors behind Mainland Chinese people's decision to pursue further studies in Hong Kong. The findings indicated that many respondents agreed with the importance of available resources, voices from other people about studying outbound, and the quality of institutions, as well as destinations. These findings mirrored some arguments by Chew et al. (2010), Guan et al. (2023), and Nikou et al. (2023). But social norms were particularly highlighted among these groups of people in the current study. In Chinese society, the views of important others are influential, including the circumstances of considering outbound studies. Given the findings, institutions and destinations (e.g., Hong Kong and its universities) could consider supplementing with more scholarships and studentships in a more widely manner to alleviate the financial burdens of those of interest, while highlighting their institutional rankings and destination reputation. Meanwhile, the host government and institutions must work with reference groups such as past students, faculty members, relatives (including parents), and opinion leaders to spread positive word-of-mouth to attract new applicants. Incentives need to be issued for such recommendations and referrals, at the institutional or destination level.

5.2. Conclusion
In conclusion, this study emphasises the importance of resources, social norms, and the quality of outbound study locations in persuading students to undertake such courses. Resource availability is critical in encouraging students to consider studying abroad. Additionally, social norms and the perceived quality of study destinations influence their decisions. These findings have significant implications for policymakers and educational institutions looking to attract more international students to their study programmes.

5.3. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies
Nevertheless, it is crucial to take into account the limitations of this research. The generalizability of the study's findings to international or non-local students and parents from Mainland China may be limited. As a result, undertaking a qualitative study that includes interviews with Mainland students currently studying in Hong Kong would help to triangulate the findings. Additional outbound study destinations may be taken into account for the purpose of verification.

References

Dimmock, C., & Ong Soon Leong, J. (2010). Studying overseas: Mainland Chinese students in Singapore. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, *40*(1), 25–42. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057920903155666

Gao, X. (2008). Shifting motivational discourses among Mainland Chinese students in an english medium tertiary institution in Hong Kong: A longitudinal inquiry. *Studies in Higher Education*, *33*(5), 599–614. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070802373107

Guan, L., Mok, K. H., & Yu, B. (2023). Pull factors in choosing a higher education study abroad destination after the massive global immobility: A re-examination from Chinese perspectives. *Cogent Education*, *10*(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186x.2023.2199625

HKSAR Government. (2023, October). *The chief executive's 2023 policy address*. The Chief Executive's 2023. https://www.policyaddress.gov.hk/2023/en/p158a.html

Hong Kong Immigration Department. (2023). *Immigration Yearbook 2022*. Index. https://www.immd.gov.hk/publications/a_report_2022/tc/chapter2.html

Huld, A. (2022). *Hong Kong's education market - trends and opportunities*. China Briefing News. https://www.china-briefing.com/news/hong-kongs-education-market-trends-and-opportunities/

Jung, J., Kim, S. (Sam), & Schuckert, M. (2014). Why do Asian students go to Swiss Hotel Schools? their motivations, perceptions of service quality, and preferences. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, *14*(1), 22–52. https://doi.org/10.1080/15313220.2014.872897

Juraev, O., Kiatkawsin, K., Mukhammadieva, I., & Kim, J.-H. (2021). Looking abroad for growth: A study of international student's symbolic motivations in attending South Korean universities. *Sustainability*, *14*(1), 213. https://doi.org/10.3390/su14010213

Knight, J. (2013). Education hubs: International, regional and local dimensions of scale and scope. *Comparative Education*, *49*(3), 374–387. https://doi.org/10.1080/03050068.2013.803783

Lin, M.-T., & Liu, C. (2020). Exploring the travel motivations and behaviors of educational tourists: A study of Mainland Chinese students in New Zealand. *Journal of China Tourism Research*, *18*(2), 350–375. https://doi.org/10.1080/19388160.2020.1845270

Lo, W. Y., & Li, D. (2023). Reimagining the notion of Hong Kong as an education hub: National Imperative for Higher Education policy. *International Journal of Educational Development*, *103*, 102938. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2023.102938

Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. (2020, December 16). *Statistics on Chinese learners studying overseas in 2019*. Press releases. http://en.moe.gov.cn/news/press_releases/202012/t20201224_507474.html

Mazzarol, T., & Soutar, G. N. (2002). "push-pull" factors influencing International Student Destination Choice. *International Journal of Educational Management*, *16*(2), 82–90. https://doi.org/10.1108/09513540210418403

Nikou, S., Kadel, B., & Gutema, D. M. (2023). Study destination preference and post-graduation intentions: A push-pull factor theory perspective. *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education*. https://doi.org/10.1108/jarhe-04-2023-0149

Petzold, K., & Peter, T. (2014). The social norm to study abroad: Determinants and effects. *Higher Education*, *69*(6), 885–900. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-014-9811-4

Savani, K. (2017, February 28). *When our decisions are based on social norms rather than our preferences*. Nanyang Business School. https://www.ntu.edu.sg/business/news-events/news/story-detail/when-our-decisions-are-based-on-social-norms-rather-than-our-preferences

Topuniversities. (2024). *QS best student cities ranking 2024*. Top Universities. https://www.topuniversities.com/city-rankings?region=Asia

Yang, M. (2007). What attracts mainland Chinese students to Australian higher education. *Studies in Learning, Evaluation Innovation and Development*, *4*(2), 1–12.

Yue, Y., & Lu, J. (2022). International Students' Motivation to Study Abroad: An Empirical Study Based on Expectancy-Value Theory and Self-Determination Theory. Frontiers in psychology, 13, 841122. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.841122

From the Individual to the Collective: Analyzing the Self-Expansion Behavior of K-POP Fans' Music Tourism Journey

Aguilar, Hannah R.
National University
Philippines

Bintulan, Caren D.
National University
Philippines

Guerrero, Elliz Harvey G.
National University
Philippines

Inoue, Kairi S.
National University
Philippines

Muñoz, Kyrie Eleison A.
National University
Philippines

Abstract:

Music tourists, particularly K-pop fans, significantly impact culture and the tourism sector. Yet, studies on K-pop events focus mainly on its macroeconomic benefits, neglecting K-pop fans' social, leisure, and travel experiences. Prompted by this gap, this study applies self-expansion theory to investigate how K-pop fans self-expand during mega concerts. Qualitative data from photo elicitation, autophotography, and in-depth interviews revealed that concerts enable fans to shift from individualist to collectivist behavior, influenced by artists, audiences, artifacts, and ambiance. As an implication to the industry, practitioners could enhance tourism experiences and mobility by enhancing K-pop fans' subjective well-being during mega concerts.

Keywords: Music Tourism, K-pop, self-expansion theory, social experience, autophotography

1. Introduction

K-pop fans have been an important part of tourism not only because of their economic potential but also their contribution to establishing a distinct subculture in society (Pocratsky, 2019). This phenomenon can be traced to the Hallyu Wave which gained momentum in 2012 with Psy's "Gangnam Style" and BTS leading the K-pop sensation (Choi, 2022). This global spectacle featuring Korean actors, pop artists, and athletes became a profitable strategy for attracting tourists (Ghansiyal, 2021). K-pop fans, categorized as special interest tourists, align with the niche tourism trend seen in various government policies worldwide (Hall, 1989; Hall & Zeppel, 1990; Tabata, 1989; Young & Crandall, 1984). With over 100 million Korean Wave fan clubs globally in 2021, the market for South Korean entertainment continues to thrive (Yoo, 2021).

The cultural impact of the Korean Wave significantly contributes to South Korea's tourism, with the direct economic impact doubling from 2016 to 2019, extending to consumer goods exports and tourism (Korean Foundation, 2022). K-pop's international reach has also stimulated interest in diverse Korean sectors like retail, health care, tourism, Hangul, cuisine, and fashion (Kim et al., 2022). Previous studies highlight the influence of K-pop tourism on travelers' behavioral intentions, especially in South Korea, where K-pop tourists are frequent visitors. There are established connections between travel satisfaction and the perceived value associated with the country (Baek et al., 2021; Yoon & Yoon, 2013).

Existing literature on K-pop tourism has also primarily explored the phenomenon at mega-events, examining its macro-level impacts. However, there is a gap in research concerning the micro perspective, specifically K-pop fans' social experiences and their contributions to the economy, society, culture, and the tourism industry (Bae et al., 2010; Lee, 2017;). Focusing on the micro perspective gives insights into how K-Pop tourism shapes local communities (Laffan, 2020). For instance, a surge of fans visiting a specific district to attend a concert might lead to the opening of themed cafes or shops, fostering a more vibrant and international atmosphere that attracts not only K-Pop fans but also a wider range of tourists. Thus, understanding the micro perspective change exemplifies the potential of K-Pop tourism to revitalize neighborhoods and influence local businesses.

As such, this study utilized an explanatory–qualitative approach to answer the following research question: *How does attending mega concerts develop K-pop fans' social experience?* This paper will **a**ddress the gap in understanding the impact of K-pop tourism from a micro perspective, specifically focusing on the social experiences of K-pop fans and their contributions to the economy, society, culture, and the tourism industry. From a practical standpoint, the research aims to provide insights that can inform policies and strategies for leveraging the K-pop phenomenon to induce tourism experiences and mobility by enhancing K-pop fans' subjective well-being during mega concerts.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Self-expansion theory

Self-expansion theory is based on the human urge to broaden oneself by acquiring identities, resources, and views that strengthen one's ability to attain goals through a series of expansion processes (Aron et al., 2001; Aron et al., 2005). This theory posits that individuals have an innate urge to broaden themselves and a desire to include others in their field of experience (Aron & Aron, 1986). In explaining for K-pop subculture, K-pop fans are perhaps interested in joining groups or fandoms because membership offers them the chance to expand and increase their potential to achieve goals by providing access to substantial benefits such as resources, identities, and perspectives (Wright et al., 2002). Through self-expansion, K-pop fans can create attachments and interpersonal relationships to form a new connection to a person or object to strengthen an existing relationship which is the best notion for analyzing how K-pop fans change from individualists to collectivists (Bowlby, 1980; Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Their behaviors are thus laden with creating identities, fostering a sense of belongingness, and building connections among fellow K-pop fans (Aron et al., 2001; 2005; Pocratsky, 2019). Finally, K-pop fans express a desire for unique experiences with idols, introducing them to new physical settings and providing another opportunity for self-expansion. Through self-expansion, fans transition from individualists to collectivists, forming new connections and strengthening existing relationships.

2.2. Individualist to Collectivist behavior during concerts

An interesting attribute among K-pop fans is that they exhibit individualist behavior (e.g., fostering personal independence) before attending concerts (AFS-USA, 2023). However, it remains unknown how K-pop fans expand their social experiences into collectivism. Social experience is often viewed as an essential factor for engaging in leisure activities (Beard & Ragheb, 1983), and co-attendance at music performances is no exception (Kulczynski et al., 2016; Baker, 2000; Burland & Pitts, 2014). The presence of others is a motivator for attendance at and a usual response to, live music events (Baker, 2000). This is because interactions with other K-pop Fans in a music tourism context constitute social experiences (Dearn & Price, 2016).

Fan communities in lively settings where people with similar interests congregate and forge a sense of commonality (Carter, 2018). These engagements within a fandom help to develop and define its collective identity. Fan experiences are what fans obtain (considered to be mostly affective or emotional) through engaging in fan practices and/or consuming general K-pop content. Social engagement with concerts was found to affect one's personal well-being and mental health positively. In addition, participatory culture in the form of fandom demonstrates diverse forms of meaning-making, value negotiation, and response patterns (Jenkins, 2018). It connected fans' perceptions with their participation in the collective aspects of being a K-pop fan, such as figuring out what entices them to join and mobilize activities with fellow fans, regardless of the individualistic focus on defining fan experiences.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected from June to September 2023. Two visual techniques namely, *Photo Elicitation and Autophotography,* and *In-depth Interviews* were utilized to answer the research question. Photo elicitation is a technique that encourages participants to reflect on their experiences in greater depth than verbal inquiry (Douglas, 1998; Harrison, 2002). The researchers showed a collated picture of different K-pop groups' encore stages during mega concerts, allowing the participants to share their overall experience in their recently attended concert. On the other hand, Autophotography makes use of images where the researcher and reader may see through the participant's perspective. With this method, the researchers requested a picture from the participants that best describes their overall experiences. Finally, the in-depth interview section allowed the researchers to ask questions regarding their overall experience (prior, during, and post-event) and certain lengths undertaken.

The in-depth interviews provided a 'conversational space' where participants could freely express their emotions and comfortably share narratives about their experiences and lifeworld through facilitative interaction (Owens, 2006). Thematic analysis was carried out to further understand the participants' narratives by using themes to uncover the implicit meanings in their statements and related materials about the research questions. Moreover, thematic analysis is a good tool for examining the viewpoints of different research participants, showing resemblance and distinctions, and providing unanticipated findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006; King, 2004).

3.2. Profile of the Participants

A total of 15 conveniently sampled K-pop fans comprise the participants of this study. Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the participants, including their sex, age, occupation, and frequency of attending K-pop performances. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 34 years, having an average of 23. Furthermore, more females (12) than males (3) willingly helped the researchers in this study. Finally, most of the participants were unemployed, with half attending K-pop concerts occasionally and the remaining half attending them often.

Table 1. Participant Information (N=15)

ID No.	Sex	Age	Occupation	Frequency of attending K-pop concerts
1	Female	25	Employed	Occasionally
2	Female	20	Unemployed	Often
3	Female	28	Employed	Often
4	Female	28	Employed	Often
5	Female	26	Employed	Often
6	Female	21	Unemployed	Often
7	Female	20	Unemployed	Occasionally
8	Female	18	Unemployed	Occasionally
9	Male	21	Unemployed	Occasionally
10	Female	15	Unemployed	Occasionally
11	Female	18	Unemployed	Often
12	Female	34	Employed	Occasionally
13	Male	22	Unemployed	Occasionally
14	Female	22	Employed	Often
15	Male	20	Unemployed	Often

Throughout this study, ethical considerations were strictly followed given that the study involves images from the participants. They present unique problems to confidentiality and privacy (Bugos, et al., 2014). The researchers will ensure complete transparency with participants regarding the use of photos, and participants retain the right to request non-usage, sharing, or dissemination of their photographs before the publication of the research.

4. Results

The thematic analysis yielded four themes that explain how K-pop fans self-expanded and exhibited individualistic to collectivist behavior while attending a concert. These themes, as illustrated in Figure 1, encompass the four A's of K-pop fan self-expansion: Admirers, Artists, Artifacts, and Ambiance.

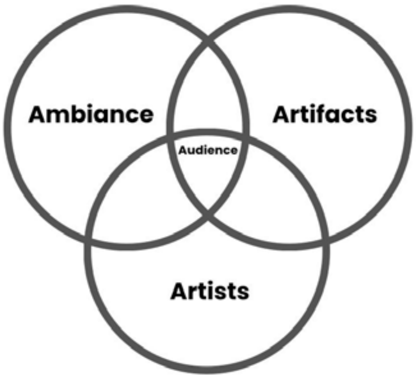


Figure 1. The 4As of K-pop fans' Self-expansion during the concert

Before music concerts, individualist fans show limited self-expansion. However, live concerts bring fans closer to their favorite artists, forming a common ground at the heart of the 4As. Aron et al. (1991) suggest that the desire to expand oneself becomes a fundamental human motivator that serves to increase one's potential efficacy in achieving goals through the acquisition of social and material resources, perspectives, and identities. With that, it is also evident from the study's results that self-expansion starts when fans meet their idols (artists), which introduces them to idol products (artifacts) and the physical atmosphere of a music tourism setting (ambiance) as well. Furthermore, Pitts (2005, p.269) mentioned having "the strong link between social and musical satisfaction…is at the core of concert attendance." The presence of all 4As facilitates self-expansion through unexpected connections that build relationships. The 4As are integral to concertgoers' self-expansion within music tourism venues, modifying feelings and motivating further self-expansion.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Artists

K-pop artists play a crucial role in fans' self-expansion as the deep attachment and loyalty fans have for their idols drive them to travel across cities and countries to meet them. The relationship exposes fans to social growth in areas like fashion, food, and culture, leading to self-expansion phases. Fans go to great lengths, enduring travel difficulties and high expenses, to attend their idols' performances. Based on the interviews, Participants 1, 7, and 14 specifically mentioned having to travel to Singapore just to see their favorite K-idol (Female, 25; Female, 20; Female, 22) despite the immense amount of expenses. Participant 1 (Female, 25) even highlighted:

"You can always go back to the country [...] Singapore is just there. But, if you miss the concert, you cannot go back to that exact moment again."

The impact of K-idols extends beyond concerts, inspiring fans to conduct charitable work and fostering positive camaraderie. Participant 5 (Female, 26) mentioned having to participate in charity projects, notably contributing school supplies. Furthermore, she emphasized:

"We (fans) did fundraising for donations instead of spending our money on ads to celebrate something (relating to their idols) [...] There is good camaraderie, you know the positive influence that it will also spread out to the fans."

In addition, Fans express the joy of listening to their idols' music, with some crediting it for saving them in difficult times. According to Participant 14 (Female, 22), the K-pop artists she idolizes saved her from the lowest point in her life, which is why she is still idolizing them and even waiting for them after their military enlistment in 2025. The willingness to engage in musical events not only provides fans the opportunity to meet idols but also motivates them to develop themselves, evident in their efforts to save money for future performances. Overall, the study highlights the profound influence K-pop artists have on fans' self-expansion, shaping their views on life and inspiring personal growth.

5.2. Admirers

K-pop fans form strong attachments to idols, engaging in one-sided relationships and participating in special interest tourism. They also participate in fan activities since they are members of various K-pop fandom communities formed around a common love and interest in K-pop groups or stars (Jenol & Pazil, 2020). Attendees from all over the world make up the crowd in a music tourism scenario, particularly at a K-pop event. Despite barriers like language, age, and cultural differences, a close bond develops among attendees in the music tourism environment. Participant 2 remarked regarding the unexpected platonic bonds formed as a result of the music tourism setting

"I can say that they're (Audience/fans) the 'Canon Event' of my life because they made my experience much better. I met a lot of friends or people along the way and then there was a lot of self-improvement [...]. I gained a lot from my experiences, not only on social media but also in real-life relationships. It has a wide range of impacts on me." (Female, 20).

Fans, emotionally devoted to their idols, constitute a distinct group, acting based on a shared sense of meaning in their social setting (Jenol & Pazil, 2020). Meaning is gained and learned through interactions between people, and it emerges as a result of the exchange of symbols in social organizations (Anwar, 2018). This is because attachment is present in self-expansion within interpersonal relationships (Bowlby, 1980; Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Fans create identities with each other that transcend traditional boundaries, positively associated with personal achievement and ego enhancement (Giddens, 1991; Lee, Scott & Kim, 2008). Fans see their involvement as a reward, and their desire for personal change contributes to social impact (Ko et al., 2014). Fans create "Fan zones" and organize charity events, fostering camaraderie and making genuine connections. Being part of the fan community promotes subjective well-being and encourages personal growth (Jenol & Pazil, 2020; Ryff, 1989). Fans will create a sense of belonging to one another if connections based on shared excitement are developed. With this, it is emphasized that the K-pop fandom or Admirers have a multifaceted impact, from personal development to societal contributions.

5.3. Ambiance

The physical environment significantly shapes audience psychology, influencing satisfaction, loyalty, and word-of-mouth. Pleasing leisure service environments lead to extended stays, high satisfaction, and intent for future visits. (Ryu & Jang, 2007; Wakefield & Blodgett, 1994). In other words, the physical environment used in the service industry may contribute to marketing factors that influence how individuals behave or make decisions (Hong, 2007). Taken from the interview, the researchers observed that the participants checked for information on the venue's appearance, proximity of location, and transport options to the music event to prepare and consider if they would attend. Participants anticipate the stage setup and fully immersive experience. Participant 5 remarked about certain sites of music events in the Philippines:

"First, Araneta Coliseum is good because it's very accessible for all, it's like a center, something like that, or it offers a variety of transportation methods [...] My issue is that Araneta Coliseum appears to be old. They needed, they badly need some form of renovation, especially innovation [...] MOA is great actually for, one of the best venues for me when it comes to concerts like there is no problem [...] We (fans) were previously somewhat concerned that we hoped they don't do it in the Philippine Arena because we don't really like Philippine Arena even though it's convenient for me [...] It is not, it is not for a concert venue there is no way it will elevate our concert experience when it comes to the Philippine Arena. So, comparing Araneta to MOA Arena, I prefer Araneta Coliseum because it is situated near hotels, malls, and transportation. Many restaurants remain open even after hours, like 24/7" (Female, 26).

Participant 3 made the following statement about going to a concert:

"*First, maybe the most enjoyable experience is the crowd was in high spirits, like, that is why I want to attend a concert actually for, because, it's a different world like at somehow I'm escaping from the reality, from the cruelty of life*." (Female, 28).

The high spirits of the crowd create a sense of timelessness, and participants want to prolong the experience. The inviting environment justifies the preparation, providing a greater appreciation for life's pleasures. The study underscores how the physical environment of music events significantly impacts the psychological well-being and behavior of the audience.

5.4. Artifacts

K-pop concerts serve as catalysts for social engagement, strengthening bonds among attendees and fostering a sense of community (Woo, n.d.). Fans express their identity through merchandise, creating a cohesive atmosphere with fan chants and synchronized light stick movements (Abou Naja, 2022). Concert possessions, like light sticks and apparel, serve as tangible reminders, fostering long-term relationships and a deeper emotional connection within the fandom. K-pop enthusiasts invest significantly in exclusive merchandise, perceiving it as a sign of loyalty. The ownership of these artifacts contributes to pride and identity, creating a lasting connection (Jenol, 2020; Ortiga, 2020; Wonho et al., 2017). Before concerts, fans prepare gifts and freebies, enhancing expectations for exclusive items. After the concert, shared ownership of artifacts enriches the collective fan experience, symbolizing shared memories and strengthening community bonds. These tangible mementos contribute to the enduring sense of belonging among K-Pop enthusiasts, beyond the items themselves. Lincoln Geraghty said,

"When it comes to fans and products, it's not about the items themselves, it's about the stories fans share about these items in their fan community — its history, how it came about, how they came to acquire it, what it is, what it could be" (Ortiga, 2020).

As Participant 4 expresses,

"Even though we are not seen visibly in the picture, I know that every time I see that picture, I am part of that." (Female, 28).

The experience for K-pop fans extends beyond artifacts, incorporating stories of inclusion in K-Idols' success. The participants' responses highlight how merchandise fosters intimacy and forms unexpected relationships, contributing to the phenomenon of self-expansion through gift-giving, trade, or sales of goods.

5.5. Conclusion

This study aims to analyze the experiences of K-pop fans, the under-researched nature of their personal stories, and social experiences as significant contributors to music tourism. Despite being part of a subculture, their voices and personalized stories remain unheard. By exploring the variables systematically, this is the research study that will bridge those gaps with the development of their social experience, through the 'self-expansion theory' as it supports the new information found. The essence of self-expansion theory shows how K-pop fans are incredibly cooperative and passionate about building "close relationships" with others who share the same interests and may aid in their personal development (Reimann & Aron, 2009). Moreover, categorizing K-pop fans as special tourists highlights those gathering identities, resources, and perspectives that enhance goal achievement through a series of self-expansion phases. The results of the study show that K-pop fans transition from individualists to collectivists during music concerts, following the 4As of self-expansion.

The study's findings indicated how interconnected the 4As - Admirers, Artists, Artifacts, and Ambiance - are regarding K-pop fans' self-expansion. Fans being the heart of the 4As self-expand through unexpected interaction with their favorite idols and fellow fans in the musical arena. Furthermore, concertgoers extend their horizons by conversing with other fans about their favorite artists, their travel to the concert, trading freebies, and evaluating the whole music show venue. Having all 4As present at live music events allow fans (admirers) to extend their horizons, thus, fans' social development occurs. Fans who were immersed in a particular setting were able to socially improve themselves by opening to engagement with their fellow fans, enabling them to feel a sense of belongingness. As a result, another phase of self-expansion occurs. Reimann and Aron (2009) also proposed that self-expansion impacts one's relationship with the environment through positive affect.

As an implication to practice, the findings of this study demonstrated the significance of K-pop fans and their influence on inducing tourist experiences and mobility. Social expansion during mega concerts can boost and encourage K-pop fans to travel, hospitality establishments to generate more revenue, and future businesses to emerge, all of which benefit the host country. As participants have acknowledged the difficulty of traveling alone to a music concert, travel agencies can improve their services to fulfill the needs of K-pop fans by providing customized group travel packages for fans. Before the concert, concert organizers may also hold a fan event at which they sell various items or fan activities on the K-pop concert, where K-pop fans in a fan club can connect with their fellow fans.

5.6. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

Despite the contributions presented, this study is not without limitations. The participants of this study were sampled from K-pop fans who attended concerts between June and September of 2023. Thus, recall bias may occur when an effort is made to obtain the details in the past or after a momentous event. Since various events and experiences may alter the extent and accuracy of the memory, participants may omit some details. Furthermore, given that the researchers' main target was K-pop fans, other international perspectives were not given the possibility to be sought out. Moreover, the sample was collected from Filipino participants with an age range of 15 to 40. These factors may have influenced how individualistic traits develop into collectivist characteristics.

Future studies are advised to investigate self-expansion to assess K-pop fans' desire to travel, concert satisfaction, and other factors impacting their psychological behavior. High self-expansion fans would be increasingly satisfied and therefore loyal to the celebrity-associated destination (Lee, 2018). This shows that the high self-expansion of K-pop fans can be a key component in developing a connection with the pop star's home nation through favorable travel experiences (Lee, 2012). Moreover, the negative effects of concerts on mental health, personal growth, and social connection are also important to explore in future research. Post-concert depression (PCD) is a newer problem with insufficient research.

REFERENCES

AFS-USA. (2023). Individualism & Collectivism. AFS-USA. https://www.afsusa.org/study-abroad/culture-trek/culture-points/culture-points-individualism-and-collectivism/

Aron, A., Aron, E. N., & Norman, C. (2004). Self-expansion Model of Motivation and Cognition in Close Relationships and Beyond. In M. B. Brewer & M. Hewstone (Eds.), *Self and social identity* (pp. 99–123). Blackwell Publishing. https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2004-00232-005

Bae, E., Chang, M., Park, E., & Kim, D. (2017). The effect of Hallyu on tourism in Korea. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, *3*(1), 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40852-017-0075-y

Baek, U. (2021). An Exploratory Study on Tourism-related Behavior of Popular Cultural Tourists Visiting Korea. *Journal of Digital Convergence, 19*(7), 87-94.

Bang, Y. Y., Joo, Y., Seok, H., & Nam, Y. (2021). Does K-pop affect Peruvians' Korean images and visits intention to Korea? Current Issues in Tourism, 24(24), 3519-3534.

Chanda, N. S. (2022, May 28). *K-pop is making billions for South Korea*. AsiaFundManagers.com. https://asiafundmanagers.com/us/kpop-and-economic-impact-on-south-korea/

Choi, J.W. (2022, August 11). K-pop invasion: From a local trend to a global phenomenon, and beyond. The Korea Herald. https://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20220811000863#:~:text=In%202012%2C%20K%2Dpop%20took,as%20%E2%80%9CKorean%20pop%20music.%E2%80%9D

Egermann, H. (2022). Development of the Social Experience of a Concert Scales (SECS): The Social Experience of a Live Western Art Music Concert Influences People's Overall Enjoyment of an Event but not Their Emotional Response to the Music. *Music & Science*. https://doi.org/10.1177/20592043221106478

Garringer, J. (2017, November 24). *How Does Music Connect the Artist and fans?* ScholarWorks@BGSU. https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1187&context=rbc

Ghansiyal, A. (2021, January 19). *How Has The Korean Wave Influenced Tourism In South Korea?* Travel.Earth. https://travel.earth/influence-of-korean-wave-on-tourism-in-south-korea/

Gottlieb, J. (2019, November 21). New Harvard study says music is universal language. Harvard Gazette. https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2019/11/new-harvard-study-establishes-music-is-universal/

Guest, G., Namey, E. E., & Mitchell, M. L. (2013). *Collecting qualitative data: A field manual for applied research.* Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Hong, K. (2007), Effects of regional festival's physical environment on visitors' affect and satisfaction. International *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research, 21*(1), 41-54.

Jang, W., & Song, J. E. (2017, July 17). *The Influences of K-pop Fandom on Increasing Cultural Contact*. Barnett Center. https://barnettcenter.osu.edu/sites/default/files/2019-08/the_influences_of_k-pop_fandom.pdf

Karlsson-Brown, Steven & Knox, Don. (2016). Why go to pop concerts? The motivations behind live music attendance. Research Gate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/303440201_Why_go_to_pop_concerts_The_motivations_behind_live_music_attendance#:~:text=The%20results%20highlight%20that%20participants,fan%20worship%20were%20also%20found.

Kim, J. H., Kim, K. J., Park, B. T., & Choi, H. J. (2022). The phenomenon and development of K-Pop: the relationship between success factors of K-Pop and the national image, social network service citizenship behavior, and tourist behavioral intention. *Sustainability, 14*(6), 3200.

Kyololo, O. M., Stevens, B. J., & Songok, J. (2023). Photo-Elicitation Technique: Utility and Challenges in Clinical Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *22*, 160940692311657. https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069231165714

Laffan, D.A. (2020). Positive Psychosocial Outcomes and Fanship in K-Pop Fans: A Social Identity Theory Perspective. *Psychological Reports*. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0033294120961524

Lee, S., Bai, B., & Busser, J. A. (2019). Pop star fan tourists: An application of self-expansion theory. *Tourism Management*, *72*, 270–280. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2018.12.006

Lee, J-W (2017). Mega-event scepticism in South Korea. *Sport, Events, Tourism and Regeneration*. The University of Edinburgh. https://www.pure.ed.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/31871304/4.JW_LEE_Open_.pdf

Liu, C. (2023). The Research on the Influence of KPOP (Korean Popular Music) Culture on Fans. Communications in Humanities Research. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/371263272_The_Research_on_the_Influence_of_KPOP_Korean_Popular_Music_Culture_on_Fans

Morgan, David. (2023). Re: Is a sample size of 5 enough for an elite interview in a QUALITATIVE RESEARCH?. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/post/Is_a_sample_size_of_5_enough_for_an_elite_interview_in_a_QUALITATIVE_RESEARCH/63c591e7c11d284c2902375b/citation/download

Nikolopoulou, K. (2022, August 9). *What Is Convenience Sampling? | Definition & Examples*. Scribbr. https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/convenience-sampling/#:~:text=Convenience%20sampling%20is%20a%20non

Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic Analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847

Ortiga, K. (2020, November 18). *The price of being a K-pop fan*. CNN Philippines. http://www.cnnphilippines.com/life/entertainment/Music/2020/11/18/kpop-fans-merch.html

Pezalla, A. E., Pettigrew, J., & Miller-Day, M. (2012). Researching the researcher-as-instrument: An exercise in interviewer self-reflexivity. *Qualitative Research : QR*, *12*(2), 165. https://doi.org/10.1177/1487941111422107

Planetary Group. (2023, June 5). *The Importance Of Live Performances For Growing Your Music Career*. Planetary Group. https://www.planetarygroup.com/the-importance-of-live-performances-for-growing-your-music-career/

Pocratsky, B. (2019, May). Ask the Sociologists: Unsure about Subcultures. The Sociologists. https://thesociologistdc.com/all-issues/ask-the-sociologist-unsure-about-subcultures/

Putri, S.O. (2023, March 10). K-Pop Business: Prospects and Challenges for Entrepreneurs in Indonesia. *Proceeding of International Conference on Business, Economics, Social Sciences, and Humanities*, *5*, 94–97. https://doi.org/10.34010/icobest.v3i.123

The K-pop fans economy: emotional bond, endless support and overconsumption. (n.d.). TFR. https://tfr.news/articles/2022/2/10/the-k-pop-fans-economy-emotional-bond-endless-support-and-overconsumption

Wakefield, K.L., Blodgett, J.G. (1996), *The effect of the servicescape on customer's behavioral intentions in leisure service settings*. Journal of Services Marketing, 10(6), 45-61.

Yoo, C. (2021, January 15). *Number of global 'hallyu' fans crosses 100 million landmark*. Yonhap News Agency. https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20210115003700315

Effect of Participants' Perceptions of Festival Coolness on Memorable Festival Experience, Momentary Happiness, Destination Love, and Destination Advocacy

Dai, Anna
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Macau University of Science and Technology

Zhang, Jingsong
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management,
Macau University of Science and Technology

Pai, Chen-Kuo
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Macau University of Science and Technology

Li, Tingting
Faculty of Tourism and Cultural Industry
Sichuan Tourism University

Abstract:

Using quantitative methods, this study used the Macao International Fireworks Display Contest as an example of a destination event and affect transfer theory as a framework to examine the relationship between perceived festival coolness and destination advocacy. Contrary to the results of prior studies, this study found romance to be the most important factor affecting destination advocacy, with attractiveness having no effect. The results of this study can be used by event and destination managers to create destination differences and enhance destination core competitiveness.

Keywords: Fireworks, Perceived Festival Coolness, Romance, Destination Advocacy

1. Introduction

Festivals and events have become an important component of the tourism market by providing destinations with a competitive advantage and a unique marketing tool. Previous studies have primarily focused on the emotions or behaviors of event participants (Coetzee et al., 2019), with few investigations examining the relationship between unique events and tourists' perceptions of a destination. In one such study, Richards (2022) found that festival activities seen as too commercialized have a negative impact on how potential tourists perceive both the destination and the culture of the inhabitants of the destination. Given the impact that tourists' attitudes toward festivals and events have on their perception of the destination in which those festivals and events occur, understanding the elements that impact this relationship is critical to successful tourism destination marketing. According to recent census data, the number of inbound tourists to Macau as of October 2023 was increasing at a year-on-year rate of 3.8% and at a month-on-month rate of 19.8% (Macau Statistics and Census Service, 2023). The Macao International Fireworks Display Contest (MIFDC) was selected for this research because determining whether the design of fireworks-themed activities attracts or retains participants serves the purpose of this study, which is to explore the impact of tourists' perceptions of event experiences on their attitudes and behaviors toward destinations.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Factors Influencing Perceived Festival Coolness

'Cool' is widely accepted as a positive attribute with positive valence perception (Sundar et al., 2014). Affect transfer theory postulates that individuals' positive memories and experiences will have a positive impact on their decisions and behaviors (Mitchell & Nelson, 2018). Coolness has been proven to be a perceived quality that makes themselves feel good and produces positive experiences (Tsaur et al., 2023). Prior studies have discussed the correlation between perceived coolness and the dimensions of uniqueness, attractiveness, and aesthetics (Chen & Chou, 2019; Loureiro & Blanco, 2023). Chen et al. (2020) proposed that situations that make participants feel relaxed, provide once-in-a-lifetime memories, and leave beautiful impressions be called 'romance.' Watching intricately designed firework displays in the sky can be described as memorable, relaxing, and providing unique, lasting impressions, so the variable of romance was included in this research.

2.2. Memorable Festival Experience

Kim and Fesemaier (2015) described memorable experience as a process in which the environment stimulates the human body's senses. Some scholars believe that festival activities provide richer sensory stimulation and situational experiences than other tourism settings (Richards & King, 2022). The experience provided by the MIFDC includes visual, auditory, and other sensory aspects, and the surrounding activities and atmosphere provide unique participant experiences. Therefore, this study discusses it from the perspective of festival activities to verify the relationship between perceived festival coolness and memorable festival experience.

2.3. Momentary Happiness, Destination Love, and Destination Advocacy

According to embodied cognition theory, an unforgettable festival experience produces positive emotional perceptions of the experience in participants, and these positive emotional perceptions trigger a sense of happiness (Brás et al., 2018). In this context, momentary happiness refers to the degree of pleasure felt immediately after having a positive experience during a holiday trip (Lv & Wu, 2021). A mutually beneficial relationship exists between cities and festivals, with cities using festivals to market and create a local identity. Destination love refers to a deep emotional connection between an individual and a tourist destination that provokes a sense of satisfaction and pleasure (Aro et al., 2018). Destination advocacy is the name given to an individual's compulsion to recommend a destination, spread positive word-of-mouth information about it, and defend its reputation (Lever et al., 2021). The three concepts of momentary happiness, destination love, and destination advocacy were included in this study to facilitate determination of whether the positive perceptions and experiences of participants generated during festival activities are transferred to their perception of the destination.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data Collection

This quantitative study employed a questionnaire survey using convenience sampling. The questionnaire consisted of two parts, the first part consisted of 50 questions about the variables and the second part consisted of demographic information. The questionnaire was distributed to individuals who had watched the Macau International Fireworks Display Contest in person. A total of 537 questionnaires were recovered from the data; 496 were determined to be valid, producing an effective rate of 92.36%.

3.2. Measurement
SPSS 26 and Smart PLS 4.0 were used to analyze the demographic characteristics, reliability, validity, and paths of the sample data. Test were conducted to determine the rationality of the model used and the validity of the hypotheses.

4. Results

4.1. Reliability Analysis and Validity Analysis
This research tested indicators such as Cronbach (α) between 0.791 to 0.919; composite reliability (CR) between 0.866 to 0.937; convergent validity (CV) includes Factor Loading between 0.721 to 0.892 and AVE higher than 0.5; heterogeneous-to-monotropic ratio (HTMT) all less than 0.9 shows a good discriminant validity (DV). To sum up, the results showed good reliability and validity.

4.2. Hypothesis Testing
According to the structural equation model test results, only the variable attractiveness has no significant impact on the perceived coolness of the event, and the other hypotheses are supported.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and Implications
Prior research on the concept of coolness as it relates to festivals and activities is limited. The results of this study expand our knowledge on this subject. The study also examined how momentary happiness affects tourists' perceptions of a destination**.** Related research on happiness has expanding significance. Likewise, the results of this study confirm that positive emotions and attitudes, such as destination love and **momentary** happiness, have a positive and significant impact on destination advocacy, enriching understanding of the theoretical relationships affecting destination marketing. The results of this study may be beneficial to tourism stakeholders by providing valuable destination management and marketing suggestions.

5.2. Study Limitations and Suggestions for Future Studies
A limitation of this study is that most of the survey respondents were from mainland China, which means the results lack comprehensive understanding of the attitudes of different groups and have regional limitations. Future research should consider expanding the scope of survey participants to obtain more comprehensive and objective survey results.

REFERENCES

Aro, K., Suomi, K., & Saraniemi, S. (2018). Antecedents and consequences of destination brand love—A case study from Finnish Lapland. *Tourism Management*, *67*, 71–81.

Brás, N., Mendes, J., Guerreiro, M., & Sequeira, B. D. (2018). How do residents experience their own festivals?: A qualitative approach to meanings and experiences. *In The Routledge handbook of festivals* (pp. 263-272). Routledge.

Chen, C. F., & Chou, S. H. (2019). Antecedents and consequences of perceived coolness for Generation Y in the context of creative tourism-A case study of the Pier 2 Art Center in Taiwan. *Tourism Management, 72*, 121-129.

Chen, G., Fung So, K. K., Poomchaisuwan, M., & Hu, X. (2020). Examining affection-based travel: Development and validation of a measurement scale for honeymooners' motivation. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, *17*, 100452.

Coetzee, W. J. L., Lee, C., & Faisal, A. (2019). Predicting Intentions to Revisit and Recommend a Sporting Event Using the Event Experience Scale (EES). *Event Management*, *23*(3), 303–314.

Kim, J. J., & Fesenmaier, D. R. (2015). Designing tourism places: Understanding the tourism experience through our senses.

Lever, M. W., Elliot, S., & Joppe, M. (2021). Exploring destination advocacy behavior in a virtual travel community. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, *38*(5), 431–443.

Loureiro, S. M. C., & Blanco, T. M. (2023). Museum coolness: Creating the desire to revisit. *Tourism Recreation Research*, *48*(1), 94–109.

Lv, X., & Wu, A. (2021). The role of extraordinary sensory experiences in shaping destination brand love: An empirical study. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, *38*(2), 179–193.

Macau Statistics and Census Service. (2023). *Macau Statistics and Census Service Inbound tourists in October 2023*. Retrieved 20 November 2023 from

https://www.dsec.gov.mo/zh-MO/Home/News?id=29205

Mitchell, T. A., & Nelson, M. R. (2018). Brand Placement in Emotional Scenes: Excitation Transfer or Direct Affect Transfer? *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising*, *39*(2), 206–219.

Richards, G. (2020). Measuring the dimensions of event experiences: Applying the Event Experience Scale to cultural events. *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events*, *12*(3), 422–436.

Richards, G., & King, B. (2022). The experience of cultural festivals: Evidence from Hong Kong. *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events*, *14*(3), 296–309.

Sundar, S. S., Tamul, D. J., & Wu, M. (2014). Capturing "cool": Measures for assessing coolness of technological products. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, *72*(2), 169–180.

Tsaur, S.-H., Teng, H.-Y., Han, T.-C., & Tu, J.-H. (2023). Can perceived coolness enhance memorable customer experience? The role of customer engagement. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.

Optimizing resources for smart tourism development: A sequential explanatory study of selected smart cities in the Philippines

Cabug-os, Marife M.
Department of Tourism and Transportation Management
Polytechnic University of the Philippines

Abstract:
This study investigates the transformation of Philippine smart cities into sustainable smart tourism destinations. Employing sequential explanatory design with SEM and thematic analysis, it uncovers a strong influence of smart initiatives on tourism development. Findings underscore the significant role of smart city components—especially leadership structures, innovation, and social infrastructure—in fostering smart tourism and sustainability. The study concludes with a robust framework advocating for strategic technology deployment and stakeholder collaboration, providing actionable insights for policymakers and urban planners aiming to harness smart city capabilities for enhanced tourism development.

Keywords: Smart Cities, Smart Tourism, Sustainable Tourism, Resource Management, Tourism Planning

1. Introduction

Rapid global urbanization has spurred the emergence of smart cities, conceptualized to optimize resource utilization, enhance operational efficiency, and promote sustainability. Integrating smart city concepts with the tourism industry—termed "smart tourism"—has seen digital infrastructure meld with the industry demands, enhancing service quality and operational efficiency through advancements like mobile applications and real-time information systems (Wayne, 2016). This transformation has elevated tourist experiences through sophisticated data analytics and personalized services (Bulchand-Gidumal, 2022; Lee, Hunter, & Chung, 2020; Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2015; Gretzel et al., 2015).

In the Philippines, the development of smart cities and tourism aligns with objectives to enhance public service, safety, and economic growth, as delineated by the Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022. Initiatives such as the National Government Data Center (NGDC) and the National AI Roadmap, led by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), underscore this commitment (Ponti, 2021). Cities like Cebu, Davao, and Manila, identified as ASEAN Smart Cities Network pioneers, are at the forefront, each prioritizing specific goals ranging from security to industry and innovation (MLIT, 2022). Baguio City, with the "Baguio in my Pocket" initiative and Project MINERVA, aims to employ data science and AI for urban development in collaboration with the Department of Science and Technology (DOST).
Complementing these efforts, the Department of Tourism (DOT) has introduced projects like the Digital Tourism Program to leverage digital platforms in showcasing attractions and easing travel experiences. The establishment of the Smart Tourism Gateway exemplifies endeavors to integrate travel services (Gomez, 2021; Rocamora, 2021), with investments reaching PHP 111.65 million towards digital transformation in tourism.

Notwithstanding these advancements, transitioning to smart tourism presents challenges such as the scarcity of robust frameworks to guide smart tourism development. This study addresses such limitations by proposing a framework for the optimization and integration of smart city resources in tourism, identifying critical components and their role in fostering sustainability. Employing a sequential explanatory approach, inclusive of multivariate SEM and thematic analysis, it provides actionable insights for urban planners, stakeholders, and policymakers to fortify sustainable smart tourism in the Philippines.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Interconnection between Smart City and Smart Tourism Development

The interconnection between smart cities and smart tourism underscores a symbiotic relationship where advancements in technology and data analytics enhance urban living and travel experiences. Smart cities improve infrastructure, services, and quality of life, laying the groundwork for smart tourism through advanced technology for personalized, efficient, and sustainable travel experiences (Cohen, 2018; Lee, Hunter, & Chung, 2020; Wayne, 2016). The core functions of smart cities, which comprise grid modernization, leadership structures, sustainable service provision, technology and innovation, and community social infrastructure, provide the necessary infrastructure and data management capabilities essential for supporting smart initiatives (Morrissey & Vince, 2020).

Smart tourism, building on its “smart” foundation, offers enhanced and sustainable tourist experiences. It utilizes technology to elevate destinations, augmenting service efficiency and fostering a sustainable business ecosystem, thereby crafting personalized and immersive tourist experiences (Bulchand-Gidumal, 2022; Wayne, 2016; Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2015). Crucially, the success of smart tourism relies on collaborative stakeholder engagement, ensuring that tourism development remains inclusive and sustainable (Khan, Woo, Nam, & Chathoth, 2017). Thus **H_1, Smart city components positively influence smart tourism development**, was formulated.

2.2. Smart Resource Optimization and Integration's Role in Smart Tourism

The integration and optimization of resources in smart cities are pivotal in advancing smart tourism. Common resources shared between smart cities and smart tourism included interactive tourist information centers, smart navigation systems, dynamic responsive systems, and digital guides, all aimed at providing personalized and immersive information to citizens and visitors through technologies like augmented reality and social media platforms (Basat & Choi, 2021; Lee, Hunter, & Chung, 2020; Khan, Woo, Nam, & Chathoth, 2017; Wayne, 2016).

The ASEAN Smart City Planning Guidebook identified key enablers for smart city development including stakeholder involvement, citizen participation, financial sustainability, digital infrastructure, and proper evaluations, emphasizing the critical role of government, industry, academia, and the public in promoting smart tourism and ensuring its equitable benefits (MLIT, 2022). Best practices for optimizing and integrating smart city resources for tourism involved integrated planning, data-driven decision-making, collaborative partnerships, and stakeholder engagement (Habeeb & Weli, 2020; Lee, Hunter, & Chung, 2020).

The development of smart tourism destinations is fundamentally linked to how smart city resources are harnessed as presented in **H_2: Optimization and integration of smart city components positively influence smart tourism destinations**. The strategic combination of technology, infrastructure, and city services is essential for the seamless operation and growth of smart tourism (Khan, Woo, Nam, & Chathoth, 2017). This integration translated to **H_3: Resource optimization and integration mediate the influence of smart cities on smart tourism.**

2.3. Sustainability through Smart City and Tourism Integration

Challenges in integrating smart city resources for tourism included technological, economic, and socio-cultural barriers. Technological barriers encompassed the complexity and cost of advanced infrastructure, while economic barriers involved securing funding and justifying short-term investments for long-term benefits. Socio-cultural barriers may have included resistance to technology and the digital divide, necessitating engagement with local stakeholders to ensure inclusivity and sustainability (Morrissey & Vince, 2020; Bulchand-Gidumal, 2022). The transition to smart tourism in the Philippines was also met with challenges including operational costs, interoperability issues, and a lack of comprehensive policies and standards, underlining the necessity for investment in digital infrastructure and professional training (Simeon, 2022).

Achieving sustainability involves managing potential negative impacts, including those on local cultures and environments (Revilla, Burgos, Einsle, & Moure, 2022). As such, there was a call for a more effective monitoring and evaluation framework that encompassed more than just the economic, environmental, and socio-cultural aspects of sustainability but also measured the effectiveness of sustainable management as practiced by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) through their Destination Criteria 2.0 framework.

Sustainable tourism destinations emerge from the strategic alignment of smart city components with environmental and cultural conservation. Consequently, **H_4: Optimization and integration of smart city components positively influence sustainability in tourism destinations,** and **H_5: Smart city components positively influence sustainable tourism development** were formulated to explore both the direct and indirect influence of smart city components on sustainable tourism development, advocating for integrated urban development strategies that prioritize ecological balance and social equity (Revilla, Burgos, Einsle, & Moure, 2022).

Likewise, the study scrutinizes the role of smart tourism in shaping sustainable tourism development, as examined in **H_6: Smart tourism positively influences sustainable tourism development.** By enabling tourists to partake in sustainable practices through technology, smart tourism becomes a catalyst for positive change within the industry (Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2015). Further, Lee, Hunter, & Chung (2020) claimed that smart tourism components can translate smart city features into sustainable outcomes, underscoring their role as facilitators in this transformation. Thus, to examine the nuances in smart cities due to the interplay between smart tourism and sustainability, **H_7: Smart tourism components mediate the influence of smart cities on sustainable tourism development** was formulated.

2.4. Conceptualization

The theoretical underpinnings of this study are based on frameworks by Lee, Hunter, & Chung (2020) and Bulchand-Gidumal (2022), which conceptualize a smart tourism city through the integration of smart city and tourism elements. These models advocate for a comprehensive approach encompassing economy, governance, mobility, sustainability, community, and other tourism components, essential for fostering competitive and sustainable tourism destinations.

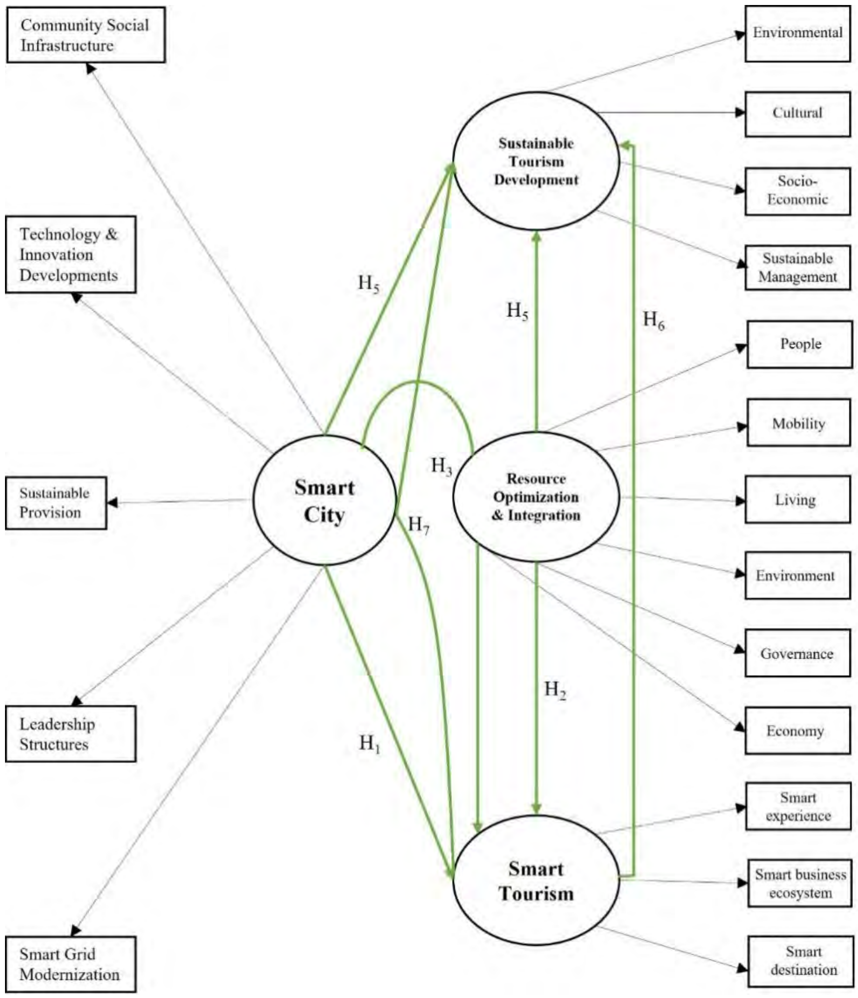


Figure 1 Proposed structural equation model of smart tourism destinations in the Philippines

The conceptual framework illustrated in Figure 1, elucidates the interplay between smart cities, smart tourism, resource optimization and integration, and sustainable tourism development. To supplement the two theoretical frameworks, the constructs comprised of the smart city functions by Morrissey & Vince (2020) and the GSTC destinations criteria 2.0 were drawn.

This research seeks to amplify the empirical understanding of smart city resources in propelling sustainable smart tourism. By exploring strategic diversification and resource efficiency through its proposed framework, the study aspires to mitigate tourism's detrimental effects while improving tourist experiences, accessibility, and operational efficiency, particularly in the Philippines.

3. Methodology

3.1. Measurement

The study adopted a sequential explanatory approach to ensure rigorous validation of the research findings. It began with quantitative data collection through survey questionnaires, followed by qualitative data collection through interviews. This sequential design was strategic, wherein the qualitative phase was conducted to support and deepen the initial findings, providing context and explanations that quantitative data alone could not fully reveal.

The quantitative phase utilized a researcher-designed questionnaire to assess constructs related to smart cities (Morrissey & Vince, 2020), smart tourism (Lee, Hunter, & Chung, 2020), resource optimization and integration (Khan, Woo, Nam, & Chathoth, 2017; Cohen, 2018), and sustainable tourism development (Global Sustainable Tourism Council, 2019). The instrument included demographic profiling and evaluations of the four principal latent constructs, employing a 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire's validity was confirmed through consultations with tourism experts and a statistician-data scientist, and its reliability was established via a pilot test, as reflected in Cronbach's alpha scores.

In the qualitative phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted using a 15-question guide that provided a platform for participants to share their expert insights. The guide covered topics including personal expertise, the utilization of smart city resources, the potential for further integration of these resources into tourism, the relationship between smart city and smart tourism to and for sustainability, and elicited recommendations for urban planners and tourism professionals. The qualitative method was intended to elicit comprehensive insights into effective strategies, anticipated benefits, and potential challenges, as well as identify areas necessitating further research for the successful transformation of smart cities into sustainable smart tourism destinations.

3.2. Data Collection

Four internationally recognized emerging smart cities in the Philippines were selected for the study: Baguio City in Northern Luzon, Manila City in the National Capital Region, Cebu City in the Visayas, and Davao City in Mindanao. Using population allocation sampling, the study targeted a representative sample of 385 respondents, reflecting each city's population with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. Following the survey, qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted via video conferencing. The study maintained high ethical standards, obtaining informed consent and ensuring the anonymity of all participants.

3.3. Analytical Methods

Data pre-processing included a thorough screening for outliers using standard deviation methods in Jamovi Project version 2.3, ensuring that the quantitative analysis was based on accurate and representative data. Outliers were identified and excluded if they fell more than two standard deviations from the mean, a common practice to maintain the integrity of statistical results. Subsequent analyses were performed using both Jamovi and R Core version 4.1 for their robust statistical capabilities. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to evaluate the interrelationships among constructs, providing a comprehensive view of the model dynamics. To complement SEM, regression analysis was conducted to detail the influence of specific variables, offering granular insights into the direct effects within the model. Thematic analysis of qualitative data was executed to contextualize and enrich the quantitative findings, providing deeper insights into the practical implications and operational dynamics observed. This multifaceted approach ensured a rigorous validation of the results, combining advanced statistical techniques and qualitative analysis to enhance the reliability and validity of the research findings.

4. Results

4.1. Profile of the Respondents

Using proportional allocation sampling, the respondents were distributed as follows: 30 in Baguio City, 98 in Manila City, 162 in Cebu City, and 95 in Davao City. Table 1 shows the demographic profile of respondents varied across age, sex, education, income, and residency type, reflecting a diverse population sample.

Table 1 Profile of the respondents

Age	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
18-25	203	52.73%
26-35	117	30.39%
36-45	48	12.47%
46-55	17	4.42%
55 and above	0	0.00%
Sex		
Male	140	36.36%
Female	245	63.64%
Educational level		
High school graduate or below	82	21.30%
Technical School	36	9.35%
Bachelor's degree	260	67.53%
Master's degree	6	1.56%
Doctoral degree	1	0.26%
Monthly Income		
Below 10,000	75	19.48%
10,000-19,999	67	17.40%
20,000-29,999	183	47.53%
30,000-39,999	42	10.91%
40,000-49,999	12	3.12%
50,000 and above	6	1.56%
Type of Resident		
Resident	351	91.17%
Representative of tourism-related business	34	8.83%

The interview participants were carefully chosen based on their expertise in smart cities and tourism, including three urban planners and smart city experts, three local government representatives, and two tourism academicians.

4.2. Regression Analysis Results Summarizing the Relationships between the Smart City, Smart Tourism, Resource Optimization and Integration, and Sustainability

Hypotheses testing through regression analysis provided the following insights:

Table 2 Model Fit Measures & Coefficients

				Overall Model Test			
Model	**R**	**R^2**	**Adjusted R^2**	**F**	**df1**	**df2**	**P**
H1: Smart city components positively influence smart tourism development.	0.793	0.629	0.624	128	5	379	< .001
H2: Optimization and integration of smart city components positively influence smart tourism destinations.	0.829	0.687	0.682	138	6	378	< .001
H4: Optimization and integration of smart city components positively influence sustainability tourism destinations.	0.885	0.784	0.781	229	6	378	< .001
H5: Smart city components positively influence sustainable tourism development.	0.765	0.585	0.58	107	5	379	< .001

H6: Smart tourism positively influences sustainable tourism development.	0.795	0.633	0.63	219	3	381	< .001

In **H_1**, the regression model yielded an R-value of 0.793, indicating a significant influence of smart city components on smart tourism, explaining 62.4% of the variance. Leadership, technology innovation, and community infrastructure were notably impactful, with less significance for smart grid modernization and sustainable provision, suggesting areas for further investigation. Nonetheless, the trend towards significance for sustainable provision suggests potential relevance in larger sample sizes. These findings support the hypothesis that certain smart city components are crucial drivers of smart tourism development.

In **H_2**, the regression analysis indicated a very strong positive relationship, with an R-value of 0.829. This suggests that the optimization and integration of smart city components significantly influence smart tourism destinations, explaining 68.2% of the variance. The findings highlight that smart economy, governance, living, mobility, and people are vital predictors enhancing the attractiveness and efficiency of destinations. Conversely, the environmental component did not show a significant direct influence, underscoring a potential area for deeper exploration in subsequent studies. This underscores the hypothesis that a holistic approach to smart city strategies is essential for boosting smart tourism destinations.

In **H_4**, the results indicated a robust relationship, with an R-value of 0.885, suggesting that optimization and integration of smart city components are key predictors of sustainable tourism, accounting for 78.1% of the variance. The significant impact of all components, particularly living conditions and human capital, supports the hypothesis that these elements are crucial for developing sustainable tourism destinations. This finding emphasizes the importance of focusing on livability, inclusiveness, and environmental sustainability as foundational to fostering sustainable tourism practices.
In **H_5**, the regression analysis yielded a strong positive correlation with an R-value of 0.765, demonstrating that smart city components significantly contribute to sustainable tourism development, explaining approximately 58% of the variance. Significant predictors included technology and innovation development, community social infrastructure, and leadership structures. These results substantiate the hypothesis, highlighting the importance of these elements in enhancing sustainable tourism initiatives.

In **H_6**, the regression analysis provided a strong positive correlation, with an R-value of 0.795, indicating that smart tourism components crucially enhance sustainable tourism development, accounting for 63% of the variance. The smart experience component emerged as highly significant, followed by smart destinations, affirming its critical role in facilitating sustainable practices within tourism. The findings corroborate the hypothesis that smart tourism initiatives, particularly those that enhance visitor experiences and are used to operate and manage tourism destinations, are fundamental drivers of sustainability.

4.3. Mediating effects of smart city resource optimization and integration on smart tourism

Hypotheses testing through mediation analysis provided the following insights:

Table 3 Mediation Estimates and Path Estimates for H3: Resource optimization and integration mediate the influence of smart cities on smart tourism

Effect	Label	Estimate	SE	Z	p	% Mediation
Indirect	a × b	0.435	0.0389	11.18	< .001	52.5
Direct	c	0.394	0.0447	8.81	< .001	47.5

Total	c + a × b	0.830	0.0346	24.01	< .001	100

			Label	Estimate	SE	Z	p
Smart City	→	Resource Optimization and Integration	a	0.811	0.0351	23.09	< .001
Resource Optimization and Integration	→	Smart Tourism	b	0.537	0.042	12.78	< .001
Smart City	→	Smart Tourism	c	0.394	0.0447	8.81	< .001

The results demonstrated a notable indirect effect with a mediation percentage of 52.5% and an estimate of 0.435, showing that over half of the influence of smart cities on smart tourism is mediated through resource optimization and integration. Additionally, the direct effect of smart cities on smart tourism, not mediated by resource optimization, significantly contributed 47.5% to the total effect, with an estimate of 0.394. The overall effect was robust at 0.830 ($p < .001$), underscoring the significance of both direct influences of smart city attributes and the mediated effects through resource optimization in enhancing smart tourism. These results affirm **H3**, illustrating the pivotal mediating role of resource optimization and integration in utilizing smart city initiatives for tourism development.

4.4. Mediating effects of smart tourism components in the use of smart city resources on sustainable tourism development

Hypotheses testing through mediation analysis provided the following insights:

Table 4 Mediation Estimates and Path Estimates for H7: Smart tourism components mediate the influence of smart cities on sustainable tourism development

Effect	Label	Estimate	SE	Z	p	% Mediation
Indirect	a × b	0.361	0.0404	8.94	< .001	45.7
Direct	c	0.430	0.0484	8.88	< .001	54.3
Total	c + a × b	0.791	0.0341	23.18	< .001	100

			Label	Estimate	SE	Z	p
Smart City	→	Smart Tourism	a	0.83	0.0346	24.01	< .001
Smart Tourism	→	Sustainable Tourism Development	b	0.435	0.0452	9.64	< .001
Smart City	→	Sustainable Tourism Development	c	0.43	0.0484	8.88	< .001

The results highlighted a significant indirect effect with a mediation percentage of 45.7% and an estimate of 0.361, suggesting that a substantial portion of the impact of smart cities on sustainable tourism development is facilitated through smart tourism components. Additionally, the direct effect of smart cities on sustainable tourism, not mediated by smart tourism components, was also significant, contributing 54.3% to the total effect, with an estimate of 0.430. The overall effect measured robust at 0.791 ($p < .001$), underscoring the significance of both the direct influence of smart city attributes and the mediated effects through smart tourism in enhancing sustainability. These findings affirm $\mathbf{H_7}$, illustrating the crucial mediating role of smart tourism components in harnessing smart city initiatives for sustainable tourism development.

4.5. Smart city resources and functions that can be optimized and integrated for tourism

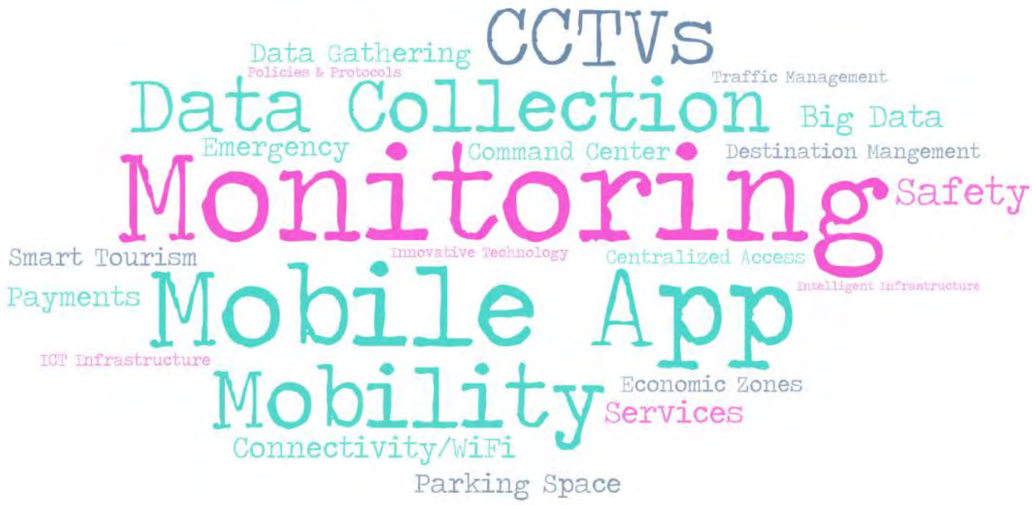


Figure 2 Key Components of Smart City Technology for Optimizing Tourism Experience

Figure 2 alludes to three main smart resources that could be optimized for tourism as identified by study participants. Safety and security emerge as foundational elements, with a pronounced emphasis on real-time monitoring systems, which include the use of Closed-circuit televisions (CCTV), and the existence of a City Command Center and emergency facilities. The prominence of mobile apps indicates a significant trend towards consolidating smart services such as navigation, information sharing, real-time updates, and emergency response through a single touchpoint. Additionally, results underscore the importance of data collection and big data analytics in understanding visitor behavior and managing traffic and destinations, which smart cities can use to customize experiences, efficiently allocate resources, and forecast tourism trends for optimal service deployment. These form the crux of the strategic approach for augmenting tourist experiences, indicating a shift towards an integrated, data-informed, and technologically equipped smart city framework to elevate the tourism industry.

4.6. Integration of advanced technologies in smart cities to improve the efficiency and sustainability of tourism operations

The integration of smart city technologies in tourism, as identified by participants, is organized into five main themes that span across ten subcategories. These themes provide a blueprint for enhancing both the efficiency and sustainability of tourism operations in smart cities:

- Strategic planning and management revolve around data-driven decision-making, emphasizing the role of big data in shaping tourism strategies and resource allocation.
- Resource management and optimization, which includes the efficient use of energy and water resources, underscores the importance of technology in the sustainability of tourism sectors.
- Tourist experience enhancement is explored through services designed to provide real-time information and improved mobility and accessibility. The critical sub-theme of safety and security focuses on advanced surveillance and rapid emergency response systems to ensure tourists' well-being.
- Infrastructure and environment encompass strategies for upgrading urban facilities to streamline tourist experiences and employing smart technologies for environmental sustainability.

- Community and cultural integration advocates for collaborations and engagement of multiple stakeholders to align tech-driven tourism initiatives with local needs and cultural preservation.

4.6. Structural equation modelling for sustainable smart tourism destinations

Table 5 Direct Effect Parameter Estimates of the Structural Equation Model

Direct Effect Parameter Estimates	Standard Estimates	t-value	p-value	Decision
P1: Smart City → Smart Tourism	0.375	5.75	< .001	Significant Relationship
P2: Resource Optimization & Integration → Smart Tourism	0.619	8.95	< .001	Significant Relationship
P3: Smart City → Resource Optimization & Integration	0.834	14.34	< .001	Significant Relationship
P4: Resource Optimization & Integration → Sustainable Tourism Development	1.055	7.45	< .001	Significant Relationship
P5: Smart City → Sustainable Tourism Development	0.165	1.98	0.048	Significant Relationship
P6: Smart Tourism → Sustainable Tourism Development	-0.248	-1.41	0.157	Not Significant Relationship
R^2				
Smart Tourism	0.912			
Resource Optimization Integration	0.695			
Sustainable Tourism Development	0.931			
Model Fit Statistics				
CMIN/df = 5, GFI = .963, TLI = .895, CFI = .912, SRMR = .04, and RMSEA = .107				

The SEM conducted highlighted critical relationships within the model. Among all paths, the smart city to resource optimization and integration (P3) demonstrated the strongest positive relationship, indicating that the functions of smart cities significantly enhance resource optimization efforts. P4 had the highest effect at 1.055, underlining that the optimization and integration of smart resources serve as a key determinant for sustainable tourism. Conversely, P6 showed that the relationship between smart tourism and sustainability is not significant. The R^2 values indicated that the model robustly explained the variance in smart tourism (0.912), resource optimization integration (0.695), and sustainability in tourism (0.931).

The model validation involved various fit indices, presenting a complex yet largely positive picture of its adequacy. While the CMIN/df ratio and RMSEA suggested some areas for improvement, the GFI at 0.963 and SRMR at 0.04 confirmed the model's strong fit to the observed data. These measures, reflecting minimal discrepancies and high variance explanation, bolstered the model's validity. The CFI and TLI, slightly below ideal levels at 0.912 and 0.895 respectively, still indicated an acceptable fit, particularly given their resilience to sample size variations. The overall assessment, considering the intricacies of the research domain and model complexity, upheld the model as a reasonably accurate representation of the structural relationships, supporting its use for strategic decision-making in smart tourism development.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and implications

The study proved the potent impact of smart city components on fostering sustainable smart tourism within the Philippines, providing crucial insights for policymakers, urban planners, and other tourism stakeholders. It underscores the intertwined nature of smart cities and smart tourism, revealing opportunities for strategic planning and execution.

Leadership, technology, and community infrastructure significantly drive smart tourism development, reinforcing the necessity of strong leadership and community engagement in urban planning. These components, accounting for a substantial variance in outcomes, highlight the urgent need to focus on building a culture of innovation and collective involvement in tourism strategy integration. On the other hand, the absence of a significant direct impact from environmental components on smart tourism development suggests a gap in current strategies. Urban planners should aim for more targeted initiatives that align smart city technologies with sustainability, recognizing the need for deliberate environmental planning in smart tourism. Advanced monitoring systems, mobile applications, and integrated transportation solutions stand out as crucial in navigating tourism toward sustainable practices.

The SEM catalyzes a shift towards an integrated model of smart tourism, prioritizing comprehensive resource optimization. It promotes a holistic strategy that incorporates smart economy, governance, living, mobility, people, and environment into tourism development, striving for sustainability. This reinforces the need for a harmonious blend of technology and sustainable practices in urban development.

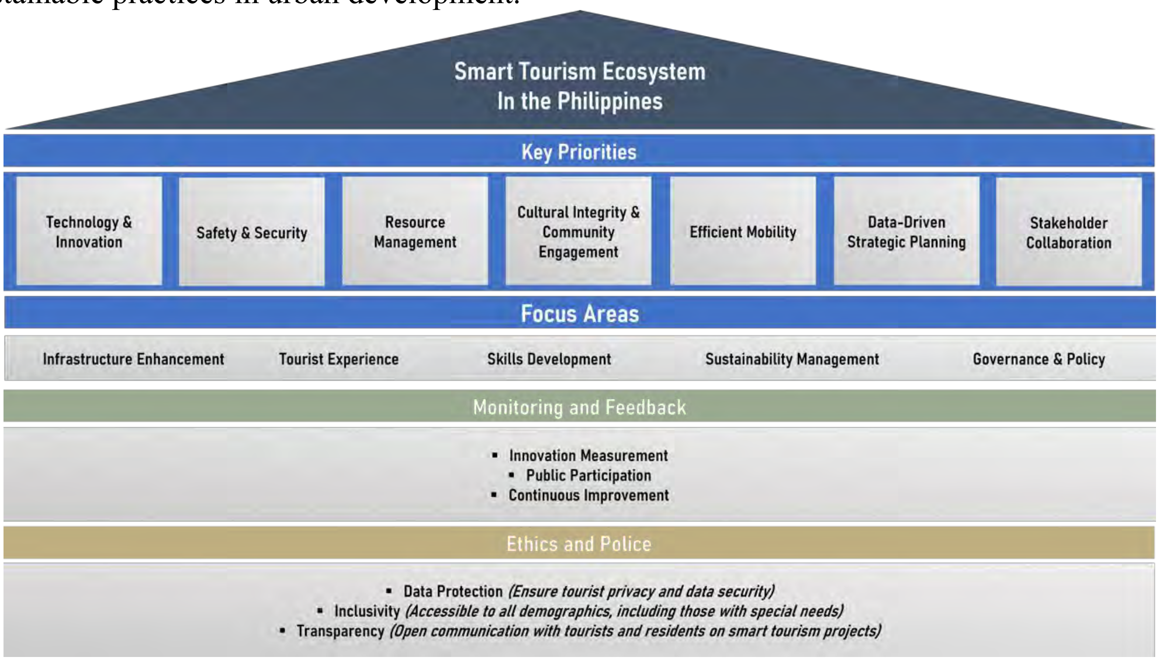


Figure 3 Smart Tourism Ecosystem Framework

The proposed strategic framework in Figure 3 advocates prioritizing technology and innovation, safety and security, and resource management, while ensuring cultural integrity and community engagement. Efficient mobility and data-driven strategic planning, backed by strong stakeholder collaboration, are highlighted as the cornerstones of sustainable smart tourism. Focus Areas emphasize infrastructure enhancements, tourist experiences, skill development, sustainability management, and governance, providing a practical roadmap for transforming smart cities into leading tourism destinations. Monitoring and Feedback loops ensure dynamism and responsiveness within the ecosystem, with innovation measurement, public participation, and continuous improvement as key components. Finally, Ethics and Policy underline the framework's backbone, stressing the importance of inclusivity, data protection, and transparency in the smart tourism approach.

The framework delineates actionable strategies, particularly for cities with varying resources:

- Cities with limited resources should focus on small-scale, impactful innovations and capacity building.
- Cities with moderate resources are encouraged to develop smart technology roadmaps and foster data-driven cultures.

- Cities with advanced resources ought to aim for a unified platform integrating various services, utilizing data analytics for personalized tourist services, and establishing innovation hubs.

This strategic blueprint provides a comprehensive view for enhancing tourism sustainability, suggesting that technology and innovation, with community and cultural harmony, are pivotal in shaping premier smart tourism destinations. It offers a guide to thoughtfully integrate smart components within tourism, taking into account available resources and goals unique to each city. This holistic approach positions cities to better capitalize on their smart city capabilities, ensuring economic growth, environmental sustainability, and enhanced tourist experiences.

5.2. Conclusion

This research thoroughly investigated the impact of smart city components on developing sustainable smart tourism destinations in the Philippines through a sequential explanatory study using structural equation modeling and thematic analysis. It found that leadership structures, technology, innovation, and community social infrastructure significantly enhance smart tourism by fostering effective leadership and community engagement. The study also emphasized the importance of a cohesive strategy for integrating smart city components into the tourism sector, noting that strategic resource application enhances efficiency and responsiveness. Additionally, it identified the critical role of integrating economic, governance, environmental, and cultural components for sustainable tourism. Despite progress, further targeted initiatives are necessary to enhance sustainability, with the environmental aspects requiring more direct attention in smart tourism development. Advanced monitoring systems, data-driven decision-making, mobile applications, and integrated mobility solutions are crucial for steering tourism toward sustainability. The study suggests future research should continue exploring these relationships and recommends the adoption of the proposed structural equation model as a strategic blueprint for policymakers and stakeholders to integrate smart components thoughtfully in tourism development.

5.3. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

The study was limited to select Philippine cities, affecting the generalizability of results to other regions. Likewise, the constrained sample size may not reflect broader stakeholder perspectives, and the data, being self-reported, could be subject to bias. Constructs used were based on existing frameworks, which might not encompass all smart tourism dimensions. As such, future research should broaden the geographic and demographic scope, update constructs to include emerging smart city facets, and utilize larger, more diverse samples for enhanced reliability and applicability to different urban settings.

REFERENCES

Buhalis, D., & Amaranggana, A. (2015). Smart tourism destinations: Enhancing tourism experience through personalisation of services. Information and communication technologies in tourism 2015, (pp. 377-390).

Bulchand-Gidumal, J. (2022). Post-COVID-19 recovery of island tourism using a smart tourism destination framework. Journal of Destination Marketing & Management Volume 23, 100689.

Cohen, B. (2018, May 2). Blockchain Cities and the Smart Cities Wheel. Retrieved from Medium:
https://boydcohen.medium.com/blockchain-cities-and-the-smart-cities-wheel-9f65c2f32c36

Global Sustainable Tourism Council. (2019, December 6). GSTC Destination Criteria 2.0 with Performance Indicators and SDGs. Retrieved from Global Sustainable Tourism Council: https://www.gstcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/GSTC-Destination-Criteria-v2.0.pdf

Gomez, R. P. (2021). DOT pushes for ‘smart tourism’ in the country. Retrieved from Getaway: https://getaway.ph/blog/uncategorized/dot-pushes-for-smart-tourism-in-the-countr

Gretzel, U., Sagala, M., Xiang, Z., & Koo, C. (2015). Smart tourism: foundations and developments. Electronic Markets, 25(3), 179-188.

Habeeb, N., & Weli, S. (2020). Relationship of Smart Cities and Smart Tourism: An Overview. HighTech and Innovation Journal Vol. 1 No. 4, 194-202.

Jiang, H., Geertman, S., & Witte, P. (2022). The contextualization of smart city technologies: An international comparison. Journal of Urban Management.

Khan, M., Woo, M., Nam, K., & Chathoth, P. K. (2017). Smart City and Smart Tourism: A Case of Dubai. Sustainability 2017, 9(12), 2279.

Lee, P., Hunter, W., & Chung, N. (2020). Smart Tourism City: Developments and Transformations. Sustainability 2020, 12(10), 3958.

MLIT. (2022, March). ASEAN Smart City Planning Guidebook. Retrieved from ASEAN: https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/ASEAN_SmartCityPlanningGuidebook_en_WEBSITE.pdf

Morrissey, J., & Vince, C. (2020, June 18). 5 focal points needed to develop a smart city. Retrieved from Smart Cities Dive: https://www.smartcitiesdive.com/news/5-focal-points-needed-to-develop-a-smart-city/580023

Ponti, J. (2021, May 10). The Philippines launches National AI Roadmap. Retrieved from Open Gov Asia: https://opengovasia.com/the-philippines-launches-national-ai-roadmap/

Revilla, M. G., Burgos, J. P., Einsle, C., & Moure, O. M. (2022). Proposal of New Strategies for Smart Tourism Destinations in the Challenging New Reality: A Commitment to the Technology–Sustainability Binomial. Sustainability 2022, 14(10), 5867.

Rocamora, J. L. (2020, October 30). Travel PH app to keep tourists updated on open destinations. Retrieved from Philippine News Agency: pna.gov.ph/articles/1120287

Wayne, S. (2016, August 11). How smart cities are leading the way to smart tourism. Retrieved from Hotel Management: https://www.hotelmanagement.net/tech/how-smart-cities-are-leading-way-to-smart-tourism

Evaluation of enabling and deterring policies for island sustainable tourism

Tsai, Tsung-Hsien
Department of Tourism
National Quemoy University

Abstract:

Transportation is a major contributor to carbon emissions, making the choice of modes at destinations a crucial issue. Overcrowding at tourist destinations result in the deterioration of service quality. Therefore, it is essential for governments to intervene and implement control policies. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of attractive incentives and regulatory controls on tourists' choice of green modes. A conceptual framework is proposed and a stated preference experiment is conducted. Multinomial and Mixed logit models are applied to explore tourists' choices. The results confirm the validity of the proposal and tourists possess distinct attitudes towards the discussed policies.

Keywords: Sustainable Island Tourism, Regulation and Incentive, Tourism and Transportation, Policy Evaluation

1. Introduction

In recent past, tourism has engaged in significant uses of transportation in the itinerary, and has been known as a carbon-intensive industry for over a decade (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). The tourism-driven traffic has generated a huge amount of carbon dioxide emissions and already raised the attention of environmental sustainability. On this matter, Xie, Fang, & Liu (2017) conducted an analysis and confirmed that transportation infrastructure did increase urban carbon emissions and intensity between 2003-2013. Lenzen et al. (2018) further indicated that the number of tourism-related global carbon footprints is 8% of global greenhouse gas emission and transportation is one of major contributors. In this regard, Le & Nguyen (2021) suggested special attention should be paid to support green transportation infrastructure technologies and practices in the tourism industry. Even though the relationship between tourism and transportation is apparent, Scuttari, Orsi, & Bassani (2019) argued the difficulties and lack of concrete actions in practice to shift usages from private cars to alternative transportation modes. Shah et al. (2021) reviewed related studies and indicated barriers and challenges needed to be resolved regarding green transportation for sustainability. Nowadays, encouraging tourists to adopt green modes in the journey is becoming more and more important, not only from the aspect of reducing carbon emissions but also maintaining positive images and tourist satisfaction (Churchill, Pan, & Paramati, 2022).

Tourism service quality is spoiled when plenty private modes are utilized at destinations especially when the carrying capacity is overloaded. Under such circumstance, congestion, pollution, and noise negatively impact traveling experiences on site and even cause the phenomenon of overtourism (Dodds & Butler, 2019). In a recent study, Sibrijns & Vanneste (2021) discussed the policy of redistribution of tourists at highly popular destinations suffering from overtourism in European cities. However, they concluded the difficulties to change tourists' minds due to travel expectation and time limitation. In this regard, more sophisticated considerations and assessment of policies catering to reduce carbon emissions and maintain tourism service quality is essential in order to obtain an extensive consideration from sustainable perspectives (Mishra et al, 2022).

On the matter of policy implementation to reduce emissions and securing quality, Jamieson & Jamieson (2019) indicated that the lack of management skills at destinations and attractions level is a reason responsible for overtourism. Kebete & Wondirad (2019) argued that proper visitor management practices further strengthen sustainable tourism destination development. As such, understanding the efficacy of anticipated policies and strategies is vital and helpful for both public and private sectors in the decision making. In the literature, both carrots (or enablers) and sticks (or deterrents) policies are perceived to be effective to motivate behavior changes (Nepal & Nepal, 2021). Although there are already studies addressing the development and management of global warming effects and carbon emissions reduction in the tourism literature (Curtale, Sarman, & Evler, 2024; Le & Nguyen, 2021; Lenzen et al., 2018), there is little discussion about the promotion of green transportation systems regarding enabling or deterring travel behaviors from the tourism perspective (Piatkowski, Marshall, & Krizek, 2019; Scuttari, Orsi, & Bassani, 2019). This study aims to fill the gap and conducts an ex-ante assessment of carrot and stick policies in relation to tourism-driven transportation mode choice preferences. The objectives of this study are: (a) to address the issue of green mode selection in island tourism using Kinmen, Taiwan as a case study (b) to assess the impacts of carrot and stick policies on tourists' behavioral changes.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Island carrying capacity and transportation management

In the development of tourism competitiveness framework, Ritchie & Crouch (2003) have included airline, road, port facilities as vital elements in the evaluation of transportation infrastructure. More specifically, the success of tourist destinations depends on not only their regional tourist competitiveness in terms of the attractiveness characteristics or quality profile that make up the tourist strength of a certain area (Hovinen, 2002) but also transportation accessibility (Xiao, Jia, & Jiang, 2012). Although derived, transportation is essential to meet the needs of movement across destinations (Le-Klάhm & Hall, 2015). In short, transportation accessibility and facilities can be recognized as an important factor while developing tourism activities in a destination.

Carrying capacity can be defined differently and variously, in relation to demography and human geography, such as population, transportation, quantity of cargo, natural resources, planning in physical environment and so on (Trakolis, 2003). The load carrying capacity affects serviceability and transportation cost. Therefore, accurate assessment of load carrying capacity is becoming more and more important. As Khomsi, Fernandez-Aubin, & Rabier (2020) pointed out that when the capacity of the tourism system is outnumbered, it will bring negative effects on the quality of life of residents as well as the quality of visitors' experiences at a destination. In an early study, Marsiglio (2017) showed that if the tourist number is optimally determined, long-run sustainable growth will be possible.

Regarding the characteristics of islands, one of the critical features worth noting is its isolation from the mainland. As islands have limited areas, some small islands that carry frequent tourism activities have been spatially connected with the mainland via bridges or tunnels. Therefore, it is suggested that quantity control and quality promotion are necessary to improve the island carrying capacity (Wu, et al., 2020) and reduce possible conflicts and impacts. Since island carrying capacity is limited, the balance between increasing the number of tourist arrivals with the consideration of environmental sustainability is important for the development of sustainable island tourism. It is therefore suggested that tourism carrying capacity can be used as input for tourism management, and policies must consider tourism carrying capacity to create and to realize sustainable ecotourism for island tourism (Faiz & Komalasari, 2020).

2.2. Green transportation and low carbon tourism

Over the past decades, the impact of global climate change on carbon emissions caused by human activities have been studied. Related studies have addressed the significance of transportation-based carbon emissions in the tourism sector such as Mishra et al. (2020), Gössling & Higham (2021), Gunter & Wöber (2022). Even though the goal of low carbon tourism has aroused attention, there is still a need to confront some long-standing structural problems from the aspect of transportation. In this regard, understanding tourists' behaviors in relation to the adoption of green transportation policies and assessing policy impacts becomes vital (Shah et al., 2021; Ur Rehman, Islam, & Miao, 2023). In the literature, Peeters (2013) have studied the tourism-traffic paradox and pointed out the shift from unsustainable modes to sustainable ones is the key of success. Yang and Ho (2016) have conducted an evaluation study towards assessing the effect of carbon reduction under different mode shift of green transportation system. These related studies all show the necessity to address the issue of sustainability from the transportation perspective.

Regarding the influencers to make decisions, mode-based attributes, attitudinal variables, and socioeconomic features are common variables applied to explain tourists' choice behaviors (Curtale, Sarman, & Evler, 2024; Peeters, 2013). On the other hand, polices are another crucial factor to motivate behavioral changes. In this regard, carrot (or pull) and stick (or push) are two effective dimensions to consider (Agrawal, Dill, & Nixon, 2010; Tian, Li, & Sun, 2022; Xiao et al., 2022). For instance, Agrawal, Dill, & Nixon (2010) researched the preference of green transportation taxes and fees and found that the policy is especially appealing to residents. Scuttari, Orsi, & Bassani (2019) advocated the necessity to study tourists' preferences regarding policy-driven transition towards sustainable transport solutions in tourism destinations. Piatkowski, Marshall, & Krizek (2019) have addressed the effects of both carrot and stick policies on the promotion of active transport through causal effect analysis. Tian, Li, & Sun (2022) used the choice of departure time as a scenario to compared the instantaneous and longitudinal effectiveness of a traditional penalty-based congestion pricing strategy (ie. stick) and an innovative traffic management strategy (ie. carrot). They found that both stick and carrot strategies are effective from different perspectives. Xiao et al. (2022) reviewed relevant papers in the literature and concluded that stick strategies and combined carrot-and-stick strategies are more effective than carrot ones. Regarding the miscellaneous effects of policies, Chen, Fu, & Chen (2023) recently conducted an experiment to study the preference of two bundles of public/shared transportation service in the context of Mobility-as-a-Service. They have revealed that there are multiple classes of tourists in the market which have heterogeneous preferences towards the bundles. Based on these relevant findings, we argue that the intention to use green modes at a tourist destination relies not only on intrinsic mode attributes but also on enabling and deterring policies. More specifically, carrot and stick policies are two major sources of the intervene to be considered.

Generally speaking, policies related to time control, space control, cost control, and access control are common deterring policies to be considered. On the other hand, the upgrading of physical facilities, introduction of new alternatives, and reward programs are not uncommon in terms of enabling policies, interpretative tour guiding to create pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors, and a digital response system to automate specific decongestion policies for real-time intervention (Camatti et al., 2020; Kebete & Griffin, 2013; Poudel1 & Nyaupane1, 2013).

2.3. Conceptual framework

Many possible factors can influence mode choice behaviors, and this study adopts the carrot-and-stick theory based on the development in the literature to investigate the effectiveness of intervention policies. In this regard, we use the promotion of green transportation at an island destination as a vehicle to address the studied issue. Carrot policies are enablers to make green transportation modes convenient and attractive; on the other hand, stick policies are deterrents related to increase barriers or costs to the use of private modes (Scuttari, Orsi, & Bassani, 2019). As such, we conduct an experiment to verify potential policies and Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework. First of all, five alternatives are considered based on the status-quo situation. These alternatives are distinguished by the proposed attributes with different levels of service. Regarding the dimension of deterrents (ie. regulation control), four corresponding attributes are included and they are loading control, time control, reservation control, and fee control. These attributes are considered based on the findings in the literature and also real environmental conditions of the studied island. More specifically, the attribute of loading control contains two levels of service including free of control versus high-occupancy vehicle control. In the next, the attribute of time control considers the minimum length of stay, which free of control and minimum four-hour stay are two tested levels. The attribute of reservation control is the requirement of making reservation in advance. The last attribute is the fee control and three levels are considered including free of charge, $100 NT dollars, and $200 NT dollars.

The second dimension in the conceptual framework is the enablers (ie. green incentives), and another three attributes are considered. The first attribute is the green coupon incentive which has three levels, namely no compensation, $100 coupon, and $200 coupon. Green priority is the second attributes to be explored in the experiment. The attribute here aims to increase convenience of using green modes and two potential activities are focused including green parking and free transfer to the public bus system. Additionally, the idea of green point reward is taken into account in the experiment with two levels (ie. no reward versus green point reward). It should be noted that the dimension of mode costs is also included in Figure 1 as a control attribute. Rental fees and waiting time are two corresponding attributes. In this regard, rental cost is a real variable based on the actual fees of rental. Waiting time is mainly available for public transportation.

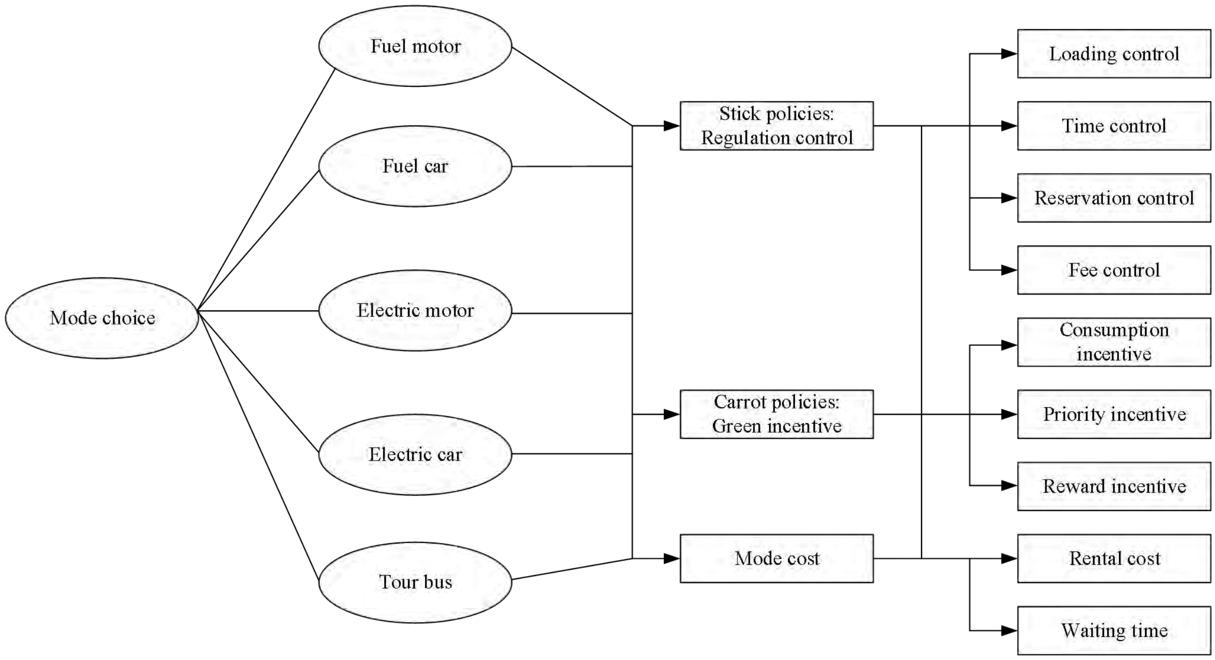


Figure 1 The proposed conceptual framework

3. Methodology

Discrete choice models are suitable for analyzing discrete dependent variables and have been widely applied in a variety of fields of research including tourism (Kemperman, 2021). Originally, the maximization of utility is the goal to derive discrete choice models. In this way, the utility of each alternative is estimated through the evaluation of respondents' overall feelings regarding the applied attributes. Equation (1) shows the calculation of utility where V_{it} is the systematic component and ε_{it} is the error term for individual t to choose alternative *i*. X_{it} is a vector of the applied attributes and β represents the unknown parameters which need to be calibrated using the collected responses. The most popular and widely applied prototype is Multinomial Logit model (MNL) as shown in Equation (2) where P_{it} represents the probability for individual t to choose i from j alternatives.

$$U_{it} = V_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} = \beta' X_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad \textbf{(1)}$$

$$P_{it} = \text{prob}[(U_{it} > U_{jt})] = \frac{e^{V_{it}}}{\sum_j e^{V_{jt}}} \quad \textbf{(2)}$$

Although the construction of MNL is straightforward, it has the issues of independence of irrelevant alternatives. In addition, MNL is also unable to deal with behavioral heterogeneity. As such, Mixed logit model (ML) is a flexible model to avoid the aforementioned issues and can be regarded as the generalization of MNL. ML treats individual differences toward a specific feature through the use of a density function $f(\beta|\theta)$ as shown in Equation (3). In the equation, β_t are random parameters which are flexible to deal with random heterogeneity of preferences among individuals. Equation (4) shows the unconditional probability of choosing alternative i by individual t. As Equation (4) is not a closed form, parameters can be approximated by using numerical analysis techniques.

$$U_{it} = \beta_t' X_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (3)$$

$$P_{it} = \int \left(\frac{\exp(\beta' X_{it})}{\sum_{j=1}^{J} exp^{\beta' X_{jt}}}\right) f(\beta|\theta) \, d\beta \quad (4)$$

3.2. Hypothetical scenarios and data collection

The adopted attributes with the corresponding levels of service result in a complicated experiment. If a full factorial experiment is conducted based on the raw design, there will be a huge number of experimental cases. As such, a fractional factorial experiment, which is a common approach to create hypothetical scenarios, was conducted using the orthogonal table $L_{32}(2^{32})$ to reduce the number of tested cases to thirty-two in this study. These scenarios are then randomly assigned to form four subsets, each of which consists of eight scenarios.

The population focused in this study is Taiwanese travelers who are above 18 years old and able to travel alone. For each hypothetical scenario, respondents were expected to choose one alternative from the choice set after considering the content of attributes and service levels. Face-to-face interviews were then conducted with tourists at transportation terminals from October 2022 to March in 2023. Trained interviewers explained the meaning of attributes and levels of service are before answering the questionnaire so that respondents can fully understand the content of the survey. In addition, questionnaires were filled in front of interviewers who are always available to clarify the meaning and interpretation of the various elements. The surveying process was carried out from 9 am to 5 pm on both weekend and weekday. The principle of systematic sampling with the interval of five was followed to maintain randomness at our best efforts and four hundred valid questionnaires were collected at the end. These collected responses were then turned into dichotomous and numeric values for the following empirical analysis. Regarding the robustness of the experiment, we have referred to the procedure and the checklist provided by Viglia & Dolnicar (2020) and Boto-Garĉıa et al. (2022).

4. Results

4.1. Demographic profile of respondents
Regarding the characteristics of the collected 400 responses, 45% of the respondents are male and 46% of them are married. The major two groups of age are 20~29-year-old and 30~39-year-old groups, both compose around 30% of the samples. For the respondents' occupation, they represents a variety of career categories. The largest groups are from public (31%) and service sectors (26%), followed by business (22%). Among all samples, around 60% of them possess university degree and above. Regarding the monthly income, most respondents earn between 40k~60k (53%), followed by 20k~40k (31%). In summary, the principle of systematic sampling is adopted to achieve randomness and at our best and the profile demonstrates a variety of different backgrounds. As such, the collected responses are considered to be representative to project behaviors of the targeted population.

4.2. Modeling results
MNL is first applied to investigate the effectiveness of the attributes. The results in Table 1 show that load control, fee control, green coupon, green parking, free bus ride, green points, and mode rental cost are statistically significant. Both regulation control and green incentives are verified to be useful to encourage the choices of green modes and discourage the utilization of fuel ones. It is important to note that the loading control estimation exhibits an unexpected positive sign here. This anomaly can be attributed to the frequent adoption of high-occupancy vehicle policies during peak time in Taiwan. The benefit of the load control is to maintain a suitable service quality without exceeding the capacity. In this way, tourists view load control as a fashion to avoid the phenomenon of congestion and possess positive attitudes toward it. The attributes of time control, reservation control, and waiting time are insignificant. Since the trip purpose is tourism rather than daily routines, the use of time is relatively flexible and time-related attributes are not influential. The overall explanatory power (ρ^2) reaches 0.166

which is acceptable based on the goodness of fit. Nevertheless, as MNL assumes independence of irrelevant alternatives and unable to deal with heterogeneity, ML is applied to further investigate the proposed framework.

The results in Table 1 demonstrate similar outcomes compared with MNL. Nevertheless, ML shows that time control reaches the criterion of significance after considering individual heterogeneity. However, the attributes of reservation control and waiting time remain insignificance. With the address of non-homogeneous behaviors, ML reveals that tourists possess different attitudes toward fee, green coupon, and waiting time since the standard derivations of these attributes are significant. In this way, we confirm the existence of tourist heterogeneity while choosing green modes at an island destination. The overall fitness ρ^2 increases a little bit to 0.170.

Table 2 Results of MNL and ML models

	MNL		ML	
	Coeff	t value	Coeff	t value
Constants				
Fuel motor alt	0.647***	3.062	-0.016	-0.035
Fuel car alt	1.583***	4.334	0.925	1.660
Elec motor alt	0.986***	5.087	0.659	1.524
Elec car alt	1.999***	5.297	1.617***	2.851
Load control				
Mean	0.205***	3.962	0.282***	4.245
SD			0.071	0.176
Time control				
Mean	-0.115	-1.425	-0.363***	-3.175
SD			0.125	0.328
Reservation control				
Mean	0.013	0.232	0.063	0.944
SD			0.052	0.121
Fee control				
Mean	-0.005***	-9.663	-0.008***	-8.992
SD			0.011***	7.783
Green coupon				
Mean	0.002***	4.300	0.002***	3.349
SD			0.007***	3.377
Green parking				
Mean	0.160***	3.091	0.198***	3.070
SD			0.323	0.663
Free public bus				
Mean	0.359***	3.322	0.512***	2.472
SD			0.334	0.364
Green point				
Mean	0.599***	12.628	0.699***	9.939
SD			0.298	1.029
Rental cost				

Mean	-0.001***	-3.410	-0.001***	-2.631
SD			0.000	0.037
Waiting time				
Mean	-0.005	-1.334	-0.043	-1.635
SD			0.044***	2.217
LL(B)	-4661		-4637	
LL(0)	-5588		-5588	
ρ^2	0.166		0.170	

***:99% Confidence level; **:95% Confidence level; *:90% Confidence level

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and implications

Based on the empirical results, several findings are summarized below. First of all, both carrot and stick policies are proved to be effective to influence tourists' green mode choices. Nevertheless, as carrot policies are normally those related to an expense of capital nature, such as carbon voucher and green points, the adoption of carrot policies should be carefully considered under the factor of execution cost. Stick policies are related to regulations or barriers, which are less likely to have a huge expense of capital. However, tourists may not be willing to see the imposition of restrictions which may scare them away from visiting destinations. In this regard, Mouratidis et al. (2023) concluded that restrictions should accompany by massive improvements in public transport infrastructure, and it is suggested to consider a package containing majorly the stick policies with the reconciliation of the carrot policies for achieving a balance. Secondly, entrance fees are verified to be a useful lever for behavioral changes. However, if such a policy is implemented to encourage the usage of green modes, the built-in environment for green transportation should be improved. In this regard, public charging of electric vehicle is a critical issue to be addressed (Potoglou, Song, & Santos, 2023) and a sophisticated electric-vehicle sharing system seems to be a necessity as well (Hu et al., 2022). In another aspect, the provision of tourist bus at the destination is an alternative of travel and it is considered to be useful to encourage mode shift (Liu et al., 2023). As such, the service quality of the tourist bus or even the integration with other public systems to form multimodal travel in the journey can be further considered.

5.2. Conclusion

As transportation is a crucial element in the determination of visiting plans, it is important to maintain the satisfaction in the journey with the minimum environmental impact, especially to an island destination. In this study, a conceptual framework is proposed to investigate the effectiveness of carrot and stick policies on green mode choices at an island destination. The proposed framework considers three dimensions namely regulation control, green incentives, and mode costs with nine attributes. The utilization of the stated preference experiment with logit models verifies the plausibility of the framework. Theoretically speaking, the proposed conceptual framework is confirmed to be able to explain tourists' green mode choice behaviors at island destinations. The proposed framework presents a comprehensive consideration for imposing suitable policies and serve as a foundation for promoting green transportation to reduce carbon emission and maintain service quality. MNL and ML both show that most applied attributes are statistically significant. In summary, load control, time control, fee control, green coupon, green parking, free bus ride, green points, and rental cost can be regarded as effective policies for encouraging behavioral changes. In addition, ML confirms the existence of behavioral heterogeneity which tourists possess different attitudes toward the applied attributes.

5.3. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies
There are several limitations which provide avenues for future research. First, this study found that tourist behaviors are heterogeneous. However, it is still unclear how individuals behave distinctly. Future studies to explore relationships between tourists' perceptions and social characteristics regarding the studied issue are suggested. Secondly, the concept of Mobility-as-a-Service has been recognized as an important trend (Sakai, 2019). The integration with other modes in the journey can be verified based on the developed framework. Thirdly, the implementation of carrot and stick policies can be further investigated with digital information systems to form event-based triggering of policies (Camatti et al., 2020).

REFERENCES

Agrawal, A. W., Dill, J., & Nixon, H. (2010). Green transportation taxes and fees: A survey of public preferences in California. *Transportation Research Part D: Transport and Environment, 15*(4), 189-196.

Boto-Garćıa, D., Mariel, P., Pino, J. B., & Alvarez, A. (2022). Tourists' willingness to pay for holiday trip characteristics: A Discrete Choice Experiment. *Tourism Economics, 28*(2), 349-370.

Camatti, N., Bertocchi, D., Carić, H., & van der Borg, J. (2020). A digital response system to mitigate overtourism. The case of Dubrovnik. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 37*(8-9), 887-901.

Chen, C-F., Fu, C., & Chen, Y-C. (2023). Exploring tourist preference for Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) - A latent class choice approach. *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice, 174*, 103750.

Churchill, S. A., Pan, L., & Paramati, S. R. (2022). Air Pollution and Tourism: Evidence from G20 Counes. *Journal of Travel Research, 61*(2), 223-234.

Curtale, R., Sarman, T., & Evler, J. (2024). Traffic congestion in rural tourist areas and sustainable mobility services. The case of Ticino (Switzerland) Valleys. *Tourism Planning & Development, 21*(1), 70-94.

Dodds, R., & Butler, R. (2019). The phenomena of overtourism: a review. *International Journal of Tourism Cities, 5*(4), 519-528, 2019.

Dwyer, L., & Kim, C. (2003). Destination competitiveness: determinants and indicators. *Current Issues in Tourism, 6*(5), 369-413.

Faiz, S. A., & Komalasari, R. I. (2020). The assessment of tourism carrying capacity in Lombok Island. *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science, 592*, 012002.

Gössling, S., & Higham, J. (2021). The low-carbon imperative: destination management under urgent climate change. *Journal of Travel Research, 60*(6) 1167-1179.

Gunter, U., & Wöber, K. (2022). Estimating transportation-related CO2 emissions of European city tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 30*(1), 145-168.

Hovinen, G. (2002). Revising the destination lifecycle model. *Annals of Tourism Research, 29*(1), 209-230.

Hu, S., Lin, H., Chen, X., Xie, K., & Shan, X. (2022). Modeling usage frequencies and vehicle preferences in a large-scale electric vehicle sharing system. *IEEE Intelligent Transportation Systems Magazine, 14*(1), 74-86.

Jamieson, W., & Jamieson, M. (2019). Overtourism management competencies in Asian urban heritage areas. *International Journal of Tourism Cities, 5*(4), 581-597.

Kebete, Y., & Wondirad, A. (2019). Visitor management and sustainable destination management nexus in Zegie Peninsula, Northern Ethiopia. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, 13*, 83-98.

Kemperman, A. (2021). A review of research into discrete choice experiments in tourism: Launching the Annals of Tourism Research curated collection on discrete choice experiments in tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research, 87*, 103137.

Khomsi, M. R., Fernandez-Aubin, L., & Rabier, L. (2020). A prospective analysis of overtourism in Montreal. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing, 37*(8-9), 873-886.

Le, T-H., & Nguyen, C. H. (2021). The impact of tourism on carbon dioxide emissions: insights from 95 countries. *Applied Economics, 53*(2), 235-261.

Le-Klǎhm, D-T., & Hall, M. (2015). Tourist Use of Public Transport at Destinations – A Review. *Current Issues in Tourism, 18*(8), 785-803.

Lenzen, M., Sun, Y-Y., Faturay, F., Ting, Y-P., Geschke, A., & Malik, A. (2018). The carbon footprint of global tourism. *Natural Climate Change, 8*, 522-528.

Liu, Q., Liu, Z., An, A., Zhao, P., & Zhao, D. (2023). A modal shift due to a free within-destination tourist bus scheme: Multimodality and transport equity implications. *Research in Transportation Business & Management, 48*, 100863.

Marsiglio, S. (2017). On the carrying capacity and the optimal number of visitors in tourism destinations. *Tourism Economics, 22*(3), 632-646.

Mishra, S., Sinha, A., Sharif, A., & Suki, N. M. (2020). Dynamic linkages between tourism, transportation, growth and carbon emission in the USA: evidence from partial and multiple wavelet coherence. *Current Issues in Tourism, 23*(21), 2733-2755.

Mouratidis, K., De Vos, J., Yiannakou, A., & Politis, I. (2023). Sustainable transport modes, travel satisfaction, and emotions: Evidence from car-dependent compact cities. *Travel Behaviour and Society, 33*, 100613.

Nepal, R., & Nepal, S. K. (2021). Managing overtourism through economic taxation: policy lessons from five countries. *Tourism Geographies, 23*(5-6), 1094-1115.

Peeters, P. M. (2013). Developing a long-term global tourism transport model using a behavioural approach: Implications for sustainable tourism policy making. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 21*, 10491069.

Piatkowski, D. P., Marshall, W. E., & Krizek, K. J. (2019). Carrots versus sticks: assessing intervention effectiveness and implementation challenges for active transport. *Journal of Planning Education and Research, 39*(1) 50-64.

Potoglou, D., Song, R., & Santos, G. (2023). Public charging choices of electric vehicle users: A review and conceptual framework. *Transportation Research Part D: Transport and Environment, 121*, 103824.

Poudel1, S., & Nyaupane1, G. P. (2013). The role of interpretative tour guiding in sustainable destination management: A comparison between guided and nonguided tourists. *Journal of Travel Research, 52*(5), 659-672.

Ritchie, J., & Crouch, G. (2003). *The competitive destination: A sustainable tourism perspective*. New York: CABI Pub.

Sakai, K. (2019). MaaS trends and policy-level initiatives in the EU. *IATSS Research, 43*(4), 207-209.

Scuttari, A., Orsi, F., & Bassani, R. (2019). Assessing the tourism-traffic paradox in mountain destinations. A stated preference survey on the Dolomites' passes (Italy). *Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 27*(2), 241-257.

Shah, K. J., Pan, S-Y., Lee, I., Kim, H., You, Z., Zheng, J-M., & Chiang, P-C. (2021). Green transportation for sustainability: Review of current barriers, strategies, and innovative technologies. *Journal of Cleaner Production, 326*, 129392.

Sibrijns, G., & Vanneste, D. (2021). Managing overtourism in collaboration: The case of 'From Capital City to Court City', a tourism redistribution policy project between Amsterdam and The Hague. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, 20*, 100569.

Tian, Y., Li, Y., & Sun, j. (2022). Stick or carrot for traffic demand management? Evidence from experimental economics. *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice, 160*, 235-254.

Trakolis, D. (2003). Carrying capacity - an old concept: significance for the management of urban forest resources. *New Medit, 2*, 58-64.

Ur Rehman, F., Islam, M. M., & Miao, Q. (2023). Environmental sustainability via green transportation: A case of the top 10 energy transition nations. Transport Policy, 137, 32-44.

Viglia, G., & Dolnicar, S. (2020). A review of experiments in tourism and hospitality. *Annals of Tourism Research, 80*, 102858.

Wu, Y., Zhang, T., Zhang, H., Pan, T., Ni, X., Grydehøj, A., & Zhang, J. (2020). Factors influencing the ecological security of island cities: a neighborhood-scale study of Zhoushan Island, China. *Sustainable Cities and Society, 55*, 102029.

Xiao, C., van Sluijs, E., Ogilvie, D., Patterson, R., & Panter, J. (2022). Shifting towards healthier transport: carrots or sticks? Systematic review and meta-analysis of population-level interventions. *The Lancet Planetary Health, 6*(11), 858-e869.

Xiao, S., Jia, L., & Jiang, L. (2012). Forest Recreational Opportunity Spectrum in the Suburban Mountainous Region of Beijing. *Journal of Urban Planning and Development, 138*(4), 335-341.

Xie, R., Fang, J., & Liu, C. (2017). The effects of transportation infrastructure on urban carbon emissions. *Applied Energy, 196*, 199-207.

Yang, C-W., & Ho, Y-L. (2016). Assessing carbon reduction effects toward the mode shift of green transportation system. *Journal of Advanced Transportation, 50*, 669-682, 2016.

Extending the taxonomy of tourism products

Liao, Zuhui
School of Hotel and Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Tung, Vincent Wing Sun
School of Hotel and Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Abstract:
Given the important role of a tourism taxonomy in understanding destination products and features, this study aims to test and extend the tourism product taxonomy from existing literature via Hong Kong, a major destination in Asia Pacific. Through a rigorous three-stage process, the study extends the taxonomy and contributes to the literature with new categories under 'Pleasure', 'Human Endeavor', and 'Nature' products. Practically, the extended taxonomy provides insights into how these elements can be leveraged to enhance tourism experiences.

Keywords: Tourism taxonomy, tourism product, Hong Kong

1. Introduction

Defining and segmenting different types of tourism products by establishing parameters is essential because it is not only regarded as the first step in creating a formal ontology of a domain, but also provides benefits for destination management (UNWTO, 2008; Velardi, Cucchiarelli, & Petit, 2007). Product-based typology allows practical market research to develop more targeted research on consumer preference by identifying the distinctions between various tourism products (Phillip, Hunter, & Blackstock, 2010). It also helps in understanding broad tourism products and destination features, providing strategic options for development and planning (Benur & Bramwell, 2015). Furthermore, categorizing tourism products can aid in identifying new products and attracting new markets for maintaining a competitive advantage (Vumbunu, Viviers, & du Plessis, 2022).

Given the importance of providing a product-based typology in tourism research, McKercher (2016) made an initial attempt to propose a comprehensive tourism product taxonomy. However, there are still important research gaps to be addressed. First, it needs to be tested and applied to categorize products at major tourism destinations to evaluate its accuracy and relevance. Second, after initial testing, the taxonomy needs to be refined for further accuracy. Third, the taxonomy should be tested against destinations from unique cultural backgrounds and heritage. Hence, the objective of this study is to address these research gaps by testing and refining the tourism taxonomy via Hong Kong, a major destination in the Asia Pacific region.

Overall, the study contributes to the literature by extending the tourism product taxonomy in an Asian Pacific context. From a practical perspective, destination management organizations can use the refined taxonomy to assess their coverage of different tourism products offered to tourists. With that, tailored marketing strategies can be made to target specific markets by identifying unique features of each product. This could also aid in identifying gaps in tourism product offerings, and then introduce alternative tourism product to expand tourism product and to attract wider range of tourists.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Taxonomy

A taxonomy is defined as a classification scheme that based on the shared characteristics of the groups, which simplifies the complexity and enables scholars to not only identify similarities and differences between objects, but also investigate connections between entities (Ge & Gretzel, 2018). Taxonomy building is the process of creating a classification system based on observations, which can be formed either qualitatively or quantitatively through coding, quantification or statistical analysis such as clustering (Ge & Gretzel, 2018). A developed taxonomy should be concise, robust, and comprehensive, and importantly, additional observations need to be applied to test the suitability of a taxonomy (Gibbs, Gretzel, & Saltzman, 2016).

2.2. Tourism Taxonomy

Many attempts have been made in tourism studies to group tourism products into typologies or taxonomies in about 30 sectors ranging from clearly identified product groups such as cultural heritage and natural-based tourism to more specialized forms of tourism such as agritourism, medical tourism and dark tourism (McKercher, 2016). However, these studies were conducted independently using different method. “The result is a rather confused mélange of ideas typified by lack of coherence that entrenches fragmentation rather than works towards the development of a holistic, collective whole” (McKercher, 2016, pp.197). Therefore, McKercher (2016) proposed a comprehensive tourism product taxonomy by adopting a marketing-oriented product taxonomic classification system.

In the study of McKercher (2016), tourism products were defined as the activities, attractions and interests consumed by tourists in a destination that satisfy their needs. With this definition and the reference of Kotler and Keller (2011) about the six-tier hierarchical structure, five broad Need Families (i.e., core need) are identified including ‘Pleasure’, ‘Personal Quest’, ‘Human Endeavour’, ‘Nature’ and ‘Business’, incorporating 27 Product Families (i.e., representations that include all the Product Classes) and 90 Product Classes (i.e., a group of products that have certain functional coherence).

3. Methodology

A three-stage process was performed in this study for the purpose of proposing an Extended Tourism Product Taxonomy (ETPT), namely Sample, Tourism Product Classification, and Validation of Extended Tourism Product Taxonomy. Details of each stage can be found in the Figure 1 below.

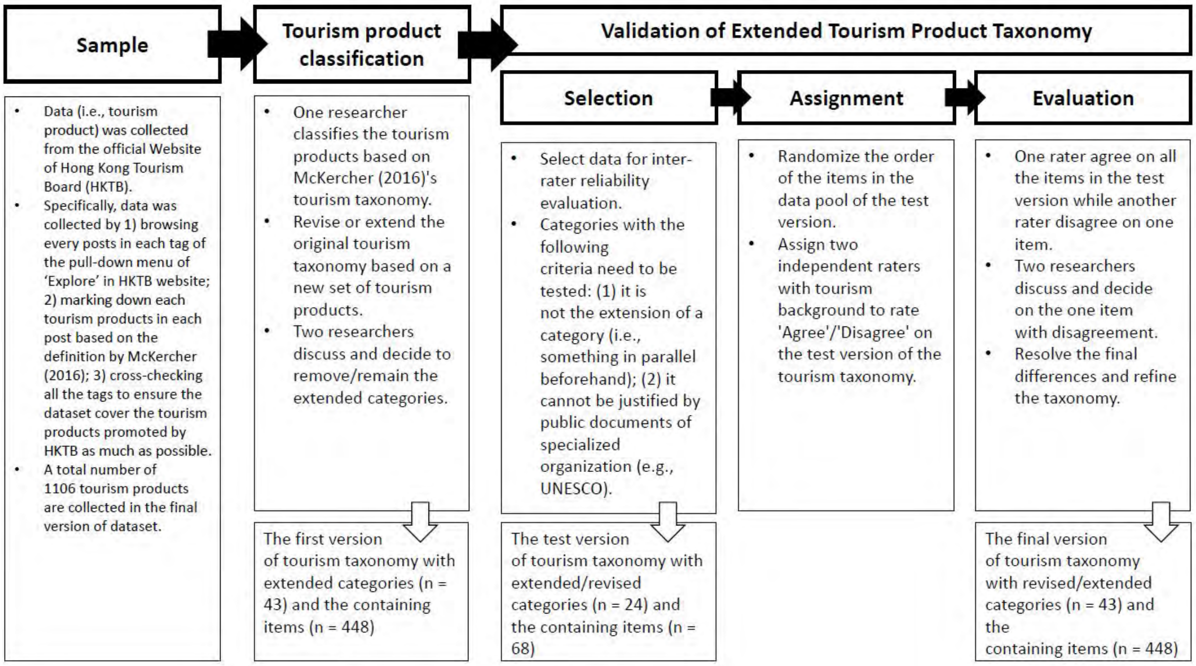


Figure 1 Research methodology steps

4. Results

By applying a new dataset in an Asian context to McKercher's (2016) Tourism Product Taxonomy, 43 extended categories were integrated to form the Extended Tourism Product Taxonomy (ETPT). Specifically, 6 new categories were included in Pleasure, 31 new categories in Human Endeavor, and 6 new categories in Nature. No new categories were added in Personal Quest and Business based on the current dataset.

The extended tourism taxonomy, based on Hong Kong's tourism data, reveals a rich tapestry of cultural, historical, and geographical elements that contribute to the city's diverse tourism offerings. From the cultural perspective, the new categories in "Pleasure" encapsulate the city's vibrant food scene, from bustling markets to Michelin-starred restaurants, reflecting Hong Kong's culinary heritage. The new added categories in "Human Endeavor" capture the city's cultural dynamism, from its unique modes of transport to its tangible and religious heritage, and contemporary culture. These elements highlight the city's cultural evolution and its blend of Eastern and Western influences.

From a historical perspective, the new added categories in "Human Endeavor" category also reflects Hong Kong's historical journey. For example, the vintage forms of transport, like trams and houseboats, are remnants of the city's colonial past. The tangible heritage, including movable (theatre) and immovable elements, and religious heritage, represent the city's historical milestones and religious diversity. The contemporary monuments serve as symbols of the city's recent history and development.

From a geographical perspective, the new added categories in "Nature" showcases Hong Kong's unique geographical features. The unique land and water forms, such as islands and bay areas, highlight the city's coastal geography. The places of outstanding beauty, like grasslands, and activities like rock climbing, mudflat-based activities, and surfing, underscore the city's diverse natural landscapes, from mountains to beaches.

In conclusion, the tourism taxonomy was extended by a comprehensive overview of Hong Kong's tourism product, emphasizing its cultural richness, historical depth, and geographical diversity. This taxonomy could serve as a valuable tool for tourism stakeholders in developing targeted strategies to promote Hong Kong's multifaceted tourism appeal.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study attempts to apply a new set of data (i.e., tourism products of Hong Kong) to the tourism taxonomy developed by McKercher (2016) to evaluate its accuracy and relevance and further refine the taxonomy. By categorizing the tourism products based on McKercher (2016)'s taxonomy and validating the extended version through tourist experts' evaluation, Extended Tourism Product Taxonomy (ETPT) was extended by incorporating new categories from a more comprehensive perspective (i.e., cultural perspective, historical perspective, and geographical perspective).

This taxonomy not only helps in understanding the current tourism landscape but also provides insights into how these elements can be leveraged to enhance the tourism experience. The new added categories in "Pleasure", for instance, underscores the potential of gastronomy tourism, given the city's culinary diversity. Similarly, the new added categories in "Human Endeavor" points towards the potential of cultural and heritage tourism, with its focus on tangible and religious heritage, and contemporary culture. The new added categories in "Nature" category, on the other hand, highlights the opportunities for eco-tourism and adventure tourism.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge in tourism research by proposing an extended tourism taxonomy. It integrates cultural, historical, and geographical perspectives, providing a comprehensive framework to understand and analyze a destination's tourism offerings. Practically, this study offers valuable insights for tourism stakeholders, the extended tourism taxonomy can guide the development of targeted tourism strategies and promotional campaigns.

A potential limitation of this study is its specific focus on Hong Kong as a tourism destination, which may limit the applicability of the findings to other contexts. Additionally, the study's reliance on data solely from the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) could constrain the breadth and depth of the analysis, as it may not encompass all aspects of the tourism experience in the city.

REFERENCES

Benur, A. M., & Bramwell, B. (2015). Tourism product development and product diversification in destinations. *Tourism management*, *50*, 213-224.

Ge, J., & Gretzel, U. (2018). A taxonomy of value co-creation on Weibo–a communication perspective. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.

Gibbs, C., Gretzel, U., & Saltzman, J. (2016). An experience-based taxonomy of branded hotel mobile application features. *Information Technology & Tourism*, *16*, 175-199.

Kotler, P., & Keller, K. (2012). *Marketing management 14th edition*. Torronto: prentice Hall.

McKercher, B. (2016). Towards a taxonomy of tourism products. *Tourism Management*, *54*, 196-208.

Phillip, S., Hunter, C., & Blackstock, K. (2010). A typology for defining agritourism. *Tourism management*, *31*(6), 754-758.

UNWTO. (2008). International recommendations for tourism statistics 2008. Madrid: UNWTO. https://www.unwto.org/tourism-statistics/on-basic-tourism-statistics-irts-2008

Vumbunu, T., Viviers, P. A., & du Plessis, E. (2022). Trends and Development of Tourism Product Diversification in Botswana: Lessons Learned.

Creative Lanna in value vo-vreation: A developing tourist destination of Phrae Province, Thailand

Karapan, Ratchapan
Multidisciplinary Research Institute
Chiang Mai University

Panot, Susuwan
Multidisciplinary Research Institute
Chiang Mai University

Abstract:

This research investigates the incorporation of value co-creation theory into a workshop process with handicraft entrepreneurs in Phrae Province, Thailand. The research aims to augment Phrae's attractiveness as a tourism destination by highlighting its indigenous history, cultural diversity, and sustainability initiatives. SWOT analysis introduces the distinctive identity in design, material, and brand characteristics incorporated with experience and wisdom as the key strengths. The collaborative brainstorming and discussions explore integrating antique elements into contemporary mascots. The study enriches existing literature on cultural entrepreneurship, sustainable tourism, and destination branding by presenting a unique methodology for promoting local heritage and attracting tourists. This study may serve as a guideline for tourism development to increase the destination's attractiveness.

Keywords: Co-Creation, Tourism destination development, local enterprise, Creative Lanna

1. Introduction

In destination attraction, value co-creation pertains to the collaborative endeavours among tourists, service providers, and local communities to collectively enhance a destination's appeal and allure (Giannopoulos et al., 2021). The co-creation process (CCP) necessitates active stakeholder engagement and participation to curate unique and memorable experiences catering to travellers' diverse needs and preferences, a research method used in the tourism literature (Mohammadi et al., 2021). Tourists assume a pivotal role in value co-creation by articulating their interests, desires, and expectations, thus influencing the types of attractions, activities, and amenities offered at the destination. Local communities contribute to value co-creation by imparting their cultural heritage, traditions, and expertise to enrich the tourism experience (Lara-Morales & Clarke, 2022). Through active involvement in tourism activities, locals provide authentic and meaningful interactions that showcase the destination's distinctive identity and attractiveness (Chiwawa & Wissink, 2023). Value co-creation in destination attraction underscores the significance of collaboration and partnership among tourists, service providers, and local communities to craft compelling and indelible experiences that attract visitors and foster the sustainable development of the destination(Deng et al., 2024).

Lanna Creative Tourism (LCT) refers to a niche tourism sector that focuses on offering immersive cultural experiences in the Lanna region of Northern Thailand (Auttarat et al., 2021). Lanna, meaning "Land of a Million Rice Fields," was an ancient kingdom that flourished from the ^{13th} to the 18^{th} century and encompassed parts of present-day Northern Thailand, Laos, Myanmar, and Yunnan Province in China. The Lanna region is known for its rich cultural heritage, traditional craftsmanship, vibrant festivals, and stunning natural landscapes (Binson-Sumrongth, 2009). Lanna Creative Tourism in Thailand offers travelers a unique opportunity to experience the rich cultural heritage, traditional craftsmanship, and natural beauty of Northern Thailand while supporting local communities and preserving Lanna traditions for future generations.

Phrae features many historical and cultural landmarks, encompassing ancient temples, traditional wooden architecture, and museum collections. Scenic mountains, verdant forests, and meandering rivers exemplify its natural beauty. Phare in Thailand is renowned for its cultural richness, historical significance, and picturesque landscapes. Moreover, the tourism destination is celebrated for its traditional craftsmanship, spanning cotton weaving, ceramic artistry, and wood sculpting. Visitors can immerse themselves in local artisanal practices by visiting villages where craftsmen showcase their skills and offer handmade souvenirs and artifacts for purchase (Karapan et al., 2021).

This research, rooted in value co-creation theory, seeks to enhance tourism in Phare province by leveraging its cultural heritage and local products. Through qualitative methods, it aims to uncover insights that can enrich the tourist experience and boost economic growth. Workshops focusing on product design and brand analysis aim to empower local entrepreneurs, fostering collaboration and driving sustainable development.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Value co-creation theory

Value co-creation theory provides a framework for understanding value creation's interactive and customer-centric nature in contemporary business environments (Prebensen et al., 2018). Value co-creation theory in marketing and service management underscores the collaborative relationship between service providers and customers in shaping value (Jaakkola et al., 2015). Acknowledges value creation's dynamic and context-specific nature, recognizing that it evolves and varies based on individual preferences and circumstances. Value is not merely a product of a company's features but co-created through interactive engagements between customers and stakeholders, active involvement of customers in shaping their experiences, and the value driven by products or services. Therefore, value co-creation theory highlights the mutual benefits for customers and firms.

Co-creation theory has profound implications for rural destination development within the tourism industry (Maziliauske, 2024). By emphasizing collaborative engagement between tourists and local communities, this approach fosters sustainable and authentic tourism experiences. In rural areas, involving residents in the tourism planning and implementation process empowers them to preserve their cultural heritage while contributing to economic growth (Fredholm, 2016). Through co-creation, tourists gain access to unique, personalized experiences that showcase the natural beauty and cultural richness of rural destinations. By embracing co-creation principles, rural destinations can unlock their potential as vibrant and resilient tourism hubs, fostering a symbiotic relationship between visitors and local communities while preserving the essence of their identity and landscape (Mijnheer & Gamble, 2019).

2.2 Tourist destination development

Tourist destination development refers to planning, implementing, and managing initiatives to enhance the attractiveness, accessibility, and sustainability of a specific location for tourism purposes (Manhas et al., 2016). It involves various stakeholders, including government authorities, tourism organizations, local communities, and private sector entities, working collaboratively to create and improve destinations that cater to the needs and preferences of tourists while maximizing socio-economic benefits and minimizing negative impacts (Volgger et al., 2021).

Tourist destination development encompasses a holistic approach that integrates physical, economic, sociocultural, and environmental dimensions (Wani et al., 2024). The ultimate goal of tourist destination development is to create attractive and competitive destinations that meet the needs of tourists while benefiting local communities by preserving natural and cultural heritage (Jaafar et al., 2015). The roadmap of developing a tourist destination involves strategic planning, infrastructure improvement, diversification of experiences, effective marketing, sustainability measures, and community engagement; assessing assets, formulating master plans, and investing in infrastructure are crucial (Danylyshyn et al., 2020; Teixeira et al., 2024).
Sustainable practices ensure long-term viability while diverse tourism products attract visitors (Benur & Bramwell, 2015). Successful destination development could unlock their potential, create economic opportunities, and preserve heritage through engaging stakeholders, fostering collaboration, and monitoring progress to allow for advancement opportunities (Henderson, 2015). Marketing sustainability is a critical aspect of developing a tourist destination(Font & McCabe, 2017). The environmentally responsible practices initiative promotes conservation endeavors and community engagement among visitors. The objective is to attract environmentally conscious travelers and bolster the destination's reputation as an ethical and responsible tourism hub, thus contributing to long-term success.

2.3 SWOT matrix analysis

Albert S. Humphrey pioneered the development of the SWOT framework in the 1960s. This widely utilized strategic planning tool delineates the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats pertinent to business evaluation (Jaafar et al., 2015). Strengths are internal attributes that bolster an entity's success or competitive advantage. These may include robust brand recognition, unique products or services, a proficient workforce, streamlined operational processes, a loyal customer base, or access to ample resources and capital. Weaknesses encompass internal factors hindering an entity's success or competitiveness. These might include lacklustre financial performance, outdated technology, a shortage of skilled personnel, inefficiencies in operational processes, or deficiencies in marketing, distribution, or customer service strategies. Opportunities denote external factors within the business environment that could benefit the entity. These could involve evolving market trends, emerging market segments, technological advancements, regulatory changes, or nascent consumer demands that the entity could leverage to foster growth or enhance operational efficiency. Threats signify external factors posing risks or challenges to an entity's success or competitive standing. These could range from intensified market competition and economic downturns to shifts in consumer preferences, technological disruptions, regulatory fluctuations, supply chain vulnerabilities, or adverse environmental contingencies (Helms & Nixon, 2010; Namugenyi et al., 2019; Pickton & Wright, 1998).

Conducting a SWOT analysis provides organizations with valuable insights into their internal dynamics and external environment (Suprina et al., 2018). TOWS matrix informs strategic decision-making, facilitates risk mitigation efforts, and guides action plans to capitalize on strengths, address weaknesses, exploit opportunities, and mitigate threats applicable to tourism industries (Ahmad et al., 2024). SWOT analysis finds application across various domains, including business strategy formulation, marketing strategy development, product innovation, project management, and organizational evaluations (Pradini et al., 2024).

3. Methodology

The workshop was conducted with three local brands volunteered by HUG HOM Design-Natural Products, Fah haam Indigo Craft & Studio, and TONE KHRAM PHRAE. The workshop process starts with the storytelling of the brand's history, with questions for destination development such as, "What about their initial associations with Phrae, including various interests and responses? Once the brainstorming finished, following data synthesis, predominant themes were identified and utilized as the basis for product development, aligning with each brand identity. Commencing with the product design and refinement process, the emerging entrepreneurs, as the target demographic, proposed concepts, delineated design methodologies, and received comprehensive guidance from the research team and marketing experts. The research conceptual framework is illustrated in Figure 1.

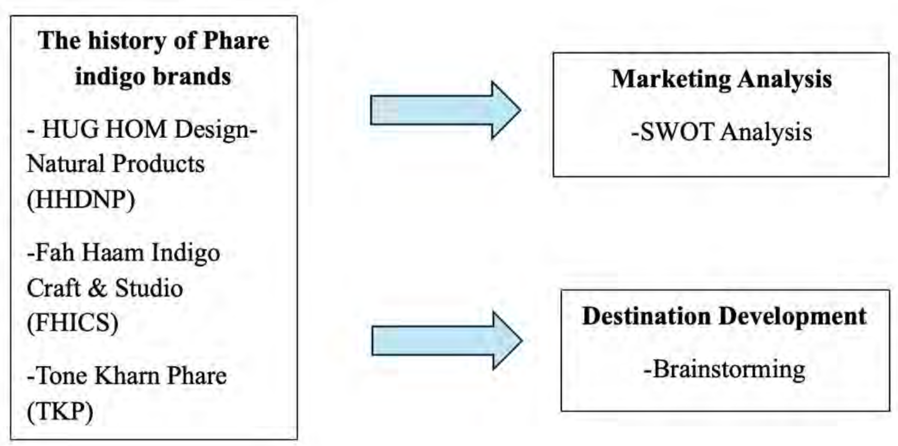


Figure 1. Research Conceptual
Source: Author's own illustrated

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 The history of HUG HOM Design-Natural Products

The brand's genesis, Hak Hom Design, can be traced back to research endeavors focused on indigo dyeing, utilizing 100% natural dyeing processes, and integrating various natural color shades, all undertaken without prior foundational knowledge. This initial exploration sparked a growing interest and fascination with the intrinsic charm of indigenous cultural traditions, including the revered practices of traditional handwoven textiles and natural indigo dyeing. Subsequently, this burgeoning interest catalyzed the innovative development of textile products tailored to resonate with contemporary lifestyles. The establishment of the Hak Hom Design store in 2014 marked the culmination of this journey. Prospective participants keen on engaging in activities offered by the brand must make bookings at least one week before facilitating the preparatory procedures associated with dyeing pots. Both silk and linen fibers are deemed suitable for utilization, with meticulous cleansing deemed an indispensable preparatory measure.

Figure 2. The local entrepreneurs' brand in Phare: HHDNP
Source: Author' work

4.2 The History of Fahaam Indigo, Craft, and Studio

Fahaam Indigo, Craft, and Studio emerged as a strategic response to familial economic circumstances. FHICS brand was initially entrenched in the teak furniture manufacturing sector; market downturns coupled with the sole inheritance of a daughter necessitated a strategic reevaluation. Consequently, the teak furniture enterprise became financially burdensome, prompting a shift in operational focus. Thus, an exploration into tie-dyeing and natural textile dyeing ensued, leveraging preexisting interest as initial capital. The critical success complies with the diligent knowledge acquisition in textile weaving and natural dyeing processes that were pursued, drawing from the local context in Phrae province and Sakon Nakhon province. During this period, the market predominantly featured tie-dyed and naturally dyed textiles in traditional shades such as blue, navy, and white, signaling an evident dearth in product diversification.

Consequently, the conceptualization of producing self-wearable clothing and pioneering distinctive color schemes and patterns emerged, predominantly marketed through online platforms sans physical storefronts. This innovative approach has garnered significant traction and commendation from domestic and international clientele since its inception in 2016. The brand has evolved to curate unique product offerings that continue to captivate and entice discerning consumers. Furthermore, strides have been made in refining color extraction techniques and diversifying dyeing methodologies, emphasizing utilizing 100% natural hues. Additionally, educational initiatives have been introduced, catering to individuals seeking to enhance their skill sets and potentially pursue professional opportunities within textile craftsmanship, available in collective and individualized instructional formats.

Figure 3. The local entrepreneurs' brand in Phare: FHICS

Source: Author' work

4.3 The History of TONE KHRAM PHRAE

TONE KHRAM PHRAE has evolved from its precursor, TON KHRAM Hom Mok, which initially focused on producing naturally dyed indigo products. Following its participation in a product enhancement program and the establishment of online distribution channels for naturally dyed indigo textiles in 2018, the brand diversified its product portfolio. Its offerings now include various products, such as naturally dyed textiles, yarns, indigo dye cakes, and contemporary items like shirts, pants, scarves, bags, keychains, earrings, hats, and other modern accessories. In addition to retail operations, the brand also provides instructional courses in textile weaving and natural dyeing techniques, catering to both local and international individuals keen on acquiring proficiency in these traditional crafts.

Figure 4. The local entrepreneurs' brand in Phare: TKP

Source: Author' work

4.4 SWOT ANALYSIS

According to Table 1, The examined brands exhibit distinctive strengths and weaknesses, notable opportunities, and potential threats. HHDNP showcases a discernible and exclusive brand presentation coupled with the utilization of premium materials for manufacturing. Nevertheless, its constrained production capacity and prolonged lead times impede scalability and timely product delivery. FHICS differentiates itself through unique product offerings and well-established brand identity, albeit facing constraints in production capacity, product variety, and reliance solely on online distribution channels. Meanwhile, TKP capitalizes on natural materials and is a strategically situated tourist destination yet grapples with limited production capacity, insufficient online sales proficiency, and a need for more product diversity and management proficiency. Despite these challenges, each brand is well-positioned to seize opportunities arising from burgeoning trends toward natural and culturally inspired products. However, they must contend with threats such as competition, seasonal constraints, and the risks of product replication. Hence, strategic adaptation and effective utilization of opportunities are paramount for navigating the competitive landscape and sustaining growth in the industry.

The strengths of the examined brands lie in their ability to establish distinct identities in both design and material composition. HHDNP, for instance, excels in presenting clear and unique brand profiles, ensuring that its products stand out in the market. Through the use of high-quality and appropriate materials in their production processes, HHDNP demonstrates a commitment to excellence and craftsmanship, enhancing their offerings' overall appeal and value.

Table 1. The SWOT analysis summary.

STRENGTH	WEAKNESS
HHDNP (Distinct Identity in Design and Material): • Clear and unique profile presentation. • Use of quality and appropriate materials for production.	**HHDNP (Limited Production Capacity and Long Lead Times):** • Limited production capacity hampers scalability. • Long production lead times may affect timely delivery of products.
FHICS (Distinctive Brand Characteristics): • Unique offerings that stand out in the market. • Cultivation of a well-loved and recognizable brand.	**FHICS (Limited Production Capacity, Variety, and Online Distributions):** • Limited production capacity may constrain meeting demand. • Limited product variety reduces customer options. • Solely online distribution channels may limit market reach and accessibility.
TKP (Experience and Wisdom): • Use of 100% natural colors to produce environmentally friendly products. • Inheritance of experience and wisdom in production from predecessors. • Use of locally cultivable and readily available raw materials. • A tourist-ready learning center: • No rental costs reduce business risks. • Focus on creating memorable and experiential tourism experiences.	**TKP (Production Capacity Online Sales Skills, Product Diversity and development, Management skills):** • Limited production capacity affects fulfillment capabilities. • Insufficient online sales skills hinder digital marketing effectiveness. • Limited product diversity limits market appeal. • Non-distinctive textile patterns diminish competitive advantage. • Lack of customer data collection restricts personalized marketing efforts. • Absence of financial record-keeping may impede financial management and planning.

OPPORTUNITY	THREAT
HHDNP (Distinct Identity in Form and Material): • The growing trend towards natural products. • The rising interest in artisanal products rooted in cultural wisdom. **FHICS (Cultural and Environmentally Rooted Offerings):** • Growing consumer interest in environmentally friendly and culturally rooted products. • With an increasing preference for products derived from cultural heritage. **TKP (Natural Material-Based Offerings and Strategic Location):** • The popularity of products derived from natural materials. • Amenities facilitating tourist travel, location in a tourist shopping area, enhance opportunities for sales. • Government support for the use of Thai fabric and improved technology. • The limited number of competitors.	**HHDNP (Distinct Identity in Form and Material):** • The majority of artisans in traditional crafts, such as fabric weaving are posing a threat to the continuity. • Limited production capacity. **FHICS (Cultural and Environmentally Rooted Offerings):** • A lack of expertise in traditional crafts and seasonal limitations in sourcing materials. **TKP (Natural Material-Based Offerings and Strategic Location):** • Natural disasters and severe weather conditions pose risks to operations. • Increasing instances of product imitation threaten TKP's market position, especially when competitors falsely claim to offer 100% natural products at lower prices.

FHICS distinguishes itself through its distinctive brand characteristics, which resonate with consumers and foster brand loyalty. By offering unique products that set them apart from competitors, FHICS has cultivated a well-loved and recognizable brand identity. This strategic positioning enables FHICS to attract and retain customers, contributing to its success in the marketplace. TKP leverages its experience and wisdom in product development, drawing on traditional knowledge and practices passed down through generations. Using 100% natural colours and locally cultivable raw materials, TKP aligns with contemporary consumer preferences for environmentally friendly and sustainable products. TKP's establishment as a tourist-ready learning center enhances its appeal as an attractive destination, providing visitors with memorable and experiential tourism experiences. The strengths of these brands underscore their ability to create unique and compelling offerings that resonate with consumers. By establishing distinct identities, leveraging brand characteristics, and drawing on experience and wisdom, these brands have positioned themselves as leaders in their respective markets. Additionally, TKP's integration of tourism initiatives further enhances its attractiveness and visibility, contributing to its overall success and competitiveness.

The identified brand weaknesses encompass limited production capacity, prolonged lead times, inadequate online sales skills, restricted product diversity, and reliance on online distribution channels. These shortcomings pose scalability, timely delivery, market reach, and competitive positioning challenges. To mitigate these weaknesses, strategic measures can be undertaken. These include investing in expanding production capacity and optimizing production processes to enhance scalability and reduce lead times. Additionally, providing training programs to

improve online sales skills and diversifying distribution channels beyond online platforms can broaden market reach.
Moreover, efforts to increase product diversity through research and development initiatives and developing distinctive textile patterns can enhance market appeal. Furthermore, implementing robust financial management systems and procedures to ensure accurate record-keeping and financial planning is essential for sustainable growth. By addressing these weaknesses systematically, the brands can fortify their market position, improve operational efficiency, and capitalize on growth opportunities in the competitive landscape.

4.5 The result of destination development by brainstorming
The outcome of the brainstorming session on destination development suggests the implementation of a culturally symbolic mascot representing the identity of Phare. This proposed mascot is envisioned to encapsulate the destination's distinct cultural heritage and traditions by infusing elements of Phare's cultural ethos into the design and attributes of the mascot. The mascot production process aims to augment the destination's allure for visitors while reinforcing its cultural distinctiveness. The mascot's incorporation into promotional endeavors, events, and activities will bolster the destination's visibility and recognition among tourists. Enriching the visitor experience and fostering a more profound affinity with Phare's cultural legacy by introducing a culturally resonant mascot may align with the overarching objectives of destination development.

The significant mural painting that stands out is the ancient mural of Wiang Ta, located in Wiang Ta Temple, Long District, Phrae Province, known as the "Inai See Wiang" painting, which dates to the early Rattanakosin Era. The painting is on the walls of a teakwood sanctuary within Wiang Ta Temple which portrays the beauty of local Lanna women in the past, showcasing their gracefulness and elegance through intricate gestures, traditional attire adorned with red shawls draped over the shoulders, and finely coiffed hair embellished with ornate floral patterns. This painting has been reimagined as a central figure in cartoon form, named "Wey Wey”, representing Phrae's girls with a charming and unique style. She is dressed in chic traditional attire with a distinctive shoulder bag and cool travel accessories; she serves as a tour guide, narrating various stories of Phrae Province to acquaint people with its rich heritage, as shown in Figure 5.

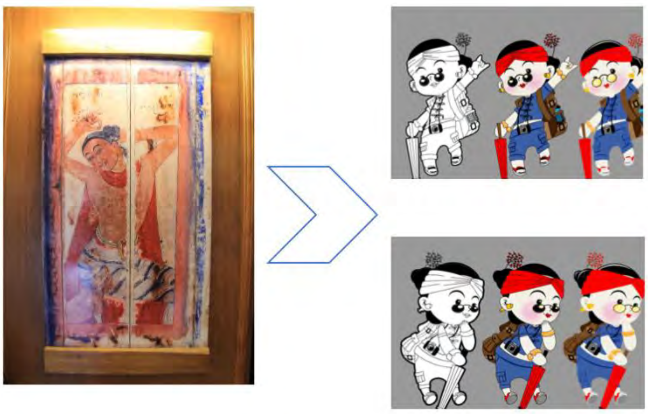


Figure 5. Transformation design from “Inai See Wiang to "Wey Wey”
Source: Author’ work
The mascot embodies cultural symbolism intrinsic to the destination, thereby serving as a visual representation of its heritage and identity. The local brand has incorporated the Wei Wei mascot into their product line, which signifies a strategy to foster destination development within the

tourism sector. The mascot contributes to augmenting the destination's visibility and allure among tourists through its integration into various merchandise and promotional materials. Furthermore, the mascot is pivotal in establishing a memorable and emblematic presence associated with the destination, fostering more profound engagement with visitors, and cultivating a sense of attachment. Figure 6 illustrates the product designs of three brands.

Figure 6. The design product with mascot to develop tourist destination.
Source: Author' work

Leveraging the mascot in marketing endeavors and tourism initiatives distinguishes the destination by serving as a memorable symbol for destinations, fostering emotional connections with tourists, driving engagement, celebrating cultural heritage, generating revenue, and differentiating destinations in the competitive market (Su & Li, 2023). Mascots positively impact tourism by enhancing destination image, serving as practical marketing tools, engaging visitors through interactive experiences, representing cultural heritage, and promoting community involvement (Radomskaya & Pearce, 2021).

5. Conclusion

5.1. Conclusion

The research convened by local entrepreneurs serves as a pivotal forum for conducting a comprehensive SWOT analysis to assess the current standing of their respective brands. Through this rigorous self-assessment process, entrepreneurs gain nuanced insights into the inherent strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that characterize their businesses. This introspective exercise facilitates a thorough understanding of their operational landscape, enabling them to delineate strategic pathways for leveraging strengths and addressing weaknesses. Moreover, the collaborative brainstorming session on destination development yields the conceptualization of a culturally rooted mascot emblematic of the destination's profound historical and cultural heritage within the tourism industry. This strategic initiative holds considerable promise in augmenting the destination's allure and fostering heightened visitor engagement. Ultimately, this scholarly inquiry provides a robust framework for guiding tourism development endeavors to bolster the destination's appeal and nurture sustainable growth trajectories for local community enterprises.

5.2. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

The study's limitations, such as potential biases in the SWOT analysis and the brainstorming session's reliance on limited perspectives, suggest the need for diverse methodologies in future research. This could validate findings and explore the long-term impact of strategies on tourism. Investigating technology and sustainability's role in enhancing local enterprises' competitiveness is crucial. Future studies could focus on quantitative analysis, assessing the impact of value-driven strategies on customer mindset in tourism.

REFERENCES

Ahmad, B. E., Abdullah, M. F., Roslan, M. N. H., Yusoh, M. P., Salleh, S. A., & Pardi, F.

(2024). The Potential of Tourism Sustainability through SWOT Analysis: The Case study of Pahang National Park, Malaysia. *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, *1316*(1), 012007. https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/1316/1/012007

Auttarat, S., Sangkakorn, K., & Krajangchom, S. (2021). THE ENHANCEMENT OF

CULTURAL TOURISM ROUTES IN THE LANNA REGION OF NORTHERN THAILAND. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, *26*(1), 124–140. https://doi.org/10.22452/jati.vol26no1.6

Benur, A. M., & Bramwell, B. (2015). Tourism product development and product

diversification in destinations. *Tourism Management*, *50*, 213–224. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2015.02.005

Binson-Sumrongth, B. (2009). RITES AND BELIEFS OF MUSIC IN THE THAILAND'S

LANNA REGION. *International Association of Music Libraries, Archives, and Documentation Centres*, *56*(3), 299–313.

Chiwawa, N., & Wissink, H. (2023). Sustainable Tourism for Local and Regional Development

in South Africa: Unlocking Economic Potential Through Responsible Tourism Strategies. *Tourism and Leisure*, *12*.

Danylyshyn, B., Bondarenko, S., Niziaieva, V., Veres, K., Rekun, N., & Kovalenko, L. (2020).

BRANDING A TOURIST DESTINATION IN THE REGION'S DEVELOPMENT. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Engineering and Technology*, *11*(4), 312–323.

Deng, Y., Lee, H. M., Lee, T. J., & Hyun, S. S. (2024). Co-creation of the tourist experience:

A systematic assessment scale. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, *51*, 101212. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2023.101212

Font, X., & McCabe, S. (2017). Sustainability and marketing in tourism: Its contexts,

paradoxes, approaches, challenges and potential. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *25*(7), 869–883. https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2017.1301721

Fredholm, S. (2016). Assets in the age of tourism: The development of heritage planning in

Ghanaian policy. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, *34*(4), 498–518. https://doi.org/10.1080/02589001.2017.1285011

Giannopoulos, A., Piha, L., & Skourtis, G. (2021). Destination branding and co-creation: A service ecosystem perspective. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, *30*(1), 148–166. https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-08-2019-2504

Helms, M. M., & Nixon, J. (2010). Exploring SWOT analysis – where are we now?: A review of academic research from the last decade. *Journal of Strategy and Management*, *3*(3), 215–251. https://doi.org/10.1108/17554251011064837

Henderson, J. C. (2015). Destination development and transformation: 50 years of tourism after independence in Singapore. *International Journal of Tourism Cities*, *1*(4), 269–281. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJTC-05-2015-0011

Jaafar, M., Bakri, N. M., & Rasoolimanesh, S. M. (2015). Local Community and Tourism Development: A Study of Rural Mountainous Destinations. *Modern Applied Science*, *9*(8), p399. https://doi.org/10.5539/mas.v9n8p399

Jaakkola, E., Helkkula, A., & Aarikka-Stenroos, L. (2015). Understanding and advancing service experience co-creation. *Journal of Service Management*, *26*(2). https://doi.org/10.1108/JOSM-02-2015-0045

Karapan, R., Maneetrakunthong, A., & Susuwan, P. (2021). The Development of Naturally Dyed Indigo Fabric Products for the Thai Phuan Weaving Group of Ban Thung Hong, Thailand. *The International Journal of Designed Objects*, *15*(1), 29–44.

Lara-Morales, O., & Clarke, A. (2022). Sustainable tourism value chain analysis as a tool to evaluate tourism's contribution to the sustainable development goals and local Indigenous communities. *Journal of Ecotourism*, 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/14724049.2022.2147189

Manhas, P. S., Manrai, L. A., & Manrai, A. K. (2016). Role of tourist destination development in building its brand image: A conceptual model. *Journal of Economics, Finance and Administrative Science*, *21*(40), 25–29. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jefas.2016.01.001

Maziliauske, E. (2024). Innovation for sustainability through co-creation by small and medium-sized tourism enterprises (SMEs): Socio-cultural sustainability benefits to rural destinations. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, *50*, 101201. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2023.101201

Mijnheer, C. L., & Gamble, J. R. (2019). Value co-creation at heritage visitor attractions: A case study of Gladstone's Land. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, *32*, 100567. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2019.100567

Mohammadi, F., Yazdani, H. R., Jami Pour, M., & Soltani, M. (2021). Co-creation in tourism:

A systematic mapping study. *Tourism Review*, *76*(2), 305–343. https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-10-2019-0425

Namugenyi, C., Nimmagadda, S. L., & Reiners, T. (2019). Design of a SWOT Analysis Model and its Evaluation in Diverse Digital Business Ecosystem Contexts. *Procedia Computer Science*, *159*, 1145–1154. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2019.09.283

Pickton, D. W., & Wright, S. (1998). What's swot in strategic analysis? *Strategic Change*, *7*(2), 101–109. https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1099-1697(199803/04)7:2<101::AID-JSC332>3.0.CO;2-6

Pradini, G., Awaloedin, D. T., Ananda, T. M., & Andini, D. A. (2024). Implementing Social Media in Public Relations Tourism: SWOT Analysis. *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ECONOMICS, MANAGEMENT, BUSINESS, AND SOCIAL SCIENCE (IJEMBIS)*, *4*(1), 397–403. https://doi.org/10.59889/ijembis.v4i1.370

Prebensen, N. K., Chen, J., & Uysal, M. (Eds.). (2018). *Creating experience value in tourism* (2nd edition). CABI.

Radomskaya, V., & Pearce, P. L. (2021). Adding character: The role of destination mascots in tourism development. *Tourism Management*, *84*, 104248. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2020.104248

Su, Q., & Li, F. (Sam). (2023). How cute mascots affect relationships with tourism destinations: A moderated mediation model. *Tourism Management*, *99*, 104782. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2023.104782

Suprina, R., Pradhipta, A., & Dyah Pramanik, P. (2018). How to Manage Urban Tourism of Kampung Sumbawan, Krapyak, Pekalongan: A SWOT Analysis and Related Strategies. *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Tourism, Gastronomy, and Tourist Destination (ICTGTD 2018)*. 2nd International Conference on Tourism, Gastronomy, and Tourist Destination (ICTGTD 2018), Jakarta, Indonesia. https://doi.org/10.2991/ictgtd-18.2018.21

Teixeira, P., Eusébio, C., & Teixeira, L. (2024). How to Develop Information Systems to Improve Accessible Tourism: Proposal of a Roadmap to Support the Development of Accessible Solutions. *Computers*, *13*(3), 69. https://doi.org/10.3390/computers13030069

Volgger, M., Erschbamer, G., & Pechlaner, H. (2021). Destination design: New perspectives for tourism destination development. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, *19*, 100561. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2021.100561

Wani, M. D., Dada, Z. A., & Shah, S. A. (2024). The impact of community empowerment on

sustainable tourism development and the mediation effect of local support: A structural equation Modeling approach. *Community Development*, *55*(1), 50–66. https://doi.org/10.1080/15575330.2022.2109703

Residents' behavioral intention towards tourism in globally important agricultural heritage systems

Lee, Louisa Yee Sum
Lee Shau Kee School of Business and Administration
Hong Kong Metropolitan University

Lai, Michael T. H.
Rita Tong Liu School of Business and Hospitality Management
Saint Francis University

Vafadari, Kazem
College of Sustainability and Tourism
Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University

Abstract:

This article uses the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Hierarchy-of-Effects Theory (HET) to examine the behavioral intentions of residents residing in Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) areas, regarding their support for tourism development in their respective localities. Empirical data was collected from 261 residents of the Kunisaki Peninsula Usa area in Japan. The results show that the perceived positive impacts of GIAHS have ripple effects on residents' attitudes, which subsequently influence their intention to support GIAHS tourism development. The study confirms the applicability of the two theories in understanding residents' support for tourism development in GIAHS areas.
Keywords: GIAHS; resident support; tourism development; theory of planned behavior, the hierarchy-of-effects theory

1. Introduction

GIAHS are unique settings where communities live in intricate relationship with the territory. The approximately 80 sites designated as GIAHS are characterised by significant agrobiodiversity, accompanied by deep rooted culture and traditional knowledge. Since 2002, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has taken this global initiative to honour and promote adaptive management and sustainable development of landscapes, biodiversity, knowledge and cultures. Despite the significance of GIAHS in the real world, scholarly research on these settings has been peripheral (Yotsumoto & Vafadari, 2021). Most studies have focused on tourism potential, while residents' support for tourism development has been overlooked. Since GIAHS is the backbone of community-based tourism, the views of residents, mostly small-scale and family farmers, are vital.

Residents' support for tourism development is one of the most well-researched topics in the tourism field, as well as a key determinant of sustainable development (Erul & Woosnam, 2022). However, scholarly endeavours on residents' support at GIAHS is at an infancy stage and the sparse extant literature presents differing views on whether tourism in GIAHS is beneficial for the residents. In this regard, this paper provides an opportunity to investigate the residents' behavioural intention in supporting GIAHS tourism development based on TPB and HET. The former serves as a theoretical foundation, whereas the latter explains the relationship between cognitive, affective and conative elements.

2. Literature Review

Current Understanding on GIAHS

As of March 2024, there are 86 GIAHS located in 26 countries (FAO, 2024). However, GIAHS has received little attention in scholarly research. The authors conducted a search in the Scopus database within the business, management, and accounting disciplines, focusing on journal articles mentioning GIAHS in titles, abstracts, and keywords. Only 10 articles were found by January 16, 2024, with a majority focusing on mainland China and exploring tourism potential. However, few studies have examined residents, revealing a knowledge gap regarding their behavioral intentions to support GIAHS tourism development.

Conceptual Framework

Tourism research over the last fourty years has paid considerable attention to the relationship between residents' attitudes and their support for tourism development (Erul & Woosnam, 2022). Consistent findings suggest that policymakers and industries should prioritise residents' attitudes when deciding on strategies for tourism development (Ramkissoon et al., 2018; Zuo et al., 2017) . However, most literature has only considered affective measurements of attitudes and overlooked cognitive measurements (Karppinen, 2005). Explicit focus on feelings can lead to experimenter bias and a tendency to elicit socially desirable responses (van den Berg et al., 2006). Considering the research gap, the present study intertwines TPB and HET as theoretical foundations. TPB suggests that behavioural intention is the main determinant of individual behaviour, which is influenced by attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991). HET focuses on explaining the cognitive, affective, and conative stages involved in an individual's decision-making process (Barry & Howard, 1990). In the context of GIAHS, this study proposes that GIAHS image, perceived positive impacts, and perceived negative impacts serve as cognitive factors that influence residents' attitudes towards supporting GIAHS tourism development. These attitudes (i.e., the affective construct), in turn, contribute to residents' behavioural intention to support GIAHS tourism development (i.e., the conative construct). To guide the inquiry, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: GIAHS image has a significant and positive effect on attitude towards GIAHS tourism development.

H2: Perceived positive impacts have a significant and positive effect on attitude towards GIAHS tourism development.

H3: Perceived negative impacts have a significant and negative effect on attitude towards GIAHS tourism development.

H4: Perceived behavioural control has a significant and positive effect on residents’ behavioural intention in supporting GIAHS tourism development.

H5: Attitude has a significant and positive effect on residents’ behavioural intention in supporting GIAHS tourism development.

H6: Subjective norm has a significant and positive effect on residents’ behavioural intention in supporting GIAHS tourism development.

3. Methodology

Data were collected through a two-section self-administered questionnaire with a sample of 280 respondents. The first section covered demographic profiles, while the second section comprised a series of 41 items measuring the seven constructs of the conceptual framework adapted from the literature (Eusébio et al., 2018; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017) . Data were collected during the first quarter of 2023 from residents of the Kunisaki Peninsula Usa area, one of the 11 GIAHS sites in Japan using snowball sampling. After data cleaning, 261 valid samples were found eligible for analysis. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was run to evaluate the fit of the measurement model, while structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed to test the proposed relationships.

4. Results

Majority of respondents were male and aged from 55 to 65 or above. Their mean residency in the GIAHS site was 40.96 years, and their working experience at the GIAHS site was 27.68 years. The results of CFA confirmed the structure of the measurement model, while the findings of SEM indicated that four out of six hypotheses were supported, specifically H2, H4, H5 and H6 (See Figure 1).

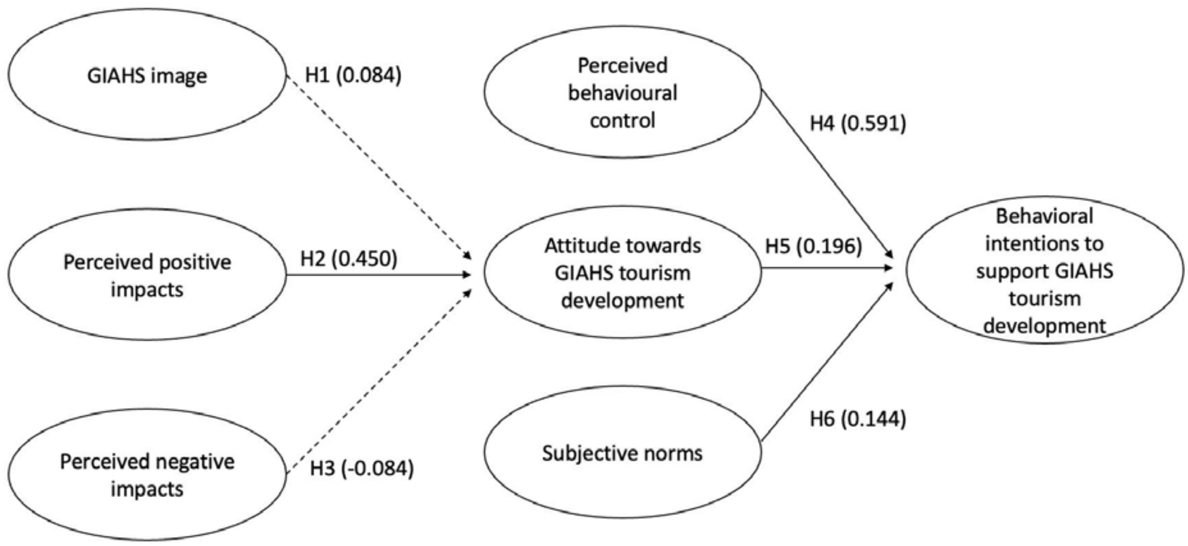


Figure 1. Final model of the proposed theoretical model.
Note: Solid line = significant path, dotted line = non-significant path

5. Discussion, implications, and conclusion

The results confirmed the applicability of both theories by demonstrating that the perceived positive impacts of GIAHS create ripple effects on residents' attitudes, which, in turn, lead to intention to support GIAHS tourism development. This finding offers a new perspective on a fundamental component of the TPB and the HET, making it a valuable addition to the existing literature. Second, the study highlights that attitude not only predicts the intention to support tourism development in GIAHS but also potentially acts as a mediator in the relationship between perceived positive impacts and the intention to support GIAHS tourism development. It is reasonable to argue that this research expands the understanding of the role of attitude, given the limited number of similar studies available in the GIAHS tourism literature. In terms of practical implication, communicating the benefits and advantages of GIAHS to residents through various channels, can help create positive perceptions and attitudes towards GIAHS tourism. By emphasizing the positive outcomes and encouraging community participation in decision-making processes, stakeholders can generate support and enhance the intention of residents to actively engage in GIAHS tourism development.

The limitations of the current research include that the data collection took place during the initial stage of reopening after the pandemic and was limited to one GIAH site. Future research is suggested to test the conceptual model in different settings to validate its theoretical value across different cultures. A longitudinal study is proposed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the evolution of the findings over time.

REFERENCES

Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 50(2), 179–211.

Barry, T. E., & Howard, D. J. (1990). A review and critique of the Hierarchy of Effects in advertising. International Journal of Advertising, 9(2), 121–135.

Bigné, E. A., Sánchez García, I., & Sanz Blas, S. (2009). The functional-psychological continuum in the cognitive image of a destination: A confirmatory analysis. Tourism Management, 30(5), 715–723.

Erul, E., & Woosnam, K. M. (2022). Explaining residents' behavioral support for tourism through two theoretical frameworks. Journal of Travel Research, 61(2), 362–377.

Esses, V. M., & Dovidio, J. F. (2002). The role of emotions in determining willingness to engage in intergroup contact. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 28(9), 1202–1214.

Eusébio, C., Vieira, A. L., & Lima, S. (2018). Place attachment, host–tourist interactions, and residents' attitudes towards tourism development: The case of Boa Vista Island in Cape Verde. Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 26(6), 890–909.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2024). GIAHS around the world. https://www.fao.org/giahs/en/

Karppinen, H. (2005). Forest owners' choice of reforestation method: An application of the theory of planned behavior. Forest Policy and Economics, 7(3), 393–409.

Ramkissoon, H., Mavondo, F., & Uysal, M. (2018). Social involvement and park citizenship as moderators for quality-of-life in a national park. Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 26(3), 341–361.

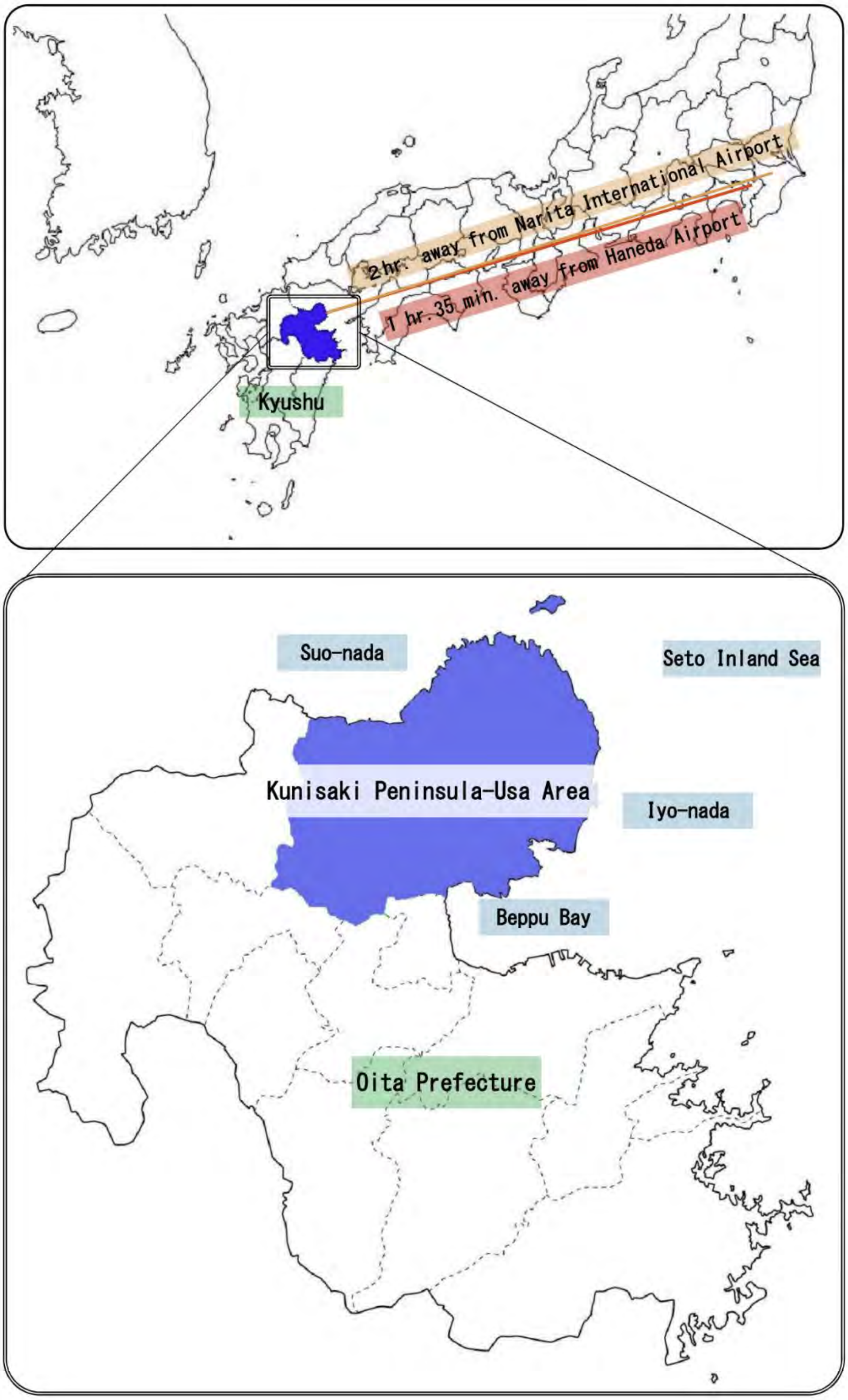
Rasoolimanesh, S. M., Ringle, C. M., Jaafar, M., & Ramayah, T. (2017). Urban vs. rural destinations: Residents' perceptions, community participation and support for tourism development. Tourism Management, 60, 147–158.

van den Berg, H., Manstead, A. S. R., van der Pligt, J., & Wigboldus, D. H. J. (2006). The impact of affective and cognitive focus on attitude formation. Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 42(3), 373–379.

Yotsumoto, Y., & Vafadari, K. (2021). Comparing cultural world heritage sites and globally important agricultural heritage systems and their potential for tourism. Journal of Heritage Tourism, 16(1), 43–61.

Zuo, B., Gusoy, D., & Wall, G. (2017). Residents' support for red tourism in China: The moderating effect of central government. Annals of Tourism Research, 64, 51–63.

Appendix 1 – Map of Kunisaki Peninsula Usa Area, Japan



Adapted from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation

Level of implementation on the accessibility compliance for PWDs among selected hotels in Muntinlupa City

Rizon, Emiliani
Tourism and Hospitality Management
PATTS College of Aeronautics

Abstract:

This study investigates the level of implementation on accessibility compliance for PWDs among selected hotels in Muntinlupa City by employing the accessibility principles by UNWTO and the criteria from Batas Pambansa 344 (Accessibility Law) and its relationship with the hotels' performance by utilizing a quantitative research design through a survey and it was found that the implementation of accessibility practices significantly correlates with the hotel's image and consumer patronage however, findings revealed that the hotel does not thoroughly observe and implement accessibility practices as required by law; consequently, the hotel's image and patronage do not meet the expectations of the PWD market. Therefore, it has been observed that the services they provide in this area are insufficient and fall short of the necessary criteria.

Resultantly, the paper identifies strategies to ensure compliance, enhance access, and improve hotel brand image as disabled-friendly. The aim is to contribute to responsible, sustainable, and universally accessible tourism aligned with the UNWTO's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The research underscores the importance of societal and policymaker efforts to create environments catering to the diverse needs of all community members, including those with special needs. The provision of such amenities lays the groundwork for redefining disabled people of any society as contributors and active members of society however, despite a growing interest in accessibility practices and the decision-makers' ongoing support for rehabilitating tourism and hospitality services to be suitable for this type of market, there is still a need to improve accessibility.

Keywords: Accessible Tourism, Universal Design, Inclusive Tourism, Barrier-Free Design, PWDs

1. Introduction

People with disabilities should be completely and intentionally included in all aspects of their communities. It is essential for integrating them into society and allowing them to fulfill their role in life that they have access to whatever environment or conditions they require.

Hospitality services are required to create accessible environments for all individuals, regardless of their profile or capacity. This is particularly important for hotels that claim to be 5-Star and disabled-friendly and are accredited with such a designation. According to Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat of the Department of Tourism of the Philippines in the webinar on “Barrier Free Tourism” organized by the DoT and NCDA (National Council on Disability Affairs) last September 24, 2020, failure to comply with the grant of such benefits like PWD discounts and accessible establishments being stated in the BP 344 and Magna

Carta 7277, is a “ground for the Review of its Accreditation of DOT’s Rules and Regulations on Accreditation without prejudice to said establishment’s liability.”

Indeed, society and policymakers should make every effort to ensure and design environments that meet the needs of all members of the community, including those with special needs (UNWTO, 2019). In December 2006, the UN General Assembly formally adopted the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). However, despite a growing interest in accessibility practices and the decision-makers' ongoing support for rehabilitating tourism and hospitality services to be suitable for this type of market, there is still a need to improve accessibility.

Also, accessible tourism research has gained popularity in recent years, with a growing number of academics focusing on the travel activities of groups of people who encounter barriers to travel; however, in comparison to other tourism types and markets, the number of studies in this field is still relatively small (Qiao et al., 2019). This suggests that there are still numerous unexplored scales and opportunities for future research. In addition, data collection was based on the establishments' perceptions rather than the PWD market as the basis for information and data on accessibility practices. Therefore, in this study, the researcher collected data from PWD customers regarding their experience and challenges specifically encountered in hotel accessibility practices to know the establishment's level of implementation in compliance to accessibility laws and principles in the Philippine context.

2. Literature Review

2.1. PWDs and the Gap between Accessibility and Hospitality Industry

One of the benefits that PWDs enjoy from traveling is the ability to feel in control of their own lives. However, according to Bauer (2018), in many cases, accommodation establishments have hardly any or even no rooms suitable for PWDs. In most hotels, the guest rooms are either designed without a thorough comprehension of the guests' requirements.

Also, due to a lack of knowledge on how to interact with people who have disabilities, those who work in the tourism industry do not always feel confident when it comes to dealing with PWD. Some lodging establishments' front-line hospitality staff do not receive comprehensive training, and as a result, they are frequently unprepared to assist guests who have disabilities. As a result, with regard to accessibility, there is a future need to consider the personalization of tourism supply (Gillovic & McIntosh, 2020). This calls for a greater understanding of the motivations, decision-making behaviors, needs, and experiences of people with disabilities as consumers of tourism and hospitality services.

According to the World Health Organization, an estimated one billion people (15 percent of the global population) are affected by some form of disability; 690 million people with disabilities live in Asia and the Pacific. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities describes people with disabilities (PWDs) as someone who “has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities” and was further elaborated as individuals “who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others." Therefore, as more persons with physical limitations and disabilities travel around the world, the more crucial it becomes to incorporate their needs into tourism strategies and policies. Accessibility is now considered a human right.

Accessibility for all is acknowledged as a fundamental requirement on a global scale, and efforts are made to ensure it. This accessibility for all includes the ability to reach, enter, move around, and use. In other words, accessibility refers to an atmosphere that is devoid of any obstacles. Regardless of age, sex, or conditions, a barrier-free environment is a space that is designed to be free of obstacles that allow for free and safe movement, function, and access for everyone. It is also a space or set of services that can be accessed by everyone, without any obstacles, with dignity, and with as much independence as is possible (Chia-Hsin, 2020). However, due to the barrier-laden and socially exclusive nature of this recreational activity, it is not always accessible to people with disabilities. Accessibility, like sustainability, is a contemporary issue in tourism and hospitality. Accessibility, in its broadest sense, ensures the creation of products, services, and environments that everyone can use and benefit from. The principles of universal design, for instance, make it possible for individuals with disabilities to utilize a product without requiring adaptation. Through the delivery of universally designed tourism products, services, and environments, accessible tourism "enables people with access requirements, including mobility, vision, hearing, and cognitive dimensions of access, to function independently and with equity and dignity." (Gillovic & McIntosh, 2020). However, People with Disabilities (PWD) not only suffer from discrimination that deprives them of social participation in tourism and hospitality but also unsuitable design that prevents access to goods and services (Khalil & Fathy, 2018).

The reality experienced by PWDs, according to Buhalis and Sinatra (2019), is unsatisfactory and often triggers extreme anxiety. There is an inaccuracy of published information and the propensity for businesses to adhere to the most fundamental regulations and, similarly, the perception that service sector employees lacked the necessary knowledge of how to treat PWDs or their needs led to ongoing disputes, complaints, and animosity towards the hotel industry. PWDs perceived their experiences in hotels as 'extremely limiting' and spent 'an incredible amount of time searching for information, planning, and making decisions due to the hospitality sector's lack of preparedness.

Hotels have a decisive role in the success of the trip and the experience of PWDs. Their success depends on how well they can give travelers control and help them make memorable experiences in their own environment. Access to accommodations is important for PWDs, but many of the problems they face when they travel are related to accommodations (Rubio-Escuderos et al., 2021b). According to UNWTO Publications, buildings can have barriers at doorways and lifts, narrow hallways, and tables at restaurants or cafeterias, preventing movement in tight spaces. Changing the height of things in the environment, like counters, cabinets, or payphones, can make them into barriers. Building entrances, indoor areas, lifts, and other facilities aren't always inspected and fixed up according to the rules of Universal Design or even the accessibility laws in place in many countries.

2.2. Universal Design and Accessibility Standards for Hotel Business

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) endorses the concept that "accessible tourism for all" entails the provision of services and products that can be enjoyed to the same degree by people with disabilities, tourists from both inside and outside the country, senior citizens, families with young children, and individuals of all other demographics. Everyone, regardless of their level of physical ability, should be able to independently enjoy tourism services (Swanepoel et al., 2020). The Universal Design is mentioned in the UN Principles of Accessible Tourism. According to the World Tourism Organization, universal design (UD), which includes assistive devices for specific groups of people with disabilities when necessary, is "the design of products, environments, programs, and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design." The paradigm of Universal Design emerged from the concept of Barrier-Free Design, Accessible Design, and Assistive Technology.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities from 2007 recognizes the significance of accessibility to the physical, social, economic, and cultural environment, as well as health and education, as well as information and communication, for ensuring that people with disabilities are able to fully enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms. In this regard, the UN defined the obligations of signatory States to promote the welfare of PWDs under Article 9 (Accessibility) of the Convention, stating that: *"... States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas."*

Parking spaces and parking lots set aside for people who have trouble moving around are important signs of how accessible the city environment and architecture are as well as in information and communication systems, including the use of sign language, Braille, large print, pictograms, symbols, and both visual and audible announcements. In relation to this, the possibility of free horizontal movement (thanks to the standard width of doorways, corridors, and no thresholds, as well as tactile, visual, and audible elements of accessibility for people with visual impairments), vertical movement (elevators, stairs, and ramps are built according to the standards), sanitary facilities for general use, and the price (do not provide more excellent value to ensure the accessibility of facilities services). The places where people stay should have a sufficient number of rooms set up for people with disabilities. All devices and mechanisms must be made so that they can be used by anyone. This is called "universal design." Also, places that rent out rooms must let people with guide dogs stay there and give them everything they need.

Also, when making furniture, designers should think about the needs of people with limited mobility, such as strollers, a lowered counter, a Braille menu, or a different format (like a website or a mobile app for screen access programs). People with food allergies (like lactose intolerance or gluten intolerance) or religious beliefs must be able to choose from the menu (for example, vegetarianism). There should be places or zones in conference rooms for people who use wheelchairs, headphones for audio-descriptive comments or sound amplification, and induction loops for people who use hearing aids. It must be made sure that audiovisual information can be accompanied by audio description, subtitles, or sign language translation if needed (Gdańsk, 2020).

2.3. The Importance of Accessibility Compliance for PWDs in the Accommodation Sector and Hotels' Image

Tourism has become an important part of people's lives as their economies and cultures have grown. More and more people with disabilities and older people are also going on trips, so the market for accessible tourism is also growing every year. Tourism can improve the mood of participants (Qiao et al.,2019) and enhance life satisfaction (Hwang et al., 2020). It is also conducive to local economic development (Gondos, 2019) and the realization of social equity (McCabe, 2019). As a result, numerous studies on accessibility practices have been conducted in the most recent years. In addition, there are over a billion people in the world who have some kind of disability, which accounts for about 15% of the total population. Of these people, 2%–4% have significant difficulties in functioning. The aging of the population and the rise in the prevalence of chronic diseases are two of the many factors that are contributing to the rise in disability rates. Assistive technologies, such as hearing aids, wheelchairs, and low-vision aids, are necessary for a significant number of people. It is anticipated that the market for PWD will increase to 2 billion by the year 2050 (WHO, 2018). This market itself has contributed to great economic profits. For example, the increasing number of aging tourists in recent years has further made accessible tourism the engine of the growth of the tourism industry (Qiao et al., 2019). Therefore, continuous investment is needed in the planning, construction, adaptation, and conservation of infrastructures (Carrillo & Boujrouf, 2020) due to the relevance of accessibility conditions in all environments and services associated with tourism activities, ensuring their use by people with disabilities (Carrillo & Boujrouf, 2020), and simultaneously ensuring appropriate tourism experiences.

Accessibility will be essential for people's quality of life, contributing to greater civic participation and a growing increase in social inclusion and solidarity. With the elimination of barriers, life becomes a minor obstacle to life regardless of the structure, age, or ability of each one (Ferreira et al., 2022). According to Campos et al. (2019), people with reduced mobility have special needs in their movement. Every day, these people are faced with physical and structural barriers present in most cities, making it difficult to strengthen the paradigm of social inclusion. Cities must adapt to meet all their needs (Campos et al., 2019). In recent years, accessibility has become more relevant for tourism (UNWTO, 2021). This new concept gives equipment and products/services a probability guaranteeing all potential users an equal opportunity to use them with dignity and safety. This evolution reveals an acceleration of changes in this sector and in tourism destinations where competitiveness and quality have become fundamental guidelines in their tourism policies (UNWTO, 2021), being accessibility an essential factor in the evaluation of quality in tourism (Carrillo & Boujrouf, 2020).

Therefore, it is safe to say that developing accessible tourism is not only social welfare but promotes economic development as well. Moreover, recent research has been perceived that the company image is formed from corporate branding, which is done to persuade consumers to remain loyal to the company's however, product service providers can only keep this competitive edge if they give their customers high-quality services that meet or go above and beyond their needs. There is no question that improving accessibility for tourists presents a commercial opportunity for the tourism industry (the economic component), as well as contributes to the formation of a more equitable society (social aspect). Additionally, accessible tourism offers disabled persons an experience of a high standard, which can be a source of innovation and a competitive advantage in an environment that is very dynamic like the tourism and hospitality industry (Triatmanto et. al, 2021). Since hotel companies compete in part on quality, it is important to understand how quality signals work in this market in order to make the hospitality industry more competitive and sustainable in the long run.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) make specific reference to the inclusion of people with disabilities in their efforts to advance universal respect for human rights and basic liberties. Goal 10 aims to reduce inequality and promote the social, economic, and political inclusion of all individuals by 2030. Goal 11 aims to make transportation systems accessible and safe, and to provide universal access to public spaces (Open to All: A Survey on Accessibility for Persons With Disabilities in Nepal's Hotels, n.d.). Changing our mindset and comprehending the business case for accessibility remain the greatest obstacles, particularly in the Accommodation Sector (UNWTO, 2019).

3. Methodology

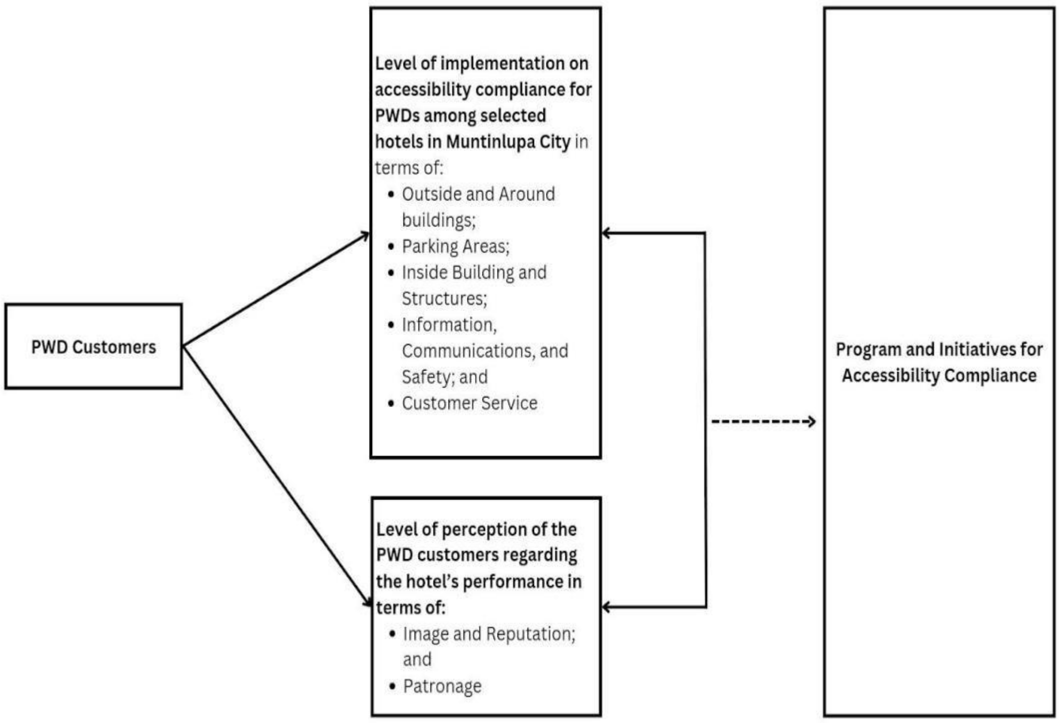


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

The respondents of this study were people with some form of disability who have experienced the service and facilities in the selected hotels in Muntinlupa City and the researcher utilized the total population sampling technique. This is a type of purposive sampling technique where you choose to examine the entire population (i.e., the total population) with a particular set of characteristics (2012 Lund Research Ltd).

Furthermore, this study used the descriptive method of research employing the quantitative approach to uncover patterns and averages, evaluate causal relationships, make predictions, and generalize results to larger groups (Bhandari, 2020) This enabled the researcher to assess the level of implementation on accessibility compliance provided to PWDs by the selected hotel establishments in terms of 1) Outside and Around buildings, 2) Parking Areas, 3) Inside Buildings and Structures, 4) Information, Communications, and Safety and, 5) Customer Service. These variables came from the Batas Pambansa Blg. 344 or the Accessibility Law, UNWTO's Principles of Accessible Tourism, and Universal Design Principles and to test the significant relationship between the level of implementation on accessibility compliance and the level of perception of the PWD customers regarding the hotel's performance among the Selected Hotels in Muntinlupa City in terms of: 1) Image and Reputation; and 2) Patronage.

Combining all the variables and data, the study developed programs or initiatives that can be proposed to improve the compliance of the hotel in accessibility and to enhance access and use of hotel facilities for PWD customers to further improve hotel brand image.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Level of Implementation on Accessibility Compliance for PWDs among Selected Hotels in Muntinlupa City

Factors	**Overall Mean**	**Verbal Interpretation**
Outside and Around buildings	2.35	Partially Implemented
Parking Areas	2.71	Implemented
Inside Building and Structures	2.57	Implemented
Information, Communications and Safety	2.41	Partially Implemented
Customer Service	2.67	Implemented

The result showed that among the 5 factors, "Parking Areas" elicited the highest overall mean of 2.71 (Implemented), which implies that the respondents are most impressed with the implementation of accessibility practices for PWDs in terms of parking areas.

According to the study by Stankova et al. (2021), the accessibility of transportation facilities is the second most significant challenge that persons who are physically disabled face as a barrier. However, service areas, such as parking areas, are better equipped for physically disabled people compared to areas such as bathrooms and elevators, which demonstrates that parking spaces are not only provided for people with disabilities (PWD) but are also conveniently located near the hotel's entrances and marked with the International Symbol of Access (ISA) which is essential for creating a truly accessible and inclusive environment for all guests. In addition to being a legal requirement in most countries, hotels may ensure that people with disabilities can access their amenities without undue physical strain by placing accessible parking places as close as feasible to their entrances.

4.2. Level of Perception of the PWD Customers regarding the Hotel's Performance in terms of Image and Reputation

Indicators	**Weighted Mean**	**Verbal Interpretation**
1. Attractiveness of the hotel due to accessibility features for PWDs	2.33	Below Expectation
2. Knowledge and capabilities of the employees in accommodating PWDs (eg. Employees can do Sign Language).	2.25	Below Expectation
3. Barrier-free design on hotel's amenities for PWD to move independently.	2.25	Below Expectation
4. The hotel's functional attributes for PWDs such as braille, Audio-Visual alarm systems and other assistive technologies to provide accessible information.	2.12	Below Expectation
5. Provided customer service specifically for PWDs	2.54	Meets Expectation
Overall Weighted Mean	**2.30**	**Below Expectation**

As observed, an overall weighted mean of 2.30 corresponds to a verbal interpretation of "Below Expectation," which signified that the PWD customers believed that the hotel's performance in terms of image and reputation does not meet the minimum standards of acceptability. These results indicated that PWD customers negatively perceived the hotel's efficacy in terms of image and reputation.

According to Triatmanto et al. (2020), when an employee or management presents a brand through interactive activities with customers, it changes the perception of the firm's image. In addition, hotels that position themselves as specializing in tourism for people with disabilities are likely to develop a reputation for social responsibility, and this enhanced image is likely to extend to other stakeholders, such as local tourism organizations, community partners, peer-to-peer accommodation networks, and individual hosts (Randle & Dolnicar, 2019). Unfortunately, not all hotels provide amenities for people with disabilities. Even when they say they do, they are frequently insufficient and do not meet the criteria of people with disabilities (PWD). In addition to the physical challenges that disabled visitors experience when staying in hotels, hotel staff members are not adequately equipped or qualified to meet the needs of this group of guests (Liasidou et al., 2021).

1.1. Level of Perception of the PWD Customers regarding the Hotel's Performance in terms of Patronage

Indicators	**Weighted Mean**	**Verbal Interpretation**
1. Loyalty based on customer review and feedback	2.35	Below Expectation
2. Customer Experience evokes gratification to PWD Customers	2.52	Meets Expectation
3. Patronizing the hotel due to its disability-friendly functions and environment	2.40	Below Expectation

4. Belongingness and acceptance felt in the hotel's service	2.58	Meets Expectation
5. Patronizing the hotel due to its pro-social reputation	2.37	Below Expectation
Overall Weighted Mean	**2.44**	**Below Expectation**

As observed, an overall weighted mean of 2.44 corresponds to a verbal interpretation of "Below Expectation," which signified that the PWD customers believed that the hotel's performance in terms of patronage does not meet the minimum standards of acceptability. These findings suggest that PWD customers have an unfavorable perception of the hotel's performance regarding patronage probably because, these hotels need to realize the effect of social inclusion on their image, as well as on their sales.

According to Miethlich and Oldenburg (2019), disabled-friendly hotels realize the loyal patronage of people with disabilities, their families, and their friends. It is feasible for an organization to enhance its number of clients and revenues by reflecting the diversity of the consumer market, which can also contribute to a rise in the company's market share. Because it provides an exciting opportunity to make the ideals of a company evident, social inclusion plays a significant role in developing a powerful brand. It boasts a business's reputation as socially responsible.

4.3. Significant Relationship between the Level of Implementation on Accessibility Compliance for PWDs and the Level of Perception of the PWD Customers regarding the Hotel's Performance

Areas Tested		**r**	**p- value**	**Decision on Ho**	**Interpretation**
Level of Implementation on Accessibility Compliance for PWDs	Level of Perception of the PWD Customers regarding the Hotel's Performance	0.935	.000	Reject H0	Significant, Very High, Positive Correlation

Findings revealed that there was an overall correlation coefficient of 0.935 with a p-value of .000 (.000<.05). Since the p-value of .000 is lesser than the alpha at the .05 level, the null hypothesis was rejected, which means that there was a significant very high and positive correlation between the overall level of implementation on accessibility compliance for PWDs and overall level of perception of the PWD customers regarding the hotel's performance. The positive correlation coefficient indicated that there was a direct relationship between the two variables, which implied that the higher the level of implementation of accessibility practices for PWDs, the more favorable the perception of the respondents regarding the hotel's performance. The lower the level of implementation of the accessibility practices, the more negative their perception of the hotel's performance. Additionally, the degree of correlation was very high. This finding signified that there was a very strong association between the implementation of accessibility practices for PWDs and the perception towards the hotel's performance.

According to Seal and Piramanayagam (2018), a hotel with Universal Design enhances the competitiveness of both tourist destinations and business organizations. In addition, it adds that Universal Design principles can be applied to creating tourism environments and services that provide the basis for a sustainable community and enterprise. Adopting Universal Design enables tourism service providers to broaden their customer base and provide a positive customer experience (Buhalis & Sinarta, 2019).

Findings from research indicated that people with mobility-related disabilities are loyal to organizations that support and are aware of their specific needs, which means that guests with disabilities will return to the same establishment if they are satisfied and supported by the proper equipment. True loyalty is when the visitor has a positive attitude toward the hotel and intends to return to the exact property because it understands and meets their needs. Customer satisfaction directly affects company image and guest loyalty, positively correlated with profitability, increased business, and positive word-of-mouth.

4.4. Significant Difference in the Level of Implementation on Accessibility Compliance for PWDs when grouped according to Type of Disability

<table>
<tr><th>Category</th><th>Type of Disability</th><th>F-value</th><th>p- value</th><th>Interpretation</th></tr>
<tr><td>Outside and Around buildings</td><td rowspan="5">psychosocial disability
disability due to chronic illness
learning disability
mental disability
visual disability
orthopedic disability
communication disability</td><td>1.583</td><td>.174</td><td>Not Significant</td></tr>
<tr><td>Parking Areas</td><td>1.958</td><td>.092</td><td>Not Significant</td></tr>
<tr><td>Inside Building and Structures</td><td>0.975</td><td>.453</td><td>Not Significant</td></tr>
<tr><td>Information and Communications & Safety</td><td>0.678</td><td>.668</td><td>Not Significant</td></tr>
<tr><td>Customer Service</td><td>0.651</td><td>.689</td><td>Not Significant</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Overall Implementation</td><td>1.078</td><td>.390</td><td>Not Significant</td></tr>
</table>

The table presented the significant difference in the level of implementation on accessibility compliance for PWDs when grouped according to type of disability. Apparently, no significant differences were found which implied that the respondents, regardless of their type of disability, have similar assessment regarding the level of implementation on accessibility compliance for PWDs.

4.5. Significant Difference in the Level of Perception of the PWD Customers Regarding the Hotel's Performance when grouped according to Type of Disability

Category	Type of Disability	F-value	p- value	Interpretation
Image and Reputation	psychosocial disability disability due to chronic illness learning disability mental disability visual disability orthopedic disability	0.896	.506	Not Significant
Patronage		1.243	.303	Not Significant
	communication disability			
Overall Implementation		**1.058**	**.402**	**Not Significant**

As shown, no significant differences were found in the level of perception of the PWD customers regarding the hotel's performance which means that type of disability made no significant difference in the level of perception of the PWD customers regarding the hotel's performance. This implied that the respondents, regardless of their type of disability, have similar perception regarding the hotel's performance.

Regardless of the specific type of disability a person may have, they all share the common experience of facing barriers and challenges in accessing the physical and digital environment, transportation, communication, and other areas of daily life. According to Gillovic & McIntosh (2020) ensuring access to travel and tourism opportunities for people living with disability as well as for the entire population requires knowledge and design structures that are inclusive for all citizens. Therefore, it is essential to assess the level of accessibility compliance in a standardized and comprehensive manner that takes into account the needs of all people with disabilities which is the concept of Inclusive Tourism

5. Conclusion

5.1. Conclusion

As inferred in the study, the level of accessibility compliance needs to improve most especially in the outside and around buildings of the hotel as well as in areas of information, communication, and safety. Based on the findings, those that were needed by guests who has orthopedic disability was generally present in the hotels like ramps and handrails as compared to the features needed by the other guests with disabilities that may hinder their decision to visit the hotel which was proved in this study when asked about the relationship of the accessibility compliance and hotel performance in terms of image and patronage.

Furthermore, it was inferred that there was a significantly very high and positive correlation between the level of implementation on accessibility compliance for PWDs and the level of perception of the PWD customers regarding the hotel's performance. This implied that the higher the level of implementation of accessibility practices for PWDs, the more favorable the perception of the respondents regarding the hotel's performance. The lower the level of implementation of the accessibility practices, the more negative their perception towards the hotel's performance.

However, the overall perception of the PWD customers regarding the hotel's performance was Below Expectation, which means that the PWD customers believed that generally, the hotel's performance does not meet the minimum standards of acceptability. This means that there was a need to improve or even develop practices that would promote accessibility. It was shown in this study that the respondents, regardless of their type of disability, had similar assessment regarding the level of implementation on accessibility compliance for PWDs and have similar perception regarding the hotel's performance.

Conducting continuous audits or evaluations of hotels is essential to ensure that they comply with the law and provide accessible accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

Continuous auditing or assessment involves routine compliance checks with hotel accessibility standards. Auditors or assessors can examine hotels' facilities, policies, and procedures to ensure that they comply with the Accessibility Law. These audits may be conducted by government agencies or independent organizations with expertise in accessibility auditing. However, this also demonstrates hotels' dedication to accessibility and inclusivity. By routinely assessing their compliance with accessibility standards, hotels can demonstrate their commitment to providing accessible accommodations for all guests, including those with disabilities.

5.2. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

It is highly recommended that forthcoming researchers employ a meticulous and systematic approach while comparing the degree of implementation of accessibility compliance among hotels rated three to five stars. This will enable them to determine which of the hotels exhibit a high level of compliance with the accessibility criteria mandated by law. The process may entail defining unambiguous standards to determine adherence, executing on-site inspections, and initiating discussions with disabled guests and hotel personnel.

REFERENCES

Abdulaziz, T., Moawad, I. F., Mahmoud, S. A., & Fayyad, S. (2022). Knowledge-Based Prototype for Assessing the Appropriateness of Tourism and Hospitality Services for Accessible Tourism. Journal of Association of Arab Universities for Tourism and Hospitality (JAAUTH) (Print), 0(0), 0. https://doi.org/10.21608/jaauth.2022.128680.1329

Akinci, Z., Çelik, M., & Elinç, H. (2021, December 1). A Study to Determine the Standards of Accessible (Disabled Friendly) Accommodation Enterprises. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/357657226_A_Study_to_Determine_the_Standards_of_Acc essible_Disabled_Friendly_Accommodation_Enterprises_ERISILEBILIR_ENGELLI_DOSTU_KON AKLAMA_ISLETMELERININ_STANDARTLARININ_BELIRLENMESINE_YONELIK_BIR_C ALISMA

Aydogdu, A., Yaşarsoy, E., & Pamukçu, H. (2019). The suitability of disabled friendly holiday accommodation in Turkey: The case of Kastamonu hotels. Journal of Global Business Insights, 5(1), 19–32. https://doi.org/10.5038/2640-6489.5.1.1092

Bauer, I. (2018). When travel is a challenge: Travel medicine and the 'dis-abled' traveller. Travel Medicine and Infectious Disease, 22, 66–72. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmaid.2018.02.001

Borkowski, M., Paslavskyi, M., Теребух, A., & Senkiv, M. (2021, April 30). Accessible tourism for all and its contribution to sustainable development: the experience of the European Union ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351228271_Accessible_tourism_for_all_and_its_con tributio n_to_sustainable_development_experience_of_the_European_Union

Buhalis, D., & Sinarta, Y. (2019). Real-time co-creation and nowness service: lessons from tourism and hospitality. Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 36(5), 563–582.https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2019.1592059

Carrillo, M., & Boujrouf, S. (2020). Turismo accesible para todos. Evaluación del grado de accesibilidad universal de los parques y jardines de Marrakech. PASOS Revista De Turismo Y Patrimonio Cultural. https://doi.org/10.25145/j.pasos.2020.18.004

Chia-Hsin, C. (2020). The Satisfaction Study of People with Disabilities Regarding the Restaurant with Barrier-Free Environment in Taiwan Tourism Area. International Business Research, 13(4), 1. https://doi.org/10.5539/ibr.v13n4p1

Da Silva Campos, A. P. (2019, November 10). ACESSIBILIDADE URBANA: A REALIDADE DOS DEFICIENTES FÍSICOS NA CIDADE DE JUIZ DE FORA. https://broseguini.bonino.com.br/ojs/index.php/CBAS/article/view/126

Ferreira, F., Liberato, D., Liberato, P., & Coentrão, R. (2022). Fostering Accessible Tourism: Stakeholders' perspective in Vila do Conde and Póvoa de Varzim. International Conference on Tourism Research, 15(1), 192–199. https://doi.org/10.34190/ictr.15.1.131

Gillovic, B., & McIntosh, A. (2020). Accessibility and Inclusive Tourism Development: Current State and Future Agenda. Sustainability, 12(22), 9722. https://doi.org/10.3390/su12229722

Gondos, B. (2019),"Equal opportunities for people with reduced mobility in tourism", Civil Szemle, Vol.16 No.2, p.85

Hashemi, M. (2018b). Emergency evacuation of people with disabilities: A survey of drills, simulations, and accessibility. Cogent Engineering, 5(1), 1506304. https://doi.org/10.1080/23311916.2018.1506304

Hwang, J., Kim, J., Lee, J., & Sahito, N. (2020). How to Form Wellbeing Perception and Its Outcomes in the Context of Elderly Tourism: Moderating Role of Tour Guide Services. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 17(3), 1029. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17031029

Irina, R. C. (2018, June 30). THE ACCESSIBILITY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN ROMANIAN TOURISM. Cecilia Irina | Revista De Turism - Studii Si Cercetari in Turism. http://www.revistadeturism.ro/rdt/article/view/401

IRR of BP 344: National Council on Disability Affairs. (n.d.-c). https://www.ncda.gov.ph/disability-laws/implementing-rules-and-regulations-irr/irr-of-bp-344/

Kasimati, E., & Ioakeimidis, P. (2019). Accessible tourism in Greece: What is the current status? DergiPark (Istanbul University). https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/733518

Khalil, N. M., & Fathy, E. (2018). Assessing the Accessibility of Disabled Guests' Facilities for Enhancing Accessible Tourism: Case Study of Five- Star Hotels' Websites in Alexandria. International Journal of Heritage, Tourism, and Hospitality (Print).

Martin-Fuentes, E., Mostafa-Shaalan, S., & Mellinas, J. P. (2021). Accessibility in Inclusive Tourism? Hotels Distributed through Online Channels. Societies, 11(2), 34. https://doi.org/10.3390/soc11020034

McCabe, S. (2019). "Tourism for all?" Considering social tourism: a perspective paper. Tourism Review, 75(1), 61–64. https://doi.org/10.1108/tr-06-2019-0264

McKercher, B., & Darcy, S. (2018). Re-conceptualizing barriers to travel by people with disabilities. Tourism Management Perspectives, 26, 59–66. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2018.01.003

Miethlich, B., & Oldenburg, A. G. (2019). How Social Inclusion Promotes Sales: An Analysis of the Example of Employing People with Disabilities. Journal of Marketing Research & Case Studies, 1–15. https://doi.org/10.5171/2019.463316

Open to All: A Survey on Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities in Nepal's Hotels. (n.d.). ENAT. https://www.accessibletourism.org/?i=enat.en.reports.2252

Qiao, G., Chen, N., Thompson, M., & Xiao, X. (2019). Social tourism for Chinese rural left-Behind children: an instrument for improving their happiness. Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research, 24(5), 468–481.https://doi.org/10.1080/10941665.2019.1588761

RA 7277 – An Act Providing For The Rehabilitation, Self-Development And Self-Reliance Of Disabled Person And Their Integration Into The Mainstream Of Society And For Other Purposes.: National Council on Disability Affairs. (n.d.). https://www.ncda.gov.ph/disability-laws/republic-acts/republic- act-7277/

Rabinowitz, F. (2021). Implementing Promising Community Interventions: Ensuring Access for People with Disabilities, The Community Toolbox, Center for Community Health and Development, University of Kansas, USA. Available from https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/implement/physical-social-environment/housingaccessibility-disabilities/main

Randle, M. J., & Dolnicar, S. (2019). Enabling people with impairments to use Airbnb. Annals of Tourism Research, 76, 278–289. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2019.04.015

Rubio-Escuderos, L., García-Andreu, H., Michopoulou, E., & Buhalis, D. (2021b). Perspectives on experiences of tourists with disabilities: implications for their daily lives and for the tourist industry. Tourism Recreation Research, 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2021.1981071

Seal, P., & Piramanayagam, S. (2018, June 12). A Conceptual Framework for Barrier Free Hotels in Smart Cities. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325711621_A_Conceptual_Framework_for_Barrier_Free_ Hotels_in_Smart_Cities

Stankova, M., Amoiradis, C., Velissariou, E., & Grigoriadou, D. (2021, March 15). Accessible Tourism in Greece: A Satisfaction Survey of Tourists with Disabilities ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/350071244_ACCESSIBLE_TOURISM_IN_GREECE_A_S ATISFACTION_SURVEY_ON_TOURISTS_WITH_DISABILITIES

Swanepoel, L., Spencer, J.P., & Draper, D. (2020). Education and Training for Disability Awareness of Front Line Hospitality Staff in Selected Hotels in the Cape Winelands African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism, and Leisure, 9(4):402-417. https://doi.org/10.46222/ajhtl.19770720-27

Triatmanto, B., Respati, H., & Wahyuni, N. (2021). Towards an understanding of corporate image in the hospitality industry East Java, Indonesia. Heliyon, 7(3), e06404. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e06404

Inclusive hospitality experiences: Perspectives from families with autism spectrum disorder

Pung, Jessica Mei
UniSA Business
University of South Australia

Del Chiappa, Giacomo
Department of Economics and Business
University of Sassari

Atzeni, Marcello
University of Sassari

Abstract:

Since family vacationing is crucial for social bonding, connectedness, and respite from daily routines, more research investigating holiday experiences of families with children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is needed, especially in hospitality contexts. Interviews were conducted with a laddering approach, to understand the current needs of families with children with ASD when selecting and staying at hotels and resorts. The study findings suggest that multiple concrete and abstract attributes, functional and psycho-social consequences, and associated instrumental and terminal values need to be considered for marketing and designing inclusive hospitality infrastructure, services, and operations.

Keywords: Hospitality, Consumer Behaviour, Experiences, Family Tourism, Autism Spectrum Disorder

1. Introduction

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) can involve social, communication and behavioural challenges (Hamed, 2013), and it has witnessed a recent rise in prevalence estimates in APAC countries such as South Korea, Australia and Taiwan (Zeidan et al., 2022). ASD may be a hindering factor for benefitting from activities such as leisure and travel, where unfamiliar spaces might rather represent a challenge (Stacey et al. 2019). While several studies focused on challenges and experiences for families with children with ASD in tourism and air travel contexts, there is a need to consider perspectives in relation to how these families navigate their experiences of hospitality consumption (Freund et al., 2019). Since accessible hospitality firms need to promote and deliver universally designed services within a 'tourism for all' framework, they should be aware of what inclusive hospitality experiences look like for families with children with ASD.

2. Literature Review

Emerging tourism research explored travel and holiday experiences of individuals with ASD, and of families with children diagnosed with ASD (Amet, 2013). They are often characterised by social exclusion fears from both service staff and other travellers, and families express a need for support to reduce challenges and facilitate adaptation (Sedgley et al., 2017). Freund et al. (2019) examined the travel constraints of families with ASD in relation to their intention to travel to accessible accommodation, and found that the main constraints were related to interaction of staff and other guests, and fear of social exclusion. Dietary needs, waiting times, and non-adapted leisure offer were also discussed as constraints which accommodations fail to address (Freund et al., 2019).

To further give voice to these families' perspectives, the present study analyses their ideal experiences in hospitality contexts. As such, the following research questions were developed: What are the characteristics of inclusive hospitality experiences catering for families with children with ASD? What values do families attach to these ideal experiences

3. Methodology

A means-end chains approach was used to understand product/service ideal attributes and relate them to consequences/benefits, and outcomes/values. This research method was considered appropriate for understanding ideal hospitality experiences for families with children with ASD, and associated needs (Zhang et al., 2022). The research involved sixteen in-depth interviews asking participants to discuss their accounts of accommodation selection and stay according to their own and to their child's needs. The interviewees were encouraged to discuss each important accommodation characteristic that would allow the family to enjoy their holiday, as well as attached feelings and values (Kim et al., 2022). The findings presented reflect the views of 11 mothers and 5 fathers (average age = 51) of children with ASD.

4. Results

The interview data was coded through a thematic analysis for identifying patterns, and then into fewer ladders, following a laddering technique. The Ladderux software allowed to generate the hierarchical value map (figure in Appendix 1) illustrating means-end chains and the relationships expressing the cognitive structure of families' choices of accommodation.

As illustrated in (table in Appendix 2), the main concrete attributes that participants discussed were inclusive entertainment service and sensory stimuli modulation, while the main abstract attributes of hospitality businesses were customised service, staff empathy, and staff trained skills. As functional benefits of these ideal attributes, interviewees discussed avoiding children's sensory overload, behavioural crises, and physical dangers. Among psycho-social consequences, participants mentioned children's reduced distress, greater recovery and tranquillity, and parents' respite. As instrumental values, ideal attributes and consequences were mainly related to parents' tranquillity, children's autonomy, and the family's positive experience and satisfaction. The most recurring terminal values for families with children with ASD were feeling serenity, tranquillity, relax, and satisfaction. Moreover, the most recurring means-end chain was found between experiencing less sensory overload and avoiding behavioural crises, where the latter led to the children's recovery and tranquillity, and then to children's reduced distress. The strongest complete chain started with sensory stimuli modulation, which led to avoiding behavioural crisis, resulting in parents' tranquillity, and the whole family's relaxation.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and implications

The research findings confirm the importance of accommodation staff that is trained to be sensitive of disability-related needs (Kim et al., 2012; Poria et al., 2011). The reduction of visual and auditory stimuli plays an important role in facilitating the families' adaptation to the novel environment (Hamed, 2013). Furthermore, inclusive day care and kids' entertainment would provide children with adapted leisure services, and offer parents opportunities for recreational time (Freund et al., 2019). As novel accommodation attributes, ample spaces and secondary areas were identified as allowing children and their families to enjoy quiet respite. The main consequences and values identified in this research suggest that parents would like hospitality establishments to provide a range of amenities and services that allow children with ASD to feel at ease, thus helping recreate the autonomy enjoyed in their home environment. As such, the study participants primarily pursue the terminal values of satisfaction/pleasure, relax, tranquillity and serenity. These values further articulate an ideal stay for families with children with ASD characterised by comfort and relaxation (Sedgley et al., 2017).

The present study focused on the accommodation sector, expanding hospitality management knowledge on preferred hospitality experiences for families with children with ASD and their needs. Appendix 3 presents a conceptual framework of the means-end chain for hospitality experiences for families with children with ASD, based on research results. The study findings also offer practical opportunities for strategic differentiation, as hospitality firms' offers can be positioned into consumer decision sets (Lu et al., 2022): hospitality providers can develop an effective communication strategy that emphasises distinct terminal values and follows the laddering chain, and thus consumers' decision-making logic (Kim et al., 2022). Web pages and digital content of tourism accommodation providers should also be specifically designed to provide information on infrastructure that meets families' preferences. For instance, emphasis could be placed in promoting and providing day care services at the accommodation, together with inclusive recreational activities allowing children with ASD to safely interact with others and relieve parents from pressure.

5.2. Conclusion, Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

The present study contributes to understanding the characteristics and values that parents with children with ASD assign to ideal hospitality experiences. Given that ASD can involve moderate or severe conditions, families with a child diagnosed with ASD do not represent a homogeneous market. Therefore, the present research approach did not aim to provide generalizable findings, but to shed light on the range of ideal attributes of inclusive hospitality experiences. Future studies could employ innovative approaches to further analyse tourism experiences of children and young people with ASD, and to delve into the needs of families with children with ASD, in different tourism and hospitality contexts (e.g. museums, restaurants).

References

Amet, L. (2013). Holiday, what holiday? Vacation experiences of children with autism and their families. *Autism, 3*(3), 123.

Freund, D., Cerdan Chiscano, M., Hernandez-Maskivker, G., Guix, M., Iñesta, A., & Castelló, M. (2019). Enhancing the hospitality customer experience of families with children on the autism spectrum disorder. *International Journal of Tourism Research, 21*, 606-614.

Hamed, H. M. (2013). Tourism and autism: An initiative study for how travel companies can plan tourism trips for autistic people. *American Journal of Tourism Management, 2*(1), 1–14.

Kim, S. (S.), Choe, J. Y. (J.), King, B., Oh, M. (M.), & Otoo, F. E. (2022). Tourist perceptions of local food: A mapping of cultural values. *International Journal of Tourism Research, 24*(1), 1– 17.

Kim, W. G., Stonesifer, H. W., & Han, J. S. (2012). Accommodating the needs of disabled hotel guests: Implications for guests and management. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 31*(4), 1311-1317.

Lu, C. Y., Suhartanto, D. & Chen, B. T. (2022): Exploration of new outdoor leisure activities (glamping) during the post-pandemic era. *Tourism Recreation Research,* DOI: 10.1080/02508281.2022.2111628

Poria, Y., Reichel, A., & Brandt, Y. (2011). Dimensions of hotel experience of people with disabilities: An exploratory study. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 23*(5), 571–591.

Sedgley, D., Pritchard, A., Morgan, N., & Hanna, P. (2017). Tourism and autism: Journeys of mixed emotions. *Annals of Tourism Research, 66*, 14–25.

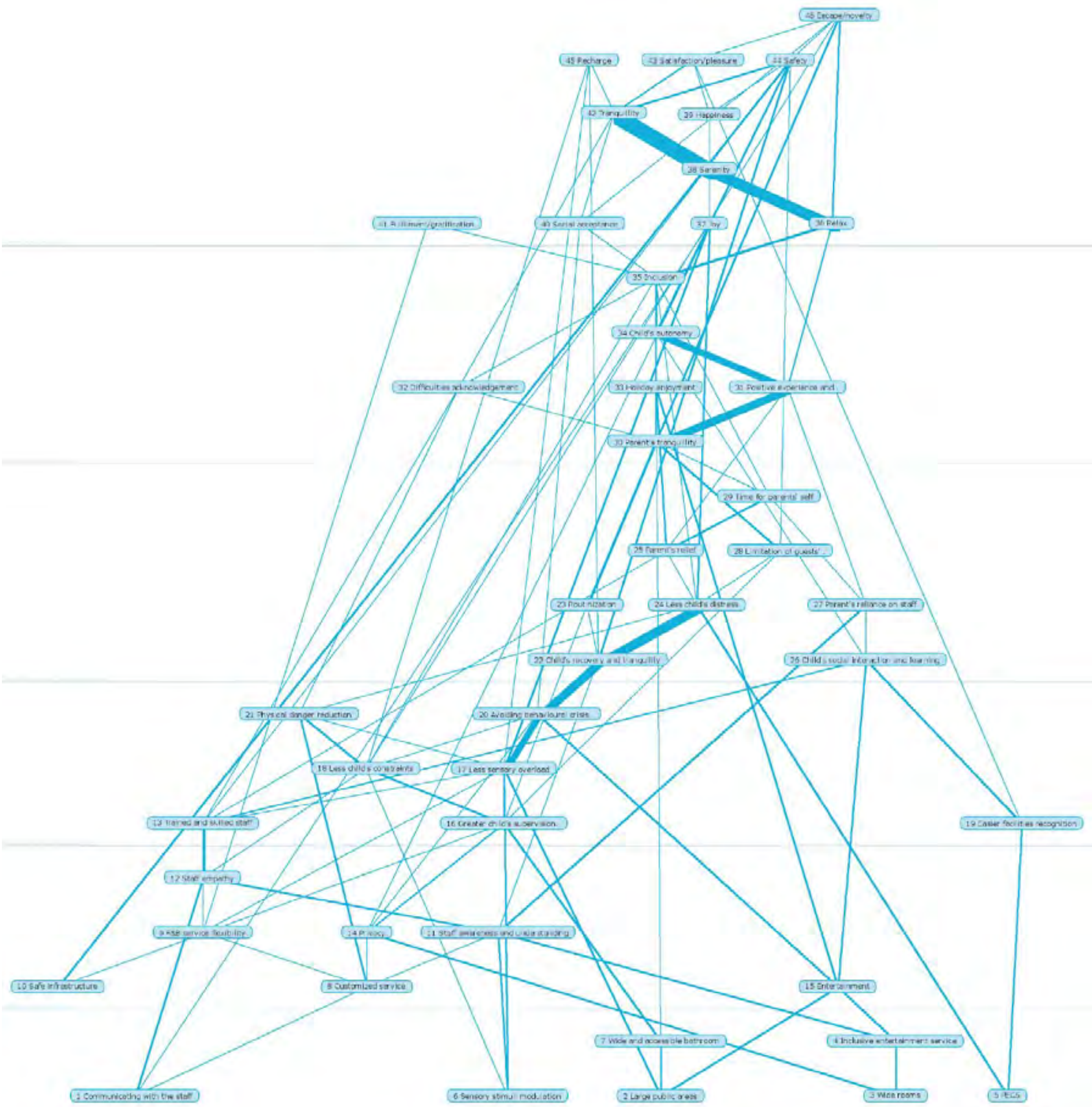
Stacey, T-L., Froude, E. H., Trollor, J., & Foley, K-R. (2019). Leisure participation and satisfaction in autistic adults and neurotypical adults. *Autism, 23*(4), 993-1004.

Zeidan, J., Fombonne, E., Scorah, J., Ibrahim, A., Durkin, M. S., Saxena, S., Yusuf, A., Shih, A., & Elsabbagh, M. (2022). Global prevalence of autism: A systematic review update. *Autism Research, 15*(5), 778–790.

Zhang, E. Y., McKercher, B., & Tse, T. S. M. (2022). Are Luxury Travelers Alike? A Qualitative Means–End Segmentation Approach. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*. https://doi.org/10.1177/10963480221103224

Appendices

Appendix 1: Complete hierarchical value map of ideal hospitality experiences

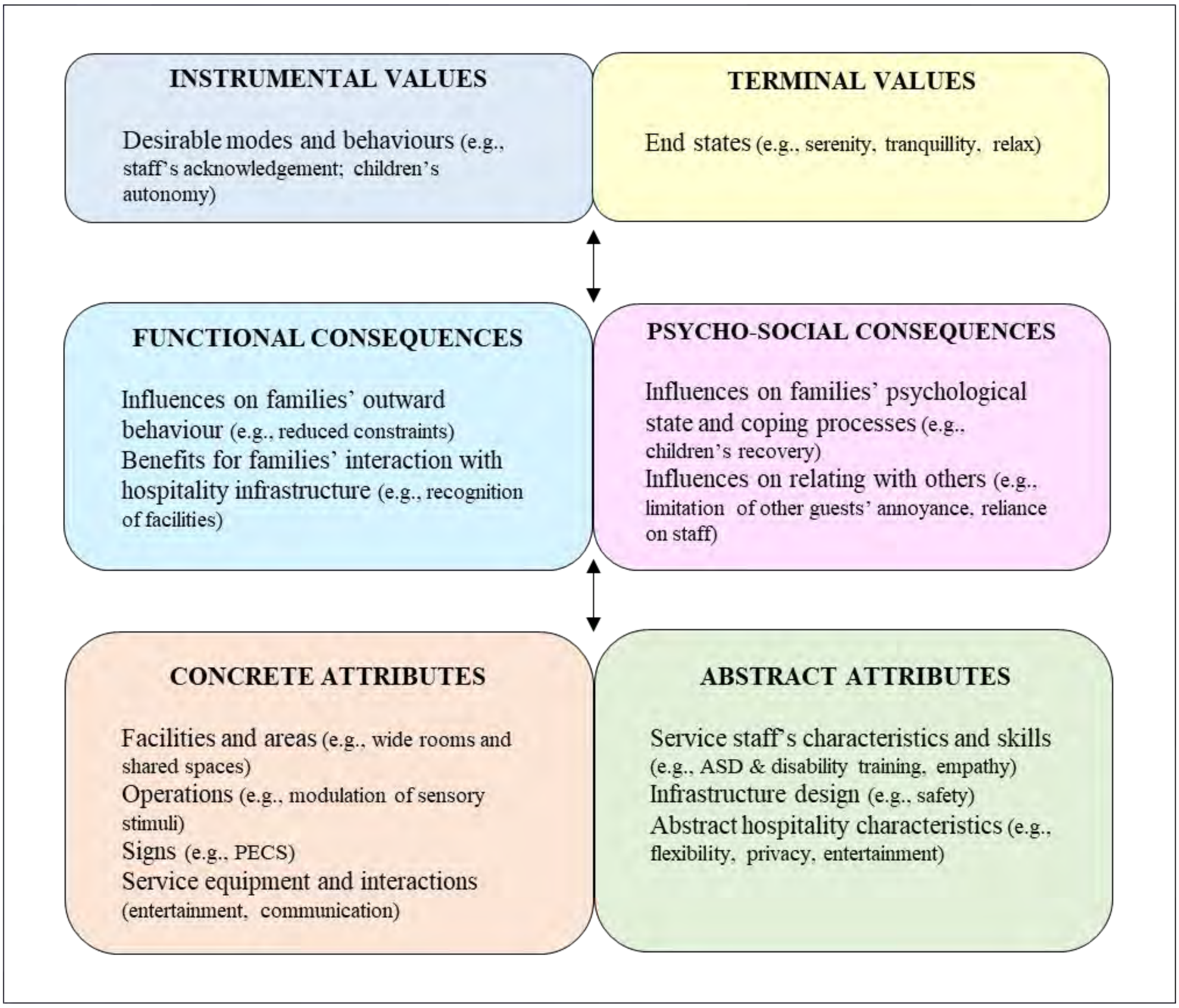

46 Escape/novelty
45 Recharge
43 Satisfaction/pleasure
44 Safety
42 Tranquillity
39 Happiness
38 Serenity
41 Fulfilment/gratification
40 Social acceptance
37 Joy
36 Relax
35 Inclusion
34 Child's autonomy
32 Difficulties acknowledgement
33 Holiday enjoyment
31 Positive experience and...
30 Parent's tranquillity
29 Time for parents' self
25 Parent's relief
28 Limitation of guests' ...
23 Routinization
24 Less child's distress
27 Parent's reliance on staff
22 Child's recovery and tranquillity
26 Child's social interaction and learning
21 Physical danger reduction
20 Avoiding behavioural crisis
18 Less child's constraints
17 Less sensory overload
13 Trained and skilled staff
16 Greater child's supervision
19 Easier facilities recognition
12 Staff empathy
9 F&B service flexibility
14 Privacy
11 Staff awareness and understanding
10 Safe infrastructure
8 Customized service
15 Entertainment
7 Wide and accessible bathroom
4 Inclusive entertainment service
1 Communicating with the staff
6 Sensory stimuli modulation
2 Large public areas
3 Wide rooms
5 PECS

Appendix 2: Attributes, consequences and values associated with ideal hospitality experiences

CODE	CONCRETE ATTRIBUTES	MENTIONS
1	Communicating with the staff	4
2	Large public areas	3
3	Wide rooms	4
4	Inclusive entertainment service	9
5	PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System)	4
6	Sensory stimuli modulation	8
7	Wide and accessible bathroom	4
CODE	**ABSTRACT ATTRIBUTES**	**MENTIONS**
8	Customised service	11
9	F&B service flexibility	6
10	Safe infrastructure	5
11	Staff awareness and understanding	6
12	Staff empathy	8
13	Trained and skilled staff	14
14	Privacy	5
15	Entertainment	5
CODE	**FUNCTIONAL CONSEQUENCES**	**MENTIONS**
16	Greater child's supervision	6
17	Less sensory overload	8
18	Less child's constraints	7
19	Easier facilities' recognition	3
20	Avoiding behavioural crises	13
21	Physical danger reduction	14
CODE	**PSYCHO-SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES**	**MENTIONS**
22	Child's recovery and tranquillity	7
23	Routinization	5
24	Less child's distress	9
25	Parent's relief	6
26	Child's social interaction and learning	4
27	Parent's reliance on staff	4
28	Limitation of guests' annoyance	5
29	Time for parents' self-restoration	7
CODE	**INSTRUMENTAL VALUES**	**MENTIONS**
30	Parents’ tranquillity	14
31	Positive experience and satisfaction	11
32	Difficulties acknowledgement	4
33	Holiday enjoyment	4
34	Child's autonomy	11
35	Inclusion	7

CODE	TERMINAL VALUES	MENTIONS
36	Relax	13
37	Joy	5
38	Serenity	16
39	Happiness	5
40	Social acceptance	5
41	Fulfilment/gratification	3
42	Tranquillity	14
43	Satisfaction/pleasure	12
44	Safety	3
45	Recharge	5
46	Escape/novelty	4

Appendix 3: Conceptual framework of means-end chain for hospitality experiences for families with children with ASD, based on research results.



Exploring the impact of the digital nomadic lifestyle on destination Image and travel intentions: A moderated mediation analysis of perceived risk

Soronzonbold, Oyunzul
College of Hospitality and Tourism
Sejong University

Lee, Seul- Ki
College of Hospitality and Tourism
Sejong University

Abstract:

This study examines how the digital nomadic lifestyle impacts destination image and travel intentions, with perceived risk as a moderating factor. Digital nomads prioritize unique experiences and shape destination perceptions. Through online surveys, we aim to understand their decision-making process, offering insights for destination marketers and policymakers.

Keywords: Digital nomadic lifestyle, destination image, perceived risk, travel to intention

1. Introduction

Digital nomadism represents a modern trend embraced by remote workers who cherish the liberty to travel frequently. Though lacking a universally agreed-upon definition, digital nomads typically share four key traits: leveraging technology, changing locations regularly, embodying a specific motivation or lifestyle, and identifying themselves as part of this lifestyle (Aroles, 2020) They engage in various forms of tourism, including beach, adventure, or city tourism. Unlike traditional tourists, digital nomads tend to interact more with locals and avoid major tourist spots (Chevtaeva, 2021) Extensive literature explores digital nomads, focusing on factors influencing their choice of destination and accommodation, as well as delving into the psychological impact of their nomadic lifestyle (Mancinelli, 2020). Such insights offer valuable guidance for destinations seeking to tap into the growing market of digital nomad tourism.

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the rise of digital nomadism, with remote work opportunities surging and individuals increasingly embracing this lifestyle. (WTO,2022) Consequently, countries and cities worldwide are keen on attracting digital nomads, leading to the implementation of tailored visa programs and infrastructure enhancements. Cities like Bangkok, Barcelona, and Lisbon have revamped their hospitality industries, offering purpose-designed coworking spaces to cater to the needs of digital nomads. However, challenges such as safety concerns, permit issues, and visa regulations persist, prompting governments to introduce new visa options and adapt immigration rules. Estonia's Digital Nomad Visa Program, for instance, allows remote workers to legally reside in the country for up to a year, aiming to stimulate the local economy while meeting the demand for remote work options.

In recent years, digital nomadism has emerged as a lifestyle choice for individuals valuing flexibility, autonomy, and remote work opportunities. Enabled by internet connectivity, digital nomads constitute a growing segment of the global workforce. Understanding the implications of this lifestyle for travel and tourism is crucial. This research aims to explore the relationship between digital nomadism, destination image, and perceived risk. By investigating how digital nomads perceive and interact with potential travel destinations, the study seeks to shed light on the factors shaping destination image within the context of digital nomadism. Moreover, it aims to examine the influence of perceived risk on the travel decisions and intentions of digital nomadic travelers. Through these analyses, the study deepens our understanding of the relationship between digital nomadism and travel behavior, providing valuable insights for destination marketers, tourism policymakers, and industry stakeholders. Emphasizing the role of value in travelers' decision-making processes, the findings underscore the importance of developing segment-based strategies for evaluating locations, thereby enabling management to design competitive marketing strategies and build a comprehensive database tailored to the needs of digital nomadic travelers.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Digital nomadic lifestyle

Studies indicate that the digital nomadic lifestyle, characterized by remote work, flexibility, and a focus on experiences, influences travel behavior (Spinuzzi, 2012; Tomkins & Green, 2018). Digital nomads often seek destinations that align with their values, such as access to coworking spaces, a vibrant local culture, and reliable digital infrastructure (Sharma & Alampay, 2018). The rise of digital nomadism has implications for destination branding (Walters, 2019). Destinations that successfully align with the values and needs of digital nomads are likely to enhance their brand image among this specific demographic, influencing how they are perceived as desirable places to visit and work. Lifestyle shows significant results and can affect Destination image (Wiyanti& Hanfan, 2022) and (Fitria, 2018).

2.2 Destination image

Baloglu and McCleary (1999) conducted a seminal study exploring the relationship between destination image and travel intentions. Their findings revealed a strong positive correlation between a favorable destination image and the likelihood of individuals expressing an intention to visit that destination.

Grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which posits that attitudes influence behavioral intentions, the literature consistently underscores the pivotal position of destination image as a major determinant of individuals' travel intentions (Pike & Ryan, 2004).

Hypothesis 1: The Digital Nomadic Lifestyle has a significant main effect on Destination Image.

2.3 Intention to travel & Decision process

Rooted in the Protection Motivation Theory (Rogers, 1975), which associates perceived risk with protection motivation, the literature suggests that individuals' travel intentions may be intricately tied to how perceived risk interacts with their perception of a destination (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998).

Digital nomads often seek destinations with coworking spaces and collaborative environments (Germann Molz, 2013). The availability of such infrastructure can positively influence the intention to visit, as individuals prioritize destinations that support their work and lifestyle requirements (Spinuzzi, 2012).

Hypothesis 2 : Destination Image has a significant positive impact on Intention to Travel

2.4 Perceived risk

Digital nomadic individuals, who often value flexibility and unique experiences, are likely to have a positive impact on how they perceive travel destinations. A positive destination image is expected to influence the intention to travel. Digital nomads, who value unique and appealing destinations, are likely to express a stronger intention to travel to places with a positive image.

The moderation effect of perceived risk is expected to be significant. Higher perceived risk may weaken the positive relationship between destination image and intention to travel. Digital nomads, despite a positive destination image, might be less willing to travel if they perceive higher risks associated with the destination.

Hypothesis 3 : Perceived Risk A Moderated Mediation of the relationship between Destination Image and Intention to Travel.

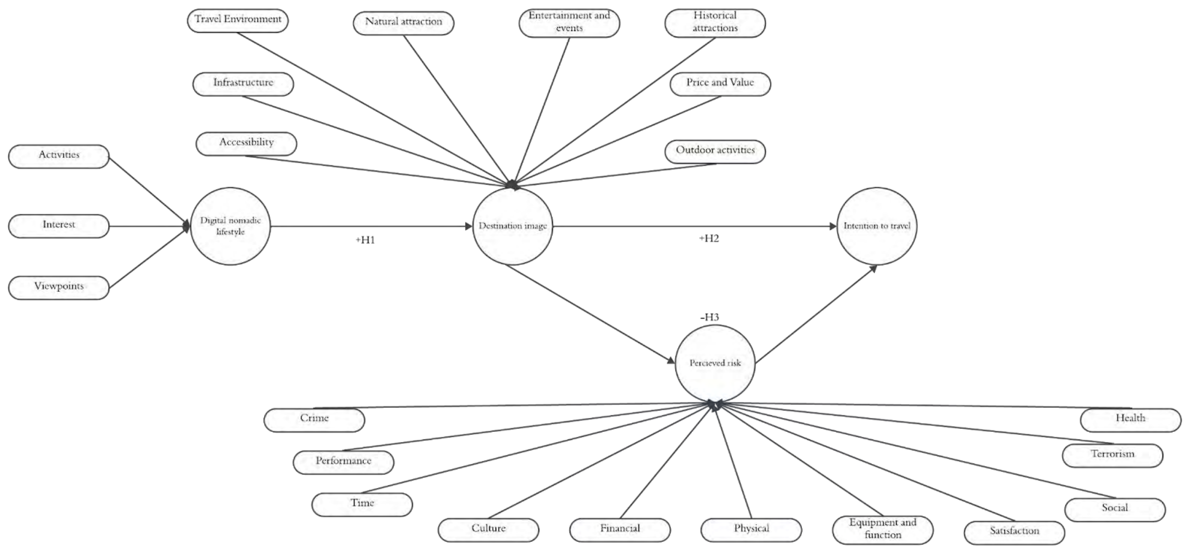


Figure 1: Extended Proposed Model

3. Methodology

2.1. Measurement

This study adopts a quantitative research design, employing surveys and structured questionnaires to collect numerical data. The target participants are digital nomadic travelers actively engaged in remote work. Data collection will rely on surveys conducted among members of nomadlist.com, a platform facilitating remote work worldwide. Nomad List, launched in July 2014, quickly gained popularity among digital nomads and remote workers, providing valuable information on internet speed and cost of living in various cities. With over 140 million visits since its inception, Nomad List has significantly influenced the landscape of digital nomadism and location-independent work.

In collecting data from respondents, will use a questionnaire. The online questionnaire contained (Kotler, Armstrong, 2017) 3 statements describing the research variables in the Digital Nomadic lifestyle, 8 variables describing (Pullman,2007) Destination image, and 11 items included in Perceived risk and intention to visit. The measurements will apply in this study using a seven-point Likert Scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to agree (7) strongly agree.

To analyze the role of the Digital Nomadic lifestyle in enhancing the intention to visit through Destination image, this study employs Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). PLS-SEM is a composite-based method used for estimating structural equation models, providing a robust analytical approach for examining complex relationships within the data.

4. Expected results

This study contributes to a broader understanding of the decision-making process of digital nomadic travelers, shedding light on the interplay between the digital nomadic lifestyle, destination image, perceived risk, and travel intentions. By refining hypotheses and focusing on perceived risk as a moderator, the study provides a more targeted investigation into the factors influencing travel decisions in this specific context. The impact of a positive destination image on travel intentions may vary based on the level of perceived risk, with higher perceived risk potentially reducing the strength of the relationship between destination image and travel intentions. Destination management organizations can leverage the insights gained from the study to enhance destination appeal by implementing measures to address concerns and enhance the overall image of the destination.

4.1 Respondents profile
MBO Partners found that presently, approximately 4.8 million self-employed individuals identify themselves as digital nomads within the United States. Considering that the U.S. population is around 330 million, this suggests that about 1.5% of the population identifies as digital nomads. Extrapolating this percentage to the global population, they estimate that there could be approximately 100 million digital nomads worldwide. (Nomad List, 2024).

The survey will be conducted through the digital nomadic hub site, targeting individuals who are already registered members of digitalnomadic.com. With an existing user base of 35,000 active members. As a paid membership, it provides a means to support the development of city rankings and data on the main site, aiding individuals in discovering suitable destinations to explore.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and implications
This study delves into the impact of the digital nomadic lifestyle on destination image and travel intentions, with a particular emphasis on examining the role of perceived risk as a moderating factor. The findings of this research contribute to both academic understanding and practical implications within the field of tourism and hospitality. The literature review highlighted several relevant studies that form the foundation for understanding digital nomadism, destination image, perceived risk, and travel intentions. Notably, research by Baloglu and McCleary (1999) established a strong positive correlation between destination image and travel intentions. Similarly, studies by Spinuzzi (2012), Sharma and Alampay (2018), and Walters (2019) have emphasized the influence of the digital nomadic lifestyle on travel behavior and destination branding. These studies collectively underscore the

importance of considering the unique work and lifestyle preferences of digital nomads in destination marketing and management strategies. This study extends previous research by specifically focusing on the relationship between the digital nomadic lifestyle, destination image, perceived risk, and travel intentions. Through its use of moderated mediation analysis, the study provides a nuanced understanding of how perceived risk moderates the relationship between destination image and travel intentions among digital nomads. The findings of this study offer valuable insights for destination marketers, tourism policymakers, and industry stakeholders. Recognizing the influence of the digital nomadic lifestyle on destination image and travel intentions, destination management organizations can tailor their marketing strategies to better appeal to this growing segment of travelers. Additionally, understanding the moderating role of perceived risk allows destinations to address concerns and implement measures to enhance the overall image of the destination, thereby attracting more digital nomadic visitors.

5.2. Conclusion

This study underscores the significance of digital nomadism in shaping destination image and travel behavior. By aligning with the needs and preferences of digital nomads, destinations can capitalize on this growing market segment and position themselves as attractive locations for remote work and leisure. Continued research in this area is essential to adapt to the evolving needs of modern travelers and ensure the sustainability of destination development efforts.

5.3. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

It is essential to acknowledge the limitations of this study. Firstly, the data collection method relied on surveys conducted among members of nomadlist.com, which may introduce selection bias and limit the generalizability of the findings. Secondly, the digital nomadic lifestyle is dynamic, and preferences may evolve. The study may capture a snapshot of preferences; the use of cross-sectional data precludes establishing causality between the variables examined. Future studies could address these limitations by employing diverse data collection methods and longitudinal designs. While this study provides valuable insights, there are several avenues for future research. Firstly, exploring the role of other potential moderators, such as cultural factors or socioeconomic backgrounds, could further enrich our understanding of the decision-making processes of digital nomadic travelers. Additionally, longitudinal studies could examine how the perceptions and behaviors of digital nomads evolve, especially in response to external factors such as global events or technological advancements.

REFERENCES

Adam, I. (2015). *Backpackers' Risk Perceptions and Risk Reduction Strategies in Ghana.* Tourism Management, 49, 99-108.

Amir, A. F., Ismail, M. N. I., & See, T. P. (2015). *Sustainable Tourist Environment: Perception of International Women Travelers on Safety and Security in Kuala Lumpur.* Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 168, 123–133.

Baloglu, S., & McCleary, K. W. (1999). *A model of destination image formation. Annals of Tourism Research,* 26(4), 868-897.

Bauer, R. A. (1960). *The Effect of Risk Perceptions on Tourists' Revisit Intentions. European Journal of Business and Management,* 7(2), 36-44.

Bielen, F., & Sempels, C. (2003, June). *Critical analysis of the dimensionality of the concept of intangibility: An empirical study.* Paper presented at the Acte de l'AMA Sersig Res Conference, Reims, France.

Boo, S., & Gu, H. (2010). *Risk perception of mega events. Journal of Sport & Tourism,* 15(2), 139–161.
Brooker, G. (1984). *An Assessment of an Expanded Measure of Perceived Risk, Advances in Consumer Research,* 11, 439-441.

Campos-Soria, J.A., Inchausti-Sintes, F., & Eugenio-Martín, J.L. (2015). *Understanding touristsı´ economizing strategies during the global economic crisis. Tour. Manage.* 48, 164–173

Cheron, E. J., & Ritchie, J. R. B. (1982). *Leisure activities and perceived risk. Journal of Leisure Research*, 14, 139–154.

Chew, E. Y. T., & Jahari, S. A. (2014). *Destination image as a mediator between perceived risks and revisit intention: A case of post-disaster Japan. Tourism Management, 40(0), 382-393.*

Chowdhury, J. McLeod, V. Gillet, & P. Willet (Eds.), *Transforming digital worlds* (pp. 207–217).

Consumer behaviour as a risk taking. In R. S. Hancock (Ed.), *Dynamic marketing for a changing world* (pp. 389-398). Chicago: American Marketing Association.

Çetinsöz, B., & Ege, Z. (2013). *Impacts of perceived risks on tourists' revisit intentions. Anatolia An International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 24(2),173–187.

Deng & Ritchie, B.W (2016). *International university students' travel risk perceptions: an exploratory study, Current Issues in Tourism,* 1-19.

Dickson, T., & Dolnicar, S. (2004). *No risk, no fun - the role of perceived risk in adventure tourism, CD Proceedings of the 13th International Research Conference of the Council of Australian University Tourism and Hospitality Education* (CAUTHE 2004).

Vagena, A. (2021). *Digital Nomads and Tourism Industry.* Academia Letters, Article 765.
Esther Martı´nez-Garciaa, Josep M, Rayab (2008) *Length of stay for low-cost tourism, Tourism management 29*, 1064-1075

Eric S. W. Chan* and Simon C. K. Wong, 2005, Hotel selection: When price is not the issue.
Fleischer, A., & Pizam, A. (2002). *Tourism constraints among Israeli seniors. Ann.Tour. Res.* 29 (1), 106–123.

Germann Molz, J. (2013). *The commodification of place: a critical examination of its implications for leisure travel. Journal of Consumer Culture,* 13(3), 245-264.

Jeng, J., Fesenmaier, D.R., 2002. *Conceptualizing the travel decision-making hierarchy: a review of recent developments. Tour.* Anal. 7 https://doi.org/10.3727/ 108354202108749925

Jialiang Gao, Peng Peng, Yang Xu, *Towards travel recommendation interpretability: Disentangling tourist decision-making process via knowledge graph,* 2023. Information processing and management 60, 103369

Jin Young Chung,Yoon-Kyung Choi,Byong-Kook Yoo &Soon-Hong Kim, *Bleisure tourism experience chain: implications for destination marketing*, 2020. Lewis, ref. 9 above.

Moutinho, L. (1987). *Consumer Behavior in Tourism. European Journal of Marketing.* 21(10), 3-44. Moreira, P. (2004).

Nash, C., Jarrahi, M. H., Sutherland, W., & Phillips, G. (2018). *Digital Nomads beyond the buzzword: Defining digital nomadic work and use of digital technologies*.

Nik Hashim, N.A.A., Ritchie, B.W. & Tkaczynski, A. (2017). *The Determinants Of Tourist Travel Intention In Malaysia: The Role Of Perceived Risk And Destination Image.*

1st Connect-Us Conference (CuC 2017).*Sustainable Society Development: Human,* Environmental and Economic Vitality,78-82 Noh, J (2006).

Olga Hannonen, Teresa Aguiar Quintana, Xinran Y. Lehto (2023), *A supplier side view of digital nomadism: The case of destination Gran Canaria,* Tourism Management 97, 104744

Pike, S., & Ryan, C. (2004). *Destination positioning analysis through a comparison of cognitive, affective, and conative perceptions.* Journal of Travel Research, 42(4), 333-342.

Rivers, M. J., Toh, R. S. and Alaoui, M. (1991) *'Frequent-stayer Programmes: The Demographic, Behavioural, and Attitudinal Characteristics of Hotel Steady Sleepers'*, Journal of Travel Research 30(2): 41–5.

Rogers, R. W. (1975). *A protection motivation theory of fear appeals and attitude change.* Journal of Psychology, 91(1), 93-114.

Sharma, S., & Alampay, E. (2018). *Going remote: understanding digital nomads in Southeast Asia.* Tourism Recreation Research, 43(3), 309-321.
Baloglu, S., & McCleary, K. W. (1999). *A model of destination image formation.* Annals of Tourism Research, 26(4), 868-897.

Germann Molz, J. (2013). *The commodification of place: a critical examination of its implications for leisure travel*. Journal of Consumer Culture, 13(3), 245-264.

Pike, S., & Ryan, C. (2004). *Destination positioning analysis through a comparison of cognitive, affective, and conative perceptions. Journal of Travel Research*, 42(4), 333-342.

Rogers, R. W. (1975). *A protection motivation theory of fear appeals and attitude change.* Journal of Psychology, 91(1), 93-114.

Sharma, S., & Alampay, E. (2018). *Going remote: understanding digital nomads in Southeast Asia. Tourism Recreation Research,* 43(3), 309-321.

Spinuzzi, C. (2012). Working alone together: *Coworking as emergent collaborative activity. Journal of Business and Technical Communication,* 26(4), 399-441.

Tomkins, L., & Green, R. (2018). *Digital nomads: In search of a home.* Annals of Leisure Research, 21(2), 232-250.

Walters, G. (2019). *Nomadland: The burgeoning digital nomad lifestyl*e. Journal of Tourism Futures, 5(1), 72-80.

Sustainable farm-to-table dining as a travel motivator in the Philippines

Catubig, Patrick Allen
School of Culinary Management
Treston International College

Morcilla, Angel Louise
School of Culinary Management
Treston International College

Tolentino, Francis
School of Culinary Management
Treston International College

Buela, Jazzy
School of Culinary Management
Treston International College

Abstract:
This study aimed to determine the perceptions of food professionals concerning the sustainable farm-to-table movement and how it can be used as a travel motivator for customers in the Philippine setting. After thorough analysis, the researchers concluded that farm-to-table refers to any food establishments that directly sources their ingredients from a food source; it can either be farms, vineyards, gardens, and/or orchards. The study findings revealed that the farm-to-table movement not only supports sustainable practices but also aligns with customers' preferences, making it a marketable approach.

Keywords: Farm-to-table, Sustainability, Travel Motivator, Food Tourism

1. Introduction

The issue of sustainability in food consumption has become a pressing concern globally in recent times. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP, 2020), approximately 1.3 to 1.5 billion tonnes of food, constituting nearly one-third of the world's total food production, went to waste in 2020. Notably, restaurants are recognized as significant contributors to the escalating problem of food wastage, with their impact intensifying over the years. As the issue of food wastage becomes more critical, it has become an eye-opener for restaurants to shift and plot a more sustainable game plan when it comes to their food preparation and ~~to~~ the food that they serve. According to Jacob (2018), sustainable food refers to the production or cooking of food in establishments that involves protecting the environment and at the same time reducing the loss of natural resources without any changes in the quality of the food served to consumers.

In light of this issue, emerges as a practical sustainability approach that restaurants can adopt to address the challenges of food waste. Farm-to-table, similarly farm-to-fork, can be described as a social movement where restaurants source their ingredients from local farms, usually through direct acquisition from a farmer. With farm-to-table, people get to know where their meal is directly sourced from, customers can feel confident in knowing that the ingredients are healthier as it is organically sourced and natural. Moreover, it gives tourist a unique travel and dining experience in an agricultural or conventional setting. Furthermore, Farm-to-table restaurants advocate for locally sourced food that is seasonal, fresh, and organically produced (Eco Caters, 2018).

The farm-to-table movement has slowly and discreetly impacted the Philippines positively. As years progressed there is an increase and slight change in the demand of the Filipinos when it comes to consuming food. The fast-paced modern lifestyles have driven consumers towards dining out more frequently and exploring the latest food trends, with the farm-to-table movement emerging as one of the popular choices.

To better understand and see the bigger picture of the farm-to-table concept in the restaurant industry, the researchers aimed to focus on assessing how farm-to-table works in alleviating the challenges of food sustainability in the Philippines. Moreover, the study sought to uncover the potential of the farm-to-table approach to entice a broad range of customers, comprising tourists, travelers, and citizens alike, to patronize restaurants that feature farm-sourced menu offerings.

Statement of the Problem:

1. What are the qualifications needed to be classified as a farm-to-table dining establishment?
2. What are the perceptions of food professionals such as established chefs, restaurateurs, and food managers towards the farm-to-table movement in the Philippines?
3. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:
    a. Age;
    b. Socio-economic status; and
    c. Current city of residence
4. What are the motivations of customers towards visiting farm-to-table restaurants in the Philippines?
5. What is the current state of farm-to-table in the Philippines?
6. How can farm-to-table restaurants improve food sustainability?
7. How can a farm-to-table concept contribute to SDG 12?

Research Objectives

1. To know the qualifications for a food establishment to be classified as a farm-to-table dining.

2. To determine the perception of food professionals such as established chefs, restaurateurs, and food managers towards the farm-to-table movement in the Philippines.

3. To determine the demographic profile of the respondents.

4. To determine the motivations of customers or respondents towards sustainable culinary practices in the farm-to-table movement in the Philippines.

5. To investigate the current state of the farm-to-table movement in the Philippines.

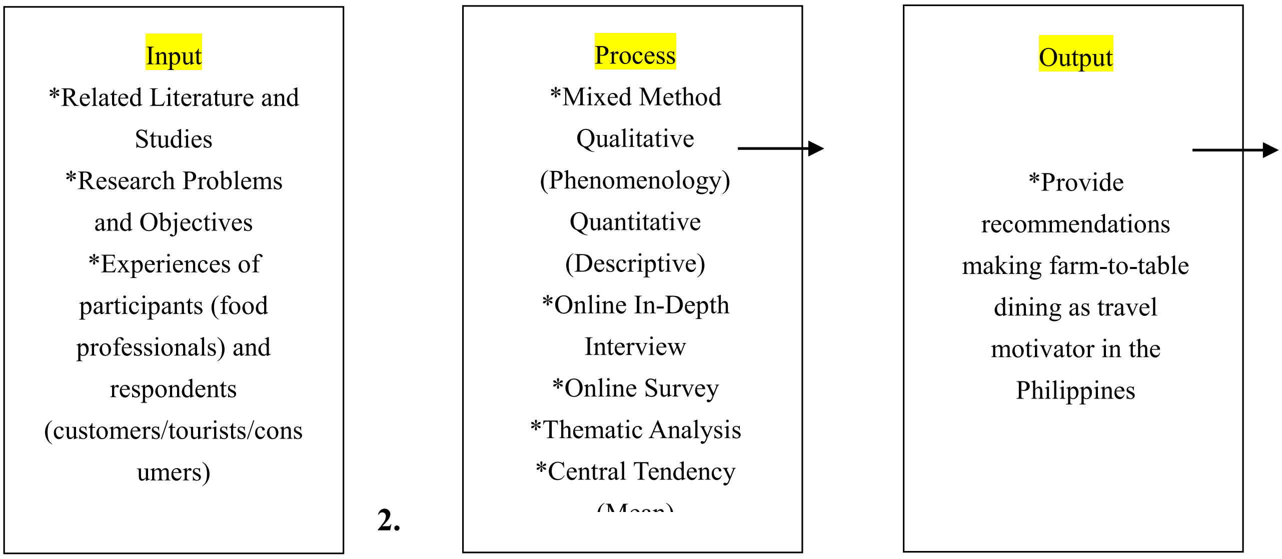
6. To determine the role of farm-to-table food establishments in improving food sustainability in the Philippines.

7. To identify the contribution of farm-to-table to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 12:

Responsible Consumption and Production in practicing food sustainability in the restaurant industry in the Philippines.

8. To provide recommendations for making farm-to-table dining a travel motivator in the Philippines.

Conceptual Framework



2. Literature Review

2.1. Defining Farm-to-Table Movement
Watson (2021) states that many people think differently about the farm-to-table movement in restaurants. For this study, Farm-to-Table shall henceforth be defined as any food served that comes ~~came~~ directly from a specific farm, without going through the store, market, or distributor along the way. "Locally sourced", "farm-fresh", and "farm-to-fork" are some of the words that can be used interchangeably for the farm-to-table movement. The use of the farm-to-table movement emphasizes a direct relationship between the farm and the restaurant. This relationship brings mutual benefits between the restaurants and the farmers as it allows them to maximize their profit compared to what they would typically earn through traditional market channels.

2.2. Sustainable Farm-to-table Movement as Food Tourism
An article written by Ecotourism World (2020) stated that gastronomy tourism as defined by The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), is a "type of tourism activity which is characterized by the visitors' experience linked with food and related products and activities while traveling. Along with authentic, traditional, and/or innovative culinary experiences, Gastronomy Tourism may also involve other related activities such as visiting the local producers, participating in food festivals, and attending cooking classes." Gastronomy tourism, or food tourism, is simply the practice of touring for culinary, or food experiences unique to the destination, region, or area. Gastronomy tourism involves the practice of

actively working to avoid the depletion of natural resources while enjoying localized culinary delights in a sustainable manner. There are several ways that gastro tourists can engage sustainably. One could consider that sustainable gastronomy tourism has a focus on the utilization of locally grown produce which is all the better if the produce is organic or somehow otherwise made or caught locally or prepared traditionally.

2.3 Farm-to-Table Movement in Europe

The EU is working to change the way food is prepared and eaten in Europe in order to decrease the environmental impact of food chains, enhance their courage in the face of crisis, and ensure that good inexpensive food is available to the present and future generations. In May 2020, the European Commission unveiled the “farm to fork” approach as one of the European Green Deal’s core measures. Promoting the attainment of climate environmental stability by 2050, the policy aims to transition the current EU food system to a sustainable solution. While food security and safety remain a top priority, the core measures’ main goals are: 1) within planetary boundaries, ensure adequate, affordable, and nutritious food; 2) reduce pesticide and fertilizer consumption, as well as antimicrobial sales by half, and increase the amount of organic farmland; 3) encourage people to eat more sustainably and eat healthier diets; 4) food waste and loss are reduced; 5) defend the supply chain from food safety issues; and 6) ensure the welfare of animals. Pesticide use will be decreased by half by 2030.

2.4 Combing Al-Fresco and Farm-to-table Dining

Greer (n.d) mentioned that farm-to-table has taken a lot of new meanings in recent years. It can include things like restaurants directly sourcing from local farms, schools coordinating with nearby farms, and the like. However, farm-to-table solely means consuming food grown and prepared directly from the food source where they were produced. In connection with combining alfresco and farm-to-table dining, ideally, the goal is to create a farm-to-table setup that allows for the consumption of locally sourced food outdoors. Eating food outdoors connects customers with the farm and the farm-grown food providing a new gustatory experience.

2.4 Farm-to-Table Movement in the Philippines

Ernest Escaler is the founder of organic foods company Gourmet Farms and Coffee and Cafe, chair of the Asian Cultural Council (ACC) Philippines Foundation, and board member of the Asian Cultural Council. In 1986, when California cuisine was the rage in America, Escaler decided to build up the country’s first organic farm in Silang, Cavite. A two-hectare orchid farm was converted into a sustainable organic vegetable farm. Around 2012, the farm-to-table movement gained hold in the Philippines as the country’s strong economic growth brought prosperity and busier lifestyles, encouraging more people to dine out and seek out the latest food trends. Several farm-to-table restaurants recently opened in Makati, Ortigas, and Bonifacio Global City, carving out a position in the fast-growing foodservice industry.

2.5 Millennial Preference

Costin (n.d) defined Millennials as those who were born roughly between the years 1981 and 1994, or those who are currently aged between 25-39 years old. In terms of preference and spending habits, millennials consider social responsibility and environmental friendliness when making their decisions when buying products and services. Millennials let their instincts decide for them however, their choices can also be influenced by their surroundings particularly by their peers. Millennials also prefer creating and having personal connections with those who offer the products/services they patronize, and lean towards those who already have their trust, and have proven their authenticity to the consumer. Simply put, millennials often choose products that have already proven its worth and value to them.

2.6 Gen Z Preference
According to Kasasa (2020), Gen Z is the generation born between 1997 and 2015 and is currently aged between 8-23 years old. Petro (2021) stated that Generation Z is now becoming open-minded when it comes to shopping and is willing to spend most of their time and money on sustainable products. Also, Generation Z's personal decisions are most likely easily influenced based on what they witness as norms of the society, as well as its environmental involvement. In addition, Generation Z consumers tend to patronize products if they see the brands ensuring consumer and employee safety. The purchasing power of Generation Z is high. Gen Zers are also easily influenced by the environment, especially by the current trends on social media.

2.7 Contribution of the Farm-to-Table Movement in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production
According to Hearthstone Kitchen & Cellar (2018), the farm-to-table movement has had a significant impact on the restaurant and hospitality industry about how food is sourced and prepared. Locally sourced produce not only ensures freshness and superior flavour but also provides vital support to the local farming community. The farm-to-table movement may contribute to the environment when especially when consumers patronized farm-to-table restaurant. Through this, the consumers can also help the environment. Local foods are sourced within the community, less energy is used and less emissions are emitted during the delivery of the ingredients to the restaurant. Furthermore, consumers can support morally responsible farming practices like free-range meat, non-GMO crops, and organic farming when they know where their food comes from. This is an excellent opportunity to put money to good use by supporting organizations that care about and encourage other local farms to adapt and continue these practices (Hearthstone Kitchen & Cellar, 2018).

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design
The researchers used a mixed method which combines the two methods in conducting a research study, particularly the Quantitative and Qualitative Methods. Under the qualitative method, the researcher used the phenomenological approach to determine the commonality of the opinions and responses of chefs, restaurateurs, and restaurant managers with regards to sustainable farm-to-table dining as a travel motivator in the Philippines. Under the quantitative method, the researchers made use of a descriptive approach to describe the motivations and attitudes of possible respondents towards the phenomena of farm-to-table dining.

3.2 Sample and Sampling Technique
The researchers made use of purposive sampling in the form of a non-probability sampling technique. On the other hand, in determining the researchers' sample size, the researcher utilized Slovin's formula to calculate the sample size (n), given the population size (N), and the margin of error (e). In the Philippines, there are roughly 43 million Gen Z and 25 million Millennials according to the Philippine Statistical Authority (2020). The researchers used a 95% Confidence level and 5% margin of error for both age groups. After thorough

computation, the total sample size needed for the study was 770-800, 385-400 for possible Millennial customers/tourists/consumers and 385-400 for possible Gen Z customers/tourists/consumers.

3.3 Procedures for Data Collection

After the questionnaires were set and validated, the researchers started conducting both in-depth interviews and survey questionnaires. However, due to time restrictions while the study is being conducted, the researchers gathered their data through purposefully selected participants and respondents via social media and digital survey platforms. The process of interviewing food professionals was done through chat interview, audio call, or video call via Zoom.

3.4 Procedures for Data Analysis

The researchers used thematic analysis in analysing the qualitative data gathered from in-depth interviews. On the other hand, the researchers used a central tendency in analysing and interpreting the data gathered from online questionnaires.

3.5 Evaluation and Scoring

The following was the system of evaluation and scoring used by the researcher for quantitative data:

Assigned Points	Range	Categorical Responses
4	3.26 – 4.00	Strongly Agree
3	2.51 – 3.25	Agree
2	1.76 – 3.24	Disagree
1	1.00 – 1.75	Strongly Disagree

4. Results

4.1. Thematic Analysis

Theme 1: Concept of Farm-to-Table

To support the theme, here were some critical points the researchers analysed from the transcript of interview:

- Directly from a food source.
- Locally and ethically sourced ingredients from farms, gardens, orchards and vineyards.
- Ensuring quality standard of ingredients due to its freshness.
- Sustainable way of preparing and consuming food.

Furthermore, here were other significant statements food professionals have shared:

"Serving what you have harvested but for me farm-to-table is more than that, it involves the community", "basically you get the ingredients from farmers removing the middleman, the retailers, and wholesalers ensuring the quality standard ingredients"

Theme 2: Dilemma in having a standard operating procedure in Farm-to-Table movement

To support the theme, here were some critical points the researchers analysed from the transcript of interview:

- It will be better if no standard operating procedures are created and followed.
- Having a standard operating procedure might contradict the idea of farm-to-table because it will "policize", create guidelines, and eventually monopolize the concept of farm-to-table.
- It will cost a lot of investment particularly in getting necessary requirements (HACCP certification, Servsafe, and Organic Certification).
- Small-mid scale farm-to-table restaurants may not fully benefit if the movement itself will be "policized".
- Reputable and big food establishments that currently practice the movement might sustain if standard operating procedures are to be implemented.

Furthermore, here were other significant statements food professionals have shared:

"It's okay for me if there are no standard operating procedures to be followed, honestly if you have a standard, it becomes a deterrent especially for small to mid-scale restaurants."

Theme 3: Emerging of Farm-to-Table in Restaurants

To support the theme here were some significant statements food professionals had shared:

- Restaurants located in urban areas who have solid monetary funding can promote, practice, and emerge farm-to-table to their existing location.
- Rural areas have a high chance of emerging in farm-to-table restaurants.
- Increase in popularity as years progress.

Furthermore, here were other significant statements food professional have shared:

"Farm-to-table is slowly growing for the past few years, but I think we need more of this honestly, living in Bacolod I want to see more restaurants to make use and take advantage of the agricultural business"

Theme 4: Farm-to-Table Meets Alfresco Dining

To support the theme here were some significant statements food professionals had shared:

- Increase the occupancy rate.
- Attract more customers with alfresco dining.
- Dining experience is more realistic and may establish a connection between the customers and the farmers.
- Restaurants cannot maximize the usage of al fresco due to seasonal changes.

Furthermore, here were other significant statements food professional have shared:

"*Combining al fresco and farm-to-table is both good for the environment and good because of our environment, but remember we have 10 months of rainfall in the Philippines"*

Theme 5: Farm-to-Table as a travel motivator

To support the theme here were some significant statements food professionals had shared:

- Farm-to-table restaurants can be a travel motivator.
- Farm-to-table movement has marketing opportunities in urban areas, but it may invalidate the concept of it.

- Farm-to-table restaurants located in urban areas may not fully engage themselves in sustainable farm-to-table practices and solely use it for marketing and branding only.
- Feasible in rural areas

Furthermore, here were other significant statements food professional have shared:

"People are now more aware of being sustainable and ethical as compared to decades ago. People are more open minded to explore farm-to-table and they want to help out those farmers and people who want to dine, of course, eating fresh, ethically produced and all that, it impacts the tourism".

Theme 6: Challenges of Farm-to-Table in the Horizon

To support the theme here were some significant statements food professionals had shared:

- Farm-to-table concept is not yet widely recognized and established in the Philippines.
- Only few restaurants promote and practice farm-to-table movement despite Philippines being considered as an agricultural country.
- "Foodies" and food enthusiasts or ecocentric diners are the primary market.
- Longer time to popularize.
- Higher price range compared to normal restaurants.
- Reaching of locally sourced ingredients from rural areas transporting to urban areas may invalidate the idea of farm-to-table.

Furthermore, here were other significant statements food professionals had shared:

"The current state of farm-to-table in the Philippines is sad, it lacks the recognition it deserves and most of the people are not really into the concept".

Theme 7: Advocacy of the Farm-to-Table Movement

To support the theme here were some significant statements food professional had shared:

- It tackles sustainability of the environment when it comes to preparing, consuming, and being mindful about the ingredients used.
- Stakeholders should engage themselves to the concept by practicing and promoting reduced food wastage, food loss, food production, and food consumption.
- Better understanding the concept and how it can boost the local economy, environment, and the community

Furthermore, here were other significant statements food professionals had shared:

"*The real farm-to-table is not all about marketing to people and pulling them to your restaurant, it is about food advocacy, it is about the sustainability of the environment".*

4.2 Profile of the respondents

(a)Age

Age Category	Frequency	Percentage
Generation Z	50	78.10%
Millennials	14	21.90%
	64	100%

64 respondents who answered the survey questionnaire met the criteria in the target

demographic profile of the researchers when it comes to age.

(b) Current city of Residence

Region	Frequency	Percentage
NCR	40	62.00%
CALABARZON	22	34.40%
Bicol Region	1	1.60%
Central Luzon	1	1.60%
	64	100%

64 respondents answered the survey also fit the criteria that they reside within the Philippines since the scope of the study was within the Philippines.

(c) Socio-economic status (Based on Monthly Income)

Socio-economic class	Frequency	Percentage
Student (No monthly Income)	21	32.80%
Poor (P11,000 and below)	4	6.30%
Low-income but not poor (P11,000 - P22,000)	9	14.10%
Lower Middle (P22,000 - P44,000)	14	21.90%
Middle (P44,000 - P76,000)	6	9.40%
Upper Middle (P76,000 - P132,000)	7	10.90%
Upper Middle but not rich (P132,000 - P220,000)	2	3.10%
Rich (P220,000 and above)	1	1.60%
	64	100%

Out of 64 respondents, 21 respondents (32.8%) were students with no monthly income, 4 respondents (6.3%) belonged to the socio-economic class of poor, 9 respondents (14.1%) belonged to the socio-economic class of low-income but not poor, 14 respondents (21.9) belonged to the socio-economic class of lower-middle, 6 respondents (9.4%) belonged to the socio-economic class of middle, 7 respondents (10.9%) belonged to the socio-economic class of upper-middle, 2 respondents (3.1%) belonged to the socio-economic class of upper-middle but not rich, and 1 respondent (1.6%) belonged to the socio-economic class of rich.

4.3 Determining the experience and willingness of the customers *(a) Experience of respondents with farm-to-table dining*

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	20	31.30%
No	44	68.70%
	64	100%

Out of 64 respondents, 20 respondents (31.3%.) answered that they have experienced farm-to-table dining however, 44 respondents (68.7%) answered that they did not have any experience at all with farm-to-table dining.

(b)Willingness of the respondents who have no experience, to experience farm-to-table dining.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	43	98.50%
No	1	1.50%
	44	100%

.

Out of the 44 respondents who responded that they had no experience with farm-to-table dining, 43 respondents (98.5%) stated that they were willing to experience farm-to-table dining, and 1 respondent (1.5%) answered that they were not willing to experience farm-to-table dining.

4.4 Central Tendency
Table 4.4.1 Motivations to travel to certain destinations.

Motivations to travel	4	3	2	1	Mean	Interpretation
I want to temporarily escape from my daily routine	44	19	1	0	3.68	Strongly Agree
I want to experience something new aside from the routine I am accustomed on	50	14	0	0	3.78	Strongly Agree
I want to relax to replenish for a little while	56	8	0	0	3.88	Strongly Agree
I am motivated to travel to relieve my stress and improve my overall health	51	12	0	1	3.75	Strongly Agree
I am being motivated to travel to certain destinations because of the advertisements seen on social media (Facebook, Instagram, Titkok)	40	18	4	2	3.51	Strongly Agree
I want to travel to certain places that will meet and satisfy my needs (psychologically, physiologically, sociologically)	53	11	0	0	3.82	Strongly Agree
I am motivated to travel because of being quarantined for a long time by the COVID-19 Pandemic	44	14	4	2	3.57	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean					3.71	Strongly Agree

The overall mean of the motivations of the respondents to travel to certain destinations was 3.71 which represents that the respondents strongly agreed that they were motivated to travel to certain destinations, they want to temporarily escape from their daily routine, they want to experience something new aside from the routine the respondents were already accustomed to, they are motivated to travel to relax and replenish for a little while, they are motivated to travel to relieve stress and improve their overall health, they are being influenced to travel on what advertisements they see on social media, they are motivated to travel to meet and satisfy their needs, and that they are most likely motivated to travel because of being quarantined by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Table 4.4.2 Reasons for visiting farm-to-table dining

Reasons for visiting	4	3	2	1	Mean	Interpretation
I want to visit a farm-to-table offering restaurant because they prepare food sustainably	47	16	0	1	3.69	Strongly Agree
I want to visit a farm-to-table offering restaurant because the ingredients are locally sourced from farms, gardens or nearby agricultural land	53	10	1	0	3.82	Strongly Agree
I want to visit a farm-to-table offering restaurant because the ingredients are quality standard since it directly came from farms, gardens or nearby agricultural land	55	8	1	0	3.85	Strongly Agree
I want to visit a farm-to-table offering restaurant because the ingredients are natural and organic	55	7	1	1	3.82	Strongly Agree
I want to visit a farm-to-table offering restaurant because the foods served are nutritious	54	10	0	0	3.85	Strongly Agree
I want to visit a farm-to-table offering restaurant particularly that has an ambiance closely to nature or the environment	58	6	0	0	3.91	Strongly Agree
I want to visit a farm-to-table offering restaurant particularly that has an ambiance closely to nature or environment with an outdoor dining	55	9	0	0	3.86	Strongly Agree
I want to visit a farm-to-table offering restaurant even if the restaurant's ambiance has no related to nature or the environment	23	23	16	2	3.05	Agree
I want to visit a farm-to-table offering restaurant to socialize	21	23	16	4	2.94	Agree
I want to visit a farm-to-table offering restaurant that has recreational activities	40	18	6	0	3.54	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean					3.63	Strongly Agree

The overall mean of the reasons to visit a farm-to-table offering restaurant was 3.63. This would mean that the respondents strongly agreed that they wanted to visit a restaurant offering farm-to-table services because they prepare food sustainably, and the ingredients are locally sourced from farms, gardens, or nearby agricultural land. They also want to visit a farm-to-table offering restaurant because of ensured quality standard of the ingredients, and because the foods served are nutritious, healthy, and organic. Additionally, they want to visit a farm-to-table offering restaurant that has an ambience with or without relation to nature or environment. Lastly, they will also visit farm-to-table offering restaurant with an outdoor or al fresco dining that offers recreational activities that also allows them to socialize with other people.

Table 4.4.3 Possible feelings of customers/tourists/consumers dining at a farm-to-table offering restaurant.

Feelings of respondents towards farm-to-table restaurant	4	3	2	1	Mean	Interpretation
I will feel relaxed when I will be able to dine at a farm-to-table offering restaurant	41	23	0	0	3.65	Strongly Agree
I will feel replenished when will be able to dine at a farm-to-table offering restaurant	38	25	1	0	3.58	Strongly Agree
I will feel satisfied if I will be able to dine at a farm-to-table offering restaurant	42	21	1	0	3.65	Strongly Agree
I will feel healthy when I will be able to consume food offered from a farm-to-table offering restaurant	46	17	1	0	3.71	Strongly Agree
I will feel entertained when I will be able to dine a farm-to-table offering restaurant	42	20	2	0	3.63	Strongly Agree
I will feel entertained when I will be able to dine-in at a farm-to-table offering restaurant that also offers recreational activities	45	18	1	0	3.69	Strongly Agree
I will feel that I am helping the environment sustainably when I dine at a farm-to-table offering restaurant	52	11	1	0	3.8	Strongly Agree
I will feel that I am helping the local farmers when I dine at a farm-to-table offering restaurant	60	4	0	0	3.94	Strongly Agree
I will feel that I am contributing to the local economy when I dine at farm-to-table offering restaurant	58	6	0	0	3.91	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean					3.73	Strongly Agree

The overall mean of the possible feelings of respondents dining at a farm-to- table offering restaurant was 3.73. This proves that customers, tourists, and consumers strongly agreed that they will be relaxed, replenished, satisfied, and will feel healthy consuming farm-to-table food, they will be entertained dining at a farm-to-table offering restaurant particularly if it also offers recreational activities, and lastly respondents also feel that they are helping the local farmers, helping the environment sustainably, and contributing to local economy when they are able to dine at a farm-to-table offering restaurant.

Table 4.4.5 Marketing of farm-to-table dining

Marketing of farm-to-table dining	4	3	2	1	Mean	Interpretation
I will look for a farm-to-table offering restaurant	36	22	6	0	3.46	Strongly Agree
I am willing to dine-in at restaurants that are offering farm-to-table food	51	13	0	0	3.8	Strongly Agree
I am willing to dine-in at restaurants that are offering farm-to-table food for a reasonable price range	52	12	0	0	3.82	Strongly Agree
I am willing to dine-in at restaurants that are offering farm-to-table food for an expensive price range	24	18	19	3	2.97	Agree
I am willing to patronize restaurants that are offering farm-to-table food	41	20	3	0	3.59	Strongly Agree
I am willing to recommend to other people restaurants that are offering farm-to-table food	78	16	0	0	3.74	Strongly Agree
I am willing to travel to nearby farm-to-table offering restaurant	46	17	1	0	3.71	Strongly Agree
I am willing to travel to farm-to-table offering restaurant even if the location is far	28	26	9	1	3.26	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean					3.54	Strongly Agree

The overall mean of marketing of farm-to-table dining was 3.54. This proves that all the respondents strongly agreed that they are willing to look and dine-in at restaurants offering farm-to-table food. Respondents stated that they also want to be catered by restaurants offering farm-to-table food both for a reasonable price range and expensive price range however, not all respondents prefer to dine-in at restaurants offering farm-to-table food for an expensive price range. Additionally, they are also willing to recommend farm-to-table offering restaurants to other people and they are most likely to travel and dine-in at restaurants regardless of the location of the current residence of the respondents.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and implications

With its practical implications, the definition of farm-to-table based on the perceptions of the interviewed food professionals was determined. Any food establishments that are directly sourcing their ingredients from a food source can be classified as a farm-to-table offering restaurants. However, despite the given statements of food professionals, it is clearly stated that as of now, most of the food establishments who are offering farm-to-table menu do not follow any standard operating procedure for it will contradict the idea of the movement itself. It was also concluded that implementing Standard Operating Procedures will make it more difficult for the movement to flourish as a trend in the Philippines in the near future. The motivations of the Generation Z and Millennials as the respondents/customers were also determined. Generation Z and Millennial customers can patronize and support restaurants who are already offering farm-to-table menu since based on their perceptions, with or without experience, they are willing to dine and visit farm-to-table offering restaurants because of its psychological and physiological implications which include; it offers food sustainably, it ensures the freshness and nutritional value that foods served, and it brings a connection between the customers and farmers particularly if the food establishment has an alfresco dining and with relation to the environment. With all the implications being said, food professionals may work with other food professionals who are currently practicing and serving farm-to-table menus to customers to strengthen the concept of it in the food industry. It was also established that this is more feasible in rural areas compared to urban areas since ingredients are mostly sourced from rural areas and in line with this, there might be a challenge when transporting ingredients to urbanized areas as the quality of ingredients may be compromised during transport. Thus, food professionals can also support farmers and optimize resources available that may also connect them to their customers providing a unique dining experience making it a travel motivator for them.

5.2. Conclusion

Upon thorough investigation the researchers concluded that the majority of the food professionals stated that any restaurant can be considered a farm-to-table so long as they directly source their ingredients from any food source which can include farms, gardens, and orchards. The researchers also concluded that farm-to-table can be a travel motivator in the Philippine setting due to its positive implications which are promoting food sustainability in a sense of being mindful of the ingredients consumed and as to how it will reach the plate by reducing food wastage, food loss, and food production. In addition, based on the perceptions of the Generation Z and Millennials, with or without prior experience of farm-to-table restaurants, regardless of socio-economic status and their location, it was concluded that they are willing to support and patronize farm-to-table offering restaurants due to its psychological and physiological implications. The researchers also concluded that farm-to-table is a holistic approach in which food professionals have more freedom because they do not follow any standard operating procedure for their restaurant to operate. Hence, the farm-to-table movement has more to deal with in the horizon for which the researchers also concluded that it is still an emerging trend because of its current state in the Philippines in which it is not yet widely recognizable; it may require a longer period, money, and investment to fully implement it as a new trend.

5.3. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

The study was held during the COVID-19 Pandemic and the gathering of data was done through an online survey questionnaire; an online in-depth interview was also done. The target sample size of participants and respondents were not met due to time restriction and the availability of resources. This study was conducted within a given time frame of 1-2 months.

Since this study was bounded by its scope and limitation it contains a limited amount of information. Future researchers must aim to deepen the scope of the present study which may involve the "*Lacto and Ovo Vegetarian*" community. Future researchers can also provide a wider scope and suitable understanding of the topic not only focusing on farm-to-table as a travel motivator.

REFERENCES

Jacob, A. (n.d.). Sustainable Food: 3 practices Australian restaurants are embracing. Sustainable Food: 3 Practices Australian Restaurants are Embracing. Retrieved August 16, 2021, from https://www.ordermentum.com/blog/sustainable-food-practices-australian-restaurants-are-embracing?fbclid=IwAR3xicoyLjAQNhIMAW2LogLV36WF7M9M8H1GQ0REUq545FGOrUFaha5WA2I

Severson, K. (2020, April 9). The farm- to-table connection comes undone. The New York Times. Retrieved August 18, 2021, from https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/09/di ning/farm-to-table-coronavirus.html?fbclid=IwAR15B_51i 0jsWKpUycbSfuUAg3YSH3ofk2NBwVAfh0Vz5_HB55WthaummMM

What farm-to-table really means. The Spruce Eats. (n.d.). Retrieved August19, 2021, from https://www.thespruceeats.com/farm-to- table-2216574.

Sustainable Farm to table. WWF. (n.d.). Retrieved August 17, 2021, from https://wwf.org.ph/what-we- do/food/sustainable-farm-to-table/

Khan, S. A. (2020, March 15). Food - culinary - gastronomy tourism. My Tourism Magazine. Retrieved August 16, 2021, from https://mytourismgazine.blogspot.com/2020/03/food-tourism-culinary- tourism.html

The New Farm to fork strategy: The key things every European needs to know. Slow Food International. (2020, May 29). Retrieved August 17, 2021, from https://www.slowfood.com/the-new- farm-to-fork-strategy-the-key-things-every-european-needs-to- know/?fbclid=IwAR2bYPsPsQ6lN1Mdmqab0v0eUQdyGsb8SYnVCb1z0v6j- E9KtCNPTpXzSS4

Schebesta, H., &Candel, J. J. L. (2020, October 14). Game-changing potential of the EU's Farm to Fork Strategy. Nature News. Retrieved September 4, 2021, from https://www.nature.com/articles/s43016-020-00169?fbclid=IwAR39Trjv9Ot12BPClj_hf_ Wun15KrLxhByfmR- kDy_AnkRTB4W3PwdKZH1M

Locally grown: A peek into the USA farm-to-table movement. Visit The USA. (n.d.). Retrieved September 10, 2021, from https://www.visittheusa.com/experience/locally-grown-peek-usa-farm-table-movement?fbclid=IwAR0yC3lVoJWSa0 KfsiuvXZ05ZB7sVWZRzmon0F-OO3Li9DQ3eVk0Vf9Hayk

Petro, G. (2021, April 30). Gen Z is emerging as the sustainability generation. Forbes.

Retrieved September 8, 2021, from https://www.forbes.com/sites/gregpetro/ 2021/04/30/gen-z-is-emerging-as-the- sustainability-generation/?sh=2295c7238699&fbclid= IwAR0KYx0r9K0Wd5ohiYqipm-bJLCaJNXCgGg7Nio7m6Y11vfYZGzWe 1mZaTE

Costin, G. (2019, May 1). Author post: Millennial spending habits and why they buy. Forbes. Retrieved September 8, 2021, from https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbooksauthors/2019/05/01/millennial-spending-habits-and-why-they- buy/?sh=58f0e1b740b8&fbclid=IwAR0k41fJQXcBNfNTQx3m7qgSXT6m3z_Kg mTmWc_qNk_9sDG4Z0520z9ScEA

Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production: UNDP in Philippines. UNDP. (n.d.). Retrieved September 8, 2021, from https://www.ph.undp.org/content/philippines/en/home/sustainable-development-goals2/goal-12-responsible- consumption-and-production.ht

Who is the father of the farm-to-table movement in the Philippines? Gourmet Farms. (n.d.). Retrieved August 17, 2021, from https://gourmetfarms.com.ph/who-is-the-father-of-the-farm-to-table- movement-in-the-philippines

Unpacking tourist gaze in heritage hotels using text-mining of online reviews

Lin, Bingna
Faculty of International Tourism and Management
City University of Macau

Zhang, Yunxuan Carrie
Faculty of International Tourism and Management
City University of Macau

Abstract:
The importance of tourist gaze in shaping guest experiences and emotions remains under-explored in hospitality research. This study aims to investigate the tourist gaze and its emotional responses toward heritage hotels by conducting frequency and sentiment analysis of online customer reviews about Siheyuan hotels in Beijing, China. This study uncovers three elements of tourist gaze: cultural representation, cultural imagery, and cultural proximity. Our findings provide important theoretical and practical implications for hospitality literature and practitioners.

Keywords: Heritage hotels, Tourist gaze, Guest experiences, Emotional responses

1. Introduction

Heritage hotels refer to lodging establishments with structures or locations that hold the historical or cultural significance of the place in which they are found (Lee & Chhabra, 2015). They intertwine history and culture with contemporary hospitality. Despite increasing scholarly efforts on emerging trends of hotels (e.g., boutique and theme hotels), heritage hotels remain largely under-researched (Marghany et al., 2023). Heritage hotels are objectified and commodified under the tourist gaze (Urry, 1992). While hotel experiences and emotions have been studied, the importance of tourist gaze in shaping guest experiences and emotions has not been recognized yet in hospitality research (Franklin, 2001). Tourist gaze is a visual consumption process, which critically affects hotel guests' perceptual and emotional responses toward heritage hotels (Urry, 1992). As such, this study aims to unpack tourist gaze and its emotional outcomes in the heritage hotel setting.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Heritage hotels

Heritage hotels can be perceived as a type of boutique or large luxury hotels (Elshaer et al., 2022). With certain renovations, heritage hotels preserve original cultural characters and deliver a unique guest experience, such as Savoy Hotel in London (Marghany et al., 2023). They typically carry architectural features, historical characteristics, and cultural identities of a place (Elshaer et al., 2022; Lin & Fu, 2021). Their historic structures (e.g., castles and palaces) are rich in history and cultural meanings (Urry, 1992). These signifiers can stimulate guests' interest in staying in heritage hotels and evoke emotional connections between guests and the hotels.

2.2. Tourist gaze

Tourist gaze has been conceptualized as a socially, culturally, and technologically visual consumption (Urry, 1992). Gazing upon a hotel is an inescapable part of accommodation consumption, particularly in heritage hotels. From selecting and booking a heritage hotel to arriving and appreciating the heritage hotel, tourist gaze not only demonstrates its fundamentally visual nature, but also uncovers that it is an interpretive consumption that influences tourism activities (Franklin, 2001). Accordingly, tourist gaze encompasses a range of environmental disclosures in heritage hotels, which collectively constructs and shapes guest experiences and emotions (Marghany et al., 2023). Going beyond seeking temporary sheltering, guests can appreciate the authentic aesthetics and immerse themselves in the historical path by gazing upon the heritage hotels.

3. Methodology

Our study employed a data mining approach and collected data from Siheyuan (Chinese: 四合院), a typical type of heritage hotel in China. Siheyuan is a historical type of vernacular architecture in China, which refers to a courtyard surrounded by buildings on all four sides (Zhang, 2015). It has been developed as a culturally symbolic type of theme hotel in Beijing, China. The landscape of Siheyuan hotels embodies the Hutong culture of Old Beijing, which opens a door for tourists to gaze upon the historical path, traditional customs, and unique lifestyle of Chinese residents in Beijing, China.

3.1. Data collection and cleaning

Online customer reviews were collected from Qunar.com as of December 2023. Using the selection function of the platform, we identified a list of 36 Siheyuan hotels in Beijing, China. We excluded 10 hotels classified as Chinese cultural lodgings that are not exclusively Siheyuan-style hotels. First, we downloaded 21,169 available reviews. After removing 1,022 reviews due to a lack of substantive information and 144 written in languages other than Chinese, the final data set comprised 20,003 online consumer reviews from 26 Siheyuan hotels.

Before further data analysis, we utilized Python for segmenting Chinese text, which was widely used for Chinese word segmentation in text mining and sentiment analysis (Hou et al., 2019; Li et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2022). The authors also utilized a list of Chinese words to filter out the stop words in the current study, which helps to enhance the data quality (Hou et al., 2019).

4. Results

4.1. Themes of the Siheyuan hotels

After cleaning the data, we conducted a word frequency analysis for all reviews using Python. Then, in accordance with the theoretical underpinning of tourist gaze (Urry,1992), the top 600 words were analyzed and categorized into three themes:

cultural representation, cultural imagery, and cultural proximity, which are the key experiential elements of tourist gaze. Table 1 presents selected sample keywords associated with each theme.

Table 1
Keywords for Each Theme

Themes	Sample Keywords
Cultural representation	Siheyuan(四合院), Hutong(胡同), decoration(布置), Prince's Mansion(王府), red house(红房子)
Cultural imagery	antique(古色古香), atmosphere(氛围), history(历史), unique(独特), charm(韵味)
Cultural proximity	like(喜欢), surprise(惊喜), warm(亲切), satisfaction(满足), enjoy(享受)

4.2. Emotional responses

To gain deeper insights into tourists' emotional responses toward various aspects of heritage hotels, we tagged each review with the relevant keywords, along with a sentiment score. The distribution was as follows: 1,613 reviews related to cultural representation, 1,865 reviews touched on cultural imagery, and 3,993 reviews discussed cultural proximity. Each review was assigned a sentiment score ranging from 0 to 1, indicating the reviewers' tone. Scores below 0.5 were considered negative, while those above 0.5 were seen as positive.

To compare the tone across these themes, we conducted an ANOVA using SPSS 27.0. As shown in Figure 1, the results revealed significant differences in tone levels among the three themes ($M_{cultural\ representation}$=0.83, $M_{cultural\ imagery}$=0.92, $M_{cultural\ proximity}$=0.89, $F_{(2, 7468)}$=64.51, p<.001). Despite the generally positive tone across all themes, the Tukey HSD post hoc test (Table 2) indicated that tourists have the highest positive attitudes toward cultural imagery and the lowest positive tone for the reviews related to cultural representation ($p_{cultural\ representation-cultural\ imagery}$<.001, $p_{cultural\ representation-cultural\ proximity}$<.001, $p_{cultural\ imagery-cultural\ proximity}$<.001).

Figure 1
Means of Three Themes

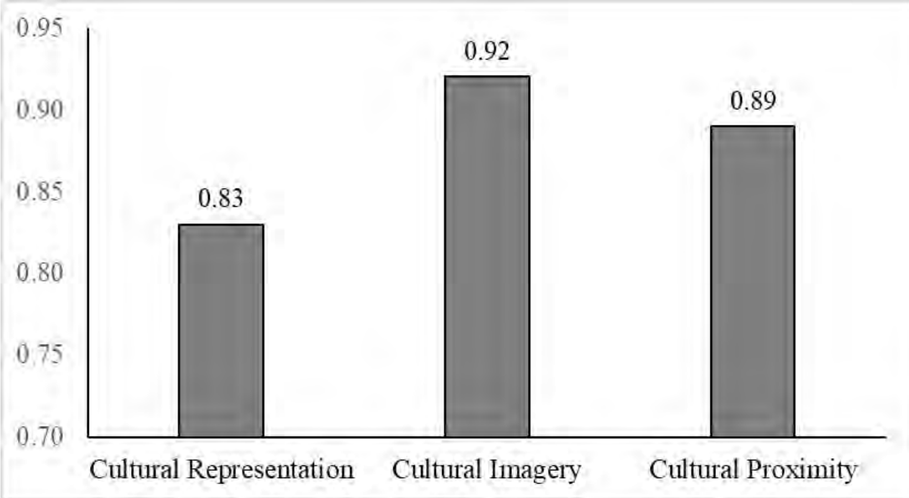


Table 2
Results of Tukey HSD Post Hoc Test

Comparations	Difference of Mean		S.E.
Cultural Representation - Cultural Imagery	-0.10	***	0.01
Cultural Representation - Cultural Proximity	-0.06	***	0.01
Cultural Imagery - Cultural Proximity	0.04	***	0.01

Note. The mean difference is calculated by subtracting the mean value of the first theme from the mean value of the second theme.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and implications

The current research is an exploratory study to unpack the tourist gaze with its experiential elements and emotional responses toward heritage hotels. Compared with past studies, our findings substantiate the dynamic nature of the tourist gaze and extend the understanding of its underlying elements and emotional influences (Marghany et al., 2023). Addressing the emerging interest in heritage hotels, this study makes a pioneering effort to reveal the construction of the tourist gaze and add new knowledge about guest perceptions and emotions to hospitality literature. Additionally, the findings of this study provide important practical implications for hospitality marketing.

5.2. Limitations and suggestions

This study is not exempt from limitations. This study collected online customer reviews, which may limit the insights into the underlying mechanism of tourist gaze in the heritage hotels. Future research may benefit from using a qualitative approach (e.g., in-depth interviews) to generate insightful findings. Besides, only Siheyuan hotels in China were explored. Future investigations should be conducted in other types of heritage hotels or other geographical areas to capture a holistic understanding of heritage hotels.

REFERENCES

Elshaer, I. A., Azazz, A. M., & Fayyad, S. (2022). Authenticity, involvement, and nostalgia in heritage hotels in the era of digital technology: A moderated meditation model. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 19*(10), Article 5784.

Franklin, A. (2001). The tourist gaze and beyond: An interview with John Urry. *Tourist Studies, 1*(2), 115-131.

Hou, Z., Cui, F., Meng, Y., Lian, T., & Yu, C. (2019). Opinion mining from online travel reviews: A comparative analysis of Chinese major OTAs using semantic association analysis. *Tourism Management, 74,* 276-289.

Lee, W., & Chhabra, D. (2015). Heritage hotels and historic lodging: Perspectives on experiential marketing and sustainable culture. *Journal of Heritage Tourism, 10*(2), 103-110.

Li, C., Niu, Y., & Wang, L. (2023). How to win the green market? Exploring the satisfaction and sentiment of Chinese consumers based on text mining. *Computers in Human Behavior, 148,* Article 10789.

Lin, B., & Fu, X. (2021). Gaze and tourist-host relationship–state of the art. *Tourism Review, 76*(1), 138-149.

Marghany, M., Morgan, N., Finniear, J., & White, P. (2023). Heritage hotels: An exploration of staff experiences in these unique hospitality environments. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1177/146735842312157

Urry, J. (1992). The tourist gaze "revisited". *American Behavioral Scientist*, *36*(2), 172-186.

Zhang, D. (2015). Classical courtyard houses of Beijing: Architecture as cultural artifact. *Space and Communication, 1*(1), 47-68.

Zhang, T., Li, B., & Hua, N. (2021). Chinese cultural theme parks: Text mining and sentiment analysis. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change, 20*(1-2), 37-57.

Navigating online review persuasion: The interplay of spatial distance and message type

Kim, Minji
College of Hospitality & Tourism Management
Sejong University

Busser, James
William F. Harrah College of Hospitality
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Abstract:

This study investigates how consumers utilize online reviews when making restaurant decisions for delivery. Drawing on construal level theory, it was hypothesized that consumers rely more heavily on reviews that fit their construal level. This prediction was tested in an experimental setting, where spatial distance and message type were manipulated. The results revealed higher fluency in the spatially distant condition with desirability-related reviews and in the near condition with feasibility-related reviews. The experience of fluent processing intensified evaluative reactions, increasing the likelihood of switching to competing service providers.

Keywords: Online Reviews, Spatial Distance, Message Type, Perceived Fit, Processing Fluency, Switching Intention

1. Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technology in recent years has transformed numerous aspects of daily life, with the COVID-19 pandemic acting as a catalyst for the acceleration of these changes. One such notable transformation is the surge in popularity of online food delivery (OFD) services. The convenience and safety afforded by these platforms during times of social distancing and lockdowns have propelled the OFD market to unprecedented heights. As per Statista's report in 2022, the United States has witnessed a near doubling of OFD users over the past five years, soaring from 81 million in 2017 to a staggering 161 million in 2022. Projections indicate further growth, with an anticipated 217 million users expected by 2027.

In the rapidly evolving landscape of the OFD market, many restaurants are leveraging third-party digital platforms, such as DoorDash and Uber Eats, to expand their reach and enhance revenue streams. This strategic shift represents a proactive response to meet the changing preferences and behaviors of consumers, providing access to a vast pool of potential customers beyond the confines of traditional brick-and-mortar establishments (Traynor et al., 2022). However, the challenge is that the OFD market is highly competitive, with numerous restaurants vying for the same consumer base. As such, it becomes critical for restaurants to understand how consumers choose restaurants for delivery.

Consumers today have a large variety of options to choose from and thus, tend to actively seek information to discern the most promising one. While various information sources are available, online reviews emerge as the primary source on which consumers rely for their decisions (Gursoy, 2019). Online reviews offer firsthand experiences and opinions from other users, enabling consumers to make informed decisions with greater confidence (Le et al., 2022). However, online reviews are not equally valued by consumers. According to construal level theory (CLT), the selection and utilization of any given piece of information are contingent on one's construal level—the way individuals mentally represent objects, events, or situations. It contends that individuals are intrinsically inclined to seek logical consistency among their cognitions, thereby giving greater weight to information consistent with their construal level (Trope & Liberman, 2010).

Online reviews wield considerable influence over consumer evaluations and choices, particularly in the purchase of experience goods (e.g., restaurant meals). However, their impact remains relatively underexplored in the context of OFD. This study aims to address this gap by investigating the role of construal fit and the psychological mechanism underlying its effect on OFD purchase decisions. The findings theoretically deepen the understanding of conditions under which online reviews become more influential in OFD purchase decisions. From these insights, restaurateurs can effectively harness the power of online reviews to thrive and succeed in the ever-evolving OFD landscape.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Online customer reviews

Facilitated by the emergence of online communication networks, consumers have become active creators and distributors of information. Online reviews, as a popular form of user-generated content, have grown in popularity and become part of the purchase journey (Lo & Yao, 2019). The increasing role of online reviews in decision-making has attracted much academic interest, yet the findings have been somewhat equivocal. Some studies, for instance, suggest a persuasive advantage of negative reviews over positive ones (Park & Nicolau, 2015), while others indicate the opposite effect (Pan & Zhang, 2011) or no discernible difference (Li & Zhan, 2011). To address prior discrepancies, recent research explored factors influencing online review persuasion, such as product type (Filieri, Galati, & Raguseo, 2021). Adding to this stream of research, the present research examines spatial distance as a contextual factor that affects personal relevance and thus, reliance on online reviews.

2.2. Psychological distance and construal level

CLT proposes that the same object or event can be mentally represented or construed at varying levels of abstraction. Low-level construals are unstructured, contextualized representations that include incidental details of the target, whereas high-level construals are schematic, decontextualized representations that capture the essence of the target (Trope & Liberman, 2010). While construal level can vary as a function of one's chronic tendency, it can also be situationally induced by spatial distance—the perceived physical distance between the self and the target event (Bar-Anan, Liberman, & Trope, 2006). The basic tenet of CLT is that individuals use increasingly higher levels of construal to represent a target as the spatial distance from the target increases.

A shift in construal level has important downstream consequences, as it affects the relative salience of feasibility versus desirability considerations in decision-making. Desirability pertains to the valence of an action's end state, whereas feasibility relates to the ease or difficulty of achieving that end state (Liberman & Trope, 1998). Many decision problems often involve trade-offs between these two dimensions. A robust finding in the literature is that individuals operating at higher construal levels tend to prioritize desirability over feasibility (Aggarwal & Zhao, 2015; Baskin et al., 2014). This is because desirability constitutes a higher level of construal than feasibility in the sense that when considering an action, the subjective importance of feasibility depends more on the level of desirability than vice versa (Trope & Liberman, 2010).

It was also shown that construal level yields systematic differences in information search patterns. Because high-level construals increase the relative weight of desirability versus feasibility concerns, individuals preferentially attend to desirability-related information (e.g., functionality). When construal levels are low, feasibility concerns become more salient, increasing reliance on feasibility-related information (e.g., discount) (Han, Duhachek, Agrawal, 2016; Tok, Chen, & Chu, 2021). This finding is consistent with the construal fit hypothesis that fit occurs when a message is construed at a level that matches the internal mindset of the recipient, and that fit enhances message persuasion (Lee, Keller, & Sternthal, 2010).

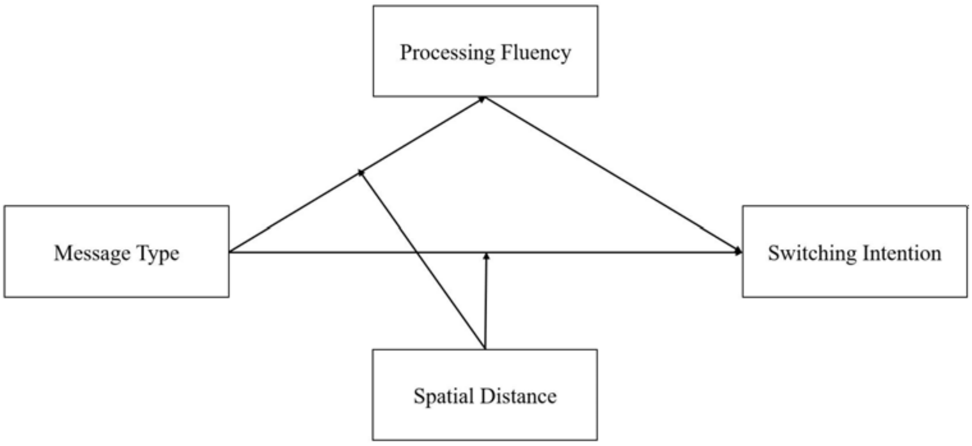
2.3. Construal fit and processing fluency

A message that fits one's current mindset elicits a "feels-right" sensation that can transfer to subsequent message evaluation. Specifically, the feeling of rightness arising from construal fit enhances engagement with the message claim and, in turn, induces processing fluency (Lee et al., 2010). As a result of fluent processing, the recipient has more confidence in their evaluative reactions to the message (Avnet, Laufer, & Higgins, 2013). Supporting this premise, studies provide empirical evidence that individuals tend to develop more extreme message evaluations, displaying more positive responses toward positive messages and more negative responses toward negative messages (Avnet et al., 2013; Li et al., 2021).

2.4. Hypotheses

Based on prior research, it is hypothesized that message persuasion hinges on the fit between construal level and message type. When placing a delivery order for a restaurant located at a spatially distant location, consumers are likely to engage in high-level construals. Consequently, they are likely to experience greater processing fluency and exhibit more extreme behavioral intentions when online reviews feature desirability issues. The opposite should hold when the delivery order is for a spatially proximal restaurant, as consumers are likely to adopt low-level construals. Figure 1 summarizes the study hypotheses.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



3. Methodology

Explain what research methods were used and why. Explain how they were applied. Measurement, Data collection, and Analytical methods may be included.

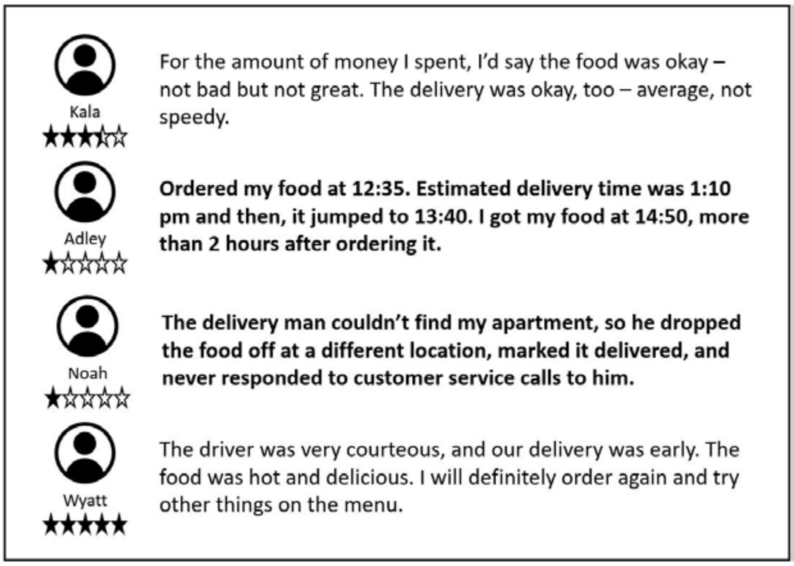
3.1. Design and subjects

This research used a 2 (spatial distance: near, distant) x 2 (message type: feasibility-related, desirability-related) between-subjects experimental design. The experiment was conducted through Qualtrics, an online market research firm. The sample consisted of 164 adult participants (≥ 18 years old) who had used third-party delivery apps at least once in the last six months. The majority of the participants were female (72.6%), White/Caucasian (82.3%), between 25 and 44 years of age (54.8%), full-time workers (60.4%), with an annual income less than $75K (74.4%).

3.2. Procedure and measures

Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four experimental conditions, with 40-42 participants per condition. The first screen contained a hypothetical scenario with spatial distance manipulation. Participants were instructed to assume they found an appetizing restaurant while browsing a delivery app. The restaurant was labeled as either "2 miles (near condition)" or "6 miles (distant condition)" away from their current location. The subsequent screen was a simulated online review website presenting four customer reviews—one positive, two negative, and one neutral—regarding the restaurant. The simulated website remained constant across conditions, except for the textual content of negative reviews. Specifically, negative reviews featured customer complaints about either delivery experiences (feasibility-related message condition) or dining experiences (desirability-related message condition). Figure 2 displays an example of stimuli. All reviews were adapted from actual customer reviews and pretested to ensure that they reflected the intended message type.

Figure 2. Stimulus sample: Feasibility-related message



3.3. Measures

Participants completed two outcome measures: processing fluency and switching intention, followed by manipulation checks and demographics. Two items were adopted from Lee and Aaker (2004) to assess processing fluency. Participants rated how easy it was to process and understand the review content on a 7-point semantic differential scale (alpha = 0.908). Switching intention was measured using three items adapted from Kim, Shin, and Lee (2006). An example item is "The likelihood of me switching to another restaurant is high." The participants indicated their level of agreement on a 7-point disagree–agree scale (alpha = 0.919).

Two manipulation checks were intended to assess whether the experimental stimuli were perceived as intended. The spatial distance manipulation was checked by asking participants to indicate how far away the restaurant was from their current location on a scale of 1 (very close) to 7 (very far). For the message type manipulation, participants rated their agreement on a 7-point disagree-agree scale with the statement: "Any complaints made by the reviewers are mainly about a process failure" (Sparks & Browning, 2011).

4. Results

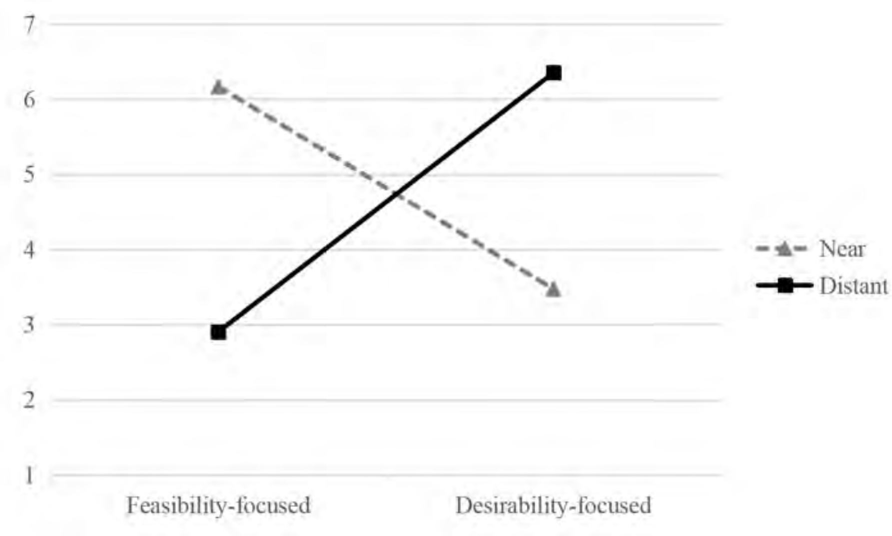
4.1. Manipulation Checks

The manipulation of spatial distance was assessed via a 2 x 2 analysis of variance (ANOVA) on the spatial distance manipulation check measure. The results revealed a main effect of spatial distance ($F_{1,160} = 161.151$, $p < .001$), such that the participants in the near condition perceived the restaurant as physically closer (mean = 2.31) than those in the distant condition (mean = 4.78). Neither the main effect of the message type ($F_{1,160} = 1.391$, $p = .240$) nor the interaction between the two factors ($F_{1,160} = .110$, $p = .741$) was significant. The same two-way ANOVA was conducted on the message type manipulation check measure, and the results showed a significant main effect of message type ($F_{1,160}$ = 190.704, p < .001). The participants in the feasibility-related message condition were more likely to agree that the reviews were mainly about a process failure (mean = 5.86) than those in the desirability-related message condition (mean = 3.26). The main effect of spatial distance ($F_{1,160}$ = .042, p = .838) and the interaction ($F_{1,160}$ = .050, p = .824) were not significant. Taken together, it can be concluded that all the experimental manipulations worked as intended.

4.2. Hypotheses Testing

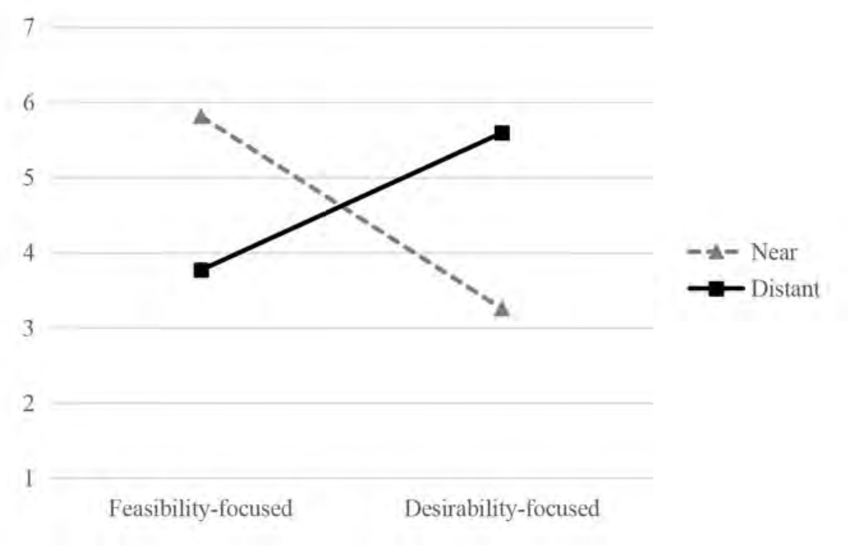
A 2 x 2 ANOVA on processing fluency revealed a significant main effect of message type ($F_{1,160}$ = 4.237, p = .041). The desirability-related reviews received higher fluency ratings (mean = 4.91) than their feasibility-related counterparts (mean = 4.54). This main effect of message type was further qualified by a significant two-way interaction between spatial distance and message type ($F_{1,160}$ = 281.988, p < .001). An analysis of simple main effects was performed as a follow-up to the significant interaction effect (see Figure 3). Participants in the near condition perceived the feasibility-focused reviews (mean = 6.17) to be easier to process than the desirability-focused ones (mean = 3.48), $F_{1,79}$ = 95.447, p < .001. In contrast, participants in the distant condition found the desirability-versus feasibility-related reviews easier to process ($mean_{feasibility}$ = 2.91 vs. $mean_{desirability}$ = 6.35), $F_{1,81}$ = 204.514, p < .001.

Figure 3. Plot of mean processing fluency



A 2 x 2 ANOVA on switching intention revealed a significant interaction between spatial distance and message type ($F_{1,160}$ = 257.484, p < .001). None of the main effects were significant (spatial distance: $F_{1,160}$ = 1.318, p = .253; message type: $F_{1,160}$ = .388, p = .534). A follow-up analysis of simple main effects was performed to probe the interaction effect (see Figure 4). Participants in the near condition exhibited a higher likelihood to switch to an alternative restaurant when exposed to feasibility-related reviews (mean = 6.00) than desirability-focused reviews (mean = 3.09), $F_{1,79}$ = 162.791, p < .001). In contrast, participants in the distant condition had a greater likelihood of switching after exposure to the desirability-related reviews (mean = 5.69) than feasibility-related ones (mean = 3.00), $F_{1,81} = 104.434$, $p < .001$.

Figure 4. Plot of mean switching intention



Following the procedure proposed by Hayes (2013), PROCESS Model 8 with 5,000 bootstrapping samples was used to test the mediation effect of processing fluency in the proposed relationship. The index of moderated mediation was 3.282, with a 95% bootstrap confidence interval (CI) excluding zero (2.265 to 4.310). This suggests that the indirect effect of message type varies with spatial distance. Specifically, the estimated indirect effect of message type on switching intention through processing fluency was statistically significant for both spatial distance groups (near: $\beta = -1.440$, 95% CI: -2.006 to -.935; distant $\beta = 1.842$, 95% CI: 0.281 to 2.396). Moreover, the direct effect of message type on switching intention was significant in both spatial distance groups (near: $\beta = -1.469$, 95% CI: -1.995 to -.942; distance: $\beta = 0.849$, 95% CI: .263 to 1.436). These results indicate a partial mediation effect of processing fluency between message type, spatial distance, and switching intention.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion

This study sought to investigate the influence of online reviews on OFD purchase decisions. The finding supports the hypothesis that online reviews serve as a critical purchase criterion only when they convey information consistent with consumers' construal level. Specifically, the results demonstrate that spatial distance induces high-level construals, while spatial proximity stimulates low-level construals. The activation of high-level (low-level) construals renders desirability-related (feasibility-related) negative reviews conceptually more fluent, increasing consumer intention to switch their initial choice of restaurant. Overall, the findings illustrate that online reviews enjoy a persuasive advantage when their content matches rather than mismatches the reader's construal level, and that processing fluency accounts for the increased persuasiveness of online reviews.

5.2. Implications

This study makes a significant contribution to the literature by addressing a recent call for research on consumer behavior in the OFD context. Unlike prior research that primarily focuses on the reasons consumers adopt OFD services (Shankar et al., 2022), this study investigated consumer behavior in selecting a restaurant for delivery. The results indicate, consistent with CLT, that spatial distance, as a primary determinant of construal level, affects the diagnostic value of online reviews, which in turn predicts consumers' restaurant purchase decisions. Therefore, it provides evidence that supports the potential of CLT as a useful framework for predicting consumer behavior in an OFD setting. Moreover, this study adds to the current body of knowledge on online reviews by uncovering a boundary condition under which negative reviews pose a severe threat to restaurants—construal fit.

This study presents novel insights for restaurant managers. The results indicate that online reviews have a significant impact on the consumer's purchasing journey. Specifically, consumers take into account both the restaurant's quality and the delivery service's quality when making online restaurant purchase decisions. Consequently, restaurant managers should exercise caution when selecting third-party delivery companies to collaborate with and should continuously monitor the delivery service quality. They should also work in close cooperation with third-party delivery companies to promptly address any delivery service issues. These actions would assist in minimizing the adverse consequences of customer complaints about online food delivery services, particularly when they are expressed as negative reviews on online platforms.

5.3. Limitations and future studies

This study has certain limitations that indicate potential avenues for future research. The study focused solely on situational construal level, whereby participants were induced into low- and high-level construal mindsets through variations in spatial distance. Future research could explore other methods of manipulating construal level, such as procedural priming, or employing chronic construal level. Moreover, this research utilized a scenario-based experiment to investigate the proposed construal fit effect. Although this approach helps control for external factors, ensuring a strong internal validity of the inferences drawn, it may potentially limit the external validity of the study. Future research could enhance the generalizability of the findings by conducting field experiments.

REFERENCES

Aggarwal, P., & Zhao, M. (2015). Seeing the big picture: The effect of height on the level of construal. *Journal of Marketing Research, 52*(1), 120-133.

Avnet, T., Laufer, D., & Higgins, E. T. (2013). Are all experiences of fit created equal? Two paths to persuasion. *Journal of Consumer Psychology, 23*(3), 301-316.

Bar-Anan, Y., Liberman, N., & Trope, Y. (2006). The association between psychological distance and construal level: evidence from an implicit association test. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General, 135*(4), 609.

Baskin, E., Wakslak, C. J., Trope, Y., & Novemsky, N. (2014). Why feasibility matters more to gift receivers than to givers: A construal-level approach to gift giving. *Journal of Consumer Research, 41*(1), 169-182.

Filieri, R., Galati, F., & Raguseo, E. (2021). The impact of service attributes and category on eWOM helpfulness: An investigation of extremely negative and positive ratings using latent semantic analytics and regression analysis. *Computers in Human Behavior, 114*, 106527.

Gursoy, D. (2019). A critical review of determinants of information search behavior and utilization of online reviews in decision making process (invited paper for 'luminaries' special issue of International Journal of Hospitality Management). *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 76*, 53-60.

Han, D., Duhachek, A., & Agrawal, N. (2016). Coping and construal level matching drives health message effectiveness via response efficacy or self-efficacy enhancement. *Journal of Consumer Research, 43*(3), 429-447.

Kim, G., Shin, B., & Lee, H. G. (2006). A study of factors that affect user intentions toward email service switching. *Information & Management, 43*(7), 884-893.

Le, L. T., Ly, P. T. M., Nguyen, N. T., & Tran, L. T. T. (2022). Online reviews as a pacifying decision-making assistant. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 64, 102805.

Lee, A. Y., & Aaker, J. L. (2004). Bringing the frame into focus: the influence of regulatory fit on processing fluency and persuasion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 86*(2), 205.

Lee, A. Y., Keller, P. A., & Sternthal, B. (2010). Value from regulatory construal fit: The persuasive impact of fit between consumer goals and message concreteness. *Journal of Consumer Research, 36*(5), 735-747.

Li, S., Hu, Y., Xu, L., & Fu, G. (2021). Exploring regulatory fit between service relationships and appeals in co-production. *Journal of Services Marketing, 35*(4), 505-515.

Li, J., & Zhan, L. (2011). Online persuasion: How the written word drives WOM: Evidence from consumer-generated product reviews. *Journal of Advertising Research, 51*(1), 239-257.

Liberman, N., & Trope, Y. (1998). The role of feasibility and desirability considerations in near and distant future decisions: A test of temporal construal theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 75*(1), 5.

Lo, A. S., & Yao, S. S. (2019). What makes hotel online reviews credible? An investigation of the roles of reviewer expertise, review rating consistency and review valence. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 31*(1), 41-60.

Pan, Y., & Zhang, J. Q. (2011). Born unequal: a study of the helpfulness of user-generated product reviews. *Journal of Retailing, 87*(4), 598-612.

Park, S., & Nicolau, J. L. (2015). Asymmetric effects of online consumer reviews. *Annals of Tourism Research, 50*, 67-83.

Shankar, A., Jebarajakirthy, C., Nayal, P., Maseeh, H. I., Kumar, A., & Sivapalan, A. (2022). Online food delivery: A systematic synthesis of literature and a framework development. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 104*, 103240.

Statista (2022). Meal delivery – United States. https://www-statista-com.ezproxy.library.unlv.edu/outlook/dmo/online-food-delivery/meal-delivery/united-states#revenue

Tok, D., Chen, X., & Chu, X. Y. M. (2021). "I Want It! Can I Get It?" How product-model spatial distance and ad appeal affect product evaluations. *Journal of Business Research, 135*, 454-463.

Traynor, M., Bernard, S., Moreo, A., & O'Neill, S. (2022). Investigating the emergence of third-party online food delivery in the US restaurant industry: A grounded theory approach. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 107*, 103299.

Trope, Y., & Liberman, N. (2010). Construal-level theory of psychological distance. *Psychological Review, 117*(2), 440.

Sparks, B. A., & Browning, V. (2011). The impact of online reviews on hotel booking intentions and perception of trust. *Tourism Management, 32*(6), 1310-1323.

Near or distant? The impact of the spacial distance and review type on visiting intentions

Liu, Chunqun
School of Hotel and Tourism Management
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Xue, Nan
School of Hotel and Tourism Management
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Wan, Lisa C.
School of Hotel and Tourism Management
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Abstract:

This research aims to explore the impact of viewer-destination distance and online review type on the viewer's intention to visit, through two studies. Study 1 indicated that when the distance is near, attribute-based (vs. benefit-based) reviews lead to a higher intention to visit. However, the results are reversed when the distance is distant. Study 2 further revealed the underlying mechanism and tested the mediation effects of perceived feasibility and perceived desirability. This work can provide valuable managerial strategies for tourism marketers regarding online reviews.

Keywords: Viewer-destination Distance; Review Type, Visiting Intention

1. Introduction

Location-based service (LBS) is a precise and popular tourism marketing strategy that offers value-added services through the combination of mobile communication networks and satellite positioning systems (Zhang et al., 2019). Yuan and Raubal (2014) indicate that 80% of the world's information content includes time-related or location-related tags, highlighting the increasing importance of LBS in providing precise and accurate consumer information. This enables firms to actively plan effective communication strategies on social media or tourism platforms, such as recommending products or activities to targeted tourists with specific location tags, rather than waiting passively. Therefore, this paper aims to enhance the understanding of tourism practitioners regarding how the viewers location (viewer-destination distance) affects the viewer's intention to visit in the context of online reviews.

When studying online reviews, it is essential to consider the review's characteristics. This research classifies online review types into attribute-based and benefit-based reviews, based on whether the content focuses on the experiential consumption/travel process (e.g., activities and environment description of the destination) or the outcome (e.g., benefits gained from the travel) (Wang & Lehto, 2020). Construal level fit and psychological distance (Chou & Lien, 2012; Wang & Lehto, 2020) suggest that there may be a matching effect between the viewer-destination distance and the review type.

The fit between the viewer's mental representation (viewer-destination distance) and the incoming information (online review) may lead to positive viewer attitudes, such as visiting intentions. Therefore, this work aims to explore the matching effect between viewer-destination distance and review type on visiting intentions and further investigate the underlying mechanism.

This research contributes to the literature on online reviews, psychological distance, and corresponding managerial practices. Firstly, it extends the context of psychological distance literature into the realm of online reviews by exploring the effect of viewer-destination distance on visiting intentions. Additionally, while traditional online review studies often focus on valence or linguistic style (Su et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2019), the current research discusses the characteristics (attribute-based or benefit-based) of the review and enriches the literature on online review types. Lastly, the results of this research may offer practical marketing strategies for tourism practitioners. For example, during peak tourist seasons, tourism platforms should actively address/recommend attribute-based (vs. benefit-based) characteristics/reviews to targeted tourists located near (vs. distant) the destination to attract potential consumers.

2. Theoretical Background and Hypothesis Development

2.1 The Effects of the Viewer-destination Distance and Review Type on the Visiting Intentions

According to Construal Level Theory (Trope & Liberman, 2000, 2003), individuals tend to construct mental representations of distant events that occur spatially far away at a high abstract level, focusing on central, value-based, and decontextualized features. In contrast, events that happen in close proximity are represented at a low abstract level, emphasizing peripheral, means-based, and contextual features (Trope & Liberman, 2000, 2003; Liu et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2016). Additionally, from an external perspective, messages with different content characteristics can also induce individuals to perceive the content at different construal levels. Attribute-based messages, describing specific activities and the natural environment at a low construal level, are process-focused, concrete, detailed, and means-oriented (Meeds & Farnall, 2018; Wang & Lehto, 2020). On the other hand, benefit-based posts depict the actual benefits (high construal level) that individuals can gain after achieving a goal (Meeds & Farnall, 2018; Wang & Lehto, 2020)

Furthermore, when the construal level of the mental representation aligns with that of the message (either both low-construal or high-construal levels, i.e., construal level fit), the message has a positive effect on individuals' attitudes (e.g., Chou & Lien, 2012; Hernandez et al., 2015). In this context, I propose that there is a construal level fit between the viewer-destination distance (internal mindset: near vs. distant) and the review type (external information: attribute-based vs. benefit-based). That is, when the construal level of the viewer's mental representation (spatial distance) matches that of the message information (review type), viewers are more likely to exhibit positive responses (e.g., visiting intention) towards the consumption/travel experience compared to inconsistent conditions (e.g., Wang & Lehto, 2019). Based on this, I present the following hypotheses:

H1: When viewers plan to go to a near (vs. distant) destination, attribute-based (vs. benefit-based) reviews will induce higher visiting intentions.

2.2 The Mediation Effect of Perceived Feasibility and Perceived Desirability

Drawing from the Means-end Chain Theory (MEC) (Gutman, 1982; Gutman & Reynolds, 1988; Olson & Reyno, 1983), product/service meanings can be conveyed through attributes, benefits (consequences), and values, spanning from low abstract levels to high levels (Reynolds, 1985; Xiao et al., 2019). As a result, tourists gather different information about a travel experience from different review orientations. Moreover, Gretzel and Yoo (2008) pointed out that viewers read online reviews to alleviate uncertainty and avoid risks associated with consumption or travel plans (e.g., Park & Nicolau, 2015; Sparks & Browning, 2011). During the process of reading online review content, viewers may engage in different mental simulations. Taylor et al. (1998) suggest that when individuals are primed with process simulation, they tend to consider specific and detailed steps to reach a goal, while outcome process simulation primes individuals to envision desirable outcomes after achieving the goal (Zhao et al., 2007).

According to the mental simulation model, when individuals focus on an object's concrete features, they are more likely to prime process simulation and perceive the object's feasibility. Conversely, when individuals focus on abstract features, they tend to prime outcome simulation and perceive the desirability of the object (Zhao et al., 2007). Additionally, feasibility and desirability are two factors that drive people to pursue a goal. Feasibility involves the process-oriented and specific steps of a plan (e.g., how to achieve the plan), while desirability refers to outcome-oriented and final benefits resulting from the plan (e.g., why individuals pursue the goal) (Liberman & Trope, 1998; Liu et al., 2023; Oliveira et al., 2020). Combining the concept of construal level fit with mental simulation, when viewers plan to visit a nearby destination, they would pay more attention to attribute-based (vs. benefit-based) reviews. As a result, they would experience process simulation and perceive the feasibility of the plan, leading to more positive attitudes towards it. For distant destinations, viewers are more concerned with benefit-based (vs. attribute-based) reviews, leading to outcome simulation and the perception of desirability, resulting in a higher motivation towards the plan. Therefore, the hypotheses are as follows:

H2a: When viewers plan to go to a near destination, the attribute-based (vs.benefit-based) review would bring a higher level of perceived feasibility, in turn, leading to a higher viewer's visiting intentions.
H2b: When viewers plan to go to a distant destination, the benefit-based (vs.attribute-based) review would bring a higher level of perceived desirability, in turn, leading to a higher viewer's visiting intentions.

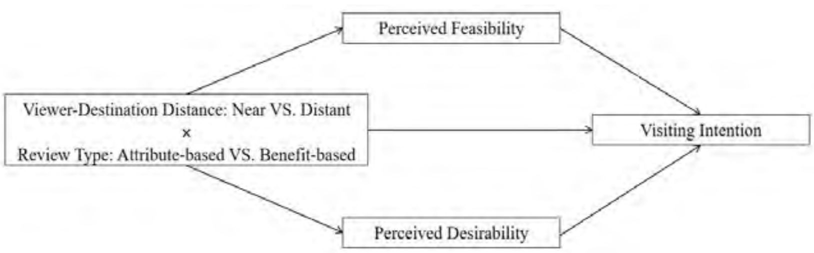


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

3. Method

3.1 Study 1

Design and Procedure. One hundred and ninety-nine participants (Female = 73.4%, M_{age} = 35.22) in a 2 (distance: near vs. distant) × 2 (post type: attribute based vs. benefit-based) between design study. All participants are from the Credemo which has an online sample base (real consumers) of over 3 million in China and get ¥2 as the remuneration. Firstly, participants are randomly assigned to one of four groups. In the near (distant) viewer-destination distance condition, participants are required to image that they would plan a travel in a coastal city where they need to take an airplane for 2 (12) hours and they search relevant experience sharing post on the Xiaohongshu about this city. After that, a attribute-based (or attribute-based) post is presented to them (See Appendix A). Then, participants response the manipulation check questions. They answered one item for the distance manipulation check ("How far is the destination?"; Ma & Li, 2022). Then both the attribute-based review and benefit-based review check are measured by two items (e.g., the post focuses on benefits over attributes; both αs >0.8; Hernandez et al., 2015). Next, participants reported their visiting intentions in four items (e.g., I will go there in the future; α = 0.896; Tan & Wu, 2016). These questions are answered on the 7-point scale. Lastly, the demographic information of participants is collected.

Manipulation Check. An one-way ANOVA shows that there is a significant difference of the distance perception between the near and distant group ($F(1, 198) = 80.10$, $p < .001$; $M_{near} = 3.83$; SD = 1.74; $M_{distant} = 5.76$; SD = 1.30). And two another one-way ANOVAs also indicate the attribute score is higher in the attributed-based condition than that of the benefit-based condition ($F(1, 198) = 29.04$, $p < .001$) and the benefit score is reversed ($F(1, 198) = 3.70$, $p = .056$). Thus, both the manipulations of the distance and review type are successful.

Visiting Intentions. Employing a two-way ANOVA on the visiting intentions and the results reveal a significant interaction effect ($F(1, 198) = 12.06$, $p < .01$) and there is no main effect (both Fs < 1.1). A simple effect analysis manifest (See Figure 2), in the near group, viewer reading the attribute-based (vs. benefit-based) post have a higher visiting intentions ($F(1, 198) = 5.45$, $p < .05$; $M_{\text{attribute-based}} = 5.63$; SD = 0.73; $M_{\textit{benefit-based}} = 5.21$; SD = 1.10), while another simple effect analysis for the distant group, viewers reading the benefit-based (vs. attribute-based) post generate a higher visiting intentions ($F(1, 198) = 6.49$, $p < 0.05$; $M_{\textit{benefit-based}} = 5.37$; SD = 0.93; $M_{\text{attribute-based}} = 4.82$; SD = 1.18). That is, when planing a near (vs. distant) travel, the attribute-based (vs. benefit-based) review would induce a higher viewer's visiting intentions. Hence, H1 are supported.

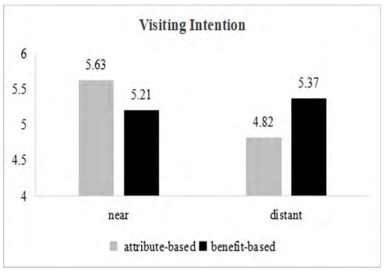


Figure 2. Visiting Intention (Study 1)

3.2 Study 2

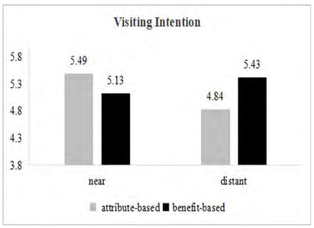
Design and Procedure. A 2 (distance: near vs. distant)×2 (review type: attribute based vs. benefit-based) between design was conducted on Credemo platform through recruiting American participants (N=173) to involve. All procedures are as that of in study 1. But the manipulation of spacial distance would change by using the specific figure in km between two cities (e.g., 100 (1500) miles is a near (distant) distance). And the context also is viewer's intent to book a hotel in a tourism city online and they would read a review (attribute based vs. benefit-based) from an anonymous reviewer (See appendix B). After the manipulations, they also responded to all manipulation check questions and visiting intentions as that in study 1. And then participants evaluated the perceived feasibility and desirability (e.g., I think visiting this hotel would be feasible/desirable; α = .842/α = .872; Jia et al., 2012), with four and six items, respectively.

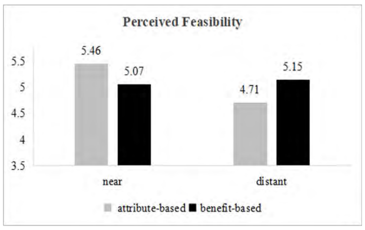
Manipulation Check. As in study 1, two-way ANOVAs reveals both manipulations of the viewer-destination distance and review type are successful (both *F*s>2.5).

Visiting Intentions. A two-way ANOVA indicates a significant interaction effect ($F(1, 173) = 9.96$, $p < .01$) and there is no main effect (both *F*s < 1.4). And the simple effect analyses show that, in the near condition, attribute-based (vs. benefit-based) review would induce a higher visiting intention ($F(1, 173) = 3.80$, $p = .054$; $M_{\text{attribute-based}} = 5.49$; SD = 1.77; $M_{\text{benefit-based}} = 5.13$; SD = 1.42), whereas this effect is reversed in the distant condition ($F(1, 173) = 6.09$, $p < .05$; $M_{\text{benefit-based}} = 5.43$; SD=1.19; $M_{\text{attribute-based}} = 4.84$; SD = 1.27). Hence, these results support the H1 again (See Figure 3).

Perceived Feasibility and Perceived Desirability. A two-way ANOVA on perceived feasibility manifests a significant interaction effect ($F(1, 173) = 7.23$, $p < .01$). And the simple effect analyses (see Figure 4) show that, in the near condition, attribute-based (vs. benefit-based) review induces a higher perceived feasibility ($F(1, 173) = 4.41$, $p < .05$; $M_{\text{attribute-based}} = 5.46$; SD = 0.90; $M_{\text{benefit-based}} = 5.07$; SD = 0.85) and there is no difference in the distance condition ($F(1, 173) = 3.14$, $p > .05$; $M_{\text{attribute-based}} = 4.71$; SD = 1.25; $M_{\text{benefit-based}} = 5.15$; SD = 1.05). Moreover, when conducting a two-way ANOVA on perceived desirability, there is a significant interaction effect ($F(1, 173) = 7.03$, $p < 0.01$). The simple effect analyses (see Figure 5) indicate that, in the distant condition, viewers who reading the benefit-based (vs. attribute-based) review have a higher perceived desirability ($F(1, 173)=4.36$, $p < .05$; $M_{\text{benefit-based}} = 5.25$; SD = 0.88; $M_{\text{attribute-based}} = 4.82$; SD = 1.05), but this effect can not found in the near condition ($F(1, 173) = 2.78$, $p > .05$; $M_{\text{attribute-based}} = 5.31$; SD = 0.97;

$M_{\text{benefit-based}}$ = 4.95; SD = 1.03). Hence, results provide evidence for H2a and H2b preliminarily.





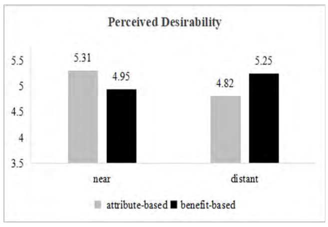


Figure 3. Visiting Intention (Study 2)

Figure 4. Perceived Feasibility (Study 2) **Figure 5. Perceived Desirability (Study 2)**

Moderated Mediation Analysis. To further test H2a and H2b, a moderated mediation analysis (PROCESS Model 8, Hayes, 2017) will be performed. In this model, review type is the independent variable, the viewer-destination distance is the moderator, the visiting intentions is the dependent variable, the perceived feasibility and perceived desirability are as mediators. The results showed a significant indirect effect "attribute-based review → perceived feasibility → visiting intentions" (B = 0.15, 95% CI = [0.0802, 0.6834) and this effect only exists in the near distance condition (B= -0.16, 95% CI = [-0.3653, -0.0055]); There was also a significant indirect effect "benefit-based review → perceived desirability → visiting intentions" (B = 0.15, 95% CI = [0.0734, 0.6736]) for the distant conditions and this effect only exists in the distant distance condition (B = 0.18, 95% CI = [0.1018, 0.4108]). That is, when viewer intent to go a near (vs. distant) destination, the attribute-based (benefit-based) review would promote the feasible-related inference and enhance the visiting intentions. Hence, these finding provide substantial evidence for H2a and H2b.

4. Results and Discussion

This paper examines the significance of the viewer's location and introduces a novel classification of online reviews, namely attribute-based and benefit-based reviews, to investigate the matching effect between distance and review type. The findings reveal that when there is a low-level construal fit, combining a near destination with an attribute-based review leads to a higher intention among viewers to visit. This effect is mediated by perceived feasibility. Conversely, when there is a high-level construal fit, the matching of a distant destination with a benefit-based review results in a higher intention to visit, mediated by perceived desirability.

This research contributes to the existing literature on online experience sharing by exploring viewer-based factors such as location and comment features. It also extends the application of psychological distance theory by considering the viewer-destination distance. Furthermore, by focusing on the tourism industry, which combines both products and services, this paper examines the matching effect in this specific context. The interaction effects identified in this study can provide practitioners with valuable insights for managing online reviews through Location-based Service (LBS) marketing. For example, the Harbin tourist administration utilizes various official social media platforms during the International Ice and Snow Sculpture Festival to promote an affordable and comfortable travel experience, attracting tourists who are distant from Harbin. Additionally, managers of popular restaurants leverage attribute-based reviews to attract non-local (distant) consumers.

REFERENCES

Chou, H. Y., & Lien, N. H. (2012). The effects of incentive types and appeal regulatory framing in travel advertising. *The service Industries Journal*, *32*(6), 883-897.

Gretzel, U., & Yoo, K. H. (2008). Use and impact of online travel reviews. In *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 2008* (pp. 35-46).

Gutman, J. (1982). A means-end chain model based on consumer categorization processes. *Journal of Marketing*, *46*(2), 60-72.

Gutman, J., & Reynolds, T. J. (1988). Laddering theory-analysis and interpretation. *Journal of Advertising Research*, *28*(1), 11.

Hayes, A. F. (2017). Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach. Guilford publications.

Hernandez, J. M. D. C., Wright, S. A., & Ferminiano Rodrigues, F. (2015). Attributes versus benefits: The role of construal levels and appeal type on the persuasiveness of marketing messages. *Journal of Advertising*, *44*(3), 243-253.

Jia, H., Wang, Y., Ge, L., Shi, G., & Yao, S. (2012). Asymmetric effects of regulatory focus on expected desirability and feasibility of embracing self-service technologies. *Psychology & Marketing*, *29*(4), 209-225.

Liberman, N., & Trope, Y. (1998). The role of feasibility and desirability considerations in near and distant future decisions: A test of temporal construal theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *75*(1), 5.

Liu, J., Xu, X. A., & Wang, L. (2023). How do travel experience sharing type, tourism activity type, and temporal distance shape online viewers' travel intentions? An application of construal level theory. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 1-23.

Ma, J., & Li, F. (2022). Effects of psychological distance and social influence on tourists' hotel booking preferences. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, *39*(4), 394-411.

Meeds, R., & Farnall, O. (2018). Comparing visual attention allocated to thematic, attribute and benefit sentences in advertising copy blocks: an eye tracking approach. *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising*, *39*(2), 101-119.

Oliveira, T., Araujo, B., & Tam, C. (2020). Why do people share their travel experiences on social media?. *Tourism Management*, *78*, 104041.

Park, S., & Nicolau, J. L. (2015). Asymmetric effects of online consumer reviews. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *50*, 67-83.

Reynolds, T. J. (1985). Implications for value research: A macro vs. micro perspective. *Psychology & Marketing*, 2(4), 297-305.

Sparks, B. A., & Browning, V. (2011). The impact of online reviews on hotel booking intentions and perception of trust. *Tourism Management*, *32*(6), 1310-1323.

Su, L., Yang, Q., Swanson, S. R., & Chen, N. C. (2022). The impact of online reviews on destination trust and travel intention: The moderating role of online review trustworthiness. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, *28*(4), 406-423.

Tan, W. K., & Wu, C. E. (2016). An investigation of the relationships among destination familiarity, destination image and future visit intention. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, *5*(3), 214-226.

Taylor, S. E., Pham, L. B., Rivkin, I. D., & Armor, D. A. (1998). Harnessing the imagination: Mental simulation, self-regulation, and coping. *American Psychologist*, *53*(4), 429.

Trope, Y., & Liberman, N. (2000). Temporal construal and time-dependent changes in preference. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *79*(6), 876.

Trope, Y., & Liberman, N. (2003). Temporal construal. *Psychological Review*, *110*(3), 403.

Wang, S., & Lehto, X. (2020). The interplay of travelers' psychological distance, language abstraction, and message appeal type in social media advertising. *Journal of Travel Research*, *59*(8), 1430-1446.

Wang, Y., & Kim, J. (2021). Interconnectedness between online review valence, brand, and restaurant performance. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, *48*, 138-145.

Xiao, L., Guo, Z., & D'Ambra, J. (2019). Benefit-based O2O commerce segmentation: a means-end chain approach. *Electronic Commerce Research*, *19*, 409-449.

Yuan, Y., & Raubal, M. (2014). Measuring similarity of mobile phone user trajectories – A spatio-temporal edit distance method. *International Journal of Geographical Information Science*, *28*(3), 496-520.

Zhang, Z., Qiao, S., Chen, Y., & Zhang, Z. (2022). Effects of spatial distance on consumers' review effort. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *94*, 103406.

Zhang, J., Wu, T., & Fan, Z. (2019). Research on precision marketing model of tourism industry based on user's mobile behavior trajectory. *Mobile Information Systems*, *2019*.

Zhang, Z., Zhang, Z., & Yang, Y. (2016). The power of expert identity: How website-recognized expert reviews influence travelers' online rating behavior. *Tourism Management*, *55*, 15-24.

Zhao, M., Hoeffler, S., & Zauberman, G. (2007). Mental simulation and preference consistency over time: The role of process-versus outcome-focused thoughts. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *44*(3), 379-388.

APPENDIX A

*Attribute-based review*It takes about 20 minutes by taxi from downtown to the beach.The temperature here feels comfortable, around 25 degrees, not too hot.The sea is so vast that you can even see the rocks and the sand on the seabed clearly through the water, which is very interesting.Additionally, walking or jogging along the seaside walkway, the wind with the salty flavour blows, feeling so comfortable. Looking at the sea horizon, the two spaces are intertwined, deeply shocked.A very worthy trip.

Benefit-based review The beach is very close to the citycenterand easy to find.The weather here is so sunny and the climate is also very good.And then the sea is endlessand is notdisappointing.It is soclear and blue, and I even if felt lighter.Moreover, the comfortablebreezealong the seasidemakes me feel very peaceful.The sea horizonis so romantic andI havea good experience.A veryworthytrip.

APPENDIX B

Attribute-based Review

Andrea Z wrote a review

I felt such an incredible experience and the service was no more than fabulous!
We finished the check-in within 5 minutes, a very quick process.
The room was very clean and the bed was comfortable. The facility works well and is easy to use during our staying.
The hotel's location was great, walking distance from this building or only a 10-15 minute Uber ride to every other hotspot.
The staff, Letty, who helped us check out, got our bags, and found a reasonably priced Uber for us to the airport, took care of all the details. Would definitely recommend.

Benefit-based Review

Andrea Z wrote a review

I felt such an incredible experience and the service was no more than fabulous!
A smooth and efficient check-in process, saving much time for us.
The room was very clean and the bed was comfortable, and we experienced a enjoyable sleep every night.
The hotel's location was great and it is very convenient for us to go all the main attractions.
The staff, Letty, who pulled out all the stops in making our stay exceptionally fun and memorable. She always took our stay and made us feel like a priority. Would definitely recommend.

Online hotel reviews and travellers' two-phased journey: Investigating boundary conditions for the decoy effect in hotel booking platforms

Bai, Blake
School of Hospitality and Tourism
Auckland University of Tourism

Kim, Chloe S.
School of Hospitality and Tourism
Auckland University of Tourism

Kim, Peter B.
School of Hospitality and Tourism
Auckland University of Tourism

Abstract:

This study delves into how different levels of online reviews (i.e., overall-level and individual-level reviews) affect the decoy effects of online hotel reviews on travellers' decision-making processes. Four scenario-based experimental studies were conducted to examine the decoy effect, exploring both overall-level and individual-level review stimuli on participants' hotel decision-making processes. The findings revealed a significant decoy effect with overall-level review attributes (e.g., overall rating and volume) and a significant but reverse decoy effect with individual-level online review attributes (e.g., review recency, length, and reviewer expertise) in hotel selection. Implications of the findings are provided for tourism researchers and managers.

Keywords: Hotel online reviews, Overall-level reviews, Individual-level reviews, Decoy effect.

Healing experiences at resort hotels and customers' eudaimonic well-being

Liu, Chyong-Ru
Department of Marketing and Tourism Management
National Chiayi University

Wang, Yao-Chin
Department of Tourism, Hospitality and Event Management
University of Florida

Kuo, Tonny Menglun
Center for Teaching and Learning Development
National Tsing Hua University

Tsui, Cheng-Hsiung
School of Business Department of Tourism
Minnan Normal University

Chen, Hsuan
Department of Marketing and Tourism Management
National Chiayi University

Abstract:

During the post-pandemic era, there is a rising trend to seek healing experiences at resort hotels. To contribute knowledge to this contemporary issue, this study aims to examine the effectiveness of healing experiences in improving customers' eudaimonic well-being. Based on the Conservation of Resources Theory, this study further conceptualizes psychological comfort and travel companion rapport as dual mediators of well-being formation. Data collected from customers at three luxury resort hotels in Taiwan indicates a significant positive relationship between healing experiences and eudaimonic well-being, with psychological comfort and travel companion rapport partially mediating this relationship.

Keywords: Healing Experience, Resort Hotel, Eudaimonic Well-Being, Psychological Comfort, Travel Companion Rapport, Conservation of Resources Theory

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused customers in the current post-pandemic era to seek healing experiences that can boost their mental health, build positive social connections, and improve their well-being (Stankov et al., 2020; Stankov & Filimonau, 2023; Wang & Uysal, 2023). Based on the context of complementary and alternative medicines (e.g., acupuncture, massage therapy, and chiropractic), Verhoef and Mulkins (2012) explained that the reasons individuals pursue healing experiences are due to physical symptoms, energetic imbalances, mental/emotional imbalances, subconscious imbalances, and spiritual imbalances. Verhoef and Mulkins (2012) identified that healing is a personal and subjective experience, self-directed and requiring positive intention, and is experienced in varying degrees and levels within an individual (e.g., physical healing, mental healing, social healing, and transformative healing). Symptom resolution, mental outlook, social support, and personal/existential growth are outcomes of healing found in interviews by Verhoef and Mulkins (2012). Although related studies such as wellness hotels (Chi et al., 2020), Zen retreat experiences (Wang et al., 2021), and eudaimonic wellness experiences (Kim & Yang, 2021) have been conducted in hospitality and tourism literature, knowledge creation on healing experiences is still in its infancy.

Healing experiences can be planned through therapeutic landscapes involving human-environmental and social interactions in hospitality settings (Gesler,1992). Resort hotels are ideal settings where high-quality and various healing experiences can be planned and offered to customers (Dryglas & Salamaga, 2023; Smith & Kelly, 2006). Liu et al. (2023) developed a 22-item scale to measure healing experiences at resort hotels via the four dimensions: sensory healing, social healing, wellness and cultural healing, and natural healing. The luxury facilities and equipment, aesthetics in decoration, destination locations, protection of privacy and safety, and excellent service deliveries make resort hotels a perfect setting for offering healing experiences to customers (Kang, 2018). The importance of creating healing experiences has been considered in hotel design (Zhou et al., 2018). It has been involved in different resort healing features, such as hot spring resort hotels (e.g., Beniya Mukayu in Japan), spa resort hotels (e.g., Six Senses Yao Noi in Thailand), wellness resort hotels (e.g., WE Hotel Jeju in Korea), and spiritual healing resort hotels (e.g., Hotel Tugu Bali in Indonesia). Some of the resort hotels develop unique healing experiences by integrating local art, cultural, and religious elements (Glouberman & Cloutier, 2016; Lee, 2015), mindful eating and fitness practices (Chen et al.,2022; Chi et al., 2020), and spiritual activities to achieve body-mind-soul balance (Kelly, 2010; Kim & Yang, 2021).

Eudaimonic well-being refers to psychological well-being in terms of happiness plus meaningfulness, self-actualization and vitality, and living in one's true self (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Enjoying a vacation at resort hotels has been taken as a means of relaxation and fostering self-growth and spirituality (Lengieza et al., 2019; Pearce & Packer, 2013; Rahmani et al., 2018), and therefore eudaimonic well-being is a potential outcome after having healing experiences at resort hotels. Based on the conservation of resources theory (COR), this study further proposes the formation of eudaimonic well-being from healing experiences at resort hotels can be developed through two resource-gaining mechanisms: individual resources (e.g., psychological comfort) and (2) interpersonal resources (e.g., travel companion rapport). Although improving eudaimonic well-being via staying at resort hotels has been popular worldwide, studies explaining the mechanisms of eudaimonic well-being formation are still limited. Therefore, the study's purposes are two-folded: (1) test the relationship between healing experiences at resort hotels (i.e., sensory healing, social healing, wellness and cultural healing, and natural healing) and eudaimonic well-being, and (2) propose and examine the mediating effects of psychological comfort and travel companion rapport.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Conservation of resources theory (COR)

Hobfoll (1989) proposed the conservation of resources theory (COR) and advocated that individuals try to conserve, protect, and build resources in social environments. One approach for individuals to reenergize their psychological resources is through positive social interactions (Hobfoll, 1989). Based on COR, this study proposes customers' stay experience at resort hotels as a social environment for them to gain psychological resources and further conceptualize such resource-gaining mechanisms into two approaches: (1) individual resources (e.g., psychological comfort) and (2) interpersonal resources (e.g., travel companion rapport). First, we focus on creating psychological comfort as a focal individual resource customers can gain from healing experiences at resort hotels. The intrapersonal facilitators motivate individuals to seek tourism activities and improve physical, psychological, and spiritual wellness (Raymore, 2002). Among intrapersonal facilitators, this study focuses on psychological comfort, which refers to "a positive emotion representing a sense of ease and a stress-free feeling in an environment that goes beyond other emotional feelings such as moods or happiness" (Radia et al., 2022; p. 102824). In the hotel industry, resort hotels are created to satisfy customers' needs for psychological comfort. Luxury resort hotels nowadays even offer guided meditation, yoga, or/and other mindfulness-related activities (e.g., zen tea, mindful walking, and mindful eating) for customers to enjoy senses of tranquillity, quietness, and peacefulness so that they can effectively release stress and gain quality restoration (Kim & Yang, 2021).

Second, we focus on the feelings of travel companion rapport as a focal interpersonal resource customers can enjoy from healing experiences at resort hotels. The interpersonal facilitators are operated and developed via social interactions (e.g., with friends, social groups, and family members) and are built based on individuals' social needs and human-environmental interactions in social environments (Kim, 2015). According to Aubert-Gamet and Cova (1999), customers sometimes shop to satisfy social or companion needs rather than the operational or financial benefits of the paid products/services. In tourism and hospitality contexts, building social relationships (e.g., couple relationship quality, family cohesion, friendship, or teamwork spirit) are sometimes the key reasons for people to engage in tourism and hospitality experiences and should be planned into travel itineraries (Choo & Petrick, 2015). Therefore, this study focuses on customers' rapport with their travel companions as an essential interpersonal resource they may enjoy during healing experiences at resort hotels. Rapport is a form of social interaction based on mutual trust and cooperation (Drolet & Morris, 2000) and can be developed through friendly communication, sharing the same feelings and thoughts, or mutual support and caring (Kim & Ok, 2010). Travel companions play essential roles in influencing customers' emotional and social quality, and most customers prefer to have their close family members or friends as ideal travel companions (Orakani et al., 2021). This study conceptualizes travel companion rapport as a relationship status in which customers perceive pleasant social interactions and build social bonds with travel companions. Resort hotel managers can offer opportunities via group activities or service programs for customers to develop social relationships (Lin et al., 2019).

2.2. Hypotheses development

According to COR and the abovementioned potential creation of individual resources (e.g., psychological comfort) and interpersonal resources (e.g., travel companion rapport) from healing experiences at resort hotels, we propose that healing experiences at resort hotels (i.e., sensory healing, social healing, wellness and cultural healing, and natural healing) can contribute to the improvement of psychological comfort, travel companion rapport, and eudaimonic well-being. Regarding the main effect of creating eudaimonic well-being via healing experiences, studies have found that safe and comfortable leisure spaces would allow individuals to perceive the meaning of life (Iwasaki et al., 2015); meanwhile, leisure activities related to relaxation and mindfulness can assist individuals on self-actualization and mental connections with inner self (Yang et al., 2011). Since such leisure activities (e.g., guided meditation, sunrise yoga, and sound therapy sessions) are widely offered at resort hotels (e.g., Four Seasons Resort the Nam Hai in Hoi An, Carillon Miami Wellness Resort in Florida, and Six Senses Bhutan) (Ahn et al., 2019; Wu & Yang, 2022), we propose that healing experiences at resort hotels can support customers' eudaimonic well-being. Through enjoying the healing experiences at resort hotels, this study highlights two paths within the mechanisms: psychological comfort and travel companion rapport. First, mental recovery, inner peace, and spiritual wellness can be enjoyed during the healing experiences at resort hotels, making customers feel psychological comfort, which later supports the perceptions of eudaimonic well-being (Kim & Yang, 2021; Tung et al., 2017). Second, with high-quality human-to-human service interactions at resort hotels and the opportunities for customers to enjoy healing experiences with their travel companions, customers can develop and strengthen positive interpersonal relationships with others, gaining travel companion rapport, which also can contribute to their overall eudaimonic well-being (Ahn et al., 2019; La Guardia et al., 2000). Taken together, we propose the following hypotheses:

H1: Customers' healing experiences at resort hotels (i.e., sensory healing, social healing, wellness and cultural healing, and natural healing) positively relate to their psychological comfort.
H2: Customers' healing experiences at resort hotels positively relate to their travel companion rapport.
H3: Customers' healing experiences at resort hotels positively relate to their eudaimonic well-being.
H4: Customers' psychological comfort positively relates to their eudaimonic well-being.
H5: Customers' travel companion rapport positively relates to their eudaimonic well-being.
H6: Customers' psychological comfort mediates the relationships between healing experiences at resort hotels and their eudaimonic well-being.
H7: Customers' travel companion rapport mediates the relationships between healing experiences at resort hotels and their eudaimonic well-being.

Figure 1 shows the research framework of this study.

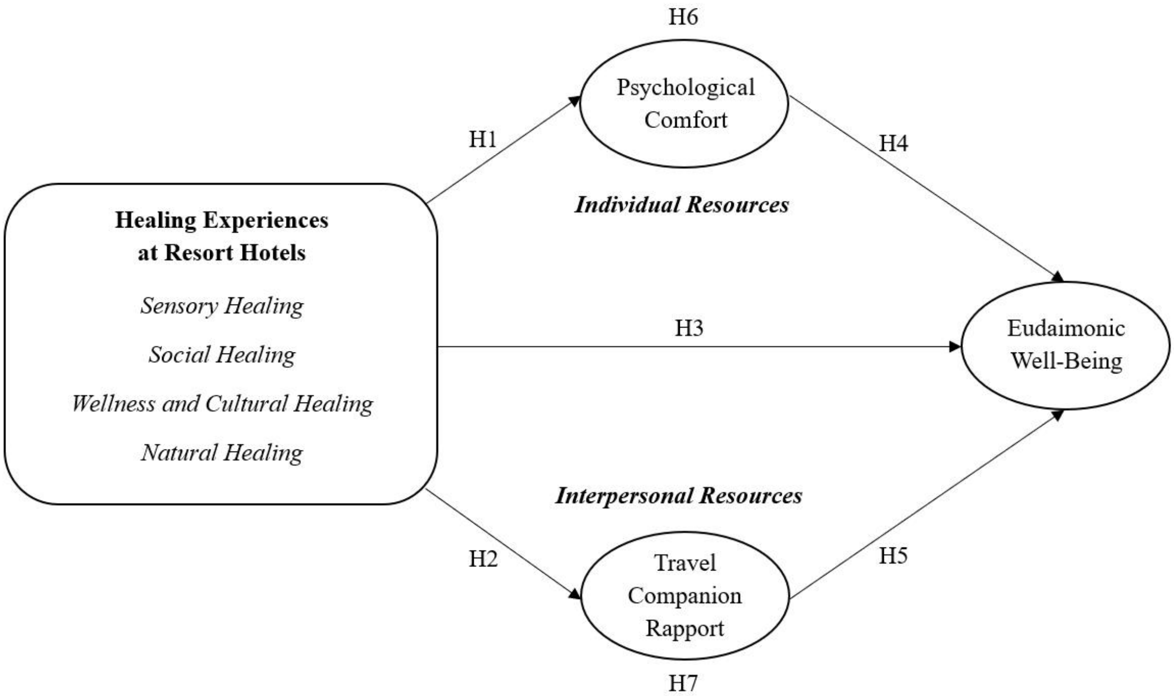


Figure 1.
The Research Framework

3. Method

3.1. Sampling and data collection
We target customers of three five-star healing resorts in Taiwan: The Lalu Sun Moon Lake, Fleur de Chine Hotel, and Hoshinoya Guguan. We chose the three resorts because they provide unique and comprehensive healing experiences for customers: The Lalu's Wellness Travel programs are designed to provide a holistic healing experience, encompassing aspects ranging from nutritionally balanced diets to serene meditative practices. Hoshinoya Guguan aspires to attain guest gratification through the therapeutic energies of nature and spa wellness. Fleur de Chine Hotel facilitates a rejuvenating sojourn through its picturesque vistas and natural hot springs, supplemented by Qi SPA that is under the aegis of Japan's Shiseido Company, proffering aromatherapy and hydrotherapy. Through purposeful sampling, we recruited customers who (1) posed photos or videos on social network sites (Instagram and Facebook), (2) checked in one of the three selected reports, and (3) stayed in the hotel with a travel companion. An invitation letter with an online survey questionnaire was sent through private message.

3.2. Measurement
All survey items were adapted from validated scales from previous studies. This study employed Likert-scale and semantic differential scale formats to mitigate the impact of common method variance. Unless otherwise specified, a seven-point Likert scale in

the agreement format was used to measure customers' responses to the experiences at the resort hotel (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). The survey items did not disclose the construct names to minimize social desirability bias. Multifaceted healing experience scales, encompassing sensory, social, wellness and cultural, and natural healing aspects, were adopted from Liu et al. (2023). The 22-item scale demonstrated suitable validity and reliability in a validation study (Liu et al., 2023). An 8-item psychological comfort scale from Spake et al. (2003) was used in the semantic differential format, employing pairs of adjectives to gauge psychological experiences (e.g., uncomfortable-comfortable; worried–worry-free). The concept of travel companion rapport was adapted from the 'enjoyable interaction' subscale by Gremler and Gwinner (2000), modifying the six-item scale to measure the rapport between customers and their travel companions, aligning with the research context. Eudaimonic well-being was assessed using a six-item scale from Ryan and Deci (2001). Control variables, including gender, age, education, visit frequency, and income, were collected as demographic data.

3.3. Data analysis

We conducted a confirmatory factor analysis to confirm the validity and reliability of our scale in the measurement model, using the *lavaan* package in R. To account for the impact of covariates, a series of multivariate regression models were used. The variance inflation factor (VIF) statistics were examined before interpreting the regression results to mitigate the impact of multicollinearity. For the process model analysis, mediation analysis was conducted using the *psych* package in R, as per the method outlined by Revelle (2015). We constructed four models, incorporating all control variables as covariates. Consistent with previous studies (Hayes, 2018), bootstrapping techniques (with 5,000 iterations) were employed to estimate the indirect effects.

4. Results

4.1. Profile of the respondents

A total of 273 valid responses were collected, with Fleur de Chine Hotel accounting for the majority (39.2%), followed by Hoshinoya Guguan (33.3%), and The Lalu Sun Moon Lake (27.5%). Among the respondents, a higher proportion were female (55.7%), the majority were single (51.6%), possessed a diploma or bachelor's degree (71.1%), were aged between 25-44 years (68.1%), and primarily resided in the northern region (53.8%). Most respondents were visiting for the first time (43.6%), while about three in ten had visited once before (27.8%). The primary companions during the stay were family members for over 62% of respondents, while friends accompanied 31%.

4.2. Hypotheses testing results

Table 1 shows the correlation coefficients among the used constructs. More details on checking the reliability and validity of the measures are available on request. The primary findings indicate that various aspects of healing experiences at resort hotels have a positive association with eudaimonic well-being. Controlling for demographic variables such as gender, education, age, and income, it was observed that wellness and cultural healing (r = .34***) and natural healing (r = .30**) positively predict eudaimonic well-being. Additionally, it was discovered that sensory (r = .23***), social (r = .14*), and natural healing (r = .55***) contribute to psychological comfort. Similarly, sensory (r = .15*), social (r = .22**), wellness and cultural (r = .12**), and natural healing (r = .37***) also enhance rapport with travel companions. Bootstrapping analysis conducted 5000 times revealed that psychological comfort and travel companion rapport play distinct roles in influencing customers' eudaimonic well-being. Specifically, psychological comfort serves as a mediator between sensory and natural healing and eudaimonic well-being (95%CI = [.02, .19] for sensory, [.07, .40] for natural). At the same time, travel companion rapport mediates between social and natural healing and eudaimonic well-being (95%CI = [.04, .21] for social, [.07, .30] for natural). Lastly, the study found that wellness and cultural healing directly affect eudaimonic well-being (r = .27***). In contrast, the indirect effects between wellness and cultural healing and eudaimonic well-being were insignificant. The hypotheses testing results for both the main and mediation effects are summarized in Tables 2 and 3. Based on the results, H2, H4, and H5 were accepted. H1, H3, H6, and H7 were partially accepted.

Table 1.
Means, SD, and Correlations

		Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	Gender	1.56	.50	--										
2	Education	3.03	.61	-.01	--									
3	Age	3.00	1.21	-.03	-.13*	--								
4	Income	2.83	1.35	-.15*	.26***	.13*	--							
5	Sensory Healing	5.68	1.05	.11	.14*	-.13*	.12*	***(.82)***						
6	Social Healing	5.90	1.00	.18**	.13*	-.12*	.13*	.77***	***(.89)***					
7	Wellness and Cultural Healing	5.06	1.22	-.10	.01	-.01	.00	.44***	.30***	***(.73)***				
8	Natural Healing	5.90	.93	.06	.12*	-.15*	.17**	.74***	.72***	.44***	***(.82)***			
9	Psychological Comfort	5.88	1.01	-.02	.15*	-.17**	.15*	.74***	.70***	.39***	.80***	***(.85)***		
10	Travel Companion Rapport	5.81	1.05	.07	.21***	-.17**	.20***	.67***	.66***	.41***	.70***	.77***	***(.86)***	
11	Eudaimonic Well-Being	5.38	1.15	-.03	.05	-.10	.09	.53***	.45***	.55***	.55***	.65***	.68***	***(.87)***

Note: * p <.05, ** p <.01, *** p < .001. The off-diagonal elements are the correlations between the constructs. The diagonal elements are the squared root of the average variance extracted.

Table 2.

OLS Regressions to Predict Psychological Comfort, Travel Companion Rapport, and Eudaimonic Well-Being

	Model 1 Psychological Comfort		Model 2 Travel Companion Rapport		Model 3 Eudaimonic Well-Being		Model 4 Eudaimonic Well-Being	
Predictors	*Estimates*	*p*	*Estimates*	*p*	*Estimates*	*p*	*Estimates*	*p*
(Intercept)	.84	**.011**	.39	.337	.84	.106	.34	.456
Gender	-.21	**.004**	.02	.790	-.06	.595	.01	.936
Family Composition	-.05	.256	.04	.438	-.07	.339	-.07	.264
Education	.05	.418	.16	**.027**	-.07	.479	-.16	**.048**
Age	-.01	.668	-.07	.071	-.02	.724	.02	.630
Income	-.01	.800	.06	.098	.04	.412	.01	.753
Visiting Frequency	-.06	.089	-.06	.148	.04	.437	.09	**.047**
Sensory Healing	.23	**<0.001**	.15	**.033**	.17	.055	.01	.874
Social Healing	.14	**.020**	.22	**.002**	.07	.478	-.09	.254
Wellness and Cultural Healing	.01	.678	.12	**.003**	.34	**<0.001**	.27	**<0.001**
Natural Healing	.55	**<0.001**	.37	**<0.001**	.30	**.002**	-.09	.336
Psychological Comfort							.38	**<0.001**
Travel Companion Rapport							.47	**<0.001**
Observations	273							
***R^2* adjusted**	.702		.578		.425		.575	

Table 3.
Results of Testing Mediation Effects

Path	Estimate $_{boot}$	95% CI	
		lower	upper
Sensory Healing → Psychological Comfort → Eudaimonic Well-Being	.09	.02	.19
Social Healing → Psychological Comfort → Eudaimonic Well-Being	.06	-.01	.15
Wellness and Cultural Healing → Psychological Comfort → Eudaimonic Well-Being	.00	-.02	.03
Natural Healing → Psychological Comfort → Eudaimonic Well-Being	.22	.07	.40
Sensory Healing → Travel Companion Rapport → Eudaimonic Well-Being	.07	.00	.18
Social Healing → Travel Companion Rapport → Eudaimonic Well-Being	.11	.04	.21
Wellness and Cultural Healing → Travel Companion Rapport → Eudaimonic Well-Being	.04	.00	.10
Natural Healing → Travel Companion Rapport → Eudaimonic Well-Being	.17	.07	.30

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Theoretical implications

First, our research highlights that within the four healing experiences at resort hotels (i.e., sensory healing, social healing, wellness and cultural healing, and natural healing), both “wellness and cultural healing” and “natural healing” experiences are crucial for achieving eudaimonic well-being in resort hotels. Resort services like aromatherapy, massage, traditional relaxation activities (e.g., singing bowls and yoga), local cultural experiences, and outdoor gardens significantly contribute to eudaimonic well-being. These findings align with existing literature suggesting a growing desire for eudaimonic experiences during vacations (Lengieza et al., 2019; Glouberman & Cloutier, 2016). Hence, luxury resort operators should emphasize healing experiences through stress-relief services, traditional healing activities, local explorations, and natural environmental integration to boost customer eudaimonic well-being.

Second, the study reveals the dual pathway to eudaimonic well-being. Psychological comfort and travel companion rapport partially mediate the relationship between healing experiences and eudaimonic well-being. Based on COR (Hobfoll, 1989), we conceptualize psychological comfort as a type of personal resource and travel companion rapport as a type of interpersonal resource. The findings of this study show that healing experiences in resort hotels impact psychological comfort, fostering eudaimonic well-being—a novel finding that expands the understanding of luxury resort healing experiences. Furthermore, sensory and natural healing enhances eudaimonic well-being through psychological comfort. Meanwhile, experiences of social and natural healing foster travel companion rapport, which also positively influences eudaimonic well-being. This underscores the importance of offering diverse healing experiences and enhancing customer-travel companion interactions to elevate overall well-being.

5.2. Practical implications

This study emphasizes the importance of improving psychological comfort through healing experiences at resort hotels. It suggests that luxury resort hotel operators should offer personalized services to their guests. Before guests arrive, they should inquire about their preferences and special needs, and upon their arrival, they should fulfill these requests in unique ways. Examples include preparing their favorite drinks, bedding, and room decoration style or offering customized private experiences like tailor-made dinners and exclusive tours, thus ensuring guests feel comfortable and content with personalized service.

On the other hand, the study highlights the significance of creating travel companion rapport through healing experiences at resort hotels. Luxury resorts are advised to provide intimate social spaces for guests. Designing activities like nighttime storytelling sessions, perhaps outdoors or by a campfire, where interesting local stories and mysterious legends are shared, can create a warm and mystical atmosphere. Sharing thoughts and feelings among travel companions can foster close and harmonious relationships among travel mates.

5.3. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

With meaningful implications contributed by this study, there are still some limitations within this study that lead to suggestions for future studies. First, this study focuses on the paths from healing experiences to eudaimonic well-being without considering the potential moderators to enhance or reduce the effects on psychological comfort, travel companion rapport, and eudaimonic well-being. Therefore, we suggest future studies explore the moderating effects of our proposed model. Second, data collection for this study is conducted only in Taiwan. Future studies may collect data from different cultural regions, implement cross-cultural validation, and explore potential cultural differences in eudaimonic well-being formation through healing experiences at resort hotels.

REFERENCES

Ahn, J., Back, K. J., & Boger, C. (2019). Effects of integrated resort experience on customers' hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, *43*(8), 1225-1255.

Aubert-Gamet, V., & Cova, B. (1999). Servicescapes: From modern non-places to postmodern commonplaces. *Journal of Business Research, 44*(1), 37-45.

Chen, C. C., Han, J. J., & Wang, Y. C. (2022). A hotel stay for a respite from work? Examining recovery experience, rumination and well-being among hotel and bed-and-breakfast guests. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 34(4), 1270-1289.

Chi, C. G. Q., Chi, O. H., & Ouyang, Z. (2020). Wellness hotel: Conceptualization, scale development, and validation. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *89*, 102404.

Choo, H., & Petrick, J. F. (2015). The importance of travel companionship and we-intentions at tourism service encounters. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, *16*(1), 1-23.

Drolet, A. L., & Morris, M. W. (2000). Rapport in conflict resolution: Accounting for how face-to-face contact fosters mutual cooperation in mixed-motive conflicts. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *36*(1), 26-50.

Dryglas, D., & Salamaga, M. (2023). Therapeutic landscape as value added in the structure of the destination-specific therapeutic tourism product: The case study of Polish Spa Resorts. *Tourism: An International Interdisciplinary Journal, 71*(4), 782-797.

Gesler, W. M. (1992). Therapeutic landscapes: medical issues in light of the new cultural geography. *Social Science & Medicine*, *34*(7), 735-746.

Glouberman, D., & Cloutier, J. A. (2016). Community as holistic healer on health holiday retreats. In M. K. Smith & L. Puczkó (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of health tourism* (pp. 152–167). Routledge.

Gremler, D. D., & Gwinner, K. P. (2000). Customer-employee rapport in service relationships. *Journal of Service Research, 3*(1), 82-104.

Hayes, A. F. (2018). Partial, conditional, and moderated moderated mediation: Quantification, inference, and interpretation. *Communication Monographs*, *85*(1), 4-40.

Hobfoll, S. E. (1989). Conservation of resources: a new attempt at conceptualizing stress. *American Psychologist*, *44*(3), 513-524.

Iwasaki, Y., Messina, E., Shank, J., & Coyle, C. (2015). Role of leisure in meaning-making for community-dwelling adults with mental illness: Inspiration for engaged life. *Journal of Leisure Research, 4*7(5), 538-555.

Kang, J. (2018). Finding desirable post-consumption behaviors: An investigation of luxury value and romantic brand love relationships. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 30*(9), 2984-3003.

Kim, W., & Ok, C. (2010). Customer orientation of service employees and rapport: Influences on service-outcome variables in full-service restaurants. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, *34*(1), 34-55.

La Guardia, J. G., Ryan, R. M., Couchman, C. E., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Within-person variation in security of attachment: A self-determination theory perspective on attachment, need fulfillment, and well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 79*, 367-384.

Lee, T. J. (2015). Implications of cultural differences for expatriate managers in the global hotel industry. *Tourism Analysis*, *20*(4), 425-431.

Lengieza, M. L., Hunt, C. A., & Swim, J. K. (2019). Measuring eudaimonic travel experiences. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *74*(C), 195-197.

Lin, H., Zhang, M., Gursoy, D., & Fu, X. (2019). Impact of tourist-to-tourist interaction on tourism experience: The mediating role of cohesion and intimacy. *Annals of Tourism Research, 76*, 153-167.

Liu, C.-R., Wang, Y.-C., Kuo, T. M.-L., Tsui, C. -H., Chen, H. (2023, June 10). *Healing experiences at resort hotels: A preliminary study on scale development*. Welcome New Normal: Conference on Sustainability and Innovation of Tourism and Hospitality Business, New Taipei City, Taiwan.

Kelly, C. (2010). Analysing wellness tourism provision: A retreat operators' study. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 17*(1), 108–116

Kim, B. (2015). What facilitates a festival tourist? Investigating tourists' experiences at a local community festival. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, *20*(9), 1005-1020.

Kim, B., & Yang, X. (2021). "I'm here for recovery": the eudaimonic wellness experiences at the Le Monastère des Augustines Wellness hotel. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, *38*(8), 802-818.

Orakani, S. N., Smith, K., & Weaver, A. (2021). Reframing the experiences of travellers with mobility impairments: Enhancing the leisure constraints model. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, *47*, 84-92.

Pearce, P. L., & Packer, J. (2013). Minds on the move: New links from psychology to tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *40*, 386-411.

Radia, K. N., Purohit, S., Desai, S., & Nenavani, J. (2022). Psychological comfort in service relationships: A mixed-method approach. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, *64*, 102824.

Revelle, W. 2015. "Package 'Psych.'" The Comprehensive R Archive Network, August 30. https://cran.r-project.org/web/ packages/psych/psych.pdf.

Rahmani, K., Gnoth, J., & Mather, K. (2018). Hedonic and eudaimonic well-being: A psycholinguistic view. *Tourism Management, 69*, 155-166.

Raymore, L. A. (2002). Facilitators to leisure. *Journal of Leisure Research*, *34*(1), 37-51.

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2001). On happiness and human potentials: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *52*, 141-166.

Smith, M., & Kelly, C. (2006). Wellness tourism. *Tourism Recreation Research, 31*(1), 1-4.

Spake, D. F., Beatty, S. E., Brockman, B. K., & Crutchfield, T. N. (2003). Consumer comfort in service relationships: Measurement and importance. *Journal of Service Research*, *5*(4), 316-332.

Stankov, U., Filimonau, V., & Vujičić, M. D. (2020). A mindful shift: An opportunity for mindfulness-driven tourism in a post-pandemic world. *Tourism Geographies*, *22*(3), 703-712.

Stankov, U., & Filimonau, V. (2023). Here and now–the role of mindfulness in post-pandemic tourism. *Tourism Geographies*, *25*(1), 374-389.

Tung, V. W. S., Lin, P., Qiu Zhang, H., & Zhao, A. (2017). A framework of memory management and tourism experiences. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 34*(7), 853-866.

Verhoef, M. J., & Mulkins, A. (2012). The healing experience—how can we capture it? *Explore*, *8*(4), 231-236.

Wang, Y.-C., Chen, P.-J., Shi, H., & Shi, W. (2021). Travel for mindfulness through Zen retreat experience: A case study at Donghua Zen Temple. *Tourism Management*, *83*, 104211.

Wang, Y.-C., & Uysal, M. (2023). Artificial intelligence-assisted mindfulness in tourism, hospitality, and events. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 36*(4), 1262-1278.

Wu, Y., & Yang, J. (2022). Lifestyle skiing contributes to health and eudaimonic well-being: an emergent Chinese lifestyle mobility. *Tourism Geographies*, *24*(6-7), 1134-1152.

Yang, S., Xiao, H., & Tse, C. Y. (2011). Leisure in an urban environment: A perspective of university students. *Journal of China Tourism Research, 7*(2), 168-183.

Zhou, L., Yu, J., Wu, M. Y., Wall, G., & Pearce, P. L. (2018). Seniors' seasonal movements for health enhancement. *Service Industries Journal*, *38*(1-2), 27-47.

A study of destination determinants of sauna tourism in japan: From a questionnaire survey

Yoshioka, Tsutomu
Toyo University

Abstract:

The sauna boom in Japan that began several years ago, continues today. Many sauna-enthusiasts visit saunas near their homes or workplaces. However, there are also many sauna lovers who travel to distant sauna facilities. This study focused on the determinants of sauna travel destinations. What factors do influence sauna enthusiasts' decisions regarding sauna travel destinations? This point is discussed through an analysis of a questionnaire survey conducted by the author.

Keywords: Sauna tour, consumer behavior, water baths, sauna enthusiasts (sauna lovers)

1. Introduction

The sauna boom in Japan that began several years ago, continues today. Many sauna-enthusiasts visit saunas near their homes or workplaces. However, many sauna lovers also travel to distant sauna facilities in addition to their neighborhood saunas. Sometimes, package tours are organized to visit several distant sauna facilities within a short period of time.

These trips can be called a form of sauna tourism or sauna tour, a type of tourism research area called "Special Interest Tourism". Therefore, what kind of research on sauna tourism will contribute to the interdisciplinary and practical world of sauna tourism?

This study focused on the determinants of sauna travel destinations. What factors do influence sauna enthusiasts' decisions regarding sauna travel destinations? Are there differences in the attributes of sauna lovers? These points will be discussed through an analysis of the questionnaire survey conducted by the author.

2. Methodology

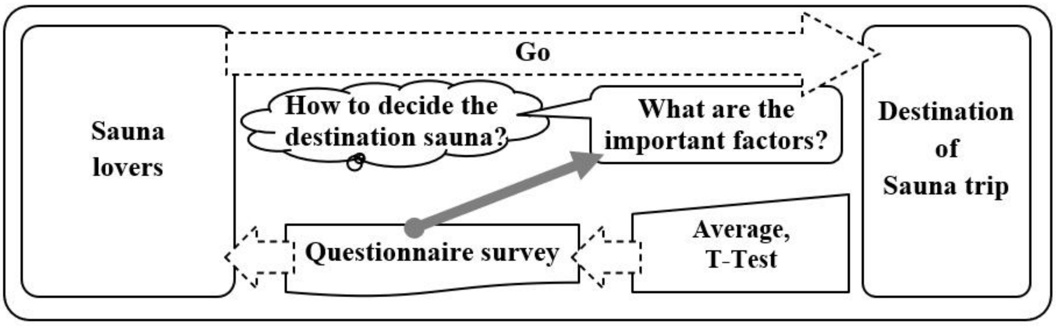
In this study, a questionnaire survey of sauna enthusiasts was conducted. A summary of the survey is as follows:
- Period: February 12 - 24, 2024
- Method: Create a survey form on Google Forms and announce it on various social media platforms, X (Twitter), Facebook, and Instagram.
- Question items: The two main types of survey items were as follows:

(1) Factors that determine the destination of a trip to sauna (5-point Likert scale for importance)

Sauna facilities seen on TV programs, sauna facilities popular on social media, sauna facilities seen in magazines, saunas I have always wanted to visit, saunas I have visited before and I would like to visit again, etc.

(2) Facilities and services that are important to sauna tourists (5-point Likert scale for importance)
(2)-1. sauna room related
Sauna room temperature (high, medium, low), sauna room type (dry, Finnish, mist, etc.)
(2)-2. related to water bath
Availability, water quality, temperature (high, medium, low, or very low temperature)
(2)-3. bathroom-related
Taking rest outside, many resting chairs, etc.
(2)-4. Other
Availability of meals, lodging, parking, payment methods, and so on

Figure-1: Research outline and model



3. Results

3.1. Summary of responses
The respondents' demographics data are as follows:
- Gender: 33 males, 18 females, 4 did not respond
- Age: 9 in their 20s, 11 in their 30s, 25 in their 40s, 5 in their 50s, 1 in their 60s or older, 4 did not respond.
- Education: 8 postgraduate, 23 undergraduate, 6 junior college, 12 high school, 1 other, 5 did not respond.
- Frequency of sauna use: 2 respondents - about once a year; 1 respondent - about once every 2-3 months; 4 respondents - less than 3 times a month; 23 respondents - 4-8 times a month; 13 respondents - 9-14 times a month; and 12 respondents - 15 or more times a month.

3.2. Analysis
Data were collected on a 5-point Likert scale for the importance of each item, and the averages were ranked as follows:
Table-1: Importance of items (average>3.70)

rank	item	n	ave.	rank	item	n	ave.
1	**There are water baths.**	55	**4.64**	6	There are hot tubs.	55	4.07
2	**Sauna facility I have wanted to visit for a long time.**	55	**4.40**	8	Sauna room is Finnish type	55	3.91
3	**Facilities that I have**	55	**4.31**	9	Sauna facilities in the	54	3.78

	been to before and would like to go back again				vicinity of the business travel destination		
4	Available facilities	55	4.13	10	There are rest chairs that lie flat.	54	3.76
5	Many rest chairs	55	4.11	11	Sauna facility that is a hot topic on social media	55	3.71
6	Outdoor breaks available	55	4.07				

Source: author

Next, a t-test by gender (male and female) was conducted, and the items for which significant differences were found were as follows:

Table-2: T-test by gender (p<0.05)

		average				average	
item	p	male	female	item	p	male	female
A mist-type sauna room	.048	2.00	**2.22**	There is an ultra-low temperature (less than 10°C) water bath.	.008	**2.61**	1.56
Löyly or Aufguss are taking place in	.015	**3.79**	3.33	There are hot tubs.	.023	**4.33**	3.50
There are facilities to hang sauna hats.	.049	**2.60**	1.9	Drinks favored by sauna enthusiasts are available for sale.	.014	**2.67**	1.56
There is a water bath	.022	**4.82**	4.39	There is a special ware for that facility.	.044	**3.51**	2.67
There is a medium temperature (20~25°C) water bath	.030	1.88	**2.17**	Body care (e.g., massage) is provided	.012	2.12	**2.33**

Source: author

In addition, the results of a t-test by age group revealed the following items with significant differences.

Table-3: T-test by age (p<0.05)

item	P	average <= 39	>= 40
Sauna facilities seen in magazines and other publications (including e-books)	.017	**2.90**	2.52
Sauna facility I have wanted to visit for a long time.	.034	**4.60**	4.29
The water bath is hot (25°C or higher)	.000	1.45	**1.94**

Source: author

4. Discussion, implication, and conclusion

4.1. Discussion

The analysis in the previous section revealed the factors that are important for determining sauna travel destinations in Japan.

(1) Water baths

The availability of a water bath, which ranks first in terms of importance, is a point to be focused on.

In fact, when the author recommended a certain facility to a friend (who uses it more than 15 times a month), she was hesitant to go there because "there is not a water bath." In addition, I have heard many others say that the availability of water baths is important.

In other words, it seems that having water baths is an important factor for sauna facilities to be chosen as a destination for sauna trips. This analysis also found that women prefer medium temperatures, and men prefer ultra-low temperatures. This information is useful for setting up water baths to the target markets of each sauna facilities.

(2) Facilities I have wanted to visit for a long time

In Japan, TV dramas about saunas are aired and can be viewed anytime on Netflix. In addition, many sauna operators and sauna-related media (magazines, database site of saunas, etc.) use social media daily.

These can be triggers for sauna lovers to think, "I would like to visit here." In other words, by being remembered as a sauna facility that they "want to visit," and by continuing to encourage them to act on that memory, "sauna facilities they want to visit" will become "sauna facilities they go to," in other words, destinations for sauna trips.

In addition, the fact that the topic was talked about on social media was also high on average in importance, confirming the indispensability of making good use of this means.

(3) Facilities that they have visited before and they would like to visit again

Sauna lovers are more likely to repeatedly use their favorite sauna facilities if they are located within their living areas, such as homes or workplaces. However, it is difficult for sauna lovers to repeat their use (repeat purchases) while traveling to saunas. But according to the results of the survey, the top factor in deciding the destination was "sauna facilities that I have visited before and I would like to visit again."

This finding suggests that saunas offer something that makes people want to return. The top features of saunas (mean value >= 4) among those who answered "5" to the importance level of "sauna facilities I have been to before and I would like to go back" were "Finnish type sauna room," "water baths," "can rest outside," "many chairs for resting," "hot tubs," and "available."
Therefore, it can be assumed that satisfying these factors would make it easier for people to select the facility they would like to visit again.

4.2. Implication, and conclusion
The survey revealed that three factors are important for determining the destination of a sauna trip: (1) water baths, (2) sauna facilities that respondents have always wanted to visit, and (3) sauna facilities that they have visited before and they would like to visit again. These factors identified in this study will be beneficial to current sauna operators and those who are starting sauna businesses.

These points of view were derived from a questionnaire survey of the Japanese respondents. For example, this could be a point that non-Japanese sauna facilities targeting Japanese tourists could consider in their marketing.

In addition, as an interdisciplinary contribution, this study could be part of sauna tourism research, especially in Japan, where research on sauna tourism is rare.

4.3. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies
Although a questionnaire survey was conducted in this study, the number of samples collected was small (n=55), making it difficult to theorize or generalize through the analysis of these data. In the future, it will be necessary to consider ways to increase the sample size and design a questionnaire that is easy to complete.

Slow-wellness destination for holistic Well-Being: A novel conceptual paradigm

Insuwanno, Patthawee
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism
Prince of Songkla University, Phuket Campus

Abstract:

A conceptual idea of a slow-wellness destination proposed in this article is derived from the two concepts, namely wellness tourism and slow tourism, which are evolved initially separately. An integrative systematic literature review analysis of relevant published works was employed, utilizing relevant keyworks inputted through Google Scholar. Thirty articles meeting the criteria were chosen. The data were then explored and synthesised to identify the linkage and similar commonalities between these concepts. The results indicate that these two forms of tourism coexist and share similar commonalities that predominantly promote tourists' physical and psychological well-being. They can advocate for and supplement each other to achieve holistic well-being through various activities and components offered at a slow-wellness destination. The destinations implementing this conceptual idea are diversifying their tourism products under the primary goal of well-being to cater to the diverse needs and preferences of multi-group consumers.

Keywords: wellness tourism; slow tourism; well-being; destination; new touristic experience.

1. Introduction

In the late 20th century, health-related activities have become a global megatrend that gains high interest. Therefore, wellness tourism emerged as a significant form of tourism without any sign of slowing down. It entails the preservation of health in response to stress, hunger, and emerging diseases. Moreover, the fast-paced work and life, especially in capitalised societies, create tremendous pressure (Heung & Kucukusta, 2012). Additionally, people have started seeking opportunities to reduce the pace of their lives and rejuvenate their bodies and mind through tourism. The philosophy of “slow” has become a new culture in respond to this demand because it allows people to spend time on mindfulness and self-reflection (Parkins, 2004). This philosophy attaches various dimensions within the tourism context, emphasizing immersion, relaxation, and indulgence in tourism activities for a more meaningful experience (Caffyn, 2012; Parkins, 2004).
In this study, an investigation on the definitions and dimensions of wellness and slow tourism is pursued to formulate a new conceptual idea known as the “Slow-wellness destination”. Originally, wellness and slow tourism evolved independently, but they may share similar commonalities and have potential to complement each other in meeting the diverse needs of tourists seeking to enhance their physical and psychological well-being. Understanding the linkage and mutual commonalities of these concepts could path a way for the destinations to develop innovative tourist experience.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Wellness Tourism

In recent years, wellness tourism has garnered substantial attention and has witnessed notable global expansion. This phenomenon can be attributed to evolving trends within the healthcare sector, which prioritize proactive, holistic, and preventative approaches to enhance individuals' personal, physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being (Dini & Pencarelli, 2021). It is imperative to acknowledge that the concept of wellness is dynamic and inherently subjective, allowing for diverse interpretations and multifaceted definitions (Smith & Kelly, 2006). However, it traditionally encompasses an array of life domains, including the pursuit of a harmonious equilibrium among the body, spirit, and mind, the cultivation of self-development, the nurturing of social connections, the promotion of environmental consciousness, the stimulation of intellectual growth, the attainment of occupational satisfaction, and the fostering of a sense of happiness (Erfurt-Cooper & Cooper, 2009; Monteson & Singer, 2004; Mueller & Kaufmann, 2001; Smith & Kelly, 2006; Smith & Puczkó, 2015).

Scholars have posited that the concept of wellness encompasses seven interconnected dimensions: physical, psychological, spiritual, intellectual, social, occupational, and environmental (Puczkó & Bachvarov, 2006). These dimensions extend the notion of wellness beyond the mere absence of disease or infirmity, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the concept. A review of the existing literature reveals a wide-ranging scope of activities within the domain of wellness tourism, including but not limited to spa treatments, massages, educational programs, fitness initiatives, spiritual healing practices, and numerous other offerings (Bočkus et al., 2021).

2.2. Slow Tourism

Slow tourism has emerged as a distinctive form of travel, initially stemming from the slow food movement that originated in Italy in 1980 as a response to the proliferation of fast-food establishments and less-nutritious dietary choices (Shang et al., 2020; Valls et al., 2019). In its early stages, the concept of slow tourism was closely associated with environmentally sustainable practices (Özdemir & Çelebi, 2018). Subsequently, the philosophy of “slow” has horizontally transcended into various facets of tourism, with a focus on enhancing personal satisfaction and overall well-being (Caffyn, 2012; Shang et al., 2020). Nevertheless, owing to its relatively recent emergence, the definition of slow tourism remains a subject of ongoing debate, with limited research dedicated to this topic (Fullagar et al., 2012; Oh et al., 2016).

It is noteworthy that the concept of slowness in tourism is not inherently tied to opposition against speed or mass tourism. Instead, it manifests itself in the immersive consumption patterns associated with tourism products (Caffyn, 2012; Esichaikul & Songsonthonwong,2012).

Through the literature review, the significant tourists' motivations to participate in this form of tourism are well-being, relaxation and escapism, social interactions, self-reflection and discovery, and novelty-seeking (Caffyn, 2012; Esichaikul & Songsonthonwong, 2012; Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011). In addition, slowness is dominantly found in four key aspects in slow tourism product development: slow city, slow activity, slow food, and slow travel (Clancy, 2017; Dickinson et al., 2011). In this particular, Esichaikul & Songsonthonwong (2012) presented some critical activities included in slow tourism such as soft exercising, eating local high nutrient foods, learning local cultures, and geographically immersing in the purely natural environment. Thus, it would exempt tourists from lives of depression, congestion, and pollutions in cities. Tourists, therefore, are given a chance to rejuvenate their physical and psychological health through relaxing activities, such as rowing canoes, rafting, contacting locals, learning new skills and knowledge, and trekking through forests.

3. Methodology

This study utilized an integrative literature review analysis, employing a systematic approach that involved conducting a search on Google Scholar using relevant keywords: "slow tourism," "slow travel," "health and wellness tourism," "destination," and "well-being tourism." This search yielded a substantial result of 20,700 published works as of October 2023. To streamline this extensive body of literature, additional criteria were applied to narrow down the results:

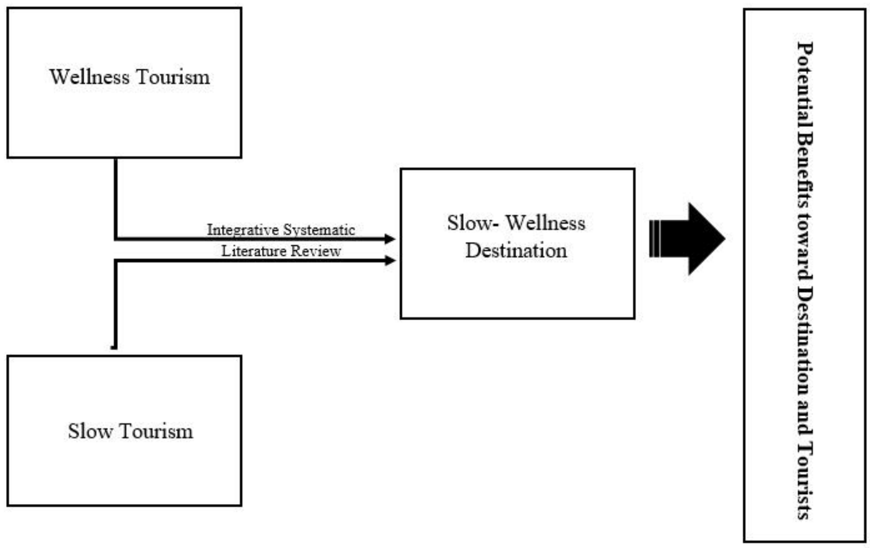
- The publication stage was required to be final.
- The language was limited to English.
- The source type was confined to journal articles, books, and conference proceedings.

Following this initial screening, a meticulous examination of the titles and abstracts of these articles led to the selection of 30 articles that provided comprehensive definitions and dimensions of wellness tourism and slow tourism. The chosen articles were assessed for their quality, clarity, and depth of exploration. Lastly, these selected articles underwent an exploratory investigation and synthesis to facilitate a profound understanding of the subject matter.

Through the systematic approach of the literature review, the definitions of these two terms were identified and categorized as either heuristic or technical definitions. Heuristic definitions, as outlined by Maslow (1968) and Lipman (2003), are practical and often informal, drawing on personal experience and subjective interpretation. They offer broad definitions that allow for flexibility and aim to aid individuals in understanding a concept in a general sense. Conversely, technical definitions, as defined by Merriam-Webster (n.d.), are more precise and formal, commonly used in academic or technical contexts. These definitions rely on established criteria or standards and strive to be clear and unambiguous (American Psychological Association, 2020).

Following the classification of definitions, the study proceeded to explore the commonalities between wellness tourism and slow tourism. This exploration was conducted through the lens of seven dimensions of wellness: physical, psychological, social, intellectual, spiritual, environmental, and occupational wellness. These dimensions served as a framework for understanding the holistic nature of both concepts and their potential for integration. By examining how activities and experiences within each concept contributed to well-being across these dimensions, the study shed light on their intersecting aspects and the possibility of synthesizing them into a unified approach to tourism. This methodological approach facilitated a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between wellness tourism and slow tourism, laying the groundwork for further exploration and application in tourism development and promotion.

Conceptual Framework
Figure 1
Conceptual Framework of Slow-wellness destination



4. Results

With the systematic approach of the literature review, the definitions of these two terms are first identified and further classified as either heuristic or technical definitions. Heuristic and technical definitions represent two distinct approaches to defining a concept or term. According to Maslow (1968) and Lipman (2003), a heuristic definition is a practical and often informal definition based on personal experience and subjective interpretation. It is a broad definition that allows for flexibility and is intended to help individuals understand a concept in a general sense. In contrast, Merriam-Webster (n.d.) defines a technical definition as a more precise and formal definition typically used in academic or technical contexts. It is often based on established criteria or standards and aims to be clear and unambiguous (American Psychological Association, 2020). In summary, the primary difference between heuristic and technical definitions lies in the level of precision and formality. Heuristic definitions are more flexible and informal, while technical definitions are characterized by precision and formality.

The definitions highlight several beneficial dimensions that are subsequently analysed to identify their similarities and compatibility. This analysis reveals the potential for combining and integrating these two concepts to complement each other and promote their joint application.

This systematic literature review presents the definitions and dimensions of wellness and slow tourism in Table 1, allowing for the identification of similar commonalities, as presented in Table 2.

Table 1
The definitions and dimensions of wellness tourism and slow tourism

Wellness Tourism	
Heuristic Definitions	**Technical Definitions**

• Mueller & Kaufmann (2001): a journey focused on enhancing physical, mental health and developing harmony with social and environmental factors. • Myers, et al., (2000): a form of traveling dedicated to optimising health and overall well-being by achieving a balanced integration of body-mind-spirit, harmonised with surroundings. • Smith & Puczkó (2015): a form of tourism primarily emphasises enhancing physical well-being and improving mental and spiritual well-being, with the overarching goal of enhancing individuals' capacity and functionality.	• Cockerell (1996): a form of travelling characterized by individuals traveling with the primary intention of proactively maintaining or enhancing their health and overall well-being through engagement in a range of wellness-related activities and services offered at a destination. These activities often encompass physical fitness, nutrition, relaxation, and other holistic approaches to well-being. • Connell (2006): a specialized form of travel in which individuals seek medical and surgical procedures, including cosmetic surgeries and treatments, with the dual objectives of enhancing their physical appearance and addressing psychological well-being. This form of tourism entails journeys across borders to access medical or healthcare services. • Árpási (2018): a form of travelling motivated by the desire to mitigate work-related stress and enhance overall physical and mental well-being. Travelers engage in a spectrum of activities aimed at stress reduction, relaxation, and self-improvement, often involving spa therapies, mindfulness practices, fitness regimens, and other wellness-focused interventions. It serves as a means of rejuvenation and escape from work-related pressures.
Slow Tourism	
Heuristic Definitions	**Technical Definitions**
• Caffyn (2012): a form of tourism that involves making meaningful experiences with people, places, culture, food, and the environment for body and mind rejuvenation.	• Conway & Timms (2010): it is a distinctive form of travel that integrates elements of leisure, cultural exploration, relaxation, and environmental responsibility. It emphasizes extended

• Woehler, (2004): a form of travelling to recharge and restore physical and mental strength by immersing themselves with climate, nature, culture and people on the destination for physical and psychological health. • Oh et al. (2016): slow tourism has been gone beyond environmental sustainability to slow pace in travelling in ways conducive to personal satisfaction and well-being	stays at destinations, fostering a deeper understanding of local culture and minimizing adverse environmental impacts through sustainable practices. • Dickinson et al., (2011): it represents a deliberate mode of travel characterized by a reduced pace, allowing tourists to engage in introspection and spend extended durations at destinations. This approach facilitates immersion in the local culture, interactions with residents, and the appreciation of authentic culinary experiences. • Meng & Choi (2016): it is a specialized travel approach characterized by a deliberate deceleration of travel pace. It involves the allocation of extended time for visiting attractions and fully immersing oneself in the authentic cultural and environmental aspects of a destination, resulting in a more profound travel experience.

Table 2
Similar commonalities between wellness and slow tourism

Dimensions	**Wellness Tourism**						**Slow Tourism**					
	Mueller & Kaufmann (2001)	Smith & Puczkó (2015)	Myers, et al. (2000)	Cockerell (1996)	Connell (2006)	Árpási (2018)	Caffyn (2012)	Conway & Timms (2010)	Woehler (2004)	Oh et al. (2016)	Dickinson et al. (2011)	Meng & Choi (2016)
Physical	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
Psychological	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Social	X		X				X		X		X	
Spiritual		X	X							X	X	
Intellectual		X					X	X	X		X	X
Occupational		X				X						
Environmental	X		X				X	X	X	X	X	X

The table presents a comprehensive analysis of dimensions associated with wellness tourism and slow tourism, as defined by various authors. These dimensions are critical in understanding the multifaceted nature of these types of tourism. Notably, there is a consensus among most authors regarding the inclusion of the physical and psychological dimensions in both wellness tourism and slow tourism. These dimensions emphasize the importance of activities and experiences in contributing to travelers' physical health and psychological well-being. Furthermore, the social dimension is recognized by some authors for both forms of tourism, indicating that interactions with local communities and engagement with social aspects are salient features. The spiritual dimension, though less emphasized, is mentioned by several authors, hinting at the potential for providing opportunities for spiritual exploration and growth.

Additionally, the intellectual dimension emerges as significant in both wellness and slow tourism, suggesting that these types of tourism may have opportunities for intellectual enrichment and learning experiences. Cockerell (1996) uniquely introduces the occupational dimension in the context of wellness tourism, implying that wellness tourism might also have implications for individuals' career or occupational well-being. Moreover, the environmental dimension is acknowledged by a substantial number of authors for both wellness and slow tourism, underlining the importance of considering environmental sustainability and the interaction with natural surroundings in these forms of travel. Overall, this analysis reveals a convergence of dimensions associated with wellness and slow tourism, emphasizing their holistic nature and the diverse aspects that contribute to travellers' overall well-being and experiences.

The idea of wellness and slow tourism have developed separately and their definitions differ. However, they share a common goal of improving physical and mental health. Combining these two concepts, the destinations can offer tourism that promotes overall well-being. In addition, these concepts can advocate each other in aspects that are not as prominent as physical and psychological well-being. Combining these concepts can potentially appeal to a larger market. Therefore, a new concept of a "slow-wellness destination" is proposed, which integrates the principles of both wellness and slow tourism to provide a holistic approach to enhance individuals' well-being.

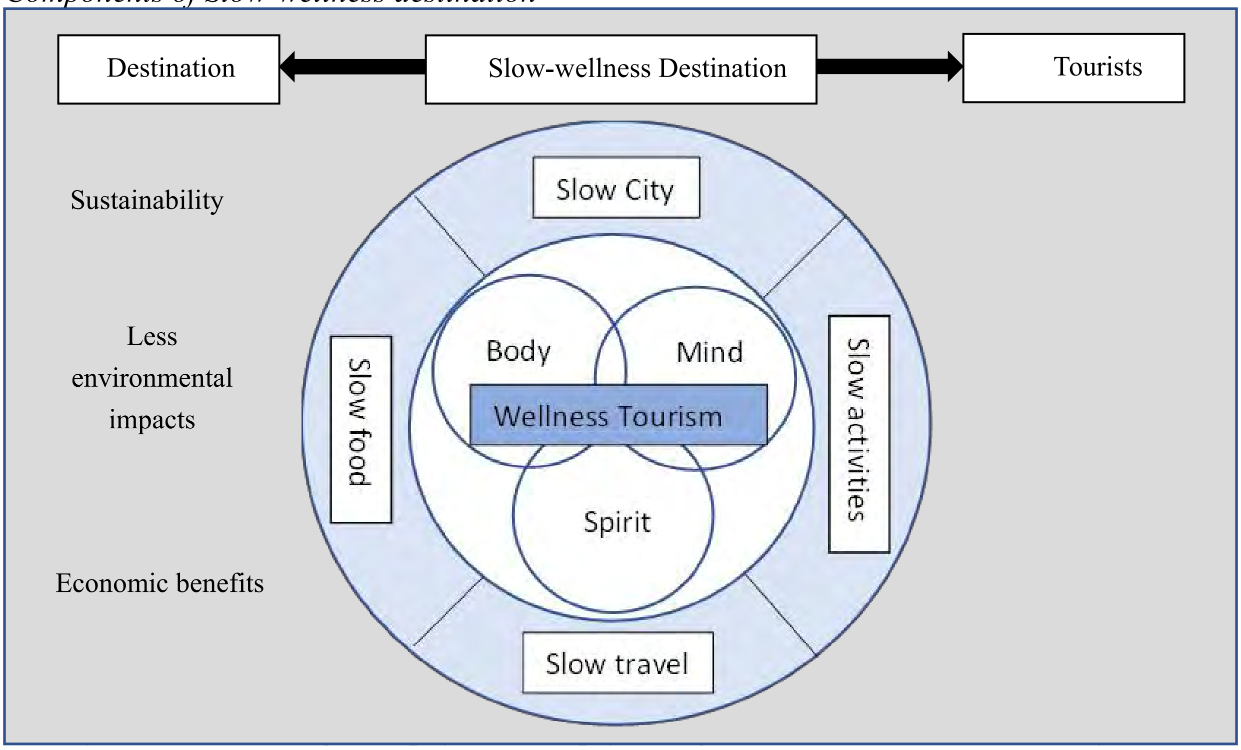
5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and implications

While the concepts of wellness and slow tourism have evolved separately, their definitions reveal commonalities and similarities, as depicted in Tables 1 and 2. Wellness tourism is widely recognized for its capacity to enhance both physical and psychological well-being, primarily delivered within specific settings such as wellness retreats, spas, and hotels. In contrast, slow tourism places greater emphasis on psychological health, intellectual growth, self-reflection, and mindfulness through engagement with the environment and local surroundings (refer to Table 2). These findings suggest that these two concepts can effectively advocate for and complement each other. Wellness products and activities are offered within specific locations, while the broader destination offers tourists a chance to feel refreshed, reinvigorated, and recharged (Oh et al., 2016).

By combining these two concepts, the scope of wellness tourism can expand exponentially beyond traditional activities, culminating in a truly holistic well-being experience within a slow-wellness destination, as illustrated in Figure 1. Previous research has argued that the well-being needs of tourists may vary significantly at different stages of their lives (Smith & Kelly, 2006). Therefore, the diversity of tourism products offered within slow-wellness destinations has the potential to adapt and personalize experiences to meet the varying needs and preferences of tourists.

Figure 2
Components of Slow-wellness destination



the characteristics of this innovative tourism concept have positive effects on the environmental, social, and economic aspects of destinations, ultimately contributing to greater tourism sustainability.

5.2. Conclusion and future studies
The philosophy of "Slow" has recently gained considerable attention and is recognized as a concept that cannot exist in isolation. It has evolved into an approach and a process that can seamlessly integrate with various other tourism activities. Based on the findings of this integrative literature analysis, the concepts and dimensions of wellness and slow tourism should be perceived as coexisting, complementary, and mutually supportive, all aimed at achieving the objective of travel for well-being and mindfulness. Consequently, a conceptual idea of a slow-wellness destination has emerged, presenting a form of leisure travel that involves immersing oneself in natural environments, embracing local cultures, cultivating local relationships, and engaging in wellness activities to holistically revitalize the body and mind.

Furthermore, this conceptual ideal provides destination planners and marketers with a valuable framework to create tourism products and promote destinations that offer a more profound and meaningful travel experience, appealing to a diverse range of consumers. Therefore, the slow-wellness destination holds the potential to establish a win-win situation: it can serve as a more sustainable form of tourism, ensuring that economic and social benefits remain within local communities, wellness tourism operators, and the destination itself. Simultaneously, tourists can enjoy a more meaningful and satisfying travel experience with this innovative approach.

Future investigations could explore several avenues to further enhance our understanding and implementation of this innovative tourism approach. Firstly, empirical studies could be conducted to validate and expand upon the findings of the integrative literature review, utilizing diverse methodologies such as surveys, interviews, and participant observation to gather insights from tourists, destination stakeholders, and industry professionals. These studies could delve deeper into the specific activities, amenities, and characteristics that contribute to the well-being outcomes of slow-wellness destinations, as well as examining potential differences across cultural contexts and geographic locations. Moreover, longitudinal research could track the development and evolution of slow-wellness destinations over time, assessing their sustainability, resilience, and socio-economic impacts on local communities.

REFERENCES

American Psychological Association. (2020). Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (7th ed.). American Psychological Association.

Árpási, Z. (2018). Wellness tourism: What motivates the consumer. Valahian Journal of Economic Studies, 9(1), 87-92. https://doi.org/10.2478/vjes-2018-0009

Bočkus, D., Sulkinoja, E., Kolesnikova, N., & Komppula, R. (2021). Differences in the concept of wellness and its materialisation in service offering: A multiple case study from eastern Finland, Russian Karelia, and Lithuania. Tourism Recreation Research, 1-16. https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2021.1984693

Caffyn, A. (2012). Advocating and implementing slow tourism. Tourism Recreation Research, 37(1), 77-80. https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2012.11081690

Clancy, M. (2017). Practicing slow. Slow Tourism, Food and Cities, 63-75. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315686714-5

Cockerell, N. (1996). Market segments: Spas and health resorts in Europe. Travel and Tourism Analyst, 1. 53-77.

Connell, J. (2006). Medical tourism: Sea, sun, sand and … surgery. Tourism Management, 27(6), 1093-1100. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2005.11.005

Conway, D., & Timms, B. F. (2010). Re-branding alternative tourism in the Caribbean: The case for 'Slow tourism'. Tourism and Hospitality Research, 10(4), 329-344. https://doi.org/10.1057/thr.2010.12

Dickinson, J. E., Lumsdon, L. M., & Robbins, D. (2011). Slow travel: Issues for tourism and climate change. Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 19(3), 281-300. https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2010.524704

Dini, M., & Pencarelli, T. (2021). Wellness tourism and the components of its offer system: A holistic perspective. Tourism Review. https://doi.org/10.1108/tr-08-2020-0373

Erfurt-Cooper, P., & Cooper, M. (2009). Health and wellness tourism. Channel View Publications. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781845411138

Esichaikul, R., & Songsonthonwong, C. (2012). Slow Tourism: Learning Through Interpretation for European Senior Tourists. Journal of Thai Hospitality & Tourism, 7(1), 41-57.

Fullagar, S., Wilson, E., & Markwell, K. (2012). 1.Starting slow: Thinking through slow mobilities and experiences. Slow Tourism, 1-9. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781845412821-003

Kelly, C. (2012). Wellness tourism: Retreat visitor motivations and experiences. Tourism Recreation Research, 37(3), 205-213. https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2012.11081709

Koncul, N. (2012). Wellness: A new mode of tourism. Economic Research-Ekonomska Istraživanja, 25(2), 525-534. https://doi.org/10.1080/1331677x.2012.11517521

Heung, V. C., & Kucukusta, D. (2012). Wellness tourism in China: Resources, development and marketing. International Journal of Tourism Research, 15(4), 346-359. https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.1880

Lipman, M. (2003). Thinking in education (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Lumsdon, L. M., & McGrath, P. (2011). Developing a conceptual framework for slow travel: A grounded theory approach. Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 19(3), 265-279. https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2010.519438

Maslow, A. H. (1968). Toward a psychology of being (2nd ed.). Van Nostrand.

Meng, B., & Choi, K. (2016). The role of authenticity in forming slow tourists' intentions:Developing an extended model of goal-directed behavior. Tourism Management, 57, 397-410. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2016.07.003

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Technical definition. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved March 21, 2023, from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/technical%20definition

Monteson, P. A., & Singer, J. (2004). Marketing a resort-based spa. Journal of Vacation Marketing, 10(3), 282-287. https://doi.org/10.1177/135676670401000307

Mueller, H., & Kaufmann, E. L. (2001). Wellness tourism: Market analysis of a special health tourism segment and implications for the hotel industry. Journal of Vacation Marketing, 7(1), 5-17. https://doi.org/10.1177/135676670100700101

Myers, J. E., Sweeney, T. J., & Witmer, J. M. (2000). The wheel of wellness counseling for wellness: A holistic model for treatment planning. Journal of Counseling & Development, 78(3), 251-266. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6676.2000.tb01906.x

Oh, H., Assaf, A. G., & Baloglu, S. (2016). Motivations and goals of slow tourism. Journal of Travel Research, 55(2), 205-219. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287514546228

Özdemir, G., & Çelebi, D. (2018). Exploring dimensions of slow tourism motivation. Anatolia, 29(4), 540-552. https://doi.org/10.1080/13032917.2018.1460854

Parkins, W. (2004). Out of time. Time & Society, 13(2-3), 363-382. https://doi.org/10.1177/0961463x04045662

Puczkó, L., & Bachvarov, M. (2006). Spa, bath, thermae: What's behind the labels? Tourism Recreation Research, 31(1), 83-91. https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2006.11081250

Shang, W., Qiao, G., & Chen, N. (2020). Tourist experience of slow tourism: From authenticity to place attachment – a mixed-method study based on the case of slow city in China. Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research, 25(2), 170-188. https://doi.org/10.1080/10941665.2019.1683047

Smith, M., & Kelly, C. (2006). Wellness tourism. Tourism Recreation Research, 31(1), 1-4. https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2006.11081241

Smith, M., & Puczkó, L. (2015). More than a special interest: Defining and determining the demand for health tourism. Tourism Recreation Research, 40(2), 205-219. https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2015.1045364

Valls, J., Mota, L., Vieira, S. C., & Santos, R. (2019). Opportunities for slow tourism in Madeira. Sustainability, 11(17), 4534. https://doi.org/10.3390/su11174534

Voigt, C., & Pforr, C. (2013). Wellness tourism from a destination perspective: Why now? Wellness Tourism, 27-42. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203079362-10

Woehler, K. (2004). The rediscovery of slowness, or leisure time as one's own and as self-aggrandisement? In K. Weiermair, & C. Mathies (Eds.), The Tourism and Leisure Industry: Shaping the Future (pp. 83-92). New York: Haworth.

Wellness tourism research: A bibliometric review through a gender lens

Wong, Jose Weng Chou
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Macau University of Science and Technology

Wang, Jiao Jiao
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Macau University of Science and Technology

Lin, Yang Peng
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Macau University of Science and Technology

Abstract:
Wellness tourism is an emerging field that can reduce stress levels, foster positive emotions, lead to a healthy balance of body, mind, and spirit, and satisfy consumer experiences that enhance personal well-being. As a unique sub-category of wellness tourism, female wellness tourism is a very important part of the wellness tourism type. Moreover, up to this point, there has been little mention in the literature review of this type of tourism, that is, there has been no comprehensive review assessing the impact of females on wellness tourism research. To fill this gap, a bibliometric review was conducted. Data were collected in March 2024 through the Web of Science (WoS) database. A total of 50 relevant peer-reviewed articles published in English-language journals were selected. The data were analyzed by the related technique of plotting the results with HistCite software. Based on these findings, directions and suggestions for future research are presented.
Keywords: Female, Wellness tourism, Health tourism, HistCite

1. Introduction

With the development of the economy, female tourists share more than half of the market in both leisure and business travel, and it is obvious that female tourism has become an important part of the tourism market (Khan, 2011). In a general sense, female tourism means that the trip participants are females and do not include males. The growth of the female tourism market makes the segmentation of the whole tourism industry more and more important, and female tourism has become one of the main topics in tourism research (Zhang et al., 2024).

According to the Global Health Institute (GWI), wellness tourism is a rapidly growing segment of travel and is the intersection of two large and growing industries, tourism and health (Global Health Institute [GWI], 2018). The worldwide wellness sector has emerged in response to people’s increasing need to have experiences that bring relaxation and rejuvenation, particularly during the pandemic and post-pandemic period (Bočkus et al., 2023). At the same time, many studies have shown that the main market for wellness tourism is "baby boomers" (those in their 30s to 50s), especially female (Martins et al., 2023). Females are more willing than males to share their personal feelings in public forums, which also explains why more female than male participates in health tourism (Smith & Kelly, 2006). And with the continuous development of wellness tourism, the proportion of female in it will become more and more important (such as yoga tourism, medical beauty tourism, etc.) (Gray, 2017). However, there are few studies on female wellness tourism, and the research on the literature review of female's wellness tourism is even rarer. Therefore, understanding the existing research is crucial for the follow-up research on female's wellness tourism to track the trend. And it is considered relevant to conduct a bibliometric review of female's wellness tourism.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Wellness tourism

Wellness tourism is a division of health tourism and generally involves healthy people (Mueller & Kaufmann, 2001). Wellness tourism was defined as the sum of all the relationships resulting from a journey by people whose motive, in whole or in part, is to maintain or promote their health and well-being, and who stay at least one night at a facility that is specifically designed to enable and enhance people's physical, psychological, spiritual and/or social well-being (Voigt & Pforr, 2013, p. 17). At the same time, wellness tourism is considered one of the fundamental research topics in tourism research because it involves the adoption of a healthy lifestyle (Wright & Zascerinska, 2023) and its impact on the economy and globalization (Nicolaides & Grobler, 2017). It implies an expanding tourism niche that involves individuals or groups traveling to specialized resorts and destinations with the aim of maintaining physical and mental health (Dillette et al., 2021). Moreover, many studies have shown that wellness tourism is a huge market in the 21st century (De la Hoz-Correa et al., 2018). The pressure of human beings, the demand for personalized services, and the aging society easily lead to its development (Voigt & Pforr, 2013). Health science is likely to be the core concept to promote the development of wellness tourism in the next 75 years (Chrysikou et al., 2018). And future research may examine the growth drivers of wellness tourism. They may affect customers (Hartwell et al., 2018); Therefore, research on wellness tourism consumers will become crucial.

2.2. Female tourism

Female tourism refers to the leisure tourism phenomenon of female tourists of all ages, including girlfriend vacation tourism (Wang et al., 2023). Since the late 1970s, feminist studies began to appear in leisure tourism research (Aitchison, 2005). In the field of tourism, understanding the background of feminists helps us to enrich our understanding of the complexity of female tourists' motivations, perceptions and other tourism behaviors (Schneider & Bos, 2019). In the early stage of female tourism research, researchers took women as a whole, and the research on female tourism mainly focused on the overall difference between female tourists and male tourists (Kousis, 1989). In recent years, some studies have attempted to examine this special group from different perspectives (Long & Aziz, 2022). At the same time, it is worth noting that female tourists account for a large proportion in the type of health and wellness tourism, especially in some branches such as yoga tourism and medical beauty tourism (Lovelock & Lovelock, 2018). However, there is a lack of research on this kind of female's wellness tourism in the current research. In view of the fact that the development of female's wellness tourism is certain and continuous, it is necessary to conduct this systematic review, so that researchers and practitioners can extract the research and development trends from the past literature.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data Collection

In order to deeply understand the existing literature on female's wellness tourism and refine the future trend, this study follows the standard literature review method used in the existing systematic review (Bernard et al., 2022**;** Li et al., 2021). Specifically, the systematic review process adopted in this study mainly draws on Pickering and Byrne (2014) and Basu et al. (2023)**.** The first stage of the review process involved collecting and organizing the existing literature. In order to consolidate the current situation of female's wellness tourism research, this paper takes articles related to female's wellness tourism as the research object. Data was collected in March 2024 through the Web of Science (WoS) database as it is one of the most widely used in the field of tourism; The WOS core set covers the literature data that pass the quality test in the database (Chen et al., 2022**;** Santos-Rojo et al., 2023). The keywords "health tourism and female", "health tourism and female", "wellness tourism and female", "health tourism and women" and "wellness tourism and women" are combined with the Boolean operators "or", "and" and "not". The authors selected only peer-reviewed articles published in English language journals to refine the results. A total of 266 relevant records were retrieved. Then, the abstract and content of the article are reviewed, and the non-conforming items are eliminated. Articles that did not fall within the category of female's wellness tourism were removed to ensure that all included articles were studies on female's wellness tourism. Finally, irrelevant articles were manually removed, reducing the dataset to 50 articles.

3.2. Data Analysis

This study conducted a systematic evaluation of 50 female's wellness tourism publications related to tourism research. For the quantitative evaluation, the bibliometric analysis method (HistCite co-citation method) was used. Bibliometrics is a form of quantitative analysis that uses mathematical and statistical methods to measure the value and impact of research publications in a specific field (Santos-Rojo et al., 2023). The most common methods include evaluation techniques based on productivity and impact measures, focusing on total citations and number of publications (Coll-Ramis et al., 2023), and related techniques by mapping the results. Therefore, this paper uses HistCite bibliometric analysis to systematically classify the published articles from the aspects of publication year, author name, institution and country, number of authors, type of collaboration, nature of articles, different topics and so on **(**Hjalager, 2010).

4. Results

4.1. General information

The citation graph, Figure 1, shows the number of citations by year. This indicates that women's health tourism continues to appear in the literature. The study found that the first high citation frequency occurred in 2003 (636 times), the highest citation frequency occurred in 2003 (636 times), followed by 2020-2021 (233 times and 168 times).

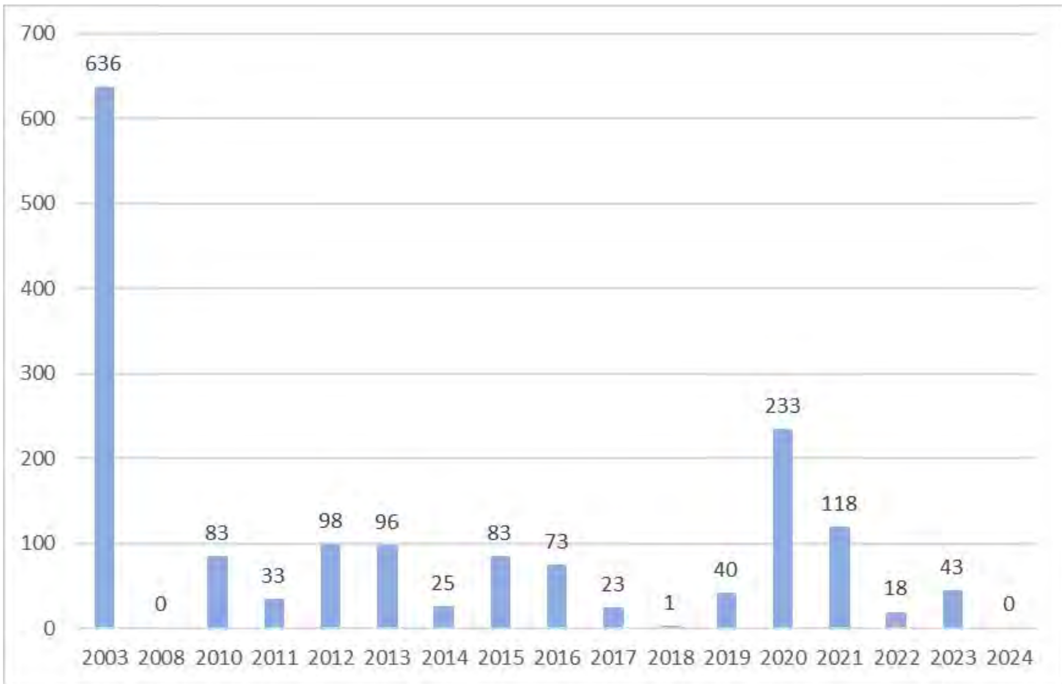


Fig. 1. Times cited by year.

4.2. Analysis of the total global citation score

In total, the 50 articles were published in hospitality and tourism journals. According to the Global Total Citation Score (TGCS), the top 10 most important journals are ranked with the help of HistCite, as shown in Table 1. Tourism Management and Journal Of Hospitality And Tourism Management are the two journals that published the most papers related to women's wellness tourism (11). This was followed by Tourism Management Perspectives with 4 papers. The most influential authors are ranked according to the Global Total Citation Score (TGCS). The first was Gibson H with a TGCS of 654; The second is Lepp A with a TGCS of 636. Dai SS was third with 145 points. The following authors are Huang XY (TGCS = 145) and Xu HG (TGCS = 145). In terms of countries/regions and institutions, 60 institutions from 23 countries/regions coauthored 50 publications. The top 10 countries/regions and institutions in terms of the number of publications are shown in Table 2. The top five countries/regions are distributed among the United States (n = 14), Peoples R China (n = 10), , Mexico (n = 4), the United Kingdom (n = 4) and Australia (n = 3). The top five universities are the University of Florida, the Sun Yat Sen University, the University of Illinois, Bournemouth University, Natl Kaohsiung University of Hospitality & Tourism.

Table 1
Number of articles published in hospitality and tourism journals.

	Journal	Items	TGCS	Author	Items	TGCS
1	Tourism Management	6	291	Berdychevsky L	3	83
2	Journal Of Hospitality And Tourism Management	5	123	Gibson HJ	3	87
3	Tourism Management Perspectives	4	177	Gibson H	2	654
4	Journal Of Sustainable Tourism	3	30	López AL	2	0
5	Annals Of Tourism Research	2	651	Vázquez AB	2	0
6	Journal Of Quality Assurance In Hospitality & Tourism	2	10	Vázquez AB	2	0
7	Tourism Geographies	2	6	Alves S	1	0
8	3rd International Conference On Social Science And Management (Icssm 2017)	1	1	Amuquandoh FE	1	24
9	Advances In Tourism, Technology And Systems, Vol 1	1	5	Balakrishnan J	1	0
10	Almatourism-Journal Of Tourism Culture And Territorial Development	1	4	Boga TC	1	9

Table 2
The top 10 countries and institutions involved.

	Country/ region	Count	Institution	Count
1	the United States	14	the University of Florida	5
2	Peoples R China	10	the Sun Yat Sen University	3
3	Mexico	4	the University of Illinois	3
4	the United Kingdom	4	Bournemouth University	2
5	Australia	3	Natl Kaohsiung University of Hospitality & Tourism	2
6	Portugal	2	University of Nacl Autonoma Mexico	2
7	Taiwan	2	Evler Mahallesi	1
8	Austria	1	Adiyaman University of ADYU	1
9	Brazil	1	Azores Tourism Observ	1
10	Bulgaria	1	Calif State Polytech University of Pomona	1

4.3. Citation mapping

The analysis of commonly used citations by HistCite is shown in Figure 3. Based on the TGCS, the 30 most cited articles were identified. Figure 2 shows 30 articles (nodes) and 5 links (relationships between articles). These articles present strong integrated citation maps, indicating that prominent academic scholars pay high attention to published works and cite them in their research papers. The HistCite citation map shows the clear distinction of a seminal research article as the center of many connections (1 in Figure 2). Table 3 shows the full list of the 30 most cited articles.

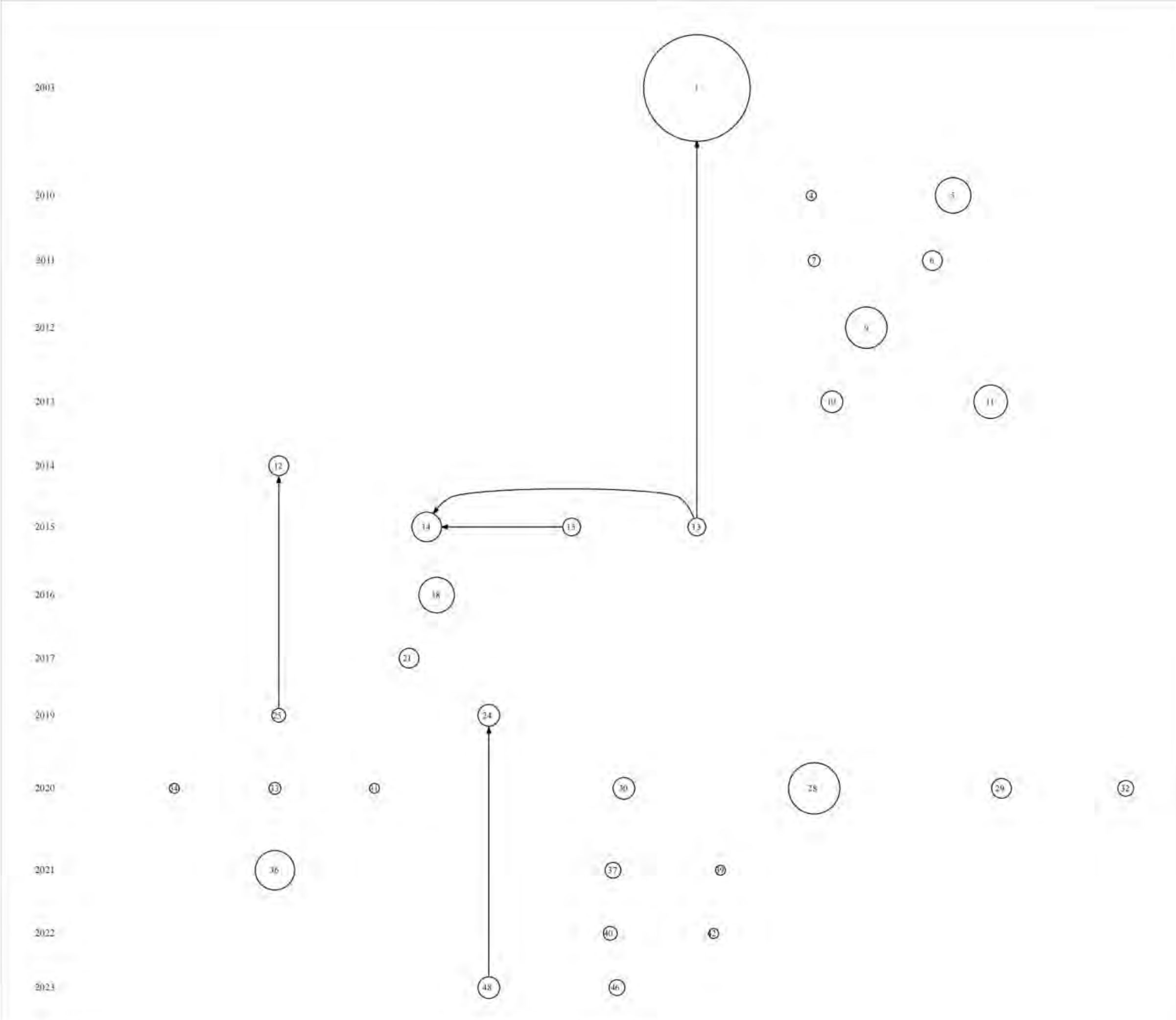


Fig. 2. Citation map of the 30 most cited articles produced by HistCite.

Table 3
The list of 30 most cited articles.

	Node	Author	Year	Title	Journal
1	**1**	Lepp A, Gibson H	2003	Tourist roles, perceived risk and international tourism	Annals of Tourism Research
2	**4**	Joukes V, Gerry C	**2010**	Website Effectiveness in Wellness Promotion By Portuguese Spa s	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management
3	**5**	Pesonen J, Komppula R	**2010**	Rural Wellbeing Tourism: Motivations and Expectations	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management
4	**6**	Amuquandoh FE	**2011**	International Tourists' Concerns About Traditional Foods in Gha na	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management
5	**7**	Boga TC, Weiermair K	**2011**	Branding new services in health tourism	Tourism Review
6	**9**	Xu YY, McGehee NG	**2012**	Shopping behavior of Chinese tourists visiting the United States: Letting the shoppers do the talking	Tourism Management
7	**10**	Matheson CM, Finkel R	**2013**	Sex trafficking and the Vancouver Winter Olympic Games: Perceptions and preventa tive measures	Tourism Management
8	**11**	Heung VCS, Kucukusta D	**2013**	Wellness Tourism in China: Resources, Development and Marke ting	International Journal of Tourism Research
9	**12**	Hritz NM, Sidman CL, D'Abundo M	**2014**	SEGMENTING THE COLLEGE EDUCATED GENERATION Y HEALTH AND WELLNESS TRAVELER	Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing
10	**13**	Berdychevsky L, Gibson H	**2015**	Women's Sexual Sensation Seeking and Risk Taking in Leisure Travel	Journal of Leisure Research
11	**14**	Berdychevsky L, Gibson HJ	**2015**	Phenomenology of young women's sexual risk-taking in tourism	Tourism Management
12	**15**	Berdychevsky L, Gibson HJ	**2015**	Sex and risk in young women's tourist experiences: Context, likel ihood, and consequences	Tourism Management
13	**18**	Gao J, Kerstetter DL	**2016**	Using an intersectionality perspective to uncover older Chinese f emale's perceived travel constraints and negotiation strategies	Tourism Management
14	**21**	Clark-Kennedy J, Cohen M	**2017**	Indulgence or therapy? Exploring the characteristics, motivations and experiences of hot springs bathers in Victoria, Australia	Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research
15	**24**	Gabor MR, Oltean FD	**2019**	Babymoon tourism between emotional well-being service for me	Tourism Management

				dical tourism and niche tourism. Development and awareness on Romanian educated women	
16	25	Lee PC, Lee MJ, Cheng TT	2019	Importance of Wellness Concepts in the Hotel Industry: Perspectives from the Millennials	Journal of Quality Assurance In Hospitality & Tourism
17	28	Huang XY, Dai SS, Xu HG	2020	Predicting tourists' health risk preventative behaviour and travelli ng satisfaction in Tibet: Combining the theory of planned behavi our and health belief model	Tourism Management Perspectives
18	29	Mirehie M, Gibson HJ	2020	The relationship between female snow-sport tourists' travel beha viors and well-being	Tourism Management Perspectives
19	30	Kling KG, Margaryan L, Fuchs M	2020	(In) equality in the outdoors: gender perspective on recreation and tourism media in the Swedish mountains	Current Issues In Tourism
20	31	Díaz-Carrión IA, Vizcaino-Suárez P, Gaggiotti H	2020	Change within the change: pregnancy, liminality and adventure tourism in Mexi co	Tourism Geographies
21	32	Monterrubio C, Madera SLR, Pérez J	2020	Trans women in tourism: Motivations, constraints and experience s	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management
22	33	Brown L, de Coteau D, Lavrushkina N	2020	Taking a walk: The female tourist experience	Tourist Studies
23	34	Mackenzie SH, Boudreau P, Raymond E	2020	Women's adventure tour guiding experiences: Implications for w ell-being	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management
24	36	Ivanova M, Ivanov IK, Ivanov S	2021	Travel behaviour after the pandemic: the case of Bulgaria	Anatolia-International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research
25	37	Santafe-Troncoso V, Loring PA	2021	Indigenous food sovereignty and tourism: the Chakra Route in the Amazon region of Ecuador	Journal of Sustainable Tourism
26	39	Wood EH, Dashper K	2021	"Purposeful togetherness": Theorising gender and ageing through creative events	Journal of Sustainable Tourism
27	40	Nguyen CP	2022	Tourism and gender (in)equality: Global evidence	Tourism Management

					Perspectives
28	42	Small J	2022	The sustainability of gender norms: women over 30 and their physical appearance on holiday	Journal of Sustainable Tourism
29	46	Yu L, Zhao PJ, Tang JQ, Pang L	2023	Changes in tourist mobility after COVID-19 outbreaks	Annals of Tourism Research
30	48	Chen KH, Huang L, Ye Y	2023	the relationship between wellness tourism experiencescape and r evisit intention: a chain mediation model	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and implications

5.1.1 Discussion and finding

This study conducts contemporary academic analysis and interpretation of female health tourists and tourism phenomena, systematically combs 50 articles published from 2003 to 2024, and reveals the complexity of female health tourism. In addition to obtaining in-depth information and insights, this study also highlights the need for a multifaceted elaboration of the concept of female wellness tourism in academia. Given that there may be large differences in the tourism experience between different groups (Wong et al., 2019, 2020) and the health tourism experience of women from other cultures or regions, we should pay more attention to the market segmentation of important tourism groups.

Meanwhile, from the above analysis that the topic of female's wellness tourism first emerged in 2003, and there are only 50 relevant literatures so far, which is a relatively niche research direction, and future research can be richer and more diversified. And the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on tourism (Wang et al., 2022). Several countries imposed travel restrictions and lockdowns to contain the spread of the virus (Wang et al., 2022). This has significantly reduced travel, including health tourism (GWI, 2021). Due to safety concerns, people hesitate to travel, which affects the demand for health-related travel (Li & Huang, 2022). However, the pandemic has increased awareness of health and well-being, leading to greater interest in health-related activities (Sthapit et al., 2023). Similarly, there is a growing body of research in this area, with several studies attempting to understand the health tourism needs of different types of tourists. Based on the selected sample of 50 articles, the number of published articles from 2020 to 2023 shows a relatively large trend. In particular, research output was highest during the pandemic outbreak in 2020, with nine publications, followed by seven in 2023. If the trends observed in previous years continue, it is reasonable to expect further growth in publications throughout 2024.

5.1.2 Theoretical implications

This bibliometric review of women's wellness tourism allows researchers, practitioners, and industry stakeholders to identify current research trends. It helps to identify the most studied topics, emerging areas of interest, and potential gaps in the existing literature. In addition, the survey provides insights into the emergence of new topics, research priorities, and the most studied areas. Stakeholders in the health tourism industry can use the findings of the review to adapt their products, marketing strategies, and services to meet the changing needs and requirements of travelers.

5.1.3 Practical implications

The research is not only of academic significance, but also of practical significance. As destination managers or practitioners, understanding the topic of women's wellness tourism allows them to better understand this specific group and create tourism products that better suit their needs and aspirations. In particular, aiming at women's value perception and travel motivation, this study provides design ideas and inspiration for tourism-related enterprises to design women-specific products and female tourism routes. Therefore, this study comprehensively combed the current situation of female health care tourism, provided enlightenment and reference for practitioners, and provided an important experimental contribution to the tourism and hotel industry.

5.2. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

This study has several shortcomings that need to be further improved. Firstly, the scope of analysis only includes the analysis of papers published in SSCI journals, and more reference research notes, books, etc., are needed in the future. The systematic literature focused only on the Web of Science database, and some studies from other databases, such as Scopus, were not included in this study. Some papers that have not been highly cited recently may not be in the top 30 citation rankings; Some follow-up research is recommended to follow up on these recent articles. Meanwhile, the analysis scope of this study only includes the analysis of journal articles, the inclusion criteria excluded unpublished working papers, book reviews, conference proceedings, and doctoral dissertations, potentially missing relevant studies. In addition, the study focused only on English language publications, leading to the oversight of valuable research conducted in other languages. Data analysis for the study was limited to HistCite software. Addressing these limitations in future research will provide a more comprehensive and diverse view of the subject matter. And based on the findings related to female health tourists in this study, the research can be further extended to specific groups of female tourists, such as post-female yoga tourism, female medical beauty tourism, or by considering other demographic characteristics (such as age, marital status, education, ethnicity, etc.) to provide in-depth insights.

Acknowledgement
The research was supported by the Macao Foundation (no. I01039-2309-077).

REFERENCES

Aitchison, C. C. (2005). Feminist and gender perspectives in tourism studies: The social-cultural nexus of critical and cultural theories. *Tourist studies*, *5*(3), 207-224.

Basu, R., Lim, W. M., Kumar, A., & Kumar, S. (2023). Marketing analytics: The bridge between customer psychology and marketing decision-making. *Psychology & Marketing*, *40*(12), 2588-2611.

Bernard, S., Rahman, I., & McGehee, N. G. (2022). Breaking barriers for Bangladeshi female solo travelers. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, *41*, 100932.

Bočkus, D., Vento, E., Tammi, T., Komppula, R., & Kolesnikova, N. (2023). Comparing the motivations behind wellness tourism in three source markets. *European Journal of Tourism Research*, *33*, 3303-3303.

Chen, S., Tian, D., Law, R., & Zhang, M. (2022). Bibliometric and visualized review of smart tourism research. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *24*(2), 298-307.

Chrysikou, E., Tziraki, C., & Buhalis, D. (2018). Architectural hybrids for living across the lifespan: lessons from dementia. *The service industries journal*, *38*(1-2), 4-26.

Coll-Ramis, M. À., Horrach-Rosselló, P., Genovart-Balaguer, J., & Martinez-Garcia, A. (2023). Research progress on the role of education in tourism and hospitality. A bibliometric analysis. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, 1-13.

De la Hoz-Correa, A., Muñoz-Leiva, F., & Bakucz, M. (2018). Past themes and future trends in medical tourism research: A co-word analysis. *Tourism management*, *65*, 200-211.

Dillette, A. K., Douglas, A. C., & Andrzejewski, C. (2021). Dimensions of holistic wellness as a result of international wellness tourism experiences. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *24*(6), 794-810.

Global Wellness Institute GWI. (2018). *Global Wellness Tourism Economy*. Retrieved from https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/GWI_GlobalWellness

TourismEconomyReport.pdf

Global Wellness Institute GWI. (2021). *The Global Wellness Economy: Looking Beyond COVID*. Retrieved from https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/

GWI-WE-Monitor-2021_Wellness-Tourism.pdf

Gray, J. (2017). Beyond Mars and Venus: Relationship skills for today's complex world. BenBella Books, Inc.

Hartwell, H., Fyall, A., Willis, C., Page, S., Ladkin, A., & Hemingway, A. (2018). Progress in tourism and destination wellbeing research. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *21*(16), 1830-1892.

Hjalager, A.-M. (2010). A review of innovation research in tourism. *Tourism management*, *31*(1), 1-12.

Khan, S. (2011). Gendered leisure: are women more constrained in travel for leisure? *Tourismos*, *6*(1), 105-121.

Kousis, M. (1989). Tourism and the family in a rural Cretan community. *Annals of tourism research*, *16*(3), 318-332.

Li, C., & Huang, X. (2022). How does COVID-19 risk perception affect wellness tourist intention: findings on Chinese generation z. *Sustainability*, *15*(1), 141.

Li, C. S., Zhang, C. X., Chen, X., & Wu, M. S. S. (2021). Luxury shopping tourism: views from Chinese post-1990s female tourists. *Tourism review*, *76*(2), 427-438.

Long, F., & Aziz, N. A. (2022). Travel abroad for face gaining or face saving? A comparison between Chinese gen Y male and female tourists in a context of Chinese culture. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, *34*(1), 39-50.

Lovelock, B., & Lovelock, K. (2018). “We had a ball… as long as you kept taking your painkillers” just how much tourism is there in medical tourism? Experiences of the patient tourist. *Tourism management*, *69*, 145-154.

Martins, P., de Jesus, S. N., Pocinho, M., & Pinto, P. (2023). Wellness Tourism: A Bibliometric Analysis Approach. *Journal of Tourism, Sustainability and Well-being*, *11*(4), 203-217.

Mueller, H., & Kaufmann, E. L. (2001). Wellness tourism: Market analysis of a special health tourism segment and implications for the hotel industry. *Journal of vacation marketing*, *7*(1), 5-17.

Nicolaides, A., & Grobler, A. (2017). Spirituality, Wellness tourism and quality of life. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, *6*(1), 1-37.

Pickering, C., & Byrne, J. (2014). The benefits of publishing systematic quantitative literature reviews for PhD candidates and other early-career researchers. *Higher Education Research & Development*, *33*(3), 534-548.

Santos-Rojo, C., Llopis-Amorós, M., & García-García, J. M. (2023). Overtourism and sustainability: A bibliometric study (2018–2021). *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, *188*, 122285.

Schneider, M. C., & Bos, A. L. (2019). The application of social role theory to the study of gender in politics. *Political Psychology*, *40*, 173-213.

Smith, M., & Kelly, C. (2006). Wellness tourism. In (Vol. 31, pp. 1-4): Taylor & Francis.

Sthapit, E., Björk, P., & Coudounaris, D. N. (2023). Towards a better understanding of memorable wellness tourism experience. *International Journal of Spa and Wellness*, *6*(1), 1-27.

Voigt, C., & Pforr, C. (2013). *Wellness tourism: A destination perspective*. Routledge.

Wang, G., Ren, L., Qiu, H., & Yao, Y. (2022). Salient health goal, salient restoration? A transformative model of wellness tourism. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, *39*(7-9), 591-608.

Wang, X., Lai, I. K. W., & Wang, K. (2023). Do young women travellers really consider the risk of sexual harassment during night travel? Evening travel vs midnight travel. *Tourism review*, *78*(1), 58-71.

Wong, J. W. C., Lai, I. K. W., & Tao, Z. (2019). Memorable ethnic minority tourism experiences in China: a case study of Guangxi Zhuang Zu. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, *17*(4), 508-525.

Wong, J. W. C., Lai, I. K. W., & Tao, Z. (2020). Sharing memorable tourism experiences on mobile social media and how it influences further travel decisions. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *23*(14), 1773-1787.

Wright, D. W. M., & Zascerinska, S. (2023). Becoming immortal: future wellness and medical tourism markets. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, *9*(2), 168-195.

Zhang, J., Lai, I. K. W., & Wong, J. W. C. (2024). Female travellers in hospitality and tourism industry: A systematic literature review. *Heliyon*, 10 (5). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e27256

The impact of wellness tourism experiences on tourists' inspiration and subsequent travel decision-making

Wong, Jose Weng Chou
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Macau University of Science and Technology, Taipa, Macau, China

Lin, Yang Peng
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Macau University of Science and Technology, Taipa, Macau, China

Wang, Jiao Jiao
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Macau University of Science and Technology, Taipa, Macau, China

Abstract:
Wellness tourism has undergone rapid development in recent decades. This study aims to explore the antecedents and consequences of tourist inspiration in the context of wellness tourism. PLS-SEM was used to test the hypotheses by using a sample of 260 wellness tourists. The results reveal that wellness tourism experience significantly affects the inspired-by state. Further, wellness tourism experience and tourist inspiration significantly affect intentions to visit other wellness destinations. At last, the theoretical and practical implications have been discussed in this study.

Keywords: Wellness tourism, Tourism experience, Tourism inspiration, Intention

1. Introduction

Wellness tourism is a rapidly growing sector in the global travel industry (Smith & Kelly, 2006). Especially after the COVID-19 era, consumers are increasingly focused on their health needs. In recent literature on wellness tourism, many of them took well tourism experiences as an integrated one (He et al., 2023; Luo et al., 2018), but overlooked the unique characteristics of wellness tourism. Furthermore, in the era of experience economy, customer inspiration become more and more important. According to Böttger et al. (2017), customer inspiration factor should be considered an important motivational factor within the consumer behavior literature because inspiration significantly affects the behavioral intentions of customers. However, in the field of tourism, the effects of inspiration, especially the consequences of inspiration, are rarely mentioned. Therefore, the current study adopts tourist inspiration as an influencer to explain wellness tourists' psychological mechanism on the relationship between wellness tourism experience and intentions to visit other wellness destinations under the tourist inspiration framework. The findings of this study improve the knowledge about tourists' intention toward wellness tourism setting and emphasize the role and importance of tourist inspiration, which links the relationship between wellness tourism experience and behavioral intention. The results of this study also provide guidelines for wellness destination managers through intrinsic motivation such as tourist inspiration.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Wellness tourism experience

The Global Wellness Institute (2016) defines wellness tourism as travel associated with the pursuit of maintaining or enhancing one's physical and psychological health. Jolliffe and Cave (2012) argue that wellness tourism refers to achieving health and well-being through holistic (physical and mental) vacation approaches, without medical intervention. Li et al. (2023) addresses the unique context of wellness tourism, proposes that the wellness tourism experience is a multidimensional construct comprising three dimensions, including “regain health,” “escape from stress” and “discover oneself.” In this study, we include these three dimensions proposed by Li et al. (2023) as the components of the wellness tourism experience.

2.2. Tourist inspiration

Inspiration can be defined as a motivational state where thought-eliciting stimulus perceived by brains sparks a sense of necessity and excitement (Wartiovaara et al., 2019), and it drives individuals to transform their ideas into tangible outcomes (Oleynick et al., 2014). In current literature, inspiration is commonly known to consist of two factors: the inspired-by state and the inspired-to state. Also, tourism inspiration is treated as a state because it reflects as an intrinsic motivation that is evoked by tourism experience (external stimulus). This study attempts to investigate the effect of tourism experiences on tourist inspiration (i.e., tourists inspired-by state and inspired-to state) in the context of wellness tourism.

Sources of inspiration in tourism can come from different antecedents. Among those, experiential factors are increasingly recognized as influential elements in predicting the state of inspiration (Khoi et al., 2020; Thrash et al., 2014). For example, Kwon and Boger (2021) discovered that brand experience has a positive influence on customer inspiration. Chen et al. (2016) argued that wellness destinations possess distinct therapeutic or restorative qualities, setting them apart from typical tourist destinations, such as hot spring resorts and forests. However, the psychological response of inspiration remains a novel concept, particularly among wellness tourists, and there is a dearth of research on this phenomenon. Based on the literature above, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H1. Wellness tourism experience positively influences inspired-by state.

The states of inspired-by and inspired-to often occur simultaneously in a specific order (Thrash et al., 2014). External stimuli, such as the destination environment, atmosphere, and events, as well as new discoveries, may trigger the inspired-by state in tourists. During this state, they may generate new ideas, while also gaining fresh perspectives (Khoi et al., 2020; Lindberg et al., 2014). Current studies in tourism field have shown that the inspired-by state positively influences inspired-to state. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2. Inspire-by state positively influences inspired-to state.

2.3. Intention to visit other wellness destinations

The intention to visit other wellness destinations, unlike conventional behavioral intentions, reflects tourists' loyalty towards similar forms of tourism. Wellness tourism offers visitors an opportunity to embrace nature and relax their minds. For most tourists, these experiences are extraordinary and unforgettable, and such memorable experiences positively influence tourists' revisit intentions (Zhang et al., 2018). In a recent study of minority ethnic tourism experiences, Wong et al. (2020) confirmed that memorable ethnic minority tourism experiences positively influence tourists’ intention to visit other ethnic minority destinations. In line with these studies, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3. Wellness tourism experiences positively influences tourists’ intention to visit other wellness destinations.

Recent research consistently demonstrates that inspiration has a positive impact on customer behavior, such as purchasing behavior (Tang & Tsang, 2020), exploration behavior (Böttger et al., 2017) and so on. Furthermore, Hu et al. (2017) explain that stimuli from the external environment can evoke intense feelings of love and inspiration in tourists, thereby motivating them to pursue their desires. When there is in an Inspired to state, tourists increase their impression of the destination, prompting individuals to make other decisions (Pantano & Di Pietro, 2013). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4. Inspire-to state positively influences tourists' intention to visit other wellness destinations.

Therefore, this article brings forth the following research framework (see Figure 1):

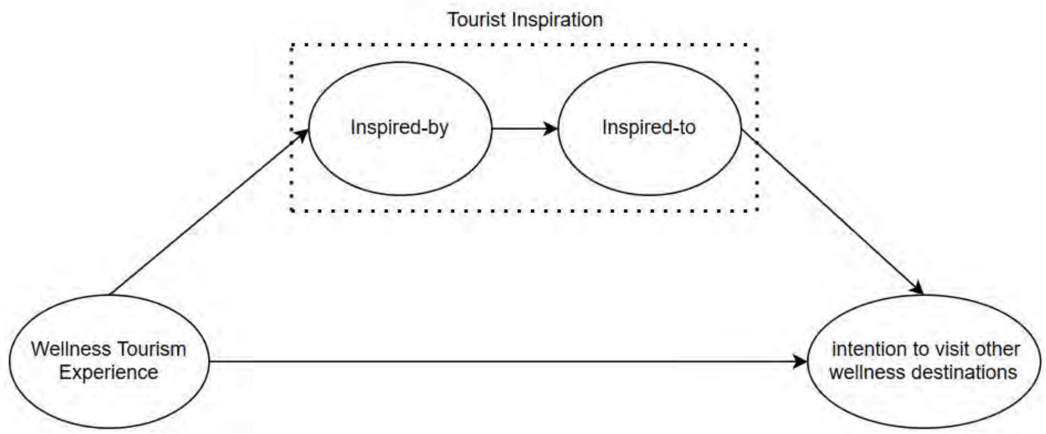


Figure 1. Representation of theoretical model.

3. Methodology

3.1. Site Selection

The Skov River Resort is the first eco-tourism and vacation area in Guangzhou, China, with the main theme of outdoor sports. The core development area spans over 2,000 acres and is surrounded by six major forest parks, encompassing approximately 400,000 acres of pristine forests (Trips, 2024). Leveraging the ecological advantages of the four national-level forest parks in northern Guangzhou, the resort is built up to include features such as a forest sea hot spring resort hotel, forest sea water park, and forest sea campground. Given that it is a popular wellness tourism destination in China, selecting the Skov River Resort is appropriate in this study.

3.2. Questionnaire design and data collection

The questionnaire is divided into two parts. The first part includes the measurements of the main constructs. To obtain good content validity, the measurement items of all constructs were derived from existing studies. Specifically, the wellness tourism experience has three dimensions, 9 items, adapted from Li et al. (2023)'s study. Inspired-by and inspired-to include ten items and are adapted from Khoi et al. (2020). Intention to visit other wellness destinations includes three items adapted from Wong et al. (2020). Table 1 shows these measurable items, and all items are measured on a seven-point-Likert scale (1= extremely disagree; 7= extremely agree). The second part includes the demographic items of the respondents, including gender, age, monthly income, education, and the number of visits to Skov River Resort. Considering that the majority of the respondents are Chinese tourists, the back-translation procedure was adopted to ensure translation equivalence (Brislin, 1970).

Data were collected at Skov River Resort between November and December 2023 with the convenience sampling by two well-trained research assistants; one of the assistants spoke fluent Cantonese. The tourists were asked to participate in our survey only after traveling the destination (Choi & Choi, 2019). The researchers had brief communication with the participants before conducting the survey to ensure that: (a) they were over 18 years old; (b) they were willing to participate in a 10-minute survey; (c) they had visited at least one wellness project, such as hot springs, forest exploration, or forest camping. In this study, a total of 300 questionnaires were distributed, 40 questionnaires were invalid due to missing values and incomplete responses, and finally a total of 260 valid questionnaires were analyzed.

Table 1. Mean, standard deviation (S.D.), and factor loading of 22 measurable items.

	Measurable item	Mean	S.D.	Factor loading
	Wellness tourism experience extended from Li et al. (2023)			
RH1	Wellness tourism can help me reduce stress	5.158	1.2833	0.898
RH2	Wellness tourism can make me get exercise	5.300	1.2804	0.929
RH3	Wellness tourism can keep me away from worries and problems	4.881	1.2292	0.827
ES1	Wellness tourism can help me feel free from daily life	5.712	1.1104	0.935
ES2	Wellness tourism can free me from the daily necessities	5.712	1.1812	0.925
ES3	Wellness tourism can help me forget their responsibilities temporarily	5.581	1.2165	0.866
DO1	Wellness tourism can make me love themselves more	4.473	1.4689	0.802
DO2	Wellness tourism can make me full of hope for the future	4.915	1.2887	0.904
DO3	Wellness tourism can make me pay more attention to themselves	5.150	1.2661	0.887
	Tourism inspiration extended from Khoi et al. (2020)			
IB1	My imagination has been stimulated	5.331	5.331	0.797
IB2	I have been intrigued/fascinated by a new idea	5.538	5.538	0.880
IB3	I have spontaneously formed new ideas	5.400	5.400	0.840
IB4	My horizon has been broadened	5.477	5.477	0.841
IB5	I have discovered something new	5.458	5.458	0.817
	Because of the visit to Skov River Resort			
IT1	I have been inspired to experience more	5.388	5.388	0.776
IT2	I have felt a desire to experience more	5.512	5.512	0.847
IT3	My interest to experience more has been raised	5.573	5.573	0.872
IT4	I have been motivated to experience more	5.492	5.492	0.850
IT5	I have felt an urge to experience more	5.262	5.262	0.797
	Intention to Visit Other Wellness Destinations extended from Wong et al. (2020)			
IV1	I would visit other wellness destinations in the future.	5.562	5.562	0.891
IV2	If given the opportunity, I would like to have another wellness travel.	5.569	5.569	0.865
IV3	I am loyal to the wellness tourism.	5.312	5.312	0.837

4. Results

PLS-SEM is a comprehensive and mature technique for evaluating relationships between variables in structural models. We adopt a multifaceted model that contains different latent constructs. Hence, it was appropriate to employ the partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) approach to analyze the conceptual model.

4.1. Measurement model evaluation

The mean, standard deviation, and PLS factor loading for 22 measurable items are shown in Table 1. The PLS factor loadings are ranged from 0.776–0.935; these values (higher than 0.70) are considered highly satisfactory. As shown in Table 2, Cronbach's alpha are greater than 0.70, so the results indicate adequate reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Furthermore, the values of composite reliability and average variance extracted from all constructs exceed the minimum criteria of 0.70 and 0.50 respectively (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Fornell & Larcker, 1981), indicating good internal consistency. The AVE of all constructs was greater than 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). These results imply good convergent validity. Following Fornell and Larcker (1981), the square roots of AVE of each construct is greater than its correlation coefficient with other constructs (shown in Table 3), implying acceptable discriminant validity. Additionally, all HTMT ratios were less than 0.85, indicating that discriminant validity is not an issue. (Henseler et al., 2015). The values of the variance inflation factor (VIF) for the constructs (ranging from 1.697-4.028) are less than the recommended cut-off value of 5.0, so collinearity issues between the constructs are absent from this study (Hair Jr et al., 2021).

Table 2. Reliability and validity.

	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Regain health (RH)	0.861	0.865	0.785
Escape from stress (ES)	0.894	0.896	0.826
Discover oneself (DO)	0.832	0.843	0.749
Inspired-by (IB)	0.892	0.895	0.698
Inspired-to (IT)	0.886	0.886	0.687
Intention to visit other wellness destinations (IV)	0.831	0.837	0.748

Remark: AVE = average variance extracted; CR = construct reliability.

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker Criterion.

Construct	RH	ES	DO	IB	IT	IV
Regain health (RH)	**0.886**					
Escape from stress (ES)	0.564	**0.909**				
Discover oneself (DO)	0.513	0.478	**0.866**			
Inspired-by (IB)	0.541	0.513	0.575	**0.836**		
Inspired-to (IT)	0.544	0.539	0.559	0.789	**0.829**	
Intention to visit other wellness destinations (IV)	0.501	0.518	0.537	0.637	0.713	**0.865**

Table 4. Table x Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT).

Construct	RH	ES	DO	IB	IT	IV
Regain health (RH)						
Escape from stress (ES)	0.643					
Discover oneself (DO)	0.605	0.548				
Inspired-by (IB)	0.617	0.570	0.660			
Inspired-to (IT)	0.620	0.605	0.643	0.886		
Intention to visit other wellness destinations (IV)	0.592	0.600	0.640	0.736	0.828	

4.2. Structural model assessment

SmartPLS 4.0 software (Ringle et al., 2015) was utilized to examine the structural model and hypotheses. The study adopted the bootstrapping method with 5000 iterations to evaluate the structural model (Chin et al., 2008). Table 8 and figure 2 present the complete results of the structural model and hypotheses testing. All four hypotheses were strongly supported indicating that wellness tourism experience was a good predictor of inspire-by among tourists. Moreover, the findings indicate that inspired-by predict inspired-to among tourists, and both wellness tourism experience and inspired-to predict intention to visit other wellness destinations.

Table 5. Results of the hypothesized model using PLS-SEM.

		Path coefficient	t-statistics	P-value	Result
H1	WTE → IB	0.658	14.369	0.000	Supported
H2	IB→ IT	0.789	23.588	0.000	Supported
H3	WTE→ IV	0.278	4.813	0.000	Supported
H4	IT→ IV	0.529	10.584	0.000	Supported

Remark. WTE: wellness tourism experience; IB: inspire-by; IT: inspire-to IV: intention to visit other wellness destinations.

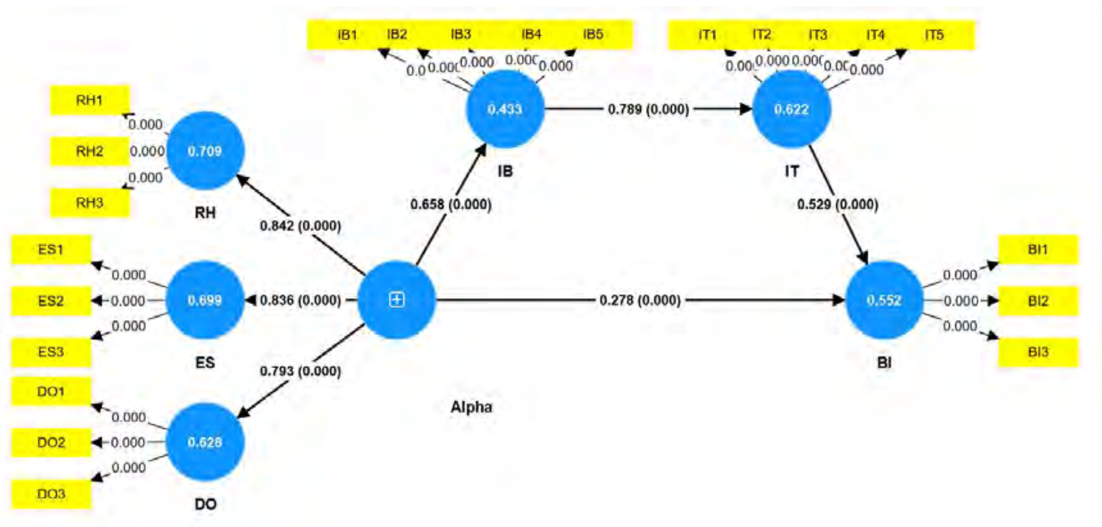


Figure 2. Results of PLS-SEM analysis.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Conclusions
This study examines the impact of wellness tourism experience on tourists' post-experience behaviors (intention to visit other wellness destinations). The findings are as follows. First, wellness tourism experience positively predicts tourist inspiration. Second, tourist inspiration is a direct consequence of wellness tourism experience. Third, wellness tourism experience significantly predicts intention to visit other wellness destinations. Thus, the study attempts to enhance the comprehension of how wellness tourism experience influences tourist inspiration and behavioral intention in wellness context.

5.2. Theoretical contributions and practical contributions
Firstly, the contribution of this study is that it validates the scale of wellness tourism experiences developed by Liu et al (2023). In previous studies on wellness tourism experiences, few researchers have considered the uniqueness of wellness tourism destinations and have instead used an integrated tourism experience scales (He et al., 2023; Luo et al., 2018). This study steps further to examine the distinctive features of wellness tourism and validate three dimensions proposed by Liu et al. (2023) for health tourism experiences: regain health, escape from stress, and discover oneself.

The findings of current study also showed that wellness tourists tend to have high level of inspiration when destination provide regain health, escape from stress, and discover oneself experiences. For instance, when wellness tourists become inspired by wellness tourism experience, their intention to save something is formed, which leads to inspired-to status. The inspired-to status ultimately enhances tourists' intention to visit other wellness destinations. By following the previous marketing literature (Böttger et al., 2017), the findings of current study extended the knowledge of tourist inspiration in the tourism industry.
This research findings offer valuable recommendations for government officials, tourism administrators, and local DMOs from a practical standpoint. The present study uncovers that wellness tourism experience have a high significance with inspiration, especially escape from stress. Therefore, we suggest that tourism developers pay more attention to escape from stress among customers. For example, provide various activities and facilities for physical and mental relaxation, such as spa centers, yoga studios, and meditation rooms. These facilities and activities can help customers relieve stress, relax their body and mind, and therefore more efforts should be put in those places to enhance their wellness experience.

Acknowledgement
The research was supported by the Macao Foundation (no. I01039-2309-077).

REFERENCES

Bagozzi, R. P., & Yi, Y. (1988). On the evaluation of structural equation models. *Journal of the academy of marketing science*, *16*, 74-94.

Böttger, T., Rudolph, T., Evanschitzky, H., & Pfrang, T. (2017). Customer inspiration: Conceptualization, scale development, and validation. *Journal of marketing*, *81*(6), 116-131.

Chen, C.-C., Petrick, J. F., & Shahvali, M. (2016). Tourism experiences as a stress reliever: Examining the effects of tourism recovery experiences on life satisfaction. *Journal of travel research*, *55*(2), 150-160.

Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of marketing research*, *18*(1), 39-50.

He, M., Liu, B., & Li, Y. (2023). Tourist inspiration: How the wellness tourism experience inspires tourist engagement. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, *47*(7), 1115-1135.

Hu, X., Yu, J., Song, M., Yu, C., Wang, F., Sun, P., Wang, D., & Zhang, D. (2017). EEG correlates of ten positive emotions. *Frontiers in human neuroscience*, *11*, 26.

Jolliffe, L., & Cave, J. (2012). Health and wellness tourism. *Tourism: The key concepts*, 93-95.

Khoi, N. H., Phong, N. D., & Le, A. N.-H. (2020). Customer inspiration in a tourism context: An investigation of driving and moderating factors. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *23*(21), 2699-2715.

Kwon, J., & Boger, C. A. (2021). Influence of brand experience on customer inspiration and pro-environmental intention. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *24*(8), 1154-1168.

Li, Y., Deng, Q., Peng, F., & He, M. (2023). Development and verification of the wellness tourism experience scale. *Journal of travel research*, 00472875231209493.

Lindberg, F., Hansen, A. H., & Eide, D. (2014). A multirelational approach for understanding consumer experiences within tourism. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, *23*(5), 487-512.

Luo, Y., Lanlung, C., Kim, E., Tang, L. R., & Song, S. M. (2018). Towards quality of life: The effects of the wellness tourism experience. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, *35*(4), 410-424.

Nunnally, J., & Bernstein, I. (1994). Psychometric Theory 3rd edition (MacGraw-Hill, New York). In.

Oleynick, V. C., Thrash, T. M., LeFew, M. C., Moldovan, E. G., & Kieffaber, P. D. (2014). The scientific study of inspiration in the creative process: Challenges and opportunities. *Frontiers in human neuroscience*, *8*, 436.

Pantano, E., & Di Pietro, L. (2013). From e-tourism to f-tourism: Emerging issues from negative tourists' online reviews. *Journal of hospitality and tourism technology*, *4*(3), 211-227.

Smith, M., & Kelly, C. (2006). Holistic tourism: Journeys of the self? *Tourism recreation research*, *31*(1), 15-24.

Tang, Y. E., & Tsang, A. S. (2020). Inspire me to purchase: Consumers' personal control and preference for underdog brand positioning. *Journal of Business research*, *115*, 101-109.

Thrash, T. M., Moldovan, E. G., Oleynick, V. C., & Maruskin, L. A. (2014). The psychology of inspiration. *Social and personality psychology compass*, *8*(9), 495-510.

Wartiovaara, M., Lahti, T., & Wincent, J. (2019). The role of inspiration in entrepreneurship: Theory and the future research agenda. *Journal of Business research*, *101*, 548-554.

Wong, J. W. C., Lai, I. K. W., & Tao, Z. (2020). Sharing memorable tourism experiences on mobile social media and how it influences further travel decisions. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *23*(14), 1773-1787.

Zhang, H., Wu, Y., & Buhalis, D. (2018). A model of perceived image, memorable tourism experiences and revisit intention. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, *8*, 326-336.

The Resilience of the Luxury Retail Industry in Macau Amidst the Pandemic: Insights into Consumer Behavior

Wang, Xin-Ye (Grace)
Department of Integrated Resort and Tourism Management
University of Macau

So, Siu-Ian (Amy)
Department of Integrated Resort and Tourism Management
University of Macau

Hsieh, Yu-Chin (Jerrie)
Saunders College of Business
Rochester Institute of Technology

Abstract:

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the tourism industry, leading to significant shifts in consumer behavior. However, the luxury retail sector in Macau has demonstrated remarkable resilience and has experienced positive performance in the post-pandemic period. This study employs an in-depth interview methodology with luxury brand managers and consumers to examine the changes in consumer purchasing behavior within this context. The findings reveal that the shopping experience has gained even greater importance, with consumers emphasizing value preservation and considering factors such as necessities, practicality, and brand marketing. Additionally, mall promotional programs have emerged as significant motivators for luxury retail purchases. This research provides valuable practical insights for the luxury retail industry, highlighting the key factors driving consumer behavior in the post-pandemic era.

Keywords: Luxury Retail, Tourist, Shopping Behavior, Pandemic

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound and far-reaching impact on the global tourism industry, necessitating a fundamental shift in consumer behavior. The effects of the pandemic on global trade and the economy are complex and wide-ranging. The impact of the pandemic canceled daily events such as catering or relaxation services, closed accommodations, and shut down attractions became immediately felt within the tourist chain (Gössling et al., 2020). According to Batat (2021), the global COVID-19 pandemic and its related social distancing mandates have disrupted consumer behaviors and business practices. Consumers have pursued alternative strategies and new consumption behaviors to cope with the constraints created by social distancing (e.g. Debata et al., 2020; Khan, 2020). However, amidst these challenging circumstances, the luxury retail sector in Macau has displayed remarkable resilience, demonstrating positive performance in the post-pandemic period. Retail trade receipts of Macau shows a notable rise (+53.5%) in 2021, back to the level in 2019 (Wholesale and Retail Survey, 2021).

This study aims to investigate the changes in consumer purchasing behavior within this unique context by employing an in-depth interview methodology involving luxury brand managers and consumers. By analyzing their insights, this research sheds light on the evolving dynamics of the luxury retail sector. Specifically, it uncovers that the shopping experience has assumed even greater significance, with consumers placing a premium on value preservation, as well as considering factors such as necessities, practicality, and brand marketing. Moreover, the study highlights the emergence of mall promotional programs as influential motivators for luxury retail purchases. Consequently, this research offers valuable and practical insights for the luxury retail industry, elucidating the key factors that drive consumer behavior in the post-pandemic era.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Social network

On the occasion of the pandemic, the recession caused a reduction in purchasing power, which has produced significant uncertainty regarding the ability of luxury brands to rebound and has resulted in shifts in consumption patterns and consumer perspectives that have upset the equilibrium of power (BCG, 2020). Goswami & Chouhan (2021) have investigated that more degrees of social distancing are related to drops in spending, especially in the retail area.

Consumers' price consciousness is more susceptible to changes in the external environment than any other traits (Steenkamp, J.-B E. M., and A. Maydeu-Olivares, 2015). Consumers actually tend to avoid purchasing luxury items as extrinsic means to display their social status, but rather respond more favorably towards luxury consumption that aligns with their intrinsic values (Shahid & Paul, 2021) in the post-pandemic era.

Nevertheless, Holmqvist et al., (2020) conceptualized moments of luxury as a transient hedonic escape from the worries caused by the pandemic or responsibilities of life. More and more people may return to experience and hedonism, especially Generation Z (Russell J. Zwanka & Cheryl Buff, 2021). According to (Wang et al., 2022), to some extent, the dissonance caused by the dark side of traditional luxury or prestige-seeking consumption behavior that was aggravated by the pandemic. The pandemic coronavirus pneumonia in Macao only resulted in a nearly 40.0% reduction in retail trade revenues in 2020, which is less than other sectors of the tourism industry. This is despite the negative effects of the pandemic on the entire Macao society (Wholesale and Retail Survey, 2020). As a result, there is still room for debate over whether the pandemic has a serious negative impact on retail, particularly in Macau.

2.2. Conceptualization

Based on the previous research and theoretical underpinning, this study will investigate the primary influencing factors which include customer perceived economic stability, and shopping experience, brand marketing and mall promotional program how impact consumer behaviors in purchasing.

The effects of the pandemic on global trade and the economy are various, and consumer behavior of luxury consumption is especially obvious. Consumer behavior concerns the study of individuals or groups who are in the process of searching to purchase, use, evaluate, and dispose of products and services to satisfy their needs (Rajagopal, 2020). According to Di Crosta et al. (2021), changes in consumer behavior can occur for different reasons, including personal, economic, psychological, contextual, and social factors.

Previous researchers proposed several important factors that influence purchasing behavior. Purchasing Behaviour is mostly affected by some external and internal components (Chaudhuri, 2006). According to Grant, & Stephen (2005), there are many influences on consumers' purchasing behavior, including social (culture, sub-culture, social class, reference groups, family), technological, political, economic, and personal factors (motivation, personality, self-image, perception, learning, beliefs, and attitudes). Di Crosta et al. (2021) have found that consumer behavior was predicted by personality traits, perceived economic stability, and self-justifications for purchasing. And one form of consumer behavior is consumer decision-making, it is well known that consumer decision-making is influenced by psychological factors (internal variables) and non-psychological factors (external variables). Sirakaya &Woodside (2005) argued that psychological factors include attitudes, motivations, and beliefs, while time, push factors, and the marketing mix are considered as external variables. M. J. Kim et al. (2022) theorized and empirically demonstrated that the way consumers perceive the value of money influences their financial behaviors. Based on a review of the literature on factors influencing consumer behavior, numerous studies concurred that social, cultural, personal, psychological, and economic factors have a significant impact on consumer behavior.

The pandemic's socioeconomic effects have altered consumer purchase habits, product preferences, and product selection motives. The financial crisis due to Covid-19 has affected consumer buying behavior patterns, both planned and unplanned, many shopping malls and the retail sector have closed their businesses (Suryadi et al., 2022). Septianto and Chiew (2021) have also indicated that the majority of consumers change their product behavior and preferences. To reach customers, retail marketers require fresh strategies.

Nevertheless, in Macau, most of the shopping malls are located in the Integrated Resorts, rendering its retail industry unique (Ren, & Liu, 2019), the gamblers are tourists and also consumers, and the majority of them are Mainland Chinese. Meanwhile, the retail malls, unlike the local retail community, encompass their unique attractiveness to the retail market with their characteristics and behaviors (Gerbich, 1998). The the specialty of Macau was considered at the same time.

This leads to the first research question:
How does the pandemic adversely affects tourists' purchasing behavior?

2.2.1 Customer perceived economic stability
ME, MM, & N (2016) highlighted a positive relationship between income and spending levels. Income is defined as money earned on a regular basis through work or investment. Interestingly, a different line of research pointed out that self-perceived economic stability is a more appropriate determinant of consumer behavior than actual income (N, T, P, &B, 2005; H, & EV, 2009). An intriguing justification for this bias makes use of social comparison process. In fact, the study by Karlsson et al. (N, T, P, &B, 2005) revealed that, in comparison to families who felt they were in a good financial situation, households who felt they were in a worse financial situation than others reported making fewer purchases, perceive their most recent purchase had a greater impact on their finances, and carefully planned their purchases. Furthermore, in the context of the COVID-19 catastrophe, a recent study discovered that people who believed they had more financial resources were less concerned about future purchases and spent more (Ceccato et al.,2021; Ceccato et al.,2021).

It is essential to figure out whether and how customers' perceptions of economic stability affected their purchasing behavior because the pandemic is a type of uncertain scenario that affects that perspective. As a result, the current investigation will evaluate respondents' perceived economic circumstances as well as their income in order to take into account both their subjective perceptions and the available economic data. Respondents were also asked to rate their perception of the economy's stability before and after the pandemic.

Therefore this lead to the second research question:
How does higher perceived economic stability associate with an increase in purchasing behavior after the pandemic?

2.2.2 Customer shopping experience
The concept of "customer experience" has been explored in a variety of commercial scenarios, including e-commerce, service delivery, tourism, and retailing (Tsai, 2005). The consumer shopping experience is increasingly being recognized as a key competitive tool, influencing consumer attitudes toward store channels and store selection (Verhoef et al., 2009). Since consumers today tend to make purchasing decisions based on a variety of factors, this latter factor has become a key factor in all companies' marketing decision-making processes (Alden et al., 2006; Fazio et al., 1989; Osman, 1993;). So, it is imperative for retailers and businesses to comprehend how client shopping experiences affect their sentiments regarding store channels if they are to successfully develop brand loyalty, channels, and services (Badgett et al., 2007; Osman, 1993).

According to Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), the consumer shopping experience refers to the consumer's perspective on shopping pleasure, feelings, imagination, fun, and multisensory experiences in a multimodal shopping activity. For instance, browsing, bargain hunting, social engagement, and so forth. This multi-faceted activity may include customers' interpretations of the concept of the shopping experience, as well as how consumers perceive pleasure during the buying process (Verhoef et al., 2009).

Actually, there are three stages in the customer experience (Otieno et al., 2005). The pre-sale phase, the in-store interaction phase, and the after-sale phase are these three phases. The second phase is the primary concern of the current study.

Verhoef et al. (2009) assert that a customer's experience has not been studied on a large scale as a distinct construct in the marketing, retailing and service literature. It appears that research on consumer experiences in in-store environments from an all-inclusive perspective is particularly sparse (Petermans et al., 2013).

2.2.2.1 Sense experience
Aesthetic pleasure, excitement, beauty, and satisfaction inspired by vision, hearing, smell, taste, and tactile consciousness, which can directly motivate customers to increase value and achieve product differentiation, are examples of sense experiences (Schmitt, 1999). A successful retail atmosphere not only encourages purchases but also increases client satisfaction with available options (Morales et al., 2005). The relevance of layout and design is also emphasized by Marques et al. (2013) since they give customers reasons to explore further.

2.2.2.2 Feel experience

Feel experience is made composed of happy and negative emotions, as well as intense feelings that are especially acute during the interactive consumption phase, and it assists in the sublimation of fantastic experiences, and feeling influences consumer brand preference, which retailers can influence by building customer relationships, interacting with customers, and raising conversion costs (Ge and Sy-Changco, 2014). Terblanche (2018) proposed that positive consumer emotions can result from courteous and knowledgeable staff, while personal attention and excellent delivery can also contribute to pleasant in-store customer shopping experiences and customer satisfaction.

2.2.2.3 Think experience

Think Experience can be produced by surprizessurprises or excitement to capture consumers' attention. It arouses excitement and sparks interest. The goal of the think experience strategy is to make consumers recognize brands or their products by inspiring careful and original thought. Ge and Sy-Changco (2014) indicated that, it necessitates that shopping stores be refreshed for visitors each time they visit and motivates them to engage in active thought rather than just passively consuming goods and services.

2.2.2.4 Relate experience

It is the primary variable that is concerned with social experience. Nowadays, everyone lives in different types of groups, and social identity is very crucial for us. The products that consumers choose to buy should be appropriate for their social status. Relate Experience is linked to cultural value, social role, and group identification, resulting in a distinct social recognition for consumers through the construction of the culture or community that they desire (Schmitt, 1999).

Previous studies have revealed that individuals who are dependent and materialistic may be more inclined to indulge in luxuries (Bearden, Netermeyer & Teel, 1989; Richins, 1994). Li and Su's (2007) investigation additionally demonstrated that Chinese consumers buy luxuries to preserve, enhance, or save face and that this behavior is motivated by conformity.

Thus, this leads to the third research question:
How does shopping experience associate with purchasing behavior after the pandemic?

2.2.3 Brand marketing and mall promotional program

Shopping tourists are a special kind of consumer, they are different from local citizens and have different consumption behavior as they are at home place, thus, the marketing and promotional program may have a special effect on tourists. For visitors, they may not freely come to the shopping sites, the travel costs money, and they have to consider whether they are able to carry what they want to buy to home, so they may be willing to buy but cannot come and buy in fact (Ge & Sy-Changco, 2014). Especially in terms of luxury consumption, the limited edition may be appealing.

2.2.3.1 Brand Marketing

To grasp the core concept of consumer purchasing decisions, and marketing experience to develop effective management strategies. For instance, creating various products for various market segments, paying attention to the appearance and interior design of the store to create a comfortable, enjoyable shopping environment, training the staff to improve the reputation of the service they provide, and fostering connections between customers through the network (Ge & Sy-Changco, 2014).

After investigating the behavior of luxury consumers in Europe, North America, and Asia-Pacific, Dubois, Laurent and Cellar (2001) have indicated six characteristics of luxury including price, quality, exclusivity, aesthetics, personal history, and superfluousness. Heine and Phan (2011) summarized and reflected much of the literature on luxury by applying the common association: "Luxury products have more than necessary and ordinary characteristics compared to other products of their category, which include their relatively high level of price, quality, aesthetics, rarity, extraordinarily, and symbolic meaning "(Heine & Phan 2011, p.55). Both of these two authoritative findings focused on the characteristics of aesthetics, exclusivity, and extraordinariness, which are majorly propaganda by brands. Nevertheless, does brand marketing still strongly encourage consumer behavior in the post-pandemic?

Thus, the fourth research question is:
How does more brand marketing associate with an increase in purchasing behavior after the pandemic?

2.2.3.2 Mall promotional program

Mall promotions are temporary discounts offered to consumers by retailers (Blattberg & Neslin, 1990) and designed to increase sales. Promotional strategies have psychological and financial connotations and include monetary benefits, freebies, and discounts on purchases (Kumar et al., 2004).

The findings of Khare et al. (2019) suggest that cultural values of long-term orientation and masculinity have an impact on consumers' perceptions towards discounts, promotional offers, and loyalty programs, at the same time, the linkages between cultural dimensions and promotional techniques would be helpful in targeting different consumer groups by designing promotions which are in line with cultural values. The cooperative promotional program in the mall increases consumer engagement and consumption with the participating brands.

Promotions were likely to influence consumers' cognitive evaluations about the store, improve trust, perception of value, and consequently loyalty (Demoulin & Zidda, 2008; Dorotic et al., 2012; Stathopoulou & Balabanis, 2016). Promotions have utilitarian, hedonic, and symbolic benefits and were used to target price-sensitive and value-conscious consumers (Bolton et al., 2000; Gómez et al., 2012; Stathopoulou & Balabanis, 2016). It was expected that discounts, coupons, and loyalty cards would induce a positive reaction across different segments of consumers. Drawing from earlier research it was assumed that price-sensitive consumers would evaluate retailer promotional strategies positively and exhibit loyalty and commitment towards them (Khare et al., 2019).

But there is little research to investigate whether mall promotion still affects the purchasing decision of consumers and how significantly it affects after the pandemic.
Thus, the next research question is:

How do more mall promotional programs be associated with an increase in purchasing behavior after the pandemic?

3. Methodology

3.1. Measurement

This study focused on identifying the new purchasing behaviors and decisions of Mainland Chinese consumers after the pandemic in Macau. In-depth interviews were conducted to learn about the consumer behavior of Mainland Chinese in Macau's luxury shops before and after the pandemic to find new trends. This research design was chosen mainly because of the absence of academic studies on the new consumer purchasing trends from Macau luxury retailers' observations and because most articles focus on quantitative analysis. This study used qualitative research. Twenty-one luxury brand managers and thirteen consumers of malls in the international integrated resort were selected for the in-depth interview separately.

3.2 Data collection

A personal network was used to seek interviewees. Each interview lasted approximately 15 to 30 minutes. The interview guide was drafted in both English and Chinese. The demographic information of consumers, such as gender, age, how often he/she visits Macau, and how many times he/she has purchased in IR of Macau was collected in each interview was collected at the end of the interview. Basic information about the brand, brand stores, and brand managers was known in advance, the reason was to ensure that they were a good fit for the target of this study.

3.3 Data Analytical Methods

In order to transcribe the interviews and extract the relevant findings, the content analysis method was used. An open coding method was used to create notes and headings. The goal of the data analysis was to discover new trends in consumer behavior by learning about the factors that influence post-pandemic customer behavior.

4. Results

4.1. Profile of the respondents

4.1.1 Brand Managers

Of the 21 respondents, all of them have been working in retail in Macau before and after the pandemic.

Figure1. Watch vs. Fashion vs. Jewelry

Figure 2. Luxury vs. Mass Luxury

Figure 3, 4 & 5. Luxury vs. Mass Luxury

4.1.2 Consumers

Most of the consumers were Millennials, and lived in Guangdong and Fujian, visited Macau 5 to 9 times per year, and had a monthly personal income of 20 to 50 thousand Mop.

Figure 6. Consumer Gender Composition

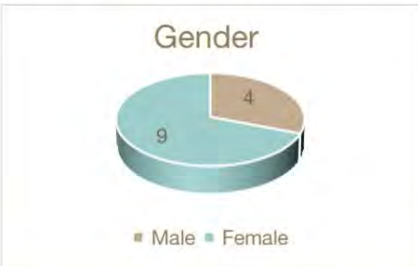


Figure 7. Consumer Age Composition

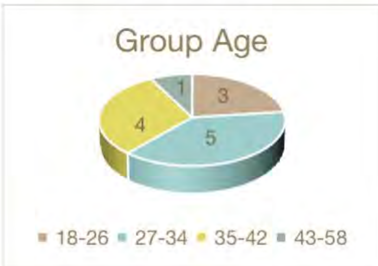


Figure 8. Provinces Consumers Come From

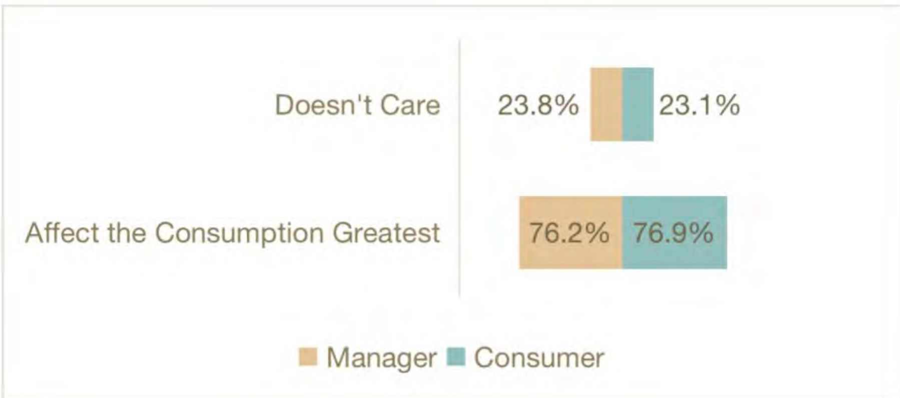
Figure 9. Purchase Category of Consumers *Figure 10. Monthly Personal Income*

4.2 Tourists' purchasing behavior after the pandemic

Both managers and consumers who participated in this study place a strong emphasis on value preservation to make an assortment of investments, giving deeper thought to factors like necessities, practicality, and expenses before making a purchase, and valuing the shopping experience tremendously.

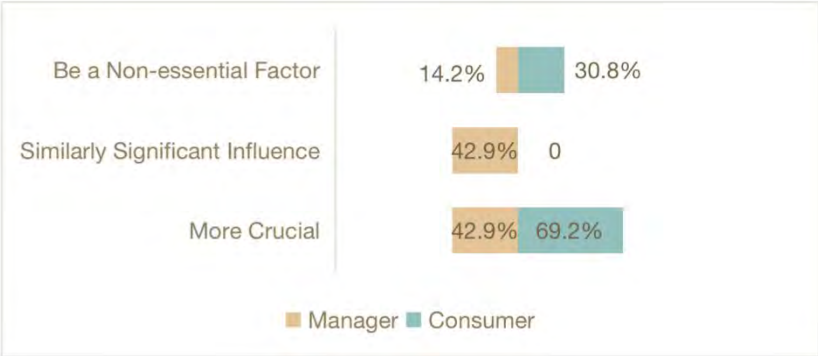
The pandemic didn't adversely affect tourists' purchasing behavior but actually change their buying psychology and behaviors.

4.3Perceived economic stability associated with purchasing behavior after the pandemic



The perceived economic stability of middle-class customers had a significant impact on luxury purchases after the pandemic and it's the essential factor when purchasing for the middle class, but it was not a considered factor for the upper classes, according to interviews with managers and consumers.*4.4 Shopping experience associated with purchasing behavior after the pandemic*

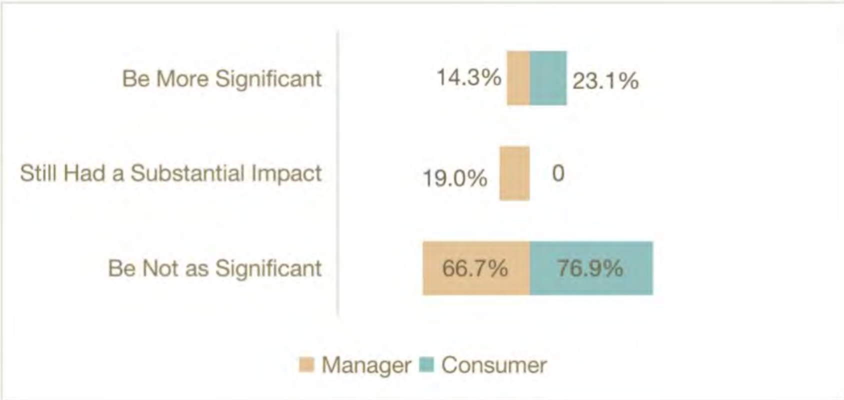
4.4.1 The effect of created consumer "sense" experience of shopping



4.4.2 The effect of created consumer "feel" experience of shopping

4.4.3 The effect of created consumer "think" experience of shopping

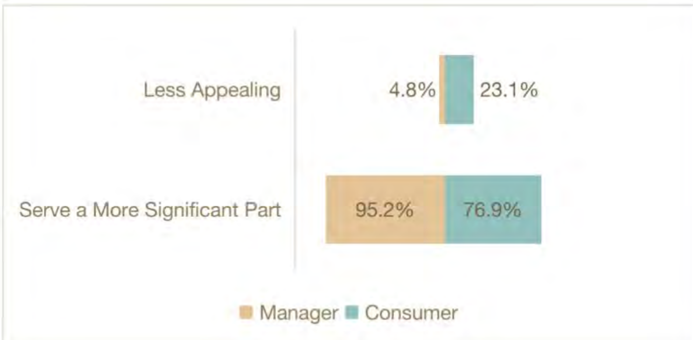
4.4.4 The effect of created consumer relate experience of shopping



4.5 Brand marketing associated with purchasing behavior after the pandemic

All of the brand managers and most of the consumers hold the opinion that brand marketing is more motivating to buy after the pandemic. Managers and customers alike highlight the celebrity effect and the trend of pursuing uniqueness to stimulate the suppressed senses; yet, the internet platform plays a crucial role. The value preservation of some classic looks must also be marketed.

4.6 Mall promotional program associated with purchasing behavior after the pandemic



Both the majority of managers and consumers agreed that mall promotions are much more attractive for consumption after the pandemic for the budget, it can even lead the traffic. However, the feelings of consumption for the upper class and personal demand for the middle class are what matter most when picking a store to consume.

4.7 Watch consumption verse fashion consumption after the pandemic

When purchasing pricey watches, customers are greater concerned with value retention and perceive what they spend as an investment. Customers who purchase trendy products give special attention to the store's fashion design and layout, and those who purchase watches choose a luxurious and comfortable environment.

4.8 Trend of consumer rejuvenation

Nowadays, Generation Z has also become important consumers owing to their desire and ability to consume luxury goods. Nevertheless, the brand position and target market still play a decisive role. Some traditional luxury brands don’t target Gen Z as their main market.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and implications

Based on the result of the study, it can be concluded that there are still some brands in the Integrated Resort that survive well, and a considerable percentage of consumers had frequent consumption in the brand stores even though the inauspicious damage on the retail industry in Macau is undisputed. The pandemic has adversely affected the retail business within Macau's integrated resorts, but there was still enough room for discussion.

Futhermore, The COVID-19 pandemic caused a wave of stress and worry unseen in recent years. Today’s consumers (Shahid & Paul, 2021) have paid increasing attention to their intrinsic motivations that fulfill their “intrinsic self” (e.g., internal desire; Berlyne, 1966), including self-directed pleasure, self-love (Tsai, 2005), and personal goals (Wilcox, Kim, & Sen, 2009) that are unattached to external objects and bring them ultimate happiness. Both managers and consumers who participated in this study place a strong emphasis on value preservation to make an assortment of investments, giving deeper thought to factors like necessities, practicality, and expenses before making a purchase, and valuing the shopping experience tremendously. The pandemic didn’t adversely affect tourists' purchasing behavior but actually changed their buying psychology and behaviors.

Third, the perceived economic stability of middle-class customers had a significant impact on luxury purchases after the pandemic, and it’s the essential factor when purchasing for the middle class, but it was not a considered factor for the upper classes, according to interviews with managers and consumers.

The majority of brand managers noticed that sense experience is critical for consumers, and half of them found it has become even more so since the epidemic. Although sensory experience is a requirement, it can entice, delight, and provide wow factors to encourage consumption. Luxury customers with higher spending power have higher expectations for the retail atmosphere, while customers with lower spending power believe this component is a minor factor. All brand managers and consumers claim that consumers feel the experience is extremely critical, second only to the product itself, even as equally important as the product itself, and that its significance has risen since the outbreak of the pandemic. After the pandemic, a few customers even made service-based purchasing decisions. The primary benefits of brick-and-mortar stores need to be emphasized because consumers have an increasing desire for feelings and because the stores compete fiercely with one another and online businesses.

Furthermore, most brand managers and consumers acknowledge that consumers value think experience and that this value has expanded since the epidemic. The key reason is the continued development of social media and the information explosion. Customers now consider additional factors when choosing a purchase, such as the brand's history, story, and social image, in addition to the attributes of the product.

With normal circumstances, the social position has a considerable impact on how people spend their money, and their decisions reflect the level of wealth they possess. Ostentatious consumption is typical of the upper class (Veblen, 1922). However, after the pandemic, a substantial proportion of managers and customers have faith that related experience is no longer as important as it previously was. Due to the fact that during the economic recovery period, greater emphasis is placed on the pleasurable experience derived from consumption rather than the presented face and social position, and overall consumption power is reduced, there is less comparison among the consumers.

All of the brand managers and most of the consumers hold the opinion that brand marketing is more motivating to buy after the pandemic. Managers and customers alike highlight the celebrity effect and the trend of pursuing uniqueness to stimulate the suppressed senses; yet, the internet platform plays a crucial role. The value preservation of some classic looks must also be marketed.

Lastly, both the majority of managers and consumers agreed that mall promotions are much more attractive for consumption after the pandemic for the budget; it can even lead to traffic. However, the feelings of consumption for the upper class and personal demand for the middle class matter most when picking a store to consume.

5.2. Conclusion

Since the trend of rejuvenation, the brands can respond to the curiosity of the younger generation and create enough novelty for your guests.

Offering greater selectivity and highlight the advantages of having more products in stock and more variety will be help.

Increasing added value, impressing customers with a more complete service system, and using swag and CRM to make them feel willing to spend a little more on the product itself.

Marketing the value preservation, and cooperating with shopping malls to give them a great budget.

As it’s revealed that the celebrity effect is more helpful in marketing , brands should cooperate more with celebrities and KOL for advertisement.

Brands can offer more personalized products and services that provide customers with a sense of exclusivity, particularly for luxury brands. At the same time, both exclusive products and classical conservative designs are needed to meet a wide customer base.
Fashion brands are encouraged to make investments in the film and arts industry to increase brand appeal.

5.3. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

The selection for interviewing luxury brand consumers is not geographically and demographically comprehensive enough and not sufficient. Some discrepancies in interview recordings may exist in the English translations. According to Holmqvist et al., (2020), moments of luxury are conceptualized as a transient hedonic. More and more people may return to experience and hedonism, especially Generation Z (Zwanka & Buff, 2021), there is bright future for luxury consumption for hedonism.

Appendix--Sample Transcript of the Demographic Profile of Consumers (n=13)

Respondents Details		No. of Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	4	30.76%
	Female	9	69.23%
Group Age	18-26	3	23.07%
	27-34	5	38.46%
	35-42	4	30.76%
	43-58	1	7.69%
Province	Guangdong	4	30.76%
	Fujian	4	30.76%
	Shanghai	1	7.69%
	Jiangsu	1	7.69%
	Zhejiang	1	7.69%
	Hubei	1	7.69%
	Shandong	1	30.76%
Visit Macau Annually (times)	3	2	15.38%
	5	4	30.76%
	7	3	23.07%
	9	4	30.76%
Purchase in Macau IR (times)	Below 5 Times	1	7.69%
	5 to 10 Times	5	38.46%
	10 to 20 Times	5	38.46%
	Above 20 Time	2	15.38%
Purchase Category	Watch	4	30.76%
	Fashion Products	5	38.46%
	Jewelry	2	15.38%
	Others,beauty	2	15.38%
Occupation	Manager	3	23.07%
	Financial staff	1	7.69%
	Self-employed	3	23.07%
	Civil Servant	1	7.69%
	Administrative staff	1	7.69%
	Teacher or professor	1	7.69%

	Technician or associate professionals	1	7.69%
	Student	2	15.38%
Monthly Personal Income (MOP)	10000-20000	1	7.69%
	20000-30000	4	30.76%
	30000-40000	4	30.76%
	40000-50000	3	23.07%
	Above 50000	1	7.69%

REFERENCES

Ahmed, M. E., Khan, M. M., & Samad, N. (2016). Income, social class and consumer behaviour: A focus on developing nations. *International Journal of Applied Business and Economic Research*, 14(10), 6683-6706.

Alden, D.L., Steenkamp, J-B.E.M. and Batra, R. (2006). Consumer attitudes toward marketplace globalization: structure, antecedents and consequences, *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 23, 227-239.

Batat, W. (2021). Introduction to the special issue: forms and effects of 'distancing' on consumer behaviors and business practices: Towards coping strategies and new consumption trends in a pandemic context. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 37(17-18), 1691-1711.

Bearden, W. O., Netemeyer, R. G., & Teel, J. E. (1989). Measurement of consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 15, 473-481.

Blattberg, R.C., & Neslin, S. A. (1990). Sales promotion: Concepts, methods and strategies, *Marketing Letters*, Vol. 1, Prentice–Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, pp. 81-97.

Bolton, R. N., Kannan, P. K., & Bramlett, M. D. (2000). Implications of loyalty program membership and service experiences for customer retention and value. Journal of the academy of marketing science, 28(1), 95-108.

Ceccato, I., Di Crosta, A., Palumbo, R., Marchetti, D., La Malva, P., Maiella, R., ... & Di Domenico, A. (2021). Data on the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on people's expectations about their future. *Data in Brief*, 35, 106892.

Chaudhuri, A. (2006). Emotion and reason in consumer behavior. Routledge.

Debata, B., Patnaik, P., & Mishra, A. (2020). COVID-19 pandemic! It's impact on people, economy, and environment. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 20(4), e2372.

Demoulin, N.T., & Zidda, P. (2008). On the impact of loyalty cards on store loyalty: Does the customers' satisfaction with the reward scheme matter?." *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 15(5), 386-398.

Di Crosta, Ceccato, I., Marchetti, D., La Malva, P., Maiella, R., Cannito, L., Cipi, M., Mammarella, N., Palumbo, R., Verrocchio, M. C., Palumbo, R., & Di Domenico, A. (2021). Psychological factors and consumer behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic. *PloS One*, 16(8), e0256095–e0256095, from https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0256095

Dorotic, M., Bijmolt, T.H. and Verhoef, P.C. (2012).Loyalty programmes: Current knowledge and research directions. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 14(3), 217-237.

Dubois, B., & Laurent, G. (1994). Attitudes towards the concept of luxury: An exploratory analysis. *ACR Asia-Pacific Advances.*

Ge, & Sy-Changco, J. A. (2014). Impact of tourists' shopping experience on consumer satisfaction and loyalty: An empirical study on tourists' consumer behavior in retail industry. University of Macau.

Gerbich, M. (1998). Shopping center rentals: an empirical analysis of the retail tenant mix. *Journal of Real Estate Research*, 15(3), 283-296.

Gómez, B. G., Arranz, A. M. G., & Cillán, J. G. (2012). Drivers of customer likelihood to join grocery retail loyalty programs. An analysis of reward programs and loyalty cards. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 19(5), 492-500.

Gössling, S., Scott, D., & Hall, C. M. (2020). Pandemics, tourism and global change: A rapid assessment of COVID-19. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 29(1), 1-20.

Goswami, S., & Chouhan, V. (2021). Impact of change in consumer behaviour and need prioritisation on retail industry in Rajasthan during COVID-19 pandemic. *Materials Today: Proceedings*, 46, 10262-10267.

Grant, & Stephen, G. R. (2005). Buying behaviour of "tweenage" girls and key societal communicating factors influencing their purchasing of fashion clothing. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 9(4), 450–467.

Heine, K., & Phan, M. (2011). Trading-up mass-market goods to luxury products. *Australasian Marketing Journal*, 19(2), 108-114.

Holbrook, M.B. and Hirschman, E.C. (1982). The experiential aspects of consumption: consumer fantasies, feelings, and fun. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 9, 132-140.

Holmqvist, J., Wirtz, J., & Fritze, M. P. (2020). Luxury in the digital age: A multi-actor service encounter perspective. Journal of Business Research, 121, 747–756, from https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.05.038

Karlsson, N., Gärling, T., Dellgran, P., & Klingander, B. (2005). Social comparison and consumer behavior: When feeling richer or poorer than others is more important than being so 1. Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 35(6), 1206-1222.

Khan, M.N.A. (2020). Intention to reserve food during covid-19 pandemic among Bangladeshi internet users: Based on theory of planned behavior. *European Journal of Medical and Educational Technologies*, 13(2), em2010.

Khare, Sarkar, S., & Patel, S. S. (2019). Influence of culture, price perception and mall promotions on Indian consumers' commitment towards malls. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 47(10), 1093–1124. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJRDM-06-2017-0134

Kim, Huang, Y., & Chen, H. (Allan). (2022). A penny saved is a penny earned: How money-view and self-view jointly influence consumer financial behaviour. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 46(2), 449–458. https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12692

Kumar, V., Madan, V., & Srinivasan, S.S. (2004). Price discounts or coupon promotions: Does it matter?. *Journal of Business Research*, 57(9), 933-941.

Osman, M. Z. (1993). A conceptual model of retail image influence on loyalty patronage behaviour. *International Review of Retail Distribution Consumer Research*, 3 (2),133-148.

Otieno, R., Harrow, C., & Lea-Greenwood, G. (2005). The unhappy shopper, a retail experience: exploring fashion, fit and affordability. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 33(4), 298-309.

Petermans, A., Janssens, W., & Van Cleempoel, K. (2013). A holistic framework for conceptualizing customer experiences in retail environments. *International Journal of Design*, 7(2),1-18.

Rajagopal, D., & Rajagopal. (2020). Development of consumer behavior. Transgenerational Marketing, Springer International Publishing, 163-194.

Ren, & Liu, X. M. (2019). Retail tenant mix considerations in Macau integrated resort : What shopping behaviors of gamblers tell? University of Macau.

Richins, M. L. (1994). Special Possessions and the Expression of Material Values*, Journal Consumer Research*, 19, 303-316.

Russell J. Zwanka & Cheryl Buff (2021) COVID-19 Generation: A conceptual framework of the consumer behavioral shifts to be caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic, *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 33(1), 58-67.

Schmitt, B. (1999). Experiential marketing: A new framework for design and communications. *Design Management Journal (Former Series)*, 10(2), 10-16.

Septianto, F. & Chiew, T. M. (2021). The perceived threat of Covid-19 influences product preferences: The moderating role of consumers' mindset. *Australasian Marketing Journal*,29,78-86. https://doi.org/10.1177/1839334921998553

Shahid, S., & Paul, J. (2021). Intrinsic motivation of luxury consumers in an emerging market. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 61, 102531. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102531

Sirakaya, & Woodside. (2005). Building and testing theories of decision making by travellers. *Tourism Management*, 26(6), 815-832

Stathopoulou, A., & Balabanis, G. (2016). The effects of loyalty programs on customer satisfaction, trust, and loyalty toward high-and low-end fashion retailers. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(12), 5801-5808, Retrieved from https://www.dsec.gov.mo/getAttachment/0d1a534b-c8fc-4002-872f-c20db86e41dd/E_TUR_FR_2023_Q1.aspx

Steenkamp, J. B. E., & Maydeu-Olivares, A. (2015). Stability and change in consumer traits: evidence from a 12-year longitudinal study, 2002–2013. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 52(3), 287-308.

Suryadi, Anggraeni, R., Ariyanto, D., & Fajrul Islam, M. (2022). The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on consumer behaviors: A study on gen-z in Indonesia. *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Scienc*e, 10(8), 313–318. https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v10i8.1490

Tenforde, M. W., Kim, S. S., Lindsell, C. J., Rose, E. B., Shapiro, N. I., Files, D. C., ... & IVY Network Investigators. (2020). Symptom duration and risk factors for delayed return to usual health among outpatients with COVID-19 in a multistate health care systems network—United States, March–June 2020. *Morbidity and mortality weekly report*, 69(30), 993.

Tsai, S. P. (2005). Impact of personal orientation on luxury-brand purchase value: An international investigation. *International Journal of Market Research*, 47(4), 427-452.

Verhoef, P. C., Lemon, K. N., Parasuraman, A., Roggeveen, A., Tsiros, M., & Schlesinger, L. A. (2009). Customer experience creation: Determinants, dynamics and management strategies. *Journal of Retailing*, 85(1), 31-41.

Wang, Z., Yuan, R., Luo, J., & Liu, M. J. (2022). Redefining "masstige" luxury consumption in the post-COVID era. *Journal of Business Research*, 143, 239–254. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2022.01.057

Wholesale and Retail Survey. (2020) Official Statistics 2020, Government of Macao Special Administrative Region Statistics and Census Service, Retrieved from https://www.dsec.gov.mo/getAttachment/c2af96b8-b5d0-4e69-9ffb-c6758c8fb731/E_ICGR_PUB_2020_Y.aspx

Wholesale and Retail Survey. (2021) Official Statistics 2021, Government of Macao Special Administrative Region Statistics and Census Service, Retrieved from https://www.dsec.gov.mo/getAttachment/dddb98d5-0a7b-41fc-a559-60066466a3c5/E_ICGR_PUB_2021_Y.aspx

The spotlight of chinese middle-class spenders: A comparison between luxury products and luxury hotel services

Yoelao, Woraprat
Faculty of Business, Economics and Communications
Naresuan University

Hung, Kam
School of Hotel and Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Abstract:

The principal drivers of global growth in the consumption of luxury products and services are now the Chinese, with China's middle classes from the major cities responsible for many of the current trends in luxury markets. This study explored the structural relationships among interdependent and independent self-concept, luxury values, and behavioral intention in the context of luxury goods and luxury hospitality services. The study used questionnaires for data gathering, a total of 529 participants were recruited to complete the questionnaires. The findings revealed that interdependent and independent self-concepts possibly affect the perceived functional values of Chinese consumers, as well as their perceived symbolic, hedonic, and financial values. These effects are likely to shape behavioral intentions, determining the extent to which Chinese consumers will buy personal luxury goods and stay at luxury hotels. The study then examines the implications of these results from the perspective of luxury product and service managers.

Keywords: Self-concept, Luxury values, Behavioral Intention, China's middle class, Luxury goods, Luxury hotel services

1. Introduction

China is anticipated to become the largest luxury market in the world by 2025 as a consequence of the spending prowess of Chinese consumers (Bain & Company, 2024). It has been reported that Chinese consumers spend freely on leading brands, and have a growing tendency to seek out luxury hospitality experiences (Bain & Company, 2015). Accordingly, it is vital for luxury brands and service providers to gain a better understanding of Chinese perceptions of luxury, since attempts to market such products and services to the Chinese consumer in the absence of such an understanding is likely to prove costly and ineffective. However, few studies to date have examined the independent and interdependent self-concepts as they are related to luxury products and hospitality. The work of Tsai (2005) and Wong and Ahuvia (1998) notes the need to distinguish between personally and socially oriented luxury consumers, adding that these tendencies may be based upon the self-concept of an individual as being either independent or interdependent (Markus & Kitiyama, 1991). Self-concept is a crucial factor influencing luxury consumption (Hung et al., 2018). Meanwhile, the idea of consumption value has also been frequently applied when examining the consumption of luxury goods and services (Shukla & Purani, 2012; Tynan, McKechnie, & Chhuon, 2010). However, previous results concerning the importance of luxury value have lacked consistency (Chen & Peng, 2018). Smith and Colgate (2007) stated that the dimensions of consumer value differ significantly between cultures, and also vary if differing contexts. Kastanakis and Balabanis (2012) were able to describe the behavior of consumers toward luxury brands with the context of an individualistic society, but observed that a collectivistic society may be driven by quite different factors in the luxury purchase behavior. One further point to consider is that Chinese consumers today are less collectivistic than in the past, and are increasingly diverse and individualistic (Ngai & Chi, 2012). This study therefore seeks to explored the structural relationships among interdependent and independent self-concept, luxury values and behavioral intention in the context of personal luxury goods and luxury hotel services.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Self-concept

Self-concept is closely related to the differing cultural notions of either individualist or collectivist societies (Triandis, 1988). An individualistic society is one in which individual goals are held to be more important than those of the wider group, while a collectivist society is one in which individual aims are of less importance than the goals of the group. It was argued by Singelis and Sharkey (1994) that self-concept may have cultural links to the varying strengths of the individualistic or collectivistic tendencies within a society. From this point of view, an independent consumer is more likely to exhibit their personal orientation when engaging in luxury product consumption since the primary aim is to satisfy hedonic needs, in addition to meeting utilitarian and self-communication aims (Ackerman & Chung, 2012). Interdependent consumers, in contrast, are more likely to focus upon the social aspects of their consumption of luxury goods and services (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012; 2014).

2.2. Dimensions of luxury value

It was observed by Smith and Colgate (2007) that functional value takes into consideration the ability of an alternative product to perform the role of an original product based on utilitarian needs. Within the hospitality sector, it is necessary to take into account such ideas as service quality and hospitality environment, which encompasses facilities and design, in addition to service personalization, since these factors are key components of luxury and will shape consumer decisions (Dortyol, Varinli, & Kitapci, 2014).

Meanwhile, symbolic value is a concept connected to the psychological meaning attributed to luxury products by the consumer (Smith & Colgate, 2007). Wiedmann, Hennigs, and Siebels (2009) explained that consumers who wish to boost their social status often like to purchase luxury brands, so the esteem in which a brand is held by society will be the crucial factor in determining the level of status that use of the brand can confer upon the owner. In addition, status is often linked to the public consumption of luxury (Goffman, 1959; Bulk, 1988) since this can promote the self-concept of the consumer through allowing them to present the image they want to portray, and thus to achieve the status they seek (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012).

Hedonic consumption is another form of consumer behaviour which was described by Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) as related to the emotional or fantasy aspects of the use of a luxury product. According to Dubois and Laurent (1994), hedonic value is a principal goal of luxury consumers because luxury consumption is carried out by consumers specifically to bring pleasure to themselves (Monkhouse, Barnes, & Stephan, 2012). The modern Chinese consumer is much more likely to exhibit materialistic and individualistic tendencies than before (McEwen et al., 2006, cited in Wu & Yang, 2018), and as a consequence, increasing numbers of Chinese are seeking out luxury hotels when they travel for leisure purposes (Wang & Zhao, 2014). They are looking for experiences, and it is therefore hedonic value which primarily drives their purchases (Peng & Chen, 2014; Wu & Yang, 2018).

Financial value is also crucial in the area of luxury consumption, and it can most simply be considered as the price paid by the consumer for the product (Wiedmann et al., 2009). A high price often implies high quality. Wu and Yang (2018) explained that Chinese consumers place great emphasis on financial value when they look for luxury hotels, and therefore it can be inferred that consumers must find adequate value in their luxury hospitality purchases to justify the high prices charged (Wu & Yang, 2018).

H1a. The independent self-concept associated positively with functional value (luxury goods vs. luxury hotel services), and the interdependent self-concept associated positively with functional value (luxury goods vs. luxury hotel services).
H1b. Functional value is positively related to behavioral intentions (luxury goods vs. luxury hotel services).
H2a. The independent self-concept associated positively with symbolic value (luxury goods vs. luxury hotel services), and the interdependent self-concept associated positively with symbolic value (luxury goods vs. luxury hotel services).
H2b. Symbolic value is positively related to behavioral intentions (luxury goods vs. luxury hotel services).
H3a. The independent self-concept associated positively with hedonic value (luxury goods vs. luxury hotel services), and the interdependent self-concept associated positively with hedonic value (luxury goods vs. luxury hotel services).
H3b. Hedonic value is positively related to behavioral intentions (luxury goods vs. luxury hotel services).
H4a. The independent self-concept associated positively with financial value (luxury goods vs. luxury hotel services), and the interdependent self-concept associated positively with financial value (luxury goods vs. luxury hotel services).
H4b. Financial value is positively related to behavioral intentions (luxury goods vs. luxury hotel services).

3. Methodology

3.1. Sampling and data collection

The participants in this study were recruited by an online research company and were drawn from one of Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, and Chongqing. To identify the luxury consumption of China' middle-class, participants were screened for past luxury hotel stay experiences (they had to have stayed in a luxury hotel at least once within the past 12 months), participants were also asked to write down the luxury hotel name as an accuracy check and purchasing any personal luxury goods (such as jewellery, watches, handbags, etc.) In total, there were 529 respondents, 59.2% of whom were female, while 73.7% were university-educated, and 38.7% were in the 25-34 age group. The largest income group, at 56%, was for an annual income of CNY 250,000 – 500,000.

3.2. Measurement

In order to measure independent and interdependent self-concept, a questionnaire was created on the basis of previous research (Singelis, 1994). The questionnaire also examined luxury value (Smith & Colgate, 2007; Shukla & Purani, 2012; Yang & Mattila, 2016; Peng, Chen & Hung, 2020), and behavioural intentions (Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman, 1996). All items were evaluated using a seven-point Likert scale.

4. Results

4.1. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)
In performing the confirmatory factor analysis, all factor loadings were considered significant with values exceeding 0.7, while the average variance extracted (AVE) for each of the latent factors exceeded 0.5, and the construct reliability values were all greater than 0.7, confirming the overall convergent validity. The findings also confirmed that the square root of the AVE values exceeded the in-construct correlations, offering strong evidence for the good discriminant validity of the questionnaire.

4.2. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)
The SEM results demonstrated a good fit between the model and the data ($\chi 2$ = 466.847; df = 227; $\chi 2$/df = 2.0566; GFI = .961; NFI = .928; TLI = .935; CFI = .961; RMSEA = .035; RMR = .072). For luxury hotel services, the model fit was good ($\chi 2$ = 441.368; df = 222; $\chi 2$/df = 1.988; p-value = 0.000; GFI = .963; NFI = .938; TLI = .945CFI = .967; RMSEA = .034; RMR = .075). The hypothesis test results showed that interdependent/independent self-concept has an effect on all of the luxury values in the context of behavioural intention through both indirect and direct effects. These findings support the following: H1a->H1b, H2a->H2b, H3a->H3b, H4a->H4b.

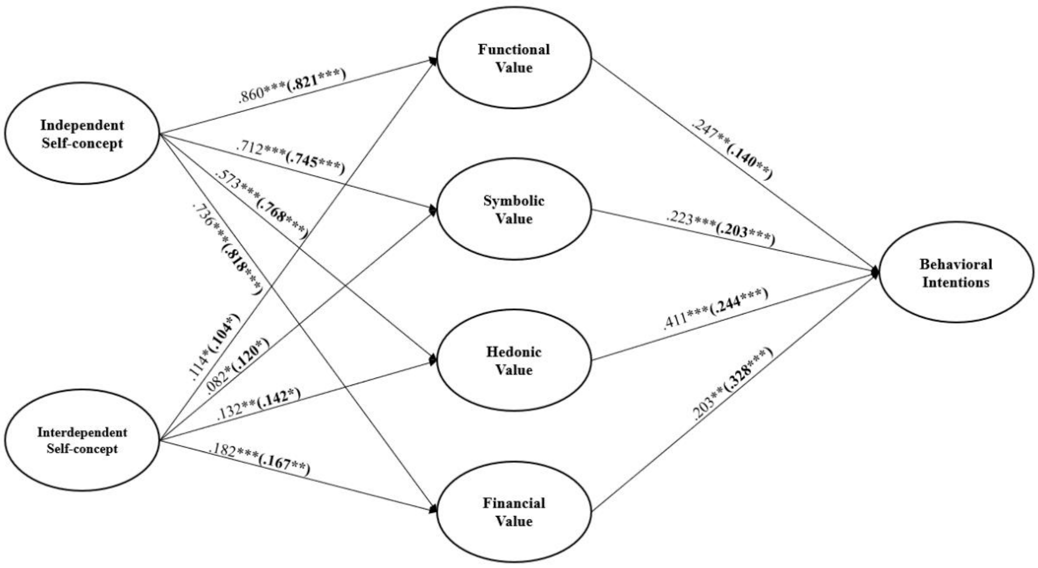


Figure 1.
Results of the structural model
Notes: Luxury goods vs (***Luxury hotel services***); *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and implications
This study examined the perceived luxury values mediating the relationship between self-concept and behavioural intention. As the market for luxury goods and services grows, it is important to understand the factors affecting the purchase of personal luxury products or luxury hospitality services. China was the primary focus of the study, due to its rapid growth in luxury goods spending, and tends to spend more on hotel services (Bain & Company, 2015). The outcome confirms that the research framework employed was appropriate in assessing the behavior of middle-class Chinese consumers when purchasing luxury goods or hotel services. Prior to this study, few researchers had compared the purchase of luxury goods

and luxury hotel services, despite the importance of this topic given the differences between the two product types (Hwang, Shin & Kim, 2023).

This study reaffirms that luxury value, which is a concept usually applied to physical goods, is an effective indicator of consumer self-concept in the context of luxury hotels. The findings are therefore able to support the relationships originally hypothesized. The consumption of luxury goods and luxury hotel services is positively linked to the interdependent/independent self-concepts, with the relationships mediated by luxury values. In particular, the best predictor of perceived functional value in luxury goods and luxury hotel services is independent self-concept. Hung, Zhang, Guillet, and Wang (2021) noted that Chinese luxury consumers are often driven by individual independent motivations, whereby they look for high quality and high value goods to purchase. Meanwhile, the best predictor of financial value in luxury goods and luxury hospitality is interdependent self-concept. In this case, Hung et al. (2021) observed that Chinese consumers know little of the stories behind the brands they purchase, but instead focus on the price and the brand popularity. Interdependent self-concept is therefore relatively important in shaping Chinese consumer demand for luxury goods and services. In China, hedonic value then plays a key role in shaping consumer behavior, since consumers often seek pleasure through purchasing something for themselves which will deliver intrinsic excitement (Tynan et al., 2010; Monkhouse et al., 2012; Wiedmann et al., 2007; 2009). Financial value also exerts a powerful influence over the luxury hotel behavioral intentions of Chinese consumers. Wu and Yang (2018) confirm this point of view, noting that consumers try to balance the high price with the premium experience of luxury, and it is crucial to derive sufficient value to offset the high price involved for a luxury hotel stay.

The results presented in this work may offer practitioners useful insights concerning the trends in Chinese consumer behavior in luxury markets for both goods and services. It may be possible for practitioners to apply the results to promote better products with higher quality and unique aspects to deliver greater authenticity and sophistication. It may be useful also to visit trade shows to gain deeper insights into consumer desires and habits. It is also important to note that Chinese consumers often use luxury purchases as a means to impress others through the attributes of their purchase, its exclusivity, price, or general popularity. Practitioners might therefore classify their products by considering such factors as popularity versus exclusivity, while luxury hospitality providers might consider the use of pricing promotions as a means to generate interest.

Chinese consumers select their luxury purchases on the basis of esthetic appeal, or emotional values such as pleasure or self-indulgence. Hedonic factors are particularly important to the Chinese middle class, so companies selling luxury goods may wish to promote the hedonic benefits of their products more strongly. In the Chinese luxury hotel sector, financial value is a critical consumption driver, as confirmed by Wu and Yang (2018) who reported the need for consumers to obtain greater value due to the high prices they had to pay for luxury. Strategies based on price can therefore be useful to attract consumers who look for the financial value of their luxury goods. Price reductions can be dangerous in hospitality, however, and it may be wise for hoteliers to seek to increase the value of their offering rather than lower the price. Earlier studies have shown that China is a collectivist society, and therefore luxury consumption is affected by the impression made upon the group. However, the current study indicates that Chinese consumers are driven by intrinsic motivation, and they will purchase both luxury goods and luxury experiences. These markets can sometimes involve different characteristics, and the behavior of consumers is shaped by different personal and cultural factors (Jap, 2009).

5.3. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

This study takes into consideration only personal luxury goods and services, and the findings might not therefore be generalizable to other luxury markets without taking further factors into consideration. Future studies might therefore make adjustments to the current framework in order to focus upon other luxury markets with specific attributes or qualities that the current work overlooks.

REFERENCES

Ackerman, D., & Chung, C. (2012). ‘We’or ‘Me’consumer goods: a cross-national look at self-construal and gender in product choice. *Journal of Global Scholars of Marketing Science*, *22*(1), 70-82.

Bain & Company, (2024). China’s luxury market expected to grow at mid-single-digit in 2024. Retrieved January 24, 2024 from https://www.bain.com/about/media-center/press-releases/2024/chinas-luxury-market-expected-to-grow-at-mid-single-digit-in-2024/

Bain & Company, (2015). China Luxury Market Trends. Retrieved January 20, 2024 from https://www.bain.cn/pdfs/201601210331128186.pdf

Belk, R. W. (1988). Possessions and the extended self. *Journal of consumer research*, *15*(2), 139-168.

Chen, A., & Peng, N. (2014). Examining Chinese consumers’ luxury hotel staying behavior. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *39*, 53-56.

Dortyol, I. T., Varinli, I., & Kitapci, O. (2014). How do international tourists perceive hotel quality? An exploratory study of service quality in Antalya tourism region. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *26*(3), 470-495.

Dubois, B., & Laurent, G. (1994). Attitudes towards the concept of luxury: An exploratory analysis. *ACR Asia-Pacific Advances*.

Goffman, E. (2006). The presentation of self. *Life as theater: A dramaturgical sourcebook*, 129-139.

Holbrook, M. B., & Hirschman, E. C. (1982). The experiential aspects of consumption: Consumer fantasies, feelings, and fun. *Journal of consumer research*, *9*(2), 132-140.

Hung, K., Zhang, H. Q., Guillet, B. D., & Wang, L. (2021). China watching: Luxury consumption and its implications. In *Travel and Lifestyle* (pp. 45-60). Routledge.

Hwang, Y., Shin, M., & Kim, S. (2023). Unplanned purchases of luxury goods and experiences. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 10963480231168679.

Jap, W. (2009). *How country-of-origin effect and Confucius face culture influence Chinese consumer consumption values on global brands*. University of Phoenix.

Kastanakis, M. N., & Balabanis, G. (2012). Between the mass and the class: Antecedents of the “bandwagon” luxury consumption behavior. *Journal of business research*, *65*(10), 1399-1407.

Kastanakis, M. N., & Balabanis, G. (2014). Explaining variation in conspicuous luxury consumption: An individual differences' perspective. *Journal of Business Research*, *67*(10), 2147-2154.

Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Cultural variation in the self-concept. In *The self: Interdisciplinary approaches* (pp. 18-48). New York, NY: Springer New York.

Le Monkhouse, L., Barnes, B. R., & Stephan, U. (2012). The influence of face and group orientation on the perception of luxury goods: A four market study of East Asian consumers. *International Marketing Review*, *29*(6), 647-672.

Ngai, J., & Cho, E. (2012). The young luxury consumers in China. *Young Consumers*, *13*(3), 255-266.

Peng, N., & Chen, A. (2019). Examining consumers’ luxury hotel stay repurchase intentions-incorporating a luxury hotel brand attachment variable into a luxury consumption value model. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *31*(3), 1348-1366.

Singelis, T. M., & Sharkey, W. F. (1995). Culture, self-construal, and embarrassability. *Journal of cross-cultural psychology*, *26*(6), 622-644.

Smith, J. B., & Colgate, M. (2007). Customer value creation: a practical framework. *Journal of marketing Theory and Practice*, *15*(1), 7-23.

Shukla, P., & Purani, K. (2012). Comparing the importance of luxury value perceptions in cross-national contexts. *Journal of Business Research*, *65*(10), 1417-1424.

Triandis, H. C. (1989). The self and social behavior in differing cultural contexts. *Psychological review*, *96*(3), 506.

Tsai, S. P. (2005). Impact of personal orientation on luxury-brand purchase value: An international investigation. *International Journal of Market Research*, *47*(4), 427-452.

Tynan, C., McKechnie, S., & Chhuon, C. (2010). Co-creating value for luxury brands. *Journal of business research*, *63*(11), 1156-1163.

Wang, L., & Zhao, Q. (2014, November). Empirical Analysis of the Difference of the Luxury Consumption Motivations between Chinese and British. In *2014 International Conference on Social Science (ICSS-14)* (pp. 120-126). Atlantis Press.

Wiedmann, K. P., Hennigs, N., & Siebels, A. (2009). Value-based segmentation of luxury consumption behavior. *Psychology & Marketing*, *26*(7), 625-651.

Wong, N. Y., & Ahuvia, A. C. (1998). Personal taste and family face: Luxury consumption in Confucian and Western societies. *Psychology & Marketing*, *15*(5), 423-441.

Wu, B., & Yang, W. (2018). What do Chinese consumers want? A value framework for luxury hotels in China. *International journal of contemporary hospitality management*, *30*(4), 2037-2055.

Yang, W., & Mattila, A. S. (2016). Why do we buy luxury experiences? Measuring value perceptions of luxury hospitality services. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *28*(9), 1848-1867.

Silent hotel customers: A study of the active communication behavior of customers with high social anxiety

Yan, Youxu
Department of Tourist Management,
Ningbo University

Wang, Xueji
Department of Tourist Management,
Ningbo University

Abstract:

Active communication feedback from consumers is crucial for co-creating value with providers. However, the presence of social anxiety poses challenges to this dynamic. This study aims to deepen understanding of the active communication behaviors of socially anxious individuals. Utilizing a repeated measures research design, 300 questionnaires were collected online, and the related hypotheses were tested through multilevel regression analysis. The findings reveal that social anxiety negatively affects consumers' active communicate willingness and positively influences their preference for instant messaging channels. Additionally, there is a cross-level interaction between social anxiety and consumers' perceived communication necessity and problem attribution.

Keywords: Social anxiety; active communication willingness; instant messaging; value co-creation

1. Introduction

Communication has been an important attribute within service industry in delivering messages between individuals for co-creations development (e.g. provider-consumer communication). Especially, active communication is necessary when consumers encounter problems or seek assistances to achieve service recovery. However, the increasing in social anxiety post significant challenges in actively communication. Despite it is often recognized as sense of introversion, social anxiety is medicalized as mental disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Recent reports indicated that the lifetime prevalence of social anxiety disorder (SDA) has reached 4% worldwide (Stein et al., 2017). Consumer diagnosed with social anxiety post fear and avoidance in interpersonal communication. For instance, previous studies revealed that high social anxiety individuals exhibit physiological arousal (Shalom et al., 2015; Myllyneva et al., 2015) and state social anxiety (Howell et al., 2016) when communicating with the others that leading to physical and psychological discomforts.

Despite the increasing attention in social anxiety consumption behavior studies, the examination in active communication behaviors remain under-explored. The investigation in socially anxious individuals' active communication behaviors will deepen the understanding in their communication habits and preferences that are important to the sustainability development in provider-consumer communication. As such, this research aims to address this gap by examining the active communication willingness (ACW) of socially anxious consumers in the hotel context. To achieve it, three research objectives are proposed. Firstly, examination on the impact of social anxiety on the ACW of hotel customers. Secondly, comparison in their preferences between instant messaging communication channels and phone calls. Lastly, factors that influence socially anxious customers' active communication willingness and preference for instant messaging (PIM).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Social anxiety

Watson and Friend (1969) characterize social anxiety as a sensation of unease, distress, trepidation, and worry in social contexts, which is often accompanied by a tendency to shun these situations due to a fear of being negatively judged by others. People with high social anxiety differs their consumption behaviors due to the presence of fear and avoidance in interpersonal communication (Delacroix & Guillard, 2016; Jin & Youn, 2021). Given the differentiation in consumption, existing studies have been investigating to deepen the understanding in their consumption behaviors. For example, researchs have found that social anxiety has a negative impact on the benefits of customer-to-customer interaction (Becker & Pizzutti, 2017) and the willingness to purchase agile brands on social media (Bozkurt et al., 2023). Specifically, in the hotel setting, Xiong et al.(2022) and Shang et al.(2024) respectively examined the impact of social anxiety on the effects of excessive service and ritualized service. The results showed that social anxiety negatively affected consumers' perception of service, thereby damaging their accommodation experience.

Although these studies have to some extent revealed the behavioral characteristics of social anxiety consumers, their active communication behavior remain under-explored. For example, does social anxiety affect their ACW and PIM? Answering this question will help promote value co-creation between providers and social anxiety consumers.

2.2 Active communication in value co-creation

The Service-Dominant (S-D) logic emphasizes that consumers are participants or co-creators in the value creation process (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). The value perceived by consumers depends on how they use tangible goods or experience intangible services. After purchasing goods or services, consumers need to learn how to use them, how to solve unexpected problems, and how to meet their personalized needs (Lusch & Vargo, 2014). Actively communicating with providers is an important means for consumers to achieve these goals and one of the most important ways for them to participate in value co-creation. This is especially true for intangible service products. On the one hand, in the process of experiencing services, consumer needs are personalized, not entirely identical. On the other hand, the process of providing services is complex and changeable, any minor error can lead to service failure (Van Vaerenbergh et al., 2014). Active communication by consumers is of great significance for meeting their personalized needs and implementing service remediation.

However, the interaction process can cause physiological and psychological discomfort for individuals with social anxiety, making active communication a challenge for them (Clark & Wells, 1995; American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Even when encounter problems and need assistance, they may be reluctant to initiate communication. This reluctance hinders the co-creation of value between providers and consumers, negatively impacting the latter's experience. Despite the fact that communication and value co-creation between providers and social anxiety consumers present substantial real-world challenges, related research remains limited. Therefore, the examination of active communication behaviors of social anxiety consumers holds both practical and theoretical significance.

3. Hypothesis Development

3.1 Social anxiety and Active communication willingness (ACW)
According to previous research, there are two main reasons why people with social anxiety are reluctant to communicate actively. Firstly, the cognitive model of social anxiety (Clark & Wells, 1995) suggests that individuals with social anxiety often have a negative perception of their self-image, thinking they are inadequate and will perform poorly in social situations. This mindset leads them to view social interactions as dangerous. Influenced by this, they interpret neutral social cues as signs of negative evaluation from others, which further exacerbates their anxiety. During social interactions, individuals with social anxiety tend to focus their attention on their own appearance, performance, and various social cues, making it difficult for them to fully process the corrective information revealed from the reactions of their social counterparts (Clark, 2001). This makes the process of social interaction very challenging for them.

Secondly, beyond subjective anxiety sensations, the process of social interaction also causes physiological discomfort in individuals with social anxiety. Research indicates that during social interactions, individuals with social anxiety may exhibit symptoms such as blushing, trembling, palpitations, and sweating (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), accompanied by an accelerated heartbeat and elevated blood pressure (Matthews, Manuck & Saab, 1986). When these symptoms appear, the fear of others noticing their abnormality further intensifies their anxiety.

In the face of difficulties both in physiological and psychological aspects, when active communication is needed, consumers with social anxiety are more likely to choose endurance rather than active communication. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:
Hypothesis 1: Social anxiety has a negative impact on ACW

3.2 Social anxiety and Preference for instant messaging (PIM)
Although people with social anxiety face many difficulties in interactions, research has found that these difficulties diminish when communicating through instant messaging (Lundy & Drouin, 2016; Kamalou et al., 2019; Oren-Yagoda & Aderka, 2021; Chen & Toma, 2023).The characteristics of instant messaging provide greater control over personal information and less exposure to scrutiny, particularly regarding physical appearance and vocal sounds (Shalom et al., 2015). In comparison to in-person communication, individuals with social anxiety felt a greater sense of control and viewed themselves as more successful when using instant messaging (Shalom et al., 2015). Furthermore, in contrast to phone calls, instant messaging provides a communication method for anxious individuals that eliminates the fear of immediate disapproval or rejection, redirecting attention from the observer's viewpoint to the crafting of messages that more effectively meet self-presentation objectives (Reid & Reid, 2007). Therefore, when active communication is needed, people with social anxiety may prefer to use instant messaging.

Hypothesis 2: Social anxiety has a positive impact on PIM

3.3 The interaction effect between perceived communication necessity, difficulty, and problem attribution with social anxiety

In addition to the between-person factor of social anxiety, the same consumer's perception of the communication necessity, difficulty, and problem attribution (to what extent the hotel is to blame for this problem) of different communication matters also affects their ACW and PIM. These three within-person factors were derived from interviews. 20 interviews with ten socially anxious participants and ten non-socially anxious participants in the China were conducted. They were guided to list the problems and troubles they had encountered in their previous hotel stays. Next, they shared about whether and how they initiated communication for these problems and the corresponding reasons. Finally, the three within-person factors were extracted from the interview materials through coding. Furthermore, we found that there may be an interaction effect between these three factors and social anxiety. In other words, comparing with lower social anxiety consumers, the ACW (and PIM) of higher social anxiety consumers are more (and less) affected by these three factors. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 3a, b, and c:

(a) Social anxiety moderates the relationship between perceived communication necessity and ACW.

(b) Social anxiety moderates the relationship between perceived communication difficulty and ACW.

(c) Social anxiety moderates the relationship between perceived problem attribution and ACW.

Hypothesis 4a, b, and c:

(a) Social anxiety moderates the relationship between perceived communication necessity and PIM.

(b) Social anxiety moderates the relationship between perceived communication difficulty and PIM.

(c) Social anxiety moderates the relationship between perceived problem attribution and PIM.

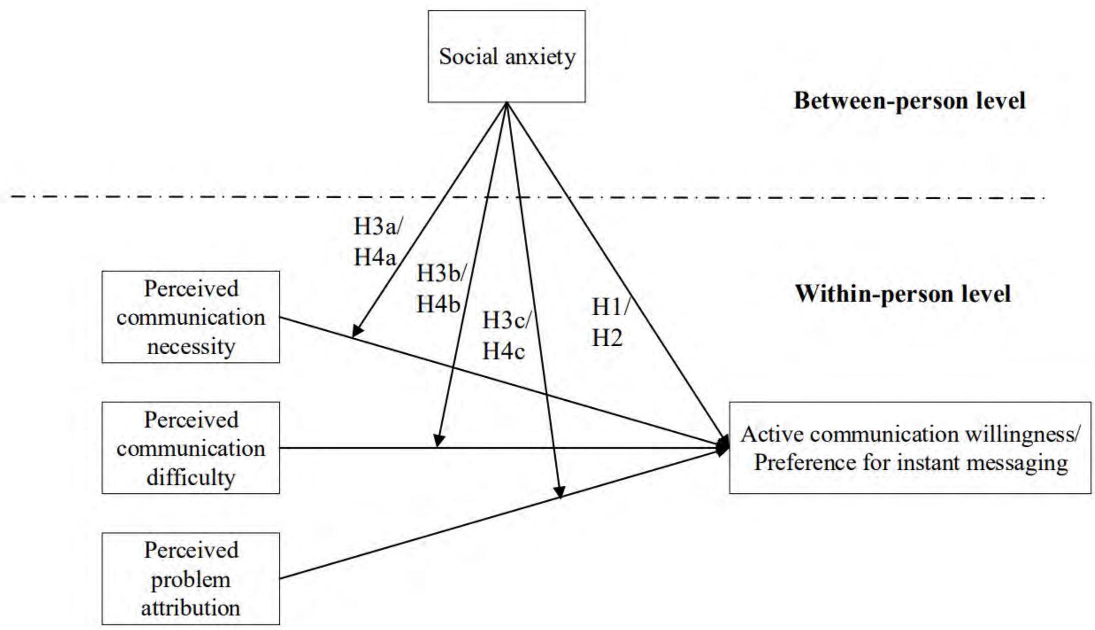


Fig. 1. Conceptual model.

4. Methodology

A repeated-measure experimental design was used. Data were collected through an online survey distributed via Credamo. (https://www.credamo.com/). 15 hypothetical hotel scenarios, captured from online reviews, were presented and participants were asked to share their ACW with the hotel staffs and interest in using instant messaging and phone calls. Participants' PIM was computed as a difference score between interest in using instant messaging and phone calls. Participants were also required to assess the necessity and difficulty of communication, and the extent to which they attribute the problem to the hotel for each scenario. A duplicate hotel scenario was included to screen out invalid responses. For social anxiety, it is measured using the Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (SIAS, Mattick et al.,1998). A total of 300 valid questionnaires were collected. The Cronbach's α of the variables are in the range of 0.79 to 0.90, which indicates the measurement has high reliability.

5. Results

Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) was employed for analysis. Firstly, the intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) of ACW and PIM was 0.16 and 0.32 respectively, indicating approximately 16% of the variance in ACW and 32% of the variance in PIM can potentially be explained by between-person factors (social anxiety and control variables of gender and income), indicating the necessity in using multilevel modeling.

Results of the multilevel analysis (Table 1) showed that, at the between-person level, social anxiety significantly negatively affects ACW and significantly positively affects PIM (Model 2 and 5). Hypotheses 1 and 2 are supported. Besides that, at the cross-level, ACW as dependent variable, social anxiety exhibit positive and significant moderating effect when perceived communication necessity and perceived problem attribution were predictor (B = 0.02, Sig = 0.03; B = 0.01, Sig = 0.06), indicating that the higher the level of social anxiety in consumers, the stronger the positive impact of these two factors on their ACW. Hypotheses 3a and c are supported. When PIM as dependent variable, the moderating effect of social anxiety was significant and positive (B = 0.03, Sig = 0.09) only when perceived communication necessity was predictor, indicating that the higher the level of social anxiety in consumers, the weaker the negative impact of perceived communication necessity on their PIM. Hypotheses 4a is supported.

Table 1 Results of multilevel analysis

Predictor	Dependent variable: ACW									Dependent variable: PIM								
	Model 1 (Null model)			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4 (Null model)			Model 5			Model 6		
	B	SE	Sig	B	SE	Sig	B	SE	Sig	B	SE	Sig	B	SE	Sig	B	SE	Sig
Intercept	5.18	0.05	<0.01	5.84	0.22	<0.01	5.13	0.14	<0.01	-0.78	0.11	<0.01	-1.40	0.51	0.01	-0.81	0.32	0.01
BETWEEN-PERSON PREDICTOR AND CONTROL VARIABLES																		
Sex				-0.04	0.10	0.66	-0.04	0.10	0.67				0.42	0.23	0.07	0.42	0.23	0.07
Income				0.02	0.05	0.59	0.02	0.05	0.59				-0.04	0.10	0.66	-0.04	0.10	0.66
Social anxiety				-0.18	0.03	<0.01	-0.18	0.03	<0.01				0.15	0.07	0.04	0.15	0.07	0.04
WITHIN-PERSON PREDICTORS																		
PCN							0.52	0.02	<0.01							-0.52	0.03	<0.01
PPA							0.20	0.01	<0.01							-0.16	0.02	<0.01
PCD							-0.14	0.02	<0.01							-0.07	0.03	0.03
CROSS-LEVEL INTERACTIONS																		
PCN × Social anxiety							0.02	0.01	0.03							0.03	0.02	0.09
PPA × Social anxiety							0.01	0.01	0.06							-0.01	0.01	0.28
PCD × Social anxiety							-0.02	0.01	0.11							-0.02	0.02	0.37
VARIANCE COMPONENTS																		
Level 1 (σ2)		2.78			2.78			1.73			7.13			7.13			6.16	
Level 2 Intercept (τ00)		0.52			0.42			0.5			3.37			3.29			3.35	
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION																		
ICC		0.16									0.32							
Pseudo R^2					0.03			0.32						0.01			0.09	

Note: PCN = Perceived communication necessity, PPA = Perceived problem attribution, PCD = Perceived communication difficulty. N = 300 participants provided 4,500 ACW and PIM. Unstandardized coefficients (B) and standard errors (SE) are shown. Pseudo R2, proportion of variance explained in dependent variable by predictors at the between-person level or at both between-person and within-person levels.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

6.1 Summary and Interpretation of Findings

In this study, the effects of consumers' social anxiety on their ACW and PIM were examined. The findings demonstrate that social anxiety negatively affects consumers' ACW and positively affects their PIM. These findings are consistent with previous research on the behavioral characteristics of people with high social anxiety (Pickard et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2022; Reid & Reid, 2007; Chen & Toma, 2023). This highlights the significant impact of social anxiety on communication, as well as the important role of instant messaging in improving communication.

In addition, we examined the interaction effects between perceived communication necessity, difficulty, and problem attribution with social anxiety. Among them, social anxiety positively moderates the relationship between perceived communication necessity and problem attribution with ACW, and perceived communication necessity with PIM, which is consistent with the conclusions drawn from previous interviews. However, its moderating effect on the relationships between perceived communication difficulty with ACW, perceived problem attribution and communication difficulty with PIM is not significant. In this regard, for perceived communication difficulty, a possible explanation is that problems that are difficult to communicate are often also difficult for the hotel to solve. Realizing that communication may be futile, consumers are less willing to communicate for this matter (whether by phone call or instant messaging), regardless of whether their level of social anxiety is high or low. For perceived problem attribution, this may be because when consumers think that a problem is the hotel's fault, they will have feelings of dissatisfaction or even anger. In this emotional state, consumers are more inclined to communicate with the hotel by phone call, expressing their dissatisfaction and anger in a strong tone, regardless of whether their level of social anxiety is high or low.

6.2 Theoretical implications

This research makes several significant theoretical contributions. First, it elucidates the active communication behaviors and preferences for communication channels among consumers with high social anxiety within the context of the hotel industry. This extends the body of knowledge on consumer behavior in hospitality studies. Second, by investigating the willingness to communicate actively and the preferred communication channels of social anxiety consumers, we have broadened the scope of subjects in value co-creation research, underscoring the importance of communication channels in this field. Third, this research enhances our understanding of the social anxiety demographic. Despite a growing body of studies on their communication behaviors, there is limited examination of their active communication behaviors and preferences for communication channels. By addressing this gap, our study deepens the understanding of the consumption behaviors of individuals with social anxiety.

6.3 Practical implications

This study also provides practical insights for hotel management. The findings urge optimization in hotel services when they are serving special needs consumers, in this case, the social anxiety group. For example, providing instant messaging communication channel that is preferred by high social anxiety consumers in fostering actively communicate feedback. Especially for high-end hotels, meeting the rigid demands of customers is no longer a challenge. To break through the bottleneck of further improving service, it is necessary to understand the personalized needs of customers and require active communication feedback from customers. Therefore, it is very necessary to provide a more friendly communication channel for the large group of people with social anxiety in these hotels.

REFERENCES

American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th ed.)*. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Pub.

Becker, L. C., & Pizzutti, C. (2017). C2C value creation: social anxiety and retail environment. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing, 11*(4), 398-415. https://doi.org/10.1108/JRIM-10-2016-0106

Bozkurt, S., Gligor, D., Locander, J. and Ahmad Rather, R. (2023). How social media self-efficacy and social anxiety affect customer purchasing from agile brands on social media. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing, 17*(6), 813-830. https://doi.org/10.1108/JRIM-08-2022-0242

Carvalho, P., & Alves, H. (2023). Customer value co-creation in the hospitality and tourism industry: a systematic literature review. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 35*(1), 250-273. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-12-2021-1528

Chen, Y. A., & Toma, C. L. (2023). To Text or Talk in Person? Social Anxiety, Media Affordances, and Preferences for Texting Over Face-To-Face Communication in Dating Relationships. *Media Psychology*, 1-27. https://doi.org/10.1080/15213269.2023.2246895

Clark, D. M. (2001). A cognitive perspective on social phobia. In W. R. Crozier & L. E. Alden (Eds.), *International handbook of social anxiety: Concepts, research and interventions relating to the self and shyness (pp. 406)*. John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Clark, D. M., & Wells, A. (1995). A cognitive model of social phobia. In R. Heimberg, M. Liebowitz, D. A. Hope, & F. R. Schneier (Eds.), *Social phobia: Diagnosis, assessment and treatment (pp. 69–93)*. New York: Guilford Press.

Delacroix, E., & Guillard, V. (2016). Consumers who avoid relationships: social anxiety in commercial contexts. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour, 15*(4), 370-384. https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.1582

Gyung Kim, M., Wang, C., & Mattila, A. S. (2010). The relationship between consumer complaining behavior and service recovery: An integrative review. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 22*(7), 975-991. https://doi.org/10.1108/09596111011066635

Heeren, A., Mogoașe, C., Philippot, P., & McNally, R. J. (2015). Attention bias modification for social anxiety: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Clinical Psychology Review, 40*, 76-90. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2015.06.001

Howell, A. N., Zibulsky, D. A., Srivastav, A., & Weeks, J. W. (2016). Relations among social anxiety, eye contact avoidance, state anxiety, and perception of interaction performance during a live conversation. *Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, 45*(2), 111-122. https://doi.org/10.1080/16506073.2015.1111932

Islam, M. S., & Kirillova, K. (2021). Nonverbal communication in hotels as a medium of experience co-creation. *Tourism Management, 87*, 104363. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2021.104363

Jin, S. V., & Youn, S. (2021). Why do consumers with social phobia prefer anthropomorphic customer service chatbots? Evolutionary explanations of the moderating roles of social phobia. *Telematics and Informatics, 62*, 101644. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2021.101644

Kamalou, S., Shaughnessy, K., & Moscovitch, D. A. (2019). Social anxiety in the digital age: The measurement and sequelae of online safety-seeking. *Computers in Human Behavior, 90*, 10-17. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2018.08.023

Lundy, B. L., & Drouin, M. (2016). From social anxiety to interpersonal connectedness: Relationship building within face-to-face, phone and instant messaging mediums. *Computers in Human Behavior, 54*, 271-277. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.08.004

Lusch, R. F., & Vargo, S. L. (2014). *Service-dominant logic: Premises, perspectives, possibilities*. Cambridge University Press.

Matthews, K. A., Manuck, S. B., & Saab, P. G. (1986). Cardiovascular responses of adolescents during a naturally occurring stressor and their behavioral and psychophysiological predictors. *Psychophysiology, 23*(2), 198-209. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-8986.1986.tb00618.x

Mattick, R. P., & Clarke, J. C. (1998). Development and validation of measures of social phobia scrutiny fear and social interaction anxiety. *Behaviour Research and Therapy, 36*(4), 455-470. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0005-7967(97)10031-6

Myllyneva, A., Ranta, K., & Hietanen, J. K. (2015). Psychophysiological responses to eye contact in adolescents with social anxiety disorder. *Biological Psychology, 109*, 151-158. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biopsycho.2015.05.005

Pickard, H., Rijsdijk, F., Happé, F., & Mandy, W. (2017). Are social and communication difficulties a risk factor for the development of social anxiety?. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 56*(4), 344-351. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaac.2017.01.007

Reid, D. J., & Reid, F. J. (2007). Text or talk? Social anxiety, loneliness, and divergent preferences for cell phone use. *CyberPsychology & Behavior, 10*(3), 424-435. https://doi.org/10.1089/cpb.2006.9936

Shalom, J. G., Israeli, H., Markovitzky, O., & Lipsitz, J. D. (2015). Social anxiety and physiological arousal during computer mediated vs. face to face communication. *Computers in Human Behavior, 44*, 202-208. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2014.11.056

Shang, Y., & Li, F. S. (2024). How does ritualistic service increase brand evangelism through E2C interaction quality and memory? The moderating role of social phobia. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 116*, 103624. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2023.103624

Skandalis, A., Byrom, J., & Banister, E. (2019). Experiential marketing and the changing nature of extraordinary experiences in post-postmodern consumer culture. *Journal of Business Research, 97*, 43-50. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.12.056

Stein, D. J., Lim, C. C., Roest, A. M., De Jonge, P., Aguilar-Gaxiola, S., Al-Hamzawi, A., ... & WHO World Mental Health Survey Collaborators. (2017). The cross-national epidemiology of social anxiety disorder: Data from the World Mental Health Survey Initiative. *BMC Medicine, 15*, 1-21. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12916-017-0889-2

Van Vaerenbergh, Y., Orsingher, C., Vermeir, I., & Larivière, B. (2014). A meta-analysis of relationships linking service failure attributions to customer outcomes. *Journal of Service Research, 17*(4), 381-398. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094670514538321

Vargo, S. L., & Lusch, R. F. (2004). Evolving to a new dominant logic for marketing. *Journal of Marketing, 68*(1), 1-17. https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.68.1.1.24036

Watson, D., & Friend, R. (1969). Measurement of social-evaluative anxiety. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 33*(4), 448. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0027806

Xiong, W., Huang, M., Okumus, B., Leung, X. Y., & Cai, X. (2022). When social phobia meets excessive service: Effects on customer delight and loyalty. *Tourism Management Perspectives, 44*, 101031. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2022.101031

Zhang, C., & Zhang, W. (2022). The impact of social phobia on willingness to communicate in a second language: The mediation effect of ideal L2 self. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13*, 1018633. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1018633

Food communication ritual in the Filipino quick service restaurant in the United States of America (USA)

Baylosis, Lilibeth Jordas
Department of Hotel, Restaurant and Institution Management
University of the Philippines

Abstract:

This ongoing preliminary study used Carey's ritual view of communication to understand the communication ritual of customers in Filipino quick-service restaurants in the United States of America. The ritual communications in the QSR cycle of service were used to understand and describe the Filipino customers' food, face-to-face and computer-mediated communication. Based on the preliminary result, ritual communication has been transformed. The former dominant face-to-face community has changed. It strengthened communities at home. Computer and smartphone mediated communication has increased. The milieu for the face to face communication was renegotiated. It is done both inside and outside the Filipino QSR store.

Keywords: Food Communication, Fast food, Quick Service Restaurant, Filipinos, QSR in USA

1. Introduction

Philippine cuisine is as rich and diverse as its history and was viewed to reflect the Filipino culture. House Bill 3926 (Castillo, 2014) proposed to declare *adobo* (vinegar braised dish) as the national food as it reflected the blending and simmering of the historical saga of the country. This proposal was not fully supported, as some advocates viewed *sinigang* (Filipino sour soup) as the dish to earn the title. On the other hand, in the light of the changing landscapes where hybridization happens, from the point view of a foreigner, the present food icon of the Filipino is the homegrown fast food; inspired by the Western food concept, it was decontextualized and branded as a forerunner of Filipino food (popular) culture.

There is one Filipino brand, Jollibee, that is recognized worldwide. As of 2024, this Filipino icon has 103 stores in North America, sixty-six (74) of which are in the United States (*Jollibee Locations*, n.d.). Against this backdrop, this study used the lenses of James Carey to describe the ritual view of communication between Filipino customers of the popular Filipino QSR in the USA.

The main objective of this preliminary study is to find out the communication rituals of Filipinos while they are in the Filipino QSR.

Specifically, this study aims to describe the following:
1. How Filipino QSR USA customers communicate (and behave) while inside the QSRs.
2. How the communication rituals of Filipino customers were shared, maintained, negotiated, transformed and annihilated in the Filipino QSR in the USA.

There are three major rationales for doing this preliminary study in the Filipino QSR in the USA. First, the Filipino QSR is a national pride and a symbol of Filipino success. It positioned the brand as the 'home' of Filipinos in the Philippines (Escobar & Blancaflor, 2018) and now operates in 19 countries (*Jollibee by Country 2024*, n.d.)

It is among the few QSR chains that beat global brands in its home front. It penetrated the USA fast food market, the turf and the origin of the fast food giant McDonald's. Second, more than four million Filipino immigrants are in the United States (*Filipinos Data on Asian Americans | Pew Research Center*, n.d.)According to Nadal (2004), Filipinos and Filipino Americans were among the only ethnicities in several "racial" categories. It was further highlighted that the immigration wave went through three phases intertwined with the histories and ties of the Philippines and the United States (Cariño, 1996). Third, while numerous types of research were on Filipino immigrants in the diaspora, there seems to be an absence of food communication studies of Filipinos in the USA.

2. Literature Review

Two alternative communication concepts were alive in the American culture: the transmission view of communication (TVC) and the ritual view of communication (RVC). Carey (2008) argued that TVC is the commonest in the United States and all industrial cultures. TVC is linked to terms such as "imparting," "sending," "transmitting," or "giving information to others." The second view of communication, RVC was posited by Carey to be linked to the ritual definition: "Communication is linked to terms such as "sharing," "participation," "association," "fellowship," and "the possession of a common faith. (p. 15).

Several studies concurred that RVC was vital in maintaining community and cultural identity. Among these were the spatial and temporal celebration of reunification in the Spring Festival of Li (2014) in China and the study by Kim (2017) which described how food was used as a vehicle for communication, socialization and building relationships in funeral rituals in Korea. RVC was also used to study how invented traditions were built, passed on, negotiated and maintained. The study of Marchi (2013) focused on how the ritual of celebrating the Day of the Dead in the United States was brought along with them by migrants. It posited that this invented tradition was an offshoot of globalization and migration where there were interactions and negotiations among different cultural groups of Mexican Americans, between Mexican Americans and other Latinos and between Latinos and non-Latinos. Despite bearing the same title, this ritual has transformed and is now celebrated entirely differently from a place of origin (Marchi, 2013).The improvement in technology, transportation and communication has propelled globalization, migration, and mobility of goods and money. Chia (2011) highlighted the dichotomy of the stance of host and sending countries in migration.

The study of Stajcic(2013). which looked into different definitions of communication, conjured that food was a form of communication as it concurred with the definition that "communication is the process by which we understand the world and our attempts to convey that understanding to others through both verbal and nonverbal language (p. 79). Food represents meanings that may have evolved through multi-faceted dimensions that may be linked and attached to different disciplines like anthropology, sociology and psychology.

Economic, political and social factors were the impetus in the evolution of communication rituals. The effect of migration and globalization on how food rituals were formed, negotiated, maintained, transformed and annihilated were described in several personal accounts and studied, an example of which was the study of Parasecoli (2014).

Previous researchers focused on the typology of various interactions among customers in the service industry including those neighboring strangers customers and the audience in a social setting or environment. The study of Kim and Choi (2016) on three types of customer-to-customer interactions. The first one highlighted the communication between the customer and friends and families which reinforced the previous studies of Garner (2015) and Kellershohn et al., (2018). The second and third engagement of communications in a service company between neighboring stranger customers and the audience as a social setting. The presence of other customers is also part of the servicescape and based on previous research by Ng et al. (2007) as cited by Kim & Choi (2016) while inside an establishment, customers interact with one another by sharing time, space or service equipment. While doing so, they may affect decisions and experiences. This type of interaction was labeled as customer-to-customer (C2C). According to Bettencourt (1997) and Groth (2005), their role in other customers was either participants, helpers and/or referrers (Kim & Choi, 2016). Interactions with other customers may happen anywhere in the cycle service from entry to exit or even after the experience. Several studies among were by Kim & Choi (2016), Harmeling et al. (2017), and van Tonder & Petzer (2018) tested how communication with other customers affects the customer citizenship of others. These interactions need not happen in the same physical space but can also happen in a virtual space (Harmeling et al., 2017).

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) is also known as online communication, (Medina & Srivastava, 2016). It is also referred to as communication through computers. According to Warschauer (2001) as cited by Medina & Srivastava (2016), CMC involves two types, first is synchronous communication and the second is asynchronous communication. In synchronous communication, participants communicate in real-time via chat or discussion software, with all participants at their computers at the same time, and in asynchronous communication, in which people communicate in a delayed fashion by computer, such as e-mail.

Though CMC was viewed to be as less effective than face-to-face it was as posited by the media richness theory that through the years and as technology advances, the affordances of mobile phones and mobile apps were getting more varied and more sophisticated. It was said to "replace traditional communication technology, replace human-to-human with human-machine communication" (Hilbert & Aravindakshan, 2018 p.1). Mobile phone communication competes with face-to-face communication even while eating or in social gatherings (Lee & Zickuhr, 2015).

Self-service technology (SST) is another CMC that involves communication between customers and companies, QSRs included. SST exemplified the prosumption model of McDonaldization where the prosumer performs the task of the service crew (Shim et al., 2021). Order taking (Arsalan & Latif, 2021; Kelso, 2019; Kocaman, 2021; Park et al., 2021; Shim et al., 2021), suggestive selling (Arsalan & Latif, 2021; Kelso, 2019, and payment can be done (Kocaman, 2021; Park et al., 2021) through the use of ordering apps in the customer's Smartphones, company provided tablets and ordering Kiosks (Arsalan & Latif, 2021; Kelso, 2019; Kocaman, 2021; Park et al., 2021; Shim et al., 2021; Tang et al., 2022; Vakulenko, 2019). Through CMC, deciding to upsize, take value meals, and availing of promotional offers are some self-service activities performed by the customer without the assistance of the service employees (Arsalan & Latif, 2021; Kelso, 2019; Kocaman, 2021; Park et al., 2021; Shim et al., 2021). These transactions can be done through the Internet (Kocaman, 2021; Vakulenko et al., 2019) or without the Internet (Vakulenko, Y. et al., 2019).

For the customers, the benefits included ease in choosing food, comfort and less pressure to upsize their orders as they felt that they were not being judged for their choices. It also provided opportunities for the customer to improve and change customer experience (Arsalan & Latif, 2021; Kelso, 2019). On the side of the company, through CMC, the employees have more time to focus on other tasks which will add to customer service and enhance face-to-face interactions (Touch Dynamic, 2019). Moreover, trying out new items can be easier for both the customers and the company. The company can easily assess if the new product is well-liked because of the consistency in marketing through suggestive selling (Arsalan & Latif, 2021; Kelso, 2019).

Before the pandemic, the QSRs or fast food restaurants (Kellershohn, et al., 2018) and coffee shops (Garner, 2015) were considered as "third place." The study of Kellershohn et al. (2018), focused on the communication of families with children in the QSR cycle of service in the Canadian context. Ordering through the use of Smartphone applications and computer-mediated kiosks was not used by the majority of families with children. They opted to order directly from the counterperson. The bring-in gadgets were observed to be used in taking photos of food before eating (Kellershohn et al., 2018).
The Covid-19 pandemic was a big blow to the restaurant industry. It was among the biggest providers of jobs and made up 4% of the US gross domestic product. In 2020, the projected sales were US$899bn but due to the pandemic, sales dropped to US$240bn. In the United States, though the effect of the outbreak varied by state and locality, the interventions to mitigate the spread and severity were similar. To enforce physical distancing, dine-in services were banned. As a result, 60% of US restaurants closed down. Only those who were able to sustain their operation through alternative off-premise models like drive-thru, and delivery, among others were able to stay afloat. Also, those who had the advanced digital infrastructure and used AI's had the advantage (Maher et al., 2022).

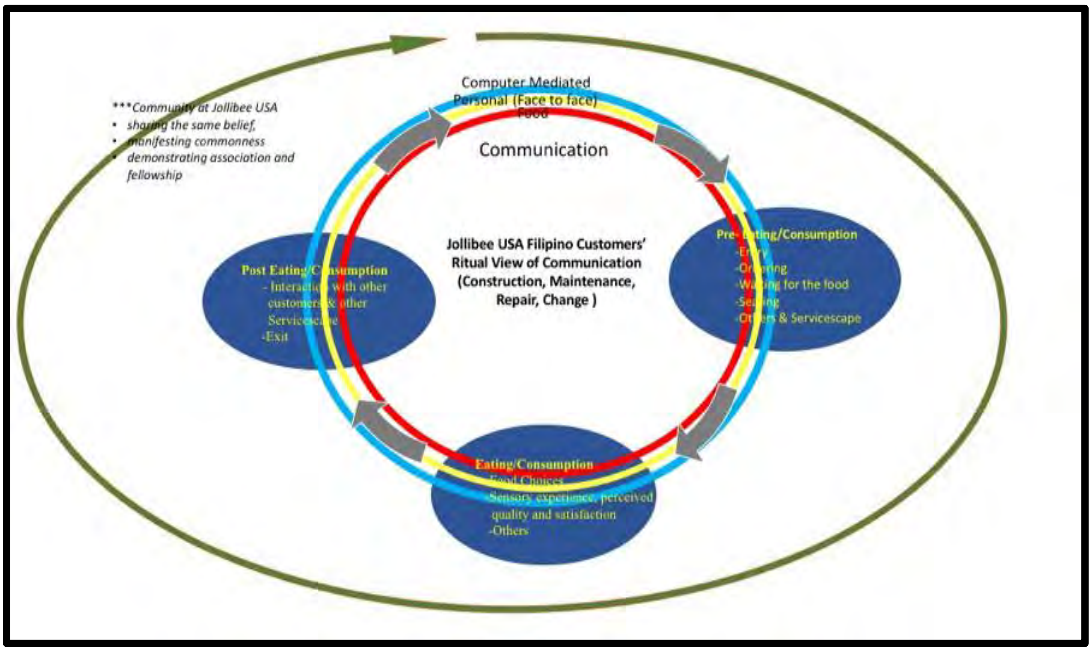
Likewise, the COVID-19 pandemic changed the communication temporal, spatial and behavioral communication of the customers and the company. The hospitality industry which includes hotels, resorts, restaurants, bars, coffee shops and other establishments with "high touch" services was among those that were greatly affected economically and operationally (Jeong et al., 2021; Maher et al., 2022). The popularity of CMC increased during the Covid-19 pandemic. Fear of contracting the virus through interpersonal interactions both on the side of the employees and customers facilitated the adoption of the CMC (Yang et al., 2020).

3. Methodology

To understand the communications of QSR customers, the cultural theory of James W. Carey (1989), the ritual view of communication, will be the main theory to be used. The "cycle of service" in the Filipino QSR branches in USA will serve as the route where food rituals, personal face-to-face and computer-mediated communications are constructed (formed or produced), maintained, repaired or changed.

The operational framework, shown in Figure 1, represents a fluid community in Filipino QSR USA branches, represented by the area enclosed by the green porous incomplete loop. It is theorized that the community members are Filipino immigrant customers of Filipino QSR in USA, sharing the same belief, manifesting commonness and demonstrating association and fellowship. The shared belief and commonness that bind them together are their food communication (FC), personal face-to-face communication (PFtFC) and computer-mediated communication (CMC) rituals signified by the red, yellow and blue circles. The RVC of the Filipino immigrants is formed (constructed or produced), maintained, repaired, or changed in Filipino QSR USA branches. The formation and transformation rituals transpire as they go through the Filipino QSR in USA service cycle, an end-to-end cycle that starts from the moment they enter to dine in until they finish eating and leave.

Figure 1: Customers' Ritual View of Communication in Filipino QSR in USA



Case Study

This ongoing qualitative study adopted the quality inquiry process of Williams (2018). The research design of the case study is summarized in figure 2.

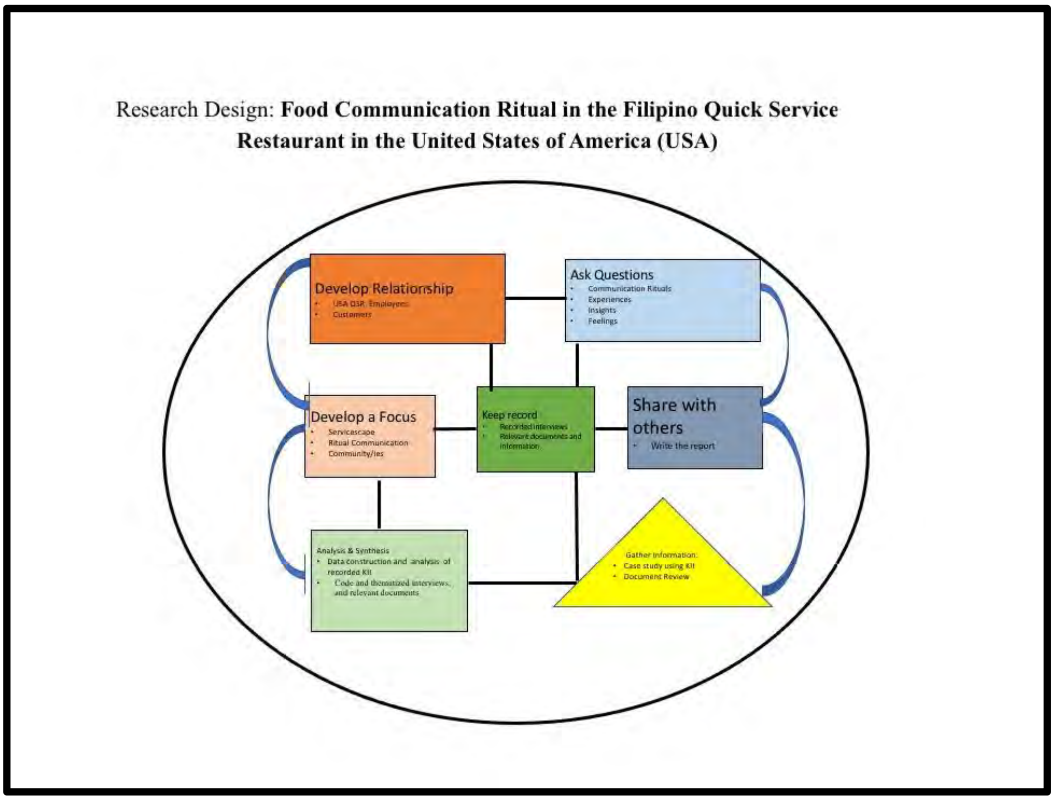
Case Study Locale

A case study of Filipino QSR USA customers, frontline employees and communities formed having the same ritual communication was done. The multiple sources of data were gathered through in-depth key informant interviews (KII) of the Filipino QSR USA customers and frontline employees.

Case Study KII Participants

The key informants (KIs) will be the primary source of the case study. According to Portus (2018), the reliability of the information can be better assured by having accounts from primary sources. KII participants were purposively selected. They must have dined in, ordered take away or availed of delivery from the Filipino QSR in the USA. While for the frontline employees must have worked in the Filipino QSR for at least one year as supervisors, managers, and service crew assigned in customer contact areas as cashiers or dining crew.   Key informants were recruited and interviewed starting February 2023. Recruitment of KII participants was done through the assistance of friends, relatives, managers and crew of QSRs. Recruitment of participants through the snowball method was done as well.

Figure 2: Research design



KII Instrument

There were two main KII instruments. The first one is the personal information sheet (PIS) covering the sociodemographic and general information of the informant. The PIS form was adopted by Portus et al. (2018, p. 114). The second instrument is a script that serves as the outline and guide of the interview. The in-depth key informant interviews of customers included food communication, physical face-to-face communication (PF2FC) and computer-mediated communication (CMC). The life stories and narratives formed part of the historical documentation of communication while dining in, ordering take-home or ordering through third-party deliveries.

Data Construction and Analysis of KII

This study adopted the data construction and analysis of Portus et al.(2018, p100). The memoes and the recorded interviews were transcribed. Codes were created, and the concept map was organized into themes. The units of analysis were the individual key informant participants and the communities formed through the RVC.

Document Analysis

This study also made use of document analysis to be able to contextualize the narratives of the interviewees through shared pictures and other documents by interviewees. News articles and other documents were also included in the analyses when mentioned by the informant/s. These documents served as secondary sources. Similar to the KII case study, coding and thematic arrangement were done.

4. Preliminary Results

Data construction for the case study commenced on April 25, 2023. The first KII participant was a female Filipino teacher who had been teaching in one of the middle schools in Maryland, USA. She is over 60 years old and has been in the USA for over ten years. According to her, despite the distance to the Filipino QSR branch in Virginia Beach, they visited the branch during holidays before the pandemic. Like other Filipinos, she used to buy the products they could eat inside the store and buy more for takeout that she and her husband usually enjoyed for days. Also, she shared that once they are in the store, she would post it on her Facebook account. Right after posting, she would receive comments and requests from Filipino neighbors, friends and relatives asking for a favor to buy and bring their favorite fast food products. She recalled that she used to ask the same favor from friends and acquaintances.

Things changed during the pandemic. Despite opening a new store at Westfield Wheaton, Maryland, which was just 45 minutes away from her home compared to the four-hour drive in Virginia Beach, they did not go to the outlet as they used to do before the pandemic.

The Filipino QSR in the USA implemented the "call and pick-up" mode of service (Industry News, 2021) during and after the pandemic. With this service feature. the KII participant calls the outlet whenever they like to eat or have family gatherings. After placing the order, her daughter picks up at the agreed time of service.

This experience corroborated the experience shared by Bry Cepe in his FB account and can also be accessed through YouTube (Bry Cepe, 2021). The video described how the ritual view of communication during the opening day of one of the Filipino QSR branches in the

USA. The rituals and practices in the Filipino QSR were transformed because of the restrictions during the pandemic. The use of technology facilitated communication from ordering, queuing, and waiting. During the pick-up of food, the face-to-face communication was short, but the essence and the message were similar before the pandemic. The difference was that the consumption part was done outside the store, in the case of the key informant and Bry Cepe, 2021 where both enjoyed their food at home. The communities that were previously formed inside the QSR branch have shifted to more communities at home with families.

Because of convenience, this has continued up to the present. In 2022 and 2023, the KII participants shared that they got used to the QSR's "call and pick-up" service. She confirmed that she missed meeting fellow Filipinos while inside the Filipino QSR branch. However, because she believed and was wary of the prevalence of the COVID-19 virus and possible new variants their family opted not to lessen dining in.

She likewise confessed that she believed that fast food is unhealthy, but its satisfaction is worth it. The joy of eating the Filipino fast food is incomparable, "*alam ko naman na hindi healthy pero ang lasa at saya ay Pilipinong-Pilipino…Sige na lang*." Moreover, she highlighted that partaking and eating Filipino fast food was her family's way of combating homesickness. It tastes and smells like "home"

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The case study and document analysis are still ongoing. Based on the preliminary result, could be articulated that ritual communication has been transformed. The former dominant face-to-face community has changed. It strengthened communities at home. Computer and smartphone mediated communication has increased. The milieu for the face to face communication was renegotiated. It is done both inside and outside the Filipino QSR store.

The data construction for other KII participants is underway. As this is a qualitative study, their life stories and narratives would be interestingly similar or different and cannot be generalized.

REFERENCES

Arsalan, S., & Latif, D.V. (2021). Technology adoption of millennial generations in implementation of self-ordering machine in fast food restaurant. *Turkish Journal cf Computer and Mathematics Education,* 12(8), 556-560.

Bry Cepe (2021, April 8). Jollibee Opens in Westfield, Wheaton, Maryland USA | Ordering on the Grand Opening Day (Video file). You Tube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3n4xNCv8Ghw

Carey, J.W. (1989). Communication as culture: Essays on media and society. Boston: Unwin Hyman retrieved from http://web.mit.edu/21l.432/www/readings/Carey_CulturalApproach Communication.pdf

Carey, J. W. (2008). Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society. Taylor and Francis e-Library.

Cariño, B. (1996). Filipino Americans: Many and varied. In S. Pedraza, & R. G. Rumbaut, *Origins and destinies: Immigration, race, and ethnicity in America* (pp. 293--301). Belmont, Calif: Wadsworth

Castillo, L. V. (2014, February 28). Bill declares adobo as national food. Retrieved January 25, 2019, from http://www.congress.gov.ph/press/details.php?pressid=7678.

Chia, S. Y. (2011). Foreign Labor in Singapore: Rationale, Policies, Impacts, and Issues. *Philippine Journal of Development*. Vol. 38, Iss. 1/2, pp. 105–133.

Escobar, A., & Blancaflor, S. (2018, December 5). A Filipino favorite, Jollibee aims for international growth. Retrieved March 17, 2019, from nbcnews.com: https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/filipino-favorite-jollibee-aims-international-growth-n940301

Filipinos | Data on Asian Americans | Pew Research Center. (n.d.). Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends Project; https://www.facebook.com/pewresearch. Retrieved April 11, 2024, from https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/fact-sheet/asian-americans-filipinos-in-the-u-s/#filipino-population-in-the-u-s-2000-2019

Garner, B. (2015). Interpersonal Coffee Drinking Communication Rituals. *International Journal of Marketing & Business Communication*, 4(4), 1-12.

Harmeling, C. M., Moffett, J. W., Arnold, M. J., & Carlson, B. D. (2017). Toward a theory of customer engagement marketing. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*; New York Vol. 45, Iss. 3, (May 2017): 312-335. DOI:10.1007/s11747-016-0509-2 ., 312-335.

Hilbert, M., & Aravindakshan, A. (2018). What characterizes the polymodal media of the mobile phone? The multiple media within the most popular medium. *Multimodal Technologies and Interaction*, 1-5.

Jeong, M., Kim, K., Ma, F., & DiPietro, R. (2021). Key factors driving customers' restaurant dining behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic . *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* Vol. 34 No. 2, 2022. DOI 10.1108/IJCHM-07-2021-08, 836-858.

Jollibee by Country 2024. (n.d.). World Population by Country 2024 (Live). Retrieved April 11, 2024, from https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/jollibee-by-country

Jollibee locations. n.d. Jollibee Locations. Retrieved April 11, 2024 from https://locations.jollibeefoods.com/index.html.

Kellershohn, J., Walley, K., West, B., & Vriesekoop, F. (2018). Young consumers in fast food restaurants: technology, toys and family time. *Young Consumers,* https://doi.org/10.1108/YC-08-2017-00731, Vol 19(1), 105-118.

Kelso, A. (2019). Self-Order Kiosks Are Finally Having A Moment In The Fast Food Space. Forbes.Com . https://www.forbes.com/sites/aliciakelso/2019/07/30/self-order-kiosks-are-finally-having-a-moment-inthe-fast-food-space/?sh=4dc234124275

Key facts about Asian Americans | Pew Research Center. (n.d.). Pew Research Center; https://www.facebook.com/pewresearch. Retrieved April 11, 2024, from https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2021/04/29/key-facts-about-asian-americans/#:~:text=Chinese%20Americans%20are%20the%20largest,(or%204.2%20million%20people)

Kim, H.S., & Choi, B. (2016). The effects of three customer-to-customer interaction quality types on customer experience quality and citizenship behavior in mass service settings. *Journal of Services Marketing* 30/4, [DOI 10.1108/JSM-06-2014-0194], 384-397.

Kim, H.S. (2017). Funeral foods and its role as vehicle of communication. https://www.ritsumei.ac.jp/acd/re/ssrc/result/memoirs/tokusyuugou201707/tokusyuugou201707-07.pdf

Kocaman, E. M. (2021). Operational effects of using management system: An assessment according to business features. *International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Science*, 25 100408, 1-8.

Lee, R. & Zickuhr, K. Americans' Views on Mobile Etiquette; Pew Research Center: Washington, DC, USA, 2015.

Li, M. (2014). Creating continuity in social transformation: An ethnographic study of migrant workers' spring festival family reunion rituals in China (Order No. 3680091). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1652862378). https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/creating-continuity-social-transformation/docview/1652862378/se-2

Lin & Matilla. (n.d.). Restaurant servicescape, service encounter, and perceived congruency on customers' emotions and satisfaction. Retrieved April 11, 2024, from https://pure.psu.edu/en/publications/restaurant-servicescape-service-encounter-and-perceived-congruenc

Maher, A. A., Elsharnouby, T. H., Aljafari, A. M., & Maher et al.,. (2022). Consumer approach intentions amid COVID-19: the role of safety compliance and perceived risk. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* Vol. 34 No. 3, DOI 10.1108/IJCHM-07-2021-0855, 972-992.

Marchi, R. (2013, July). Hybridity and Authenticity in US Day of the Dead Celebrations. *The Journal of American Folklore*, 126501, pp. 272–301.

Medina, M. N., & Srivastava, S. (2016). The Role of Extraversion and Communication Methods on an Individual's Satisfaction with the Team Medina, Michele N; Srivastava, Saurabh. *Journal of Organizational Psychology*; West Palm Beach Vol. 16, Iss. 1, (Apr 2016): 78-92. Journal of Organizational Psychology, 78-92.

Nadal. (2004). Pilipino American identity development model. *Journal of Multicultural Counselling and Development,* 45–62.

Parasecoli, F. (2014). Food, identity, and cultural reproduction in immigrant communities. *Social Research*, 81, 415-439. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26549625

Park, Soona, Lehto, Xinran, Lehto, Mark. (2021). Self-service technology kiosk design for restaurants: An QFD application. *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 92 102757

Portus, L. M., Barrios, E. B., Conaco, M. C., & Go, S. P. (2018). Doing Social Science Research Guidebook. Quezon City, Philippines: Philippine Social Science Council

Shim, H.S.; Han, S.L.; Ha, J. (2021)The effects of consumer readiness on the adoption of self-service technology: moderating effects of consumer traits and situational factors. *Sustainability*, 13, 95. https://dx.doi.org/10.3390/su13010095

Stajcic, N. (2013). Understanding Culture: Food as a Means of Communication. Hemispheres, (28), 77-86. https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/understanding-culture-food-as-means-communication/docview/1539530315/se-2

Tang, Y., Yang, L., & He, Y. (2022). My phone, my zone: Restaurant consumers' territorial responses to unsolicited recommendation on their smartphones. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*. 101, 103115

Vakulenko, Y., Oghazi, P., & Hellstrom, D. (2019). Innovative framework for self-service kiosks: Integrating customer value knowledge. *Journal of Innovation & Knowledge*, Volume 4, Issue 4, , Pages 262-268.

van Tonder, E., & Petzer, D. J. (2018). Perspectives on "other" customers' roles in citizenship behaviour. *The International Journal of Bank Marketing; Bradford* Vol. 36, Iss. 2, (2018): 393-408.

Yang, Y., Liu, H., & Chen, X. (2020). COVID-19 and restaurant demand: early effects of the pandemic and stay-at-home orders. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* Vol. 32 No. 12. DOI 10.1108/IJCHM-06-2020-0504 , 3809-3834.

Impact of face consciousness on tourist's green purchase behavior: Norm Activation Theory perspective

Sun, Bongran Lucia
Graduate School of Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Management
Yonsei University

Abstract:

The corpus of academic literature investigating the influence of Face Consciousness (FC) on green purchasing behaviors is currently limited. Consequently, there is a pressing need for research that clearly articulates the mechanisms by which FC influences green consumption patterns. Addressing this lacuna, the present study adopts the Norm Activation Theory (NAT) as a framework to elucidate this process. Analysis was conducted on data collected from 410 Korean consumers employing PLS-SEM. The analysis supported all posited hypotheses.

Keywords: *Face consciousness, NAT, Green Purchasing Behavior*

1. Introduction

The concept of "face," pertains to the notion of a positive self-image as perceived by others within interpersonal relationships and social networks (Goffman, 2017). The term "face-consciousness" denotes the propensity of consumers to engage in behaviors aimed at augmenting, preserving, and preventing the loss of face vis-à-vis significant others (Bao et al., 2003). This is exemplified by the substantial correlation between FC and various aspects of consumer activity, such as the choice of gifts, the preference for certain brands, and the expenditures on gift purchases (Gao, Huang, & Brown, 2017). Behaviors such as overacting, grooming, and social engagement among Korean consumers at festivals have been associated with FC (Lee & Park, 2021). In the context of the United States, FC has been identified as a significant moderating variable that influences other aspects of customer perception and the valuation of social attributes among luxury cruise patrons.

FC has a significant relationship with green consumption behavior. The behaviors associated with green consumption among consumers are frequently intertwined with the dynamics of face consciousness (Chan, Berger, & Van-Boven,2012). Individuals exhibiting a heightened consciousness of face are likely to engage more extensively in green consumption activities (Wan, Poon, & Yu,2016). However, existing scholarly work exploring the impact of face consciousness on green consumption practices remains scant. Therefore, research is required to delineate the systematic processes through which face consciousness (FC) affects green consumption behaviors.

To fill this gap, the current study employs the norm activation theory (NAT, Schwartz,1977) to understand the mechanism. NAT is a psychological model elucidating the motivational process leading individuals to perform altruistic deeds, explicitly focusing on pro-social conduct. Conceived to uncover the underlying reasons prompting individuals to partake in beneficial actions for others, this theory has found broad application in investigating pro-environmental behaviors, including green consumption (Stern, 2000). The main elements of the NAT include the awareness of consequences (AC), the ascription of responsibility (AR), and personal norms (PN), which collectively impact pro-environmental actions. Given that face consciousness (FC) is recognized as a consumption and cultural value (Bao et al., 2003; Yin et al., 2018), it is a preceding factor influencing AC, AR, and PN.

Thus, the objective of this study is to investigate the causal and systematic effect of FC on AC, AR, and PN, which consequently affects tourists' green purchase behavior (GPB). Incorporating FC into the NAT enhances the existing body of literature on tourist Green Purchasing Behavior (GPB). Additionally, by elucidating the pivotal role of FC, this research offers valuable managerial implications.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Face Consciousness (FC)

Face represents a self-concept widely recognized as a social attribute (Goffman, 1955) and is understood as a socially exposed self-perception (Chunling, et al., 2019). Individuals who highly value face are inclined to purchase rare and branded items to showcase their social standing, dignity, and self-perception to others, focusing more on the superficial features of products rather than their functional qualities (Wong & Ahuvia, 1998). In the literature on Face, Face and FC are used interchangeably.

2.2. Norm Activation Theory (NAT)

The NAT (Schwartz, 1977) and its subsequent extensions have been extensively used to elucidate prosocial and environmentally friendly behaviors. The connections between the NAT variables—AC, AR, and norms—have been explored to characterize intentions and prosocial actions (e.g., Harland et al., 2007). This research combines FC (as precursors) with the three fundamental constructs of NAT—AC, AR, and Personal Norms (PN)—to investigate their influence on tourists' GPB.

2.3. Hypotheses Development

Drawing from existing literature, this research formulated a conceptual model that posits seven hypotheses, as illustrated in Figure 1.

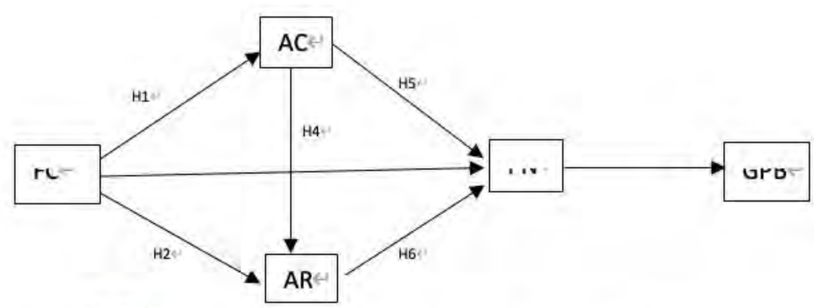


Figure 1. The conceptual model of this study.

*FC=Face Consciousness, AC=Awareness of Consequences, AR=Ascription of Responsibility, PN=Personal Norm, GPB=Green Purchase Behavior

3. Methodology

Prior scholarly works informed the construction of the survey questionnaire. Specifically, four scale items from Bao et al. (2003) were employed for FC. Regarding AC and AR, six items (three for each construct) were derived from the study conducted by Han (2020). The measurement scales for PN and GPB, each comprising three items, were also adapted from Han's research (2020). The questionnaire was disseminated through an online platform, collecting 410 responses from Korean consumers who had patronized green hotels in the previous 12 months. The analysis employed Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), with Smart PLS being the analysis tool.

4. Results

Confirmatory factor analysis was employed to test the stability of the measurement model. Goodness-of-fit indices (standardized root mean square residual (SRMR)=0.058, chi-square=662.702, normed fit index (NFI) =0.845, p=0.000) show the data fit the model well. All items of each construct were significantly loaded >0.5 (p< 0.001) (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012). For each construct, Cronbach's alpha >0.7 ensured internal consistency. Composite reliability (CR) >0.6 and average variance extracted (AVE) >0.5 ensured reliability and convergent validity, respectively (Bagozzi &Yi, 2012). Discriminant validity was also tested using the Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations. The HTMT values below the threshold of 0.85 confirmed adequate equivalence of discriminant validity for all constructs.

For the structural model, all hypotheses received support at a significance level of p<0.05, with the exception of the pathway from FC to AC, which exhibited a significance level of p=0.080, thus receiving support at the p<0.10 level.

	β	t-statistics	p-value	Decision
FC → AC	0.111	1.751	0.080	H1:supported
FC → AR	0.104	2.130	0.033	H2:supported
FC → PN	0160	3.085	0.002	H3:supported
AC → AR	0.587	12.694	0.000	H4:supported
AC → PN	0.265	3.723	0.000	H5:supported
AR → PN	0.212	3.424	0.001	H6:supported
PN → GBP	0.705	0.705	0.000	H7:supported

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this investigation align with prior research regarding the relationships AC → AR, AC → PN, AR → PN, and PN → GBP. A novel contribution of this study is the significant impact of FC on AC, AR, and Personal Norms PN.

FC has various scales. This study considers FC a consumption value. Future research can investigate the effect of FC by utilizing other FC. Except for PN, social norms can be incorporated into the model to observe the effect of FC on social norms.

REFERENCES

Bagozzi, R. P., & Yi, Y. (2012). Specification, evaluation, and interpretation of structural equation models. *Journal of the academy of marketing science*, *40*, 8-34.

Bao, Y., Zhou, K. Z., & Su, C. (2003). Face consciousness and risk aversion: do they affect consumer decision-making?. *Psychology & Marketing*, *20*(8), 733-755.

Chan, C., Berger, J., & Van Boven, L. (2012). Identifiable but not identical: Combining social identity and uniqueness motives in choice. *Journal of Consumer research*, *39*(3), 561-573.

Chunling, Y., Xiaodong, Z., Xia, W., & Yifei, Z. (2019). Face consciousness and green buying intention: The moderating effect of consumption context and mediating effect of price. *Management Review*, *31*(11), 139.

Gao, H., Huang, S. S., & Brown, G. (2017). The influence of face on Chinese tourists' gift purchase behaviour: The moderating role of the gift giver–receiver relationship. *Tourism Management*, *62*, 97-106.

Goffman, E. (1955). On face-work: An analysis of ritual elements in social interaction. *Psychiatry*, *18*(3), 213-231.

Goffman, E. (2017). *Interaction ritual: Essays in face-to-face behavior*. Routledge.

Harland, P., Staats, H., & Wilke, H. A. (2007). Situational and personality factors as direct or personal norm mediated predictors of pro-environmental behavior: Questions derived from norm-activation theory. *Basic and applied social psychology*, *29*(4), 323-334.

Han, H. (2020). Theory of green purchase behavior (TGPB): A new theory for sustainable consumption of green hotel and green restaurant products. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, *29*(6), 2815-2828.

Lee, K. Y., & Park, S. H. (2021). Does Face Consciousness Affect Tourist Behaviour at Festival Events? A Korean Perspective. *Sustainability*, *13*(20), 11558.

Schwartz, S. H. (1977). Normative influences on altruism. In *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 10, pp. 221-279). Academic Press.

Stern, P. C. (2000). New environmental theories: toward a coherent theory of environmentally significant behavior. *Journal of social issues*, *56*(3), 407-424.

Wan, L. C., Poon, P. S., & Yu, C. (2016). Consumer reactions to corporate social responsibility brands: the role of face concern. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, *33*(1), 52-60.

Wong, N. Y., & Ahuvia, A. C. (1998). Personal taste and family face: Luxury consumption in Confucian and Western societies. *Psychology & Marketing*, *15*(5), 423-441.

Yin, J., Qian, L., & Singhapakdi, A. (2018). Sharing sustainability: How values and ethics matter in consumers' adoption of public bicycle-sharing scheme. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *149*, 313-332.

Will joining the casino loyalty program lead to real customer loyalty? The effects of switching barriers and brand trust

Xu, Yueying
School of Hospitality Management
Macao University of Tourism

Lok, Pou U
School of Hospitality Management
Macao University of Tourism

Abstract:

The study examines a few prerequisites of casino customer attitudinal and behavioral loyalty. Switching barriers, as represented by switching costs, relationship investment, and alternative attractiveness, brand trust, and casino loyalty program are scrutinized for their respective effects on loyalty. The value of casino loyalty program is further explored for its contribution in building customer loyalty. Results based on 277 gamblers who had visited Macao casinos at least once show that switching barriers and brand trusts exert the most predicting power on customer loyalty, but the rewards program is an insignificant factor even if gamblers had positive experiences with the program.

Keywords: Casino customer loyalty; Attitudinal loyalty; Behavioral loyalty; Switching barriers; Brand trust

1. Introduction

With the nickname of 'Oriental Monte Carlo' or the 'Asian Las Vegas', Macao has a long history with its gaming industry throughout the last three centuries. The once-colony tiny city is economically dependent on gaming which is unlawful in all other parts of China. As of 2018, Macao has 41 casinos (DICJ, 2020). Recently, however, with the global economic slowdown and the aftermaths of the COVID-19 pandemic, Macao's gambling revenues have plummeted since 2020 (DICJ, 2022), and the future is still gloomy although the world economy is recovering. In addition, the emergence of new casinos in surrounding regions such as Korea has heated up the competition in the gaming market. To maintain competitive advantages and build long-lasting relationships with their customers, Macao gaming operators launch various rewards programs, such as providing complimentary accommodation and transportation in their hotels and offering discounts at their integrated resorts, to attract and retain gamblers. These rewards activities are parts of the loyalty programs developed by casino operators to cultivate customer loyalty (Wohl, 2018).

Loyalty programs are considered to be usually used by companies as a structured customer relationship management (CRM) tool to build and extend customer-supplier relationship (Alshurideh et al., 2020) with the expectation that good relationships generate positive perceptions and boost loyalty among customers. Loyalty programs will increase customer satisfaction which further leads to customer loyalty (Khairawati, 2020). The perceived value of a loyalty program is essential in the formation of customer brand loyalty and switching barriers can mediate their relationship (Koo et al., 2020). By persuading customers to participate in loyalty programs, companies can strengthen customer relationships and stimulate repeat patronage and even transform customers to become brand advocators, which further helps to attract new customers through word-of-mouth communication (Yi & Joen, 2003).

However, the effectiveness of loyalty programs is still widely debated in the literature (Belli et al., 2022). Rothschild and Gaidis (1981) doubted that incentives offered by the loyalty program may lead to the program rather than to the brand loyalty. Dowling and Uncles (1997) argued that it is difficult for companies to expand their competitive advantages by just offering loyalty programs. Reinartz and Kumar (2002) found that loyalty programs only brought weak profits. Tanford, Raab and Kim (2011)'s study showed that hotel customers who focus on high value and benefits on the loyalty program did not show true loyalty and could be considered "spurious loyal" customers. Furthermore, Prentice (2013) in a study of gaming industry found that gamblers who did not participate in any membership program could still patronize and stay loyal to designated casinos, which casts a doubt on the usefulness of loyalty programs. With a comprehensive meta-analysis of loyalty programs, Belli et al. (2022) found that loyalty programs can enhance behavioral loyalty but it is challenging to change consumers' attitudinal loyalty via loyalty programs. They also found the design characteristics of loyalty programs (e.g. structure, reward content and delivery) and industry characteristics would moderate the effectiveness of loyalty programs.

2. Literature Review

Most of the existing loyalty programs literature focuses on a few industries (e.g. Dekay, Toh, & Raven, 2009; Tanford, 2013; Palmer & Mahoney, 2005; Chen et al., 2022). Chen et al. (2022) reviewed 131 loyal programs-related articles following the Theory–Context–Characteristics–Methodology (TCCM) review protocol and pointed to the need for more studies on different contexts. Not many studies and references to this research direction in the gaming industry are available (e.g., Hendler & Latour, 2008; Palmer & Mahoney, 2005), inviting the current study.

Being the goal of most marketing efforts, customer loyalty is achieved by many other factors than just the loyalty programs. Brand trust has been proven to be a powerful predictor and it plays a critical role in building customer loyalty in casino and the general industries (Bowen & Shoemaker, 1998; Fullerton, 2011; Sui & Baloglu, 2003; Wilkins et al., 2009). Rauyruen and Miller (2007) argued that to gain loyalty of customers, companies must first gain their trust. Scholars believe that strengthening trust is an effective strategy to prevent customer deviation (Fullerton, 2011; Sui & Baloglu, 2003). In the gaming sector, trust from gamblers could be even more important, because the gambling activities involve precious assets of the customers: money and privacy. Casino customers may want to deal with only trustworthy companies.

In addition, to prevent customer loss, companies set up switching barriers to stop customers from changing to their competitors. The higher the barriers, the less likely customers would leave their current company. These barriers include interpersonal relationships and switching costs (Jones et al., 2000). The availability and attractiveness of alternative companies act as a driver for customers to change companies, so lower alternative attractiveness can serve as another switching barrier. Scholars found that switching barriers have a correlation, positive or negative (e.g., Colwell & Hogarth-Scott, 2004), with loyalty and they are postulated as important predictors of customer loyalty. But the perspective effects of different barriers on casino customer loyalty ask for more empirical evidence.

According to Keller (1993), brand loyalty occurs when good beliefs and attitudes toward the brand are represented as repeated purchase behaviors. Thus, loyal customer is one who has a strong favorable attitude toward a brand and is willing to buy the same brand repeatedly (Mellens, Dekimpe & Steenkamp, 1996). So customer loyalty is both attitudinal and behavioral. The two dimensions are highly correlated, and according to Bennett and Thiele (2002), behavioral loyalty is an observable result of attitudinal loyalty and has a greater impact on the long-term development of the company. In this research, the two dimensions of loyalty are separately examined for more nuances.

The current research aims to contribute to the literature via deepening the understanding of customer loyalty behaviors in the gaming setting. Specifically, the objectives are 1) to investigate the relationships among switching barriers, brand trust, and loyalty program, and the attitudinal loyalty and behavioral loyalty of casino guests; 2) to examine how loyalty programs contribute to casino customer loyalty. The following hypotheses are proposed based on literature review:

H1a: Brand trust positively affects attitudinal loyalty of casino customers.
H1b: Brand trust positively affects behavioral loyalty of casino customers.
H2a: Switching barriers positively affect attitudinal loyalty of casino customers
H2b: Switching barriers positively affect behavioral loyalty of casino customers.
H3a: Loyalty membership program affects attitudinal loyalty of casino customers.
H3b: Loyalty membership program affects behavioral loyalty of casino customers.

3. Methodology

A survey method with a pre-designed questionnaire was adopted. All measurement items of the studied variables were adopted from the literature (Please see Table 1) and adjusted to fit the current research on casino customers. They were on 5-point Likert scales. For switching barriers, the three most common dimensions are used: switching costs, alternative attractiveness, and relationship investment (Han et. al., 2011; The questionnaire is available in English and Chinese, using a translation-back-translation process to establish equivalence.

The study population includes all casino customers aged at least 21 at the time of study and had visited a Macao casino at least once in the past 24 months. Non-probability sampling methods with convenience sampling and quota sampling methods were used. The authors purposely controlled the percentages of guests with or without casino loyalty membership. The data collection period was from. To improve the representativeness of the convenience sample, multiple means were employed including in-person survey and online survey, in the hope to recruit different types of gamblers. The in-person data collection was conducted near the three most popular casinos in the Cotai Strip of Macao. Data collection time covered both weekdays and weekends from February to April, 2021. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed and 127 complete forms were returned, with a 63.5% response rate. The online survey was created on the Questionnaire Star and Google Form websites, and the links were shared on social media through Facebook, WhatsApp and WeChat of one of the authors who works in the gaming industry. The online survey was chosen for a more diversified sample of tourists who were not allowed to enter Macao during the pandemic. It could also reach the gamblers who had visited other casinos than the abovementioned three, and/or on other times. It ends up with 150 usable questionnaires. And finally, 277 valid questionnaires were ensured for data analysis.

4. Result

4.1. Profile of the respondents

Among the sample, 63.2% were male; they were mostly young, with one half aged 31-40 and 42.6% aged 21-30. Over 68% had at least a college degree and most of them earned a modest income with 45.5% in the monthly income group of Mop10,001- 20,000 (USD1=MOP8), and 31% in the group or Mop20,001 - 30,000. Amid the Covid-19 pandemic, most of the respondents were from local Macao (52%) and Mainland China (43.3%). Over 68% visited Macao casinos after the Covid-19 outbreak in early 2020, and the rest had paid their visit before the pandemic.

Regarding casino loyalty program participation, most respondents had joined at least one membership program and 63.5% held a membership card of any Macao casino. Among these 176 members, 86% had joined more than one program. About 2/3 of the members used their cards at least occasionally on their casino visits. One-third had never used the cards while gambling. The reasons cited are "inconvenience, small or infrequent gambling, privacy concern, and Feng-Shui (Luck) concern" (Table 2).

4.2 Factors influencing customer loyalty

Two multiple regression models were run to investigate the impacts of brand trust, switching barriers, and loyalty program (dichotomy categorical variable) on casino customer loyalty, one for their impacts on attitudinal loyalty, and the other on behavioural loyalty. Results show that in combination Brand Trust, Relationship Investment, Alternative Attractiveness, Switching Cost, and Loyalty Program can significantly predict casino guests' attitudinal loyalty with an adjusted R square of 0.276, and an F value of 22.018 ($p < 0.000$). The coefficients show that the significant predictors include Brand Trust ($t=2.958$, $p=0.003$), Relationship Investment $t=6.395$, $p=0.000$), and Switching Cost ($t=3.870$, $p=0.000$). Alternative Attractiveness and Loyalty Program Membership are not significant in predicting attitudinal loyalty (Table 3). For behavioural loyalty, the regression model is statistically significant with even higher predicting power, with an adjusted R square of 0.350, and F value of 30.748 ($p < 0.000$). The coefficients show that the significant predictors are the three switching barriers, Relationship Investment $t=9.227$, $p=0.000$), Alternative Attractiveness ($t=2.404$, $p=0.017$), and Switching Cost ($t=2.782$, $p=0.006$). Brand Trust and Loyalty Program Membership are not significant in predicting behavioural loyalty (Table 4).

4.3 Value of casino loyalty program

Because loyalty program membership has been found to be insignificant in predicting casino guest loyalty on both the attitudinal and behavioural dimensions, further investigation was conducted to explore the value of loyalty programs, on which most casinos have invested heavily. For the 146 gamblers who held the membership card of their visited casino, the descriptive statistics illustrate that their satisfaction of the loyalty program was quite positive, with the means ranging from 3.36 to 4.04 in 5-point scales for all the four satisfaction measurement items. (Table 5). The four items were entered into another regression model to check their effects toward customer loyalty. The results further show that customer satisfaction with the loyalty program does not lead to attitudinal loyalty at all, with a weak and insignificant F value of 2.028 ($p=0.094$). It affects behavioural loyalty with a statistically significant F value of 4.298 ($p=0.003$), but the adjusted R square was only 0.083, meaning only 8.3% of the variance of Behavioural Loyalty can be explained by the regression model.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The study aims to examine the influences of several factors, including brand trust, switching barriers, and loyalty/membership program, on customer loyalty in the context of the gaming industry, taking Macao as a case. In the study, customer loyalty is measured by two dimensions, attitudinal and behavioural loyalty. The multiple regression results show that for attitudinal loyalty, brand trust, switching costs, and relationship investments are the significant predictors; while for behavioural loyalty, all three switching barriers can significantly predict the loyalty, but brand trust is not a significant factor. For either dimension of loyalty, membership program is found to have no significant impact on customer loyalty. Furthermore, among all the significant factors leading to customer loyalty, relationship investment is the most powerful factor, pointing to the importance of customer relationship management (CRM) in the gaming industry (Alshurideh et al., 2020).

Among the switching barriers, switching costs and relationship investments pose important hurdles for customers' switching attitudes and behaviours, driving the customers to stay loyal to their current casino. Alternative attractiveness is found to show mixed effects; its effect on attitudinal loyalty is insignificant, but the effect on behavioural loyalty is negatively significant as hypothesized. The findings suggest that the attractiveness of competing casinos is not decisive in motivating customers to willingly switch, although they might really take the action of change. On the one hand, the costs incurred by the switching behaviour, coupled with the close relationship already built with the current casino, would make gamblers reluctant to move to another gaming provider. On the other hand, however, the high attractiveness of other casinos in the market would really lure away the customers, causing a loss to the current company.

Brand trust has diverged impacts on customer loyalty when the setting is the gaming industry. It has a significant effect on attitudinal loyalty but not behavioural loyalty, implying trust can nurture a favourable attitude of gamblers but is not enough to drive them to change the casino. Furthermore, although it affects customer attitude, brand trust is a weaker predictor of loyalty when compared to the three switching barriers. A plausible explanation for this result is that due to the scale and the importance of gaming industry, Macao government has set up sufficient laws and regulations with which all casino operators must comply. The proper governance of the general gaming industry gives gamblers enough confidence in any casino brand, and so trust is no longer a key consideration, while other factors possess more roles in shaping customer loyalty, especially the behavioural aspect. This finding expands our understanding of the relationship between brand trust and customer loyalty and is worth further investigations in future research.

Surprisingly, the loyalty programs invested heavily by most casinos contribute little to customer loyalty, according to the results from the study. Being a member of the rewards program or not, the gamblers build up their loyalty under the impacts of other factors such as costs, relationship, or trust. The importance of loyalty programs might not be as hoped for in cultivating real loyalty among the casino customers, even when they are happy with the rewards programs. This finding is contradictory to some previous studies, e.g., Keh and Lee (2006), but echoes other studies such as that of Prentice (2013). As many of the membership cards are linked to the restaurants and retail stores operated by the casino companies, loyalty-program members receive discounts or special offers from these shops rather than earning points from gambling activities, and so their satisfaction with the membership program may not reflect objectively on the casino activities. In other words, the benefits received from the current loyalty programs may not be enough to hook up the gamblers with the casinos. Proper designing benefits and rewards to meet customer needs and expectation is vital to success (Alshurideh et al., 2020). Casinos should carry out market research to identify the real needs of gamblers.

Theoretically, the study findings add new insights to our knowledge about customer loyalty and its prerequisites, with empirical evidence from the gaming industry. Based on the study, casino operators can reconsider their marketing strategies in building good customer relationships and guarantee customer retention.

REFERENCES

Alshurideh, M., Gasaymeh, A., Ahmed, G., Alzoubi, H & Kurd, B. (2020). Loyalty program effectiveness: Theoretical reviews and practical proofs. *Uncertain Supply Chain Management, 8*(3), 599-612.

Belli, A., O'Rourke, A. M., Carrillat, F. A., Pupovac, L., Melnyk, V., & Napolova, E. (2022). 40 years of loyalty programs: how effective are they? Generalizations from a meta-analysis. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 50*(1), 147-173.

DICJ (2020). Macau Gaming History, Retrieved from: http://www.dicj.gov.mo/web/en/history/

Khairawati, S. (2020). Effect of customer loyalty program on customer satisfaction and its impact on customer loyalty. *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science (2147-4478), 9*(1), 15-23.

Koo, B., Yu, J., & Han, H. (2020). The role of loyalty programs in boosting hotel guest loyalty: Impact of switching barriers. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 84*, 102328.

Prentice, C. (2013). Service quality perceptions and customer loyalty in casinos. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.

Yi, Y & Jeon, H.,（2003）., "Effects of Loyalty Programs on Value Perception，Program Loyalty and Brand Loyalty", Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science,Vo1.31(3), pp229-240.

The attributes and formation of slow tourism experiences: A study of recreational snow-sport tourists in Japan

Huang, Ting-Yen
Travel and Tourism Program,
Ming Chuan University, Taiwan

Tsai, Chi-Hsuan
Graduate Institute of Sport, Leisure and Hospitality Management
National Taiwan Normal University, Taiwan

Lin, Hui-Min
Leisure and Recreation Management
Ming Chuan University, Taiwan

Huang, Yu-Chi
Faculty of Health and Sport Science
University of Tsukuba, Japan

Abstract:

This study aims to identify the attributes and the constructs that form tourists' slow tourism experiences (STE). Online surveys were distributed via the Qualtrics platform on the Facebook Groups to recruit recreational snow-sport tourists who have been to ski resorts in Japan in the past three years. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were adopted to examine the measurement model. The findings showed that recreational snow-sport tourists' snow-sport behaviors and involvement in culture and nature significantly influenced their STE. Authenticity, slowness, and immersion were validated to capture recreational snow-sport tourists' STE at the ski resorts in Japan.

Keywords: Slow tourism experiences, Slow tourism, Snow-sport, Ski Resorts

1. Introduction

People nowadays travel to seek meaningful interactions with local elements (e.g., people, culture, food, landscape, environment, events, festivals). Alternative tourism, which aims to satisfy tourists' particular interests, aids tourists with memorable experiences (Jovicic, 2016; Kesgin et al., 2022). For example, spiritual tourism is visiting spiritual and holy places of worship for religious purposes (Kato & Progano, 2017). Nature-based tourism focuses on hiking, walking, and conserving the natural environment (Buckley, 2020). Spa tourism means tourists seek health improvement through hot springs or hydrotherapy (Lin, 2014). Among these new types of tourism, a new form of tourism that emphasizes personal and social well-being through engaging in local activities, called slow tourism, has emerged.

Slow tourism is derived from the Slow Food Movement, which opposed the invasion of a McDonald's restaurant in Italy in 1986 (Oh et al., 2016). The Movement encouraged people to value personal, social, and environmental responsibility (i.e., farm-to-table dining, farmer's markets, and home craft products), which further cultivated the foundation of slow-related practices, such as slow food, slow travel, slow city, and slow festival (Shang et al., 2020b). Slow tourism, by definition, means that tourists travel a shorter distance and spend more time at a destination (Huang et al., 2023; Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011).

Numerous studies on slow tourism (Park & Lee, 2019; Sun & Lin, 2018; Walker & Lee, 2019; Shang et al., 2020a) have been conducted in various countries, such as the United States, China, Taiwan, South Korea, Italy, and Turkey. The concept of slow tourism has garnered considerable attention from scholars in the field of tourism globally. However, limited research has focused on slow tourism or travel in Japan. Japan's distinct cultural traditions, bountiful natural resources, and exquisite gastronomic offerings lay the groundwork for fostering slow tourism. Following the decline of the COVID-19 pandemic in late 2022, the Japanese government encouraged domestic travel over international tourism (Matsuura & Saito, 2022). Japanese residents began engaging in various outdoor activities within the country, including camping, hiking, and recreational snow sports. Recreational snow sports refer to tourists visiting ski resorts to enjoy skiing or snowboarding and explore the unique travel experience.

While previous studies on slow tourism in Japan mainly examined how slow tourism contributed to regional development, little is known about how slow tourism creates memorable experiences for tourists. Hence, this study fills this research gap by choosing ski resorts in Japan as the primary research object. This study aims to identify the attributes and formation of slow tourism experiences (STE) for recreational snow-sport tourists in Japan and develop the measurement scale for STE. Thus, two research questions are posited:
(1) What attributes contribute to recreational snow-sport tourists' STE at the ski resort in Japan?
(2) What constructs form recreational snow-sport tourists' STE at the ski resort in Japan?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Recreational Snow-sport Tourists' Practices in Slow Tourism

The existing literature has mentioned how tourists engage in slow tourism, such as participating in local activities, consuming local food and drink, and involving local culture and natural landscape. This study primarily targets recreational snow-sport tourists who visit ski resorts for leisure snow-sport activities (Happ et al., 2023). Unlike professional athletes or amateurs, these tourists engage in winter sports and demonstrate typical leisure travel behaviors (Bichler & Pikkemaat, 2021). The following illustrates these tourists' practices in slow tourism at ski resorts in Japan.

First, active participation in local activities is considered engagement in slow tourism (Losada & Mota, 2019; Walker et al., 2021). When tourists slow down, they have more time to attend activities or events held by local tourism providers. Participating in local activities (wine tasting, food production, hot springs, local farming, etc.) and events (musical festivals, snow festivals, marathons, etc.) allows tourists to experience diverse elements which they hardly encounter in their daily lives (Oh et al., 2016). Likewise, recreational snow-sport tourists travel away from home to participate in snow-sport for recreation in mountainous areas (Mirehie & Gibson, 2020). Recreational snow sports tourists spend their time at the ski resort, enjoying skiing and snowboarding to embrace different travel experiences and avoid daily routines.

Local food consumption is an essential experience in tourism, especially in slow tourism (Kim & Eves, 2012; Fusté-Forné & Jamal, 2020). Slow food, which advocates for local food production, preparation, and consumption, has become a channel for tourists to experience the locality and eat like locals (Huang, 2023). While snow sports are energy-consuming, recreational snow sports tourists need adequate time to resile and recover. In addition, ski resorts in Japan are usually in the countryside and rural areas with great local ingredients that could be made for locally featured cuisine.

Tourists are involved in local culture and nature when they have enough time to explore the destination (Varley & Semple, 2015). Oh et al. (2016) indicated that slow travel allows tourists to deeply engage in local history, culture, heritage, and natural landscape. Most slow tourists extend their stay, take time to be involved in cultural traditions, and enjoy the local scenery (Losada & Mota, 2019). Moreover, recreational snow-sport tourists ski through the trails at the ski resorts; they embrace the alluring mountain views. Lumsdon and McGrath (2011) mentioned that slowing down to enjoy the natural landscape and engage in the local culture are the critical elements of slow travel. Thus, local culture and nature involvement could describe the engagement in slow tourism.

2.2 Recreational Snow-sport Tourist' Slow Tourism Experiences (STE)
To understand tourists' slow tourism experiences (STE), we reviewed previous literature on slow tourism and compiled three factors that reflect tourists' experiences in slow tourism: (1) authenticity, (2) slowness, and (3) immersion.

Authenticity includes three types: objective, constructive, and existential (Wang, 1999). While objective authenticity and constructive authenticity are object-related, tourism researchers have noted that the authenticity of physical objects is not static (Goulding, 2000). Existential authenticity refers to tourists producing tourism experiences and emphasizing their experiences at the destination. Several studies have shown that slow tourism is perceived as a highly authentic experience that can generate existential authenticity (Dickinson et al., 2011; Huang et al., 2023; Meng & Choi, 2016a; Shang et al., 2020a). Shang et al. (2020a) studied Chinese tourists' behavior and their attachment to the slow city regarding the tourist experience of slow tourism. Meng & Choi (2016b) developed an extended model of goal-directed behavior to explore the intention of authenticity for slow tourists. Huang et al. (2023) highlighted that consuming slow food was an authentic experience that led to self-enrichment and self-fulfillment. Hence, slow tourism encourages tourists to seek and experience genuine nature, culture, and traditions, which aligns with the essence of existential authenticity, making it an appropriate measure for STE.

The concept of slowness originated from Honoré (2005), who pointed out that slowness is not merely describing speed changes but a calmer, more quality, authentic, and meaningful existence. Slowness was recently extended to slow travel and tourism (Dickinson et al., 2011). Huang et al. (2023) asserted that slowness is one of the components of the tourist experience of slow tourism, emphasizing that travelers do not rush to explore the destination but have time to observe the surrounding environment thoroughly, gain a deeper understanding of local culture, traditions, and values, and then develop an understanding and respect for the local culture. Oh et al. (2016) investigated whether the concept of slowness is empirically evident in tourist behavior. Tourists' motivations to slow down included relaxing, escaping from daily life, seeking novelty, gaining new knowledge, engaging with locals, and accomplishing self-reflection. Thus, this study adopts the concept of slowness as a metric to measure tourists' STE.

Previous studies have explored how immersion creates or generates tourist experiences. Paulauskaite et al. (2017) indicated that most tourists believed immersion in local culture could lead to an authentic destination experience. Blumenthal and Jensen (2019) proposed the immersion process, delineating three key stages: involvement trigger, involvement world, and immersion stage. This dynamic process involves tourists moving fluidly between these stages, experiencing fluctuating levels of involvement, and generating different personal experiences (Hansen & Mossberg, 2017). Frochot et al. (2017) investigated tourists' experiences during a five-day stay in a mountain ski resort. The tourists alluded that the more immersed they got in the resort, the more they forgot about everyday life. The study proved that immersion was critical in investigating the tourists' experiences. While most snow sports require deep involvement, tourists usually spend more time experiencing skiing and snowboarding. In line with our study, immersion is viable for exploring recreational snow-sport tourists' STE.

2.3 Hypotheses Development

Tourists engaging in snow-sport behavior (i.e., skiing, snowboarding) were related to their on-snow experiences (Dickson & Faulks, 2007). Mirehie and Gibson (2020) indicated that female snow-sport tourists' travel behavior positively influenced their travel experiences at the destination. Mirehie et al. (2021) mentioned that tourists who participated in active sports tourism (i.e., golf, snowboarding, long-distance running) generated tourism experiences. As such, participation in snow-sport behavior shapes tourists' experiences.

Further, local food consumption is essential to the tourism experience (Kim & Eves, 2012; Kim et al., 2013). Zhang et al. (2019) investigated the relationships between local food and sustainable tourism experience. The study showed that tasting authentic local food at the destination created a satisfactory tourism experience. Frisvoll et al. (2016) explored tourists' consumption of local food in rural tourism and revealed that tasting local food extends the tourist experience in Norway. Dedeoglu et al. (2021) pointed out that local food consumption during travel creates a hedonic tourism experience for tourists. Thus, tourists with impressive local food will have a better travel experience.

Last, involvement in local culture and nature allows tourists to experience traditional events and natural landscapes (Lu et al., 2015). Cetin and Bilgihan (2016) suggested that involvement with the place is a dimension of predicting tourists' experiences. Luo et al. (2020) explored tourists' entertainment experiences in Macau and indicated that local culture and involvement created tourists' entertainment experiences. Moreover, engagement in local culture positively influences tourists' memorable tourism experiences (Chen & Rahman, 2018). Hence, high-involvement tourists have better tourism experiences at the destination. Based on previous literature, the following three hypotheses related to recreational snow-sport tourists' STE were proposed:

H1**:** Recreational snow-sport tourists' snow-sport behavior significantly contributes to their STE at ski resorts.

H2**:** Recreational snow-sport tourists' local food and drink consumption significantly contributes to their STE at ski resorts.

H3**:** Recreational snow-sport tourists' local culture and nature involvement significantly contribute to their STE at ski resorts.

3. Methodology

3.1 Data collection

The online survey was designed using the Qualtrics platform and translated into Japanese and Chinese. Three tourism scholars proficient in English, Japanese, and Chinese scrutinized each item and consolidated the questionnaire to ensure accuracy and clarity. A final three-language survey questionnaire was generated for distribution upon achieving consistency in the translations.

The survey questionnaires were distributed on Facebook groups related to snow sports in Japan, targeting recreational snow-sport tourists with prior experience in snow sports within the country. Japanese keywords such as ski, snowboard, ski resort, etc., were utilized to identify suitable groups on Facebook. Seven public groups with over 10,000 followers and active daily posts were selected for recruitment. Respondents were screened based on their participation in recreational snow sports in Japan within the past three years. 512 questionnaires were distributed, resulting in 363 responses, indicating a robust 70.8% response rate. The data underwent purification, eliminating responses with missing values and incomplete answers. After the data cleaning, 326 valid questionnaires were used for further analysis.

3.2 Measurement

Four main variables in this study composed the questionnaire, including (1) snow-sport behaviors (SP), (2) local food and drink consumption (LF), and (3) local culture and nature involvement (CN). Seven items that measure tourists' snow sport and travel behaviors were adopted from Mirehie and Gibson's (2020) survey instrument. Six items that measure local food and drink consumption were adopted from Kim and Eves' (2012) study. Six items that measure local culture and nature involvement were adopted from previous studies (Lumdson & McGrath, 2011; Meng & Choi, 2016a; Lin et al., 2020). This study measures slow tourism experiences (STE) by sixteen items, including six on authenticity (AU) (Shang et al., 2020a;

2020b), five on slowness (SL) (Huang et al., 2023), and five on immersion (IM) (Meng & Choi, 2016a; Lin et al., 2020). All items relevant to the above variables used a 5-point Likert scale. Further, all items were revised and modified to fit the ski resorts for this study.

3.3 Data analysis

First, descriptive analysis was used to analyze respondents' background information, including gender, age, annual income, the highest education level, and the snow sport they participated in at the ski resorts. Second, a multicollinearity check was applied to ensure low correlation values between items. Next, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to identify the dimensions of tourists' STE. The sample was examined for its Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) for the scale and Bartlett's test of sphericity (BTS). The KMO measure of sampling adequacy value was 0.832, greater than the suggested value of 0.8. The approximate Chi-square (c^2) value of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (BTS) was 1744.802 (df=66, p<0.001), showing that the sample was appropriate for the factor analysis. Six items (SP1, AU1, AU2, SL3, SL4, IM2) were deleted due to a low factor loading value or non-significance. Principal Axis Factoring (PAF) with Varimax Rotation revealed three dimensions (AU, SL, IM) comprising eleven items, collectively explaining 63.68% of the variance.

After item removal, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was estimated using the *lavaan* package in the R Studio software environment and was adopted to test the construct validity. CFA provided a rigorous test of the proposed scales by testing how well the measurement items represented the constructs (Hair et al., 2010). Further, goodness-of-fit indices, which examined the measurement model to determine whether the data fit well, showed how well a specified model reproduced the observed covariance matrix among the indicator terms (Hair et al., 2010).

4. Results

4.1 Demographic Analysis

The sample comprised almost an equal proportion of male (46.6%) and female (53.1%) respondents. Approximately 70% of the respondents were between 20 and 39 years old, indicating a predominance of young adults in the sample. Most respondents (60.1%) had completed a four-year university or college education. The most respondents (35.9%) reported earning between ¥ 2,000,000 and ¥ 4,000,000 per year. The sample exhibited a balanced distribution of respondents engaged in skiing (52.1%) and snowboarding (47.9%).*4.2 Normality Analysis*

The recommended skewness range of -3 to +3 and kurtosis range of -10 to +10 were considered. Skewness values for individual items ranged from -1.89 to -0.07, while kurtosis values ranged from -1.31 to 4.36. These findings affirmed the sample's adherence to normality standards.

4.3 Analysis of Measurement Model

A series of tests assessed reliability and validity (convergent and discriminant). The reliability assessment included the construct's composite reliability (CR) and the average variance extracted (AVE). Cronbach's alpha values for the constructs spanned 0.613 to 0.919, affirming inter-item reliability (Hair et al., 1998). Composite reliability, signifying internal consistency among scale items, was consistent with standards, with CR values ranging from 0.712 to 0.912 (Hair et al., 2006). Additionally, the AVE, which quantifies the proportion of indicator variance attributed to the construct, exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.5 (Bagozzi, 1992). As Hair et al. (2017) established, convergent validity manifested as the degree of association between measures of the same phenomenon; the AVE values range from 0.514 to 0.666, surpassing the 0.5 criterion. Discriminant validity, capturing the extent of differentiation between measures (Hair et al., 2006), was substantiated through squared covariances comparisons—each pair of constructs displayed correlations lower than the corresponding AVE values, upholding the criterion for discriminant validity (Table 1).

Table 1. Latent Variable Squared Covariance Matrix.

Latent variable	1	2	3
1. Snow-sport behavior (SP)	**.525**		
2. Local food consumption (LF)	.068	**.645**	
3. Local culture and nature involvement (CN)	.083	.276	**.612**

The CFA was also used to examine the measurement model. The results of the CFA (See Table 2) showed the measurement model fit ($\chi^2 = 984.144$, $df = 379$, $p < 0.001$, NFI = 0.951, CFI = 0.941, GFI = 0.928, TLI = 0.909, RMSEA = 0.055). The NFI, CFI, GFI, and TLI values were all greater than 0.9 criteria, and the RMSEA value was less than 0.06, showing an acceptable model fit. Factor loadings (l) between items and constructs were significant ($p < 0.001$). This finding indicated that the multi-item measures adopted in this study were reliable.

Table 2. Results for the Measurement Model

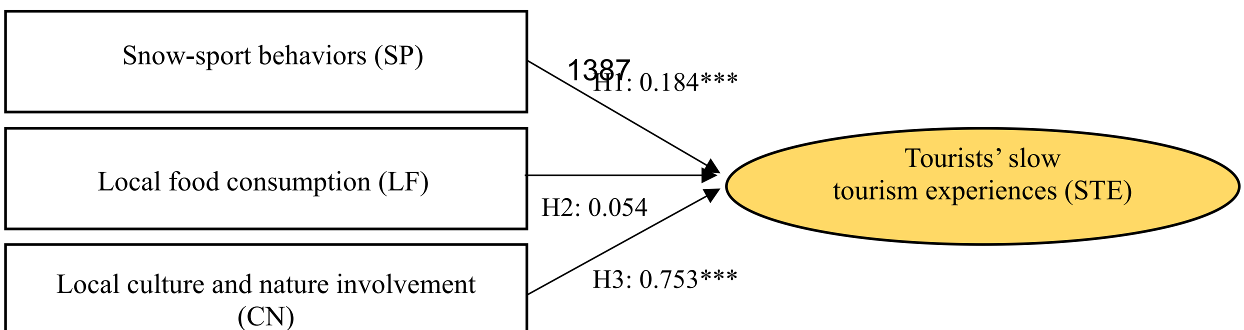
Model	χ^2	*df*	CMIN/*df*	*p*	NFI	CFI	GFI	TLI	RMSEA
Measurement model	984.144	379	2.596	.000	.951	.941	.928	.909	.055

Table 3 shows the results of the hypotheses testing. The estimates of standardized coefficients showed that tourists' snow-sport behavior (SP) and local culture and nature involvement (CN) had a positive and significant impact on their slow food experiences (ST) ($\beta_{SP\rightarrow ST}$= 0.184, p < 0.001; $\beta_{CN\rightarrow ST}$= 0.753, p < 0.001;) However, tourists local food consumption did not have a significant impact on their slow tourism experiences ($\beta_{LF\rightarrow ST}$= 0.054, p > 0.05). Thus, H1 and H3 were supported, but H2 was not supported. Figure 1 shows the resultant measurement model.

Table 3. Results of the Structural Equation Modeling (n=326).

Paths	Coefficients	*t*-values	Hypotheses testing
SP → STE	0.184	4.018***	H1: Supported
LF → STE	0.054	1.188	H2: Not Supported
CN → STE	0.753	7.172***	H3: Supported

Figure 1. Resultant Measurement Model. ***p<0.001.



5. Conclusion and Discussion

This study found that recreational snow-sport tourists' snow-sport behaviors and involvement in local culture and nature significantly influenced their slow tourism experiences. However, recreational snow-sport tourists' local food consumption did not significantly influence their slow tourism experiences. This study also validated that authenticity, slowness, and immersion could construct the measurement scale for tourists' slow tourism experiences.

5.1 Theoretical contributions

This study offered several theoretical contributions to sports and slow tourism literature. First, tourists' snow-sport behavior contributed to their travel experiences at ski resorts. This suggests that when tourists enjoy recreational snow sports at ski resorts, they are willing to spend more time and value their time at the ski resorts. This finding was consistent with the existing literature; for example, Mirehie and Gibson (2020) indicated that females' satisfaction with snow-sport participation enhanced their leisure/travel experiences. Thus, this study asserted that passionate engagement in snow sports escalated tourists' STE.

Moreover, the study showed that tourists who engaged with local culture and nature had a more immersive and authentic STE. This finding was consistent with previous research on the connection between cultural elements and the tourist experience (Chen & Rahman, 2018). Additionally, as most ski resorts boast breathtaking natural scenery and mountainous terrains, tourists can appreciate the natural beauty while skiing or snowboarding. Carneiro et al. (2015) also emphasized the significance of natural landscapes in the tourism experience in rural settings. Thus, this study confirmed that deep involvement with local culture and nature enriched tourists' STE, even in ski resorts.

Surprisingly, tourists' local food consumption at ski resorts was not critical to their STE. Perhaps this implied that local food and dining may not influence tourists' experiences at ski resorts. This finding slightly aligned with Hall et al.'s (2017) study, which found that food and dining at ski resorts were neither positive nor negative experiences. Snow sports tourists may select food and beverages toward energy supplements, valuing satiety, healthiness, and nutrients (Hallmann et al., 2015). In the slow tourism context, tourists take their time to seek local food and consume local products to optimize their authentic experiences. In contrast, recreational snow-sport tourists emphasize functions and convenience. Thus, local food consumption was not the core value for recreational snow sport tourists visiting ski resorts, which may not impact their travel experiences.

This study developed a reliable measurement scale for tourists' STE by validating three primary constructs: authenticity, slowness, and immersion. Authenticity gauges whether tourists feel genuinely authentic during their slow travel (Wang, 1999), while slowness assesses whether tourists value their time and feel a sense of being slow (Huang et al., 2023). Immersion measures the degree to which tourists immerse themselves in the destination (Blumenthal & Jensen, 2019). This newly developed scale and its constructs can provide a solid foundation for future research to measure tourists' STE at the destination.

5.2 Practical implications

This study has practical implications for snow-related industries that desire to promote tourists' experiences from the slow tourism perspective. First, tourism providers can introduce distinctive tour packages that encourage tourists to immerse themselves in the local culture and nature. Recreational snow-sport tourists, rather than professional skiers or snowboarders, tend to enjoy opportunities to explore the surrounding culture and nature. Thus, ski resorts can creatively integrate cultural and natural elements, enriching their tourism experiences.

Snow sports providers have a compelling opportunity to elevate tourists' authentic and immersive experiences by integrating snow sports, local culture, and nature elements. For instance, ski resorts can introduce an innovative immersive snow sports experience through virtual reality (VR) technology. The Metaverse skiing system, intricately connected to the actual ski resorts, offers tourists a lifelike ski/snowboard scenario, allowing them to bask in the breathtaking mountain views and trails. Moreover, VR technology will enable tourists to partake in cultural events or festivals that may occur annually. Tourists may participate in and experience the activities whenever they visit the ski resort. This seamless integration of VR technology, enriched with local elements and sports features, ultimately enhances tourists' STE.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research Directions

Like any research, the current study has limitations that can be addressed in future studies. Firstly, this study was conducted at ski resorts in Japan, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other populations and activities. Future studies could involve different types of recreational sports tourists and activities to explore their travel experiences. Last, a more in-depth analysis of the demographic characteristics of recreational snow-sport tourists could be undertaken, such as their length of stay, accommodation choice, transportation selection, and companions. A market segmentation study could help better understand the attributes that form tourists' STE. Thus, ski resorts in Japan can benefit from detailed customer information and exploit new markets.

REFERENCES

Blumenthal, V., & Jensen, Ø. (2019). Consumer immersion in the experience scape of managed visitor attractions: The nature of the immersion process and the role of involvement. *Tourism Management Perspectives, 30*, 159-170. https://doi.org/10.1080/15022250.2020.1725624

Buckley, R. (2020). Nature tourism and mental health: parks, happiness, and causation. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 28*(9), 1409-1424. https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2020.1742725

Cetin, G., & Bilgihan, A. (2016). Components of cultural tourists' experiences in destinations. *Current Issues in Tourism, 19* (2)*,* 137-154. https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2014.994595

Chen, H., & Rahman, I. (2018). Cultural tourism: An analysis of engagement, cultural contact, memorable tourism experience and destination loyalty. *Tourism Management Perspectives, 26*, 153-163. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2017.10.006

Dedeoğlu, B. B., Çalışkan, C., & Sabbağ, Ç. (2021). Local food consumption during travel: Interaction of ıncentive-disincentive factors, togetherness, and hedonic value. *International Journal of Tourism Research, 23*(2), 206-219. https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2394

Hallmann, K., Zehrer, A., & Müller, S. (2015). Perceived destination image: An image model for a winter sports destination and its effect on intention to revisit. *Journal of Travel Research, 54*(1), 94-106. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0047287513513161

Huang, T. Y., Chen, J. S., & Ramos, W. D. (2023). Slow tourism: The relationship between tourists' slow food experiences and their quality of life. *Tourism Review, 78*(1), 159-176. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/TR-02-2022-0053

Jovicic, D. (2016). Cultural tourism in the context of relations between mass and alternative tourism. Current Issues in Tourism, 19(6), 605-612. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2014.932759

Kato, K., & Progano, R. N. (2017). Spiritual (walking) tourism as a foundation for sustainable destination development: Kumano-Kodo pilgrimage, Wakayama, Japan. Tourism Management Perspectives, 24, 243-251. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2017.07.017

Kesgin, M., Önal, İ., Kazkondu, I., & Uysal, M. (2022). Gastro-tourism well-being: The interplays of salient and enduring determinants. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 34*(9), 3253-3277. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-09-2021-1132

Lin, C. H. (2014). Effects of cuisine experience, psychological well-being, and self-health perception on the revisit intention of hot springs tourists. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research, 38*(2), 243-265. https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348012451460

Lin, L. P. L., Huang, S. C. L., & Ho, Y. C. (2020). Could virtual reality effectively market slow travel in a heritage destination? *Tourism Management, 78*, Article 104027. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2019.104027

Lin, L.P. (2017). Industrial tourists' behavioral intention toward slow travel in Taiwan. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 25*(3), 379-396. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2016.1213848

Lumsdon, L. M., & McGrath, P. (2011). Developing a conceptual framework for slow travel: A grounded theory approach. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 19*(3), 265-279. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2010.519438

Matsuura, T., & Saito, H. (2022). The COVID-19 pandemic and domestic travel subsidies. *Annals of Tourism Research, 92*, Article 103326. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2021.103326

Meng, B., & Choi, K. (2016). Extending the Theory of Planned Behaviour: Testing the Effects of Authentic Perception and Environmental Concerns on the Slow-Tourist Decision-Making Process. *Current Issues in Tourism, 19*, 528-544. https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2015.1020773

Meng, B., & Choi, K. (2016). The role of authenticity in forming slow tourists' intentions: Developing an extended model of goal-directed behavior. *Tourism Management, 57*, 397-410. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2016.07.003

Mirehie, M., & Gibson, H. J. (2020). The relationship between female snow-sport tourists' travel behaviors and well-being. *Tourism Management Perspectives, 33*, Article 100613. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2019.100613

Mirehie, M., Sato, S., & Krohn, B. (2021). Participation in active sport tourism and life satisfaction: Comparing golf, snowboarding, and long-distance running. *Sustainability, 13*(18), Article 10316. https://doi.org/10.3390/su131810316

Oh, H., Assaf, A. G., & Baloglu, S. (2016). Motivations and goals of slow tourism. *Journal of Travel Research, 55*(2), 205-219. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0047287514546228

Park, H. J., & Lee, T. J. (2019). Influence of the 'slow city' brand association on the behavioural intention of potential tourists. *Current Issues in Tourism, 22*(12), 1405-1422. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2017.1391753

Shang, W., Qiao, G., & Chen, N. (2020a). Tourist experience of slow tourism: from authenticity to place attachment – a mixed-method study based on the case of slow city in China. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research, 25*(2), 170-188. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10941665.2019.1683047

Shang, W., Yuan, Q., & Chen, N. (2020b). Examining structural relationships among brand experience, existential authenticity, and place attachment in slow tourism destinations. *Sustainability, 12*(7), Article 2784. https://doi.org/10.3390/su12072784

Sun, Y. Y., & Lin, Z. W. (2018). Move fast, travel slow: The influence of high-speed rail on tourism in Taiwan. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 26*(3), 433-450. https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2017.1359279

Walker, T. B., & Lee, T. J. (2019). Visitor and resident perceptions of the slow city movement: The case of Japan. *International Journal of Tourism Sciences, 19*(2), 112-127. https://doi.org/10.1080/15980634.2019.1621535

Wang, N. (1999). Rethinking authenticity in tourism experience. *Annals of Tourism Research, 26*(2), 349-370. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(98)00103-0

Discovering regional functions at the travel destination: Application of LDA modeling

Lee, Yejin
Smart Tourism Education Platform, Kyung Hee University

Seo, Yebin
Smart Tourism Education Platform, Kyung Hee University

Park, Sangwon
Smart Tourism Education Platform, Kyung Hee University

Chung, Namho
Smart Tourism Education Platform, Kyung Hee University

Abstract:
The paper explores how spatial signatures, emphasizing the form and functionality of destinations, can enhance the competitive positioning of smart destination design by understanding tourists' valued destination functions. Analyzing over 6 million navigation data, this study uncovered nine number of destination functions by employing the LDA algorithm as one of the topic modeling. The study confirms distinct characteristics of the places at a micro-level, emphasizing the importance of incorporating them into tourism development using spatial signatures. By considering both form and function, spatial signatures provide insights for researchers, urban planners, and DMOs into the design and tourist experience of destinations.

Keywords: Spatial signatures, LDA, Regional function, Topic Modeling, Jeju island

1. Introduction

Smart destinations have emerged to integrate physical and technological infrastructure, creating seamless experiences for tourists. Leveraging advanced technologies within the physical infrastructure of specific geographical boundaries accelerates enhancing destination competitiveness (Sorokina et al., 2022). In particular, smart destinations integrating various information technology collect a large size of data and come up with data-driven insights to design spaces that cater to the needs and preferences of tourists (Williams, Rodriguez, & Makkonen, 2020). The spatial layout, encompassing the arrangement of buildings, parks, attractions, accommodations and other elements, serves as the foundations in constructing destination design. Effective design should be associated with the tourists' activities occurring at the place. This means that understanding how people interact with various areas of the destination helps gain insights on characteristics and functions of the destination in a meso-level. This user-centered approach ensures that the design is tailored to meet the needs and preferences of visitors, which can ultimately enhance travel experiences at the destination.

Smart destination design aims to create tourism environments that facilitate pleasant experiences and memorable moments for tourists. This consisting of four factors such as accessibility, comfort, sustainability, and functionality (e.g., Hernández-Martín, Rodríguez-Rodríguez, & Gahr, 2017; Jeong & Shin, 2020; Scuttari, Pechlaner, & Erschbamer, 2021). Indeed, this research highlights the functionality of the destination. Based on the theory of multi-faceted tourist travel decisions, travelers tend to fulfil multiple travel activities to maximize their utility during their visits to a destination (Dellaert, Ettema, & Lindh, 1998). In this sense, it is important for destination management organizations (DMOs) to understand which activities the travelers seek for (i.e., functions of the destination) and where the activities take place (i.e., forms of the destination).

This argument is related to the concept of spatial signatures comprising the form and function of tourism destinations, providing a framework for examining urban environments (Arribas-Bel & Fleischmann, 2022). Spatial signature highlights (1) the physical structure and appearance of the destination (i.e., form) and (2) the activities that individuals fulfil within the destination (i.e., function). In particular, the interplay between form and function in urban spaces involves analyzing the physical layout and appearance alongside the activities and uses that occur within them. This approach helps tailor destination design to meet the needs and preferences of tourists, thereby enhancing their overall experience and satisfaction during their visit.

Accordingly, this paper investigates how the application of spatial signatures can help establish a competitive position in smart destination design by understanding the various destination functions valued by tourists. In order to address the research purposes, this study examines the spatial signatures of Jeju Island based on the destination function using mobility or movement data of tourists who visit the island. Utilizing navigation data from tourists who rented cars on Jeju Island, the study divided the area into a uniform grid of 2*2 (km) and employed topic modeling using LDA, a machine learning technique, to identify the main functions representing tourist activities within each grid. The findings confirm the emergence of distinct functions in each region of the tourist destination, underscoring the importance of identifying destination functions and incorporating them into tourism development using spatial signatures. By considering both form and function, spatial signatures provide insights for researchers, urban planners, and DMOs into the design and tourist experience of destinations.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Spatial Signatures

Spatial signatures offer a framework for analyzing urban environments by considering both their physical characteristics (i.e., form) and the activities (i.e., function) that occur within them (Arribas-Bel & Fleischmann, 2022). Specifically, form focuses on the physical layout and appearance of urban spaces, which examines elements such as the arrangement of buildings, streets, and other infrastructure. It considers how these physical features interact with each other to shape the overall environment. On the other hand, function delves into the activities and uses that occur within these spaces. It examines how people utilize urban environments for various purposes, such as residential living, commercial activities, recreation, and transportation. Function explores the dynamics of human behavior within urban contexts, including patterns of movement and interaction.

While earlier studies concentrate on either form (e.g., Dibble, 2016; Fleischmann et al., 2020; Gil et al., 2012) or function (e.g., Angel et al., 2020; Ewing et al., 2016), it is essential to recognize their intrinsic interconnection. Form and function offer complementary viewpoints for comprehending urban landscapes, as form shapes function, evolving to accommodate changing needs and ensuring relevance within its context (Arribas-Bel & Fleischmann, 2022). When specific forms and functions converge, distinct patterns emerge, illustrating how cities encapsulate and mirror intricate facets of human existence, such as history, culture, and technology.

Accordingly, spatial signatures provide exhaustive coverage for an area of interest by drawing organic boundaries that delineate portions of consistent morphological and functional characteristics. To the extent cities compress space and time to concentrate human activity of a very diverse nature, the study of function is essential to the tourism industry in several ways. Firstly, spatial signatures shape the overall experience of tourists, influencing whether visitors are drawn to or deterred from a destination (Marrocu & Paci, 2013). Secondly, it supports the strategic development of tourist destinations by facilitating enhanced planning and design through the interplay between the physical layout and activities, which can be utilized to differentiate destinations and attract more visitors (Boarnet & Crane, 2001). Moreover, it helps in resource allocation within destinations, optimizing distribution according to where activities flourish and how they integrate with the environment (Yang & Wong, 2013). Lastly, it facilitates sustainability initiatives by improving the management and conservation of natural and cultural assets (Risteskia, Kocevskia, & Arnaudov, 2012).

However, research addressing both form and function within a unified framework is limited, often focusing on specific functions. By integrating form and function, spatial signatures bridge the gap between morphological descriptions and those based on function (e.g., Bourdic, Salat, & Nowacki, 2012). Thus, in tourism literature, emphasis should be placed on two key aspects of spatial signatures: selecting the spatial unit and integrating urban form and function within these units to delineate distinctive signatures. This approach combines morphometric features capturing physical patterns in the built environment with functional attributes, such as economic activities, amenities, or land use classifications.

3. Methodology

3.1. Navigation Data

To explore the spatial signatures of Jeju Island, this study analyzed navigation data that represent the movements of domestic tourists who traveled the island by car from June 1, 2020, to May 31, 2021. A sample of the dataset is presented in Table 1. The data were collected from a navigation smartphone application company in Korea. These navigation data, comprising Origin-Destination (O-D) information, enable the identification of the locations from which tourists departed and to which they arrived. In this research, Jeju Island was partitioned using a vertical 2 km by 2 km grid, and real-time locations moving from a grid (origin) to another grid (destination) were systematically collected. The dataset encompasses not only spatial but also temporal information, including the date and time of arrival. The Points of Interest (POI) in each destination potentially reflecting an idea of the visitors' purposes was obtained as well. The dataset includes individual information about drivers such as gender and age were obtained.

Table 1. Sample of Dataset

Date	Arrival Time	Gender	Age	Origin	Destination	Destination POI Category
2020.06.01	12:00	W	10	Grid 1	Grid 2	Condo / Resort
2020.06.02	18:40	M	40	Grid 3	Grid 4	Chinese Restaurant
…	…	…	…	…	…	…
2021.05.30	09:00	M	50	Grid 5	Grid 6	Harbor
2021.05.31	21:00	W	20	Grid 7	Grid 8	Airport

3.2. Data Analysis

To address the research purpose, researchers adopted Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) topic modeling in the study. LDA topic modeling is a type of natural language processing that helps to find topics in large corpora. The model assumes the document is a random mixture of latent topics, and these topics follow a certain word distribution. Figure 1 illustrates the process of LDA topic modeling. First, after the number of topics is set, the β_k is fixed. It represents the word distribution of topic k, which is decided from Dir(η). In the model, α and η are the prior probability distributions. Specifically, α is the per-document topic distribution, and η is the per-topic word distribution. θ_d is the topic distribution of document d, which is selected by Dir(α). Based on θ_d, the topic of word n in document d, which is $Z_{d,n}$, is decided. Finally, $W_{d,n}$, the word n in document d, is generated based on $Multinomial\,(\theta_d)$ and $Multinomial(Z_{d,n})$. For the process of inferring the topics from the corpora, the topic number is randomly allocated to all words in document d. During this process, θ_d and β_k are automatically generated. Continually assuming that the topic of one certain word is unknown, the model estimates the topic. Finally, by repeating this step, the θ_d and β_k converge.

In the current research, the POI of the destination, which shows the purpose of the visit, can be regarded as words, and the collections of POI in each grid become documents. The whole of Jeju Island is set as corpora. As a result, the topics can reflect the functions as part of spatial signature on Jeju Island (Figure 2).

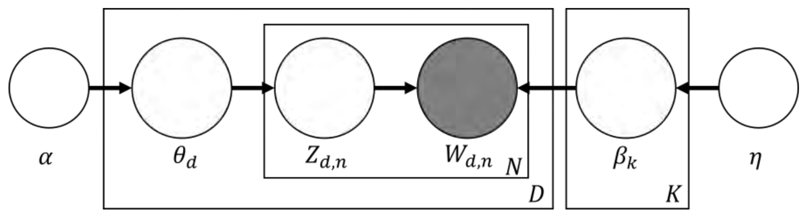


Figure 1. LDA Topic Modeling Process

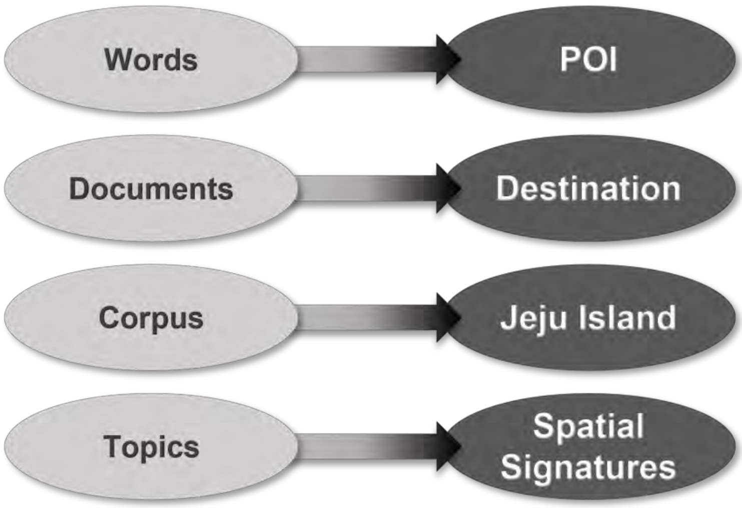


Figure 2. Representation of Topic Modeling Terms in this Study

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis was initially conducted to understand the characteristics of the dataset (Table 2). In terms of a gender variable, the number of male drivers is approximately twice more than one of female drivers. This finding reflects the gender distribution of drivers in Korea, where male drivers are more than female drivers, as reported by Statistics Korea in 2022 (Ref). Subsequently, analysis of age demographics revealed that individuals in their 30s constituted the largest group (34.4%) followed 40s, 50s, 20s, 60s, over 70s, and under 20s, in descending order of representation. This demographic distribution aligns with findings from the 2022 Jeju Visitor Survey conducted by the Jeju Tourism Organization, thereby suggesting that the dataset mostly reflects the features of travelers visiting Jeju Island. Checking a POI category, Travel/Leisure, Convenience, Transportation, Shopping, Building/Facilities, Public, Medical, Company/Group, AOI, Financial, Group, and Entrac accounted for the largest proportion, in that order. Interestingly, about half (46.9%) of the movements by travelers associate to travel/leisure activities such as amusement facilities, national park, hotel and etc.

Table 2. Results of Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Sub-categories	Frequency (n=6,960,421)	Percentage
Gender	Male	4,688,377	67.4%
	Female	2,272,044	32.6%
Age	10(10 to 19)	19,692	0.3%
	20(20 to 29)	975,186	14.0%
	30(30 to 39)	2,395,594	34.4%
	40(40 to 49)	1,991,804	28.6%
	50(50 to 59)	1,126,250	16.2%
	60(60 to 69)	388,825	5.6%
	70(more than 70)	63,070	0.9%

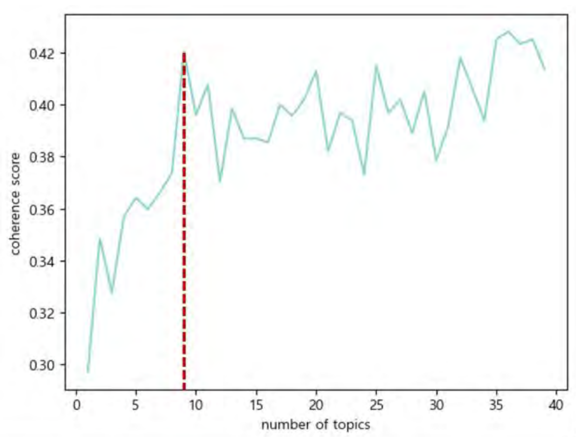
POI Category	AOI	35,391	0.5%
	Building / Facilities	139,786	2.0%
	Company / Group	47,079	0.7%
	Convenience	1,545,886	22.2%
	Financial	19,952	0.3%
	Entrac*	4	0.0%
	Group	12,885	0.2%
	Medical	49,917	0.7%
	Public	89,938	1.3%
	Shopping	518,656	7.5%
	Transportation	1,239,153	17.8%
	Travel /Leisure	3,261,774	46.9%

* Entrac is one of the services provided by the navigation smartphone application company.

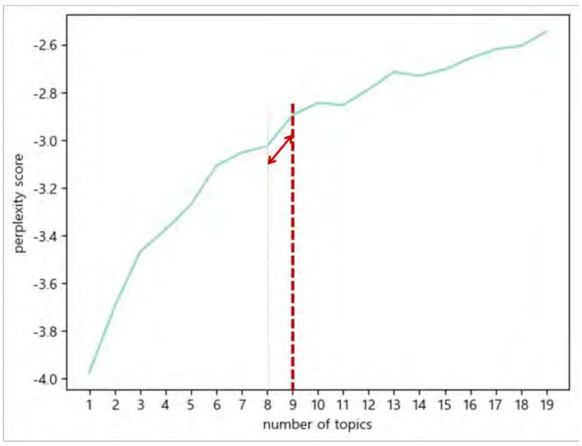
4.2. Numbers of Regional Topics

The selection of an appropriate number of topics is a crucial step in conducting LDA Topic Modeling. To determine the optimal number of topics, researchers considered various indicators. In this study, we estimate perplexity and coherence scores, provided by Gensim, a Python package for natural language processing. The perplexity score quantifies the model's confusion, calculated as the inverse geometric mean of per-word likelihood. Specifically, per-word likelihood refers to the probability of a particular word's occurrence within the language model. The coherence score assesses the similarity among the top words within a topic, measured by estimating the co-occurrence of two words within a single document.

Initially, perplexity scores were computed for a range of 1 to 100 topics to identify the optimal number. As the increment of number of topics, the perplexity score diminished when evaluating up to 40 topics. Consequently, coherence scores were calculated for the range of 1 to 40 topics (see Figure 3(a)). Given the fact that a higher coherence score indicates a more suitable model, it was determined that 9 topics constitute the most appropriate number for this model. Furthermore, Figure 3 (b) presented that the change of perplexity scores from 8 to 9 topics indicate a significant growth, which demonstrate the suitability of 9 topics in the estimation of unsupervised machine learning.



(a)



(b)

Figure 3(a). The results of coherence score

Figure 3(b). The results of perplexity score

4.3. LDA Topic Modeling Results

This section presents the results of LDA Topic Modeling (see Table 3). As mentioned previously, the study aimed to explore how tourists utilize space to experience a tourism destination. Accordingly, LDA Topic Modeling was employed to identify the functions (i.e., travel activities), specifically referred to as spatial signatures. Nine spatial signatures were identified in the study: Parking Lot, Hotel, Attraction, Beach, Café, Museum & Memorial, Condo/Resorts, Fauna and Flora, and Rental Car. The topics were named by the researchers based on the composition of the words.

For Topic 1 (Parking Lot), tourists frequently visit certain regions primarily to look for the "Parking Lot" facilities, while also engaging with "Hotel," "Traditional Market," "Waterfalls/Valleys," and "Snack Bar" facilities. In Topic 2, the term "Hotel" emerged as the most dominant word (in other words, POI) with golf course. This result is reasonable that most of golf courses are associated to the hotel accommodations in Jeju Island. The top words of Topic 3, which include "Other Attractions," "Famous Mountain," “Harbor”, "Aquarium," and "Spa," were grouped under the same POI (Point of Interest) category in the research. Topic 4 was characterized by the dominance of the word "Beach." Comparing to Topic 3, the tourism destination of Jeju Island can be divided into beach (or ocean)-related attractions and other attractions. Topic 5 exhibited a uniform distribution of words, encompassing a wide array of product types, such as café others, pension, and specialty restaurant. As depicted in Table 3 for Topic 6, a significant portion was dedicated to artificial attractions and transportation facilities. Mirroring Topics 2 and 4, Topic 7 was distinguished by a singular dominant word, "Condo/Resort." Topic 8 was notable for its emphasis on nature-related attractions, including “Fauna and Flora," "Natural Recreation Forest," and "Ranch." Lastly, Topic 9 comprised a considerable proportion of "Rental Car" and "Airport" references. Based on the local knowledge, the places where travelers can rent cars are close to airport. According to the Jeju Tourism Organization (2021), the usage rate of rental cars reached 73.8% in 2021, indicating that most domestic tourists prefer rental cars for traveling Jeju Island. The result also demonstrates the movement patterns that travelers pick up the reserved rent-cars or drop them before and/or after going to the airport.

In summary, this study uncovers nine functions of spatial signatures that imply tourists’ main activities at the destination.

Table 3. Results of LDA Topic Modeling

Topic 1(Parking lot)		Topic 2(Hotel)		Topic 3(Attraction)	
Parking lot	33.4%	Hotel	43.6%	Other attractions	37.4%
Hotel	15.0%	Golf course	9.3%	Famous mountain	28.7%
Traditional market	8.4%	Discount store	5.2%	Harbor	22.8%
Waterfalls / Valleys	7.8%	Bakery	3.6%	Aquarium	4.1%
Snack bar	6.0%	Snack bar	3.6%	Spa	1.0%
Topic 4(Beach)		Topic 5(Cafe)		Topic 6(Museum &	

				Memorial)	
Beach	58.8%	Cafe Others	23.5%	Museums & Memorials	39.9%
Drive Course	11.8%	Pension	13.8%	Tourist complex	15.4%
Cafe Others	6.6%	Specialty restaurant	13.3%	Gas station	7.8%
Specialty restaurant	3.5%	Supermarket	8.0%	Public / National rest areas	6.9%
Pension	2.7%	Travel / Leisure	5.2%	Temple	4.6%
Topic 7(Condo / Resort)		Topic 8(Fauna and flora)		Topic 9(Rental car)	
Condo / Resort	68.7%	Fauna and flora	19.2%	Rental car	43.3%
Park	14.7%	Natural recreation forest	18.4%	Airport	24.3%
Cave	3.0%	Ranch	10.8%	Leisure / Sports Others	7.5%
Forest park	1.8%	Port	9.1%	Specialty restaurant	4.6%
Pension	1.4%	Theme cafe	7.3%	Snack bar	2.1%

Only the top 5 words which comprise the topic were demonstrated in the table.

4.4. Spatial Distribution of Topics

In this section, we present the spatial distribution of topics, reflecting forms of spatial signature (see Table 4). There are total 481 numbers of 2km by 2km grids. Table 4 presents the the dominant topic within each grid. Topic 5 (Cafe) emerged as the most prevalent, covering 197 out of 481 grids. Following Topic 5, Topic 3 was the second most dominant. Subsequently, Topics 2, 6, 8, 7, 4, 1, and 9 were ranked in descending order of prevalence. The researchers conjecture that the predominance of Topic 5 in most areas is attributable to its balanced word composition, enabling it to encompass areas with broad and diverse functions.

To elucidate the specific locations where each signature predominantly appears, this research employed GIS software to visualize the spatial distribution of the topics. As demonstrated in Figure 4, the spatial signatures correspond closely with the actual locations of transportation facilities, accommodations, and both natural and artificial attractions. Moreover, this visualization indicates dynamic structures of the spatial signatures across different regions, suggesting that tourists utilize the island's space for multiple purposes (Park & Fesenmaier, 2014).

Table 4. Spatial Distribution of Topics

Topic	Num of Grids	Percentage
Topic 1(Parking lot)	15	3.1%

Topic 2(Hotel)	54	11.2%
Topic 3(Attraction)	58	12.1%
Topic 4(Beach)	19	4.0%
Topic 5(Cafe)	197	41.0%
Topic 6(Museum & Memorial)	43	8.9%
Topic 7(Condo / Resort)	41	8.5%
Topic 8(Fauna and flora)	42	8.7%
Topic 9(Rental car)	12	2.5%
Sum	481	100%

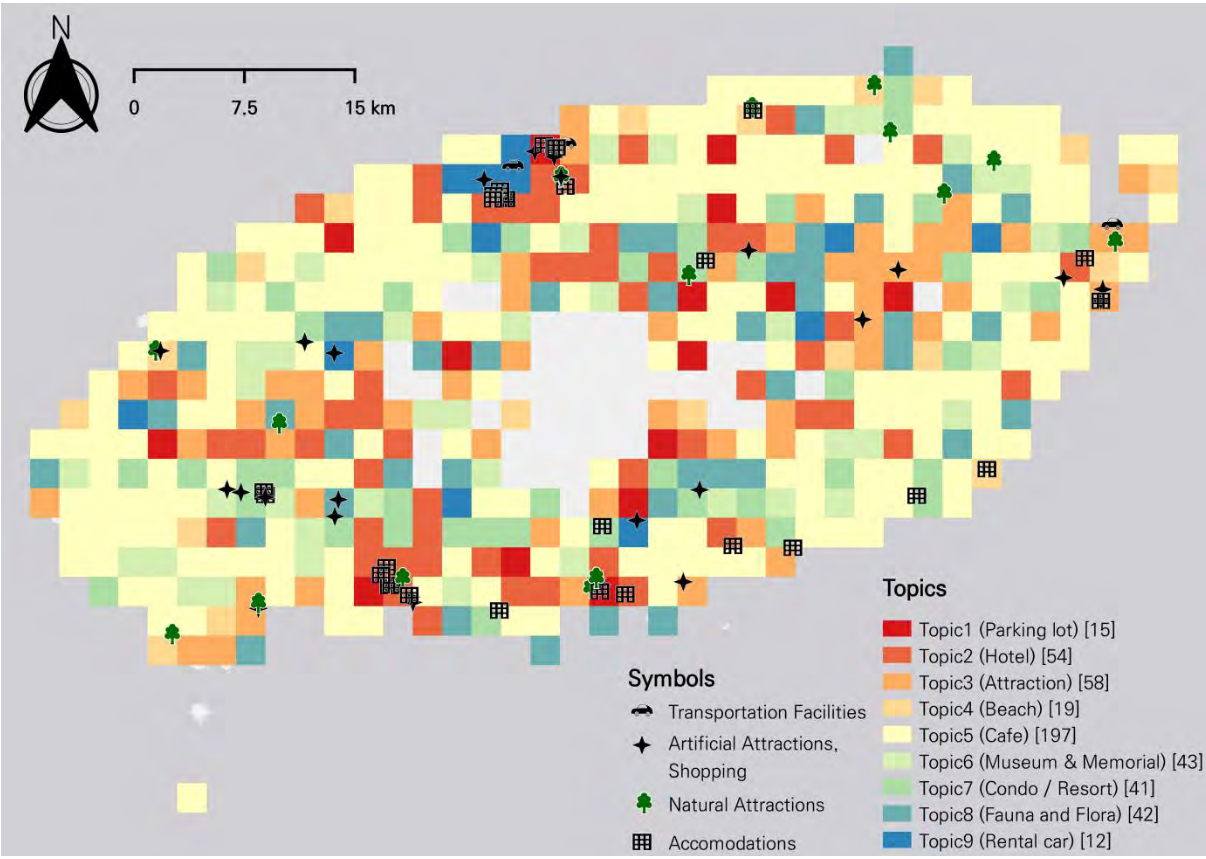


Figure 4. Spatial Distribution of Regional Topics

Note: Only the top 100 POIs that were searched by domestic and international tourists in navigation applications were marked as symbols.

4.5. Temporal Distribution of Topics

Figure 5 illustrates the heatmap for the temporal distribution of topics. Topics 1 and 2 are most frequently observed at 5 PM, while Topic 3 is predominantly seen at 11 AM. Topics 4, 7, and 9 are most commonly found at 3 PM. Topics 5, 6, and 8 are primarily discovered at 2 PM. A minimal amount of data is observed from 2 AM to 4 AM across all topics. Additionally, Topics 3, 6, and 8, which consist largely of activities with restricted operating hours, exhibit a pattern of increasing activity at 10 AM and a significant decline at 5 PM. Moreover, Topic 2 exhibits peaks at two distinct times, indicative of its strong association with lodging. This pattern mirrors the actual behavior of tourists, reflecting typical check-in and check-out times.

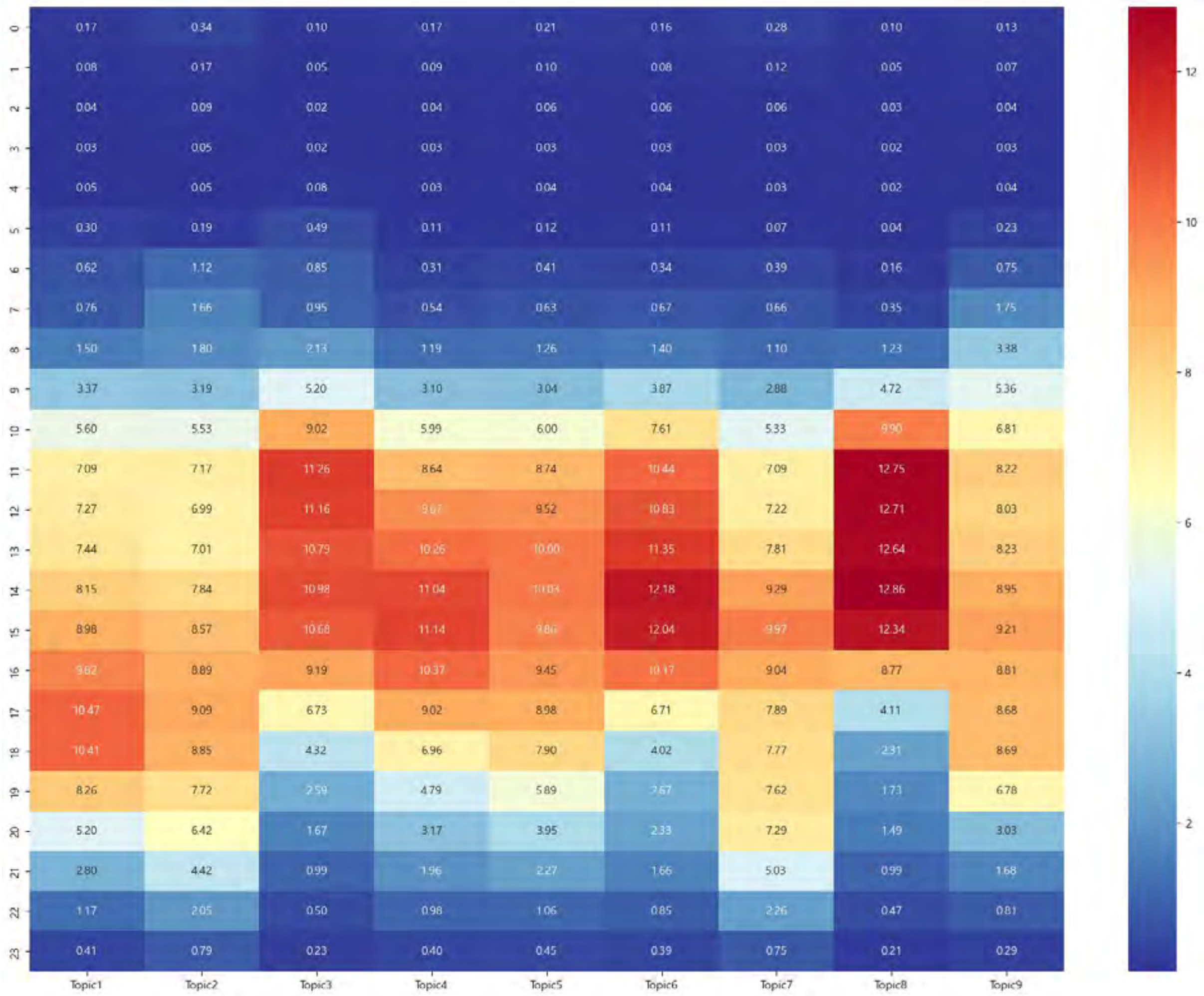


Figure 5. Heatmap for Temporal Distribution of Topics

Note: The number in the box means the number of movements related to a particular topic that occurred at a particular time, converted as a percentage.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This paper attempts to uncover the regional functions of the destination by applying a concept of spatial signature. The spatial signature was initiated from the study of urban planning, which facilitates understanding the characteristics of the place in terms of forms (i.e., spatial shape) and functions (i.e., travel activities). Specifically, based on the 2km by 2km grid formats of the destination (i.e., the form of spatial signature), this research identified the structures of places based on travel activities (i.e., functions of the spatial signature) by adopting the big data of travel mobility. Indeed, this research investigated the navigation data including over 6 million numbers of movement patterns whereby travelers use the mobile applications to search for driving directions. Considering the features of navigation data, it contains not only spatial and temporal information of travel mobility but also POI information of the destination reflecting the purposes of travelers' visits to a certain place (i.e., travel activities). As a result, the findings of this research identified 9 numbers of regional functions labeling “Parking lot”, “Hotel”, “Attraction”, “Beach”, “Café”, “Museum & Memorial”, “Condo / Resort”, “Fauna and flora”, and “Rental car”. Dynamic variations of the regional functions were discovered according to different spatial and temporal dimensions. Therefore, this study suggests a number of important theoretical and practical implications.

To authors’ knowledge, this is the first attempt in tourism to adopt the idea of spatial signature from the urban study and to better understand the characteristics of a tourism destination. As opposed to the existing literature on tourism to explore the travelers’ purposes to visit a destination (Hwang, Gretzel, Xiang, & Fesenmaier, 2006) as well as adopt the travel behaviors in destination planning (Dredge, 1999), this research suggested the approach to uncovering the features of places at the micro level. Based on the idea of the destination design (or design thinking in general), it is vital to manage quality function deployment that is a structured approach to identify customers, understand their needs, and ensure that their needs are met by experiencing the activities at the destination (Zare Mehrjerdi, 2011). Accordingly, this paper demonstrates the way to understand the forms and functions of spatial signatures at the destination, which can become the foundation of destination design.

This study also provides methodological contributions. LDA method is one of the most well-known algorithms in text mining analytics. Interestingly, this research employs the LDA algorithm in analyzing travel mobility data and disclosing the multiple topics – in other words, multi-functions of the destination – based on the associations of the travel activities. As a result, this research demonstrated the usefulness of applying the machine learning algorithms developed in analyzing the textual data into exploring mobility data.

From the perspective of managerial implications, the findings of this research should be beneficial for DMOs when they develop a package of travel products. Indeed, rather than applying the flow-based destination planning that mainly highlights the travel movement patterns (Park, Xu, Jiang, Chen, & Huang, 2020), the insights on destination functions facilitate designing the destination experiences allowing visitors to have diverse travel activities (Jeng & Fesenmaier, 2002). This approach should be helpful in making the destination products successful, which potentially provide a guidance on tourism planning to alleviate the income inequality of the common social issue at the destination (Lee, 2009).

REFERENCES

Angel, S., Franco, S. A., Liu, Y., & Blei, A. M. (2020). The shape compactness of urban footprints. *Progress in Planning, 139*, 100429.

Arribas-Bel, D., & Fleischmann, M. (2022). Understanding (urban) spaces through form and function. *Habitat International, 128*, 102641.

Boarnet, M., & Crane, R. (2001). The influence of land use on travel behavior: specification and estimation strategies. *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice, 35*(9), 823-845.

Bourdic, L., Salat, S., & Nowacki, C. (2012). Assessing cities: a new system of cross-scale spatial indicators. *Building Research & Information, 40*(5), 592-605.

Dellaert, B. G., Ettema, D. F., & Lindh, C. (1998). Multi-faceted tourist travel decisions: a constraint-based conceptual framework to describe tourists' sequential choices of travel components. *Tourism Management, 19*(4), 313-320.

Dredge, D. (1999). Destination place planning and design. *Annals of tourism research, 26*(4), 772-791.

Dibble, J. (2016). Urban morphometrics towards a quantitative science of urban form. *Physics & Society*, 1–340.

Ewing, R., Hamidi, S., Grace, J. B., & Wei, Y. D. (2016). Does urban sprawl hold down upward mobility?. *Landscape and urban planning, 148*, 80-88.

Fleischmann, M., Feliciotti, A., Romice, O., & Porta, S. (2020). Morphological tessellation as a way of partitioning space: Improving consistency in urban morphology at the plot scale. *Computers, Environment and Urban Systems, 80*, 101441.

Gil, J., Beirão, J. N., Montenegro, N., & Duarte, J. P. (2012). On the discovery of urban typologies: data mining the many dimensions of urban form. *Urban Morphology, 16*(1), 27.

Hernández-Martín, R., Rodríguez-Rodríguez, Y., & Gahr, D. (2017). Functional zoning for smart destination management. *European Journal of Tourism Research, 17*, 43-58.

Hwang, Y., Gretzel, U., Xiang, Z., & Fesenmaier, D. (2006). Travel destination choice models. *Destination recommendation systems: Behavioural foundations and applications, 29.*

Jeju Tourism Organization, (2023). 2022 Jeju Visitor Survey. Accessed from https://ijto.or.kr/korean/Bd/view.php?btable=pds&bno=398

Jeng, J., & Fesenmaier, D. R. (2002). Conceptualizing the travel decision-making hierarchy: A review of recent developments. *Tourism analysis, 7*(1), 15-32.

Jeong, M., & Shin, H. H. (2020). Tourists' experiences with smart tourism technology at smart destinations and their behavior intentions*. Journal of Travel Research, 59*(8), 1464-1477.

Korean National Police Agency, (2022). Police Statistical Year Book 2022. Korean National Police Agency. Accessed from https://www.police.go.kr/user/bbs/BD_selectBbsList.do?q_bbsCode=1117

Lee, S. (2009). Income inequality in tourism services-dependent counties. *Current Issues in Tourism, 12*(1), 33-45.

Marrocu, E., & Paci, R. (2013). Different tourists to different destinations. Evidence from spatial interaction models. *Tourism Management, 39*, 71-83.

Park, S., & Fesenmaier, D. R. (2014). Travel decision flexibility. *Tourism Analysis, 19*(1), 35-49.

Park, S., Xu, Y., Jiang, L., Chen, Z., & Huang, S. (2020). Spatial structures of tourism destinations: A trajectory data mining approach leveraging mobile big data. *Annals of Tourism Research, 84*, 102973.

Risteskia, M., Kocevskia, J., & Arnaudov, K. (2012). Spatial planning and sustainable tourism as basis for developing competitive tourist destinations. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 44*, 375-386.

Scuttari, A., Pechlaner, H., & Erschbamer, G. (2021). Destination design: A heuristic case study approach to sustainability-oriented innovation. *Annals of Tourism Research, 86*, 103068.

Sorokina, E., Wang, Y., Fyall, A., Lugosi, P., Torres, E., & Jung, T. (2022). Constructing a smart destination framework: A destination marketing organization perspective. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, 23*, 100688.

Williams, A. M., Rodriguez, I., & Makkonen, T. (2020). Innovation and smart destinations: Critical insights. *Annals of Tourism Research, 83*, 102930.

Yang, Y., & Wong, K. K. (2013). Spatial distribution of tourist flows to China's cities. *Tourism Geographies, 15*(2), 338-363.

Zare Mehrjerdi, Y. (2011). Quality function deployment and its profitability engagement: a systems thinking perspective. *International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management, 28*(9), 910-928.

Differentiating resident attitude towards domestic tourist: A segmentation analysis

Xie, Zhihe
Ningbo University-University of Angers Joint Institute at Ningbo University

Tse, Wai Tsz Serene
Ningbo University-University of Angers Joint Institute at Ningbo University

Abstract:

Resident attitude has been an important topic in understanding the psychological states of residents in intergroup tourism studies as it posts significance towards interaction and harmonious development. Previous studies often regarded resident as homogeneous group, while, actually, differentiations were revealed, which failed to understand the heterogeneity of resident. Besides, residents are exposing to different tourists' groups, yet examination in domestic tourists were under-explored and how resident exhibit differences in stereotype, emotion and behaviour. To address them, a two-step segmentation was conducted. Three clusters were resulted named *Eulogist, Neutral* and *Prudent*. Furthermore, significant differentiations were noted in emotional solidarity and behaviour.

Keywords: Resident attitude, Self-stereotype, Heterogeneous, Domestic tourist, Bias

1. Introduction

The understanding of resident attitude is important in tourism research as it post significant influences towards host-guest relations which further exert impacts on destination image and competitiveness, key aspects for sustainable tourism development (Unurlu, 2021). Existing resident attitude in tourism research, often, guided by social theories, such as social exchange theory, social identity theory and social representation theory, whereby these theories are focusing on individuals' psychological concepts of perception, emotions, and behavior in understanding how resident think, feel and act towards tourist (Ouyang et al., 2017). Recent studies further pinpoint resident attitude formation through their stereotype, emotional attachment and behaviors towards tourists. More specifically, this research suggested that the construction of residents' pro- and anti-tourist attitude with respect to their positive or negative stereotypes, assimilative or dissimilative affective connections, and facilitative or harm behaviors (Woosnam, 2012; Chen & Hsu, 2021; Zhang et al., 2021).

Examination in resident attitude in tourism studies has evolved according to theoretical enhancement (e.g., multi-dimensional framework over bi-polar spectrum) as well as shift in phenomena (e.g., economic, social-cultural, and environmental). However, it should be noted that existing studies remain in recognizing resident as homogeneous group although individuals hold discrepancies in their psychological states. As suggested by social psychology studies, intergroup attitude is heterogeneous in which differentiations were noted within a social group (Rivas-Drake et al., 2019). For example, Lefringhausen et al. (2021) found that British are defined as three clusters: "separated", "integrated" and "undifferentiated", based on their dissimilar attitude towards immigrants' cultures. Similarly, Landmann et al. (2019) identified six types of intergroup threat "symbolic threat", "realistic

threat", "safety threat", "cohesion threat", "prejudice threat", and "altruistic threat" towards refugee migration. The neglection in recognizing heterogeneity among residents may under- or over-stated their attitude towards tourists which hinder knowledge enhancement in host-guest relations as well as implementing inaccurate strategical approach in the area of host-guest development.
Furthermore, existing tourism research in resident attitude were mainly focusing on inbound tourists, exploring residents' psychology states towards outgroup members that may foster cross-cultural exchange, mutuality and inclusiveness (Monterrubio, 2016). Previous studies have pointed out plenty of differences existed between inbound tourists and domestic tourists, ranging from perceived value, satisfaction, to behaviors such as gaze, revisit intentions and Words-of-Mouth (Stone & Nyaupane, 2019). Due to the presence of dissimilarities, resident attitudes towards inbound and domestic tourists would be different. Hence, the confusion of resident attitudes towards inbound and domestic tourist is inaccurate, investigating resident attitude towards domestic tourist facilities comprehension of intergroup perspectives within the same social milieu, which contribute to promoting social cohesion and maintaining stability.

To address the above-mentioned research gap, this study aims to investigate the heterogeneity of resident attitude towards domestic tourists using segmentation analysis. More specifically, residents are segmented in accordance with their stereotypes towards domestic tourists, thus identifying clusters based on different items of cognitive levels. Also, this study asserts that it is possible to evaluate dimensions of resident emotional solidarity and behavior. The research tends to address the two objectives: (1) to validate the usefulness of tourist stereotype as a segmentation tool, identifying homogeneous groups of residents; (2) to explore the connection among stereotype, emotion and behavior among the tourist stereotype-based clusters.

In sum, this study identified heterogeneity in resident attitude towards domestic tourists. Theoretically, the findings explained the intergroup attitude in tourism context, unfolding a unique perspective that focuses on residents towards domestic tourists, which provide empirical support for resident attitude theory. Further, this study highlights the application of tourist stereotypes in resident segmentation, complementing the gap of existing studies. Practically, the results could provide insights for destination management organizations and tourism practitioners to reduce conflicts held by tourist stereotype. Moreover, it provides strong evidence for managing residents' behavior and regulating social norms, form a stable and harmonious China society.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Self-stereotypes
Stereotype, or bias, prejudices, occurs when an individual applies a set of characteristics to another that he or she considers to be part of an outgroup（Ratliff & Nosek, 2011). Therefore, if an individual describes and evaluates itself in terms of the ingroup norms and values, we call it self-stereotype (Van Veelen, 2016). As a branch of stereotype, self-stereotype, a process of depersonalization answers the question: "how do we see ourselves?" (Selmer, 2024). In this process, individual start to shift from thinking, feeling and behaving as unique

individuals to being members of a group with shared perceptions, understandings and goals (Brown, 2022).

Both stereotype and self-stereotype exert influence on groups, however, serving in different ways. Previous research on stereotype had focus on the way people stereotype group members, indicating that outgroup stereotype is stronger than ingroup stereotype (Ryan & Bogart, 1997), while self-stereotype is regarded as a key concept works for ingroup, resulting in bias, emotion as well as cognitive processing (Moons et al., 2009). In tourism, resident may hold self-stereotype towards domestic tourists. Tung et al. (2020) found that mainland Chinese residents would acquiesce to negative and harmful statements about their in-groups to internalize patterns of tourist stereotypes. The residents acknowledged their positive stereotypes like competence to be closer and assimilate towards ingroup, yet at the same time, admitting negative stereotype like rude to differentiate them. Besides, the content of tourist stereotype had re-conceptualized, from a 2 X 2 (Warmth X Competence) mixed model to the four dimensions ‘Approachable’ ‘Competence’ ‘Boastfulness’ and ‘Rude’ (Fiske et al., 2002; Tung et al.,2020; Chen & Hsu, 2021).

2.2 Emotional Solidarity

Emotional solidarity refers to an affective bond that an individual developed with whom they interact and striking a similar chord, in tourism, it was defined when interactions between tourists and residents are accompanied by shared beliefs and behaviours, the relationship between them would become harmonious (Woosnam et al., 2009). Previous studies found that residents’ emotional solidarity affected their perceived positive festival impacts and support for tourism development (Xu et al., 2020). The above-mentioned study explores the influence of emotional solidarity as an independent variable, in addition, some studies described is role between the independent variable and the dependent variable (Chen et al., 2022).

Despite the two functions of emotion solidarity, few studies revealed the antecedents of the emotional solidarity. In other words, these studies use emotional solidarity as a dependent variable and discuss how it develops. Stereotype is one of the key concepts introduces this phenomenon, for its understanding help explain social conflict (Čivre et al., 2013). Stereotypes may lead to distinct emotions like admiration, contempt, envy, and pity (Fiske et al., 2002). Existing literature revealed the connection between stereotype and emotion, also proved that residence may hold dissimilar level of emotional solidarity based on their stereotype towards tourist.

2.3 Resident Behaviour

Behaviour is an action that a person produces in response to an external stimulus (Reis et al., 2000). In tourism, existing studies usually focus on residents' behaviours towards tourism, such as pro-tourism behaviours (Shen et al., 2022), and resident supportive behaviour for tourism development (Stylidis, 2016). Some studies have noted residents' behaviours towards tourists, but they have singularly defined them as positive and negative (Tu et al., 2023). Through borrowing the concept of BIAS map from psychology to tourism, the present study used the scale conceptualized by Tse & Tung (2022a), assessing a new approach to describe resident behaviour. Considering both the positive and negative aspects and their different intensities, resident behaviour were separated into four quadrants: ‘Active-Facilitation’, ‘Active-Harm’, ‘Passive- Facilitation’ and ‘Passive-Harm’.

The relationship between stereotype and behaviour have been examined in tourism research, as stereotype may influence how individuals react to others (Fan & Jia, 2023). For example, Singapore residents may hold negative stereotypes about mainland Chinese tourists, which may result in discriminatory behaviour (Tse & Tung, 2022b). Moreover, the relation emotion and behaviour have also a key bond in tourism. Positive emotion may promote positive behaviours like revisit intention, environment responsible (Bi et al., 2020), while negative emotion could cause multiple undesirable behaviours such as word-of-mouth, recommendation intention (Min & Kim, 2019). Existing studies have connected the concept stereotype, emotion and behaviour, forming the tripartite model as well as the corresponding interrelationship (Micevski et al., 2021; Tse & Tung, 2022b). Residents will express emotions based on their tourist stereotype, and then act on them. Detailly, resident positive stereotype like approachable and competence may affect their admiration emotion and thus lead to active and passive facilitation behaviour.

3. Methodology

3.1 Questionnaire Design

To achieve the research objectives, a self-administrated questionnaire with four sections was employed. First section measures tourist stereotype that consisting of 12 items proposed by Tung et al. (2020) and Chen & Hsu (2021) on a 7-point likert scale whereby 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. Second section measures emotional solidarity with 10 measured items proposed by Woosnam & Norman (2010) and Joo & Woosnam (2020). Third section measures resident behavior through 12 measured items proposed by Tse & Tung (2022a) on a 7-point frequency scale in which 1 = never to 7 = always. Final section collects residents’ demographic such as gender, age, educational level, and monthly income. The questionnaire was developed in English, then translated to Chinese and checked by tourism experts. A pilot test was conducted with 20 Chinese to ensure the clarity and ease of understanding, no revisions were required.

3.2 Research Site

Hangzhou, capital city of Zhejiang Province, which earns the reputation of ‘paradise on the earth’ in Chinese poetry has attracted millions of domestic tourists and was ranked first by the number of domestic tourists received in the first two quarters of 2023 (Hangzhou Cultural and Tourism Bureau, 2023). In 2023 May Golden Week holiday, Hangzhou hosted more than 630 million of domestic tourists, one of the top destinations, and this figure is predicted to soar with the hosting of mega events, e-commerce development and demand in tourism among Chinese. However, large number of tourists visiting Hangzhou has induced disturbances among residents, and eliciting host-guest conflicts with increasing reports (Zhang et al., 2015). For example, a security guard were blamed when he tried to stop domestic tourist from climbing the statue (Yu, 2020). Worse still, some domestic tourists even wantonly trampled on natural spots and littered (Liu et al., 2020). The findings from Hangzhou residents would reveal their stereotype, emotion and behaviors towards the domestic tourist that are essential for sustainable tourism development.

3.3 Sampling and Data Collection

Data was collected via WenJuanXing, a China online survey platform that has been popularized among tourism research (Cao et al., 2023). A screening question was employed to excluded unsuitable respondents, namely: “Are you a citizen of Hangzhou?”. Those who answered no were terminated from the main survey. A non-student, gender-balanced sampling approach was adopted in this research. 593 valid questionnaires were collected and analyzed. 55.8% were female respondents, 25.97% were aged between 45 and 49, 45.02 % had a bachelor's degree or above. Also, 46.88 % had a monthly income above 9000 Yuan.

4. Results

4.1 Cluster Analysis

Heterogeneity of tourist stereotypes was examined through a two-step cluster analysis. Several reasons for choosing two-step cluster analysis, firstly, two-step clustering allows for the calculation of categorical and continuous variables simultaneously (Tkaczynski, 2017); second, this method uses the Schwarz Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) to automatically form the optimal number of clusters to find the most typical clusters (Tkaczynski et al., 2010). Prior to the analysis, the reliability of the items was assessed with Cronbach’s value ranged from 0.89 to 0.93, which indicates good internal consistency (Hair et al., 2006). Three distinctive clusters were resulted and named *Eulogist* (n=157, 26.5%), *Neutral* (n=202, 34.1%) and *Prudent* (n=234, 39.5%) sequentially (Table 3).

Table 1
Two-step cluster analysis on tourist stereotype.

Items	Predictor Importance	Cluster 1 Eulogist (n=157)	Cluster 2 Neutral (n=202)	Cluster 3 Prudent (n=234)
Unreasonable	1.00	2.07	4.17	4.01
Rude	0.92	2.13	4.22	3.99
Uncivilized	0.85	2.25	4.31	4.07
Industrious	0.81	6.10	5.14	4.01
Sincere	0.76	5.94	4.82	3.95
Intelligent	0.74	5.89	4.80	3.88
Good	0.72	5.92	4.66	3.89
Immoral	0.70	1.92	3.78	3.91
Loud	0.66	3.08	5.09	5.44
Competent	0.63	5.92	4.83	3.93
Friendly	0.42	6.29	5.28	4.66
Materialistic	0.28	3.73	4.97	3.91

Demographic of the three clusters were cross-tabulated with significances across all measured items. Specifically, *Prudent* contained more male respondents, by contrast *Eulogist* and *Neutral* includes more female respondents. Furthermore, *Neutral* have more young residents (age between 25 to 29), comparing with *Prudent*, which involved more middle-aged residents (age between 45 to 49). Moreover, significant difference exists in the educational level among the three clusters, all residents in *Prudent* don’t have bachelor’s degree, while *Neutral* have a higher level of education, with 80% of them having a bachelor's degree or above. Similarly, lower monthly income in *Prudent* compared to the other two clusters.

Table 2
Cluster profiling based on resident’ demographic characteristics.

Items	Distribution			Chi-square	Sig.
	Cluster 1 Eulogist (n=157)	Cluster 2 Neutral (n=202)	Cluster3 Prudent (n=234)		
Gender					
Male	40%	34%	56%	23.323	.000
Female	60%	66%	44%		
Age					
25-29	10%	25%	8%		
30-34	11%	5%	17%		
35-39	9%	9%	11%		
40-44	24%	25%	17%	72.246	.000
45-49	24%	17%	35%		
50-54	14%	11%	10%		
55-59	2%	5%	1%		
60 or above	6%	3%	1%		
Education level					
Up to high school	0	1%	40%		
High school	14%	1%	42%		
Post-secondary	19%	18%	18%	402.770	.000
Bachelor	54%	55%	0		
Master and above	13%	25%	0		
Monthly income (yuan)					
Less than 3000	5%	7%	3%		
3000-4999	18%	15%	23%		
5000-6999	22%	15%	25%	116.680	.000
7000-8999	18%	22%	46%		
Over 9000	37%	41%	3%		

Next, following the suggestion proposed by Stylidis et al. (2020), discriminant analysis was performed to assess the accuracy of the identified clusters. The two canonical discriminant functions were resulted significantly. The correlations for both discriminant functions were strong, suggesting that the results explain the relationship between the can function and the dependent variable (Hosany & Prayag, 2013). A high hit-ratio (95.3%) was resulted which suggest that 565 out of the 593 Hangzhou residents were clustered correctly into their respective segments.

Table 3
Discriminant analysis of resulted clusters.

Discriminant Functions	Eigenvalue	Canonical correlation	Wilk's lamba	Chi-square	Significance
1	3.75	0.889	0.091	1399.72	.000
2	1.32	0.755	0.431	491.23	.000
Classification results					
Actual group	No of cases				
		1	2	3	
Cluster 1	157	150 (95.5%)	5 (3.2%)	2 (1.3%)	
Cluster 2	202	7 (3.5%)	188 (93.1%)	7 (3.5%)	
Cluster 3	234	0 (0%)	7 (3%)	227 (97%)	

Hit - ratio: 95.3%

4.2 Intergroup Comparison

A one-way ANOVA with Scheffe as post hoc test was conducted to examine the differences in emotional solidarity and behaviours among the clusters. Significant differences exist within the three clusters. Generally, *Eulogist* expressed the highest emotional solidarity, with *Neutral* in the second and *Prudent* embodied the weakest. Specially, *Eulogist* and *Prudent* will be more welcoming to domestic tourists than *Neutral*, in other words, the first two residents believe that tourism is favourable to them and are proud to have so many tourists visiting their hometowns (i.e., Hangzhou).

Table 4
Differences in emotional solidarity to domestic tourists by cluster.

Items	Mean			F-Value	sign	Sheffe test
	Eulogist	Neutral	Prudent			(p<0.05)
Emotional Solidarity	6.09	5.33	4.89	108.897	.000	1>2>3
Feeling Welcome	6.50	5.87	6.38	23.88	.000	1,3>2
Emotional Closeness	5.78	5.08	4.20	125.27	.000	1>2>3
Sympathetic Understanding	5.95	5.06	4.15	201.36	.000	1>2>3

Further, each group differs in terms of behaviours. *Eulogist*, particularly, more likely to engaging in facilitating behaviour, they would like to accept and communicate with domestic tourists rather than threatening them. In contrast, *Prudent* exhibited the lowest to act in facilitation behaviours among the three clusters. Moreover, *Neutral* seems more prone to harmful behaviours such as resisting and refraining tourists.

Table 5
Differences in behaviour to domestic tourists by cluster.

Items	Mean			F-Value	sign	Sheffe test
	Eulogist	Neutral	Prudent			(p<0.05)
Resident Behavior						
Active-Facilitation	4.93	4.29	3.23	83.59	.000	1>2>3
Passive-Facilitation	4.70	4.38	3.95	23.39	.000	1>2>3
Active-Harm	1.28	1.85	1.32	18.91	.000	2>1,3
Passive-Harm	1.59	2.25	2.23	17.58	.000	2,3>1

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study segments residents based on tourist stereotypes, comparing emotional solidarity as well as behavior between clusters. Result shows that there are three distinct clusters: *Eulogist, Neutral, Prudent*, and further they show varying degrees of emotional solidarity and behavior towards domestic tourists. The first cluster, *Eulogist*, in the smallest cluster, including residents who hold strongly positive stereotypes towards domestic tourists and ignoring their negative aspects. They emphasized that domestic tourists are friendly and industrious, rejecting negative stereotypes such as immoral or unreasonable. However, they also pointed out that domestic tourists are somewhat materialistic as reflected like buying luxury products. Many domestic tourists regarded Hangzhou as a shopping center, with a concentration of international brand shop and many street-side shops (Qu et al., 2022). The tourists went on a shopping frenzy in Hangzhou, which to a certain extent prevented Hangzhou residents from living a normal life, and in turn was viewed as a materialistic.

The second cluster, *Neutral*, recognizing both the positive and negative aspects of domestic tourist. On the one hand, they affirmed that domestic tourists are industrious and sincere; on the other hand, they did not shy away from criticizing them for being uncivilized and materialistic. In general, they find the bright spots in domestic tourists, while altering them for needing to improve in certain areas, in a neutral position. There is a significant rate of female and young resident (aged between 25 and 29) compared to other clusters. Perhaps, young people are more discerning about tourism, expecting the tourism industry will continue to raise its standards to ensure more residents could obtain the economic benefits (García et al., 2015).

The third cluster, *Prudent*, is the largest cluster. These residents appear to be in a state of indifference towards tourists, with no clear indication of positive or negative stereotypes. However, they show strong opinions on certain indicators (e.g., loud). Equally, Chinese tourists are often regarded as making loud or noise voice (Zhang et al., 2023). Specifically, residents in this cluster are less educated, neither of them has a bachelor's degree or above. One possible reason for this is their less involvement in tourism, as Almeida-García et al. (2016) have noted that residents with lower levels of education perceive tourism less positively than others.

Further, the study compared the three clusters in emotional solidarity, resulting in significant differences on three dimensions. *Eulogist* felt emotional solidarity with the domestic tourist in all three aspects, *Neutral* done the same, but to a lesser extent. In addition, *Prudent* appeared somewhat ambivalent, strongly welcoming to the domestic tourist but express lower emotional closeness and sympathetic understanding on them. More specifically, all three clusters reflect high levels of felling welcome, which has also been reported in previous study, as it can explain resident behavior like support for tourism development (Pratt et al., 2023).

Another finding is that residents in three clusters will behave differently towards domestic tourists. With *Eulogist* more likely to act facilitation behavior comparing to *Neutral* and *Prudent*. Interestingly, *Neutral* appeared actively or passively harming domestic tourists, while *Prudent* seems regularly engaging in passive harmful behavior like resisting and refraining. Results suggest that residents' behavior towards tourists changes according to their perceived bias towards tourists. Similarly, Liu et al. (2023) find that resident behavior is not static, one possible reason for their behavior is their different levels of alliance with the tourism economy.

5.1 Theoretical and Practical Implications

The findings provide several theoretical contributions. Firstly, distinguished from previous studies, the results proved that tourist self-stereotype can also be used as a market segmentation tool. Secondly, the study noticed that stereotypes is not only negative, instead, some clusters treated tourists as strongly positive aspects (e.g., *Eulogist*). Further, to date, the study surrounding tourist stereotype was deficient, as they concentrated on the relationship between resident attitudes towards inbound tourist in a cross-cultural background. While this study emphasized that, although resident shared the same cultural context, there are still differences in their attitudes towards domestic tourists. By segmenting resident based on their self-stereotype towards domestic tourists, the result complements the gap in research which investigating the relationship between residents and tourists. Finally, although previous studies had connected the three concepts (Micevski et al., 2021), they failed to identify tourist stereotype across different resident clusters. The results revealed that tourist self-stereotype-based clusters express dissimilar level of emotional solidarity and behaviors towards domestic tourists. Consequently, findings highlight the diversity of resident groups and the complexity of host-guest relationships.

Basically, the results could provide insights for destination management organization (DMOs) to understand resident attitudes. The results could help to identify the various residents based on their stereotype towards domestic tourists, allowing to understand the differences and similarities among clusters. There are still two clusters (*Neutral* and *Prudent*) that hold varying degrees of negative stereotypes towards domestic tourists. As Tung (2021) proposes, tourist stereotypes are not fixed, instead, they are malleable and can be reduced through effective measures, such as communication messages. The organization could record some of the factors (e.g., loud) that contribute to the negative tourist stereotypes, by videos, promoting a correct approach. Furthermore, the study reveals that clusters with different stereotypes have different levels of emotional solidarity as well as behaviors, which add understanding in China's internal society. The results show that education is an important factor in influencing resident, with the more educated resident generally present more positive stereotypes and less likely to engage in harmful behaviors. Perhaps, the government should improve education system, teaching from an early age to be a civilized and friendly resident.

5.2 Limitations and future research

This study has the following limitations that can be further explored in future research. First, this research employed self-administrated question that were prone to presentation effect and self-desirability. This explicit approach could possibilities in over-stating positive stereotypes and under-stating negative stereotypes, thus, future studies could replicate this research with the employment of implicit measurements, such as implicit association test, eye tracking, and priming task to collect data. Furthermore, previous study indicated that, similar to resident, tourists hold stereotype towards residents during their visitation (Im & Kim, 2023). Hence, it is suggested that future research could employed tourist as study target and examine their stereotype, emotion and behavior towards residents. The findings could enhance the understanding of host-guest relation through investigation of both parties.

REFERENCES

Almeida-García, F., Pelaez-Fernandez, M. A., Balbuena-Vazquez, A., & Cortés-Macias, R. (2016). Residents' perceptions of tourism development in Benalmádena (Spain). *Tourism Management, 54*, 259–274. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2015.11.007

Bi, N., Yin, C. Y., & Chen, Y. (2020). A bittersweet experience! The effect of mixed emotions on business tourists' revisit intentions. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, *37*(6), 695-710. https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2020.1795047

Brown, C. S. (2022). Protecting Youth from Racism and Prejudice: Contexts, Interventions, and Future Directions. *Review of General Psychology, 26*(3), 279-281

https://doi.org/10.1177/10892680221086499

Cao, L., Xie, D., & Qu, Y. (2023). A process perspective on experience co-creation: How pre-trip involvement prompts destination loyalty. *Tourism Management, 96*, 104711.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2022.104711

Chen, J., Liu, C., Si, Y., Law, R., & Zhang, M. (2022). A Study on the Mediating Role of Emotional Solidarity between Authenticity Perception Mechanism and Tourism Support Behavior Intentions within Rural Homestay Inn Tourism. *Behavioral Sciences, 12*(9), 341. https://doi.org/10.3390/bs12090341

Chen, N., & Hsu, C. H. C. (2021). Tourist stereotype content: Dimensions and accessibility. *Annals of Tourism Research, 89*, 103212. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2021.103212

Čivre, Ž., Knežević, M., Baruca, P. Z., & Fabjan, D. (2013). Facial attractiveness and stereotypes of hotel guests: An experimental research. *Tourism Management, 36*, 57-65.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2012.11.004

Fan, D. X., & Jia, G. (2023). How do tourists respond to meta-stereotypes? Understanding their willingness to interact, self-presentation and the role of power. *Tourism Management, 94*, 104652. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2022.104652

Fiske, S. T., Cuddy, A. J., Glick, P., & Xu, J. (2002). A model of (often mixed) stereotype content: Competence and Warmth respectively follow from perceived status and competition. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 82*(6), 878-902.

https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.82.6.878

García, F. A., Vázquez, A. B., & Macías, R. C. (2015). Resident's attitudes towards the impacts of tourism. *Tourism Management Perspectives, 13*, 33-40.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2014.11.002

Hair, J., Black, W., Babin, B., Anderson, R., & Tatham, R. (2006). *Multivariate data analysis* (6th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Hosany, S., & Prayag, G. (2013). Patterns of tourists' emotional responses, satisfaction, and intention to recommend. *Journal of Business Research, 66*(6), 730-737.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.09.011

Im, A. Y., & Kim, D. Y. (2023). Understanding Disrespectful Tourist Behavior Through Tourists' Stereotyped Perceptions. *Journal of Travel Research*, 00472875231209978.

https://doi.org/10.1177/00472875231209978

Joo, D., & Woosnam, K. M. (2020). Measuring tourists' emotional solidarity with one another—A modification of the emotional solidarity scale. *Journal of Travel Research, 59*(7), 1186-1203. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287519878503

Landmann, H., Gaschler, R., & Rohmann, A. (2019). What is threatening about refugees? Identifying different types of threat and their association with emotional responses and attitudes towards refugee migration. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 49*(7), 1401-1420. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2593

Lee, K. T., & Kim, J. H. (2016). World culture festivals: Their perceived effect on and value to domestic and international tourism. *Journal of Psychology in Africa, 26*(5), 443-448.

https://doi.org/10.1080/14330237.2016.1219551

Lefringhausen, K., Ferenczi, N., Marshall, T. C., & Kunst, J. R. (2021). A new route towards more harmonious intergroup relationships in England? Majority members' proximal-acculturation. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 82*, 56-73.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2021.03.006

Liu, J., An, K., & Jang, S. C. (2023). Behaviours not set in stone: do residents still adopt pro-tourism behaviours when tourists behave in uncivilized ways? *Current Issues in Tourism*, 1-19. https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2023.2283559

Liu, J., An, K., & Jang, S. S. (2020). A model of tourists' civilized behaviors: Toward sustainable coastal tourism in China. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, 16*, 100437. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2020.100437

Martín, H. S., de los Salmones Sanchez, M. M. G., & Herrero, Á. (2018). Residents' attitudes and behavioural support for tourism in host communities. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 35*(2), 231-243. https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2017.1357518

Min, H. K., & Kim, H. J. (2019). When service failure is interpreted as discrimination: Emotion, power, and voice. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 82*, 59-67. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2019.03.017

Micevski, M., Diamantopoulos, A., & Erdbrügger, J. (2021). From country stereotypes to country emotions to intentions to visit a country: implications for a country as a destination brand. *Journal of Product & Brand Management, 30*(1), 118-131.

https://doi.org/10.1108/jpbm-09-2019-2563

Moons, W. G., Leonard, D. J., Mackie, D. M., & Smith, E. R. (2009). I feel our pain: Antecedents and consequences of emotional self-stereotyping. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 45*(4), 760-769. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2009.04.016

Monterrubio, C. (2016). The impact of spring break behaviour: An integrated threat theory analysis of residents' prejudice. *Tourism Management, 54*, 418-427.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2015.12.004

Ouyang, Z., Gursoy, D., & Sharma, B. (2017). Role of trust, emotions and event attachment on residents' attitudes toward tourism. *Tourism Management*, *63*, 426-438.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2017.06.026

Pratt, S., Gibson, D., & Kuilamu, M. (2023). Residents' attitudes towards tourism development in a non-touristy destination: the moderating role of travel experience. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research, 28*(9), 907-922.

https://doi.org/10.1080/10941665.2023.2283602

Qu, Y., Dong, Y., & Gao, J. (2022). A customized method to compare the projected and perceived destination images of repeat tourists. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, *25*, 100727. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2022.100727

Ratliff, K. A., & Nosek, B. A. (2011). Negativity and outgroup biases in attitude formation and transfer. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, *37*(12), 1692–1703.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167211420168

Reis, H. T., Collins, W. A., & Berscheid, E. (2000). The relationship context of human behaviour and development. *Psychological Bulletin, 126*(6), 844.

https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.126.6.844

Rivas-Drake, D., Saleem, M., Schaefer, D. R., Medina, M., & Jagers, R. (2019). Intergroup contact attitudes across peer networks in school: Selection, influence, and implications for cross-group friendships. *Child Development, 90*(6), 1898-1916.

https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.13061

Ryan, C. S., & Bogart, L. M. (1997). Development of new group members' in-group and out-group stereotypes: Changes in perceived variability and ethnocentrism. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 73*(4), 719.

https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.73.4.719

Selmer, J. (2024). *Stereotype theory. In a guide to key theories for human resource management research* (pp. 301-305). Edward Elgar Publishing.

Shen, K., Yang, J., & Geng, C. (2022). How residents' attitudes to tourists and tourism affect their pro-tourism behaviours: The moderating role of Chinese traditionality. *Frontiers in Psychology, 12*, 792324. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.792324

Stone, L. S., & Nyaupane, G. P. (2019). The tourist gaze: Domestic versus international tourists. *Journal of Travel Research, 58*(5), 877-891.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287518781890

Stylidis, D. (2016). The role of place image dimensions in residents' support for tourism development. *International Journal of Tourism Research, 18*(2), 129-139.

https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2039

Stylidis, D., Woosnam, K. M., & Ivkov, M. (2020). Tourists' emotional solidarity with residents: A segmentation analysis and its links to destination image and loyalty. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, 17,* 100458.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2020.100458

Tkaczynski, A. (2017). *Segmentation using two-step cluster analysis*. Springer.

Tkaczynski, A., Rundle-Thiele, S., & Beaumont, N. (2010). Destination segmentation: A recommended two-step approach. *Journal of Travel Research, 49*(2), 139–152.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287509336470

Tse, S., & Tung, V. W. S. (2022a). Measuring the valence and intensity of residents' behaviors in host–tourist interactions: Implications for destination image and destination competitiveness. *Journal of Travel Research, 61*(3), 565-580

https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287521997576

Tse, S., & Tung, V. W. S. (2022b). Understanding residents' attitudes towards tourists: Connecting stereotypes, emotions and behaviours. *Tourism Management, 89*, 104435.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2021.104435

Tu, H., Zhang, Z., & Jiang, Z. (2023). When and How tourists engage in citizenship behavior: The interactive effect of trait gratitude and positive resident–tourist contact. *Journal of Travel Research, 62*(8), 1832-1847. https://doi.org/10.1177/00472875221140904

Tung, V. W. S. (2021). Reducing tourist stereotype: Effectiveness of communication messages. *Journal of Travel Research*, *60*(2), 281-292.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287519900002

Tung, V. W. S., King, B. E. M., & Tse, S. (2020). The tourist stereotype model: Positive and negative dimensions. *Journal of Travel Research, 59*(1), 37-51.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287518821739

Unurlu, Ç. (2021). The effect of place personality on resident welcoming tourist through positive and negative impacts of tourism. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *23*(4), 636-651. https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2431

van Veelen, R., Otten, S., Cadinu, M., & Hansen, N. (2016). An integrative model of social identification: Self-stereotyping and self-anchoring as two cognitive pathways. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 20*(1), 3-26.

https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868315576642

Woosnam, K. M. (2012). Using emotional solidarity to explain residents' attitudes about tourism and tourism development. *Journal of Travel Research, 51*(3), 315-327.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287511410351

Woosnam, K. M., & Norman, W. C. (2010). Measuring residents' emotional solidarity with tourists: Scale development of Durkheim's theoretical constructs. *Journal of Travel Research, 49*(3), 365-380 https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287509346858

Woosnam, K. M., Norman, W. C., & Ying, T. (2009). Exploring the theoretical framework of emotional solidarity between residents and tourists. *Journal of Travel Research, 48*(2), 245-258. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287509332334

Xu, W., Lee, J. H., & Lee, C. K. (2020). Exploring the impact of residents' emotional solidarity on attitude and support for tourism development in the context of COVID-19. *International Journal of Tourism Research, 34*(10), 5-16.

https://doi.org/10.21298/IJTHR.2020.10.34.10.5

Yu, W.W. (2020, November 18) *Anger! West Lake Scenic Area, a man holding a child to ride the sculpture was dissuaded, even cursed the security guards*. Zhejiang Online.

https://zjnews.zjol.com.cn/zjnews/hznews/202011/t20201118_12427351.shtml

Zhang, C. X., Fong, L., & McCabe, S. (2023). Intergroup Identity Conflict in Tourism: The Voice of the Tourist. *Journal of Travel Research*, 00472875231217898.

https://doi.org/10.1177/00472875231217898

Zhang, S., Chen, N., & Hsu, C. H. (2021). Facial expressions versus words: Unlocking complex emotional responses of residents toward tourists. *Tourism Management, 83*, 104226. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2020.104226

Zhang, X., Zhou, L., Wu, Y., Skitmore, M., & Deng, Z. (2015). Resolving the conflicts of sustainable world heritage landscapes in cities: Fully open or limited access for visitors? *Habitat International, 46*, 91-100. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.habitatint.2014.11.004

Parent-child study tour under the framework of service design: Enhancing parental roles and addressing Dual-subject needs

Zheng, Ting
School of Design Art
Xiamen University of Technology

Huang, Yinan
School of Design Art
Xiamen University of Technology

Wang, Yao (Corresponding Author)
School of Design Art
Xiamen University of Technology

Abstract:

The parent-child study tour industry faces unique challenges due to its dual-subject nature. Previous research has often overlooked the role of parents and failed to consider the distinct differences between the dual subjects of parents and children in terms of their study tour service needs. This paper proposes service design as a solution. Using the "Jimei Tower Building Story" as a case study, the Differentiation Model for Parent-Child Study Tour Services is constructed, encompassing stakeholder analysis, value proposition, user journey, and service blueprint.

Keywords: Parent-child study tour, Service design, Stakeholders, User journey mapping, Service blueprints

1. Introduction

The study tour industry has witnessed rapid development, accompanied by a range of problems and challenges. Among the four contradictions facing the industry, Liu and Zhou (2020) highlighted the tension between scale and personalization. Large-scale study trips and personalized study trips, including student independent study trips and parent-child study trips, are two main approaches to study. However, research on parent-child study trips often neglects the unique role of parents and fails to address the substantial differences in their demand for study services when compared to children. To address these gaps in previous studies, this paper adopts the concept of service design from design theory. Service design offers a systematic model for revolutionizing service delivery, processes, and experiences by focusing on in-depth user insights and collaborative innovation among multiple stakeholders. By applying service design thinking to parent-child study tour, this paper aims to address the lack of attention to the needs of multiple subjects in current activity design and bridge the gap in research service needs between parents and children.

The specific research questions of this study are: why and how does service design enhance the experience of research services in the current boom of parent-child **study** tour? And how does it capture and address the individualized differences in research service needs between parents and children? The approach of this paper is as follows. Firstly, it reviews relevant literature to construct the Differentiation Model for Parent-Child Study Tour Services and verifies the applicability of service design in the study field. Secondly, it takes the parent-child study tour project "Jimei Tower Building Story" in Jimei District, Xiamen City, as an example, employing a combination of qualitative and quantitative research to deeply analyze the practice of parent-child study tour. Thirdly, based on the foundational model of differentiated parent-child study services, it utilizes stakeholder diagrams, value canvas maps, user journey maps, and service blueprints. Finally, it discusses the positive role of service design in enhancing the effectiveness of parent-child study tour and explores its broad potential for application in the future study tour industry.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Parent-Child study tour: The Neglected Role of Parents and the Challenge of Dual Subject Needs

In 2016, China's Ministry of Education issued the Opinions on Promoting Study Tour for Primary and Secondary School Students (2016), marking the official inclusion of study tour in China's primary and secondary school education planning, and the promotion of national policies has prompted the rapid popularization of study tour. However, the rapid development of the industry has also exposed the problems of heavy touring and light learning, unclear goals and random planning (YU, WANG, & WU, 2017), Liu and Zhou (2020) believes that the contradiction between scale and personalization is one of the four core contradictions in the study industry.At this stage, the mainstream of large-scale study mode, that is, the collective study organized by the school class as a unit.However, in the face of diversified market demand, research institutions have also begun to develop refined, personalized study tour projects, including parent-child study tour.

Parent-child study tours are based on personalized learning and incorporate parent-child interaction elements, allowing parents and children to share the learning process and experiences through a series of enriching practical activities. As early as 2015, China's Ministry of Education issued the Guiding Opinions on Strengthening Family Education (2015), instructing localities to actively recognize the important role of family education in children's growth. However, as a branch of the study tour field, parent-child study tours not only face challenges common to the industry but also possess their own unique complexities. On the one hand, the role of parents in parent-child study tours is particularly special, as they are not only responsible for the study fees but also directly participate in the study activities. On the other hand, considering the dual subjectivity of parent-child study tours, study institutions need to accurately understand the different needs of parents and children and meticulously plan highly personalized service programs.

In recent years, many scholars have conducted in-depth research on various complex issues related to study tours. For example, Peng and Shi (2023) used structural equation modeling to explore the influencing factors of parents' willingness to purchase study tours under the context of the double-reducing policy. Xiang and Li (2023) drew on the theory of life education in their study and explored the educational function of study tours from a theoretical perspective. Chen et al. (2022) employed cloud modeling evaluation technology in their study and constructed a comprehensive assessment index system for the service capacity of study tours.

There are also many scholars focusing on the research of parent-child tourism, for example, Liu and Wang (2021) analyzed the case of Lingshui Village and proposed that the core attraction of parent-child tourism products is the educational function. Wang et al. (2020) used the children's drawing projection test to explore the influencing factors of children's experience in the context of parent-child tourism.Despite the fact that research on study tour has become a popular phenomenon, most of the studies have neglected the special role of parents and their influence, or they have directly regarded parents and children as a single whole, failing to take into account the differences in needs between the two.There is still a large research gap to be filled in Parent-Child study tour, which is a special education form that combines research-based learning and family interaction, including the neglect of the role of parents and the consideration of the differentiated needs of both parents and children.

2.2. The Power of Parent-Child Interaction: The Advantages of Dual Subjectivity in Parent-Child Study Tour

Parent-child interaction refers to the way and process of interaction between parents and children (Harel-Gadassi et al., 2020), which has been thoroughly explored by many scholars in the past. The study by Bu Lin and Li (2024) concluded that early parent-child interaction plays a major role in establishing children's patterns of emotional socialization and behavioral socialization. Hou and Lei (2019) categorized parent-child interactions into four basic types and emphasized the significance of efficient parent-child interactions in improving children's mental health. A specialized study by Wu et al. (2012) on the types of parent-child interactions in the context of science and technology venues reveals that parent-child interactions based on collaborative exploration have a significant role in enhancing children's learning outcomes.

Previous studies have highlighted the profound impact of parent-child interaction in children's social development, mental health, and learning effectiveness. Parent-child study activities serve as an effective means of fostering this interaction. The distinctiveness of parent-child study tours lies in their dual-subject nature, emphasizing active interaction and joint learning experiences between parents and children. This sets parent-child study tours apart from other types of study tours. However, current academic research on the dual-subjective characteristics of parent-child study tours remains limited, and the design of relevant study programs has yet to fully leverage the advantages of this dual-subject interaction. Therefore, there is an urgent need to systematically explore and harness the benefits of parent-child study tours from a dual-subject perspective, in order to enhance the synergistic learning effects in the research and study process effectively.

2.3.Theoretical interventions in service design: an all-encompassing perspective and response to the different needs of two subjects

As early as 1984, Shostack (1984) pioneered the idea of integrating the concept of "design" into the field of "service" with the aim of enhancing the user experience. Since then, the idea of service design has developed rapidly in the international arena. In recent years, the service design field in China has developed rapidly and accumulated rich research results. Hu and Li (2019) define service design as a systematic and innovative design of service provision,

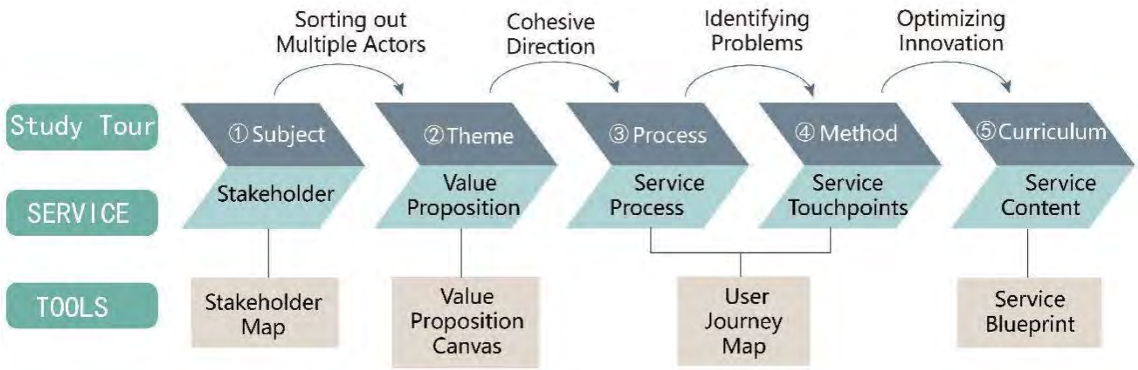
processes and service touchpoints through the comprehensive integration of people, places, products, information and other elements, led by the user perspective and collaborating with multiple participants for joint innovation. Ding and Du (2020) explains the core principles of service design and puts forward the design concepts of "system-centered" and "stakeholder-centered". These research results have strongly promoted the progress of service design in China, and are of great significance in solving practical conflicts and meeting personalized needs.
Service design is expected to fulfill its unique advantages in the field of parent-child study tour. On the one hand, service design holds a macro and panoramic perspective, breaking through the limitations of previous studies that only focus on the children themselves and ignore the role of parents. The service design is able to deeply understand the double-body nature of parent-child study tour and recognize the importance of parents in the research, who are not only the bearers of the cost of the research, but also the guides in the process of children's growth. On the other hand, the core principle of service design is centered on user experience, which can comprehensively capture the diversified needs of parents and children in the study process, including knowledge acquisition, emotional communication and other goals. On this basis, the service design strives to realize a positive response to these needs, aiming to create a study experience that truly meets the expectations of both parents and children.

2.4. Theoretical Framework of the Differentiation Model for Parent-Child Study Tour Services

How to differentiate study tour curriculum design? Ding and Ren (2023) has constructed a "Systematic Differentiation Design Model for Study Tour Services". He extracted four key elements: study theme, study program, study process, and study mode, and mapped them to the service design field. However, the model has an obvious drawback: it assumes that the participants of the study tour are all undifferentiated groups of children, ignores the participation of parents in the study tour , and focuses only on the differences in the course content without considering the differences among the participants and their needs for study tour services, which indicates that the model does not analyze the stakeholders of study tour deeply enough.

Ansoff was one of the first economists to formally use the term "stakeholder" to advocate that companies must balance the interests of a wide range of stakeholders, which may include management, employees, suppliers, and customers, when setting goals (Jia & Chen, 2002). In the specific context of research and study tour, stakeholders can be defined as those groups or individuals who can influence, or can be influenced by, the implementation of research and study travel(Liu & Zhou, 2020). Therefore, this paper introduces the concept of "stakeholders" on the basis of the above model. By doing so, the role of parents in study tour is more fully studied, with the goal of meeting the demand for differentiated study tour services, and then a set of parent-child study tour service differentiation model is constructed, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Differentiation Model for Parent-Child Study Tour Services



The Differentiation Model for Parent-Child Study Tour Services is divided into five parts, each of which is linked to a specific field of study, a scope of services, and the tools used.The study tour field covers five main aspects: subject, theme, process, method, and curriculum.At the service level, these five dimensions are mapped as stakeholders, value proposition, service process, service touchpoints, and service content, each of which has a corresponding visualization tool. In the following section, we will discuss the effectiveness of the model in practical application through specific case studies. To gather comprehensive and firsthand information for the subsequent service design analysis of parent-child study tours, this study utilized participant observation and questionnaire surveys while actively participating as staff members. This approach allows for a holistic understanding of the study tours from an internal perspective, providing valuable insights for the service design methodology.

3. Description of the case

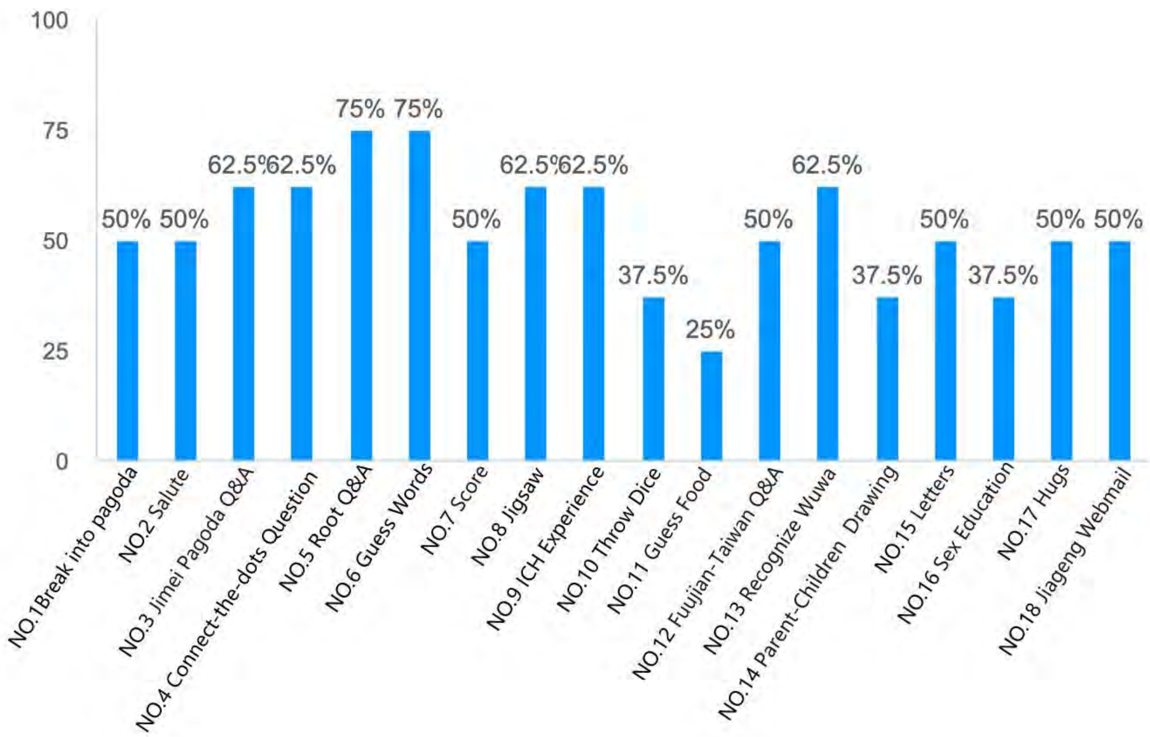
Jimei Tower, a landmark in Xiamen's Jimei District, collaborated with college and university students to launch a parent-child study program called "Jimei Tower Building Story". The initial trial took place on March 16, 2024, with the participation of nine parent-child families. The program aimed to impart historical wisdom and nurture children's interest in traditional culture through hands-on experiences. For this activity, we utilized participatory observation and questionnaire research methods, immersing ourselves as staff members to gain firsthand insights into the program's operation. The test also revealed some problems in the "Jimei Tower Building Story", and the following are the specific cruxes found in this fieldwork.

3.1. Weakness of the research theme

In this study activity, a series of guided tours and games aimed at passing on the spirit of Jiageng and the culture of southern Fujian were arranged. However, through observation, it was found that the children's absorption of the content was not ideal, and after about 15 minutes of the explanation, the concentration of the children's group dropped significantly, while the parents' group continued to maintain a high level of attention. This phenomenon is especially obvious in the subsequent knowledge quiz, and many interactive questions are solved by parents instead of children, so there is a certain obstacle to the transmission of the study theme to the children's end.

In the questionnaires collected from parents, the responses to the question, "In which game levels of this event do you think the gains were most significant?" are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Significant Gains - Statistical Results



The data show that parents gained significant cognitive benefits from participating in the traditional culture levels, such as Trace the Roots and Guess the Words in Minnan Language.This result suggests that parents' attention to traditional culture education and strengthening the excavation and transmission of research themes are important for enhancing the learning effectiveness of parent-child study tour.

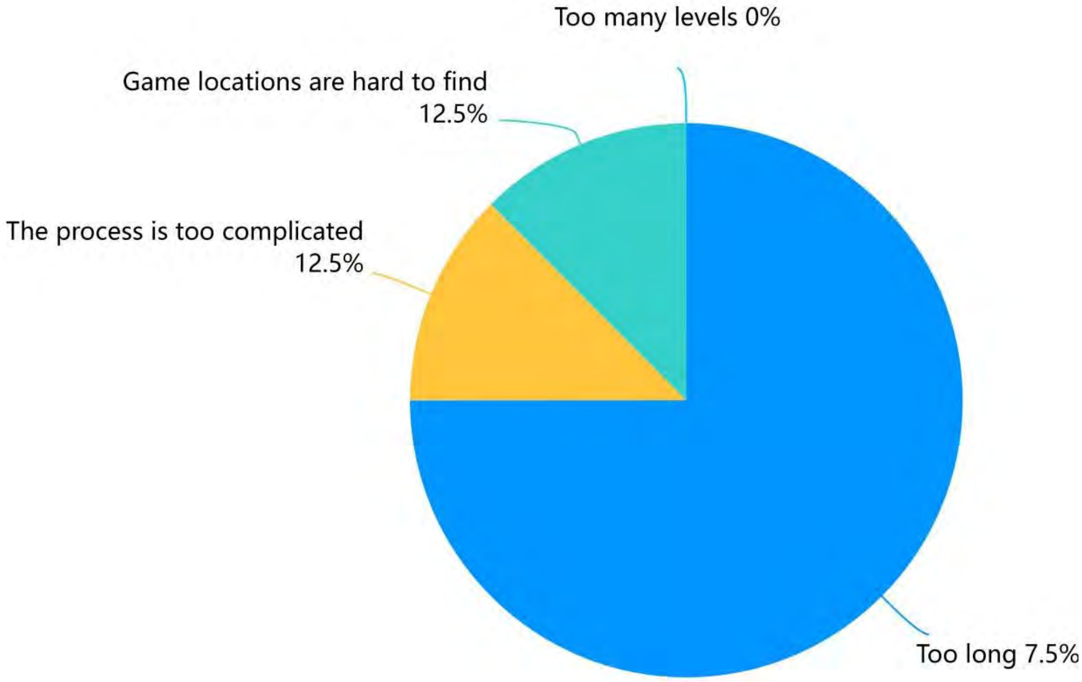
In addition, the game levels of each layer of the Jimei Tower are carefully set up with corresponding themes, and the core theme of the layer should be elaborated to the participants first, and then the participants should be made to deeply understand this theme in practice through the form of game breakthroughs. However, in the execution process, the articulation of the links was not smooth enough, which not only caused the compactness of the activity time, but also weakened the presentation of the theme of the study to a certain extent, so that the expected learning effect was not fully demonstrated.

3.2. Poor linkage

During the morning free-for-all session, a number of emergencies and organizational coordination problems arose. Inadequate communication between departments resulted in the previous levels taking longer than expected, leading to time constraints in the subsequent sessions. The guide failed to explain the exact location of each level, which directly caused the participants to lose their way during the subsequent free activities. Although the location of each level was indicated in the activity manual, the lack of time for parents to read the manual and the lack of necessary signage made it difficult for several pairs of parents and children to participate in the program.

This issue is also reflected in the questionnaire, in response to the question "What imperfections, inconveniences, and dissatisfactions did you find during your visit?" The results of the responses are shown in Figure 3. A considerable portion of parents expressed their dissatisfaction with the length of the game, and optimizing the flow of the activity and managing the time properly are crucial to improving the experience of parent-child study tour.

Figure 3 Dissatisfaction - Statistical results



The core problem of the long duration of the study activities, coupled with the lack of smooth connection between the various links, fundamentally reflects the significant shortcomings at the level of service provision. The root of the problem is that the training of staff in the early stages of the program was not done properly, and the allocation of responsibilities was not properly planned, which led to a series of unexpected problems in the implementation of the program.

3.3. Inadequate service provision

The complexities encountered in the execution phase of this parent-child study tour activity were largely due to the fact that there were multiple service providers for this activity, including the Jimei Tower Humanities Museum, the Letter Pigeon Study Team, and the Yoga Training Organization. Due to the different backgrounds of the parties, their understanding of the rules and procedures of the activity varied greatly, which undoubtedly exacerbated the difficulty of on-site management, leading to numerous problems during the execution of the levels and failing to fully utilize the educational significance of the game levels.

To sum up, this parent-child study tour has revealed a series of problems that need to be solved, such as the weakening of the study theme, the inadequacy of the communication and collaboration mechanism among multiple service providers, and the many imperfections in the organizational process of the study activities.In order to deal with these problems, the subsequent chapters will use the relevant theoretical tools of service design to conduct a comprehensive and in-depth exploration of the parent-child study tour and improve the quality of the whole parent-child study tour.

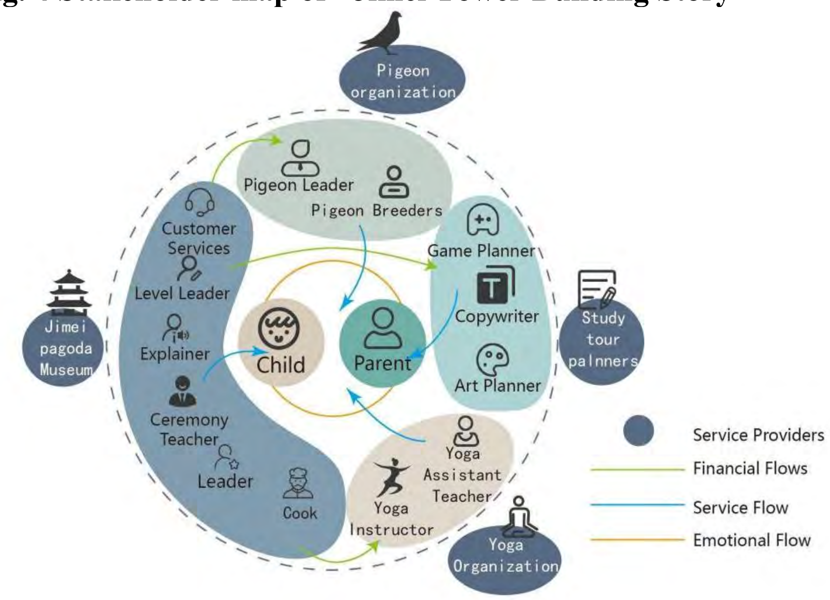
4. Results

In response to the problems highlighted in the above case, this chapter adopts the Differentiation Model for Parent-Child Study Tour Services to seek solutions.By drawing the stakeholder structure map, value proposition canvas, user journey map, and service process design of Jimei Tower's parent-child study tour, the associations between the participants, their value needs, and their experiences during the whole service process are comprehensively sorted out and analyzed in depth, thus verifying the practical application value of this theoretical framework.

4.1. Sorting out stakeholders: stakeholder mapping

Stakeholder mapping can help identify and understand the various stakeholders associated with a particular project or organization and analyze their needs, power, interests and relationships. The stakeholder map based on the actual situation of "Jimei Tower Building Story" is shown in Figure 4.

Fig. 4 Stakeholder map of "Jimei Tower Building Story"



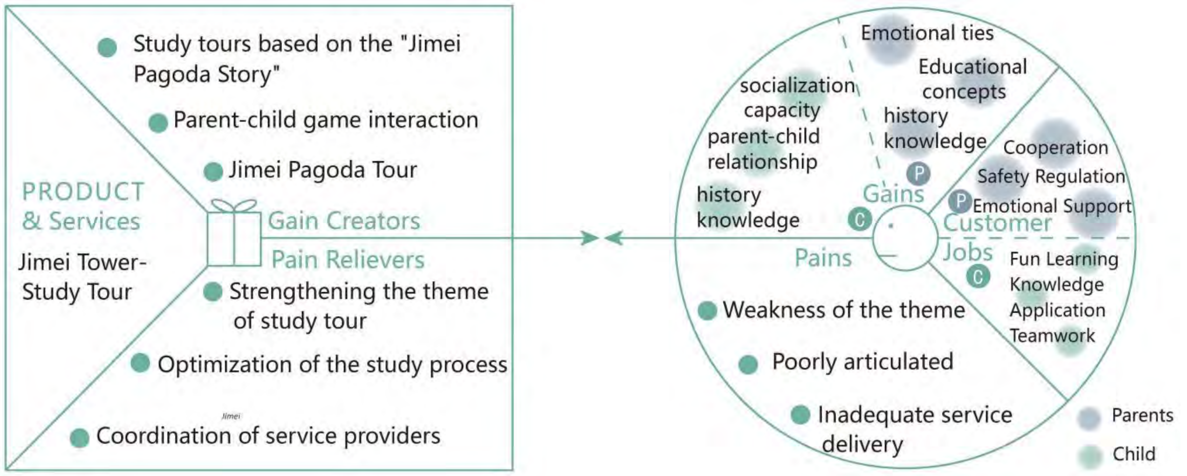
Among the stakeholders shown in the above figure, parents and children are at the core, and there are four main service providers around their needs - Jimei Tower Humanities Pavilion, Letter Pigeon Study Organization, Yoga Organization and Study Planning. Among them, Jimei Tower Humanities Museum as the main service provider, its subordinate customer service staff, the person in charge of the barrier and other staff directly involved in all aspects of parent-child study. Pigeon study institutions, yoga organizations and study planning parties from the curriculum design and value-added services to meet the needs of both parents and children in the study process.

In addition, the above figure shows the flow of emotions, funds and services among different subjects, and it can be found that there is only emotional flow between parents and children, which suggests that planners should pay attention to the role of parents when designing the curriculum, and make full use of and strengthen the positive effects of parent-child interaction. For example, emotional communication challenges or tasks can be integrated into specific sessions, aiming to stimulate and deepen parent-child communication between parents and children through the design of such levels, so as to enhance emotional cohesion and educational effects.

4.2. Cohesive research themes: the value proposition canvas

A value proposition is a product or service that creates value for a company's customers, and the core tool for its design is the value proposition canvas(Yu et al., 2024) . The value proposition canvas for "Jimei Tower Building Story" is shown in Figure 5.

Fig. 5 Value proposition canvas of "Jimei Tower Building Story"



This value proposition canvas is divided into two parts, providing an in-depth analysis of the positioning of the study tour product through the value view on the left, while systematically sorting out the needs and expectations of the target users with the help of the customer profile map on the right.

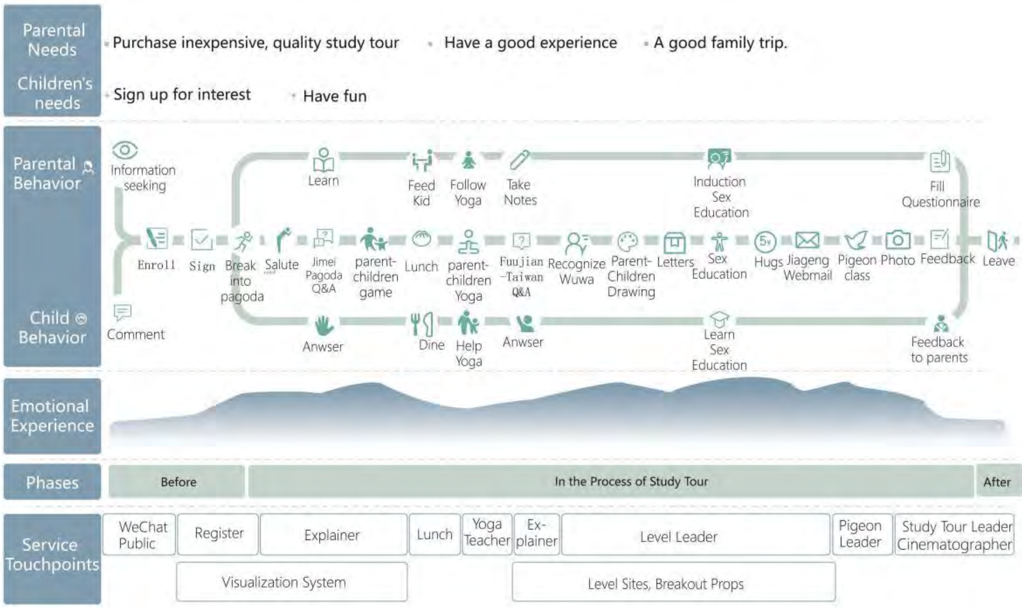
Especially in the figure on the right, the respective goals of parents and children are clearly shown. Parents play the roles of companions and collaborators in the study activities, paying attention to the safety and security of their children and devoting themselves to them emotionally. The children, on the other hand, want to have a fun learning experience and improve their social skills and teamwork, which are also dependent on the emotional care and support of their parents.

With the help of tools such as the value proposition canvas, the planning team can more accurately grasp the unique and individualized needs and expectations of parents and children, so as to distill value propositions with distinctive market appeal and create more attractive products to enhance market competitiveness and brand influence.

4.3. Reviewing the research process: user journey mapping

At the end of the beta version of the "Jimei Tower Building Story", the study planning team organized a review seminar. However, during the review process, it was found that despite the in-depth discussion of individual aspects, a macro grasp of the project's overall situation was still lacking.With the help of the user journey map (Wei & Wu, 2019), a visualization tool, can intuitively see the different needs and behaviors of parents and children, sort out the service touchpoints of"Jimei Tower Building Story", and ensure that each link can accurately match the user's needs.As shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6 User Journey Map of "Jimei Tower Building Story"



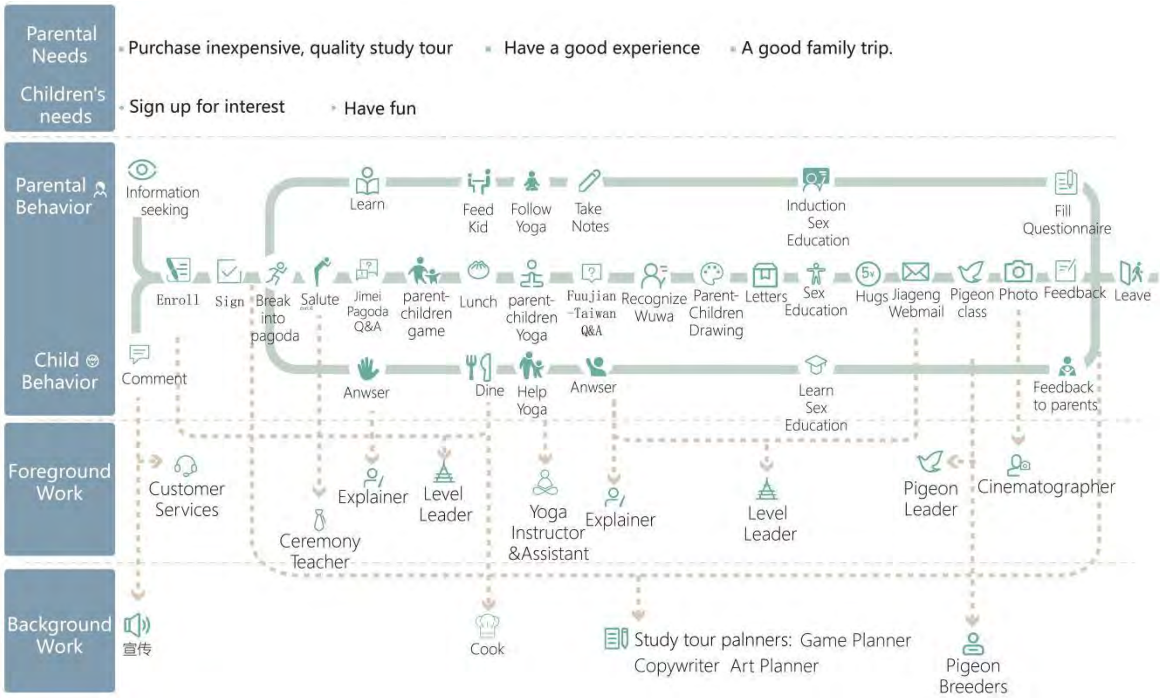
Through the User Journey Map of "Jimei Tower Building Story", it is possible to comprehensively display the changing needs, behavioral dynamics and emotional responses of parents and children at different stages. Especially in the design of interactive sessions, the role of parents is particularly critical, as they are both guides and companions, and their needs include not only deep participation in the content of the activities and effective supervision of children's safety, but also sharing high-quality parent-child time with children.

Taking the free breakthrough session as an example, parents and children encountered the problem of difficulty in locating the levels, which highlighted the fact that the guidance system directly determines the smoothness of the session. With this in mind, the planning team decided to focus on optimizing and upgrading this service touchpoint, including improving the visibility of the level markers and the clarity of the paths, with the aim of enabling parents to easily locate the tasks and assisting children to progress smoothly through the levels. Such improvements will help to increase the efficiency of parent-child interactions during activities and further enhance the user satisfaction of the whole program.

4.4. Innovative study tour services: a blueprint for services

Service blueprint, as a unique visualization tool for service design, can accurately show the whole picture of the service system (Wei & Wu, 2019) in order to find out the problems in the existing service supply and then optimize the service supply. The blueprint of "Jimei Tower Building Story" service is shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7 Blueprint of "Jimei Tower Building Story" Service



The service blueprint, as a holistic planning and design tool, depicts the evolution of parents' and children's behaviors and service acceptance in all aspects of the activity. With the help of the service blueprint, the planning team is able to understand the multiple roles of parents in the parent-child study process, not only as the children's guides and safety guarantors, but also as important partners in the exploration of knowledge and sharing of joy. In addition, the service blueprint can also accurately capture the different service needs of parents and children at each stage of the activity, and accordingly, the current service provision system has been rigorously scrutinized and targeted improvement.

For example, some participants failed to follow the established route to complete the challenge. In order to ensure the smoothness of the activity, the planning team should make timely adjustments, such as strengthening the training of front-office staff to ensure that the instructors can provide accurate paths to the tower, and ensure that this key information can be accurately conveyed to the parent group, so that parents can play an active supporting role in practice. At the same time, the backstage team also needed to optimize the layout of the overall guidance system to ensure that each participant could easily identify the correct path of action, thus ensuring the smooth operation of the tower-rushing session as well as the entire event.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study has focused on utilizing service design theory to deepen the role of parents in parent-child study tour, maximize the impact of parent-child interaction, and systematically address the individualized differences in the needs of parents and children. Through a comprehensive literature review, a set of differentiated models for parent-child study tour services has been established. Using the "Jimei Tower Building Story" as a case study, it has revealed weak thematic coherence, poor linkage, and imperfect service provision in the existing parent-child study tour. To address these issues, a series of service design tools have been applied, including the construction of a stakeholder map to identify the distinct roles of parents and children in parent-child study activities and their interconnections, the creation of a value proposition canvas to clarify the expectations of each subject, the development of a user journey map to reveal the evolving demands of parents and children throughout the study process, and the evaluation of existing service provision through the service blueprint to optimize services.

In summary, the use of service design theory to guide the curriculum design and implementation of parent-child study tour not only highlights the positive role of parents but also considers the individualized needs of both subjects. This approach ensures that parent-child study tour not only achieve educational goals but also enhance parent-child emotional communication. Moreover, service design has the potential to drive the reform of parent-child study programs and find application in the broader study tour industry. By continuously incorporating the concept of service design into iterative updates of the study tour service system, a more efficient and market-adapted parent-child study tour system can be developed, promoting the overall quality of the study and learning industry and expanding the scope of the parent-child study tour industry.

Funding
This paper was supported by the following projects: the Fujian Social Science Fund Project "Research on the Mechanism of Rural Revitalization from the Perspective of Excellent Cultural Inheritance and Development of Hakka Traditional Villages in Western Fujian" [No. FJ2024B172], and the Graduate Science and Technology Innovation Program of Xiamen University of Technology "Research on the Design of Rural Study Tour Service Based on the Background of Rural Revitalization" [No. YKJCX2023249].

REFERENCES

Bu, L., & Li, J. (2024). Early parent-child interaction and children's social development: Evidence based on the application of an interaction behavior coding scheme. Psychological Development and Education, (06), 894-904. doi:10.16187/j.cnki.issn1001-4918.2024.06.14.

Chen, D., Yang, D., & Xie, H. (2022). Construction and empirical research on evaluation system of study tour service capability. World Regional Studies, (02), 428-439.

Ding, X., & Du, J. (2020). Basic principles of service design: From user-centered to stakeholder-centered. Decoration, (03), 62-65. doi:10.16272/j.cnki.cn11-1392/j.2020.03.019.

Ding, X., & Ren, Y. (2023). Research on service design of primary and secondary school research-based learning based on systematic differences. Packaging Engineering, (16), 154-167. doi:10.19554/j.cnki.1001-3563.2023.16.016.

Harel-Gadassi, A., Friedlander, E., Yaari, M., Bar-Oz, B., Eventov-Friedman, S., Mankuta, D., & Yirmiya, N. (2020). Do developmental and temperamental characteristics mediate the association between preterm birth and the quality of mother-child interaction?. Infant Behavior and Development, 58, 101421.

Hou, L., & Lei, M. (2019). Social capital and educational attainment: A latent class analysis based on parent-child interaction patterns. Journal of Xi'an Jiaotong University(Social Sciences), (04), 114-125. doi:10.15896/j.xjtuskxb.201904014.

Hu, F., & Li, W. (2019). Defining "service design". Packaging Engineering, (10), 37-51. doi:10.19554/j.cnki.1001-3563.2019.10.008.

Jia, S., & Chen, H. (2002). A review of methods for defining stakeholders. Foreign Economics & Management, (05), 13-18. doi:10.16538/j.cnki.fem.2002.05.003.

Liu, J., & Zhou, T. X. (2020). Intrinsic tensions in the development of study tour industry from stakeholder's perspective. Tourism Science, (04), 56-69. doi:10.16323/j.cnki.lykx.2020.04.005.

Liu, H., & Wang, C. (2021). Realization path of rural parent-child tourism product development: An analysis based on the integration of culture and tourism. Social Scientist, (08), 75-80.

Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China and 11 other departments. (2016). Opinions on Promoting Study Tour for Primary and Secondary School Students. Retrieved from http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_xwfb/gzdt_gzdt/s5987/201612/t20161219_292360.html?eqid=f0c48df80000b8e300000003648688a1

Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. (2015). Guidelines on Strengthening Family Education Work. Retrieved from http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A06/s7053/201510/t20151020_214366.html

Peng, R., & Shi, S. (2023). Factors influencing parents' willingness to purchase study tour under the drive of double reduction policy. Jingchu Academic Journal, (05), 62-70+89. doi:10.14151/j.cnki.jcxk.2023.05.018.

Shostack, G. L. (1984). Designing services that deliver. Harvard Business Review, 62, 133-139.

Wang, F., Wu, B., & Luo, R. (2017). Research on parent-child tourism experience and its enhancement strategies: Based on the perspective of children's drawing projection. Journal of Huaqiao University(Philosophy & Social Sciences), (05), 35-50. doi:10.16067/j.cnki.35-1049/c.2017.05.004.

Wu, X., Li, C., Zeng, Z., & Ji, J. (2012). Types of parent-child interaction in science and technology venues and their effects on learning outcomes. Educational Research and Experiment, (06), 88-92.

Wei, W., & Wu, C. (2019). Comparative study of user experience maps, customer journey maps, and service blueprints. Packaging Engineering, 40(14), 217-223.

doi:10.19554/j.cnki.1001-3563.2019.14.036.

Xiang, B. & Li, J. Chiu. (2023). Educational functions of study tour from the perspective of life education theory: connotation, practical problems and optimization. Teaching Reference of Middle School Geography (29), 68-72.

YU, S., WANG, Y., & WU, H. (2017). Causes and Countermeasures of Research and Study Travel Problems in China. Teaching & Administration, (19), 11-13.

Yu, L., Li, Y., & Chen, J. (2024). Insight and decoding of customer value proposition. Enterprise Management, (03), 90-93.

Exploring Confucian Cultural Values and Customer Experiences in Luxury Hotels: Moments of Magic and Mistrial

Liang, Yiqiong
Lee Shau Kee School of Business and Administration
Hong Kong Metropolitan University

Lee, Yuk Kwai
Lee Shau Kee School of Business and Administration
Hong Kong Metropolitan University

Chon, Kaye
School of Hotel and Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Abstract:

The aim of this study is to investigate the influence of Confucian cultural values on touchpoints within the luxury hospitality industry. By examining the perceptions and experiences of Confucian customers in three iconic luxury hotels in Hong Kong, this study identifies touchpoints generating moments of trial and truth. The findings contribute to theoretical knowledge in hospitality management and offer practical recommendations to enhance service design for this customer segment, aligning experiences with Confucian values.

Keywords: Moment of trial and truth, Touchpoints, Confucian values, Luxury hotels

1. Introduction

The "Asian Wave" in international tourism has resulted in a significant surge in tourism demand and infrastructure development in rapidly growing Asian economies. With the Asia Pacific luxury travel market projected to reach $447,151.1 million by 2028 (ResearchDive, 2021), it is crucial to understand the influence of Confucian cultural values on Asian hospitality and tourism consumers. Confucian values, distinct from Western countries, play a significant role in shaping consumption values, service provision, travel motivations, and luxury consumption motivations (Chon, 2019; Fu et al., 2017; Le, Quy, & Quy, 2021; Zhang & Tse, 2018).

While Asian luxury brands are renowned for their high-end service standards, there is a research gap in understanding the impact of Confucian cultural values on touchpoints within the luxury hospitality industry. Customer touchpoints play a critical role in delivering exceptional service experiences in this industry (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). However, the specific influence of Confucian cultural values on touchpoints remains underexplored within the context of travel and tourism.

This study aims to address this research gap by investigating how touchpoints within Asian luxury hospitality influence the perceptions and experiences of Confucian customers. By identifying touchpoints that generate moments of trial and truth from a Confucian cultural perspective, the study seeks to provide insights into the impact of these touchpoints on customer experiences. The findings will contribute to advancing theoretical understanding in hospitality management and provide practical recommendations for luxury hotels to enhance their service design and cater to the needs and preferences of Confucian customers.

To achieve these research objectives, three iconic luxury hotels in Hong Kong have been selected as case studies, representing a significant Asian market. The study involves the participation of eight Asian doctoral students who will stay at these hotels and engage in various activities. Data will be collected through observations and semi-structured interviews, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of touchpoints and their influence on the experiences of Confucian customers.

In conclusion, this study aims to bridge the research gap in understanding the influence of Confucian cultural values on touchpoints within the luxury hospitality industry. The findings will contribute to both theoretical knowledge and practical insights, empowering luxury hotels to deliver exceptional experiences aligned with Confucian values and enhance customer satisfaction, loyalty, and competitive advantage.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Confucian Values

Confucianism, a religious philosophy with a history of 2,500 years, emphasizes inner virtue, morality, and respect for community values (National Geographic, 2021). Confucianism has influenced various regions, including China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea, Vietnam, Japan, and Mongolia (Huang & Chang, 2017). In the hospitality industry, Confucianism significantly influences Asian people's mentality, moral doctrine, behavior, and social norms (Chon & Hao, 2020). Cultural distance, including Confucianism, impacts the perception of value and purchase intentions regarding luxury experiences (Tsuchiya, Fu, & Huang, 2021). Confucian customers' values influence their need for luxury service, satisfaction, and positive word of mouth (Le, Quy, & Quy, 2021). The LUXSPV scale measures luxury hospitality consumption in the Confucian culture, encompassing personal service life, self-enhancement, social recognition, and social integration (Le & Quy, 2021). Confucian customers seek luxury experiences to enhance their personal worth and self-esteem (Le & Quy, 2020). They also use luxury hospitality products to build relationships with individuals of similar social status and demonstrate commitment to loved ones (Le & Quy, 2020). Confucian culture influences service expectations, including attitude, communication, etiquette, moral order, and social norms (Chon & Hao, 2020). Future studies should explore Confucian customers' values, culture, aesthetics, and expectations (Chon & Hao, 2020; Tsuchiya, Fu, & Huang, 2021).

2.2. Asian Luxury Hospitality

Asian hospitality incorporates cultural characteristics such as "Wai" in Thai, "Omotenashi" in Japanese, and "Li" in Confucianism (Baldwin, 2017; Chin et al., 2016; Chon & Hao, 2020; Fakfare et al., 2015). Confucianism's Li includes etiquette, ritual, reciprocity, moral order, and social norms, which are evident in Asian hospitality practices (Chon & Hao, 2020). Asian luxury hotels, such as Shangri-La, Mandarin Oriental, Banyan Tree, and Peninsula, demonstrate cultural-based branding, attention to detail, and exceptional service (Fakfare et al., 2019; Travel+Leisure, 2021). These brands offer a unique blend of Eastern and Western hospitality, reflecting Asian luxury experiences (Mandarin Oriental, 2021; The Peninsula, 2021).

2.3. Customer Journey and Touchpoints

Customer experience is a multidimensional construct that encompasses cognitive, emotional, behavioral, sensorial, and social responses throughout the entire purchase journey (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Positive customer experiences yield various benefits, such as improved financial performance, higher conversions, and increased customer loyalty (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Understanding customer expectations and perceptions at different touchpoints is crucial for organizations to improve customer experiences. Customer journey mapping involves visually depicting and documenting a customer's journey to enhance the customer experience (Rosenbaum et al., 2017). The application of touchpoints and customer journey maps differentiates them from other service design tools like service blueprinting, which primarily focuses on the company's internal strategies (Rosenbaum et al., 2017).

2.4. Moments of Truth in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry

In the hospitality and tourism industry, Moments of Truth (M.O.T.) are seen as crucial opportunities to create lasting impressions on customers (Fobes, 2016). Research has focused on labor emotion, interpersonal treatment, and customer service behavior, while Disneyland has developed an M.O.T. model with numerous touchpoints to optimize guest experiences (Groth et al., 2019; Paik, 2010). M.O.T. encompasses various factors, including staff, environment, service design, and tangible features, to create memorable hotel stays (Ariffin et al., 2015). Positive moments of magic exceed expectations, while negative moments of mistrial can lead to negative word of mouth (Interaction Design of Foundation, 2020). Understanding the customer journey and effectively leveraging M.O.T. is crucial for enhancing the overall customer experience.

In conclusion, the literature review highlights the significance of Confucian values in shaping customer behavior and expectations in the luxury hospitality industry. It emphasizes the cultural influences in Asian luxury hospitality, the importance of customer journey and touchpoints, and the role of Moments of Truth in creating memorable experiences. These themes lay the foundation for the development of the research question and provide a framework for examining the influence of touchpoints on the perceptions and experiences of Confucian customers in luxury hotels in Hong Kong.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Methods

This study employs an ethnographic approach to gain a deep understanding of Confucian customers' perceptions and reactions in Asian luxury hotels. Ethnography allows for the observation and analysis of interactions between customers, hotel staff, and the physical environment, providing rich qualitative data on the subject. This approach was chosen to capture the nuanced experiences and cultural influences present in the context of Asian luxury hospitality.

3.2. Data Collection

The author, along with a group of seven doctoral students with practical experience in hotel management, stayed at three top Asian luxury hotels in Hong Kong. The selection of Hong Kong as the research setting was based on its reputation for high-quality service standards and its strong influence of Confucian culture. The hotels chosen for the study, namely "Master Hotel," "Gentleman Hotel," and "Miss Hotel," were considered iconic establishments reflecting Confucian cultural elements in their products, services, and hospitality.

During the hotel stay, a combination of methods was employed to document the experiences. These included note-taking, photography, and reflections by both the author and the group members. The group members represented diverse nationalities and had received prior lectures on Asian hospitality and Confucian culture, equipping them with relevant knowledge and perspectives for the study.

To gather data, two primary methods were used: real-time observation and semi-structured interviews. Real-time observation involved the author paying close attention to the group members' expressions, comments, and interactions with hotel staff and the physical environment. This allowed for the capture of their thoughts and feelings in the moment. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in three sessions, with each session lasting between 10 to 30 minutes. These interviews aimed to further explore and elucidate the dimensions and attributes of the group members' experiences.

3.3. Measurement
Two broad interview questions were designed to gather comprehensive information from the group members. The first question focused on identifying the most memorable touchpoints during their hotel stays. This question aimed to uncover impactful aspects of the hotel experience, both positive and negative. The second question delved into the interviewees' emotional states during those moments, aiming to understand how Moments of Truth (M.O.T.) influenced their perceptions and reactions towards the hotel brands. These questions aimed to gain insights into specific touchpoints and their emotional impact on the group members' overall perception and behavior towards the hotels.

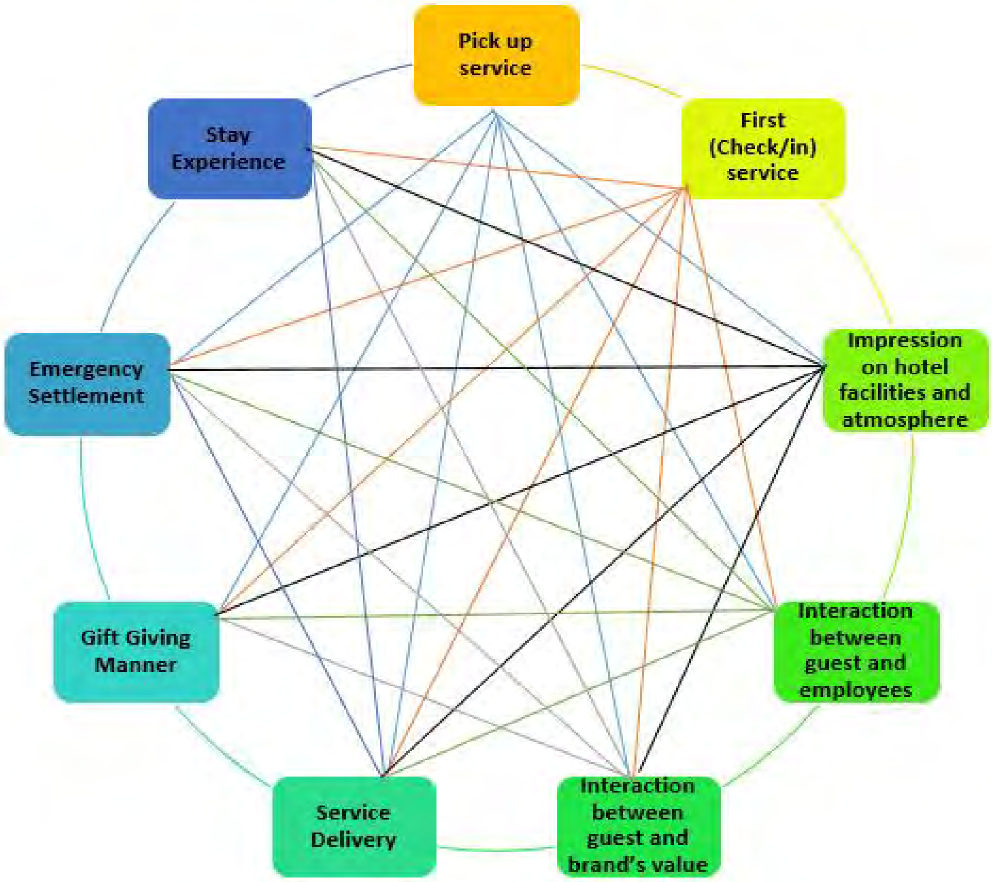
3.4. Data Analysis
The collected data from meetings, comments, interviews, and observations were subjected to a rigorous coding and categorization process. The data were analyzed thematically by comparing and contrasting the content, allowing for the identification of patterns, commonalities, and variations. Sub-categories were created within the identified themes to further explore and classify the data. Significant statements that captured the essence of each theme were selected to support the findings.

3.5. Analytical Methods
The findings were generated based on the analysis of the coded and categorized content. The analysis provided insights into the impact of Confucian culture on customer perceptions and reactions in Asian luxury hotels. The qualitative nature of the research allowed for a deep exploration of the subject, highlighting the intricate dynamics between culture, customer experiences, and hospitality in the context of Confucianism.

4. Results

The participants in the study provided feedback on various touchpoints during their luxury hotel experiences, including pick-up service, first service (check-in), impression of hotel facilities and atmosphere, service delivery, interaction between guests and employees, interaction between guest and brand's value, gift-giving manners, emergency settlement, and stay experience. These touchpoints were categorized into moments of magic and moments of mistrial, which evoked different emotional states among the participants. Table 1 presents examples of narratives for each dimension, while Figure 1 depicts a thematic map of the results.

Figure 1. Nine Touchpoints in Customer Journey



4.1. Pick-up Service

The pick-up service, as the initial touchpoint of the hospitality journey, left a lasting impression on the guests. Respondent A praised the management team of Master Hotel for picking up the group from the coach area, emphasizing that the hotel's hospitality extended beyond its premises. This personalized approach made her feel cared for and welcomed, even though it was her first interaction with Master Hotel. This customer-centric treatment fostered a sense of being valued and expected. In contrast, Respondent B had a different experience as the coach dropped the group off at the hotel's side door instead of the main entrance. This departure from Chinese etiquette for treating honourable guests shattered his first impression of the brand.

4.2. First (check-in) service
Master Hotel excelled in this aspect by providing a comfortable meeting room for group check-in, accompanied by personalized butler service. The quality of staff and their interactions with guests contributed to a pleasant check-in process. Respondents A and D described this moment as being treated like VIPs, feeling welcomed, and leaving an impressive impact. However, the check-in experience at Miss Hotel lacked any Confucian culture of hospitality. Guests were asked to stand to fill in the check-in form in the meeting room foyer, despite the meeting room is ready for the next day's group meeting. The staff lacked smiles and appeared indifferent, which created a sense of detachment among Respondents A, B, C, and D. Respondent B even remarked that the service lacked genuine hospitality.

4.3. Impression of hotel facilities and atmosphere
The impression of hotel facilities and atmosphere directly reflects the brand image, content, and value. Confucian guests appreciate untouched nature, as it aligns with their philosophy of balancing humans and nature. Female respondents expressed excitement over the fragrant flowers during their inspection of Master Hotel. Male respondents, such as Respondents B and C, highlighted the hotel's 100-year history and described its design as "classical," "magnificent," and "rich in historical culture." The combination of a long-standing history and splendid decor made these Confucian guests feel a sense of preciousness and created unforgettable memories. Respondent D fully immersed in the hotel's story, remarking that "the atmosphere created by the hotel seems unchanged for 100 years." Respondent A shared an impressive picture of the grand and awe-inspiring lounge on WeChat Moments, appreciating the grandeur of the design, which, despite being Western-style, appealed to the aesthetic preferences of Chinese customers.

On the trip to Gentleman Hotel the following day, a different interpretation of Asian themes emerged. The hotel had a strong pungent perfume scent that made Respondent A uncomfortable. Additionally, the overall lighting was relatively dim, creating a sense of mystery. The wallpaper featured "Asian elements" with depictions of Asian people, jungles, and animals. However, these depictions had a Westernized look, and the body language appeared unnatural. Many of these Western-styled Asian paintings throughout the hotel catered to Westerners' imaginations of Eastern cultures. Respondents A, C, E, and F, who were Asian themselves, shared a similar sentiment of not resonating with this "fake cultural product."

4.4. Service delivery
Service delivery at Master Hotel received compliments, with all the guests agreeing that the staff were customer-oriented and maintained appropriate service boundaries. Respondent B even felt like he was in a scenario from a Hong Kong movie and believed it was worth bringing his family to experience the unique hospitality infused with Hong Kong culture. In contrast, the service at Miss Hotel was perceived as unable to understand guests' needs based on their expressions. The delivery of service was not seamless, particularly during staff handovers. Respondent A recalled an instance where a warm welcoming staff member escorted them to the meeting room but did not introduce the colleague who handled the check-in process. The check-in staff member appeared cold and unengaging. A similar scenario occurred at Gentleman Hotel, where the staff exhibited inconsistent service attitudes

towards different customers and situations. Respondents B and C noted differences in how Westerners and Asians were treated, and all the respondents observed changes in staff behavior when their boss was present. These inconsistencies left the guests disappointed, as the service did not reflect any Asian philosophy, despite the hotels being Asian brands.

4.5. Interaction between guests and employees

The interaction between guests and employees varied across the hotels. Respondent D felt a sense of stability and trust from the service staff at Master Hotel, noting their aligned actions and manners that made guests feel comfortable. However, at the other two hotels, guests could sense the staff's work pressure, and their attitude conveyed a sense of it being just a job.

4.6. Interaction between guest and brand's value

Regarding the interaction between guests and the brand's values, Respondent C described the design of Miss Hotel as reminiscent of "Gatsby," intoxicated with luxury. However, she did not resonate with this value and instead advocated for environmental protection and simplicity as a form of luxury.

4.7. Gift Giving Manner

Gifting holds significant importance in Confucianism. The most memorable gifting experience was encountered at Master Hotel, where guests received a soap in an exquisite box valued at more than 100 Yuan. The gift was perceived as a keepsake that would evoke lasting memories. However, the presentation of the gift fell short as it was simply placed in the bathroom without a formal gifting ceremony. Consequently, Respondent E overlooked its significance.

At Gentleman Hotel, the gift was a small tea sample resembling a Macaron in size. None of the respondents mentioned this gift, and when asked about it, Respondent B described it as cheap goods from a factory wholesale. Additionally, Gentleman Hotel provided a small box of two chocolates to guests after their membership registration. However, the interaction felt transactional, with the staff simultaneously checking the registration and delivering the chocolates.

4.8. Emergency Settlement

In terms of emergency settlements, Respondent C encountered a situation where one of her shoes broke. The staff at Gentleman Hotel were proactive in assisting her and attempting to fix the shoe. However, due to face consciousness, Respondent C declined the help but appreciated the staff's efforts. She also experienced an unresolved problem in her room, where the staff lacked patience. However, Respondent C did not voice her complaint due to face consciousness.

4.9. Stay Experience

Regarding the stay experience, all three hotels provided positive experiences. Master Hotel offered a homely atmosphere with use friend room layouts and furniture. Gentleman Hotel provided exceptional comfort with high-quality amenities, and Miss Hotel stood out with its stunning views and luxurious design. Respondent D praised Master Hotel for blending traditional room styles with advanced technology, providing convenience to guests. Respondent F was impressed with the welcome amenity's presentation and even ate the chocolate decoration in the top of the amenity. Respondents E and H found Gentleman Hotel to have the most comfortable sleepers, well-handled pens, and well-designed study spaces. Respondent G was excited about the toilet in Miss Hotel, which made cleanliness tangible. However, there were also areas for improvement. Respondent E believed that the interior design of Master Hotel should consider Feng Shui elements. Respondent A discovered that the welcome letter in Gentleman Hotel was written by a sales manager rather than the general manager, which made her feel underestimated. Respondents B and C felt that the art in the rooms at Miss Hotel contradicted its theme. Additionally, some respondents had difficulty understanding the function of certain amenities in the rooms. Respondents A and C felt that Miss Hotel's room design focused more on aesthetics than practicality and convenience. Respondents F, G, and H also had concerns about the layout and design of certain amenities. Respondents E and H did not resonate with the personalized (girly) design style.

Touchpoints	**Moments of magic**	**Emotional state**	**Moments of mistrial**	**Emotional state**
Pick-up Service	Personalized approach, hospitality extended beyond its premises	Feeling cared for, welcomed, feeling valued	Coach dropped off at side door	Shattered first impression
First (check-in) service	Comfortable meeting room, personalized butler service	Treated like VIPs, impressive impact	Check-in form in meeting room foyer, staff indifference	Sense of detachment, lack of genuine hospitality
Impression of hotel facilities and atmosphere	Fragrant flowers, 100-year history, classical design, “magnificent"	Sense of preciousness, unforgettable memories	Pungent perfume scent, Westernized Asian paintings, a sense of mystery	Discomfort, lack of resonance with "fake cultural product"
Service delivery	Customer-oriented staff, appropriate service boundaries,	Unique hospitality infused with Hong Kong culture	Unable to understand guests' needs, inconsistent service attitudes, not seamless…handovers , cold and unengaging	Disappointment, lack of Asian philosophy
Interaction between guests and employees	Aligned actions and manners, stability and trust	Comfortable interaction	Work pressure, sense of it being just a job	Detachment, lack of engagement
Interaction between guest and brand's value			Luxury reminiscent of "Gatsby"	Lack of resonance, advocacy for environmental protection and simplicity as luxury
Gift Giving Manner	Exquisite soap gift, without formal ceremony (surprise)	Keepsake, lasting memories	Small tea sample gift, transactional chocolate delivery	Lack of significance, cheap goods, felt transactional

Emergency Settlement	Proactive assistance,	Appreciation	unresolved problem with lack of patience	Face consciousness
Stay Experience	Homely atmosphere, friend room layouts, stunning views	Convenience, comfort, luxury	Areas for improvement in Feng Shui, underestimation	Room design contradictions, difficulty understanding amenities

Table 2: Moments of Magic and Mistrial in Luxury Hotel Experiences

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and implications

The findings of this study align with previous research that highlights the higher expectations for hospitality and service etiquettes among Confucian customers (Chon and Hao, 2020). Confucian guests prioritize staff attitudes, service styles, rituals, moral order, and social norms during their hotel stay. This study expands on previous findings by identifying specific touchpoints and moments of magic and mistrial that have a significant impact on the service experience for Confucian customers.

The study's findings have several academic and practical implications. Academically, this study contributes to the understanding of Confucian values and their influence on service design and customer experiences in the luxury hotel industry. It highlights the importance of incorporating cultural values into service delivery and creating personalized experiences for Confucian customers. This study also emphasizes the need for a customer-centric approach and the consideration of specific touchpoints throughout the customer journey.

From a practical perspective, the findings provide valuable insights for hotel managers and service providers. They can use these insights to enhance service delivery, improve customer satisfaction, and build long-term relationships with Confucian customers. Hotel managers should evaluate each touchpoint, including pick-up, first service, service delivery, and gift-giving, in accordance with Confucian propriety. Additional training on Confucian culture and values can be provided to staff members to ensure a better understanding of the needs and expectations of Confucian guests. Furthermore, hotels can incorporate sustainable practices and create experiences that resonate with Confucian customers' cultural preferences, such as elegant and classic designs that embody harmony between humans and nature.

5.2. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study examined the moments of magic and mistrial experienced by Confucian customers in luxury hotels in Hong Kong. The findings highlight the influence of Confucian cultural values on hotel experiences, emphasizing the importance of aesthetics, harmony, and propriety. The study provides practical implications for hotels to enhance service delivery and create personalized experiences for Confucian customers. By considering the identified touchpoints and incorporating Confucian principles into service design, hotels can improve customer satisfaction and build long-term relationships with Confucian customers.

5.3. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that warrant consideration. Firstly, the small sample size of 8 participants limits the generalizability of the findings. Including a larger number of luxury hotels with Asian brands/themes would provide more robust data and a broader understanding of the service experiences of Confucian customers. Secondly, the participants may not represent regular guests, as the study did not include comments from Asian guests. Future research should include a more diverse sample to ensure a comprehensive understanding of Confucian customers' experiences.
Additionally, the study focused on the perspectives of customers and did not include the viewpoints of staff and service providers. Including the voices of hotel employees would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the service experience and enable insights into their perceptions of Confucian customers and their service expectations. Future studies should incorporate staff perspectives to gain a holistic understanding of the service encounter.

Further research in this area is warranted to deepen our understanding of Confucian values and their impact on service design and customer experiences. Future studies could explore the influence of Confucian values on other types of service industries or different cultural contexts. Additionally, research could investigate the effectiveness of specific strategies and interventions aimed at enhancing service experiences for Confucian customers. By addressing these limitations and conducting further research, hotels can continue to improve their service delivery and meet the needs of Confucian customers effectively.

REFERENCES

Ahn, Michael, Ho, Grace, Chen, Yvonne, & Chon, Kaye. (2013). Creating a Framework for the Asian Paradigm of Hospitality Management. *Proceedings of the 11th APacCHRIE Conference 2013,* 21-24 May 2013, Macau SAR, China. Conference Proceedings: ISBN 978-99965-1-047-2.

Ariffin, A. A. M., Nameghi, E. N. M., & Soon, Y. K. (2015). The relationships between national identity, hospitality, and satisfaction among foreign hotel guests. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing,* 32(6), 778-793.

Baldwin, W. (2017). The transference of Asian hospitality through food: Chef' s inspirations taken from Asian cuisines to capture the essence of Asian culture and hospitality. *International journal of gastronomy and food science*, 8, 7-13.

Chon, Kaye (2021). APacCHRIE and Evolution of the Asian Paradigm of Hospitality. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research,* 45(5), pp. 945-948. https://journals.sagepub.com/author/Chon%2C+Kaye

Chon, Kaye, Park, Eunhye (Olivia), and Zoltan, Judith (2020). "The Asian Paradigm in Hospitality and Tourism," *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research,* https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348020945370

Chon, Kaye Kye-Sung and Hao, Fei (2020), "The Five Constants: A Confucian Business Model for the Hospitality Industry," *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research,* 44(5). https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348020936342

Chon, Kaye Kye-Sung, and Zoltan, Judit (2019). "Role of servant leadership in contemporary hospitality," *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 31(8), pp. 3371-3394.

Chen, Athena, and Chon, Kaye (2016). "Transferability of Asian Paradigm in Hospitality Management to Non-Asian Countries," in Advances in Culture, *Tourism and Hospitality Research,* 12, 143-157.

Dey, B. (2019). Understanding Customers Journey Mapping in the Context of Travel and Tourism. *Jaipuria International Journal of Management Research*, 5(1), 85-90.

Forbes (2016) *The New Moment Of Truth In Business.* Retrieved September 20, 2021, from https://www.forbes.com/sites/shephyken/2016/04/09/new-moment-of-truth-in-business/?sh=63cc605b38d9

Groth, M., Wu, Y., Nguyen, H., & Johnson, A. (2019). The moment of truth: A review, synthesis, and research agenda for the customer service experience. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior,* 6, 89-113.

Huang, M. H., & Chang, S. H. (2017). Similarities and differences in East Asian Confucian Culture: A comparative analysis. OMNES: *The Journal of Multicultural Society*, 7(2), 1-40.

Interaction Design Foundation (2020*) The Moment of Truth - Build Desirable Relationships with Users and Customers.* Retrieved September 20, 2021, from https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/the-moment-of-truth-build-desirable-relationships-with-users-and-customers

Karch, G. E., & Peters, M. (2017). The impact of employee uniforms on job satisfaction in the hospitality industry. *Journal of Hotel and Business Management,* 6(1), 1-6.

Lee, S., & Chuang, N. K. (2021). Applying Expanded Servicescape to the Hotel Industry. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research,* 10963480211011535.

Le, N. T. C., & Quy, V. T. (2021). Dimensions of luxury hospitality service personal values in confucian culture: scale development and validation. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing,* 33(3), 303-318.

Li, M. (2014). Cross-cultural tourist research: *A meta-analysis. Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research,* 38(1), 40-77.

Liu, Z. (2018). The influence of confucianism on East Asian countries. *Adv Social Sci Educ Humanit Res,* 232, 77-79.

Mandarin Oriental (2021) *Hotel at a Glance.* Retrieved September 20, 2021, from https://www.mandarinoriental.com/hong-kong/victoria-harbour/luxury-hotel/presentation

Mmutle, T., & Shonhe, L. (2017). Customers' perception of service quality and its impact on reputation in the hospitality industry.

National Geographic (2021) *Confucianism.* Retrieved September 20, 2021, from https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/confucianism/

Paik, H. (2010), "Adapting Disneyland's Service Strategy to Korea's Everland Theme Park", Theses, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, pp. 1-28.

The peninsula (2021) *The peninsula experience*. Retrieved September 20, 2021, from https://www.peninsula.com/en/global-pages/experience

Pipatpong, F., Talawanich, S., Pongwat, A., and Chon, K. (2019) "Asian-ness in Hospitality: The Case of Luxury Hotels in Bangkok, Thailand," *ASEAN Journal of Management and Innovation,* December 2019, DOI: 10.14456/ajmi.2019.22

Pizam, A. (2012). Cross-cultural tourist behavior. In Consumer behavior in travel and tourism (pp. 413-432). Routledge.

Research Dive (2021) *Luxury Travel Market Report.* Retrieved September 20, 2021, from https://www.researchdive.com/8410/luxurytravelmarket?utm_source=PRN&utm_medium=PNR_P20678&utm_campaign=PRN_P20678

Rosewood HongKong (2021) UNPARALLELED SERVICES. Retrieved September 20, 2021, from https://www.rosewoodhotels.com/en/hong-kong/overview/services

Style (2019) Luxury Travel: From Como and Aman to Mandarin Oriental: how Asia's luxury hotel brands are reshaping hospitality in the West. Retrieved September 20, 2021, from

https://www.scmp.com/magazines/style/leisure/article/3037363/como-and-aman-mandarin-oriental-how-asias-luxury-hotel

Sucker, Worarak, Pusiran, Arif Kamisan, Dhevabanchachai, Nate-tra, & Chon, Kaye (2013). "The Influence of Asian Cultural Values in the Asian Hospitality Services," *Proceedings of the 11th APacCHRIE Conference 2013,* 21-24 May 2013, Macau SAR, China. Conference Proceedings: ISBN 978-99965-1-047-2.

Travel+Leisure (2021) *The Top 25 Hotel Brands in the World.* Retrieved September 20, 2021,from https://www.travelandleisure.com/worlds-best/hotel-top-brands

Guest interactions and the formation of memorable experiences: An ethnography International *Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 28 (10) (2016), pp. 2132-2155

Voorhees, C. M., Fombelle, P. W., Gregoire, Y., Bone, S., Gustafsson, A., Sousa, R., & Walkowiak, T. (2017). Service encounters, experiences and the customer journey: Defining the field and a call to expand our lens. *Journal of Business Research,* 79, 269-280.

Wan, Selina, and Chon, Kaye (2010). “Asianess” – An Emerging Concept in Hospitality Management,” *Proceedings of the 8th Asia Pacific CHRIE Conference,* Phuket, Thailand, August 12-14, 2010

Yin, R. K. (2018). Case study research and applications : design and methods (Sixth edition.. ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Zhang, E. Y., & Tse, T. S. (2018). Tapping into Chinese luxury travelers. *Journal of China Tourism Research,* 14(1), 71-99.

Appendix

Table 1 Background of Group Members

Group Members (Pseudonym)	Nationality (or Culture)	Age	Gender
A (Author)	China	30s	Female
B	China	40s	Male
C	China	30s	Male
D	China	35s	Female
E	Hong Kong	30s	Male
F	Thai	35s	Female
G	Vietnam	35s	Female
H	Japan	40s	Male

Assessing the impacts of free-roaming animals on tourist experiences: A cultural ecosystem services and disservices perspective

Chen, Li-Hsin
The International Master's Program in Tourism and Hospitality (IMTH)
National Kaohsiung University of Hospitality and Tourism (NKUHT)

Abstract:
This research examines the influence of free-roaming animals on tourism, focusing on Shoushan National Nature Park, Taiwan. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, it integrates Cultural Ecosystem Services (CES) and Ecosystem Disservices (EDS) to assess tourist interactions with monkeys. Findings reveal a complex relationship between free-roaming animal encounters and tourist perceptions, highlighting the need for balanced management strategies. This study contributes to the understanding of feral animals' dual impacts on tourism, guiding sustainable tourism and conservation practices.

Keywords: Cultural Ecosystem Services, Ecosystem Disservices, Free-roaming Animals, Tourist Experiences, Responsible Tourism

1. Introduction

Feral animals impact ecosystems and human communities, influencing tourism through their appeal to those interested in local wildlife (Liolios, 2019). However, common species like cats, deer, or monkeys may not provide unique experiences, a facet underexplored compared to tourism centered around rare species (Usui, 2022). This oversight prompts questions about the benefits and motivations for tourists interacting with these animals. Addressing this gap requires further research into tourists' experiences and perceptions of commonly encountered free-roaming animals.

A theoretical framework is essential for understanding the impacts of feral animals on tourism destinations. Ecosystem services, introduced in the mid-20th century and expanded upon by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment in 2005, include cultural ecosystem services (CES). CES recognizes the non-material benefits individuals derive from ecosystems (Smith & Ram, 2017). While CES highlights the positive impacts of human-nature interactions, ecosystem disservices (EDS) recognize the negative consequences. EDS encompasses various ecosystem functions, processes, and attributes that can adversely affect human well-being (Hernández-Morcillo et al., 2013). Understanding both CES and EDS is crucial for policymakers to make informed decisions balancing environmental conservation and human welfare (Alemu I et al., 2019). This study aims to develop an integrated CES and EDS framework, mainly focusing on the role of free-roaming monkeys, especially in Shoushan National Nature Park, Taiwan.

It is expected the findings of this study are essential for policymakers and industry professionals, offering a comprehensive understanding of both positive and negative impacts on tourism destinations and guiding effective management strategies.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The framework of cultural ecosystem service: A brief overview

To understand human-environment interactions in tourism, a framework is needed. Ecosystem services (ES) capture the benefits humans get from nature (Hernández-Morcillo et al., 2013). Developed in the 1960s, ES goes beyond material benefits like food (provisioning) to include cultural aspects. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005) identified seven "cultural ecosystem services" (CES), such as spiritual enrichment and recreation. These intangible benefits highlight the value of nature for human well-being and inform conservation efforts and tourism development. By recognizing CES, destinations can better manage their natural environment and cater to tourists while preserving cultural values. Destination management balances tourism's economic benefits with cultural and natural resource conservation. It aligns with CES by promoting ecotourism, recreation, and the cultural values that attract tourists (Smith & Ram, 2017). This explains why CES research often focuses on recreation and ecotourism.

2.2 Ecosystem disservices

The concept of "ecosystem disservices" (EDS) describes negative impacts on human well-being from ecosystem functions, processes, and attributes (Wood et al., 2022). These include natural hazards like invasive species and social hazards such as agriculture issues. EDS and CES should be considered together for holistic human-nature assessments. Understanding the varying preferences across stakeholders and individuals for CES and EDS is crucial. Integrating CES and EDS in research can lead to more balanced management decisions benefiting both tourists and local residents. This research aims to bridge the gap by developing an integration framework for CES and EDS in tourism destinations affected by free-roaming animals.

3. Methodology

3.1. The study site

Located in Kaohsiung City's Gushan District, Taiwan, Shoushan National Nature Park, popularly known as Monkey Mountain, is home to a large population of Formosan Macaques. Tourists hiking the trails often encounter these monkeys engaging in playful behaviors. Recognized as an eco-paradise and prime spot for outdoor education, visitors are cautioned against feeding or touching the monkeys to prevent disease transmission and aggressive behavior, as feeding practices have led monkeys to associate humans with food, occasionally leading to attacks that could deter future visits (Xie, 2021).

3.2. Data Collection and Analysis

This research utilized online reviews and in-depth interviews to explore tourist interactions with free-roaming animals in Shoushan. Google Maps was the primary source for user-generated content, with WebHarvy employed for comment extraction. Additionally, five detailed interviews provided deeper insights. Text analysis, facilitated by Leximancer, produced visual concept maps and thematic categories relating to cultural ecosystem services (CES) and ecosystem disservices (EDS). The study's trustworthiness was enhanced through member checking and triangulation, ensuring the findings' accuracy and robustness.

4. Results

4.1 Automatic content analysis of Google Map reviews

The study analyzed 2,510 Google Maps reviews of the Shoushan regions, revealing a range of user satisfaction. The majority of ratings were positive, with 1,334 five-star and 854 four-star reviews, supporting the tendency for favorable feedback on online platforms.

Leximancer analysis revealed four key themes: 'place', 'scenery', 'monkeys', and 'time'. 'Place' reflects positive views on the site's geography and recreation. 'Scenery' highlights the area's aesthetic appeal. 'Time' suggests the location fosters relaxation and social connections. Conversely, the 'monkeys' theme unveiled a dualistic visitor perspective. On one aspect, it accentuates the educational and experiential value attributed to wildlife interaction. Yet, it concurrently highlights safety concerns and discomfort stemming from encounters with the fauna, particularly the aggressive behaviors of monkeys. These nuanced responses underscore the complexity of human-wildlife interactions in shaping tourist experiences and satisfaction.

This dichotomy is further explored through the spatial positioning of thematic clusters, illustrating how natural elements and wildlife encounters contribute to varied visitor experiences. The proximity of 'Monkeys' to 'Low satisfaction' signifies a polarizing effect, with negative human-monkey interactions exacerbating safety apprehensions. Addressing these concerns through enhanced management strategies and educational initiatives could foster a more harmonious human-wildlife coexistence, augmenting the overall visitor experience.

4.2 Thematic analysis of in-depth interviews

To delve deeper into tourists' perceptions, the study engaged with five individuals through interviews, revealing the multifaceted role of free-roaming animals in shaping tourist experiences. The emergent themes encompass interaction with nature, safety, tourism management, environmental concerns, visitor impact, and perception and valuation, each contributing unique insights into the intricate relationship between tourists and the natural environment.

Direct interactions with the monkeys elicited mixed emotions from visitors. Some expressed enjoyment and excitement, such as one interviewee mentioned: "I think it's kind of fun because usually I don't have any chance to interact directly with animals." Similarly, another participants noted, "I think the first emotion is excitement because it's very interesting and exciting to see the white animal in person." However, others voiced fear and uneasiness due to the monkeys' perceived aggressiveness. One participant stated, "A lot of monkeys, they like come to you and prepare to steal something. So I think it's very dangerous and I'm not really feel comfortable with that." Another participant echoed this sentiment: "However, for the disadvantages, I think it's in my experience, when we went to the Shoshan, the monkey behaved not really good, so it scares a lot."

This comprehensive examination reveals the layered and complex nature of tourist experiences in the Shoushan area. It underscores the significance of integrated management and educational strategies in promoting sustainable tourism practices that respect both natural wildlife habitats and visitor safety.

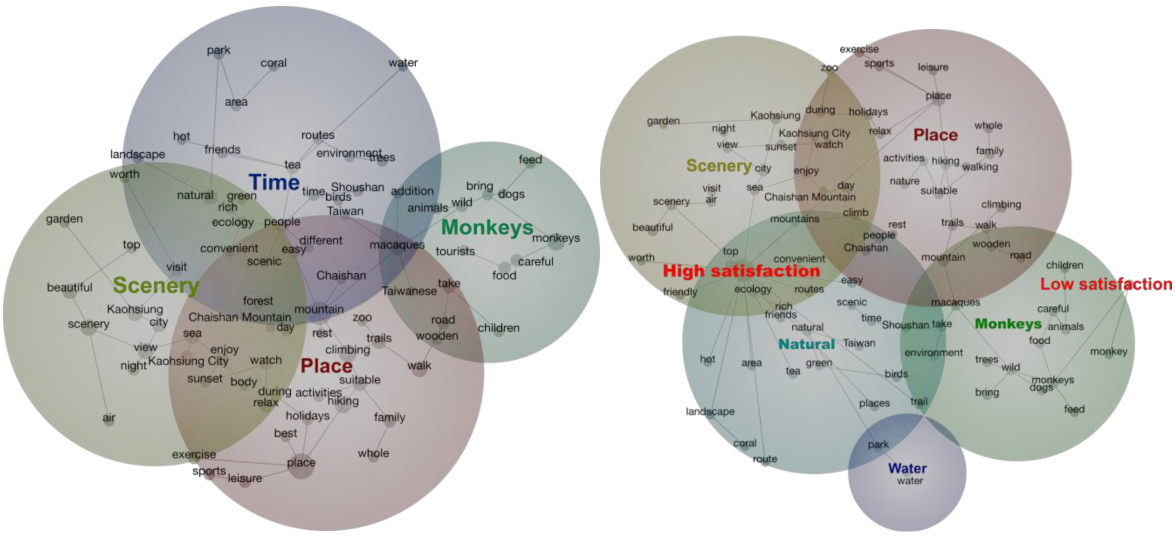


Figure 1. Concept Maps generated by Leximancer

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study pioneers connecting online review analytics and in-depth interviews with CES-EDS frameworks to better understand tourists' lived experiences, moving beyond economic assessments toward holistic valuation of intangible cultural benefits and costs. These findings underscore the dual nature of human-feral animals' interactions, where both positive (CES) and negative (EDS) aspects coexist. This dichotomy highlights the need for balanced approaches in free-roaming animal management and responsible tourism to sustain both the natural habitats of feral animals like the Formosan Macaques and the quality of visitor experiences. Understanding and managing these dynamics is crucial for promoting sustainable interactions between humans and the natural environment, ensuring the continued provision of CES while mitigating the impacts of EDS. Further research should address additional contexts with free-roaming species to expand theoretical insights into managing tourism's complex impacts on cultural ecosystem services and human-animal relations.

REFERENCES

Hernández-Morcillo, M., Plieninger, T., & Bieling, C. (2013). An empirical review of cultural ecosystem service indicators. *Ecological Indicators, 29*, 434-444.

Liolios, J. (2019). The management of free-roaming dogs in Rhodes, Greece: A multi-stakeholder approach. *Tourism Destination Management Insights, 2019*(3), 8-10.

Smith, M., & Ram, Y. (2017). Tourism, landscapes and cultural ecosystem services: A new research tool. *Tourism Recreation Research, 42*(1), 113-119.

Usui, R. (2022). Feral animals as a tourism attraction: Characterizing tourists' experiences with rabbits on Ōkunoshima Island in Hiroshima, Japan. *Current Issues in Tourism, 25*(16), 2615-2630.

Wood, L. E., Vimercati, G., Ferrini, S., & Shackleton, R. T. (2022). Perceptions of ecosystem services and disservices associated with open water swimming. *Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism, 37*, 100491.

Xie, T. (2021, December 28). Kaohsiung's eco-paradise: Shoushan National Nature Park. Taiwan Panorama. https://www.taiwan-panorama.com/en/Articles/Details?Guid=994dcb6d-a433-4c1b-95e9-44b7bf1db3a5&CatId=10&postname=Kaohsiung%27s%20Eco-Paradise-Shoushan%20National%20Nature%20Park

Hostel attributes for foot pilgrims: Evidence from the camino de santiago

Kim, Bona
Department of International Business & Trade, School of Global Convergence Studies
Inha University

Yang, Cathy Xiaotao
School of Tourism and Urban-Rural Planning
Zhejiang Gongshang University

Santos Solla, Xosé Manuel
Department of Geography
University of Santiago de Compostela

Abstract:

After pandemic, arguably, one of the most famous renewal journeys for individuals' wellness is Camino de Santiago (the way of St James) in Spain, known as a long-distance walking pilgrimage route (Kim et al., 2016). A major concern among the dominant group of foot-pilgrims is where to stay overnight during a long tough trek. Previous studies claimed that understanding the users' needs and expectations in a special accommodation is essential (Hung et al., 2015). Accommodation is an inevitable environment for pilgrims, which is closely related to their religious, spiritual, and new cultural experience-related motivations (Amaro et al., 2018; Vistad et al., 2020). Especially on a foot-pilgrimage journey, a pilgrim hostel, so-called "albergue", is one of imperative elements creating pilgrimage experiences (Kim et al., 2016). Thus, this study investigates the perceptions of foot-pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago, about pilgrims' hostel attributes and compares the attributes based on different types, and other socio-demographic characteristics. As a result, seven distinct factors were identified. The factor analysis identified two groups of pilgrimage-specific factors, named 'Authentic Functions for Pilgrimage' and 'Authentic Albergue Features' showing that pilgrimage hostels are unique from general accommodation and deserve more research focus. Based on the participants' socio-demographic characteristics, detailed and varied preferences offer pilgrim hostel owners detailed directions for improvement tailored to their target guests. All the seven factors were more crucial for Roman Catholic pilgrims than for non-Roman Catholic pilgrims, and they were all significantly different. Overall, our study serves as an initial exploration to build understanding of pilgrimage hostels. Key hostel attributes and various preferences, included in participants' socio-demographic factors, are described to obtain knowledge about this blank area. Our study provides various stakeholders with empirical suggestions to prioritize pilgrims' needs and appreciations for quality management of contemporary pilgrim hostels.

REFERENCES

Amaro, S., Antunes, A., & Henriques, C. (2018). A closer look at Santiago de Compostela's pilgrims through the lens of motivations. Tourism Management, 64, 271-280.

Kim, B., Kim, S. S., & King, B. (2016). The sacred and the profane: Identifying pilgrim traveler value orientations using means-end theory. Tourism Management, 56, 142-155.

Hung, K., Wang, S., & Tang, C. (2015). Understanding the normative expectations of customers toward Buddhism-themed hotels: A revisit of service quality. International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 27(7), 1409-1441.

Vistad, O. I., Øian, H., Williams, D. R., & Stokowski, P. (2020). Long-distance hikers and their inner journeys: On motives and pilgrimage to Nidaros, Norway. Journal of Outdoor Recreation and tourism, 31, 100326.

Small business orientation of local lodging companies under the growth of the inbound tourism market: Quantitative analysis of firm performance trends in Kyoto

Yamamoto, Akiko
Graduate School of Management
Kyoto University

Wakabayashi, Naoki
Graduate School of Management
Kyoto University

Abstract:

Even under the rapid growth of tourism, small and local lodging companies focusing on original services, special customers, and unique cultural tastes may seek for the sustainability of their companies. From the viewpoint of small business orientation perspective, proposed by Runyan and others, these SMEs tend to commit not to the growth of their business but to their unique business customers, culture or region. Using quantitative trend analysis of relationships between resources and sales performance of local lodging companies in the late 2010s, we find that many old lodging companies in Kyoto, a global destination with a growth of inbound tourism in Japan, show a small business orientation, not enhancing their revenue but keeping their unique business.

Keywords: Small business orientation, Long operating company, SMEs, Local lodging industry, Firm performance

1. Introduction

Many global destination areas currently enjoy a rapid growth of inbound tourism and huge investments in the development of new large-scale and standard hotels before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. However, even in these areas, some small and local lodging companies are not seeking scale growth but the sustainability of their unique services as lifestyle accommodations, which may widen the cultural variety of local accommodations of the destination. Considering the major research of lodging industry, main researchers focus on growing hotels and but tend to ignore small, local, and unique lodging companies. In the Kyoto area, the number of inbound tourists has increased by 450% from 2010 to 2018 (Kyoto Prefecture Government, 2020). In Kyoto City, which is one of the global destinations, 3,334 local properties are operating, but the scale of local properties on average remains small, while they have, on average, only 17 rooms in 2022, compared to 12.84 rooms for 3,614 local properties in 2018 (Kyoto City Government, 2024). Furthermore, similar to the traditional Japanese inn, ryokan (Figure1), many of them are trying to maintain or tune up their original services and culture over the long term using traditional facilities.

The purpose of this study is to show that firms that do not have the prevailing contemporary values also have a certain importance in today's society. In other words, by analyzing the picture of firms with a small business orientation, it is to reveal that firms that are not what we tend to regard as good businesses (e.g., innovative or growth-oriented) also play an important role in contemporary society.

Figure 1. One of the most famous ryokan in Kyoto, Hiragiya

2. Literature Review

2.1. Small business orientation (SBO)

Some local lodging companies show strong commitments to their unique businesses. Consistent with SME research, Runyan, et al. (2008) found that some small business owners have a small business orientation such that they do not seek growth but commit to a unique business. However, the resource-based view of the firm growth may argue that the expansion of resources leads to enhancement of firm performance. But Runyan and Covin (2019) argued that the unique values held by small business owners with a small business orientation are based on philanthropy, which emphasizes long-term relationships with the community, integrity, and employee-centeredness. Consequently, such businesses are oriented toward regional networking and mutual benefits in the community, promoting improved corporate welfare and operating with integrity toward customers and the market. Such businesses are unlikely to expand their operations even during periods of increased demand. Furthermore, Runyan and Covin (2019) state that such a value-driven behavior may explain the long-term survival of firms.

2.2. Resource-based view (RBV)

The Resource Based View (RBV), which originated from Penrose's (1959) view of the firm, states that a firm's resources are the source of growth. She conducted her research based on the question, "What brings growth to a firm?" She showed that if a company utilizes its resources effectively, it can acquire new resources and lead to growth. Subsequently, the problematics of resource-based theory developed, with Wernerfelt (1984) stating that the non-mobility of resources and Barney (1991) stating that the scarcity of resources is an internal factor that gives firms an advantage (Nagano, 2015).

From Penrose's view of the firm, when examining the reasons why human resources and equipment do not increase rapidly during periods of demand expansion, it is sought in internal factors. In other words, the reason is the lack of management resources within the firm. It is conceivable that the firm may not have the funds for capital investment and may have difficulty borrowing. However, the emphasis of resource-based theory is to explain sustainable competitive advantage based on the quantity and quality of resources, which is not sufficient to explain the behavior of businesses that are not oriented toward resource growth.

2.3. Family business studies

In a study of family businesses in the United States, Kachaner et al. (2012) conducted an empirical study and showed that family businesses underperform in short-term performance and outperform in medium- and long-term performance compared to businesses that do not. They argue that this is the result of prioritizing survival over short-term performance. According to the Socio-Emotional Wealth (SEW) theory, which is used to explain these results, family businesses have SEW and their "nonfinancial utility" may cause them to have inferior economic rationality (Gomez-Mejia et al. 2011). According to a survey by Japan's National Tax Agency, more than 95% of companies filing corporate tax returns are family businesses, so most companies in Japan are family businesses. Although it is acknowledged that family relations are a factor that causes companies to share unique values in their business activities, there are small and medium-sized companies, whether family or non-family, that share a unique business orientation. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of management by a particular value system as a company orientation on business performance and other factors, not limited to family members, in the first place, and there is no problem if family businesses and non-family businesses are mixed among those companies.

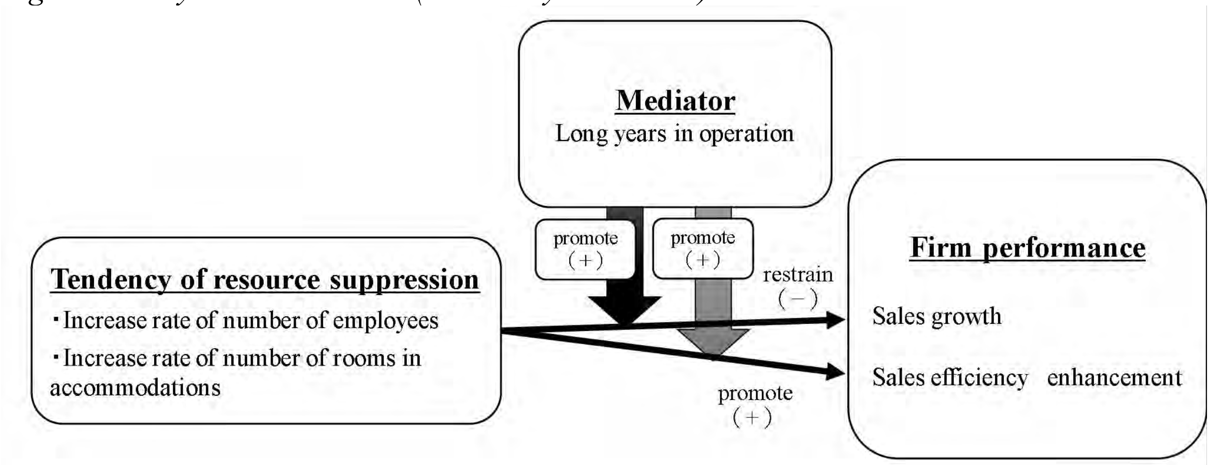
2.4. Research question

We investigate whether local lodging companies with a small business orientation adopt a strategy of maintaining their small scale and unique services during periods of inbound tourism growth, eventually restraining sales to achieve long-term stability. In particular, long-operating lodging companies, some of which have run over a century, tend to show a small business orientation, refraining from resource expansion and sales growth to survive over the long term. However, they show high efficiency. Thus, we propose the following hypotheses:

H1: Long-operating and small local lodging companies are unlikely to experience growth in total sales.
H2: Long-operating and small local lodging companies are likely to promote increases in sales per room.

***The analytical framework for these analyses is shown in Figure 2*.**

Figure 2 Analytical Framework (created by the author)



3. Methodology

3.1. Measurement
Using secondary data from the private company database sources of a private company and the local government, we examine the changing trends of attribute and the performance of local lodging companies in Kyoto Prefecture in 2014 and 2018, conducting a multiple regression analysis. We examine trends in the scale, performance, and other attributes of local lodging companies in Kyoto Prefecture, including many in Kyoto City. We target the growth rates of sales and daily sales per room as the main dependent variables, while analyzing the effects of operating year, growth of human resources, and rooms as the independent variables. We check the effects of the correlation between the operating year and growth of management resources, using their interaction terms.

4. Results

4.1. Profile of data
We used the private company financial data and the number of facilities of local lodging companies located in Kyoto Prefecture in 2014 and 2018 from the company databases of the Teikoku Databank, Japan, and the Kyoto Prefecture Government. The data include sales, number of employees, and years of operation. We collected the data of 211 companies and eventually used those of 175 companies. These companies averagely have 23 employees, 560 million yen in sales, 130 million yen in capital, 56 guest rooms, and 54 years of operation. Thus, most of them are SMEs.
The Teikoku Databank is one of the Japanese credit research companies like Dun & Bradstreet, in the USA. Kyoto prefecture collects a variety of information from lodging firms in Kyoto to issue business licenses to them.

4.2. Variables
(1) Dependent variables
The growth or expansion of sales and resources was measured by the growth rate of those figures. The first dependent variable in this study is the change in financial performance. This variable was calculated by subtracting the sales in 2014 from the sales in 2018 and dividing it by the sales in 2014, using the sales from the financial data of Teikoku Databank for the years

2014 and 2018.

The second dependent variable is the change in sales efficiency. Using the same Teikoku Databank sales data as the first dependent variable, the increase rate (%) of daily sales per room was created and used as a variable indicating sales efficiency. The number of rooms in the same year by the Kyoto Tourism Federation was divided by 365 (the number of days per year) to create a simple daily sales per room. The increase rate was calculated using the same method as for the increase rate of sales and shown as a percentage of the daily sales per room in 2018 and 2014 obtained in this way.

(2) Independent variables
(a) Years in operation as of 2014, normalized to the logarithm of the number of years in operation (logarithmic conversion)
(b) Increase rate of capital from 2014 to 2018 (%)
(c) Retention of lodging specialization (0 = Not Lodging specialization in one or both 2014 or 2018; 1 = Lodging specialization in both 2014 and 2018)
(d) Increase rate of number of rooms in accommodations from 2014 to 2018 (%)
(e) Increase rate in number of employees from 2014 to 2018 (%)
(f) Interaction term between (a) and (d): Years in operation and increase rate of number of rooms
(g) Interaction term between (a) and (e): Years in operation and increase rate of number of employees

Since we assumed that the effect of the growth in the number of rooms and the growth in the number of employees on the dependent variable would differ depending on the number of years in operation, we used an interaction term that multiplies the number of years in operation by the growth in the number of rooms or the growth in the number of employees. Since the original variables need to be entered when creating the interaction terms, they were centered to avoid multicollinearity.

In addition, all growth rates are presented as percentages, as in the calculation of the dependent variable, subtracting the 2014 value from the 2018 value and dividing by the 2014 value.

4.3. Method of Analysis
First, a correlation analysis was performed for all variables. Then, for hypotheses 1 and 2, the following four multiple regression analyses were conducted using the forced entry method with the respective variables of number of employees and number of facilities.
(1) Dependent variable: growth rate of sales (%)
Independent variables: (a) years in operation, (d) increase rate of the number of rooms,
(b) Increase rate of capital from 2014 to 2018 (%), (c) Retention of lodging specialization, (f) interaction term between (a) and (d)
(2) Dependent variable: Growth rate of sales (%)
Independent variables: (a) Years in operation, (e) increase rate of number of employees,
(b) Increase rate of capital from 2014 to 2018 (%), (c) Retention of lodging specialization, (g) Interaction term between (a) and (e)
(3) Dependent variable: growth rate of sales (%)

Independent variables: (a) years in operation, (d) increase rate of the number of rooms,
(f) interaction term between (a) and (d)
(4) Dependent variable: Growth rate of sales (%)
Independent variables: (a) Years in operation, (e) increase rate of number of employees,
(g) Interaction term between (a) and (e)
(5) Dependent variable: Growth rate of daily sales per room (%)
Independent variables: (a) years in operation, (d) increase rate of the number of rooms,
(b) Increase rate of capital from 2014 to 2018 (%), (c) Retention of lodging specialization, (g) interaction term between (a) and (d)
(6) Dependent variable: Growth rate of daily sales per room (%)
Independent variables: (a) years in operation, (e) increase rate of number of employees,
(b) Increase rate of capital from 2014 to 2018 (%), (c) Retention of lodging specialization, (f) interaction term between (a) and (e)
(7) Dependent variable: Growth rate of daily sales per room (%)
Independent variables: (a) years in operation, (d) increase rate of the number of rooms,
(g) interaction term between (a) and (d)
(8) Dependent variable: Growth rate of daily sales per room (%)
Independent variables: (a) years in operation, (e) increase rate of number of employees,
(f) interaction term between (a) and (e)

4.4. Results

Table 1 shows the correlation matrix of all the variables used in this analysis. In general, the correlation between the interaction term and the variables used to create it tends to be high. Again, a significantly high correlation was found between the increase rate of the number of employees and the interaction term used to create this (years in operation and increase rate of the number of employees). Since a highly significant correlation was also found between the increase rate of sales and the increase rate of the number of employees, a multiple regression analysis was carefully conducted, paying attention to the problem of multicollinearity. For the other variables, no highly significant correlations were found within the combination of variables for which multiple regression analysis was performed.

Multiple regression analysis yielded eight models. All models were statistically significant.

However, since the significance and goodness of fit of (1), (2), (5), and (6) in Section 4.3, Method of Analysis, are inferior due to the use of many variables, one better model was selected from (1) and (2) and one from (5) and (6) to be Model 1 in Tables 2 and 3, respectively. These six models are described below.
In particular, in Models2 and 3 in table2, we find a small business orientation for local lodging companies because long-operating companies significantly refrain from sales growth. H1 is supported. Based on the results of Models 1, 2, and 3 in tables 3, we also find that long-operating companies show a statistically significant suppression of sales per room in terms of sales efficiency. The result is the opposite of H2.

Model 1 in Table 2 adds two variables to Model 3. In this model, the rate of increase in capital has a positive effect on sales growth, but years in operation is not significant. We speculate that the added variables may be counteracting the effect of years in operation. Model in Table 3 adds two variables to Model 3. Here, both of the two variables added were not significant.

The interaction term was not significant in any of the six models. However, in general, the p-value of the interaction term tends not to be significant.

The significance probabilities for interaction terms of this study are 97.1% for Model 1, 74.5% for Model 2, and 8.5% for Model 3 in Table 2. For Model 1, Model 2, and Model 3 in Table 3, the significance probabilities are 59.4%, 10.5%, and 60.4%, respectively, and only Model 3 in Table 2 is below 10%.

We find that the effect of the expansion of the number of employees on sales for the above- and below-average years in operation groups was graphed by fitting the regression equation of the model, which was significant, to confirm that employee expansion contributed to sales growth, while the length of years in operation tended to suppress the effect of the contribution, as shown in Figure 3.

Table 1

Correlates, Means, and Standard Deviations of Study Variables

(Variables)	N	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 Increase rate of sales(%) (2014→2018)	187	140.565	947.867								
2 Increase rate of daily sales per room(%) (2014→2018)	127	12.646	37.727	0.849 ***							
3 Increase rate of number of employees(%) (2014→2018)	175	19.806	119.174	0.703 ***	0.424 ***						
4 Increase rate of number of rooms in accommodations(%) (2014→2018)	132	1.064	21.151	0.285 **	-0.213 *	-0.067					
5 Years in operation (logarithmic conversion)	211	1.571	0.431	-0.231 **	-0.185 *	-0.173 *	-0.098				
6 Increase rate of capital(%)(2014→2018)	172	9.320	81.630	0.475 ***	-0.011	0.432 ***	-0.005	-0.266 ***			
7 maintenance of lodging specialization(2014→2018)	211	0.47	0.501	-0.103	-0.075	-0.124	-0.088	0.170 *	0.021		
8 interaction term Years in operation×Increase rate of number of rooms	132	-0.653	9.240	-0.212 *	0.023	0.004	-0.643 ***	0.097	0.004	0.056	
9 interaction term Years in operation×Increase rate of number of employees	175	-6.544	88.555	-0.623 ***	0.225 *	-0.800 ***	0.042	0.180 *	-0.501 ***	0.031	-0.048

Note. Variable 7: 0 = Not Lodging specialization in one or both 2014 or 2018; 1 = Lodging specialization in both 2014 and 2018.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 2

Regression analysis of effects on

	Dependent Variable : Increase rate of sales (2014→2018)								
	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
Intercept	443.029	301.507		52.007	17.528	**	611.951	283.022	*
(Variables)									
Years in operation (logarithmic conversion)	-243.546	178.915	-0.076	-23.490	10.015	-0.199 *	-345.634	164.922	-0.113 *
Increase rate of number of rooms in accommodations (2014→2018)				0.417	0.190	0.242 *			
Increase rate of number of employees (2014→2018)	5.117	0.793	0.616 ***				4.578	0.724	0.561 ***
Increase rate of capital(%) (2014→2018)	2.253	0.755	0.187 **						
retention of lodging specialization (2014→2018)	-32.427	108.455	-0.016						
(Interaction)									
Years in operation×Increase rate of number of rooms				-0.142	0.436	-0.036			
Years in operation×Increase rate of number of employees	-0.039	1.088	-0.004				-1.690	0.976	-0.154
N	166			127			175		
Adjusted R^2	0.540 ***			0.101 **			0.509 ***		

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

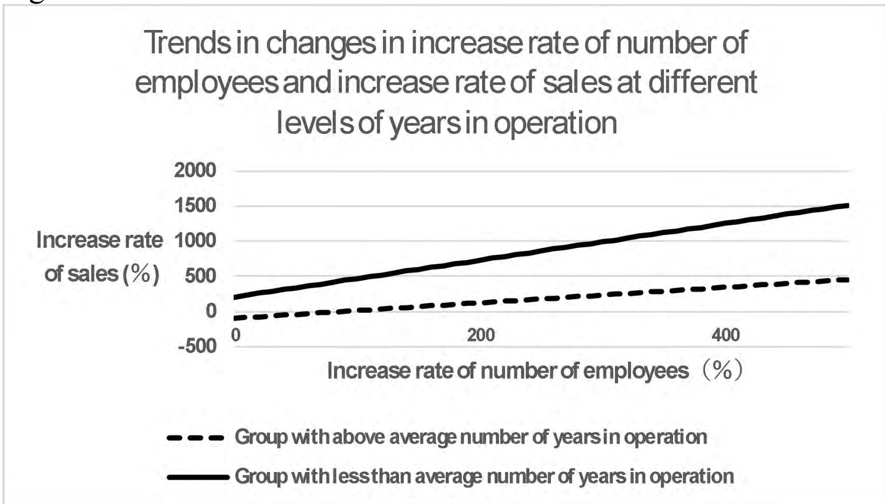
Table 3

Regression analysis of effects on increase rate of daily sales per room

	Dependent Variable: Increase rate of daily sales per room (2014→2018)								
	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
Intercept	73.205	20.147	***	54.390	17.925	**	65.791	19.277	***
(Variables)									
Years in operation (logarithmic conversion)	-35.418	11.575	-0.277 **	-24.172	10.242	-0.202 *	-32.192	11.166	-0.257 **
Increase rate of number of rooms in accommodations (2014→2018)				-0.612	0.195	-0.350 **			
Increase rate of number of employees (2014→2018)	0.453	0.088	0.470 ***				0.446	0.087	0.459 ***
Increase rate of capital(%) (2014→2018)	0.060	0.215	0.023						
retention of lodging specialization (2014→2018)	-3.738	6.584	-0.048						
(Interaction)									
Years in operation×Increase rate of number of rooms				-0.727	0.446	-0.182			
Years in operation×Increase rate of number of employees	-0.167	0.312	-0.053				-0.156	0.300	-0.520
N	117			127			124		
Adjusted R^2	0.221 ***			0.086 **			0.218 ***		

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Figure 3 The Effect of the Interaction Term



5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and implications
This study examines the impact of small business orientation on firm performance. We analyze whether the growth of managerial resources affects the growth of sales and efficiency, while considering the mediating effect of operating years among small and medium-sized lodging firms in Kyoto Prefecture from 2014 to 2018 under the rapid growth of inbound tourism. Multiple regression analysis yielded four models. We confirmed two main trends. First, long-operating companies in the local lodging industry tend to refrain from sales expansion. Although local lodging companies intend to survive over the long term, they clearly have a small business orientation. Second, long-operating companies suppress the increase in sales per room. Future studies must examine these aging effects of firms.

However, we believe that the results of this study are a result of the existence of values that emphasize employee-centeredness even at the expense of sales growth, depending on the possibility of a small business orientation of managers.

If small business orientation can be one of the key factors in determining which companies place the highest priority on employee happiness, it is hoped that this will create a stir in the consciousness of job seekers, who tend to think of large organizations as much as possible.

In these cases, some may not seek rapid expansion or excessive burdens on their employees, even to catch up with the growing demand, because they place more importance on improving the welfare of their firms.

5.2. Conclusion
We found that in Kyoto's local lodging industry long-operating companies tend to strongly show a small business orientation instead of sales growth and resource expansion. Furthermore, sales growth might be more suppressed in long-operating companies compared to the increase in the number of employees.

5.3. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

In this study, the number of years in operation was considered as one of the manifestations of small business orientation as a surrogate variable. However, small business orientation should originally be measured based on a survey of the values of owners and managers. Using other surveys or data, we must examine the values that local lodging companies regard as important, and recognize that it is necessary to accumulate empirical studies in combination with the surveys of values in the future.

REFERENCES

Barney, J. (1991). Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage. *Journal of Management*, *17*(1), 99–120. https://doi.org/10.1177/014920639101700108

Gomez-Mejia, L. R., Cruz, C., Berrone, P., & De Castro, J. (2011). The bind that ties: Socioemotional wealth preservation in family firms. *The Academy of Management Annals, 5*(1), 653–707. https://doi.org/10.1080/19416520.2011.593320

Kachaner, N., Stalk, G., & Bloch, A. (2012). What you can learn from family business. *Harvard Business Review*, *90*(11), 102–106.

Kyoto City Government. (2024). *January 2024 Preliminary figures of facilities*. (in Japanese) https://www.city.kyoto.lg.jp/hokenfukushi/cmsfiles/contents/0000193/193116/202401suii.pdf .

Kyoto Prefecture Government. (2020). *Statistical Report of Tourists in Kyoto Prefecture 2020*. (in Japanese) https://www.pref.kyoto.jp/kanko/research/documents/tougou.pdf

Nagano, H.(2015). *The Evolution of Resource-Based View*. Chuokeizaisha (in Japanese).

Penrose, E, T. (1959). *The theory of the growth in the firm*. Blackwell.

Runyan, R. C., Droge, C., & Swinney, J. L. (2008). Entrepreneurial orientation versus small business orientation: Do their relationships to firm performance depend on longevity. *Journal of Small Business Management*, *46*, 567–588. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-627X.2008.00257.x

Runyan, R. C., & Covin, J. G. (2019). Small business orientation: A construct proposal. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *43*, 529–552. https://doi.org/10.1177/1042258718807171

Wernerfelt, B. (1984). A resource-based view of the firm. *Strategic Management Journal*, *5*(2), 171–180. https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.4250050207

Winning the race for competitive advantages through asymmetric dynamics of service quality: Introducing theory-driven asymmetric impact competitor analysis

Park, Eunhye
Department of Food and Nutrition
Gachon University

Park, Hyekyung
Dedman College of Hospitality
Florida State University

Dogru, Tarik
Dedman College of Hospitality
Florida State University

Lee, Minwoo
Conrad N. Hilton College of Global Hospitality Leadership
University of Houston

Abstract:

It is crucial to develop unique and superior service quality that competitors to maintain a competitive advantage in the highly competitive hospitality industry. However, previous research on service quality has predominantly focused on the direct relationship between service attribute evaluations and overall satisfaction, often overlooking the competitive market dynamics. To bridge this research gap, the present study explores the asymmetric effects of service attributes on customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction within the airline industry, considering the key contextual factors, varying flight distances and major airline alliances. This study analyzed 450,967 customer reviews from leading airline alliances on TripAdvisor using an impact asymmetry competitor analysis to demonstrate the competitive positioning of specific service attributes. The findings underscore the roles of service attributes in shaping customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction, highlighting the importance of service quality management. This study contributes to the literature with a strong theoretical foundation and empirical evidence of the competitive and asymmetric aspects of service quality, substantially extending the use of two-factor and resource-advantage theories in the hospitality domain.

Keywords: Asymmetric impact, Impact asymmetry competitor analysis, Two-factor theory, Customer satisfaction, Service attributes, Competitive market dynamics

Causal inference for observational tourism and hospitality research: An application of the fractional imputation (FI) approach

Choi, Jinung
Department of Applied Statistics
Yonsei University

Joo, Hyei Rin
Kim, Jewoo
Apparel, Events, and Hospitality Management
Iowa State University

Choeh, Joon Yeon
Department of Software
Sejong University

Im, Jongho
Department of Applied Statistics
Yonsei University

Abstract:

Despite significant methodological advancements in causal inference, the study notes a gap in tourism and hospitality (T&H) literature regarding the application of causal analysis to observational studies. In response, the study explores the potential outcomes framework (POF) along with its foundational assumptions. Further, this study proposes a novel causal inference method employing the fractional imputation technique for observational T&H research. The FICI method is design to address the fundamental missing data problem in causal inference while releasing one of the POF's assumptions. This study includes an empirical test of the imputation-based method and discusses its theoretical and practical implications.
Keywords: Causal inference, potential outcomes framework, counterfactual, missing data problem, fractional imputation

1. Introduction

Causal relationships refer to the connection between two events where one event directly leads to the other event (Yao et al., 2021). By simplifying the complexity of phenomena, causal explanations provide a manageable and comprehensible framework that facilitates dependable predictions (Douglas, 2009). Because of these advantages, causal inference has been a key issue in various fields including social sciences, health sciences, and business (Imbens, 2024). Tourism and hospitality (T&H) are no exception to this research stream. There has been substantial scholarly attention given to developing robust research designs for causal analysis and unraveling causal mechanisms (Viglia & Dolnicar, 2020).

However, these scholarly discussions on causal inference in T&H has predominantly concentrated on randomized experiments, overlooking the applicability of the widely accepted theoretical framework for causal reasoning to observational research. The superiority of randomized experiments in causal inference is attributable to their random assignment of subjects to treatments (Rubin 2008). According to the seminal work of Neyman (1923), the causal effect of a treatment is defined as the difference between the potential outcomes under treatment and control conditions. Because a subject cannot be simultaneously exposed to both treatment and control conditions, only one potential outcome is observed for the subject while the other potential outcome is inevitably missing. This fundamental problem in causal inference makes it impossible to directly measure causal effects at the subject level (Igelström et al., 2022). Therefore, Neyman's causal analysis focuses on the estimation of average treatment effect (ATE) through randomized experiments at the population level (Rubin, 2008). In a randomized experiment, subjects are randomly assigned to either the treatment or control group. Under this randomization assignment mechanism, treatment and control groups are equivalent on average in terms of influencing factors except the treatment condition. Thus, ATE can be estimated by comparing the difference in outcomes between these two groups, using only observed potential outcomes (Yao et al., 2021).

This foundational approach to causal inference was further elaborated upon by Rubin (1978), introducing the potential outcomes framework (POF), also known as the counterfactual framework. The POF articulates core concepts in modern causal inference, including unit (subject), treatment, potential outcomes, and causal (or treatment) effects, while formulating the dynamics of causal effects within a comprehensive model in a mathematical language (Peral, 2010). Furthermore, the important contribution of the POF lies in specifying key assumptions regarding the data and causal relationships, which serve as the fundamental principles in identifying causal effects among variables (Rubin, 2008). Because these assumptions can apply to not only experiments but also non-experimental settings where randomization is not plausible, the POF demonstrates that causal inference can be generalized in observational research if the research design meets the key assumptions. (Yao et al., 2021).

The theoretical framework of the POF and its extension to observational research have been advocated in many disciplines including accounting, strategic management, economics, education, and sociology (Durand & Vaara, 2009; Gow et al. 2016; Imbens, 2024). Meanwhile, a range of methodological techniques (e.g., matching, propensity score method (PSM), stratification) have been developed to assist observational research in more closely approximating a randomized experiment in line with the key assumptions of the POF (Yao et al., 2021). Despite the substantial methodological advances in both the theories and techniques for causal inference, limited attention has been given to causal analysis for observational studies in T&H literature.

Therefore, this study aims to introduce the fundamental mechanisms of the POF along with its theoretical reasoning that allows the estimation of causal effects in observational research. In addition, we propose a new causal inference method for T&H observational research that employs the fractional imputation (FI) method to deal with the fundamental problem in causal inference. The proposed method posits that the unobserved potential outcomes are missing values (Pearl, 2010) and attempts to address the missing data problem to relax the assumptions of the POF. This approach can present flexibility in causal inference models for T&H observational research. Finally, the empirical test will be conduct on social crowdfunding projects to show the step-by-step process of applying our FI-based causal inference (FICI) method to observational studies in T&H.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Potential outcomes framework (POF)

The causal effect is the discrepancy between potential outcomes of a particular variable of interest when applying two different treatments to the same unit at the same time point (Rubin, 1978). For instance, consider an investigation into the causal effect of university-level education in hospitality and tourism on future annual earnings, The causal effect of this higher education on an individual's income is the difference between the individual's two potential incomes: one assuming the completion of the university degree program on T&H, and the other assuming non-participation in such a program.

Let T denote the treatment assignment, where T_i=1 indicates that unit i is part of the treatment group (e.g., completed the tourism/hospitality degree program), and T_i=0 indicates assignment to the control group (e.g., not participating in the degree program). The potential outcome under each treatment condition is represented as $Y(T)$. Thus, the causal effect (τ) for unit i can be mathematically formulated as

$$\tau_i = Y_i(1) - Y_i(0). \tag{1}$$

The fundamental problem in causal inference, as highlighted by Holland (1986), is that both potential outcomes cannot be observed for the same unit simultaneously. This limitation arises because each unit can only receive one treatment condition at any given time, leading to only one of the two potential outcomes being observable. However, establishing causal relationships necessitates the estimation of the unobserved potential outcomes for the comparison of the two potential outcomes.

A basic approach to this challenge involves comparing the means of observed potential outcomes in the treatment and control groups, calculated as

$$\frac{1}{n_1}\sum_{T_i=1} Y_i(1) - \frac{1}{n_0}\sum_{T_i=0} Y_i(0) \tag{2}$$

where n_1 and n_0 represent sample size of the treatment and control groups, respectively. This causal effect estimation is made assuming the standard stable unit treatment assumption (SUTVA): no interference between units and a single version for each treatment condition (Rubin, 2008). Causal effect estimates from this approach are valid in research settings where pre-existing differences between the treatment and control groups are controlled (Gow et al., 2016). When such group disparities exist before a treatment starts and can affect potential outcomes, it is misleading to solely attribute the difference in potential outcomes to the treatment. Thus, it is imperative in drawing credible causal conclusions to control these influential pre-existing group disparities or confounding variables in causal analysis.

The basic approach holds by randomized experiments where unconfoundness is feasible through random assignment (Imbens, 2024). Thus, we can obtain unobserved potential outcomes by estimating their conditional expectation given the observed data. The conditional expectation is mathematically represented as follows:

$$\overline{Y}(1-T) = E\{Y(1-T)|X, Y(T), T\}. \tag{3}$$

where X indicates observed unit-specific characteristics which are known as pre-treatment variables (covariates) in that their values are fixed prior to treatment assignment. To facilitate accurate estimation of causal effects, we leverage these pre-treatment variables. Equation(3) conceptualizes the expected values of unobserved potential outcomes in the function of pre-treatment variables, observed potential outcomes, and treatment assignments. In the context of the higher T&H education program, gender and parental education levels are considered pre-treatment variables. In notation, they are encapsulated within a p-dimensional vector X. The observed dataset, comprising N samples, is thus represented as $[\{X_i, T_i, Y_i(T_i)\}: i=1, ..., N]$, and $\{Y_i(1-T_i): i=1, \ldots, N\}$ denotes the unobserved potential outcomes.

However, the basic approach based on the group mean comparison is likely to produce biased estimates in observational studies where random assignment to treatment conditions is impossible (Rubin, 2008). Consequently, additional assumptions are needed to handle the confounding bias (Ding & Li, 2018). The POF expands on the Neyman's approach by incorporating key assumptions for causal inference that address the challenges (e.g., confounding bias) in estimating causal effects in non-randomized research settings. These assumptions provide the guidance for scholars to carefully design their research so as to simulate the conditions of a randomized experiment (Yao et al., 2021). Accordingly, various methods have been developed based on the key assumptions, enhancing the robustness and applicability of causal analysis in observational studies (Igelström et al., 2022). The following section will detail the key assumptions for causal inference emphasized in the POF.

2.2. Strongly ignorability treatment assignment (SITA) assumption

The strongly ignorability treatment assignment (SITA) assumption consists of two sub-assumptions: positivity assumption and ignorability assumption. The positivity assumption indicates that for every combination of pre-treatment variables, it is possible for units to be assigned to either a treatment condition or a control condition (Rubin, 1978). By removing the possibility that units with the same characteristics are assigned to only one condition, random assignment can hold. The non-zero probability of receiving each condition for every unit is formally expressed as:

$$\{Y(0), Y(1)\} \perp T \,|X,\ 0<\mathrm{pr}(T=1|X)<1. \tag{4}$$

The ignorability assumption posits that after controlling for pre-treatment variables, the assignment of units to treatment conditions is independent of potential outcomes (Rubin 1978). This implies that the observed pre-treatment variables X account for all confounding variables related to potential outcomes, thereby enabling control over confounding bias. Under the ignorability assumption, treatment assignment can be random for units sharing the same characteristics (Yao et al., 2021).

Following SITA emphasizing random assignment, the treatment indicator T can be excluded from Equation(2), allowing for the estimation of the conditional expectation of unobserved potential outcomes using the full dataset combining observed pre-treatment variables and observed potential outcomes:

$$f(Y(1-T)|X,Y(T),T) = \frac{f\{Y(1-T)|Y(T),\ T|X\}}{f\{Y(T),\ T|X\}} = \frac{f\{Y(1-T),Y(T)|X\}}{f\{Y(T)|X\}} \text{ by SITA}$$

$$= f(Y(1-T)|X,Y(T)). \quad (5)$$

$$E\{Y(1-T)|X,Y(T),T\} = E\{Y(1-T)|X,Y(T)\} \quad (6)$$

SITA serves as a foundation for PSM and stratification (Rubin, 2008). From a missing data perspective, these methods are the weighting methods which create a weighted sample where the distribution of observed pre-treatment variables is similar between the treatment and control group (Ding & Li, 2018). By addressing imbalances in the pre-treatment variables between the groups, weighting methods enable the observed potential outcomes under one treatment condition to account for the missing outcomes under the other treatment condition for causal analysis.

2.3. Conditional independence assumption (CIA)

Even with Equation(6) established under SITA, estimating $E\{Y(1-T)|X,Y(T),T\}$ from the observed dataset remains challenging. This is due to the fact that the conditional expectation of missing potential outcomes rely on the relationships among the variables $\{X,Y(0),Y(1)\}$, while these variables are partially observable for each unit: only $\{X,Y(0)\}$or$\{X,Y(1)\}$ are available for a given unit. To address this challenge, many causal inference methods implicitly adopt the conditional independence assumption (CIA): given the observed pre-treatment variables X, the observed potential outcome $Y(T)$ does not provide additional information for estimating the missing potential outcome $Y(1-T)$. This assumption is formulated as follows:

$$E\{Y(1-T)|X, Y(T)\} = E\{Y(1-T)|X\} \quad (7)$$

Equation(7) denotes the relationship between $Y(1-T)$ and X, all of which are available in the group with the treatment indicator value of $1-T$. Thus, $E\{Y(1-T)|X\}$ can be estimated from the data specific to a particular treatment group. For instance, to estimate the causal effect of unit i assigned to the treatment group, i.e., T_i=1, we can estimate its missing potential outcome $Y_i(0)$ by fitting a regression model with $Y(0)$ as the dependent variable and X as the independent variable using the data from the control group. Then, we input the covariate value X_i into the fitted regression model, yielding the estimated value for the missing potential outcome of unit i, $\overline{Y}_i(0)$. This approach remains valid under CIA.

However, CIA may not always hold true. Returning to the example of the higher T&H education program, if an individual who did not participate in the degree program achieves high earnings afterward, it is reasonable to assume that the individual may have attained a high income even if they had participated in the program. Conversely, if an individual exhibits low income despite completing the degree program, the individual may have similarly received a low income even without participating in the degree program. This illustrates that the missing potential outcome may be correlated with the observed outcome in many cases, and the observed outcome could provide additional information on the missing outcome even though X is already established. In such instances where CIA does not hold, causal inference methods relying on CIA may introduce bias as they overlook information provided by the observed outcome. Therefore, this study proposes the FICI method that diverges from the reliance on CIA.

3. Proposed Causal Inference Method

Imputation methods are another underpinning missing data method for causal inference along with weight methods (Ding & Li, 2018). These methods involve substituting plausible values for missing data using the observed data (Kim & Im, 2018). When comparing the treatment and control groups in causal analysis, unobserved potential outcomes are imputed with plausible values. These values are estimated from the observed data including observed potential outcomes and pre-treatment variables. To generate such imputed values for missing data, imputation models are utilized; stochastic models are commonly employed (Ding & Li, 2018; Im et a., 2015).

Our FICI method employs a statistical matching technique using FI introduced by Kim et al. (2015). This technique seeks to amalgamate the data from diverse sources for the purpose of analyzing variables that are not concurrently observed. This challenge resonates with causal analysis where datasets from control and treatment groups are accessible, yet the potential outcomes cannot be simultaneously observed. The statistical matching technique adopts FI, a method for handling missing data. FI generates multiple candidate values for a missing observation, assigning each candidate value a fractional weight depending on its plausibility for the missing observation (Im et al., 2015). As a result, the original dataset with missing observations is transformed into an augmented complete dataset with fractional weights.

Figure 1 illustrates the application of FI within a causal inference framework. For a unit i, the treatment group has the observed outcome $Y_i(1)$ and the missing outcome $Y_i(0)$. FI generates multiple imputed values for the missing outcome $Y_i(0)$, denoted as $Y_i(0)^{*(m)}$, each accompanied by a corresponding fractional weight w^*_{im} . The fractional weights of imputed values pertaining to a specific unit sum to one, effectively partitioning a single unit of raw data into M smaller units within the imputed dataset. Similarly, for a different unit k assigned to the control group where $Y_k(1)$ is unobserved, a parallel process is undertaken to generate multiple imputed values to fill in the missing outcome $Y_k(1)$.

T	X	$Y(0)$	$Y(1)$
1	$\boldsymbol{X_i}$	NA	$Y_i(1)$
0	$\boldsymbol{X_k}$	$Y_k(0)$	NA

T	X	$Y(0)$	$Y(1)$	w
1	$\boldsymbol{X_i}$	$Y_i(0)^{*(1)}$	$Y_i(1)$	w^*_{i1}
		$\vdots$		$\vdots$
		$Y_i(0)^{*(M)}$		w^*_{iM}
0	$\boldsymbol{X_k}$	$Y_k(0)$	$Y_k(1)^{*(1)}$	w^*_{k1}
			$\vdots$	$\vdots$
			$Y_k(1)^{*(M)}$	w^*_{kM}

Figure 1. Imputed Data via FI in Causal Inference

3.1. Estimation of imputed values

To apply FI to causal analysis, imputed values and weights should be estimated. They are obtained by estimating the conditional expectation of missing potential outcomes (Equation(6): $E\{Y(1-T)|X,Y(T)\}$). Under SITA, the conditional expectation equates to the target distribution: $f(Y(1-T)|X,Y(T))$ as described in Equation(5). If we assume that the target distribution function for missing potential outcomes has a parameter θ, the function is expressed: $f(Y(1-T)|X,Y(T)) = f(Y(1-T)|X,Y(T);\theta)$. Following Bayes' rule, the distribution can be converted into the product of two sub-distributions: proposal distribution for imputed values and weight distribution for fractional weights, each characterized by parameters φ and γ, respectively:

$$f(Y(1-T)|X,Y(T);\theta) \propto f(Y(T)|X,Y(1\text{-}T);\varphi)\cdot f(Y(1-T)|X;\gamma). \quad (8)$$

As elaborated in the section 2.3, $f(Y(1-T)|X;\gamma)$ can be estimated from the observed data for the 1−T group. This distribution function serves as the proposal distribution to generate imputed values. The estimate of γ, denoted by $\hat{\gamma}$, is derived using estimation techniques such as ordinary least squares estimation or maximum likelihood estimation. Then, pre-treatment conditions for a specific unit, denoted as X_i, are incorporated into $f(Y(1-T)|X;\hat{\gamma})$. From $f(Y(1-T)|X_i;\hat{\gamma})$, we generate M independently and identically distributed (iid) samples and designate them as the imputed values for the missing potential outcome of unit i:

$$Y_i(1-T_i)^{*(m)} \overset{iid}{\sim} f(Y(1-T)|X_i;\hat{\gamma}) \qquad \text{for } m = 1,\dots,M. \quad (9)$$

Consider an unit i assigned to the treatment group (T=1) as an example; the target distribution for estimating its missing potential outcome $Y_i(0)$ is expressed as:

$$f(Y(0)|X,Y(1);\theta) \propto f(Y(1)|X,Y(0);\varphi)\cdot f(Y(0)|X;\gamma).$$

The parameter of $f(Y(0)|X;\gamma)$ is estimated from the observed data for the control group in which $Y(0)$ and X are available. Thereafter, imputed values for this unit are generated from the estimated proposal distribution incorporating its covariate value (X_i):

$$Y_i(0)^{*(m)} \overset{iid}{\sim} f(Y(0)|X_i;\hat{\gamma}) \qquad \text{for } m=1,\dots,M.$$

3.2. Estimation of fractional weights

To estimate fractional weights, note that the ratio between the target distribution:

$f(Y(1-T)|X,Y(T);\theta)$ and the proposal distribution: $f(Y(1-T)|X;\ \gamma)$ is proportional to the distribution of $Y(T)$ given X and $Y(1-T)$ as derived from Equation(8):

$$\frac{f(Y(1-T)|X,Y(T);\theta)}{f(Y(1-T)|X;\gamma)} \propto f(Y(T)|X,\ Y(1\text{-}T);\ \varphi) \tag{10}$$

Equation(10) suggests that the m-th imputed value for unit I with pre-treatment variables X_i and observed potential outcome $Y_i(T_i)$ exhibits a density value for $f(Y(T)|X,Y(1\text{-}T);\varphi)$. Thus, it is logical to establish fractional weights in relation to the estimated density $f(Y(T)|X,Y(1\text{-}T);\widehat{\varphi})$:

$$w^*_{im} \propto f(Y(T)|X,Y(1-T)^{*(m)};\widehat{\varphi}). \tag{11}$$

Based on this relationship, the following formular is drawn to assign fractional weights to the m-th imputed value $Y_i(1\text{-}T_i)^{*(m)}$:

$$w^*_{im} = \frac{f(Y_i(T_i)|X_i,\ Y_i(1-T_i)^{*(m)};\ \widehat{\varphi})}{\sum_{n=1}^{M} f(Y_i(T_i)|X_i,\ Y_i(1-T_i)^{*(n)};\ \widehat{\varphi})} \tag{12}$$

where Equation(11) and $\sum_{m=1}^{M} w^*_{im}=1$ are satisfied. According to Equation(12), estimating the distribution of $f(Y(T)|X,Y(1-T);\varphi)$ is necessary to generate fractional weights.

3.3. Causal effect analysis with estimated missing potential outcomes

The multiple imputed values estimated from the proposal distribution and their fractional weights from the weight distribution represent the target distribution: $f(Y(0)|X,Y(1);\theta)$. In this logic, the conditional expectation of the missing potential outcome for unit i can be approximated by the weighted mean of its imputed values:

$$\widehat{\widehat{Y}}_i(1-T_i) := \sum_{n=1}^{M} w^*_{im}\, Y_i(1-T_i)^{*(m)}. \tag{13}$$

The estimated missing potential outcomes are used to infer the treatment effects of unit i assigned to the treatment group and unit k assigned to the control group as follows:

$$\hat{\tau}_i = Y_i(1) - \widehat{\widehat{Y}}_i(0)$$
$$\hat{\tau}_k = \widehat{\widehat{Y}}_k(1) - Y_k(0). \tag{14}$$

These unit treatment effects are averaged to determine ATE. The following set of equations are used to compute ATE_{TOTAL}, $\text{ATE}_{T=0}$, and $\text{ATE}_{T=1}$:

$$\text{ATE}_{TOTAL} = \frac{1}{n}\left[\sum_{T_i=0}\{\hat{y}_i(1) - y_i(0)\} + \sum_{T_i=1}\{y_i(1) - \hat{y}_i(0)\}\right]$$

$$\text{ATE}_{T=0} = \frac{1}{n_0}\sum_{T_i=0}\{\hat{y}_i(1) - y_i(0)\}$$

$$\text{ATE}_{T=1} = \frac{1}{n_1}\sum_{T_i=1}\{y_i(1) - \hat{y}_i(0)\}. \tag{15}$$

$\text{ATE}_{T=0}$ represents the average treatment effect for units assigned to the control group, where the potential outcomes under the treatment condition are missing. $ATE_{T=1}$ indicates the average treatment effect for units in the treatment group, for which the control condition outcomes are unobserved. ATE_{TOTAL} denotes the average treatment effect for all units obtained by combining $ATE_{T=0}$ and $ATE_{T=1}$.

In our FICI method, multiple imputed values and their different fractional weights are used to fill in one missing potential outcome. However, CIA-based weight methods assign equal weights to each imputed value. In other words, it holds under CIA:

$$w^*_{im} = \frac{f(Y_i(T_i)|X_i, Y_i(1-T_i)^{*(m)})}{\sum_{n=1}^{M} f(Y_i(T_i)|X_i,\ Y_i(1-T_i)^{*(n)})}$$

$$= \frac{f(Y_i(T_i)|X_i,)}{\sum_{n=1}^{M} f(Y_i(T_i)|X_i\ )}$$

$$= 1/M.$$

Under this condition, the target distribution is identical to the proposal distribution, and the information from the observed potential outcome $Y_i(T_i)$ remains unutilized. Conversely, the FICI method fully leverages the observed potential outcome in computing fractional weights, as outlined in Equation(12)), thereby estimating the missing potential outcome.

4. Empirical Test

This study applied the FICI method to foodservice social crowdfunding projects to explore whether the difference in message appeal beneficiaries—self (investor) vs. others (entrepreneur)—leads to differences in the fundraising amount. In reward-based crowdfunding platforms that this study focuses on, investors typically receive selling products as a reward for their pledge on the projects. Thus, customers can also be seen self-beneficiaries alongside investors. To effectively raise the capital needed for startups, it is imperative for entrepreneurs to communicate their business ideas with potential investors in a persuasive way. In this sense, the way in which business projects articulate the value proposition in terms of target beneficiary can significantly influence investment decisions. This empirical test aims to compare the variance in capital raised by restaurant entrepreneurs according to the target beneficiary emphasized in their projects. The foodservice projects targeting self-beneficiaries (investors/customers) were set as the treatment group.

4.1. Data

This study obtained the social crowdfunding project data listed from Indiegogo, one of the popular reward-based crowdfunding platforms. A total of 793 foodservice projects between January 2015 and September 2022 was identified for causal analysis. Two researchers classified 346 projects into the self-appealing project group (treatment) and 447 projects into the others-appealing group (control). Along with project descriptions, crowdfunding amount, fundraising period, number of images, number of videos, and number of words were collected from each project webpage.

4.2. Causal analysis

In the empirical test, a causal analysis was conducted by comparing crowdfunding amounts between projects targeting their appeal to investors/customers (self-appealing) and those focusing on entrepreneurs (others-appealing). As only one beneficiary was mainly described in each project, it was necessary to estimate the unobserved crowdfunding amounts that would have been raised if the project had appealed to the alternative beneficiary instead of the actual beneficiary. To this end, a full model (proposal distribution) for both treatment conditions was first specified to generate imputed values for missing funding amounts:

$$FUND_{BENE(T=1,0)} = \beta_0+\beta_1 DURA+\beta_2 IMG+\beta_3 VDO+\beta_4 LENG+\beta_5 DURA^2+\beta_6 IMG^2+\beta_7 VDO^2+\beta_8 LENG^2+\beta_9 DURA*IMG+\beta_{10} DURA*VDO+\beta_{11} DURA*LENG+\beta_{12} IMG*VDO+\beta_{13} IMG*LENG+\beta_{14} VDO*LENG+\varepsilon \quad (8)$$

This model included a dependent variable of funding amount (*FUND*) and a main treatment variable of target project appeal beneficiary (*BENE*). For *BENE*, self-beneficiaries (investors/customers) were coded as T=1 while others-beneficiaries were assigned T=0. This study also used the fundraising duration (*DURA*), the number of images (*IMG*), the number of videos (*VDO*), and project length (*LENG*) measured as the number of words as covariates (X) to control for confounding effects and characterize the treatment and control groups for FI. Table 1 presents the description of variables and their notations. To improve normality, all variables were logarithmically transformed after adding one to each observation (e.g., $x=log(x+1)$). The addition of 1 was necessary to accommodate variables that contain zero values.

Table 1. Description of variables

Variable	Description
BENE(*T*)	T=1 for self-beneficiaries (investors/customers); T=0 for others-beneficiaries (entrepreneurs)
FUND(*Y*)	Funding amount in USD($)
DURA(X_1)	Fundraising duration in days
IMG(X_2)	Number of images
VDO(X_3)	Number of videos
LENGTH(X_4)	Number of words

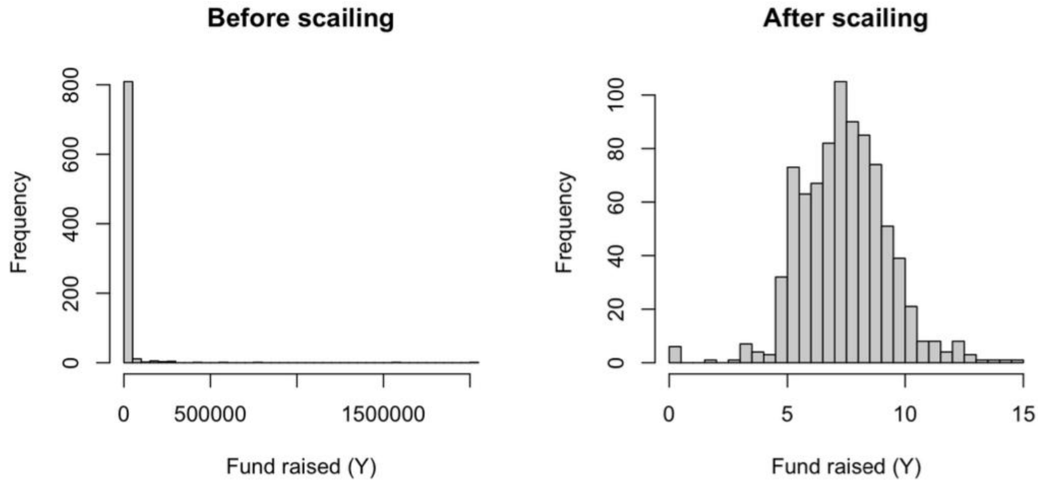


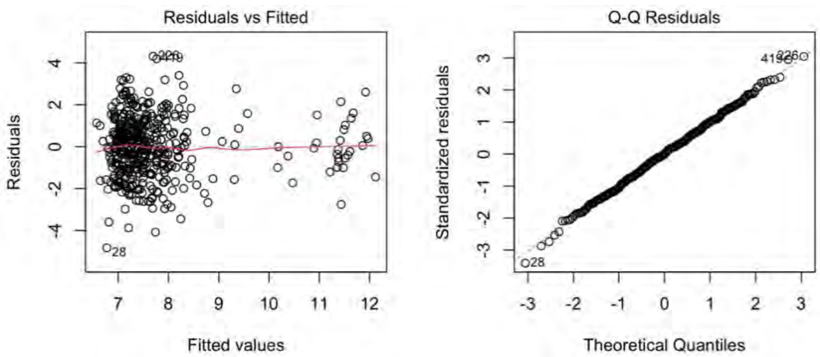
Figure 2. Distributions of *FUND* before and after logarithmic transformation (scaling)

The backward elimination method was adopted to extract the fitted model from the full model (Equation(8)) for each beneficiary condition (investor/customer (T=1) or entrepreneur/community (T=0)). As a result, the following fitted models were identified:

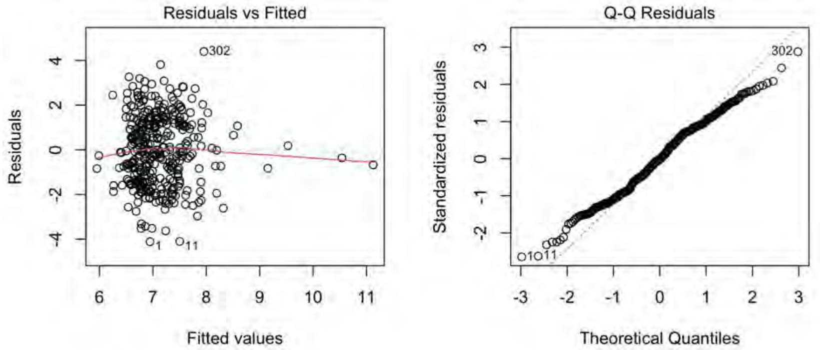
$$FUND_{BENE(T=1)} = 10.04–1.23*DURA+0.59*IMG+0.24*VDO^2–0.11*DURA*IMG+ 0.07*DURA*LENG+1.41^2 \quad (9)$$

$$FUND_{BENE(T=0)} = 5.96+0.23*LENG–0.04*DURA^2+1.05*VDO^2+0.54*IMG*VDO+ 0.04*IMG*LENG–0.28*VDO*LENG+1.57^2 \quad (10)$$

These fitted models demonstrated a robust fit to the data with *R-squared* values of 0.441 for Equation(9) and 0.107 for Equation(10). Their *f*-statistics were 46.31 and 6.75, respectively, both significant at the 0.05 level. The model fit was additionally checked with residual plots and Q-Q plots (see Figure 2). These visual analyses reaffirmed the models' adequate fit to the data.



(a) Equation(9) *BENE*(T=1)



(b) Equation(10) *BENE*(*T*=0)

Figure 2. Residual plots and Q-Q plots of the fitted models

While using the fitted models to generate imputed values for missing crowdfunding amounts, this study estimated the density values for $f(FUND_{BENE(T)}|X_i, FUND_{BENE(1-T)})$ to derive factional weights. Five different density functions with the different combinations of pre-treatment variables X_i were simulated for the robust estimation of fractional weights:

Scenario1: $f(FUND_{BENE(T)}|X_i, FUND_{BENE(1-T)}) \sim N(\beta_0+\beta_1 FUND_{BENE(1-T)}, \varepsilon^2)$

Scenario2: $f(FUND_{BENE(T)}|X_i, FUND_{BENE(1-T)}) \sim N(\beta_0+\beta_1 FUND_{BENE(1-T)}+\beta_2 DURA, \varepsilon^2)$

Scenario3: $f(FUND_{BENE(T)}|X_i, FUND_{BENE(1-T)}) \sim N(\beta_0+\beta_1 FUND_{BENE(1-T)}+\beta_2 DURA+\beta_3 IMG, \varepsilon^2)$

Scenario4: $f(FUND_{BENE(T)}|X_i, FUND_{BENE(1-T)}) \sim N(\beta_0+\beta_1 FUND_{BENE(1-T)}+\beta_2 DURA+\beta_3 IMG+\beta_4 VDO, \varepsilon^2)$

Scenario5: $f(FUND_{BENE(T)}|X_i, FUND_{BENE(1-T)}) \sim N(\beta_0+\beta_1 FUND_{BENE(1-T)}+\beta_2 DURA+\beta_3 IMG+\beta_4 VDO+ \beta_5 LENG, \varepsilon^2)$

5. Results

5.1. Descriptive statistics

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of variables. As the statistics values were logarithmically transformed, they were reverted to their original scale for the analysis. The average funding amount (*FUND*) was $2,472.54 for the treatment group (self-appealing) and $1,227.83 for the control group (other-appealing). The treatment group used more images (5.57) and videos (1.24) in their proposals than the control group (2.47images and 1.08videos). The proposal length was also longer for the treatment group (726.33words) compared to the control group (618.93words). However, the control group (41.24days) had a longer fundraising period than the treatment group (33.65days).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics

Beneficiary	Variables	Mean
Self	*FUND*(*Y*)	7.813
	DURA(X_1)	3.516
	IMG(X_2)	1.717
	VDO(X_3)	0.219
	LENG(X_4)	6.588
Others	*FUND*(*Y*)	7.113

DURA(X_1)	3.741
IMG(X_2)	0.903
VDO(X_3)	0.078
LENG(X_4)	6.428

5.2. Estimated results

Under the five different scenarios for $f(FUND_{BENE(T)}|X_i, FUND_{BENE(1-T)})$, this study computed different fractional weights. By using them with multiple imputed values for each missing outcome derived from the fitted models, $\text{ATE}_{BENE(T=0)}$, $\text{ATE}_{BENE(T=1)}$, and ATE_{TOTAL} were estimated in terms of target beneficiary. Table 3 shows the three ATE estimates for each scenario. Estimates of $\text{ATE}_{BENE(T=0)}$ (or $\text{ATE}_{BENE(T=1)}$) indicate the additional fund raised by self-appealing projects compared to others-appealing ones only when the crowdfunding amounts for others-appealing projects (or self-appealing projects) are available. Estimates of ATE_{TOTAL} is the combination of $\text{ATE}_{BENE(T=0)}$ and $\text{ATE}_{BENE(T=1)}$. Due to the logarithmic transformation applied to the variables, the ATE estimates reflect the percentage difference in the raised fund between the two groups of crowdfunding projects.

Table 3. ATE estimates

Scenario	$\text{ATE}_{BENE(T=0)}$	$\text{ATE}_{BENE(T=1)}$	ATE_{TOTAL}
1	0.213	0.188	0.202
2	0.217	0.184	0.202
3	0.213	0.183	0.199
4	0.213	0.184	0.199
5	0.213	0.184	0.199

The results show that when analyzing the dataset containing observed others-appealing projects, the treatment effect ranged from 21.3% to 21.7%. In the investigation on the dataset with observed self-appealing projects, the treatment effect was estimated to be between 18.3% and 18.8%. On the entire dataset, the estimated treatment effect was 19.9% to 20.2%. These findings indicate that self-appealing projects raised approximately 20% higher funding than others-appealing projects, which confirms the significant treatment effect. The consistency of each ATE measure across the five difference scenarios validates the robustness of the causal analysis outcomes.

This study further compared the causal effect estimate from the new FI-based method with that from the naïve method that simply computes the difference in the average funding amount between self-appealing and others-appealing projects:

$$\text{Naïve estimate} = \frac{1}{n_1}\sum_{T_i=1} y_i(1) - \frac{1}{n_0}\sum_{T_i=0} y_i(0).$$

The causal effect estimate from the naïve method was approximately 70%, which was more than three times the FI estimate.

6. Implications and Conclusions

Despite methodological advancements in theory and technique, T&H literature has not given much attention to the application of causal analysis to observational studies. This study therefore explored the potential outcomes framework (POF) which extended causal inference to observational research by conceptualizing causal effects and outlining conditions under which causal analysis can be made from both experimental and non-experimental data. Furthermore, this study proposed the FICI method for observational research in T&H. Finally, the proposed method was applied to investigate whether different target beneficiary caused changes in the crowdfunding amount for foodservice business projects.

This study contributes to T&H academia in different ways. First, the extensive review on the POF help T&H scholars to understand causal mechanism and appropriately frame causal questions in observational studies beyond randomized experiments (Pearl, 2010). This understanding can be a theoretical basis for designing rigorous causal inference research and deriving credible estimates of treatment effects from observational data (Yao et al., 2021).

Second, the FICI method employs the imputation approach to causal inference to handle unobserved potential outcomes. In the imputation process, it is allowed to fully leverage the observed data. In addition, the proposed method uses a FI technique that creates multiple imputed values for one missing outcome. Furthermore, the imputation approach makes the complete dataset for causal analysis by filling in the missing outcomes with imputed values, which relaxes CIA in modeling causal effects.

Third, the empirical test on the FICI method highlights the causal effect of message appeal on social crowdfunding in the hospitality context. The findings enhance our understanding of how to motivate investors to support entrepreneurial activities by decomposing fundraising appeals into two beneficiary dimensions: self vs. others and investigating the effects of these dimensions on investment behaviors of the public. Practically, the estimated causal effect on the raised funding can serve as a valuable guidance for foodservice entrepreneurs to develop their proposals for individual investors.

REFERENCES

Ding, P., & Li, F. (2018). Causal inference. *Statistical Science, 33*, 214-237.

Douglas, H. E. (2009). Reintroducing prediction to explanation. *Philosophy of Science, 76*(4), 444-463.

Durand, R., & Vaara, E. (2009). Causation, counterfactuals, and competitive advantage. *Strategic Management Journal, 30*(12), 1245-1264.

Gow, I. D., Larcker, D. F., & Reiss, P. C. (2016). Causal inference in accounting research. *Journal of Accounting Research, 54*, 477-523.

Holland, P. W. (1986). Statistics and causal inference. *Journal of the American statistical Association, 81*, 945-960.

Igelström, E., Craig, P., Lewsey, J., Lynch, J., Pearce, A., & Katikireddi, S. V. (2022). Causal inference and effect estimation using observational data. *Journal of Epidemiol Community Health, 76*(11), 960-966.

Im, J., Kim, J. K., & Fuller, W. A. (2015). Two-phase sampling approach to fractional hot deck imputation. *In Proceedings of the Survey Research Methods Section* (pp.1030-1043).

Imbens, G. W. (2024). Causal Inference in the Social Sciences. *Annual Review of Statistics and Its Application, 11*.

Kim, J. K., Berg, E., & Park, T. (2015). Statistical matching using fractional imputation. *arXiv preprint arXiv:1510.03782*.

Kim, J., & Im, J. (2018). Proposing a missing data method for hospitality research on online customer reviews: An application of imputation approach. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 30*, 3250-3267.

Neyman, J. (1923). On the application of probability theory to agricultural experiments. Essay on principles. *Annals Agricultural Sciences*, 1-51.

Pearl, J. (2010). The foundations of causal inference. *Sociological Methodology, 40*, 75-149.

Rubin, D. B. (1978). Bayesian inference for causal effects: The role of randomization. *The Annals of Statistics*, 34-58.

Rubin, D. R. (2008). For objective causal inference, design trumps analysis. *Annals of Applied Statistics, 2*, 808-840

Viglia, G., & Dolnicar, S. (2020). A review of experiments in tourism and hospitality. *Annals of Tourism Research, 80*, 102858.

Yao, L., Chu, Z., Li, S., Li, Y., Gao, J., & Zhang, A. (2021). A survey on causal inference. *ACM Transactions on Knowledge Discovery from Data (TKDD)*, 15(5), 1-46.

Could the Covid-19 have been managed differently: restaurant perspectives on operating in a hypothetical restriction-less Covid-19 environment

Chiriko, Amare
School of Hotel and Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Ayalew, Zemenu
School of Hotel and Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Jin, Ying
School of Hotel and Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Ma, Jizhen
School of Hotel and Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Xiao, Honggen
School of Hotel and Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Abstract:

The cost of Covid-19 on the hospitality industry has been documented as wide-ranging. This study explored restaurants' perspectives in a restriction-less environment. Qualitative data were collected and analyzed using thematic analysis. Results revealed mixed opinions on embracing a restriction-less period. Drops in restaurant revenues were imagined in the early days, followed by a performance boost in later phases. Customer satisfaction was thought to remain unaffected. Leveraging technological advancements, service improvements, and operational flexibility were identified as coping strategies.

Keywords: COVID-19, restriction-less COVID environment, restaurants, imagined restaurant perspectives

1. Introduction

The restaurant sector felt its fair share of the cost during the COVID-19 pandemic, with the quick service restaurant market size shrinking by over 15% in 2020 and 2021 from pre-pandemic years (Statista, 2023a). The pandemic restrictions hurt restaurants the most, with consumers more inclined towards online and delivery food alternatives as the restrictions remained in place (Brizek et al., 2021). This drew swift scholarly investigation that focused on backwards-looking and forward-looking studies. However, existing research suffers from two significant gaps. Firstly, it remains unclear how the restriction-less pandemic environment would have turned out. Secondly, it is worth exploring restaurant reflections beyond the pandemic-induced restriction. This study seeks to attain three objectives: 1) to assess restaurants' imagined response to restriction-less government measures; 2) to examine the imagined impacts of a restriction-less COVID-19 environment on restaurant businesses and diners' satisfaction; and 3) to evaluate envisioned survival and recovery strategies that would be pursued by the businesses in such a scenario.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Restaurant Operation under less restriction

With the implementation of a complete lockdown and travel restrictions, the restaurant sector was one of the first to endure the brunt of the pandemic's economic costs (Gursoy & Chi, 2020). A counter-argument suggests a different outcome could have occurred if the public had been allowed to work and socialize with limited hygiene measures. Even with reduced demand, restaurants could have still operated with lower profit margins (Norris et al., 2021). It is worth noting that even in this situation, restaurants still face challenges due to reduced customer confidence, social distancing measures, and changes in consumer behaviour (Lee & Koo, 2023). As for survival strategies in COVID-19, restaurants had to put in extra effort to keep abreast with the demands of operating in a non-lockdown environment; their efforts have been aided by various stakeholders. Governments and financial institutions have taken part in providing support grants or soft loans (Sardar et al., 2022; Arslan et al., 2022). Gkoumas (2022) observed that such synergy among the stakeholders was vital for restaurants' crisis management strategies.

2.2. Institutional theory

The institutional theory provides a reasonable explanation for specific decisions made by the restaurant business during the pandemic while duly accounting for the actions of multiple stockholders. According to the institutional theory, organizations do not always make rational business decisions to maximize their financial benefits. Organizations often remain vigilant and promptly respond to the demands and requirements of different stakeholders for their businesses to be legally and socially legitimate (Loi et al., 2021). Apart from legal requirements, normative pressures can influence optimal business decisions. Firms may mimic industry or best practice businesses and act by established rules or emulate the actions of their competitors to attract customers and maintain competitiveness in the market.

3. Methodology

The study adopts a constructivist paradigm. Guided by the constructivist paradigm, the study employs a descriptive design involving a qualitative research approach. The data for the current study were collected from a purposefully selected sample of 11 restaurant owners and managers in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) during the months of October and November in 2023. Restaurant owners and/or managers were approached for data collection. This study targeted independent restaurants instead of hotel restaurants and chain restaurants, as independent restaurants are better suited for analysis of firm-level scenario reflections (Elshaer, 2022). The interviews were conducted unstructured in three languages (English, Mandarin, and Cantonese). After the completion of interviews and systematic transcriptions, data collected in Mandarin and Cantonese were translated into English. English interviews were checked for grammatical and punctuation errors and arranged in a steady, logical flow of ideas and concepts. The cleaned data were then analyzed using thematic analysis. Before inputting the transcript, open coding of data was first conducted. Based on rough themes and sub-themes emerging from the Nvivo 11 software, axial coding was then conducted to determine the final themes guiding study results.

4. Results

4.1. Profile of the respondents

Six out of 11 restaurants stated that they would have approved of the decision to continue business as usual, while the remaining five restaurants believed that such a move wouldn't have been in their favour. The findings indicate a typical public divide when reflecting back on a past event. Early-career, younger, and mostly foreign owners/managers tend to have a more positive outlook on the restriction-free scenario, while older and experienced local respondents tend to prioritize safety and sustainability. Additionally, people who have been influenced by Confucianism tend to adhere to government rules and regulations. Most interviewees divided the performance into three stages early stage, middle stage, and late stage. Despite the absence of restrictions, restaurant revenues would still have dramatically dropped at the early stage of the pandemic while expecting a rebound and recovery in later phases. Furthermore, the findings indicate that the success stories of survival could have been the case in Hong Kong. Additionally, the impact on restaurant performance and the COVID-19 pandemic seriously affected diners' satisfaction. Participants imagined that guest satisfaction would not have been significantly affected. They also claimed that news of lockdowns across the world would have increased the appeal of dining out.

4.2. Resilience and Preparedness for Future

As for plans to sustain their operations, interviewees revealed that their restaurants envisioned adopting two major strategies. Firstly, they would look forward to using technology for online ordering and delivery. Secondly, they emphasized the importance of embracing a diversified business model that emphasizes expanding takeaway options for their customers. The interviewees emphasized the importance of learning from the past pandemic and implementing proactive planning to avoid panic. They stressed that if Covid-like pandemics were to occur again, priority should be given to sustaining businesses. It can be concluded that practitioners continue to believe in possibilism theories rather than determinism.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study took a novel dimension of exploring restaurants' perspectives on how the business would look like in a restriction-less environment. Findings of thematic analysis of unstructured interviews indicated that the government's move for a restriction-less environment would have been met with mixed reactions. Theoretically, this study will add to the existing literature on vulnerability and resilience. Secondly, the study will contribute to the disaster risk management literature. Finally, the study will add to the stock of literature on scenario and perspective analysis. Practically, the study provides a well-designed disaster risk management and recovery plan on the part of the government. In addition, this study also suggests innovative measures that businesses and governments can adopt in the future. This study focuses on the perspectives of micro and small-sized restaurants. Therefore, further studies can be done focusing on micro, small and medium-sized restaurants. Secondly, cases and related suggestions in Hong Kong may not be suitable worldwide. Further studies can explore more situations in different cities. Last but not least, the restaurant is not the only sector impacted by COVID-19; further studies can pay attention to other sectors and make comparisons among them.

REFERENCES

Arslan, A., Kamara, S., Zahoor, N., Rani, P., & Khan, Z. (2022). Survival strategies adopted by microbusinesses during COVID-19: an exploration of ethnic minority restaurants in northern Finland. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research, 28*(9), 448-465.

Brizek, M. G., Frash, R. E., McLeod, B. M., & Patience, M. O. (2021). Independent restaurant operator perspectives in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *93*, 102766.

Elshaer, A. M. (2022). Restaurants' response to Covid-19 pandemic: The realm of Egyptian independent restaurants. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, *23*(3), 716-747.

Gkoumas, A. (2022). Developing an indicative model for preserving restaurant viability during the COVID-19 crisis. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, *22*(1), 18-31.

Gursoy, D., & Chi, C. G. (2020). Effects of COVID-19 pandemic on hospitality industry: review of the current situations and a research agenda. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, *29*(5), 527-529.

Lee, C., & Koo, Y. (2023). Analyzing sales of the Korean restaurant franchise during the COVID-19 pandemic with the mixed-effects model approach. *Plos one*, *18*(10), e0293147.

Norris, C.L., Taylor Jr, S. and Taylor, D.C. (2021). Pivot! How the restaurant industry adapted during COVID-19 restrictions. *International Hospitality Review*, *35*(2), 132-155.

Sardar, S., Ray, R., Hasan, M. K., Chitra, S. S., Parvez, A. S., & Avi, M. A. R. (2022). Assessing the effects of COVID-19 on restaurant business from restaurant owners' perspective. *Frontiers in psychology, 13*, 849249.
Statistica (2023a). Daily year-on-year impact of COVID-19 on global restaurant dining 2020-2022 (6 Sept 2023) (Accessed on 14 Nov 2023). https://www.statista.com/statistics/1103928/coronavirus-restaurant-visitation-impact/

Guestroom aesthetics and Booking intentions: The moderation of travel goal and expertise

Luana Nanu
School of Hospitality and Tourism Management
University of South Florida

Veena Chattaraman
Department of Consumer and Design Sciences
Auburn University

Imran Rahman
Horst Schulze School of Hospitality Management
Auburn University

Abstract:

Drawing from the PIA model and the MAYA principle, this research examines how design aesthetics influence consumer pleasure and interest, thereby affecting booking intentions. Findings indicate that a balance between innovativeness and typicality in hotel room design fosters favorable booking intentions, especially when aligned with utilitarian travel goals. Moreover, travel expertise moderates the impact of room design on booking intentions, suggesting that experienced travelers exhibit a stronger preference for the MAYA principle.

Keywords: Hotel Room Design, Pleasure-Interest Model, MAYA Principle.

1. Introduction

To date, only a few studies have delved into the concept of servicescapes (Bitner, 1992), such as Lee (2019) studying the effects of biophilic design and Baek et al. (2020) comparing lifestyle and traditional hotel service experiences. Despite extensive research on hotel room design, upper midscale hotels within the hotel sector have received limited attention. Drawing from the Pleasure-Interest Model of Aesthetic Liking (Graf & Landwehr, 2017) and Most Advanced Yet Acceptable (MAYA) principle (Hekkert et al., 2003), the purpose of this study is to provide a holistic understanding of how typicality and innovativeness of room design impacts consumer pleasure and interest, which in turn leads to booking intentions. This study also investigates the moderating roles of the trip goal (hedonic or utilitarian) and travel expertise (high or low) on the relationship between interior design factors and booking intentions.

2. Literature Review

The PIA model differentiates between pleasure-based and interest-based aesthetic liking and further explains the processing dynamics of these two routes (Graf & Landwehr, 2015). The model postulates that the processing of an aesthetic object can only be automatic, or first automatic, and then controlled. The PIA model further postulates that automatic processing is stimulus-driven, and the default way of processing, while controlled processing is perceiver-driven and requires motivation. According to the PIA model, aesthetic preferences can be formed by both processing approaches, which represents two hierarchical processing levels (Graf & Landwehr, 2015).

The MAYA principle postulates that there is a general preference for a balanced mix between typicality and novelty (innovativeness in the current research), specifically when it comes to new products there is support for the preference for prototypes and the need for novelty (Hekkert et al., 2003). Typicality can be defined as the degree to which an object, or design in the current study, is representative of a category (Blijlevens et al., 2012). McClelland et al. (2004) explain that when a typical stimulus is presented to a perceiver the cognitive apparatus recognizes and categorizes the stimulus with ease, with a typical design being processed more fluently than an atypical one, resulting in a positive appraisal. In the current study, the novelty will be operationalized as innovativeness, which is defined by Leder and Carbon (2005) as "originality by virtue of introducing new ideas" (p.587), in other words introducing something new. Building on the MAYA, for a design to be successful the harmonic balance between innovativeness and typicality, must be established, trying to be as innovative as possible while preserving as much as possible the typicality of the design.
H1: Booking intentions are more favorable for upper midscale hotel interior designs with high innovativeness and high typicality as compared to other combinations: a) low innovativeness and high typicality; b) high innovativeness and low typicality; and c) low innovativeness and low typicality.

The MAYA principle aims to offer the highest innovativeness and typicality in design and consumers with utilitarian goals are more likely to be interested in simple yet advanced upper midscale room design. In contrast consumers with hedonic goals would be more interested in non-tangible benefits, which can stimulate design uniqueness, emotional appeal, not related to the physical function (Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000). In the context of the MAYA principle, the goals sought by hedonic travel consumption would translate into high innovativeness and low typicality, as opposed to high innovativeness and high typicality, which would resonate more with the utilitarian travel consumption.
H2: Compared to other design combinations, MAYA design results in more favorable booking intentions for utilitarian rather than hedonic goals.

Travel experience leads to expertise since it increases familiarity with hotels in general (McCleary et al., 2007). According to the PIA Model, an observer needs to have the desire to possess knowledge about an object to process an aesthetic stimulus (Graf & Landwehr, 2015). Ranscombe et al. (2015) point out that people form their opinions on the "sweet spot" of a design. In other words, experienced travelers would have had more exposure than non-experienced travelers to the sweet spot.
H3: Travel experience moderates the relationship between the design type and booking intentions, such that MAYA design results in more favorable booking intentions for experienced than non-experienced travelers.

When the stimulus processing ends with automatic processing, then the affective feeling will translate into aesthetic pleasure or displeasure. While pleasure is triggered by an experience of fluency during automatic processing, interest is driven by an experience of disfluency

reduction during controlled processing (Graf & Landwehr, 2017). Interest consists of an appraisal of novelty followed by an appraisal of coping potential (Silvia, 2005). In the current case, consumers will appraise the high innovativeness as novelty and then use high typicality as the coping potential. Winkielman et al. (2006) asserted that typical design is easy on the eye, and therefore easier to process, while Yang et al. (2019) pointed out that matured markets, such as the upper midscale hotel market, may lack innovation which would negatively impact interest.
H4a: Pleasure mediates the effects of typicality and innovativeness on booking intentions.
H4b: Interest mediates the effects of typicality and innovativeness on booking intentions.

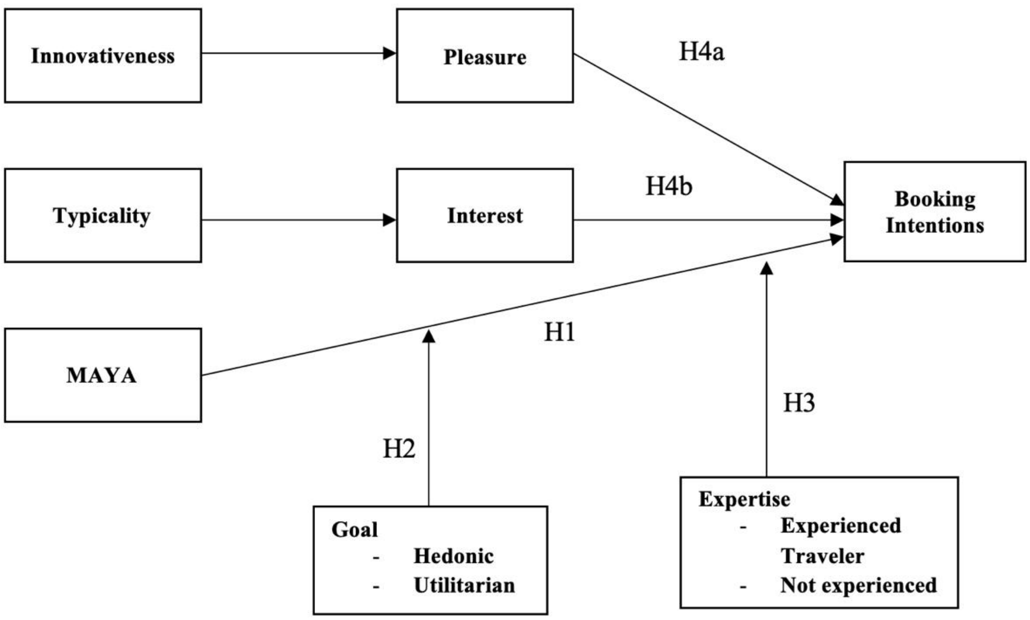


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

3. Methodology

This quantitative study is designed as an online scenario-based experiment. The study employed a 2 (Innovativeness: Low vs. High) × 2 (Typicality: Low vs. High) x 2 (Experienced vs. Non-Experienced) between-subjects experimental design. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the 4 experimental conditions. Both the stimuli check and survey for the main study were distributed via Amazon MTurk Master List as a self-administered online questionnaire.
Typicality was measured on a semantic-differential scale with 3 items (Loken & Ward, 1990), innovativeness was measured with 5 items (Jeong et al., 2017), booking intentions was measured with 3 items (Baek & Ok, 2017), expertise was measured with 3 items (Teichmann, 2011), and hedonic and utilitarian goals (5 items each) were borrowed from Voss et al. (2003). Pleasure was measured with 3 items and interest with 2 items (Turner & Silvia, 2006).

4. Results

A sample of 500 participants was collected; however, only 199 responses were usable as the rest failed the pre-qualification questions and the various attention check questions.
To test H1, we used an independent sample t-test to assess whether high innovativeness and high typicality scenarios led to more favorable booking intentions. Results revealed a significant difference in booking intentions between the MAYA scenario ($M=4.84$, $SD=1.38$) and other scenarios ($M=3.46$, $SD=1.00$), $t(197)=8.06$, $p<.001$, supporting H1.
A utilitarian goal was associated with a greater willingness to book the MAYA-inspired hotel room and bathroom combination, as shown in Figures 2 and 3. In summary, as travel goals became more utilitarian, booking intentions for the MAYA scenario increased, while more hedonic travel goals were associated with lower booking intentions for the MAYA scenario, partially supporting H2.

Table 1. Moderation - Travel Goal

Predictor	β	t	p	95% CI	
MAYA Scenario	1.403	6.84	.001	.999	1.81
Hedonic	-.025	-.291	.771	-.195	.145
Interaction (MAYA x Hedonic)	-.232	-1.33	.196	-.576	.113
Utilitarian	.229	1.68	.094	-.039	.497
Interaction (MAYA x Utilitarian)	.398	2.09	.038	.022	.774

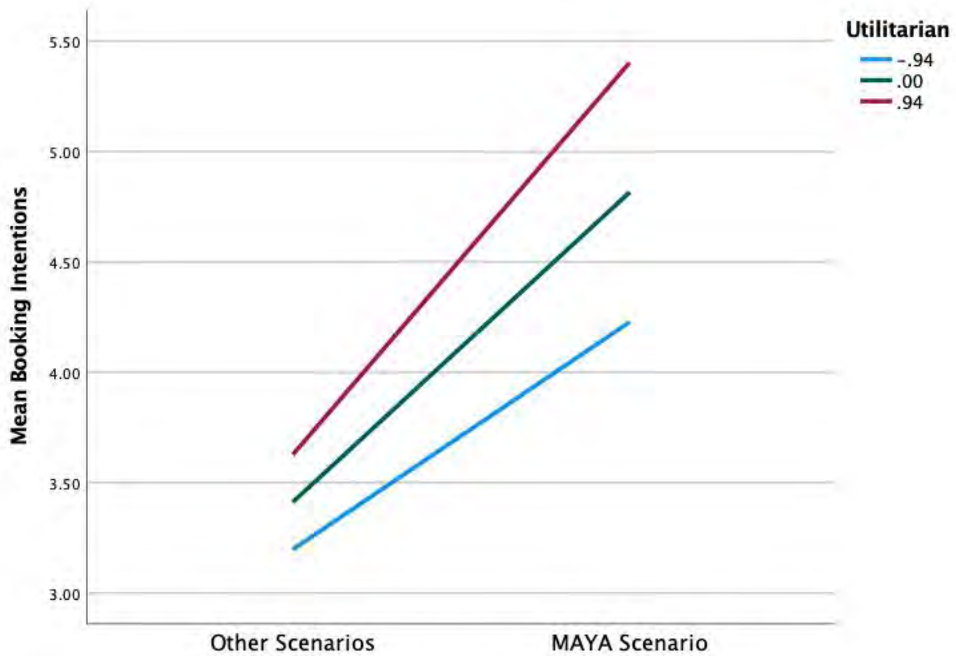


Figure 2. Moderation - Utilitarian Goal

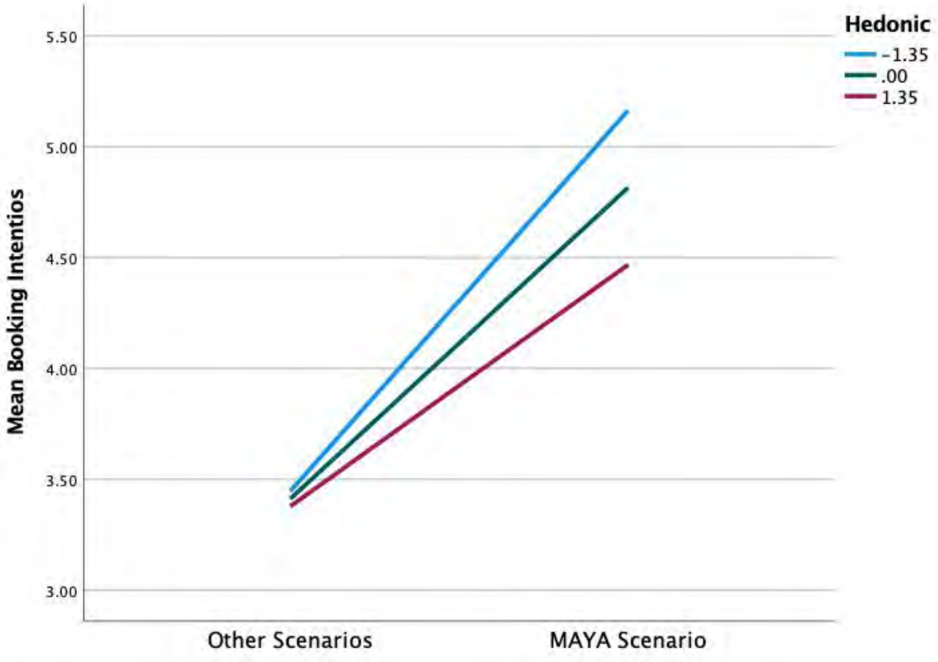


Figure 3. Moderation - Hedonic Goal

As per Table 2, the results reveal that travel expertise significantly moderates the impact of the MAYA scenario on booking intentions. Notably, higher levels of expertise correlate with a greater inclination to book the hotel room and bathroom combination adhering to the MAYA principle, as depicted in Figure 4.

Table 2. Moderation - Travel Goal

Predictor	β	t	p	95% CI	
MAYA Scenario	1.25	8.63	.000	.961	1.53
Travel experience	-.071	-.599	.548	-.304	.163
Interaction (MAYA x Travel Exp)	.902	6.12	.000	.612	1.19

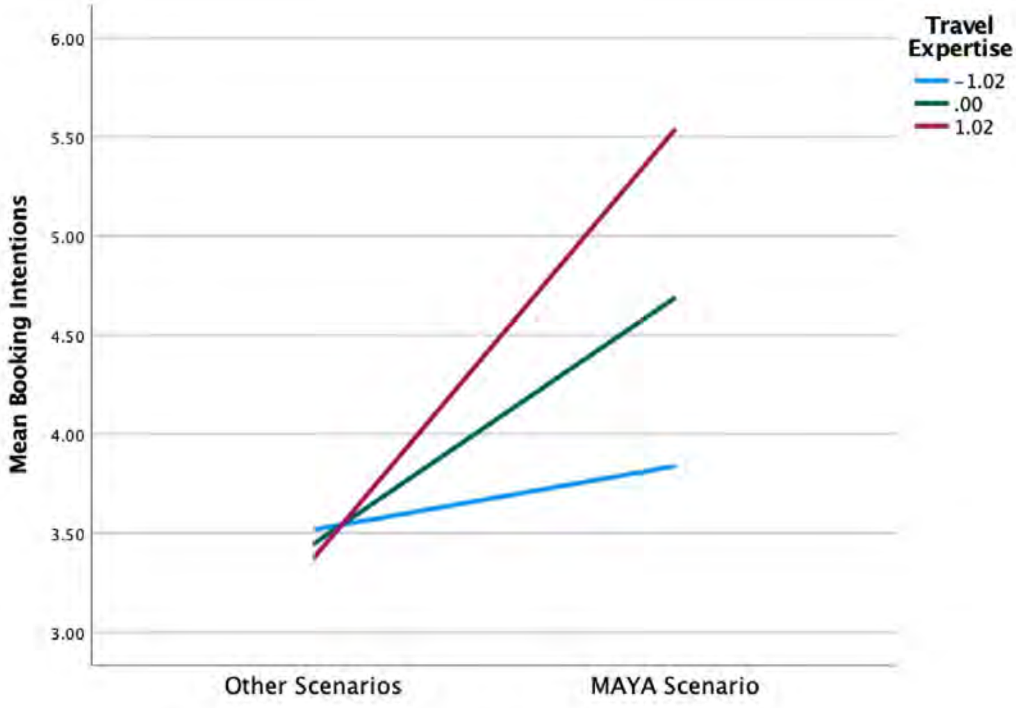


Figure 4. Moderation - Travel Expertise

Furthermore, pleasure and interest respectively fully mediated the relationship between innovative design and booking intentions and the relationship between typical design and booking intentions. Upon adding the respective mediators, the direct effects of typicality and innovativeness on booking intentions became insignificant in each case, confirming full mediation.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Implications

From a theoretical standpoint, the current research applies the PIA model, a dual-processing theory in a hospitality context, advancing the understanding in the midscale hotel context. To the knowledge of the authors, the current article is the first to integrate the PIA model in a hospitality context.

The supported relationship between the MAYA scenario and the travel goals has significant practical implications in terms of customer targeting and offerings directly tying into advertising and marketing. Moreover, hoteliers can take into consideration their current clientele base and decide whether their rooms and bathrooms need an upgrade, and if yes, to what extent.

Limitations and Future Research

The current study used an experimental design scenario to understand customer behavior intentions, where customers had to rely on imagery to determine their booking intentions. Future research could consider brand awareness and how does it affect the pleasure and interest in guestroom and bathroom.

REFERENCES

Available on request

Battle with restaurant No-Shows: Optimizing cancellation policies and awareness campaigns for restaurants

Kim, Esther L.
Feliciano School of Business
Montclair State University

Tang, Jason
Bissett School of Business
Mount Royal University

Abstract:

This study investigates the impact of cancellation policies, cancellation methods, and awareness campaigns on consumer behavior in the context of restaurant reservations. Conducting 2x2x2 experiments, the study finds that stricter policies increase reservation honor rates and decrease cancellations and no-shows. Additionally, awareness campaigns significantly enhance individuals' awareness of reservation consequences, leading to more responsible behavior. Particularly, the influence of awareness campaigns is accentuated when combined with lenient policies and easy cancellation methods. These findings offer practical insights for restaurant operators, aiding in implementing effective strategies to alleviate no-shows and enhance customer satisfaction.

Keywords: Cancellation Policies, Cancellation Method, Awareness Campaigns, No-show, Availability Heuristic, Perceived risk

1. Introduction

No-shows, where guests fail to honor reservations, present significant challenges for the restaurant industry, leading to revenue loss and operational disruptions (Superb Experience, 2022; Croy, 2017; Manning, 2020). Platforms like Tock and Resy have introduced reservation fees and deposits to combat no-shows (McCart, 2023). Still, any restaurants are hesitant due to concerns about negative customer experiences and perceived unfairness (Nnamani, 2023).

In response, restaurants are exploring alternative strategies, such as awareness campaigns, to reduce no-shows (Etemad-Sajadi, 2018; Tang, Repetti, and Raab, 2019). Understanding the reasons behind no-shows, such as difficulty finding the cancellation option or lack of awareness about the impact, underscores the importance of raising consumer awareness (Beambox, 2023). Campaigns like #showupforhospitality and #showupforrestaurants aim to educate diners about the consequences of no-shows and foster accountability among patrons (Brewer, 2021).

While previous research has focused on hotel settings or theoretical models, empirical studies are needed to confirm the effectiveness of cancellation policies in restaurants (Chen et al., 2011; Li et al., 2019; Tse & Poon, 2017). This study addresses these gaps by applying the heuristic principle (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979) to restaurant cancellation behaviors, examining the impact of cancellation policies and awareness campaigns on consumer behavior. Specifically, the objectives include (1) assessing how the strictness of cancellation policies influences diners' cancellation behaviors, (2) evaluating the effectiveness of awareness campaigns in improving diners' awareness, and (3) proposing a cancellation policy strategy that balances leniency with awareness campaigns.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Perceived Risk and Cancellation Policy Strictness

The perception of risk significantly influences consumer behavior, particularly in the context of reservation cancellations and the associated policy strictness (Kim et al., 2023; Riasi et al., 2018). Perceived risk theory posits that individuals assess potential negative consequences and uncertainties when making decisions (Bauer, 1960). In the context of this research, the cancellation fee represents a financial risk factor (Jang et al., 2022). Higher cancellation fees amplify the perceived financial risk for customers, as the cost of canceling or modifying a reservation becomes more substantial (Kim et al., 2023). Conversely, lenient policies with low cancellation fees mitigate the perceived financial risk associated with making a reservation (Riasi et al., 2018).

Perceived risk is deeply rooted in uncertainty and the perceived lack of control over outcomes (Kahneman & Tversky, 1974). Perceived behavioral control, a concept from the Theory of Planned Behavior, refers to an individual's perception of their ability to perform a behavior, considering factors such as skills, resources, and situational constraints (Ajzen, 1991). In the context of reservation cancellations, perceived behavioral control pertains to the ease with which individuals can cancel a reservation, influencing cancellation behaviors, including the likelihood of canceling, not showing up for a reservation, or honoring the reservation.

High cancellation fees increase the perceived financial risk associated with reservation cancellation, prompting risk-averse individuals to be more cautious in their decision-making (Kim et al., 2023). Similarly, difficult cancellation methods introduce friction into the cancellation process, increasing the perceived effort required and, thus, the perceived risk of cancellation. Risk-averse individuals tend to prioritize minimizing potential losses, leading them to adopt cautious decision-making strategies (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). In reservation management, risk aversion influences consumers' likelihood of canceling reservations under strict cancellation policies. Individuals may be more likely to honor reservations when faced with high cancellation fees, as canceling entails the risk of financial loss. Similarly, the perceived difficulty of canceling due to strict cancellation methods may deter individuals, especially if the effort required outweighs the perceived benefits of cancellation.

Hypothesis 1a: Participants will be more likely to honor the reservation when the cancellation fee is high compared to low.

Hypothesis 2a: Participants will be more likely to honor the reservation when the cancellation method is difficult compared to easy.

2.2. Social Pressure and Awareness Campaign

Social pressure, defined as the influence exerted by others or societal norms on individual attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, plays a significant role in shaping decision-making processes (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). This influence can manifest through various mechanisms, including conformity to group norms, obedience to authority figures, and adherence to social identities (Asch, 1955; Cialdini et al., 1990; Milgram, 1974; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Individuals often align their actions with perceived social expectations to avoid disapproval or gain approval.

In reducing restaurant no-shows through awareness campaigns, social pressure can be leveraged to encourage individuals to honor their reservations. By highlighting the social norm of punctuality and reliability when making restaurant reservations, the campaign can appeal to individuals' desire to conform to societal expectations and avoid social disapproval (Asch, 1955). Furthermore, framing the issue of restaurant no-shows in terms of belonging to a community of considerate diners can tap into individuals' social identities (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Emphasizing shared values of punctuality and respect for restaurant staff's time fosters a sense of belonging to a social group that values these behaviors.

Previous research has demonstrated the significant impact of awareness campaigns on consumer behavior across various domains (Hasting et al., 2004; Hornik et al., 2008; Hornik et al., 2017). The exposure to the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign was associated with more negative attitudes toward drug use and increased perception of risk among young people (Hornik et al., 2004). Similarly, the awareness campaign contributed to reduced marijuana use and more negative attitudes toward marijuana among youths (Hornik et al., 2017). Previous research proposed using positive reinforcement appeals to promote good behaviors rather than negative consequences. By highlighting the benefits and positive outcomes associated with desired behaviors, such campaigns seek to motivate individuals through positive reinforcement rather than instilling fear (Hastings et al., 2004).

Leveraging mechanisms such as conformity, obedience to authority, and social identity, the restaurant no-show reduction awareness campaign can effectively encourage individuals to align their behavior with expected norms of punctuality and reliability when making reservations.

Hypothesis 2: The presence of an awareness campaign will positively influence participants' awareness levels.

2.3. Heuristic System: Availability

The heuristic system proposes that individuals have two distinct cognitive processes: (1) System 1, which is fast and intuitive, and (2) System 2, which is slow and deliberate (Kahneman, 2011). System 1 operates automatically and relies on heuristics and shortcuts, leading to rapid decision-making and instinctive reactions. In contrast, System 2 is analytical and requires effortful mental activities such as complex computations (Evans & Curtis-Holmes, 2005). Heuristics are mental shortcuts that individuals use to simplify decision-making processes, helping to reduce cognitive effort (Kahneman, 2011). However, they can also lead to cognitive biases, such as availability bias, where individuals assess the likelihood of events based on how easily examples come to mind (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974).

The focus of this research is on the availability heuristic, which suggests that individuals prioritize more salient cues when making decisions. In the context of restaurant reservation cancellations, a strict cancellation policy may be perceived as more salient due to its association with perceived risk (Tversky & Kahneman, 1991). Consequently, it may overshadow other factors, such as the cancellation method and the effects of awareness campaigns. Conversely, lenient policies and easy cancellation methods contribute to a lower risk perception, allowing individuals to pay more attention to additional information, including awareness campaigns.

Therefore, when a lenient policy, an easy cancellation method, and social pressure through awareness campaigns are combined, the significance of the campaign's social pressure is amplified. The low perceived risk associated with the cancellation policy and method enhances the attention given to the awareness campaign, influencing individuals' cancellation and no-show behaviors.

Hypothesis 3a: Participants' cancellation behaviors will not be influenced by the ease of cancellation method and awareness campaign when a strict cancellation policy is offered.

Hypothesis 3b: The presence of the awareness campaign will significantly decrease participants' cancellation behaviors compared to its absence when a lenient policy and a high level of ease with the cancellation method are provided.

Hypothesis 3c: The awareness campaign will not significantly influence participants' cancellation behaviors when offered a lenient policy and low ease of cancellation.

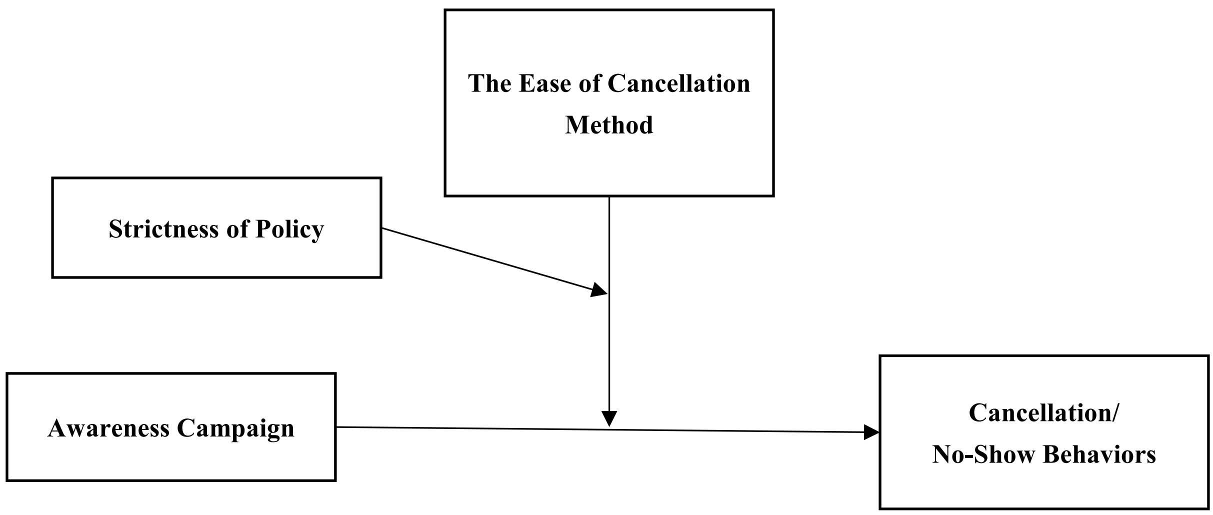


Figure 1 Proposed Conceptual Model

3. Methodology

3.1. Design of Experiment

A 2 (policy strictness: lenient vs. strict) x 2 (cancellation method: easy vs. difficult) x 2 (awareness campaign: absence vs. presence) design was employed. In the lenient condition, a

$20 per person cancellation fee was associated with the policy, while the strict condition featured a higher cancellation fee of $100 per person.

Cancellation method was operationalized as follows: participants in the easy condition were instructed to cancel their reservation by replying to a confirmation text message. In the easy condition, participants could cancel via text messages. Conversely, participants were informed to call the restaurant directly to cancel their reservation in the difficult condition.

The presence/absence of an awareness campaign flyer operationalized the awareness campaign. In the campaign presence condition, participants were exposed to a restaurant awareness campaign flyer emphasizing the negative environmental impact of no-shows. Conversely, without the awareness campaign, participants did not see the flyer.

3.2. Participants and Procedures

This study recruited 320 participants through an online survey firm. The sample size was sufficient to detect medium-sized effects at a significance level of .05, with a power of .85 (Cohen, 1992). Participants were randomly assigned to one of eight manipulated conditions, with each condition comprising 40 participants to ensure an equal distribution across all conditions.

Participants were required to be 18 years or older and have recent experience booking online reservations. The sample consisted of 70.6% females, 28.4% males, and 0.6% non-binary or genderqueer individuals, with a small percentage (0.3%) uncertain about their gender. Regarding age distribution, 29.1% were 18-30 years old, 40.0% were 31-40 years old, 24.1% were 41-50 years old, and 6.3% were 51 years or older. Marital status varied among participants, with 39.7% reporting being married, 43.4% identifying as single, 13.1% indicating divorced, separated, or widowed, and 3.8% falling into the "others" category. Ethnic background revealed that most participants identified as Caucasians or White (67.5%), followed by African American or Black (11.6%), and Asian or Pacific Islanders (5.3%). A smaller percentage identified as Latino or Hispanic (8.8%), while 6.9% selected "Others." In terms of education, the largest proportion of participants (34.4%) reported being college graduates, followed by those with some college education (31.3%), high school or lower education (19.4%), and postgraduate degrees (15.0%). The average income was approximately $50,000.

Before the main experiment began, participants rated their level of awareness on three items using measurements from previous studies. Afterward, participants were asked to make a reservation for a special dinner to celebrate their anniversary one week in advance. Unfortunately, their favorite restaurant was fully booked on the desired date. They were then given alternative restaurant options and asked to make a reservation at one of them. The confirmation page displayed the #NoMoreNoShows campaign flyer for the group exposed to social pressure, while the other group only saw the confirmation page without any additional stimuli. Additionally, participants received a confirmation text message detailing the cancellation methods, which included replying to the message or calling the restaurant.

On the subsequent page, participants learned that their favorite restaurant had a single available booking slot at their preferred time three hours before their current reservation time, which exceeded the cancellation deadline. Following this information, participants rated their likelihood of three behaviors using a 7-point Likert scale: (1) honoring the reservation and not booking their favorite restaurant (HONOR), (2) canceling the reservation as indicated to book their favorite restaurant (CANCEL), and (3) booking their favorite restaurant without canceling their current reservation (NO-SHOW). Afterward, participants answered manipulation check questions that included finding the given cancellation policy, the cancellation method, and the campaign flyer. They then rated their perception of the strictness of the policy and the ease of cancellation. Finally, participants were asked to provide demographic information. Figure 2 depicts a stimuli example.

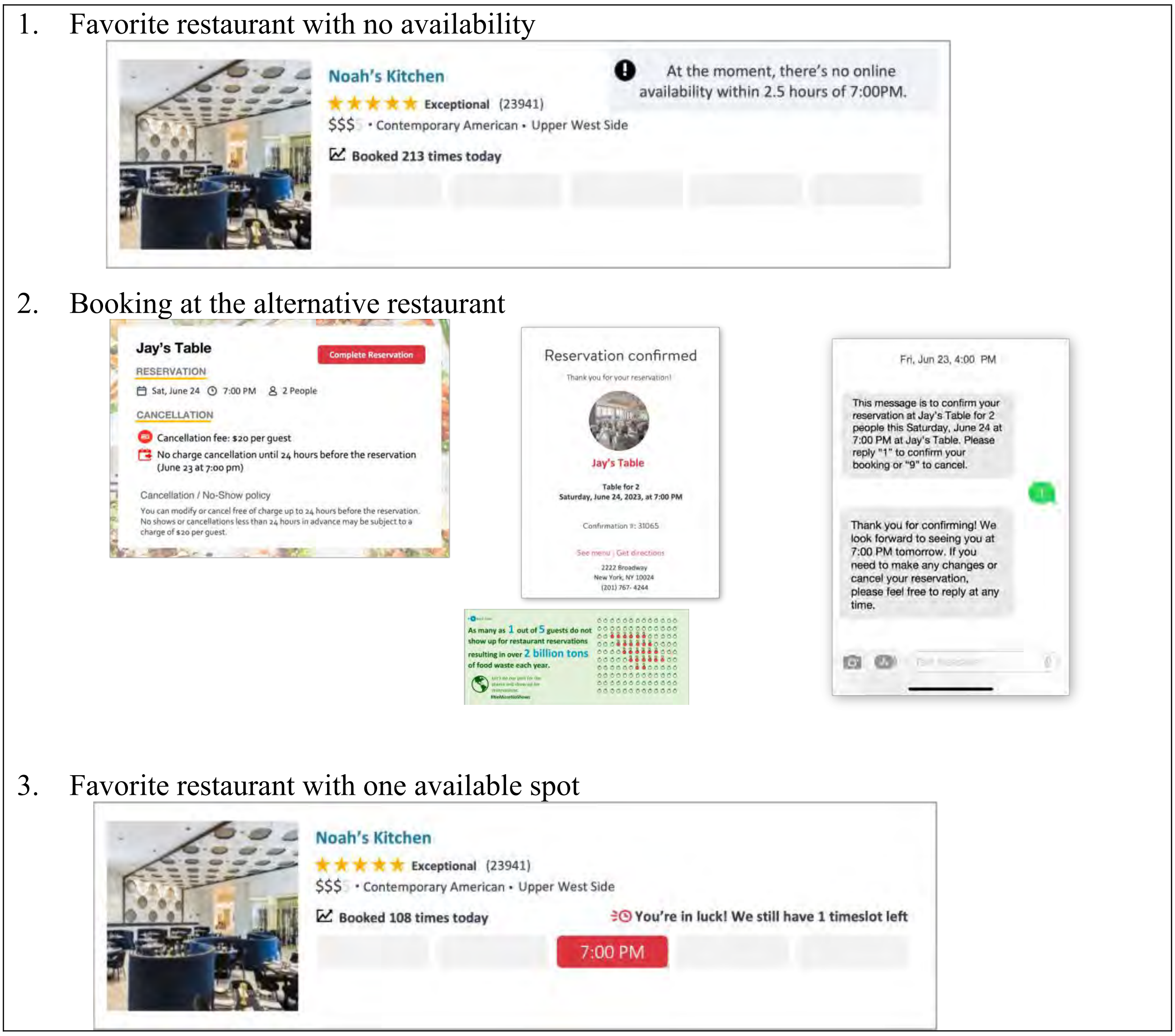


Figure 2 The survey scenario and stimuli (Lenient policy, easy cancellation method and the presence of awareness campaign condition)

4. Results

4.1. Manipulation Check

The manipulation check results confirmed the successful manipulation of three variables: policy strictness, ease of cancellation, and the awareness campaign. For policy strictness, participants rated the perceived strictness of the given policy using a 7-point Likert scale. The results of a one-way ANOVA revealed that participants in the strict condition rated the perceived strictness significantly higher (M = 4.89) than those in the lenient condition (M = 4.23), $F_{(1, 318)} = 11.530$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .035$.

Participants indicated how easy the cancellation method was on a scale from 1 (not easy at all) to 7 (extremely easy). The ANOVA analysis revealed that canceling by text message (M = 5.77) was perceived as significantly easier than canceling by phone call (M = 4.69; $F_{(1, 318)} = 41.300$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .115$).

Furthermore, the awareness campaign was successfully manipulated, as indicated by the results of the chi-square analysis ($\chi^2_{(2, 320)} = 164$, $p < .001$), with adequate reliability ($\alpha = .68$). In the awareness campaign condition, 71.9% of participants correctly identified their assigned condition. Among participants with no campaign flyer displayed, 71.3% correctly identified their assigned condition.

For realism, there were no significant differences among the manipulated conditions (Fs < 2.16, ps > .14), indicating that participants perceived the experimental conditions as equally realistic. The overall average realism rating was 5.68.

4.2. The role of awareness campaign

Using a paired t-test, the three items used to measure awareness levels before ($\alpha = .767$) and after ($\alpha = .756$) were compared by awareness campaign group to determine the effect of awareness campaigns on changes in individuals' awareness levels toward the negative impact of no-shows. There was no significant change in awareness levels among participants who did not see any awareness campaign (Before M = 4.59, After M = 4.75; $t_{(159)} = 1.31$, $p = .192$). Conversely, in the awareness campaign group, participants' awareness level significantly improved after viewing the campaign flyer (M = 5.05) compared to before viewing the flyer (M = 4.50; $t_{(355)} = 6.01$, $p<.001$). Hence, the awareness campaign significantly influenced individuals' awareness levels, indicating that hypothesis 2 is supported.

4.3. Cancellation and no-show behaviors

Three ANCOVAs were conducted to examine the effects of policy strictness, the cancellation method, and the awareness campaign on three dependent variables related to cancellation and no-show behaviors: HONOR, CANCEL, and NO-SHOW. Individual awareness level was controlled for as a covariate in the analyses. The results of a series of ANCOVAs on the three dependent variables revealed a significant covariate (Fs > 4.52, ps < .03, η^2s > .012).

A series of ANCOVAs found the main effects of policy strictness on three dependent variables ($Fs_{(1, 311)} > 20.690$, ps < .01, η^2s > .060). Participants were more likely to honor the reservation when the policy was strict (M = 6.31) than when the policy was lenient (M = 5.41). Additionally, the strict policy led to a lower likelihood of canceling the current reservation (M = 2.16) versus the lenient policy (M = 3.42). Participants' likelihood of no-show was significantly lower with the strict policy (M = 2.22) than with the lenient policy (M = 3.21).

The effect of the cancellation method was significant on HONOR ($F_{(1, 311)} = 5.290$, $p = .022$, $\eta^2 = .014$). When the cancellation method is difficult (by phone call), participants were more likely to honor the current reservation (M = 6.03) versus when the cancellation method was easy (by text message) (M = 5.69). Therefore, the findings support hypotheses 1a and 1b.

Lastly, the main effect of the awareness campaign on HONOR ($F_{(1, 311)} = 7.000$, $p = .009$, $\eta^2 = .018$) and CANCEL ($F_{(1, 311)} = 8.660$, $p = .004$, $\eta^2 = .022$) were observed. Participants were more likely to honor the reservation (M = 6.06) and less likely to cancel it (M = 2.47) when the awareness campaign flyer was displayed, compared to when no flyer was displayed (HONOR: M = 5.66, CANCEL: M = 3.11).

4.3. The effect of the awareness campaign by the cancellation method and policy strictness

The three ANCOVA results found significant interactions three-way interactions on HONOR ($F_{(1, 311)} = 3.810$, $p = .05$, $\eta^2 = .010$), CANCEL ($F_{(1, 311)} = 4.060$, $p = .05$, $\eta^2 = .010$), and NO-SHOW ($F_{(1, 311)} = 4.090$, $p = .04$, $\eta^2 = .010$). Further analysis involved splitting the interactions based on policy strictness to understand the source of this effect. When the policy was lenient, significant two-way interactions were observed between the cancellation method and the awareness campaign on HONOR ($F_{(1, 155)} = 6.68$, $p = .011$, $\eta^2 = .035$), CANCEL ($F_{(1, 155)} = 5.84$, $p = .017$, $\eta^2 = .031$), and NO-SHOW ($F_{(1, 155)} = 8.76$, $p = .004$, $\eta^2 = .047$). However, for the strict policy condition, there were no significant interactions ($Fs_{(1, 155)} < 0.117$, $ps > .733$), indicating that Hypothesis 3a is supported.

To investigate the source of the interaction, the awareness campaign's simple effect was examined at each level of the cancellation method in the lenient policy condition. The results of three one-way ANCOVAs revealed a significant awareness campaign effect on HONOR ($F_{(1, 77)} = 11.200$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .112$), CANCEL ($F_{(1, 77)} = 14.410$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .143$), and NO-SHOW ($F_{(1, 77)} = 20.731$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .210$) when the reservation could be easily canceled by text message. However, when the cancellation method is difficult (by call), the awareness campaign effect was not significant ($Fs_{(1, 77)} < .010$, $ps > .90$). Specifically, participants exposed to the awareness campaign reported a significantly higher likelihood to honor and a significantly lower likelihood to cancel and no-show when the reservation could be canceled by text message (easy). Hence, Hypotheses 3b and 3c are supported. Table 1 provides a summary of the social pressure effect by the level of ease of cancellation and policy strictness.

Table 1. The summary of three-way interactions among the factors on the intention to honor/cancel/no-show

	Lenient Policy				Strict Policy			
Cancellation Method	Easy		Difficult		Easy		Difficult	
Awareness Campaign	None	Presence	None	Presence	None	Presence	None	Presence
HONOR	4.40*	5.78*	5.70	5.70	6.20	6.33	6.38	6.40
CANCEL	4.72*	2.87*	3.26	2.95	2.26	2.01	2.20	2.07
NO-SHOW	4.54*	2.48*	2.98	2.90	2.19	1.71	1.50	1.21

Note. * Significant interaction effect <.05

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and implications

The findings underscore the significant impacts of policy strictness, cancellation methods, and awareness campaigns on individuals' cancellation and no-show behaviors. Concerning cancellation-related behaviors, participants generally exhibited an increased likelihood to honor their reservations and a decreased likelihood to cancel or no-show when perceiving a high cancellation barrier, such as a strict cancellation policy or difficult cancellation method (H1ab). This finding resonates with studies by Chen et al. (2011) and Li et al. (2019), which highlight the effectiveness of stringent cancellation policies in reducing no-shows in hospitality settings.

However, the implementation of strict cancellation policies poses a dilemma for restaurant operators due to its potential negative impact on consumers' evaluations of the restaurant. This dilemma reflects tension between mitigating no-shows and maintaining positive customer experiences (Etemad-Sajadi, 2018; Tang et al., 2019).

Secondly, the study provides empirical proof of the significant effect of awareness campaigns on individual awareness of the negative impact of no-shows (H2). Participants exhibited significantly improved awareness levels after exposure to the campaign flyer. The heightened awareness through the awareness campaign leads to a higher likelihood of honor and a lower likelihood of canceling and no-show. These findings correspond to previous research that demonstrated the significant influence of awareness campaigns on the audience's attitude changes (Hornik et al., 2008; Hornik et al., 2017).

The findings emphasize the importance of an awareness campaign, specifically when consumers perceive a low cancellation barrier characterized by a lenient policy and easy cancellation method (e.g., text message) (H3abc). The campaign effectively reinforces individuals' sense of responsibility and commitment to honoring their reservations when cancellation is easily accomplished. These findings support previous research suggesting that when a negative cue is perceived as salient, it outweighs other peripheral cues during the purchase decision process (Kim & Tanford, 2019).

5.2. Theoretical Implications

This research applies the availability principle (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974) to the context of cancellation policies, suggesting that individuals prioritize salient cues, with perceived risk playing a significant role. The findings indicate that a strict cancellation policy may overshadow other information, such as the cancellation method and the effects of awareness campaigns. Conversely, when an easy cancellation method characterizes the cancellation policy and method, individuals allocate attention to additional information, such as awareness campaigns. This highlights the importance of perceived risk and salience in decision-making processes related to cancellations, providing further support for the availability principle within the context of restaurants.

The current research provides empirical evidence and contributes to the literature on cancellation policies in the hospitality industry, particularly focusing on restaurants. While previous studies have predominantly centered around demand control modeling proposals, such as restaurant overbooking (Chiang, 2021; Oh & Su, 2012; Tse & Poon, 2017), limited research exists on understanding consumers' cancellation and no-show behaviors in response to cancellation policies and other psychological factors within a restaurant setting. By addressing this gap, the study enhances understanding of the unique dynamics and influences that shape customer behaviors in relation to restaurant cancellation policies, providing valuable insights into the practical implementation of effective policies and strategies.

5.3. Practical Implications

The practical implications of this research are twofold. Firstly, the study offers guidance to restaurant operators on implementing cancellation policies that align with customer expectations while mitigating revenue loss and addressing operational challenges. The findings highlight the importance of striking a balance between the strictness of the policy and customers' attitudes, taking into account their perceived ease of canceling reservations and the influence of social pressure through awareness campaigns. Restaurants can consider adopting lenient cancellation policies and providing convenient cancellation methods to encourage customer satisfaction.

Secondly, the study emphasizes the significance of awareness campaigns in shaping customers' cancellation and no-show behaviors. By increasing customer awareness of the negative impacts of no-shows and the importance of honoring reservations, restaurants can enhance individuals' sense of responsibility and commitment to their bookings. Incorporating awareness campaigns into marketing strategies can help reinforce social norms and encourage customers to honor their reservations, reducing last-minute cancellations and no-shows.

5.4. Limitations and Future Research

The current research used hypothetical bookings, which may not fully capture the complexities of real-life reservations. Future research could collaborate with online booking services, such as OpenTable, and utilize their secondary data to examine how consumers respond to different cancellation features in an actual setting. This would provide more realistic insights into consumers' behaviors and decision-making processes, enhancing the external validity of the findings.

Additionally, the current research focused primarily on cancellation policies and did not explore other potential strategies for reducing no-shows, such as overbooking, walk-in-only policies, or advanced ticketing. Future research could extend the investigation to include these alternative strategies and compare their effectiveness in minimizing no-shows. This would allow for a comprehensive analysis of different approaches to addressing the issue and provide a more nuanced understanding of their impact on consumers' behaviors and perceptions.

Considering the increasing role of technology and online platforms in the hospitality industry, future research could investigate the impact of technological features on managing cancellations and reducing no-shows. Exploring the effectiveness of automated reminders, online cancellation options, and personalized communication in influencing consumers' cancellation behaviors would provide valuable insights for both researchers and industry practitioners, facilitating the development of more efficient and customer-centric cancellation management systems.

In conclusion, this research emphasizes the significance of incorporating effective cancellation policies and complementary marketing stimuli in the restaurant industry to effectively reduce no-shows and last-minute cancellations while mitigating consumers' negative evaluations. By understanding consumers' responses to cancellation policy features, restaurant operators can develop tailored and effective strategies to minimize no-shows and enhance overall customer satisfaction.

REFERENCES

Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 179-211.

Asch, S. (1955). Opinions and social pressure. *Scientific American*, 193(5), 31-35.

Bauer, R. A. (1960). Consumer behavior as risk taking. In R. S. Hancock (Ed.), *Dynamic marketing for a changing world* (pp. 389-398). American Marketing Association.

Beambox. (2021, February 11). Restaurant No Shows: 5 Quick Tips for Reducing No Shows. BeamBox Blog. https://beambox.com/townsquare/how-to-deal-with-no-shows.

Brewer, M. (2021, June 17). Show up for restaurants: The fight against reservation no-shows. OpenTable Blog. https://www.opentable.com/blog/no-show-numbers/.

Chen, C. C., Schwartz, Z., & Vargas, P. (2011). The search for the best deal: How hotel cancellation policies affect the search and booking decisions of deal-seeking customers. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *30*(1), 129-135.

Chiang, C. I. (2023). Overbooking as a means to manage restaurant no-shows and cancellations: a novel model extension. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, *47*(8), 1530-1545.

Cialdini, R., & Goldstein, N. (2004). Social influence: Compliance and conformity. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 55(1), 591-621.

Cohen, J. (1992). A power primer. *Psychological bulletin*, 112(1), 155–159.

Croy, L. (2017). No-show diners costing restaurants $75m annually. Retrieved from: https://thewest.com.au/lifestyle/food/no-show-diners-costing-restaurants-75m-annually-ng-b88393106z

Etemad-Sajadi, R. (2018). Are customers ready to accept revenue management practices in the restaurant industry? *International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management, 35*(4), 846-856.

Evans, J., & Curtis-Holmes, J. (2005). Rapid responding increases belief bias: Evidence for the dual-process theory of reasoning. *Thinking & Reasoning*, 11(4), 382-389.

Hastings, G., Stead, M., & Webb, J. (2004). Fear appeals in social marketing: Strategic and ethical reasons for concern. *Psychology & Marketing*, *21*(11), 961-986.

Hornik, R., Jacobsohn, L., Orwin, R., Piesse, A., & Kalton, G. (2008). Effects of the national youth anti-drug media campaign on youths. *American Journal of Public Health*, *98*(12), 2229-2236.

Hornik, R., Jacobsohn, L., Orwin, R., Piesse, A., & Kalton, G. (2008). Effects of the national youth anti-drug media campaign on youths. *American Journal of Public Health*, *98*(12), 2229-2236

Jang, Y., Miao, L., & Chen, C. C. (2022). Book now, pay later: the effects of delays in payments and temporal distance on consumers' perceptions and purchase intention. *Journal of Revenue and Pricing Management*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41272-022-00416-4

Kim, E. J., Kim, E. L., Kim, M., & Tanford, S. (2023). Post-Pandemic hotel cancellation policy: Situational cues as perceived risk triggers. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 55*, 153-160.

Kim, H., et al. (2023). Perceived risk and reservation cancellation: A theoretical perspective. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 40(4), 320-335.

Kim, E. L., & Tanford, S. (2019). Simultaneous effects of multiple cues in restaurant reviews. *Journal of Services Marketing*, *33*(5), 521-531.

Li, K. P., Chen, S. L., Chiu, W. H., & Lu, W. C. (2019). Strategies of reduce customer's no-show probability at restaurants. *The Journal of Social Sciences Research, 5*(1), 145-152.

Manning, J. (2020). What happens when dinners don't show up for their dinner reservation. Retrieved from: https://www.opentable.com/blog/restaurant-no-shows-explained/

McCart, Melissa. "The Rise of the Reservation Fee." Eater New York, August 3, 2023. https://ny.eater.com/2023/8/3/23817542/reservation-fees-deposits-resy-opentable-nyc

Milgram, S. (1974). Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View Harper-Collins.

Nnamani, Chidinma. "Restaurant Reservation Fees: Are They Right for Your Restaurant?" The Bottom Line, November 7, 2023. https://squareup.com/us/en/the-bottom-line/managing-your-finances/reservation-fees

Oh, J., & Su, X. (2022). Optimal pricing and overbooking of reservations. *Production and Operations Management, 31*(3), 928-940.

Riasi, A., Schwartz, Z., & Chen, C. C. (2018). A proposition-based theorizing approach to hotel cancellation practices research. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 30*(11), 3211-3228.

Superb. (2021, November 23). Why no-show fees are the answer you've waited for. *Superb Blog*. https://www.superbexperience.com/experience-matters/should-your-restaurant-charge-no-show-fees

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (pp. 33–47). Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Tang, J., Repetti, T., & Raab, C. (2019). Perceived fairness of revenue management practices in casual and fine-dining restaurants. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, *2*(1), 92-108.

Tse, T. S., & Poon, Y. T. (2017). Modeling no-shows, cancellations, overbooking, and walk-ins in restaurant revenue management. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, *20*(2), 127-145.

Tversky, A., & Kahneman, D. (1974). Judgment under uncertainty: Heuristics and biases. *Science, 185*(4157), 1124-1131.

What factors play different roles in shaping attitudes vs. behavioral intentions toward food donation among restaurant managers: Application of behavioral reasoning theory

Seo, Eunhee
Department of Culinary Science and Foodservice Management Graduate School, Kyung Hee University, Seoul 02447, Republic of Korea

Jang, Ha-Won
College of Hotel and Tourism Management, Kyung Hee University, Seoul 02447, Republic of Korea

Nunkoo, Robin
Department of Management, University of Mauritius, Reduit, Mauritius

Cho, Meehee
College of Hotel and Tourism Management, Kyung Hee University, Seoul 02447, Republic of Korea

Abstract:

Exploring why restaurant managers may not always act on positive attitudes toward food donation, based on Behavioral Reasoning Theory, we found that both public (‘altruism’, ‘social norms’) and private (‘tax incentives’, ‘insufficient information’) factors significantly shape intentions, but only public factors have no notable impact on attitudes. This trend also appears in the reasons against food donation. With additional findings that ‘trust in food banks’ mitigated the negative impact of ‘reasons against’ on food donation intentions, despite its insignificant effect on attitudes, the study highlights differences between individual and organizational behavioral mechanisms in food donation. These insights have practical implications for the industry’s approach to food donations.

Keywords: Restaurant food donation, behavioral reasoning theory, trust in food banks, perceived value in food security, reasons for and against

1. Introduction

Limited access to sufficient and nutritious food challenges food security both globally and locally, drawing collective attention from restaurant businesses (Sweet, 2020; Restaurantware, 2021; Food Bank for New York City, 2023). In response, redistributing surplus food through donations has emerged as a sustainable solution for the food-insecure communities (Ceryes et al., 2023).

With the tourism and hospitality industries generating over 244 million metric tons of food waste annually (Tiseo, 2023), restaurants are scrutinized for their food waste, including unused food ingredients and unsold dishes (Ng & Sia, 2023). Concerns about surplus food and shame from unintentional wasteful practices have prompted efforts to redistribute food by engaging with local food banks and participating in donation activities (Konrath & Handy, 2018; Merkle, 2021; Ceryes et al., 2023).

While research on restaurant food donation is nascent, scholars increasingly recognize the intricate challenges involved, encompassing psychological, structural, logistical, and financial factors (Sweet, 2020; Ceryes et al., 2023). However, most studies have focused on individual household behaviors, often overlooking the importance of understanding the factors that facilitate or inhibit participation by restaurant businesses (Mettler, 2013; Bennett et al., 2023).

Furthermore, while traditional behavior theories have long suggested a robust correlation between attitudes and behavioral intentions, certain studies have highlighted a weaker or often negligible association between attitudes and intentions. Particularly, this gap has been frequently observed within the context of individual pro-social behaviors, such as energy saving behaviors (Ye & Zhou, 2012) and pro-environmental behaviors (Vieira et al., 2023). This discrepancy could be a primary factor contributing to the situation where many restaurant businesses still refrain from donating surplus food despite their perceptions of food security values and positive reasons to engage (Newman, 2022).

Therefore, this study aims to: (1) investigate whether 'perceived value in food security' serves as a primary predictor of 'reasons for' (altruism, social norms, egoism, and tax incentives) and 'reasons against' (financial burdens, inconvenience, insufficient information, and liability concerns) food donation; (2) empirically analyze the effect of 'reasons for and against' on 'attitudes' toward food donation as well as 'donation intentions' among restaurant managers to explore their distinct roles; and (3) investigate whether 'trust' in food banks significantly moderates the relationships between 'reasons for and against' and attitudes toward food donation.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Behavioral Reasoning Theory (BRT)

Behavioral Reasoning Theory (BRT), introduced by Westaby (2005), posits that individuals' behavioral intentions are shaped by motives (i.e., attitudes) and a navigation through contrasting factors, such as costs and benefits, which justify their actions (Sahu et al., 2020). These factors are termed "*reasons for*" and "*reasons against.*" Stronger the 'reasons for' enhance positive attitudes toward actions, while stronger 'reasons against' can negatively affect attitudes. Drawing upon the BRT perspective, this study investigates the comprehensive impacts, embracing both positive and negative facets of reasoning factors on restaurant managers' attitudes and their behavioral intentions for food donation.

2.2. Food donation attitudes and intentions among restaurant managers

Restaurant managers have shown growing interest in food donation, driven by its positive impact on food waste reduction and food security (Bierma et al., 2019; Ceryes et al., 2023). Literature in hospitality and retail indicates that attitudes toward food waste reduction efforts and activities contributing to food security, such as food reuse and donation (Zaidi et al., 2022), especially in collaboration with food banks (Bennett et al., 2023), have positively influenced donation intentions. Therefore, this study expects that this correlation will be

evident within the context of restaurant managers' attitudes and their intentions regarding food donation. Accordingly, we developed the following hypothesis:
Hypothesis 1. Restaurant managers' attitudes toward food donation improve their food donation intentions.

2.3. 'Reasons for and against' food donation: the effects on attitude and intention
In BRT, reasons are hypothesized to predict intentions directly and also through a path mediated by attitudes between reasons and intentions (Sahu et al., 2020). Further, these intentions are linked to the actual use of behavior (Westaby, 2002). Reasons can be powerful predictors of intentions, even when attitudes might not be supportive (Westaby, 2005). This pattern is supported by the characteristics of reasons, which can "rationalize, support, or *distort* behavior" (Shau et al., 2020). Research has explored the unique roles of reasons in the relationship between attitudes and behavioral intentions, presenting their contribution to explaining the attitude-behavior gap, especially for pro-social and pro-environmental behaviors (Claudy et al., 2013; Diddi et al., 2019). This highlights the role of specific cognitions, 'reasons for and against,' that individuals rely on to make decisions confidently and to justify their intentions or behaviors.

2.3.1. 'Reasons for' food donation: the effects on attitudes and intention for food donation
When considering benefits of donating, donors discuss both extrinsic and intrinsic factors, including public and private aspects (Konrath & Handy, 2018). 'Altruism' and 'social norms' represent public benefits (Konrath & Handy, 2018). Restaurants participate in surplus food donation because they see it as the right thing to do for others (Filimonau & De Coteau, 2019). Social norms, the influences of significant others' views on various matter, are often highlighted in the context of food donation since it is linked to the value and belief of a commendable activity and that aligns with society's expectations (Zaidi et al., 2022).

In the meantime, intrinsic factors related to private benefits, such as egoism and self-interests like tax savings, are also discussed in food donation literature (Konrath & Handy, 2018; Bierma et al., 2019). 'Egoism,' acting as an enabler of food donation behavior, is associated with feelings of empowerment, recognition, pleasure, and self-esteem (Konrath & Handy, 2018). 'Tax incentives,' such as deductions and credits, have been shown to be effective material benefits encouraging food donations (Liao et al., 2019). This is particularly applicable to companies involved in food recovery and aid, with some reporting that they treat food donations as a deductible expense to reduce their taxable income, consequently encouraging their participatory intention (Baglioni et al., 2017).

Thus, this study expects that 'reasons for' factors enhance the attitudes of restaurant managers toward food donation, as well as their intentions to participate. The following hypotheses have been developed:
Hypothesis 2. 'Reasons' (H2a: altruism, H2b: social norms, H2c: egoism, H2d: tax incentives) for food donation positively affect restaurant managers' attitudes toward food donation.
Hypothesis 3. 'Reasons' (H3a: altruism, H3b: social norms, H3c: egoism, H3d: tax incentives) for food donation positively affect restaurant managers' food donation intentions.

2.3.2. 'Reasons against' food donation: the effects on attitudes and intention for food donation

Logistical issues like a lack of storage space and unavailability of pick-up services, are commonly cited 'inconvenience' that serve as barriers to restaurants donating food (Merkle, 2021). Prior literature also highlighted economic considerations as restaurant donors have specifically reported the 'financial burdens' associated with food donation, encompassing both actual and perceived costs (Sweet, 2020). The expenses for packaging and labeling food for donation often incur extra costs and require redirected labor, leading people to find it more cost-effective and simpler to dispose of the products instead (Sweet, 2020).

'Liability concerns' related to food safety and regulations also discourage food business donations (Bierma et al., 2019). Donors fear health risks from improper labeling, sorting and unsafe cold chain transport, which deter their motivations to participate (Bierma et al., 2019). Additionally, 'insufficient information' about legal aspects and technical processes, like transportation, location, and food charity organizations, hinders restaurant participation in donating food (De Boeck et al., 2017).

Accordingly, this study expects that 'reasons against' factors exhibit negative impacts on the attitudes and intentions toward food donation among restaurant managers Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:
Hypothesis 4. 'Reasons' (H4a: financial burdens, H4b: inconvenience, H4c: insufficient information, H4d: liability concerns) against food donation negatively affect restaurant managers' attitudes toward food donation.
Hypothesis 5. 'Reasons' (H5a: financial burdens, H5b: inconvenience, H5c: insufficient information, H5d: liability concerns) against food donation negatively affect restaurant managers' food donation intention.

2.4. Perceived value in food security by restaurant managers: the effect on 'reasons for and against' food donation
The foodservice industry increasingly recognizes food security as a critical issue, as reflected in their diverse efforts, such as participating in meal swipe bank programs, donating catering leftovers to community kitchens and grocery distribution centers (Restaurantware, 2021; Food Bank for New York City, 2023). Food security's perceived value encompasses an individual's awareness of the necessity for a balanced diet of moderate to high quality and consistent access to nutritious food (Hamelin et al., 2008). Such values tend to be associated with both egoistic motivations (e.g., self-interest) and altruistic motivation (e.g., societal benefits, supporting local communities, the economy, and the environment), in the context of food donation (Birch et al., 2018).
However, obstacles such as inconvenience, liability concerns, and costs persist among restaurant management, which can deter food donations despite their commitment to food security (Sweet, 2020; Merkle, 2021). Lang et al. (2020) noted that while recognizing the importance of combating food insecurity can encourage involvement in activities like donations, the perceived disadvantages can still be a barrier. Thus, the following hypotheses are developed:
Hypotheses 6 and 7. Perceived value in food security by restaurant managers has a positive impact on 'reasons for' food donation (H6a: altruism, H6b: social norms, H6c: egoism, H6d: tax incentives) and a negative effect on 'reasons against' food donation (H7a: financial burdens, H7b: inconvenience, H7c: insufficient information, H7d: liability concerns).

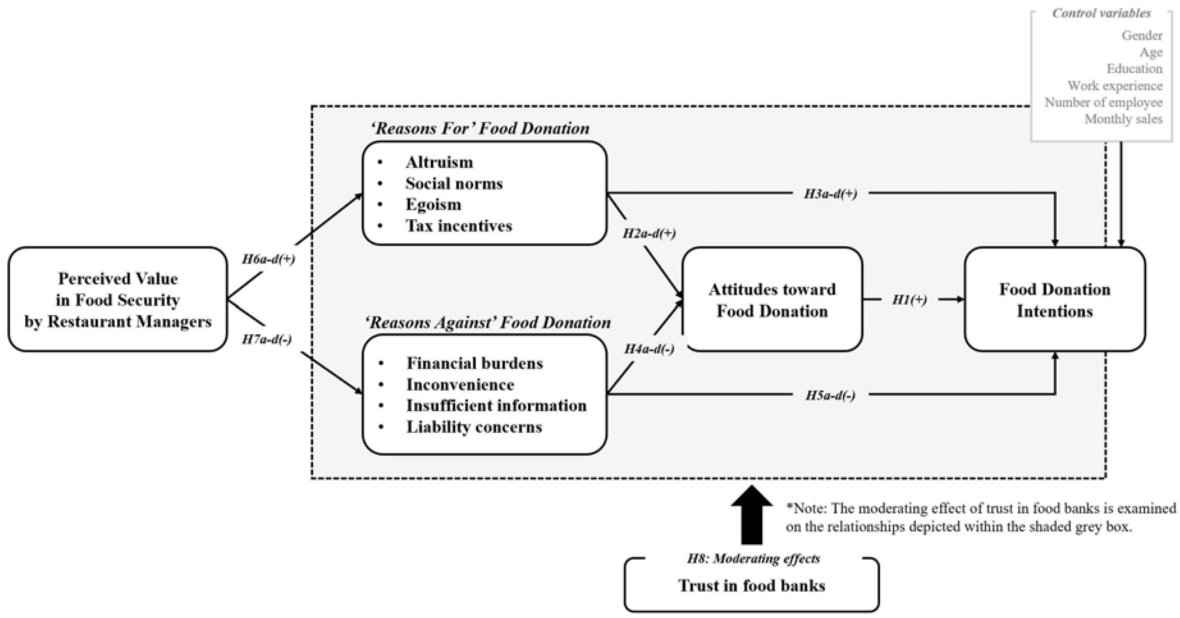
2.5. Moderating roles of trust in food banks

Trust is widely recognized as a prerequisite for charitable giving (Chapman et al., 2021). Montoli et al. (2023) emphasized the importance of fostering trust between donors and recipients, noting that participating in food donation becomes easier when donors become acquainted with the charities and perceive better openness of the recipients. When donors witness well-established donation systems and effective management addressing their safety concerns by food charitable organizations, they are inclined to develop more positive perceptions of reasoning factors, ultimately fostering more favorable attitudes and behavioral intentions (De Boeck et al., 2017; Ceryes et al., 2023).

Furthermore, research observed that concerns about food banks' mismanagement can deter donors from contributing and end up stopping supplying foods to donation agents (Busetti, 2019) Therefore, this study posits that 'trust in food banks' plays a critical role in amplifying the positive effect of 'reasons for' and mitigating a negative influence of 'reasons against' on attitudes and intentions toward food donation. Given the review, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 8. Trust in food banks moderates the relationships between 'reasons for and against,' attitudes, and food donation intentions.

The framework of this study is illustrated in Figure 1.
Figure 1. Study Framework



3. Methodology

3.1. Measures

Through an extensive literature review, the questionnaire items for assessing the study constructs have been developed. The study questionnaire, initially developed in English, was translated into Korean by proficient bilingual professors in the field of foodservice management. To enhance the reliability and accuracy of the scale measures, a pilot test was conducted with 15 restaurant managers, responsible for daily procurement operations. The final questionnaire was then refined with minor adjustments. Each reference for the constructs is as follows:

Table 1. Measurements

Constructs		Measure items	References
Perceived value in food security		6	Hamelin et al. (2008); Migotto et al. (2007)
Reasons for	Altruism	4	Ceryes et al. (2023); Konrath and Handy (2018); Müller and Lindenmeier (2022); Schanes and Stagl (2019)
	Social norms	3	
	Egoism	4	
	Tax incentives	3	
Reasons against	Financial burdens	4	Akkerman et al. (2023); Ceryes et al. (2023); De Boeck et al. (2017)
	Inconvenience	3	
	Insufficient information	4	
	Liability concerns	3	
Attitudes toward food donation		3	Enawgaw et al. (2019); Müller and Lindenmeier (2022); Ranganathan and Henley (2008)
Food donation intentions		4	Konrath and Handy (2018); Müller and Lindenmeier (2022)

Note: All measurement items were evaluated using a 7-point Likert scale (1 point = "strongly disagree" to 7-point = "strongly agree"); the additional information provided by participants is as follows: socio-demographic characteristics (gender, age, and educational level), work experience (years of employment in the restaurant industry) and the operational conditions of the currently affiliated restaurant (monthly sales, number of employees, and restaurant type).

3.2. Data collection and sampling

To ensure a reliable and robust dataset for this study, an online survey method was chosen for its reliability, offering participants the convenience of contributing swiftly to their spare time, with the added benefit of anonymity compared to face-to-face surveys (Antwi et al., 2023). The largest online survey company in South Korea, MACROMILL EMBRAIN, was recruited to conduct data collection through their business panels in the foodservice industry over a one-week period. Sampling characteristics for the respondents are as follows:

Table 2. Sampling Characteristics

Characteristic	Detail
Participation Criteria	Restaurant managers with >2 years of employment tenure
Gender Distribution	Females (52%)
Age Distribution	In their 40s (27%) and 30s (26.7%)
Education Level	With a four-year college degree (58.7%)
Working Experience	Over 5 years (30%)
Roles	Managerial roles (47.3%), Service providers (32.3%)
Type of Restaurants	Casual dining (57%), followed by fast-food, cafes, buffets, pubs, bakeries
Business Size	Small businesses with <10 employees (44.3%)
Average Monthly Sales	US $23,000 (26.3%)

Note: All respondents were informed about the study's purpose and assured anonymity and provided a modest monetary reward as a participatory incentive. Total collected responses are 300.

4. Results

4.1. Validity and reliability of the study's measurements

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was implemented to assess the validity of the study measures and Table 3 summarizes the findings.

Table 3. Summary of CFA

Measure	Value	Acceptance Criteria	Result
Chi-square/*df*	1.783	< 3.0	Acceptable
p-value	< 0.001	< 0.05	Significant
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	0.946	> 0.9	Good Fit
Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI)	0.938	> 0.9	Good Fit
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.945	> 0.9	Good Fit
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.051	< 0.08	Acceptable

Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	0.634 to 0.887	> 0.5	Good Convergent Validity
Composite Construct Reliability (CCR)	0.874 to 0.959	> 0.7	High Reliability
Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient	0.875 to 0.949	≥ 0.7	Satisfactory Reliability (Hair et al., 2018)

Correlation coefficients between the constructs were compared with their corresponding square roots of the AVE values. The lowest square root of AVE value surpassed the highest correlation coefficient value. Hence, discriminant validity was also successfully established (Hair et al., 2018).

4.2. Direct effects: Hypotheses 1–7

To verify the study hypotheses, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed. The fit indices of the SEM model (chi-square/*df* = 1.885 ($p<0.001$), IFI = 0.923, TLI = 0.913, CFI = 0.922, RMSEA = 0.054) indicated an acceptable model fit. The SEM included additional factors such as respondents' socio-demographic characteristics and restaurant operational conditions to control for any potential impact on food donation intentions. Among these control variables, only gender (β= -0.072, t= -2.026, p<0.05) and years of employment (β= 0.082, t= 2.207, p<0.05) significantly affected "food donation intentions."

Results for Hypotheses 1 to 7 are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Results for *Hypotheses 1* to *7*

Hypothesis	Factor	Impact on	Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value	Supported
1	AT	DI	0.372	5.259	<0.001	Yes
2a	Altruism	AT	0.548	5.581	<0.001	Yes
2b	Social Norms	AT	0.194	2.780	<0.01	Yes
2c	Egoism	AT	0.060	0.623	>0.05	No
2d	Tax Incentives	AT	0.013	0.295	>0.05	No
3a	Altruism	DI	0.298	3.233	<0.01	Yes
3b	Social Norms	DI	0.102	2.044	<0.05	Yes
3c	Egoism	DI	0.045	1.841	>0.05	No
3d	Tax Incentives	DI	0.171	2.919	<0.01	Yes
4a	Financial Burdens	AT	-0.058	-1.114	>0.05	No
4b	Inconvenience	AT	-0.202	-3.767	<0.001	Yes
4c	Insufficient Information	AT	-0.046	-1.734	>0.05	No
4d	Liability Concerns	AT	-0.016	-0.350	>0.05	No
5a	Financial Burdens	DI	-0.037	-0.792	>0.05	No
5b	Inconvenience	DI	-0.195	-3.498	<0.001	Yes
5c	Insufficient Information	DI	-0.116	-2.244	<0.05	Yes

Hypothesis	Factor	Impact on	Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value	Supported
5d	Liability Concerns	DI	-0.031	-0.749	>0.05	No
6a	Altruism	RF	0.582	8.899	<0.001	Yes
6b	Social Norms	RF	0.545	8.428	<0.001	Yes
6c	Egoism	RF	0.528	8.454	<0.001	Yes
6d	Tax Incentives	RF	0.392	6.463	<0.001	Yes
7a	Financial Burdens	RA	-0.036	-0.572	>0.05	No
7b	Inconvenience	RA	-0.270	-4.370	<0.001	Yes
7c	Insufficient Information	RA	-0.175	-2.792	<0.01	Yes
7d	Liability Concerns	RA	-0.008	-0.135	>0.05	No

Note: AT: Attitudes; DI: Donation Intentions; RF: Reasons For; RA: Reasons Against

4.3. Moderating effects: Hypothesis 8

To test the moderating roles of 'trust in food banks,' the respondents were divided into two groups based on a median approach (Rucker et al., 2015): low-trust (*n*=136) and high-trust (*n*=138) using the median score (4.667). This method resulted in the exclusion of 26 samples with median value duplication.

This study confirmed the invariance between the configural model and the full-metric model before undertaking multi-group analysis (MGA). The fit of the configural model concerning 'trust in food banks' was acceptable (χ^2 = 3313.546; df = 2035; IFI = 0.867; TLI = 0.849; CFI = 0.864). The difference between the two models ($\Delta\chi^2(29)$ = 41.121, p>0.05) was not significant. In addition, the invariance between the two models was assessed based on specific statistical criteria: Changes in TLI and CFI values were both within the threshold (0.01), and the difference in RMSEA values was also below the threshold (0.015) (Jovanović et al., 2022). Hence, the establishment of invariance between the two groups (high-trust and low-trust) was confirmed (Maruyama et al., 2023).

In investigating the moderating role of 'trust in food banks' on the links of reasoning factors – attitudes, while 'reasons for' exhibited a more positive impact on the 'attitudes' of restaurant managers with high trust compared with those with low trust, these variances did not achieve statistical significance.

In contrast, the moderating role of 'trust in food banks' on the reasoning factors and food donation intentions was partially significant. While the impact of 'reasons for' on 'food donation intentions' did not exhibit significant difference between the high- and low-trust group, the relationship between 'reasons against' and 'food donation intentions' was significantly affected by 'trust in food banks.' Results for Hypothesis 8 are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Results for *Hypothesis 8*

Factors	Impact in High-Trust Group	Impact in Low-Trust Group	Statistical Significance ($\Delta\chi^2(1)$)

Factors	Impact in High-Trust Group	Impact in Low-Trust Group	Statistical Significance ($\Delta\chi^2(1)$)
Lack of financial support	Positive (β= 0.185, p<0.05)	Negative (β= -0.179, p<0.05)	7.451**
Insufficient information	Positive (β= 0.225, p<0.01)	Negative (β= -0.124, p<0.05)	6.630**
Liability concerns	Positive (β= 0.254, p<0.01)	Positive (β= 0.185, p<0.05)	4.141*
Inconvenience	Not Significant (β= -0.067, p>0.05)	Negative (β= -0.321, p<0.001)	0.517

Our findings highlight the pivotal role of 'trust in food banks' in assisting restaurant managers to overcome their barriers, consequently fostering more favorable food donation intentions. Thus, Hypothesis 8 was partially supported.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and Conclusion

This study illuminates the complexities of restaurant businesses' engagement in food donation, despite growing awareness of food security and positive cognitions toward donation (Sweet, 2020; Merkle, 2021). Drawing on the BRT perspectives, this study prioritized the examination of 'perceived value in food security' among restaurant managers, recognizing its pivotal role as a key determinant of reasons in shaping attitudes and behavioral intentions toward food donation. Among the eight reasons related to food donation identified in this study, only three reasoning factors – 'altruism', 'social norms', and 'inconvenience' – exhibited a significant influence on attitudes, whereas the study found additional factors that significantly affected intentions to donate food: 'tax incentives' and 'insufficient information.' Finally, the findings highlight the mitigating role of 'trust in food banks' in reducing the negative impact of 'reasons against' on food donation intentions, despite its insignificant effect on attitudes. The findings and our distinctive approach contribute to the existing research by examining restaurants' proactive engagement in food donation, offering a potent strategy to address the intertwined challenges of reducing food waste (Warshawsky, 2023; Giordano et al., 2020).

5.2. Implications

Initially, restaurant managers' perceived value in food security demonstrated its positive impact on all four 'reasons for' factors, while its negative impact on 'reasons against' ('inconvenience' and 'insufficient information') was partially supported with 'financial burdens' and 'liability concerns' demonstrating no significant association.

The findings uniquely imply that more reasons affect intentions than attitudes. The study reveals that public benefits are significant motivators for corporate food donations, whereas private benefits like 'egoism' have no significant impact. In terms of private benefits, only tax (financial) incentives are valued, highlighting a primary preference for practical benefits in corporate contexts, as opposed to individual motivations (Müller & Lindenmeier, 2022), with a notable variance in donation amounts between individuals and organizations.

Furthermore, the result examining the impacts of ‘inconvenience’ and ‘insufficient information’ on donation intentions underscores the need for accessible and practical knowledge for effective food donation among the managers (Ceryes et al., 2023). Thus, this study indicates that for organizations, facilitators of food donation behaviors are embedded in two critical aspects: ‘importance’ and ‘convenience,’ as identified in previous literature examining the relationships between attitudes and environmentally friendly behaviors (Gao et al., 2016). The notable role of liability concerns and the challenge of inconvenience in donating food underline the crucial need for governmental support.

Expanding on Konrath and Handy’s (2018) findings that individuals’ donation intentions are influenced by ‘trust in charities,’ and supported by Ceryes et al. (2023) on the significance of fostering a positive donor-charity relationship, it becomes evident that ‘trust in food banks’ plays a pivotal role within the restaurant food donation context. This study further affirmed that ‘trust in food banks’ empowers restaurant managers to overcome challenges such as ‘financial burdens,’ ‘insufficient information,’ and ‘liability concerns,’ ultimately fostering greater food donation intentions.

Specifically, prior literature highlighted that donors are less influenced by negative aspects (e.g., perceived risks) associated with food donation processes when they have established strong ‘trust in food banks (Stötzer et al., 2023). Thus, this study enriches the understanding by providing empirical evidence and suggests practical implications for food banks.

Finally, emphasizing transparency through public disclosure of donated food types and quantities, and ensuring equitable distribution, is fundamental in building trust, ultimately fostering sustained donor contributions. Implementing a practice of labeling donated food with a specific identifier, such as the charity’s name, not only instills confidence in both donors and recipients but also ensures transparent provision of donated items to those in need. It enhances the credibility of the donated items for recipients.

5.2. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

This study still holds limitations and thus future research suggestions. Firstly, the study sample is exclusively consisted of restaurant managers in South Korea. Broader studies across various countries and industries could validate and expand these findings. Secondly, future investigations could explore additional concepts and delve deeper into the sub-factors of a more extensive array of ‘reasons for and against’ food donation, enriching the empirical foundation for generating comprehensive outcomes.

REFERENCES

Akkerman, R., Buisman, M., Cruijssen, F., de Leeuw, S., & Haijema, R. (2023). Dealing with donations: Supply chain management challenges for food banks. *International Journal of Production Economics*, *262*, 108926.

Antwi, C.O., Ntim, S.Y., Boadi, E.A., Asante, E.A., Brobbey, P., & Ren, J. (2023). Sustainable cross-border tourism management: COVID-19 avoidance motive on resident hospitality. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *31*(8).

Baglioni, S., De Pieri, B., & Tallarico, T. (2017). Surplus Food Recovery and Food Aid: The Pivotal Role of Non-profit Organisations. Insights From Italy and Germany. *International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations, 28*.

Bennett, R., Vijaygopal, R., & Kottasz, R. (2023). Who gives to food banks? A study of influences affecting donations to food banks by individuals. *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing*, *35*(3).

Bierma, T.J., Jin, G., & Bazan, C.N. (2019). Food Donation and Food Safety: Challenges, Current Practices, and the Road Ahead, *Journal of Environmental Health, 81*(10).

Birch, D., Memery, J., & Kanakarantne, M.S. (2018). The mindful consumer: Balancing egoistic and altruistic motivations to purchase local food, *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 40*.

Busetti, S. (2019). A theory-based evaluation of food waste policy: Evidence from Italy, *Food Policy, 88*, 101749.

Ceryes, C., Heley, K., Edwards, D., Gao-Rittenberg, C., Seifu, L., Sohail, S.K., & Neff, R. (2023). "We need a better system": Maryland crop growers' perspectives on reducing food loss through donation. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*, *12*(4).

Chapman, C.M., Hornsey, M.J., & Gillespie, N. (2021). To What Extent Is Trust a Prerequisite for Charitable Giving? A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis, *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 50*(6).

Claudy, M.C., Peterson, M., & O'Driscoll, A. (2013). Understanding the attitude-behavior gap for renewable energy systems using behavioral reasoning theory. *J. Macro- mark*. *33*(4).

De Boeck, E., Jacxsens, L., Goubert, H., & Uyttendaele, M. (2017). Ensuring food safety in food donations: case study of the Belgian donation/acceptation chain. *Food Research International*, *100*.

Diddi, S., Yan, R.N., Bloodhart, B., Bajtelsmit, V., & McShane, K. (2019). Exploring young adult consumers' sustainable clothing consumption intention-behavior gap: A Behavioral Reasoning Theory perspective, *Sustainable Production and Consumption*, *18*.

Filimonau, V., & De Coteau, A. (2019). Food waste management in hospitality operations: a critical review. *Tourism Management, 71*.

Food Bank for New York City. (2023). THE SERIES: EAT FOR GOOD.

Gao, Y.L., Mattila, A.S., & Lee, S. (2016). A meta-analysis of behavioral intentions for environment-friendly initiatives in hospitality research. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *54*.

Hair, J., Black, W., Anderson, R., & Babin, B. (2018), "*Multivariate data analysis* (8, ilustra ed.)", Cengage Learning EMEA.

Hamelin, A.M., Mercier, C., & Bédard, A. (2008). Perception of needs and responses in food security: divergence between households and stakeholders, *Public Health Nutrition*. *11*(12).

Jovanović, V., Rudnev, M., Arslan, G., Buzea, C., Dimitrova, R. et al. (2022). The Satisfaction with Life Scale in adolescent samples: Measurement invariance across 24 countries and regions, age, and gender. *Applied research in quality of life*, *17*(4).

Konrath, S., & Handy, F. (2018). The development and validation of the motives to donate scale. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *47*(2).

Lang, L., Wang, Y., Chen, X., Zhang, Z., Yang, N., Xue, B., & Han, W. (2020). Awareness of food waste recycling in restaurants: evidence from China, *Resources, Conservation & Recycling, 61*, 104949.

Liao, C., Hong, J., & Zhao, D. (2019). Understanding corporate surplus food donation in China: testing the roles of environmental concern, altruism, past experience, and perceived risk, *Environmental Science and Pollution Research, 26*.

Maruyama, N.U., Ribeiro, M.A., & Woosnam, K.M. (2023). The effect of minority residents' attitudes and emotional solidarity on ethnic neighborhood tourism: A multigroup invariance analysis. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *31*(2).

Merkle, E. (2021). Barriers and Incentives for Food Waste Reduction: A Case Study of NYC Restaurants. Master Thesis. *Central European University.*

Mettler, A. (2023). Food waste in restaurants: What we know [Online]. https://www.fourth.com/article/how-much-food-restaurants-waste

Migotto, M., Davis, B., Carletto, C., & Beegle, K. (2007). Measuring food security using respondents' perception of food consumption adequacy. *Food Security: Indicators,* *Measurement, and the Impact of Trade Openness. B. Guha-Khasnobis, SS Archaya and B. Davis, Eds. UNU-WIDER and ICSSR.*

Montoli, P., Ares, G., Aschemann-Witzel, J., Curutchet, M.R., & Giménez, A. (2023). Food donation as a strategy to reduce food waste in an emerging Latin American country: a case study in Uruguay. *Nutrire, 48*(22).

Müller, M.S., & Lindenmeier, J. (2022). Exploring the role of charitable ethnocentrism and donation motives in international giving: Empirical evidence from Germany. *Journal of Philanthropy and Marketing*, *27*(2), e1729.

Musenze, I.A., & Mayende, T.S. (2023). Ethical leadership (EL) and innovative work behavior (IWB) in public universities: examining the moderating role of perceived organizational support (POS). *Management Research Review*, *46*(5).

Newman, C. (2022). Why Restaurants and Grocers Don't Donate Food [Online]. https://sylvanaqua.medium.com/why-restaurants-and-grocers-dont-donate-food-23aff9c4131e

Ng, P.Y., & Sia, J.K.M. (2023). Managers' perspectives on restaurant food waste separation intention: The roles of institutional pressures and internal forces. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *108*, 103362.

Ranganathan, S.K., & Henley, W.H. (2008). Determinants of charitable donation intentions: a structural equation model. *International journal of nonprofit and voluntary sector marketing*, *13*(1).

Restaurantware (2021). How Restaurants Are Helping Out Community Kitchens, *Restaurantware* [Online]. https://www.restaurantware.com/blog/post/how-restaurants-are-helping-out-community-kitchens/

Ribeiro, M.A., Seyfi, S., Elhoushy, S., Woosnam, K.M., & Patwardhan, V. (2023). Determinants of generation Z pro-environmental travel behaviour: the moderating role of green consumption values. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 1-21.

Sahu, A.K., Padhy, R.K., & Dhir, A. (2020). Envisioning the future of behavioral decision-making: A systematic literature review of behavioral reasoning theory. *Australasian Marketing Journal, 28.*

Schanes, K., & Stagl, S. (2019). Food waste fighters: What motivates people to engage in food sharing? *Journal of Cleaner Production*, *211*.

Sert, S., Garrone, P., Melacini, M., & Perego, A. (2018). Corporate food donations: altruism, strategy or cost saving? *British Food Journal*, *120*(7).

Stötzer, S., Martin, S., & Broidl, C. (2023). Using certifications to signal trustworthiness and reduce the perceived risk of donors–An exploratory investigation into the impact of charity labels. *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing*, *35*(3).

Sweet, B.L. (2020). IDENTIFYING PERCEIVED BARRIERS IN FOOD DONATION OF OWNER/OPERATORS BASED ON THEIR PERSONAL EXPERIENCES: WORDS MATTER. Doctoral Thesis. *Northeastern University.*

Tiseo, I. (2023). Food waste production worldwide 2019, by sector. Statista [Online]. https://www.statista.com/statistics/1219836/global-food-waste-by-sector/

Westaby, J.D. (2002). Identifying specific factors underlying attitudes toward change: using multiple methods to compare expectancy-value theory to reasons theory 1. *Journal of Applied Social* Psychology, *32*(5).

Westaby, J.D. (2005). Behavioral reasoning theory: Identifying new linkages underlying intentions and behavior. *Organizational behavior and human decision processes*, *98*(2).

Ye, N., & Zhou, M. (2012). Exploring the attitude-action gap for new energy vehicle adoption. *East China Economic Management*, *11*.

Zaidi, N., Maurya, M., Dixit, S., & Dharwal, M. (2022). Predictors of reuse and donation intentions of leftover food items: An empirical analysis. *Vision*, 09722629221115921.

Transformation toward responsible management: The case of domestic hotel

Liang, Yuan
College of Shanghai Lausanne Hospitality Management
Shanghai Business School

Wang, Fangzhou
College of Shanghai Lausanne Hospitality Management
Shanghai Business School

Abstract:

In the 21st century, there exist strong pressures to balance economic growth and profitability of business with social and environmental considerations, which resonate well with the principle of responsible management. In this study, it examined the process of transformation toward responsible management in a Chinese medium-size hotel. The author proposed a visualizing graphic of transforming practices concerning in-depth interviews among hotel employees and owners. The findings assist hotel management team to achieve sustainable development.

Keywords: Transformation, Responsible Management, Domestic Hotel

1. Introduction

The term "responsible management" has caused widespread concerns with the hotel industry since the 1990s, resulting in development vigorously. Gradually, it has become a trend of the hotel industry, leading to responsible practices taken from the international hotels, such as environmental protection program (Bohdanowicz et al., 2011), the establishment of employee training policy (Tracey et.al., 2015), and so on. Despite many practices already conducted in the Chinese hotel industry, the extents of engaging responsible management from international chain hotels and local hotels have significant differences.

In the international chain hotels, responsible practices have already come to mature, resulting in constructing an integrated responsible management program or system (Abram & Jarzabek, 2016). However, the local hotel companies are still in the stage of rapid development. They mostly take actions corresponding to environmental regulations, and only pay attention to reducing consumption and waste (Meadin.com, 2013), leading to incomplete and superficial knowledge about responsible practices. Therefore, most studies pay much attention to international hotels, ignoring the significance of domestic hotels, resulting in limited studies underlying the local cases.

Regarding this, it focuses on identifying the transforming practices toward responsible management based on a selected local hotel. The analysis aims at mapping the graphic of transforming practices concerning in-depth interviews among hotel employees.

In this respect, the study considers the selection of a single case study for the local hotel in China. In addition to the interview, this study is also supplemented by the internal documents gained from the identified organization. To this end, it seeks to identify its transforming process and the related practices during this process.

2. Literature Review

In contemporary society, companies have to face some difficulties and challenges in their operations, and thus they have to make corresponding actions to cope. Empirical evidence shows that internal and external factors, such as the changes in customer demands (Yoon et al., 2016), policy and laws (Rahim, 2017), financial consideration (Jiang et al., 2018), increased public concerns (Lin et.al., 2018), the usage of the natural resources and environmental conditions (Park & Levy, 2014), give management teams pressures to reconsider and update their behaviors and actions, corresponding to the trends of the society and business environment, to gain competitive advantage (Shah & Khan, 2019) and achieve the goal of sustainable development (Pureza & Lee, 2020).
Currently, with immense growth in the intentions of application responsible management (Camiller, 2017) plus the potential positive advantages, more and more enterprises should be encouraged to combine responsible management into their daily operations (Parris et.al., 2016) and remain as their identity in this sector. But the most studies in this field only focus on antecedents (Girschik, 2020) and consequences (Shang et.al., 2019) provided by responsible management. However, limited studies focus on the practices within responsible management, but most have emphasized the subject of education and learning (Mousa et.al., 2019), aiming to cultivate potential employees to behave responsibly. Thus, the practical knowledge of responsible management within the corporations is largely ignored (Laasch, 2018), and this is an important deficiency.

Simultaneously, responsible practices within the hotel sectors remain popular in recent years. Despite an increased number of studies mentioned about the practices conducted within the hotel industry, the studies are still underdeveloped and remain fragmented (Moyeen et al., 2019). Therefore, this study aims to investigate the practices in the transformation toward responsible management within the hotel context.

3. Methodology

3.1. Single case study
The brand of A founded in 2013, is a domestic mid-scale hotel. It is committed to creating an accommodation brand and forming a leisurely and natural way of life, which enables guests to obtain a comfortable accommodation environment and relax living space during stressful and stressful business trips, ensuring to offer guests a home away from home.

Based on that, A brand has taken seven years to distribute in more than 170 cities in China and further become one of the most favorable hotel brands among international and domestic hotels. Moreover, the Chinese hotel industry has experienced the darkest hours due to the outbreak of service scandals in recent years (Netease news, 2020), resulting in lower intentions to stay in the hotels. However, A brand has gained quite a high level of customer satisfaction and guest recognitions at that time (AnswerLand, 2021). Thus, on one hand, A is a presentative domestic hotel brand to witness the rapid growth of the Chinese hotel industry, and on the other hand, its operational strategy and prompt response to the changes of markets attract my attention to explore what makes A hotel unique. Therefore, the knowledge gained from this hotel is more representative to demonstrate its transformation toward responsible management.

3.2. Participants and interviews

To gain knowledge of transformation toward responsible management, it conducted semi-structured interviews. The researcher contacted the general manager of this hotel through a personal network and gain permission to access the employees. Then, to attract the employees to involve, the researcher displayed a poster in the staff canteen and introduced this research to the employees during their group activity. Later, the researcher arranged the time to interview based on their feedback and convenient time. As a result, fifteen semi-interviews have conducted.

Considering the efficiency of the interview questions, they have developed based on the literature, researcher's previous working experience, and pre-test among experts within the Chinese hotel industry. Then, the researcher modified the questions and make a clear interview guideline to motivate the interviewees to answer. The questions are mainly demonstrated into four aspects, including demographic information, hotel information, perceptions of responsible management, and hotel responsible management. The interviews have conducted on average 90 minutes based on the responses from the interviewees.

4. Results

This section focused on the results of the interviews and discuss by relating to the extant literature, ensuring to meet the rigor of conducting qualitative research (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). In presenting our findings, this section firstly inquired about the practices compared before and after this transformation, assisting to generalize the framework of its integrated process of transformation.

Transforming p*rocess toward responsible management*

Before transformation

As stated previously, the selected hotel is operated by the franchise, resulting in that our hotel has followed all requirements from the brand company, as stated by one participant working in the food and beverage department:

"I have been working in this hotel since it opened. In the beginning, our hotel followed the requirements from the brand company to operate. For example, the service operational process, the employee uniforms, property management system, management policy, and required standards of service and products are aligned with the brand company to ensure the service quality." (No. 8)

In daily operation, A hotel already takes some responsible practices affected by hotel operation philosophy and its goal and culture, which highly focus on its service system and the attitudes toward employees. Firstly, A hotel provides service based on its original service system, ensuring a high level of guest service and gaining guest satisfaction. This original service system, not only stresses the concerns for specific groups (especially children and disabled persons) but also mentions its awareness toward environmental protection, illustrated by participants.

“Bathroom tissues in the guest room is the makeup of recycled products… for the equipment of the hotel, they are not energy-efficiency.” (No. 17)
“The most furniture in the guest room is made up of the original ecological material colored with the wood, affected by its origin of a small village in Yunnan Province.” (No. 14)

Secondly, A hotel is committed to advocating that it put employees first, corresponding to its operational philosophy with an emphasis on the application of humanistic sentiments. Gained from the data, all the respondents admitted and noted that they have experienced completely different working experience compared with international or other local hotels. They reported:
“Apart from salary, our hotel also provides some other benefits to reward us. For example, our hotel has organized events to appreciate our hardworking and prepared some special working gifts for us.” (No. 4)
“… I observed our staff dormitory, which has a high level of accommodations with fully furnished. In the meantime, four colleagues shared in a room and give us enough space to live and relax.” (No. 11)

Employees as the service provider, largely determine the quality of service (Dhar, 2015). Meanwhile, employees are one of the core resources for the hotel industry (Koo et.al., 2020), and thus maintaining qualified employees play a critical role in the fierce competition in the Chinese hotel industry. Indicated that, A hotel has recognized the importance of employees and always insists to improve employee satisfaction and loyalty through the strategy of putting the employee first.

The transformation toward responsible management

Although it has made some responsible practices as mentioned above, the mostly implemented practices are oriented by its characteristics through operation philosophy, goal, and culture. The case of A hotel has experienced great changes since the end of 2018, due to the impacts of the external environment, such as hygiene scandal, the fiercer competition between domestic and international hotels, improved guests’ cognition, and so on. In light of such circumstances, the case of A hotel implements a wide coverage of practices in the transformation toward a higher level of responsible management, compared with before. The transforming practices mainly present in three aspects, including service innovation and upgrading, re-modelling the membership policy, and establish a “warm” human resource management.
The first aspect is termed Service Innovation and Upgrading. Service is the core product for our hotel, while guests’ demands for hotel service have continued to increase as time passes. Hence, the hotel constantly makes some innovations to update and innovate its service. For A hotel, it also makes some service innovations to ensure the quality of guest consumption, catering to the increased appreciations for qualified accommodations. What’s more, there have some tiny practices conducted proposed by customers’ suggestions, such as the application of vibrators.

"Our restaurant provided noodles and wonton which needs to cost some times to wait. Luckily, the brand company is required to provide vibrators for guests to remind them when the food is ready. It is quite smart and I never see other hotels have conducted similar service." (No. 14)

Besides, A hotel also expands the usage of Bambook, located in the lobby area. In there, it provides more than thousands of books free of borrowing and non-local return. However, concerning the limited usage, A hotel connects with surrounding communities, providing a free library for residents to read books. In doing this, it not only maximizes the utilization of the public area but also benefits the surrounding community.
The second aspect comes down to Re-modelling the Membership Policy. As it suggests, it correlates with the benefits of members. Before, our membership benefits were mostly focused on the accommodation rights based on the credits, illustrated by the front desk manager.
"Previously, our members enjoyed the benefits on the aspects of reduction of the room price, birthday gift, delayed time of check-out, upgrading room, free breakfast based on the credits." (No. 5)

Compared with the past, A hotel realizes that the current membership cannot satisfied members rising requirements of membership benefits. Thus, A hotel has remodelled its policy stressing the re-establish a higher level of member service. Primarily, it presents two major aspects: personalized customization service and distant service. For personalized customization service, members need to reach the prerequisite of reaching the member points and then select four free services. If you want to experience more, the member may need to pay for the extra service listed below. Through such transformation, members feel much pleasant for extra service, mentioned by participants.

"They (members) gave us very satisfied feedback when checking out, and they told me that the upgrading member policy give them surprised about the coverage service they never think before." (No. 1)
"More and more members prefer to choose personalized customization service when making reservations. They marked which service they prefer to choose, leading us to make full preparations in advance." (No. 7)

What's more, A hotel also initiates distance benefits for platinum and black gold members. The most hotel offers the service limited to in-house guests, and guests will not experience hotel service after checking out. However, A hotel proposed the distant benefits for platinum and black gold members diverse times to experience free self-service laundry service. Therefore, remodelling the membership policy is a practice to ensure long-term guest relations by establishing a membership network with guests, corresponding to the previous perception of the sustainable dimension of responsible management.
The last aspect is concluded as "Warm" Human Resource Management. It is further refined based on its previous strategy of putting the employee first. In this aspect, A hotel has produced a slogan- treating your employees like you do. This slogan doesn't mean that the senior management team treats employees as the elders, and it implies that you perform the characteristics of unity, response, and respect for employees, resulting in higher recommendations among employees. For example,

"….. it is quite a difference compare with my previous working hotel, and it gives me a feeling of gaining a lot of respect." (No. 15)
"I just dined in the staff canteen instead of the guest restaurant before. However, we are allowed to use it in our hotel."

Actually, in our case, A hotel advocates the concept of family, and everyone in this team was treated as a whole family. Practically, all of the participants mentioned that everyone works in a homely atmosphere, and some examples express how such atmosphere presented in our hotel:

"In our hotel, we treat our colleagues as our companions. Like a family, you can feel free to express." (No. 9)
"… I like an intimate elder sister to assist them to solve any problems both at work and at home." (No.4)
More than that, Aour hotel is also emphasized the prompt response to employees' demands whether it's work-related or not. Requests you express are considered by the hotel, no matter you are a manager or an ordinary employee. For example:

"There was something that happened in my family before. At that time, I was required to take several days off, while the hotel was in the peak season. Our general manager approved my applications without consideration. Even she noted that I can contact her if I have some difficulties. It makes me moved and inspired." (No. 9)

In addition, A also encourages employees to feel free to express their ideas for hotel development, resulting in a close relationship with employees. Hence, it also involves employee participants during the process of making decisions.

"(for decision making) Commonly, the senior management firstly negotiates and then the management team will give their opinions and moves to the stage of application. In the process of application, employees will give their feedback based on actual operation, and then senior management team will make corresponding improvements." (No. 9)

Therefore, the framework of conducted practices comparing before and after transformation, based on the information discussed above, is summarized in Figure 1.

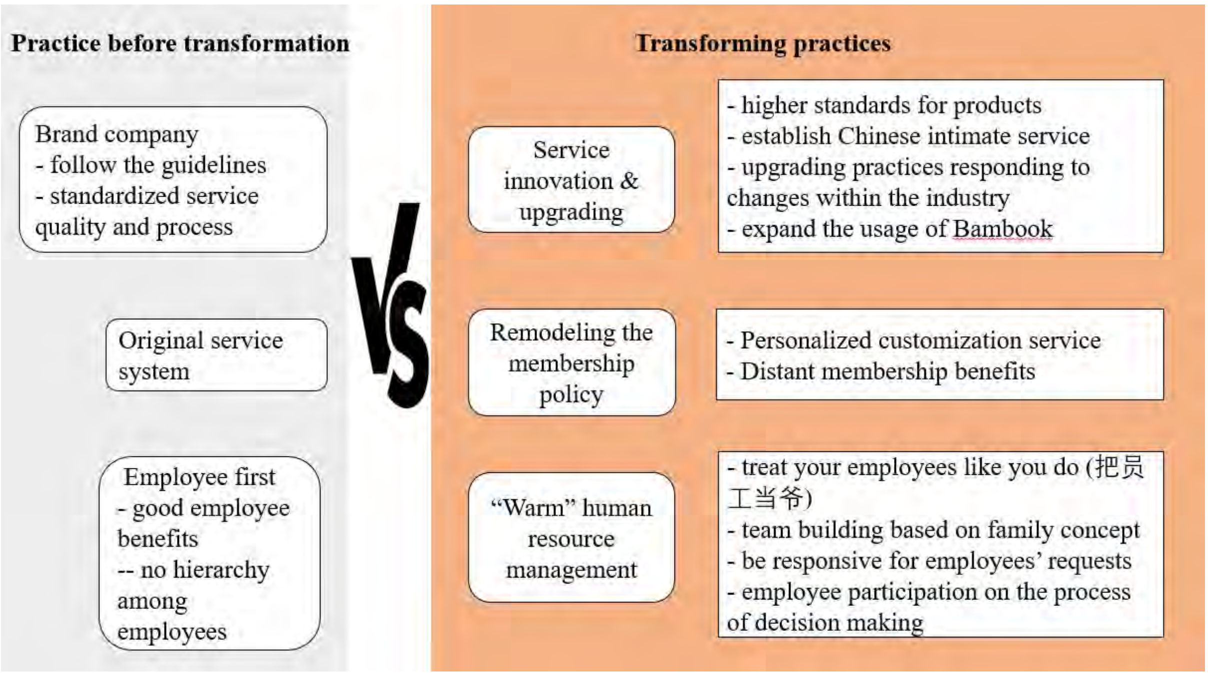


Figure 1. Applied practices before and after transformation

Compared with practices before and after transformation, the involvement of stakeholder groups for these two stages presents obvious differences. As shown, the participated stakeholders before transformation mainly focused on guests, employees, brand company. However, the participated stakeholder groups after transformation mostly focused on guests and employees. More specifically, A hotel mainly focused on the brand company, guests, and employees before transformation, while the related practices after transforming are guided by guests and employees, as the key stakeholder groups in transforming toward responsible management. Therefore, the key stakeholder groups concerning transformation are recognized, including guests, employees, and brand company. The previous studies also supported their crucial role for the hotel operations and management (Buil et al., 2019; Pang & Wee, 2020), and concluded closely relationships with hotel performance (Mohsinm et al., 2019; Safavi & Karatepe, 2018;). The findings gained from the data demonstrated that these three stakeholder groups play a significant role in this local hotel. In short, any decision or practice is required to consider the interests of these three groups, otherwise, it simply cannot be implemented.

Besides, implemented responsible practices between before and after transformation also different. Initially, the role of the brand company has changed. Affected by the managerial characteristic of franchising, the brand company plays a monitor role in its daily operation, and thus the transforming practices are strongly related to our hotel, instead of the brand company. Moreover, the transforming practice mainly focuses on the service innovation and improved membership benefits compared with the previously implemented service system, to go more detailed service to keep pace with the times. Simultaneously, A hotel practically establishes a combination of human resource management with "warm" affected by brand culture, with regards to responsible practices toward employees. Therefore, it is notable that responsible practices in the transforming toward responsible management within the local context dominated by the impacts of guests and employees, catering to A's hotel goal-centered by "employee-hotel-guest".

The process of transforming toward responsible management

Concluded the practices conducted after such transformation, the researcher further summarized its transforming process toward responsible management. Indicated from the data, the researcher concluded three major stages in the process of responsible management, including established perceptions, making judgments, and actions.

Stage 1: Established perceptions

In the first stage, established perceptions imply a step of establishing recognitions as the foundation of all the activities. For our transforming process, our managerial team needs to obtain enough information about responsible management and its potential effect on our operation and management, and later form perceptions toward responsible management. Therefore, the source of the information plays a crucial role in this stage. A hotel commonly gains information from guests, employees, brand company, competitors, and society, as the evidence demonstrated before, and its sources of information just match the groups indicated from the previously discussed antecedent sector. Therefore, we summarize that the perceptions are established based on the motivation by all the involvement of the stakeholder groups.

Stage 2: Making judgments

In the second stage, making judgment is a process of assessing whether these perceptions gained in the first stage are applicable for the hotel and how to apply them into practice. The judgments commonly comprise of two aspects, social norms and legal regulations, and professional evaluations. On one hand, both social norms and legal regulations are the basic standard to be considered. As we knew, social norms are rooted in customs and culture, while legal regulations are created by the government and required to implement. Thus, social norms are considered as the basic standards to follow, compared with the minimum moral requirement of legal regulations (Zhang & Chen, 2009). For the judgments, it thus should be putting the priority without a doubt.

On the other hand, the judgments from professional evaluations, required to provide expert judgments. A hotel mainly constructs three groups, including research company, brand company, and involved stakeholders. Firstly, as the information from its internal documents, it indicated that the research company provides some suggestions for its operational management:

“In order to improve the service quality and customer satisfaction, A hotel specially invited research companies focused on hotel management to optimize the room facilities and service procedures.” (Internal document)

Moreover, the relationship between the brand company and its franchised hotel has been discussed before. The judgment from the brand company is identified by the respondent from the assistant of general manager and noted that the approval from brand company plays an important role to determine whether it can be applied into practice:

"(For example) Anxin Project is a program initiated by scandals from other hotels. It is established by policies and operating standards provided by the brand company after multiple analyses and then applied into its hotels." (No. 3)

Besides, involved stakeholders are also recognized through the previous discussion. The engagement of these stakeholder groups proposes their opinions based on their experience and knowledge, assisting to make more effective and practical opinions.

Stage 3: Actions

In the third stage, conducted actions move to the practices. In this stage, it is a little bit complex, due to its complicated comprised of several steps. As the data presented from the internal document, noted:

"(Anxin Project) Among franchised hotels, they provide timely feedback on the problems found in actual operations, organized regular communication with partners (hotel employees), and shared experience and opinions in the implementation process of Anxin Project." (Internal Document)

After achieving such transformation, these practices are still supervised by the brand company to regulate whether these practices are reaching their expected goal and whether there is any practice that needs to be improved. Spontaneously, customers also are involved in this process and play a monitor role to give constructive feedback. Then, A hotel makes some adjustments correspondingly. The monitoring system is indicated by participants:

"Due to the changes of the external environment, our practices have also made some improvements. Our hotel provides take-out food delivery to guest rooms for the sake of guest safety. Some guests approve it considerate for guest convenience, while others hold the oppositive view and consider to wait a long time and even get cold food. Therefore, we coordinate employee arrangements based on this feedback" (No. 3)

As shown in the data, there are three steps in this stage, including conducted actions, monitor system, and updated action, and these steps repeat themselves and update frequently. Therefore, the framework of its transforming process toward responsible process is presented in Figure 2, based on the three stages discussed above.

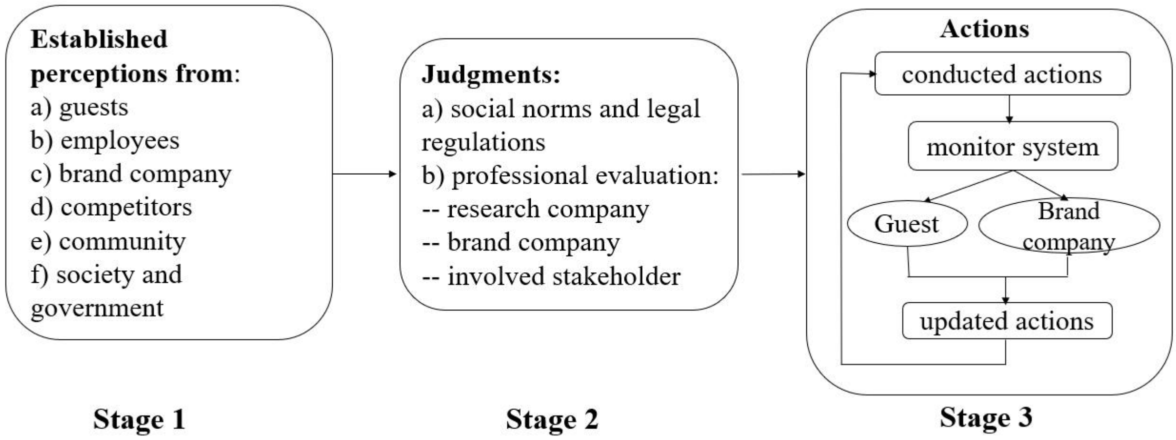


Figure 2. Transforming process toward responsible management

As we are known, such transformation is restricted by the moral and legal system, mainly reflected by the legitimacy theory. Hence, the entire transforming process is required to follow the rules of legitimizing, catering to the cycle of legitimacy judgment. So, we further analyse our transforming process with that proposed from Tost (2011) shown in Figure 3.

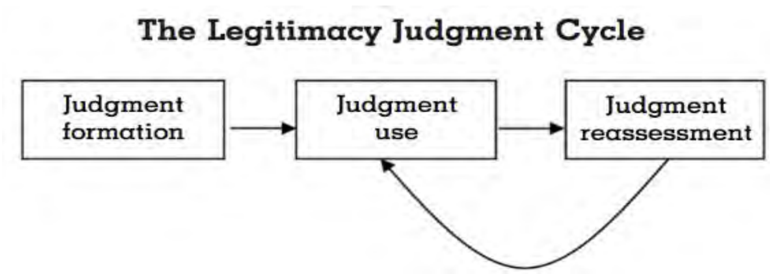


Figure 3. The legitimacy judgment cycle (2011)

Our model shared some similarities with Tost, and despite some similarities between the two models, there are important differences. From the horizontal perspective, we analyse through the order of these three stages. In Tost's model (2011), the cycle emphasized the three steps, compromising of judgment formation, judgment use, and judgment reassessment. Tost's study (2011) mentioned that passive mode and active mode are usually judged the validity in the judgment formation. The effectiveness of the organization at the institutional level influences the evaluators' judgment on the legitimacy of the organization in the passive mode, while evaluates take the initiative to evaluate the organization in the active mode.

Compared with Tost, our framework is categorized the judgment formation into two sectors, including established perceptions and judgment groups. Both stakeholder groups have involved in the first and second stages. Among them, such as society, government, and brand company, play a compulsory role for the hotel to follow their standards and requirements, while the role of guests, employees, competitors, and community are voluntary to participate in its transforming process, catering to passive and active mode mentioned by Tost.
Moreover, our framework further refined the cyclical process between judgment use and judgment reassessment of Tost's model into another circulation process. Vertically, the process of our third stage contains three steps, and the order of these three steps reflects its

verification. Compared with Tost, it presents a process ranging from application, verification, and update again and again in the hotel sector. In this process, A hotel gradually refines its transforming process to achieve the maximum effects of responsible management.

In short, our framework of the transforming process contains two loops. The first loop starts from perception, judgment to actions, and the second loop from beginning action, the monitor to updating. Both two loops are repeated validation to ensure meeting its application on the transforming toward responsible management, as the reason why A hotel has conducted successful transition.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings from the case study presented here illustrated what kinds of practices have been conducted before and after its transformation and further identified its transforming process toward responsible management. Moreover, it also identified the antecedents to influence the organization to conduct such transformation. But the impacts of these antecedents have not been known yet and need further investigation. Therefore, this study contributes to understanding the transformation toward responsible management through a single case of the domestic hotel in China.

From the theoretical perspective, our findings present the diverse stakeholder groups involved in different stages concerning its transformation toward responsible management. Firstly, Chinese hotel needs to gain the pressures from multiple stakeholder groups, including guests, employees, brand company, competitors, community, society, and government, motivating it to transform the higher level of responsible management. Furthermore, two significant stakeholders (guests & employees) are emphasized during implementing transforming responsible practices. Confirmed by the findings, all stakeholder groups as drivers the hotel to transform are not highlighted in transforming practices, and the significant role of guests and employees are fully identified concerning transforming toward responsible management. Therefore, our empirical study captures the key stakeholder groups' engagement in such transformation. This addresses the need to strategically analyse the basis for differences between these stakeholders, enhancing the opportunities to develop the right goals and vision for the business.

Furthermore, our study shows two loops with a cyclic process of validating its feasibility, contributing to the model of legitimacy theory (Tost, 2011). Our findings construct a three-stage transforming process, which stresses a close connection with stakeholder theory and legitimacy theory. Meanwhile, our results support the legitimacy judgment cycle and are further summarized into a framework closer to the Chinese hotel context. The refined transition process from the current study could become a foundation to explore more empirical evidence from domestic hotels in developing countries.

This study makes several contributions in the field of hospitality. First, it contributes to the limited studies concerning responsible practices within the Chinese hotel context. Extant studies on responsible practices primarily focused on educational practices to cultivate employees behave responsibility, whereas the scare studies pay attention to responsible managerial practices (Laasch, 2018). Although some scholars have recognized the trend of responsible management, studies on responsible management remain underdeveloped, especially in the hotel context (Moyeen et al., 2019). The most responsible practices conducted within the hotel context are related to environmental responsibility (Moyeen et al., 2019), and most of them focus on the western context, such as the USA (Rhou et al., 2016), UK (D'Acunto et.al., 2020), Spain (De Leaniz et.al., 2019), and South Korea (Kim et.al., 2017), while small parts of studies focus on the Chinese background (Wang et al., 2020). Therefore, this study contributes to examine the practices in the transformation toward responsibility by a domestic hotel in China.

Second, the current study contributes to the information of transformation. The transformation toward responsible management is complex and hard to measure in tangible constructs (Martínez et.al., 2016). Moreover, the findings assist us to identify the antecedents involved in such transformation and get a complete picture of how the hotel transforms to responsible management.

Our findings also have some implications for the practical aspects. Gaining an in-depth understanding of the transforming hotels undergo will assist practitioners in making practical suggestions to the industry. For the management levels, the findings reported in this work may be of value when designing and implementing responsible business strategies aiming to promote hotel performance and even hotel reputation. The results will also allow them to fully realize the competitive advantages and minimize their downsides compared with others.

However, some limitations should be noted. Firstly, the application of the qualitative method has its weakness, the findings may be limited regarding generalizing its results. For future study may apply to quantitative study to examine. Moreover, this study has conducted a single case study to go in-depth exploration of such transformation. However, the single case study has its biased due to shared similar perspectives toward hotel operations, and so in the future, it may try to conduct multiple case studies to compare and summarize the transforming practices and its process.

REFERENCES

Camilleri, M. A. (2017). Corporate sustainability and responsibility: Creating value for business, society and the environment. Asian Journal of Sustainability and Social Responsibility, 2(1), 59-74.

De Leaniz, P. M. G., Crespo, Á. H., & Gómez-López, R. (2019). The role of environmental CSR practices on the formation of behavioral intentions in a certified hotel context. Spanish Journal of Marketing-ESIC, 23(2), 205-226.

Girschik, V. (2020). Shared responsibility for societal problems: The role of internal activists in reframing corporate responsibility. Business & Society, 59(1), 34-66.

Laasch, O. (2018). Just old wine in new bottles? Conceptual shifts in the emerging field of responsible management. Centre for Responsible Management Education Working Papers, 4(1).

Netease news. (2020). Anxin project has application into more than 70% hotels. Retrieved on 11 March 2020 from https://www.163.com/dy/article/F7ESP8150519EI0N.html

Pureza, A. P., & Lee, K. H. (2020). Corporate social responsibility leadership for sustainable development: An institutional logics perspective in Brazil. Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management, 27(3), 1410-1424.

Shah, S. S. A., & Khan, Z. (2019). Corporate social responsibility: A pathway to sustainable competitive advantage?. International Journal of Bank Marketing, 38(1), 159-174.

Tost, L. P. (2011). An integrative model of legitimacy judgments. Academy of Management Review, 36(4), 686-710.

Zhang, Y., & Chen, L. (2009). CSR: From legal bottom line to moral ideal. Journal of Changchun University of Technology (Social Sciences Edition), 21(3), 47-50.

Perceived job characteristics of the hotel industry: An application of the job characteristics model to turnover intention

Liu, Tiantian
Hospitality Management
University of Missouri

Cho, Seonghee
Hospitality Management
University of Missouri

Abstract

The objective of this study was to explore the influence of job characteristics on the intention to leave among hospitality workers. Specifically, the research focused on the mediating effects of three essential psychological states on the relationship between job characteristic dimensions and turnover intentions. The findings demonstrate that the five central job characteristics significantly impact hotel employees' intentions to leave, with this effect being either fully or partially mediated by the three key psychological states. These results suggest that enhancing core job characteristics may effectively reduce turnover intentions in hospitality employees by positively influencing their psychological states.

Keywords: Job Characteristics Model, Intent to Leave

1. Introduction

Given the hotel industry's exponential global expansion and its staggering labor turnover rate of 73.8% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019), the recruitment and retention of employees have assumed unprecedented significance for companies. Numerous factors contribute to the industry's high turnover rate, including non-competitive wages, irregular work schedules, extended working hours, holiday shifts, substandard working conditions, varying shifts, and limited career advancement opportunities. Moreover, the intrinsic nature of the job significantly influences employees' decisions regarding tenure (Brien, Thomas, & Brown, 2017). However, scant research has delved into the specific characteristics of hotel jobs, with none exploring the relationship between these characteristics and employees' intentions to leave their jobs. To bridge this research gap, the present study examines how perceived hotel job characteristics influence turnover intentions through the lens of the job characteristics model.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Job Characteristics Model

Building on prior job design and motivation research, Hackman and Oldham (1975) developed the Job Characteristics Model (JCM) and its measurement tool, the Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS). The JCM, a motivational theory, identifies internal motivation, psychological states, and job satisfaction as personal outcomes, and job performance, turnover intention, and absenteeism as work outcomes (Hackman & Lawler, 1971). It aims to craft job features that foster positive motivational incentives for employees (Hackman & Oldham, 1976).

Initially devised in 1976 and subsequently updated in 1980, the JCM has been widely utilized to examine job characteristics and their impact on employee motivation and outcomes. The model posits that jobs can be described in terms of five core job characteristics that, when present to a high degree, enhance employee psychological states and result in positive outcomes. The five job characteristics are skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback.

The Job Characteristics Model (JCM) encompasses three pivotal psychological states: (1) experienced meaningfulness of work, (2) experienced outcomes responsibility, and (3) knowledge of actual work results. In accordance with the original JCM framework, employees experience critical psychological states when influenced by the five core job characteristics. In their original model, Hackman and Oldham (1976) asserted that for optimal personal and work outcomes, all three psychological states must coexist. Their study demonstrated that the predictive power of job characteristics was maximized when all three psychological states served as mediators, compared to using any individual state or pair. Key findings indicate a significant correlation between job characteristics—such as skill variety, task identity, task significance, and autonomy—and psychological states like knowing the actual results of work activities and experiencing responsibility for outcomes of work. These relationships underscore the complex interplay between job design and employee psychological experiences, though not all studies found consistent significance across these dimensions.

Research across various industries, including the hospitality sector, has explored the impact of job characteristics on employee performance, satisfaction, and organizational commitment, often drawing on the Job Characteristics Model (JCM) as a theoretical framework. Key studies have demonstrated that certain job characteristics, such as physical efforts, job grade, autonomy, skill variety, task identity, and task significance, positively influence task performance, contextual performance, and job satisfaction. For instance, Kahya (2007) found a positive link between job grades and task performance, while Arfanda (2011) highlighted autonomy's beneficial effect on job performance. Chantarapraprab (2004) reported that skill variety, task identity, task significance, and autonomy positively related to nurses' job performance, though Tungkiatsilp (2013) noted no significant relationship between job feedback and performance.

Within the hospitality industry, pioneering studies by Arie et al. (1984) and Pizam and Neumann (1988) explored job characteristics as determinants of job satisfaction and burnout. Lee-Ross (1998) examined the JCM's reliability for seasonal hotel workers in the UK, finding them satisfied despite poor working conditions, challenging the model's appropriateness outside Western cultures. Later studies, such as Ozturk, Hancer, and Im (2014), analyzed the impact of job characteristics on hotel employees in Turkey, identifying autonomy and feedback as significant predictors of affective commitment and job satisfaction. Furthermore, research on fast-food outlet managers and hotel employees in various contexts has confirmed the influence of job characteristics on job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Ali et al., 2013; Lam & Zhang, 2003; Grobelna, 2019). These studies highlight the model's relevance in understanding and enhancing employee experiences, suggesting that job characteristics significantly affect work engagement and performance, particularly emphasizing the role of task significance in employee engagement within the hospitality sector.

While some hospitality industry studies have partially tested the JCM, primarily focusing on core job characteristics and outcomes, critical psychological states have often been overlooked. The present study addresses this gap by investigating the five core job characteristics in the hotel industry, alongside those associated with employees' three critical psychological states and turnover intentions through mediating effect analysis.

3. Methods

We adopted the Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS) questionnaire (Hackman & Oldham, 1980) to measure five dimensions of job characteristics and three critical psychological states. We used two items to measure turnover intention. Total 1943 surveys were distributed with 436 valid response rates (valid response rate 22.44%). Our target participants are hotel employees currently working in the hotel industry in China and the United States. In the United States, the surveys were distributed through LinkedIn. In China, the data was collected through Wenjuanxing and WeChat.

4. Results

Over half of the participants were married, and approximately 79% were employed full-time (n = 368). Females constituted the majority of the participants (61%), with over 60% aged under 44 years. Additionally, more than 60% reported having a bachelor's degree or higher.

Based on the findings illustrated in Figure 1, skill variety ($\beta = .176$, $p < .001$), task significance ($\beta = .306$, $p < .001$), and feedback ($\beta = .289$, $p < .001$) significantly contribute to hotel employees' perceived meaningfulness of their work. All five job characteristics significantly explained the variance in outcome responsibility: skill variety ($\beta = .112$, $p < .001$), task identity ($\beta = .108$, $p < .01$), task significance ($\beta = .306$, $p < .001$), autonomy ($\beta = .115$, $p < .01$), and feedback ($\beta = .208$, $p < .001$). However, there were only two job characteristics: autonomy ($\beta = .091$, $p < .05$) and feedback ($\beta = .541$, $p < .001$) that contributed to the knowledge of results (adj. $R^2 = .394$, $p < .001$). All three psychological states had a significant impact on turnover intention.

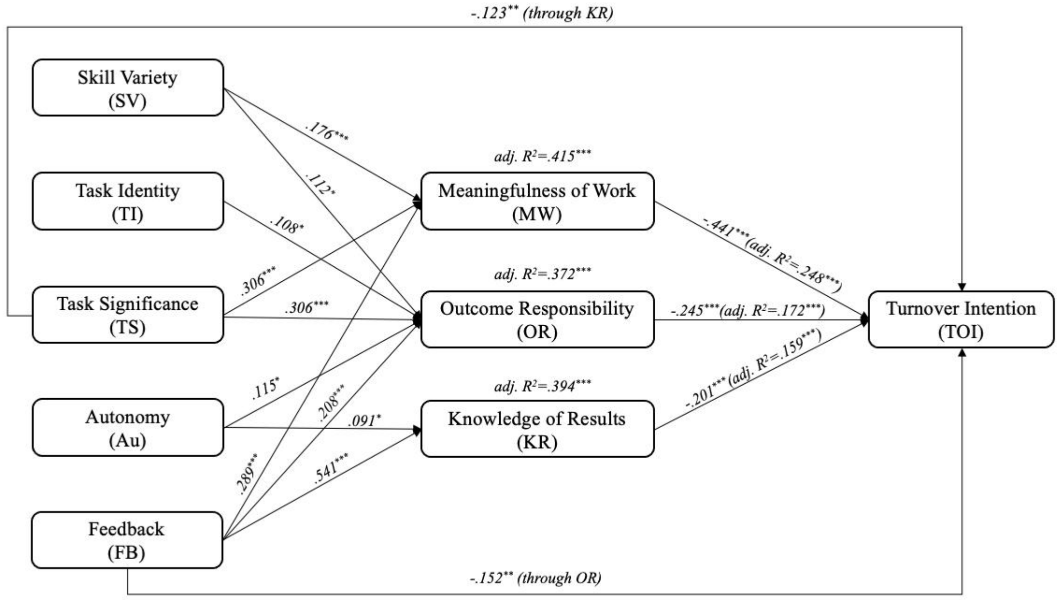


Figure 1. Analysis results of the proposed relationship

The mediation effect analyses confirm that the impacts of the job characteristics on the turnover interior were maximized through the three psychological states. As the tables show, the direct impacts of the job characteristics were minimal compared to the effects through the psychological states. The analysis revealed that the impact of the five core job characteristics on hotel employees' turnover intentions was mediated either fully or partially through all three psychological states (refer to Tables 1, 2, and 3).

Table 1. Mediation Effect of the Experienced Meaningfulness of Work

Total Effect		**Direct Effect**		**Indirect Effect**				**Effect Size**
Path	β	**Path**	β	**Path**	β	**Path**	β	
SV→TOI	$-.264^{**}$	SV→TOI	*-.024*	SV→MW	$.382^{***}$	MW→TOI	$-.628^{***}$	$-.240^{***}$
TI→TOI	$-.321^{***}$	TI->TOI	*-.12**	TI->MW	$.331^{***}$	MW→TOI	$-.603^{***}$	$-.200^{***}$
TS→TOI	$-.389^{***}$	TS->TOI	*-.027*	TS->MW	$.578^{***}$	MW→TOI	$-.627^{***}$	$-.362^{***}$
Au→TOI	$-.247^{***}$	Au->TOI	*.011*	Au->MW	$.401^{***}$	MW->TOI	$-.644^{***}$	$-.258^{***}$
FB→TOI	$-.490^{***}$	FB->TOI	$-.145^{*}$	FB->MW	$.596^{***}$	MW->TOI	$-.578^{***}$	$.344^{***}$

Table 2. Mediation Effect of the Experienced Outcome of Responsibility

Total Effect		**Direct Effect**		**Indirect Effect**				**Effect Size**
Path	β	**Path**	β	**Path**	β	**Path**	β	
SV→TOI	$-.264^{**}$	SV→TOI	$-.117^{*}$	SV→OR	$.237^{***}$	OR→TOI	$-.620^{***}$	$-.147^{***}$

TI→TOI	-.321***	TI->TOI	-.164**	TI->OR	.256***	OR→TOI	-.611***	-.156***
TS→TOI	-.389***	TS->TOI	-.158*	TS->OR	.397***	OR→TOI	-.582***	-.231***
Au→TOI	-.247***	Au->TOI	.041	Au->OR	.308***	OR->TOI	-.670***	-.206***
FB→TOI	-.490***	FB->TOI	-293***	FB->OR	.367***	OR->TOI	-.535***	.196***

Table 3. Mediation Effect of the Knowledge of Results

Total Effect		**Direct Effect**		**Indirect Effect**				**Effect Size**
Path	β	**Path**	β	**Path**	β	**Path**	β	
SV→TOI	-.264**	SV→TOI	-.181***	SV→KR	.177***	KR→TOI	-.470***	-.083***
TI→TOI	-.321***	TI->TOI	-.195	TI->KR	.277***	KR→TOI	-.455***	-.126***
TS→TOI	-.389***	TS->TOI	-.255***	TS->KR	.311***	KR→TOI	-.430***	-.134***
Au→TOI	-.247***	Au->TOI	-.114	Au->KR	.271***	KR->TOI	-.490***	-.133***
FB→TOI	-.490***	FB->TOI	-.272***	FB->KR	.607***	KR->TOI	-.359***	.218***

5. Conclusion

The results highlight the multifaceted nature of job characteristics and their impact on hotel employees' experiences and outcomes. Skill variety was found to enhance employees' perceived meaningfulness of work, indicating the importance of providing employees with diverse tasks and responsibilities to keep them engaged and motivated. Similarly, task significance emerged as a significant predictor of both perceived meaningfulness of work and responsibility for outcomes, suggesting that employees value jobs that have a meaningful impact on others. Autonomy was found to be positively associated with perceived responsibility for outcomes, emphasizing the importance of empowering employees with decision-making authority and freedom in carrying out their tasks. This finding aligns with previous research highlighting the benefits of autonomy in fostering employee motivation and job satisfaction.
Task identity also played a role in shaping employees' perceptions of responsibility for outcomes, highlighting the importance of employees being able to see the tangible results of their work. Feedback emerged as a critical factor influencing employees' knowledge of results and turnover intentions, underscoring the importance of providing timely and constructive feedback to employees.

The mediation analyses further revealed that the effects of core job characteristics on turnover intentions were mediated through employees' psychological states, emphasizing the interconnectedness of job characteristics and employee outcomes. These findings align with Hackman and Oldham's (1976) proposition that optimal personal and work outcomes are achieved when all three psychological states - meaningfulness of work, responsibility for outcomes, and knowledge of results - are present.

REFERENCES

Ali, S. A. M., Said, N. A., Yunus, N. a. M., Kader, S. F. A., Latif, D. S. A., & Munap, R. (2014). Hackman and Oldham's Job Characteristics Model to Job Satisfaction. Paper presented at the International Conference on Innovation, Management and Technology Research, Malaysia. International journal of industrial ergonomics, 37(6), 515-523.

Arfanda, A. (2011). Influence of Job Characteristics and Job Satisfaction on Employee Performance (Doctoral dissertation, University Utara Malaysia).

Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019. Retrieved from https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/jolts_03152019.pdf

Brien, A., Thomas, N. J., & Brown, E. A. (2017). How hotel employee job-identity impacts the hotel industry: The uncomfortable truth. Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 31, 235-243.

Grobelna, A. (2019). Effects of individual and job characteristics on hotel contact employees' work engagement and their performance outcomes: A case study from Poland. International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 31(1), 349-369.

Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R. (1976). Motivation through the Design of Work: Test of a Theory. Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 16, 250-279.

Hackman, J. R., & Lawler III, E. E. (1971). Employee Reactions to Job Characteristics. Journal of Applied Psychology, 55(3), 259-286.

Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, D. R. (1975). The job diagnostic survey: An instrument for the diagnosis of jobs and the evaluation of job redesign projects. Department of Administrative Sciences: Yale Univeristiy.

Kahya, E. (2007). The effects of job characteristics and working conditions on job performance.

Lam, T., & Qiu Zhang, H. (2003). Job satisfaction and organizational commitment in the Hong Kong fast food industry. International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 15(4), 214-220.

Lee-Ross, D. (1998). The reliability and rationale of Hackman and Oldham's Job Diagnostic Survey and Job Characteristics Model among seasonal hotel workers. International Journal of Hospitality Management, 17, 391-406.

Ozturk, A. B., Hancer, M., & Im, J. Y. (2014). Job characteristics, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment for hotel workers in Turkey. Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management, 23(3), 294-313.

Pizam, A., & Neumann, Y. (1988). The Effect of Task Characteristics on Hospitality Employees' Job Satisfaction and Burnout. Hospitality Education and Research Journal, 99-105.

Tungkiatsilp, A. (2013). *The Effects of Job Characteristics and Job Satisfaction on Job Performance in the Restaurant Industry* (Doctoral dissertation, Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi. Faculty of Business Administration. Business Administration).

Development and effects analysis of Adult Sensory Education applying the Sapere method

Shin, Yulee
Department of Food and Nutrition
Yonsei University

Ham, Sunny
Department of Food and Nutrition
Yonsei University

Abstract:

Human food choices are learned behaviors, emphasizing the importance of forming healthy eating habits through repeated food exposure. Although sensory education, particularly taste-focused, is globally practiced, research has predominantly concentrated on children, lacking adult-focused studies. This study seeks to fill this gap by developing and accessing an adult taste education program based on the Sapere method. The research intends to supply essential data to academia and government agencies, offering insights for future adult taste education initiatives.

Keywords: Adult sensory education, Sapere method, curriculum development, educational effectiveness

1. Introduction

The onset age of lifestyle diseases is decreasing due to recent changes in dietary habits. The number of diagnosed hypertension cases in South Korean adults aged 20-30 increased by 29.2% from 2017 to 2021(Hankook Ilbo, 2023). Diabetes cases in the same age group rose by 24%, with a 47% increase specifically in the 20s(Herald Economy, 2023). These issues are linked to changes in the "epigenome," where nutritional information affects gene expression through metabolites, influencing the body's changes and potentially being inherited through generations (DongA Science, 2020).

Additionally, food poisoning has become a serious concern, with adults experiencing higher rates than children in various processed foods (Gearhardt.et al., 2023). Food choice is mostly a learned behavior, shaped by preferences learned in childhood and lasting into adulthood (Reverdy et al., 2010; Steiner, 1974).

Educational programs promoting healthy eating habits include repeated exposure to food, influencing preferences and habits (Reverdy, 2011). Sensory education, such as the Sapere method, involves exploring and expressing thoughts and feelings through observing and tasting food. While widely conducted for children in France (France Ministry of agriculture, 2023) and other countries (Italy Ministry of Education, 2015; Ministry of Education, 2015; Mustonen & Tuorila, 2010; Ueda, 2018), there is a lack of research targeting adults.

Due to limited research on taste education for adults, this study aims to develop a taste education program for adult learners using the Sapere methodology, and to evaluate the educational effects. The specific objectives are as follows: First, to systematically develop and effective taste education program by incorporating the Sapere methodology. Second, to evaluate the effectiveness of the taste education program through assessment reflecting Kirkpatrick's evaluation model. Lastly, to measure the effects of the conducted taste education and derive directions for future taste education.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Sensory education

Sapere, originating in France, introduced Sensory Education in the 1970s, focusing on children (Reverdy et al., 2010; Puisais, Pierre, 1987). Sapere currently has its headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, and operates sensory education programs in a total of 10 countries, including Belgium, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom (Sapere, 2024). In South Korea, sensory education aims to explore the innate taste of various ingredients based on the five senses (Maeng, 2019).

2.2. Researches on the Effectiveness of Sensory Education

Previous studies on sensory education primarily targeted preschool and elementary school children (Reverdy et al., 2010; Mustonen and Tuorila 2010; Woo & Lee 2013; Rigal et. al., 2021). Research in France and Finland indicated positive effects on food neophobia and willingness to taste novel foods (Reverdy et al., 2010; Mustonen and Tuorila 2010; Rigal et. al., 2021).

2.3. Sapere Method

Sapere's Sensory Education involves a nine-step process utilizing all senses to explore and appreciate the taste of natural ingredients. Sapere has expanded globally and is actively conducting taste education in ten countries (Sapere, 2024).

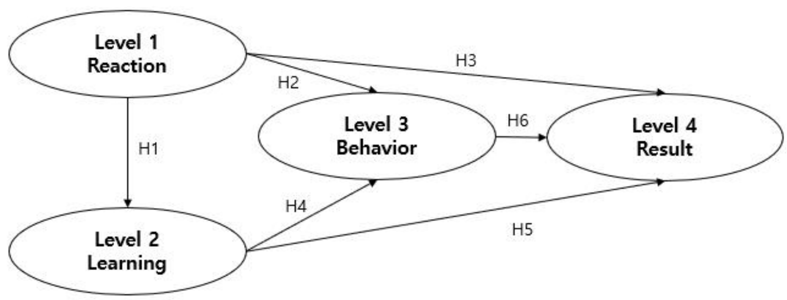
[Table 1] Sapere Sensory Education 9-Step Methodology

Sapere Sensory Education 9-Step	
1	Children learn that tasting a food uses all five senses both before and during eating
2	They isolate the sense of taste, identify reference flavours and the role of the taste buds; they discover differences in taste perception, and go beyond "I like it/I don't like it".
3	They learn about dominant tastes, experiment with mixing flavours, and test spicy or cold preparations.
4	They explore smell recognition and memory, build their smell repertoire and learn about the difference between smells and aromas.
5	They learn about the importance of sight and colour, which can sometimes be at odds with taste perceptions.
6	They discover the importance of touch and hearing in tasting foods.
7	They learn about changes to the intensity of aromas, the mechanisms of smell, the importance of chewing, and the interesting properties of hot and cold foods.

8	They are introduced to cultural diversity and the variety of regional specialties.
9	They share their taste experiences and enjoy the conviviality of a shared meal with their classmates.

2.4. Kirkpatrick's 4 level evaluation
The evaluation consists of 4 levels reaction, learning, behavior, and results & impacts. Previous research applied this evaluation to elementary school students, showing positive effects on satisfaction, nutrition knowledge, and food neophobia (Woo & Lee 2013).

2.5. Conceptualization



3. Methodology

The study plans to develop an adult sensory education program based on the Sapere method and enhance its practicality through expert consultation. The program will be implemented with 300 adult participants (150 experimental group, 150 controup group), and Kirkpatrick's 4 level evaluation will be applied.

3.1 Sampling and data collection
A total of 300 participants, divided into an education group and a control group, will be surveyed before and after the program. Data will be collected through questionnaires assessing satisfaction, knowledge, food neophobia, WTNF (willingness to taste unfamiliar food), and food addiction.

3.2 Measurement
A questionnaire based on 3 out of 4 levels of Kirkpatrick's 4-level evaluation will assess reaction, learning, behavior, and results & impacts. Components include satisfaction, knowledge, food neophobia, WTNF (willingness to taste unfamiliar food).

3.3 Analytical methods

The data of this study would be analyzed using the SPSS Windows 28.0 program. Conduct frequency analysis for the demographics of survey subjects, and paired-t-test on knowledge, food neophobia, willingness to taste unfamiliar food, and food addiction.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

4.1. Implications

The study's academic implications lie in utilizing Sapere method and Kirkpatrick's 4-level evaluation to gain insights into adult learning and behavior change, guiding future program enhancements. It also contributes to advancing research on adult sensory education by offering empirical evidence and directing future investigations. Politically, the findings support policy development promoting sensory education integration into adult education and public health initiatives, fostering healthier dietary behaviors and improved health outcomes.

4.2. Conclusion

This study aims to design and implement the first adult sensory education program using the Sapere method, providing systematic and empirical research on adult sensory education. The results are expected to be foundational for program development and policy recommendations related to adult sensory education.

References

Cox, D. N., Campbell, K. J., Cobiac, L., Gardner, C., Hancock, L., Hendrie, G. A., ... & Wiggins, B. (2023). Working together to increase Australian children’s liking of vegetables: a position statement by the Vegetable Intake Strategic Alliance (VISA). *Public Health Nutrition*, 26(11), 2271-2275.

DongA Science. (2020, November 17). "[Science Cafe by Kang Sung-ki] Metabolism and Epigenetics." Retrieved on 24 Feb 2024 from https://www.dongascience.com/news.php?idx=41599

Gearhardt, A. N., Bueno, N. B., DiFeliceantonio, A. G., Roberto, C. A., Jiménez-Murcia, S., & Fernandez-Aranda, F. (2023). Social, clinical, and policy implications of ultra-processed food addiction. *British Medical Journal*, 383.

Hankook Ilbo. (2023, October 14). "Hypertension Surges by 44% in 20s... Frequent Checks and Lifestyle Improvement Needed." Retrieved on 24 Feb 2024 from https://www.hankookilbo.com/News/Read/A2023101210460005236?did=NA

Herald Economy. (2023, December 12). "47% Increase in Diabetes Patients in their 20s compared to 2018." Retrieved on 24 Feb 2024 from https://news.heraldcorp.com/view.php?ud=20231212000091

Maeng, E. (2019). The effect of taste education on five-year-old children's eating habits, nutrition knowledge, and unbalanced diet. Master dissertation, Department of Education, Chung-Ang University, 2019.

Ministero dell'Istruzione. (2015). Linee Guida Per L'educazione Alimentare.Retrieved on 24 Feb 2024 from https://www.istruzione.it/allegati/2015/MIUR_Linee_Guida_per_l%27Educazione_Alimentare_2015.pdf

Ministere de l'agriculture et de L'alimentation. (2023). Découvrir l'alimentation par les cinq sens : les classes du goût.Retrieved on 24 Feb 2024 from https://agriculture.gouv.fr/decouvrir-lalimentation-par-les-cinq-sens-les-classes-du-gout

Ministry of Education. (2015). Curriculum for Practical Arts (Technology/Home Economics) / Information Science. Ministry of Education Notice No. 2015-74. Appendix 10.

Reverdy, C. (2011). Sensory education: French perspectives. In V.R. Preedy, R. R. Watson, & C.R. Martin (Eds.), Handbook of Behavior, Food, and Nutrition(pp. 143–157). Springer.

Reverdy, C., Schlich, P., Köster, E. P., Ginon, E., & Lange, C. (2010). Effect of sensory education on food preferences in children. *Food Quality and Preference*, 21(7), 794-804.

Steiner, J. E. (1979). Human facial expressions in response to taste and smell stimulation. *In Advances in Child Development and Behavior*, 13, 257-295.

Ueda, H. (2018). A Comparative Analysis of Promotion Systems for Taste Education in Japan, France, and Italy: Suggestions for Japan's Shokuiku (Food Education). *フードシステム研究*, 25(2), 48-70.

Woo, T., & Lee, K. H. (2013). Effects of sensory education based on classroom activities for lower grade school children. *Nutrition Research and Practice*, 7(4), 336-341.

Dialects Drive Destinations: The effect of dialects in PR videos on the intention to visit Kyoto

Oguhi, Takashi
Department of Psychology, Rikkyo University

Totoki, Rio
Rikkyo University

Kawakubo, Atsushi
Department of Psychology, Saitamagakuen Universit

Abstract:

Dialects are usually evaluated less than standard language in many aspects. However, a combination of a dialect and its local product was highly evaluated (The match-up hypothesis; Lynch & Schuler, 1994). Therefore, we hypothesize that the intention to visit the destination (Kyoto) will increase with the dialect rather than Standard Japanese in the Kyoto PR video. The results supported the hypothesis. They suggest new destination management strategies.

1. Introduction

One factor that influences the receiver when advertising a product is the spoken language. The way the communicator speaks has a huge impact. One of the ways of speaking that is geographically distinctive is dialect/accent. In studies on dialects and accents, dialect speakers were rated lower in many aspects compared to standard language and standard accent speakers (Lambert et al., 1960; Watanabe & Karasawa, 2013).

However, Hendriks et al. (2015) showed that when the country of production of the advertised product matched the country of accent, it was rated higher than in the case of mismatch, revealing the product-accent match effect. However, studies have yet to examine whether the same effect can be obtained in Japan. In recent years, Japan has used dialects to attract tourists (e.g., Kibe et al., 2013). However, there has yet to be a study on whether the use of dialect positively affects the intention to visit tourist destinations. Therefore, this study aims to examine whether the product-accent match effect between the tourist destination and the dialect spoken in the area has a positive effect on the intention to visit the destination PR videos.

However, if the traveler does not notice a dialect links to a destination, the product-accent match effect will not exist. This study, therefore, focuses on Kyoto and its dialects. They have at least two dialects. One is the weak Kyoto dialect; which Kyoto citizens speak daily. The other is the strong Kyoto dialect; which is used in the entertainment districts, known as Hanamachi Kotoba, and is often used on TV and in films. Therefore, the general Japanese recognized the strong Kyoto dialect as Kyoto dialect. Standard Japanese has few differences (word and intonation differences) with the weak Kyoto dialect but many with the strong Kyoto dialect. When the average Japanese person hears a weak Kyoto dialect, they often need to learn where it comes from. Another reason we target Kyoto is that it is a well-known tourist destination in Japan, and its dialect is well-recognized among Japanese in general.

2. Method

Participants of a screening survey: A screening survey was conducted before an online experiment. The participants were native speakers of Japanese aged 20 to 69. The screening survey included 200 respondents in the following age groups: 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, and 60s, for a total of 1,000 respondents. The screening survey was conducted on those who had never lived in the area (Kyoto Prefecture) and those who had given appropriate responses in the screening survey. Finally, we selected a total of 300 participants for the experiment.

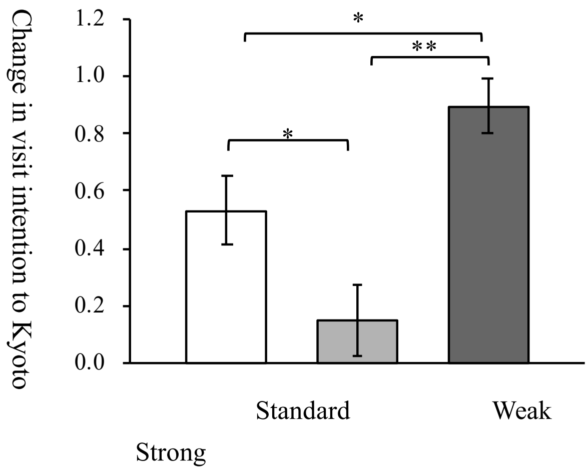
Participants of an online experiment: The participants consist of 30 males and 30 females of each age group (60 participants in their 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, and 60s, for a total of 300 participants. They were randomly assigned one of the conditions: 99 participants in the weak Kyoto dialect condition, 111 participants in the strong Kyoto dialect condition, and 90 participants in the standard Japanese. An online research company (I-Bridge Corporation in Japan) conducted the screening survey and the experiment.

Materials: The PR video on Kyoto was newly made for the experiment, using (MGT: matched-guise technique; Lambert et al., 1960). It introduces several spots in Kyoto. A female professional narrator who can speak Kyoto dialects and standard Japanese narrated the plot of the PR video. The length of the video was 2 seconds and 30 minutes.
Procedure: Participants were asked about their evaluations of Kyoto, their history of Kyoto visits, and their residence in Kyoto and nearby prefectures. The Participants who lived in Kyoto Prefecture or had visited Kyoto more than 20 times were excluded from the analysis because their attitude toward the Kyoto dialect was considered to depend on their experiences. Then, participants were asked to respond to the following questions: "*intention to visit Kyoto* (Hosany & Buzova, 2020)," "*evaluation of Kyoto* (Martinez & Alvarez, 2010; Ekinci & Hosany, 2006)," "*evaluation of the video* (Hosany & Buzova, 2020; Hendriks et al., 2015)," and "*evaluation of the narrator* (Hendriks et al., 2015)."

3. Results

We examined whether there were differences in the evaluation of visit intention between the three conditions when the narration of the PR video was in standard Japanese or weak Kyoto dialect or strong Kyoto dialect. A one-factor analysis of variance on the amount of change in visit intention ([after video presentation] – [before video presentation]) revealed a significant main effect of narration dialect (F (2,114) = 12.13, p < .001, $\eta p^2 = .18$) (Figure 1). Multiple comparisons (Holm method) revealed that the strong Kyoto dialect increased change in visit intention more than the standard Japanese (t (114) = 2.41, p < .05, d = .53) and the weak Kyoto dialect (t (114) = 4.87, p < .001, d = 1.09); the standard language also increased change in visit intention more than the weak Kyoto dialect (t (114) = 2.41, p < .05, d = .53). Standard Japanese also significantly increased the change of change in visit intention more than the Kyoto dialect (weak) condition (t (114) = 2.24, p < .05, d = .56).

Figure 1. Change in visit intention to Kyoto by narrations



Note: Error bars indicate standard deviation. A positive and more considerable change in visit intention indicates a higher intention to

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this study support the match-up hypothesis. In PR videos of tourist destinations, it was found that combining images of the relevant region and the local dialect sound of the relevant region increases the intention to visit.

The strong Kyoto dialect known on TV and other media was more likely to increase the intention to visit than the weak Kyoto dialect actually spoken in the region. One possible reason for this is that participants need to recognise the weak Kyoto dialect as Kyoto dialect, as it often overlaps standard Japanese. Furthermore, Kibe et al. (2013) refer to dialects as 'virtual dialects', whereas dialects are actually used as a language and are seen as images obtained through TV and films. Virtual dialects are associated with stereotypes and have a significant influence on 'localness'. In terms of dialect use, the use of words that give tourists a sense of 'localness' is more effective in tourism projects than the 'authenticity' of what words are actually used in the area.

It is possible to consider the relationship between tourist attractions and the sense of hearing from the aspect of soundscapes. Soundscape is a compound word of sound and landscape, meaning 'visual landscape/soundscape' (Schafer, 1977). About the agreement between the combination of PR images of tourist attractions and the accompanying auditory information, Takara (2016) reported that adding Okinawan folk songs to images of famous tourist attractions in Okinawa improved the Okinawa image. Nagasawa et al. (2012) state that information that stimulates the auditory imagination is necessary to establish sensory tourism tools, such as feeling the local atmosphere, and that even in the unusual space of a tourist attraction, the image of the landscape can be changed by adding sound. The study also clarifies that the landscape image can be changed by adding sound in the unusual space of a tourist destination. Based on the above previous research, the results of this study could be further expanded and applied to the actual version of tourism if dialects are regarded as sounds specific to the area' that influence the evaluation of tourist attractions.

REFERENCES

Ekinci, Y., & Hosany, S. (2006). Destination personality: An application of brand personality to. tourism destinations. *Journal of Travel Research*, *45* (4), 400-416.

Hendriks, B., F. van Meurs, & E., & van der Meij. (2015). Does a foreign accent sell? The effect of foreign accents in radio commercials for congruent and non-congruent products. *Multilingua – Journal of Cross-Cultural & Interlanguage Communication, 34* (1), 119-130.

Hosany,S., & Buzova,D.,(2020). The Influence of Place Attachment, Ad-Evoked Positive Affect, and Motivation on Intention to Visit: Imagination Proclivity as a Moderator. *Journal of Travel Rasearch*, 59 (3), 477-495.

Kibe, Y., Takada, A., & Tanaka, Y. (2013). *Introduction to dialectology*. Sanseido.

Lambert, W. E., Hodgson, R. C., Gardner, R. C., & Fillenbaum, S. (1960). Evaluational reactions to spoken languages. *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 60* (1), 44.

Martinez, S. C., & Alvarez, M. D. (2010). Country versus destination image in a developing country. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 27 (7), 748-764.

Nagasawa, K., Yabuki, H., Tokunaga, T., and Inoue, M. (2012). Kamakura Soundscape Tourism. *Proceedings of the 74th National Convention of Information Processing Society of Japan*, 535-536.

Schafer, R. M. (1977). *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*. Alfred Knopf.

Takara, M. (2016). Effects of sound on landscape impressions: a case study of major sightseeing spots on the main island of Okinawa, *Okinawa Geography*, 16, 87-98.

Watanabe & Karasawa, (2013). Explicit and implicit attitudes toward standard-Japanese and Osaka-dialect language use. *The Japanese journal of psychology,* 84 (1), 20-27.

Catalyser or barrier? The roles of identity in digital nomads' e-WOM of a destination: Employing a behavioural reasoning theory

Wang, Ke
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Macau University of Science and Technology

Zhang, Su
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Macau University of Science and Technology

Abstract:

This study explores the significant yet understudied area of digital nomads' motivations for sharing electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), an information-sharing behavior integral to this group. Referencing the unique interaction of these extended-stay travelers with local economies and communities, the study utilizes Behavioral Reasoning Theory (BRT) to contemplate reasons for and against e-WOM engagement. It dissects cognitive processes, examining the mediatory role of support for tourism development and spontaneous conservation of resources in the relationship between identity satisfaction and e-WOM behavior. Through examining data from digital nomads in Dali, Yunnan Province, this study offers valuable insights for destination marketing organizations.

Keywords: Behavioral reasoning theory (BRT), Digital nomads, Identity, Satisfaction, e-WOM

1. Introduction

Given the increasing trend of remote working, the previously clear demarcation between work and leisure has begun to diminish (Rainoldi et al., 2022). The widespread availability of mobile technology and the emergence of increasingly flexible, yet precarious, forms of employment have fostered the adoption of a digital nomadic lifestyle—characterized by the fusion of travel and work on a semi-permanent or permanent basis (Hannonen, 2020). It is estimated that the global population of digital nomads stands at approximately 35 million, with a typical pattern of staying in a destination for one to three months and visiting five to ten countries annually (Thinkremote, 2023). Consequently, digital nomads have become a significant source of revenue for destinations, particularly during non-peak seasons.

Prevailing research has delved into the motives, traits, societal dynamics, and the extent of destination identification among digital nomads. Hall et al. (2019) identified autonomy, adaptability, and the pursuit of work-life balance as prevailing aspirations among this cohort. Engagement within digital nomad communities primarily occurs online, where individuals seek out information and learn from the experiences of fellow nomads (Sztuk, 2023). Thompson (2018) posited that digital nomads make deliberate choices regarding their temporary abodes, with decisions being considerably swayed by electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) disseminated by their peers through dedicated online forums, social media platforms, and niche digital nomad websites (Nash et al., 2018). However, there is a dearth of scholarly attention on the psychological underpinnings and behavioral motivations that propel digital nomads to disseminate e-WOM content pertaining to specific locales. This study intends to bridge this gap by employing behavioral reasoning theory (BRT) as a lens to investigate the motivational drivers accounting for digital nomads' proclivity to share e-WOM regarding destinations.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Digital Nomads

Digital nomadism, a relatively recent phenomenon, refers to a subset of professionals who harness technology's capabilities to work remotely, leading lifestyles independent of a specific location (Andrade et al., 2023). These individuals often possess advanced degrees, professional expertise, and proficiency in digital tools that enable them to work and collaborate with individuals globally. Despite the growing scholarly interest in digital nomads across various disciplines, definitions and conceptual perspectives on this group remain diverse.

The concept of digital nomads first made its appearance in academic literature in the mid-1990s (Makimoto & Manners, 1997). Since then, it has been examined from multiple perspectives. For instance, Cook (2023) defined digital nomads in terms of their work. Simultaneously, Hall et al. (2019) approached the phenomenon through the lens of tourism and leisure, whereas Reichenberger (2018) examined it in the context of lifestyle.

These peripatetic individuals often live and work for extended periods across different countries and cities. With this lifestyle gaining traction, researchers are increasingly interested in the impact that this group has on the economy and society (Khatri & Shukla, 2022). The spending patterns of digital nomads contribute to economic growth through their demand for local services such as accommodation, co-working spaces, cafes, and restaurants, thereby generating increased revenue for local businesses (Müller, 2016). Furthermore, the presence of digital nomads can catalyze entrepreneurial activities and collaborative partnerships, leading to new startups and synergies with local enterprises (Kässi & Lehdonvirta, 2018). Because digital nomads can potentially stimulate economic development in their chosen work destinations, these areas have an incentive to positively embrace this group (Fuzi, 2015).

2.2. Social Identity Theory (SIT)

Zhang et al.'s (2017) study established that Chinese backpackers often solidify their identity through social differentiation, setting themselves apart from conventional tourists. The identity cultivated by the digital nomadic community markedly differs from that of standard tourists and residents. In addition to their tourist persona, digital nomads may also develop a localized identity linked to their host destinations (Miocevic, 2024). Consequently, it is vital to explore the facets of this group's identity, a subject that has received limited attention in previous research.

Social identity, as defined by Tajfel (1978), constitutes a component of an individual's self-perception derived from the cognizance of belonging to a social group, along with the values and emotional significance ascribed to that membership. Social Identity Theory (SIT), one of the paramount identity theories, provides a robust framework to decode the identities of digital nomads (Hornsey, 2008), thus making it applicable to research centered around this demographic.

Given that digital nomads represent a distinct class of tourists—who often opt for extended stays at destinations, artfully blending work and leisure in multiple locations (Beaumont, 2019)—it becomes necessary to examine their role identity (Farmer et al., 2003; Tuan, 2022) and professional identity (Zeng et al., 2024) in conjunction with their social identity. Investigating these components collectively will yield a fuller picture of the multifaceted identities maintained by digital nomads.

2.3. Behavioral Reasoning Theory (BRT)

Behavioral Reasoning Theory (BRT), articulated by Westaby (2005), elucidates the complex relationships weaving together values, reasons, attitudes, and behaviors. BRT is generally considered to exert a greater degree of reliability than traditional models such as the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). This is due to BRT's emphasis on context-specific reasoning as opposed to the broader set of beliefs considered by TRA or TPB (Ryan & Casidy, 2018). BRT provides a conceptual framework for deciphering the motivations behind individuals' intentions and behaviors by taking 'reasons for' (RF) and 'reasons against' (RA) specific actions into consideration (Ahmad & Harun, 2023). Westaby (2005) contended that reasons can be bifurcated into two categories: RF and RA, which span across a spectrum of factors from incentives to disincentives, or pros and cons. These reasons, both RF and RA, constitute the fundamental underpinnings of BRT and serve as precursors to attitudes.

BRT suggests that individuals carry reasons that prompt them to partake behaviors, such as sharing positive or negative travel experiences online. These reasons could be altruistic—aimed at aiding the community in making informed decisions—or self-oriented, such as seeking acknowledgement or rewards (Westaby, 2005). In the context of digital nomads and their motivations for disseminating electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), BRT can be leveraged to dissect the cognitive processes fueling their inclination to share information and experiences online. Conversely, BRT also accommodates 'reasons against' indulging in certain behaviors. For digital nomads, such reasons might include privacy concerns, apprehensions about misrepresenting experiences, or the strenuous effort requisite to generate content (Ajzen, 1985). Therefore, this study endeavors to apply the BRT framework to propose that the identity of digital nomads could influence both RA and RF, eventually elucidating their propensity to disseminate e-WOM about destinations.

2.4. Conceptualization

2.4.1. Identity and Digital Nomads' Attitudes Towards Tourism

Several studies have delved into the correlation between diverse forms of identity (such as social, gender, occupational) of residents and their attitudes toward the impacts of tourism (Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Palmer et al., 2013; Wang & Chen, 2015). For instance, Nunkoo and Gursoy (2012) examined the impact of residents' identities on their attitudes towards and support for tourism. They concluded that only resource-based occupational identity influenced the perception of both the positive and negative impacts of tourism. Furthermore, they found a direct influence of occupational, gender, and environmental identities on support for tourism.

Adding to these insights, Palmer et al. (2013) investigated the relationship between identity and residents' intentions to promote incoming tourism. Their findings suggested that cognitive identity prompts positive advocacy behaviors about tourism. Another study exploring the ties between the four dimensions of place identity and residents' attitudes towards tourism found that residents' place identity significantly influenced their behavioral intentions in support of tourism (Wang & Chen, 2015).

Individuals who reside in areas serving as tourism destinations, which are greatly intertwined with their livelihoods and well-being, often display robust dedication to preserving tourism assets, encompassing both cultural and environmental resources. Cultural conservation refers to explicit behaviors and actions taken by individuals to address or prevent cultural issues, hinging on their cognition, emotions, and perceptual understanding of a specific culture (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017). According to Zhang et al. (2017), environmental conservation refers to residents' proactive behaviors intended to safeguard the environment and advance resolutions to environmental issues within tourist destinations. Research by Strzelecka et al. (2023) suggests that individuals whose identities are more inherently linked to the sociocultural resources of a specific area are more likely to partake in activities that benefit that locale. Past empirical investigations have attested that identity can be a robust predictor of culture and environment-friendly behavior (Cheng & Wu, 2015; Yang et al., 2022).

The Behavioral Reasoning Theory (BRT) embodies the duality of decision-making, acknowledging that individuals assess both the positive and negative ramifications of their actions (Westaby, 2005). Unlike most previous behavioral theories that solely focused on favorable factors (i.e., RF) promoting an individual's propensity towards tourism development and conservation of tourism resources, BRT also factors in unfavorable elements or 'reasons against' (i.e., RA) that resist individuals' behaviors towards tourism development and the conservation of tourism resources. Following the findings of previous studies, digital nomads' identity is expected to shape residents' attitudes toward tourism positively and negatively in the following ways:
H1a: There is a positive influence of digital nomads' identity on their positive support for tourism development.
H1b: There is a positive influence of digital nomads' identity on their positive conservation of tourism resources.
H1c: There is a negative influence of digital nomads' identity on their negative support for tourism development.
H1d: There is a negative influence of digital nomads' identity on their negative conservation of tourism resources.

2.4.2. Satisfaction
Anderson and Sullivan (1993) characterized satisfaction as the final stage of a psychological process. It is a judgment concerning the delivery and pleasure level of a service's consumption as it pertains to fulfillment, which is determined by customer's assessments during service encounters (Verma, 2003). Prior studies have found that the degree to which tourism development is perceived to bolster economic well-being, cultural integrity, and

environmental conservation can mediate the relationship between identity and satisfaction for both residents and tourists (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011). The perception of tourism's impact on residents influences their wellbeing across various life domains, subsequently affecting their overall life satisfaction (Kim et al., 2013).

In contrast, tourist satisfaction is construed as a psychological state induced when the service or product provided by a destination meets or exceeds tourists' expectations (Hung & Khoa, 2022). Results indicate a positive relationship between attitudes towards the destination and tourist satisfaction. Therefore, given prior research, the current paper proposes support for tourism development and spontaneous conservation of tourism resources as mediating variables. The following hypothesis is proposed:
H2: Digital nomads' positive support for tourism development positively impacts their satisfaction with destination.
H3: Digital nomads' positive conservation of tourism resources positively impacts their satisfaction with destination.
H4: Digital nomads' negative support for tourism development negatively impacts their satisfaction with destination.
H5: Digital nomads' negative conservation of tourism resources negatively impacts their satisfaction with destination.

2.4.3. e-WOM

Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM)—commonly evidenced through online reviews and social media discussions—has evolved into a critical component of modern tourism research. Presently, the reach and utility of conventional word-of-mouth (WOM) have been amplified by e-WOM (Kim et al., 2015). Moreover, e-WOM functions as a distinct entity, lending unique credibility to narrating memorable tourism experiences (Tham et al., 2013). Tourists can swiftly transmit their travel experiences via selfie posts, instant messaging, and live video broadcasting (e-WOM), surpassing the speed of traditional WOM. Past research has predominantly concentrated on e-WOM's influence on tourist decision-making processes (Fang et al., 2016), its utilization by hospitality businesses to augment competitiveness and manage online reputations (Xiang et al., 2017), and its role in shaping online destination images (Marine-Roig, 2021) — garnering significant attention.

Assessing customer satisfaction and feedback provides managers with insights to devise strategies for service enhancement. Such feedback is remarkably effective for benchmarking the performance of destinations relative to others (Fanelli and Romagnoli, 2020). As Xiang et al. (2017) discovered, satisfaction represents a crucial precursor to online advocacy behaviors. Following the findings of previous studies, this research proposes the following hypothesis:
H6: Digital nomads' satisfaction with destination positively impacts their e-WOM behavior.

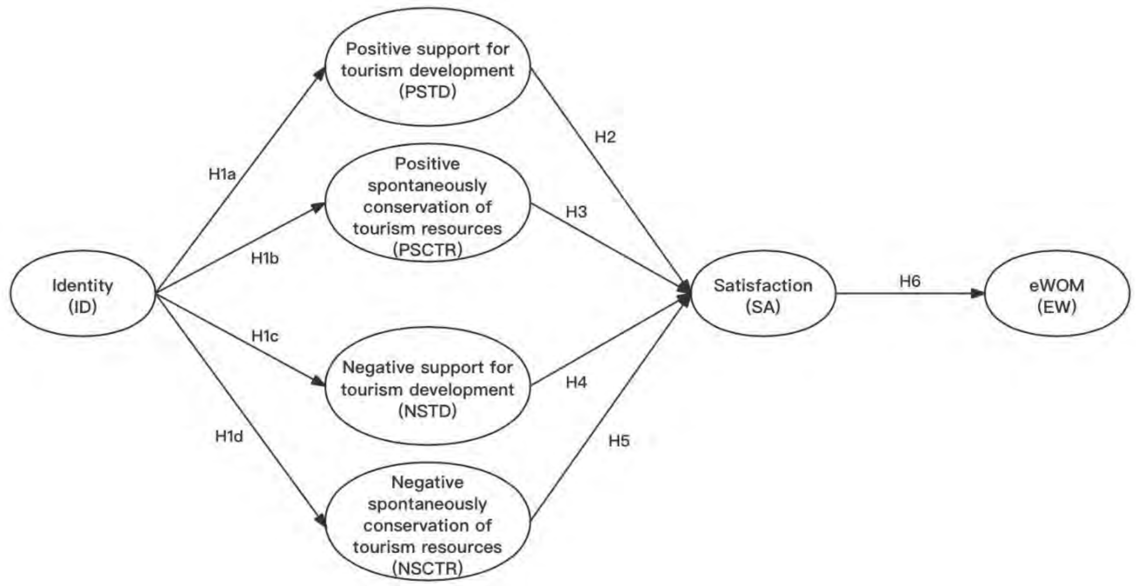


Figure 1. Conceptual model for research.

3. Methodology

3.1. Measurement

All measurement items utilized in this study were derived and adapted from previous research to ensure functional and conceptual coherence. Specifically, the construct of digital nomads' identity was gauged by twelve items drawn from the works of Chen et al. (2020), Tuan (2022), and Zeng et al. (2024). Support for tourism development—both positive and negative—was assessed using four items each, based on Woosnam (2012). Tourism resources conservation, again both positive and negative, was measured with four items each, as per Rasoolimanesh et al. (2017) and Zhang et al. (2017). Satisfaction was evaluated using four items from Ahrholdt et al. (2019), and e-WOM was measured by three items from Park et al. (2016).

This study also accounted for the demographic information of the research subjects, as factors such as gender, age, income, and education can potentially influence their perceptions and behaviors (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017). All items were measured on a five-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree). This study employed PLS-SEM for the quantitative analysis using survey data collected from Dali, a district located in Yunnan Province, southwestern China. Dali, renowned for its favorable climate, environment, and leisurely lifestyle, has magnetized numerous digital nomads and fostered several digital nomad communities.

4. Results

4.1. Profile of the Respondents

Data for this study were gathered over ten days, from March 21st to March 30th, 2024, through an on-site survey carried out among adult digital nomads whom staying in Dali. Out of the initial 384 survey questionnaires, 32 incomplete responses were discarded, leaving 352 questionnaires for the final data analysis. This yielded a response rate of 91.7%. The detailed profile of the respondents is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Background Information of respondents

		Count	Percent
Gender	Male	172	48.9%
	Female	180	51.1%
Age	18-25 years old	93	26.4%
	26-35 years old	179	50.9%
	36-45 years old	68	19.3%
	46-55 years old	12	3.4%
	Above 55 years old	0	0.0%
Monthly income	Less than5000 yuan	46	13.1%
	5000-8000 yuan	158	44.8%
	8000-10000 yuan	90	25.6%
	10000-15000 yuan	40	11.4%
	More than15000 yuan	18	5.1%
Education	Primary and below	0	0.0%
	Junior high school	0	0.0%
	Senior high school	26	7.4%
	Undergraduate course	275	78.1%
	Master's degree or above	51	14.5%

4.2. Data Analysis

Two indices were used to assess the reliability of the constructs in this study: the Cronbach's alpha coefficient and the composite reliability (CR). Results of the reliability test of scales indicated that the CR values of latent variables were greater than the threshold of 0.70 and ranged from 0.782 to 0.955. The Cronbach's alphas of all constructs were between 0.779 and 0.949, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70, which indicating that the scales and dimensions exhibited high reliability, stability, and consistency. In addition, the average variance extracted (AVE) values of each variable exceeded 0.5, with a range of 0.601 to 0.787, supporting convergent validity. Finally, as shown in Table2, the square root of the AVE of all constructs was larger than the correlation coefficient, supporting discriminant validity.

Table 2. Fornell-Larcker criterion

Positive

	EW	ID	PSCTR	PSTD	SA
EW	**0.849**				
ID	0.685	**0.775**			
PSCTR	0.640	0.570	**0.846**		
PSTD	0.554	0.687	0.503	**0.812**	
SA	0.665	0.757	0.538	0.685	**0.810**

Negative

	EW	ID	NSCTR	NSTD	SA

EW	**0.832**				
ID	0.419	**0.801**			
NSCTR	-0.398	-0.570	**0.887**		
NSTD	-0.346	-0.540	0.368	**0.879**	
SA	0.546	0.603	-0.553	-0.549	**0.887**

Note: Diagonal data are the square roots of the AVEs.

4.3. Hypothesis Testing

The path coefficients are shown in Table 3. The result shows that the digital nomads' identity positive influence the positive support for tourism development and tourism resources conservation of them, the digital nomads' identity negative influence the negative support for tourism development and tourism resources conservation of them, digital nomads' positive support for tourism development and tourism resources conservation positively impacts their satisfaction with destination, digital nomads' negative support for tourism development and tourism resources conservation negatively impacts their satisfaction with destination, and digital nomads' satisfaction with destination positively impacts their e-WOM behavior. It indicates that under other unchanged conditions, H1a, H1b, H1c, H1d, H2, H3, H4, H5, and H6 were supported.

Table 3. Path coefficients

Positive

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
ID -> PSCTR	0.570	0.571	0.054	10.504	0.000
ID -> PSTD	0.687	0.689	0.042	16.328	0.000
PSCTR -> SA	0.259	0.259	0.058	4.465	0.000
PSTD -> SA	0.555	0.556	0.059	9.397	0.000
SA -> EW	0.665	0.665	0.046	14.568	0.000

Negative

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
ID -> NSCTR	-0.570	-0.591	0.075	7.606	0.000
ID -> NSTD	-0.540	-0.559	0.077	7.038	0.000
NSCTR -> SA	-0.406	-0.409	0.137	2.953	0.003
NSTD -> SA	-0.399	-0.401	0.145	2.756	0.006
SA -> EW	0.546	0.576	0.122	4.474	0.000

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and Implications

This study presents a conceptual model, supported empirically by data from digital nomads in Dali, examining the relationships between identity, support for tourism development and conservation of tourism resources, satisfaction, and e-WOM. It adds theoretically and practically to the existing literature in several ways.

Firstly, from a quantitative view, it articulates the role of identity in digital nomad's e-WOM of a destination through the BRT lens. It posits BRT as a profitable framework for understanding digital nomad attitudes toward tourism and associated e-WOM influences.

Secondly, it explains the process of e-WOM among digital nomads, responding to the emergent mobile lifestyle trend and filling the research gap on "digital nomad identity" in relation to e-WOM behavioral intent.

Thirdly, it explores social identity complexity (Roccas & Brewer, 2002) within the digital nomad context. It affirms that digital nomads likely possess multiple identities——a personal one for optimal distinctiveness and a professional one tied to their work roles. This enhances theoretical comprehension of digital nomad identity.

Finally, considering research indicating digital nomads’ tendency for peer-recommended destinations meeting work and leisure needs, and their potential to solve destinations' off-peak economy issue (Miocevic, 2024; Nash et al., 2018), this study offers crucial insights for destination management companies.

5.2. Conclusion

Addressing a research gap in the behavioral motivations of digital nomads sharing e-WOM, this study offers strategies to promote e-WOM behavior among such travelers, subsequently boosting the economic revenue of the destination. It provides practical insights for destination marketing organizations and practitioners on how to attract, retain, and even induce revisits from this unique segment of travelers.

5.3. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

While this study contributes to the literature on digital nomads, it has certain limitations. Firstly, future research should expand the scope beyond the single destination considered here, encompassing a wider geographical area. Secondly, this study uncovers the process leading to digital nomads' e-WOM about a destination. However, long-term travelers often experience identity and lifestyle changes in the host destination (Miocevic, 2024).

Future researchers should invest more in studying digital nomad identity, potentially developing a measurement scale distinct from those used in previous works. Lastly, although this study focuses on individual digital nomads, e-WOM may be influenced by other factors, such as interactions with residents. Future research should consider these potential influences, identifying additional factors impacting digital nomads' desire to publish e-WOM about their destinations.

REFERENCES

Ahrholdt, D. C., Gudergan, S. P., & Ringle, C. M. (2019). Enhancing loyalty: When improving consumer satisfaction and delight matters. *Journal of Business Research*, *94*, 18-27.

Ahmad, N., & Harun, A. (2023). Reasons for tourist intention to use e-bike sharing services; an application behavioral reasoning theory (BRT). *Tourism Review*.

Ajzen, I. (1985). From intentions to actions: A theory of planned behavior. In J. Kuhl, & J.

Anderson, Eugene W., & Mary W. Sullivan (1993), ‘‘The Antecedents and Conse- quences of Customer Satisfaction for Firms,’’ *Marketing Science, 12* (2), 125-143.

Andrade, T. A., Dias, Á., Patuleia, M., & Pereira, L. (2023). Digital Nomads' Willingness to Stay – a Combined Analysis of SEM and fsQCA Results. *Journal of Tourism and Services*, *14*(27), 161-180.

Beaumont, J. (2019). Digital nomads and sense of place: A case study of Lisbon. *Wageningen, Netherlands: Wageningen University.*

Beckmann (Eds.), *Action Control: From cognition to behavior* (pp. 11–39). Berlin: Springer.

Chen, G., Zhao, L., & Huang, S. S. (2020). Backpacker Identity: Scale Development and Validation. *Journal of travel research*, *59*(2), 281-294.

Cheng, T.-M., & Wu, H. C. (2015). How do environmental knowledge, environmental sensitivity, and place attachment affect environmentally responsible behavior? An integrated approach for sustainable island tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *23*(4), 557-576.

Cook, D. (2023). What is a digital nomad? Definition and taxonomy in the era of mainstream remote work. *World Leisure Journal*, *65*(2), 256–275.

Fanelli, R.M., & Romagnoli, L. (2020). Customer Satisfaction with Farmhouse Facilities and Its Implications for the Promotion of Agritourism Resources in Italian Municipalities. *Sustainability, 12*(5), 1749.

Fang, B., Ye, Q., Kucukusta, D., & Law, R. (2016). Analysis of the perceived value of online tourism reviews: Influence of readability and reviewer characteristics. *Tourism Management, 52,* 498-506.

Farmer, S. M., Tierney, P., & Kung-McIntyre, K. (2003). Employee creativity in Taiwan: An application of role identity theory. *Academy of Management Journal*, *46*(5), 618–630.

Fuzi, A. “Co-Working Spaces for Promoting Entrepreneurship in Sparse Regions: The Case of South Wales.” *Regional studies, regional science* 2.1 (2015): 462–469.

Hall, G., Sigala, M., Rentschler, R., & Boyle, S. (2019). Motivations, mobility, and work practices; The conceptual realities of digital nomads. In J. Pesonen & J. Neidhardt (Eds.), *Information and communication technologies in tourism 2019* (pp. 437–449). Springer International Publishing.

Hannonen, O. (2020). In search of a digital nomad: Defining the phenomenon. *Information Technology and Tourism*, *22*(3), 335–353.

Hornsey, M. J. 2008. “Social Identity Theory and Self- Categorization Theory: A Historical

Review.” *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 2 (1): 204–22.

Hung, N. P., & Khoa, B. T. (2022). Examining the Structural Relationships of Electronic Word of Mouth, Attitude toward Destination, Travel Intention, Tourist Satisfaction and Loyalty: A Meta-Analysis. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, *45*(4 supplement), 1650-1660.

Kässi, O., & Lehdonvirta, V. (2018). Online labour index: Measuring the online gig economy for policy and research. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, *137*, 241-248.

Khatri, P., & Shukla, S. (2022). Digital Nomadism: A Systematic Review and Research Agenda. *SCMS Journal of Indian Management*, *19*(3).

Kim D, Jang S and Adler H (2015) What drives cafe customers to spread eWOM? *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management 27*(2): 261–282.

Kim, K., Uysal, M., & Sirgy, M. J. (2013). How does tourism in a community impact the quality of life of community residents? *Tourism Management, 36,* 527-540.

Makimoto, T., & Manners, D. (1997). *Digital nomad*. Wiley.

Marine-Roig, Estela. (2021). “Measuring Online Destination Image, Satisfaction, and Loyalty: Evidence from Barcelona Districts.” *Tourism and hospitality (Basel) 2*(1), 62–78.

Miocevic, D. (2024). Baby Come Back: Resident-Digital Nomad Conflicts, Destination Identification, and Revisit Intention. *Journal of travel research, 1*.

Müller, A. (2016). The digital nomad: Buzzword or research category? *Transnational Social Review*, *6*(3), 344-348.

Nash, C., Jarrahi, M. H., Sutherland, W., & Phillips, G. (2018). Digital Nomads Beyond the Buzzword: Defining Digital Nomadic Work and Use of Digital Technologies. In *Transforming Digital Worlds* (pp. 207-217).

Nunkoo, R., & Gursoy, D. (2012). Residents’ support for tourism: An identity perspective. *Annals of Tourism Research, 39*(1), 243–268.

Nunkoo, R., & Ramkissoon, H. (2011). Developing a community support model for tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *38*(3), 964-988.

Palmer, A., Koenig Lewis, N., & Jones, L. E. M. (2013). The effects of residents’ social identity and involvement on their advocacy of incoming tourism. *Tourism Management, 38,* 142–151.

Park, H., Seo, S., & Kandampully, J. (2016). Why post on social networking sites (SNS)? Examining motives for visiting and sharing pilgrimage experiences on SNS. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, *22*(4), 307-319.

Rainoldi, M., Ladkin, A., & Buhalis, D. (2022). Blending work and leisure: a future digital worker hybrid lifestyle perspective. *Annals of Leisure Research*.

Rasoolimanesh, S. M., Jaafar, M., Ahmad, A. G., & Barghi, R. (2017). Community participation in World Heritage Site conservation and tourism development. *Tourism Management*, *58*, 142-153.

Reichenberger, I. (2018). Digital nomads–a quest for holistic freedom in work and leisure. *Annals of Leisure Research*, *21*(3), 364–380.

Roccas, S., & Brewer, M. B. (2002). Social identity complexity. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *6*(2), 88–106.

Ryan, J., & Casidy, R. (2018). The role of brand reputation in organic food consumption: A behavioral reasoning perspective. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 41, 239–247.

Strzelecka, M., Mika, M., & Durydiwka, M. (2023). When tourism meets conservation: a deep dive into residents' attitudes towards Tatra National Park. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 1-20.

Sztuk, A. (2023). Cities' attractiveness factors from the perspective of digital nomads. *Scientific Papers of Silesian University of Technology. Organization and Management Series*, *2023*(174), 323-336.

Tajfel, H. 1978. "Social Categorization, Social Identity and Social Comparison." In *Differentiation between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, edited by H. Tajfel, 61–76, London: Academic Press.

Tham A, Croy G and Mair J (2013) social media in destination choice: distinctive electronic word-of-mouth dimensions. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing 30*(1–2): 144–155.

Thinkremote. (2023). *45+ exciting statistics about digital nomads in 2023*.

Thompson, B. Y. (2019). The Digital Nomad Lifestyle: (Remote) Work/Leisure Balance, Privilege, and Constructed Community. *International Journal of the Sociology of Leisure*, *2*(1–2), 27– 42.

Tuan, L. T. (2022). Fostering green product innovation through green entrepreneurial orientation: The roles of employee green creativity, green role identity, and organizational transactive memory system. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, *32*(1), 639-653.

Verma, Harsh V. (2003), ''Customer Outrage and Delight,'' *Journal of Services Research, 3* (1), 119-133.

Wang, S., & Chen, J. S. (2015). The influence of place identity on perceived tourism impacts. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *52*, 16-28.

Wang, Suosheng, Shengrong Chen, and Honggang Xu. "Resident Attitudes towards Dark Tourism, a Perspective of Place-Based Identity Motives." *Current issues in tourism*22.13 (2019): 1601–1616.

Westaby, J. D. (2005). Behavioral reasoning theory: Identifying new linkages underlying intentions and behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 98*(2), 97-120.

Woosnam, K. M. (2012). Using Emotional Solidarity to Explain Residents' Attitudes about Tourism and Tourism Development. *Journal of travel research*, *51*(3), 315-327.

Xiang, Z., Du, Q., Ma, Y., & Fan, W. (2017). A comparative analysis of major online review platforms: Implications for social media analytics in hospitality and tourism. *Tourism Management, 58,* 51-65.

Yang, Y., Wang, S., Cai, Y., & Zhou, X. (2022). How and why does place identity affect residents' spontaneous culture conservation in ethnic tourism community? A value co-creation perspective. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *30*(6), 1344-1363.

Zeng, Jie, and Weijia Liu. "The Development and Validation of the Teacher Professional Identity Scale in a Chinese University Context." *PloS one* 19.3 (2024)

Zhang, J., H. Tucker, A. M. Morrison, and B. Wu. 2017. "Becoming a Backpacker in China: A Grounded Theory Approach to Identity Construction of Backpackers." *Annals of Tourism Research* 64:114–25.

Zhang, Y.-l., Zhang, J., Zhang, H.-o., Zhang, R.-y., Wang, Y., Guo, Y.-r., & Wei, Z.-c. (2017). Residents' environmental conservation behaviour in the mountain tourism destinations in China: Case studies of Jiuzhaigou and Mount Qingcheng. *Journal of Mountain Science*, *14*(12), 2555-2567.

The impact of social media on Filipino Gen Zs' travel decisions and intentions

Disimulacion, Maria Arlene Fernali
Tourism Department
Far Eastern University Manila

Bunuan, Rommel
Graduate Studies and Transnational Education
Far Eastern University Manila

Brioso, John Oliver
Mathematics Department
Far Eastern University Manila

Abstract:

Experts agree that the pandemic disrupted the tourism industry, and despite the widespread use of internet, there is limited research on the impact of social media on the travel intentions of Filipino Gen Zs. This generation is recognized as a key market in the travel industry, thus, this study aims to analyze the effect of social media on their tourist behavior, as well as motivations and overall satisfaction levels of Filipino Gen Zs. Results showed that social media and online travel information affect their actual behavior and that push and pull factors impact their behavior through their overall satisfaction.

Keywords: Social Media, Gen Zs, Filipinos, Push-Pull Travel Motivations, Behavioral Intention

1. Introduction

According to Bonhill-Smith, "consumer habits have changed and the importance of having an effective social media presence has been heightened" (Baratti, 2020). Sigala (2020) encapsulated the impact of the pandemic as "the most global, most prolonged, most multi-dimensional issue that is beyond a health issue. It has become a biological, political, economic, and sociological crisis." Thus, the urgent need to look into the impact of the pandemic on tourism stakeholders as well as review current research approaches in response to the problem. The structured questionnaire was composed of five parts focusing on the following: (1) demographic and psychographic profiles of the respondents; (2) the effect of social media on tourist behavior; (3) factors determining cognitive, conative, and affective dimensions; and (4) their travel motivations and level of satisfaction. Furthermore, the travel landscape is driven by the need for authentic experiences (Turner, 2022), creative tourism (Virginija, 2016), work-life balance (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2023b), social responsibility (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2023a), inclusivity (Condé Nast Britain, 2023), and sustainability (United Nations, 2023), among other trends.

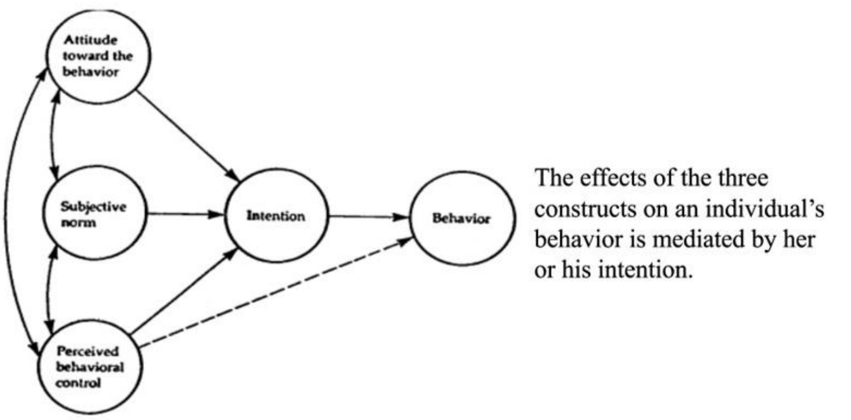
This paper seeks to analyze the travel intentions of Filipino Gen Zs in this era of shifting consumer motivations, preferences, and interests. Pew Research Center, acknowledged as the arbiter on generational classifications (Debczak, 2024), has updated its criteria determining that Millennials are those born between 1981-1996, while Gen Z refers to the age group born between 1997 and 2012 (Fareed, 2023; Khan, 2023; Dimock, 2019).

The research aims to develop a framework based on the impact of social media channels on the travel behavior and intention of Gen Zs. Specifically, the paper seeks to (1) describe the demographic and psychographic profiles of the respondents; (2) assess the mediating effect of travel intentions on the relationship between the predictors (i.e., social media channels, tourism promotions, and tourism information search) and the outcome variable (i.e., tourists' travel behavior); (3) assess the mediating effect of tourists' overall satisfaction on the relationship between motivation and their actual travel behavior; and (4) develop a framework, anchored on the theory of planned behavior, that examines the impact of social media channels and other related variables on the travel behavior and intention of Filipino Gen Zs.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Background: Theory of Planned Behavior
Tourism is best understood from a multi-disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and intradisciplinary perspective. It is a complex yet dynamic industry where stakeholders need to closely collaborate across the value and supply chains. According to experts Pahrudin et al. (2021); Soliman, (2019); Jiménez-García (2023); Ulker-Demirel & Ciftci (2020); and Phonkaew, et al. (2020), they anchored their research on travel behavior, intention, motivation on the Push-Pull Theory of Motivation (Dann, 1977) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (Azjein & Fishbein, 1973).

Figure 1
Theory of Planned Behavior



Source: Azjen & Fishbein (1973)

2.2 Conceptual Framework
2.2.1 Social Media and the Gen Z Travel Market

Hootsuite (2023) distinguishes between social marketing and social commerce where the former refers to the “use of social media based on the marketing mix;” while the latter corresponds to the “sale of products and services directly through social media.” On the other hand, Gen Zs are digital natives “relying heavily on social media for communication, entertainment, and information” (Khan, 2023). A related report from Statista revealed that 75% of respondents from Australia, Canada, India, Japan, Mexico, and the United Kingdom stated that social media is their biggest influencer when it comes to travel decisions (Hinton, 2023). Thus, it is predicted that by 2026, the travel sector will generate 73% of its revenues from online sales (Nonofo, 2023).

2.2.2 Tourist Satisfaction

Travel satisfaction refers to emotions experienced during trips as well as a cognitive evaluation of the whole journey or stages of the journey after its completion. Research shows that the quality of service is closely linked to travel motivation and satisfaction (Yousaf et al., 2018). It is therefore critical for stakeholders to understand the needs and preferences of Gen Zs to manage scarce resources for destination management and marketing (Uysal et al., 2008). This phenomenon is likewise linked to the tourists’ intention to revisit an intention, intention to recommend, as well as their possible loyalty specific attractions and destinations (Adinegara et al., 2021; Tran, 2021; Vo-Thanh et al, 2018).

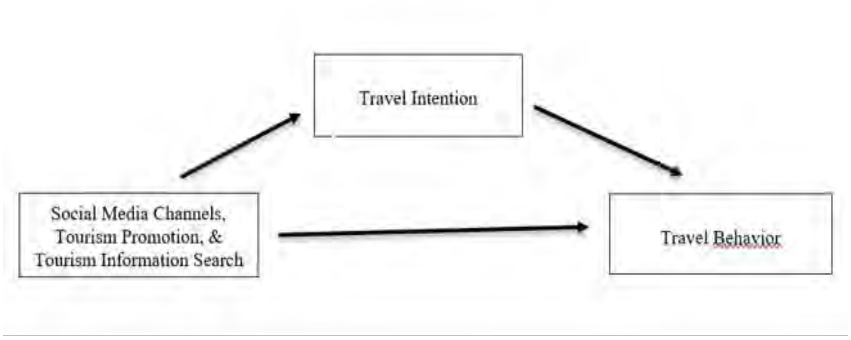
2.2.3 Push-Pull Factors of Motivation, Intention, and Behavior

Push factors refer to the intrinsic factors that influence a person to travel such as the need for knowledge, new experiences, need for socialization and recreational activities. On the other hand, pull factors are associated with attractions, amenities, and the overall tourist environment.

These can help tourism stakeholders design and manage their marketing campaigns based on factors that tourists consider important (Yousef et al., 2018). On the other hand, the relationship between the tourist motivation and future behavior has proven to be well established “despite arguments on whether the push motivation can act as a moderator to influence tourist behavior” (Nilplub, et al, 2016; Hanafiah et al., 2017). However, De Vos (2022) emphasized that “attitudes (which are considered stable over time) are a strong predictor of behavior” (p. 573) and that there is “a significant impact of affective and cognitive dimensions of travel emotions and experiences on the satisfaction with leisure activities conducted at the destination” (2019, p. 1).

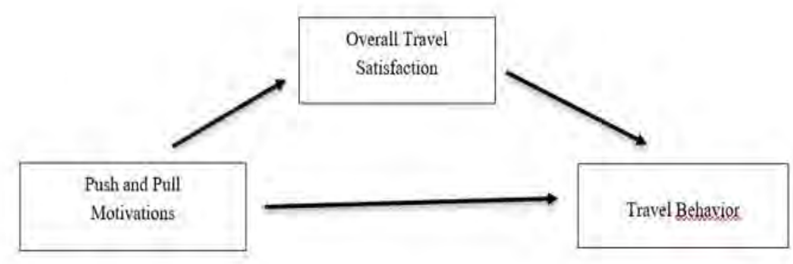
Anchored on the theory of planned behavior, the researchers developed and tested two mediation models: one that examines the impact of social media channels on tourists’ travel behavior as mediated by travel intention, and another that investigates the influence of motivation on tourists’ travel behavior as mediated by their overall travel satisfaction (see figures below).

Figure 2
Mediation Model 1



Source: Authors' own conceptual framework

Figure 3
Mediation Model 2



Source: Authors' own conceptual framework

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Instrument
The research used quantitative design through the administration of a five-part survey questionnaire. According to Uysal and Altin (2017), quantitative research is used to examine and understand tourism-related phenomena such as the "behavior of tourists, traveler characteristics, destination image assessment and perceptions, decision making and destination selection, demand analysis, performance measures, and general market assessment and segmentation" (p. 2). It is also characterized by structured questionnaire with pre-determined response options to validate facts, estimates, and relationships (Hair, 2006, pp. 171-172). The questionnaire that will be used in this study has undergone validation and pretesting. Furthermore, the scales adopted in this study had acceptable levels of reliability as Cronbach's alpha ranged from .74 to .92.

3.2 Data Collection and Analysis
The survey was administered to target respondents via Microsoft Forms. The survey took approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete. Prior to the administration of the survey, informed consent was obtained from target participants. Data collected was analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 21) predictive analytics software and R statistical programming language. Specifically, Objectives 1 and 2 were answered using descriptive

statistics, while the remaining objectives were answered by inferential statistics using regression-based models.

3.3 Ethical Consideration

Informed consent was obtained prior to the administration of the survey informing respondents that their answers will be treated confidentially and will be used for academic purposes only. The survey included a statement on Data Privacy Act of 2012 which states that "Far Eastern University strongly upholds data privacy pursuant to the laws and rules governing the Data Privacy Act of 2012. All information will be treated as confidential and will be used for academic purposes only. By continuing and participating, you (the respondent) consent and authorize the researchers in the collection, lawful use, and lawful disclosure of the responses." If the respondents agree, then they will be able to proceed with the survey. Moreover, the research proposal has undergone ethical review and has received its approval to proceed.

4. Results

4.1. Profile of the respondents

The target respondents in this study were students currently enrolled in the Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management (ITHM) at the Far Eastern University (FEU) Manila. These students were recruited using purposive sample techniques. Majority of respondents were female (79.31%), followed by male (19.83%), and less than one percent (0.86%) preferred not to disclose their gender. In terms of generational classification, 99.14% (115 respondents) were Gen Zs with only 0.86% Millennial (one respondent). The respondents' ages ranged from 20-24 years old.

Table 1
Where do you usually travel for leisure and/or vacation?

Countries of Destination	n	%
Philippines	111	95.7%
Asia, except the Philippines and Middle East	20	17.2%
Europe	3	2.6%
North America	2	1.7%
Middle East	1	0.9%

Note: The percentages do not add up to 100% because participants provide multiple responses

Table 1 shows the locations where the respondents usually travel for non-business purposes. An overwhelming majority of the respondents (95.7%) visit destinations in the Philippines while others stated Asia (17.2%), Europe (2.6%), North America (1.7%) and the Middle East (0.9%), respectively. This may be due any of the following reasons: (1) participation in domestic educational tours as encouraged by ITHM as part of their industry immersion that they, in turn, consider leisure travel; and that (2) most of the respondents' families are based in the provinces in the Philippines.

Table 2
How often do you actually travel for leisure and/or vacation?

Frequency of Travel	n	%

Once a year	41	35.5%
Twice a year	34	29.3%
Thrice a year	17	14.7%
More than three times a year	24	20.7%
Total	116	100.0%

Table 2 shows the frequency of the travel of the respondents. Most of the participants travelled once a year (35.5%) closely followed by those who travel twice a year (29.3%). The results may be attributed to vacation trips that are only taken and/or during (1) the semestral break in May-July; and (2) long holidays such as the Holy Week and Christmas, thus, limiting the number of trips taken during a year.

Table 3
How often do you like to travel for leisure and/or vacation?

Frequency of Travel	n	%
Once a year	9	8.9%
Twice a year	24	22.6%
Thrice a year	19	19.4%
More than three times a year	64	49.1%
Total	116	100.0%

Table 3 presents the Gen Zs preferred frequency of leisure travel. Almost half of the respondents (49.1%) would like to take trips more than three times a year. According to Booking.com (2024), "60% of those aged 16-24 think travel is always worth investing in. Over two thirds (69%) have already compiled a travel bucket list, with a third (32%) of respondents aiming to have checked at least five trips off their list in the next ten years."

Table 4
Who is your usual travel companion?

Travel companion	n	%
Family Member	113	97.4%
Friends	47	40.5%
Boyfriend/girlfriend	23	19.8%
Alone (solo traveler)	8	6.9%
Pets	7	6.0%

Note: The percentages do not add up to 100% because participants provided multiple responses

An overwhelming 97.4% of respondents said a family member is their usual travel companion. Filipino Gen Zs are interested in travelling with loved ones (ABS-CBN News, 2024) and this is consistent with the multi-generational travel trend resulting from the need reconnect and bond after the pandemic (Global Family Travels, 2024).

Table 5
How much do you spend for each leisure/vacation trip?

Cost/trip	n	%
Less than PHP 3,000	9	7.4%

PHP 3,001 – 5,000	18	16.8%
PHP 5,001 – 7,000	9	10.6%
PHP 7,001 – 9,000	9	7.7%
PHP 9,001- 11,000	20	17,8%
PHP 11,001- 13,000	10	6.1%
PHP 13,001 – 15,000	5	2.7%
PHP 15,001 – 17,000	6	5.8%
PHP 17,001 – 20,000	2	2.9%
More than PHP 20,000	18	22.2%
Total	116	100.0%

The costs per trip were based on the statistics generated on individual travel budget allowance of Filipinos, as of June 2022 (Statista, 2022). Table 5 shows that 22.22% of respondents spent more than PHP20,000 per trip, followed by 17.8% spending between PHP 9,0001-11,000, and 16.8% whose expenses total between PHP 3,0001-5,000. The results can either be due to the following reasons: (1) It may be assumed that the majority were with their families that exponentially increased the capacity to spend; (2) while the rest may be using their savings, thus, the propensity to save on trip expenses.

Table 6
Where do you book your leisure and/or vacation?

Booking Choices	n	%
Online travel websites (e.g. TripAdvisor, Agora, etc.)	60	52.5%
Directly with tourism establishments (e.g. hotel, resort, etc.	44	36.8%
Face-to-face with travel agent	12	10.6%
Total	116	100.0%

Although generally Gen Zs have been observed to use online travel agencies over other booking choices (Truyols, 2021). Filipino Gen Z respondents, on the other hand, prefer travel websites (52.5%) and direct bookings (36.8%) as revealed in the results of the study. In addition, the smartphone is the preferred tool for researching and booking leisure trips with 97% of Gen Zs stating social media is the primary source of travel inspiration (Roller, 2024). Research also acknowledges the "Gen Zs' intuitive understanding of how to use the internet and social media to accomplish their goals and can quickly adapt to new technological advancements" (Indeed, 2024). Despite the relatively slow internet connection speed of mobile phones in the Philippines, that is 24.04 Mbps (Ookla, 2023 as cited in Kemp, 2023), there were 76.40 million social media users aged 18 and above (Data Portal, 2024).

Table 7
How do you finance your trip?

Sources of Funds	n	%
Savings from allowances	92	79.3%
Gifts from family and/or friends	68	58.6%
Earnings from own business	6	5.2%
Salaries from part-time jobs	4	3.4%

Debt (loans and/or credit cards)	3	2.6%
Split expenses with friends	3	2.8%
Reduce unnecessary expenses	2	1.7%

Note: The percentages do not add up to 100% because participants provide multiple responses

Table 7 showed that 79.3% of respondents use savings from allowances to fund their vacations. In addition, only 2.6% of the respondents said that they use debt for their vacations. These data are consistent with research stating that Gen Zs prioritize travel experiences over materials possessions and that only 8% of Gen Z travelers are willing to go into debt when making plans for leisure travel (Travel Perk, 2023; Vizzer, 2024).

Table 8
Which content do you consider most important when planning a trip?

Types of Content	n	%
Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok)	45	38.8%
Photos/videos posted by family and friends	24	20.7%
Photos/videos posted by social media influencers	23	19.8%
Official travel websites	19	16.4%
Information from travel agencies and tour operators	5	4.3%
Total	166	100.9%

Table 8 shows that 38.8% of respondents consider social networking sites as important sources of information when planning a trip. This is followed by photos and videos posted by family and friends (20.7%) and social media influencers (19,8%). These match research that revealed that 90% of Gen Zs said that social media influenced their domestic and international travel decisions; 53% trust travel recommendations on social media; and 68% read at least three reviews prior to making decisions (Roller, 2024). In addition, they prefer "visual and bite-sized content, concise and visually appealing shareable information" (Khan, 2023).

Table 9
Regression Results for the Mediation Analysis 1

Relationship	Mediator	Indirect Effect	BBC 95% CI Lower	Upper
Social Media Channel to Actual Behavior	Behavioral Intention	.17 (.04)**	**.09**	**.26**
Tourism Promotions to Actual Behavior	Behavioral Intention	.37 (.08)**	**.21**	**.53**
Tourism Information Search to Actual Behavior	Behavioral Intention	.43 (.08)**	**.28**	**.59**

Note: *p<.05, **p<.01. Bootstrap sample size = 5,000; BBC = Bootstrap Bias-Corrected; CI=Confidence Level

Following Hayes' (2013) Macro Process in SPSS, we examined the mediating effect of tourists' behavioral intention on the relationship between the independent variables (i.e., social media channel, tourism promotions, and tourism information search) and the dependent variable (i.e., tourists' actual behavior). The results showed that the indirect effects of the three predictors on the outcome variable were statistically significant: 1) social media channel on actual behavior (*ab* = .17, [.09, .26], *p* <.01); 2) tourism promotions on actual behavior (*ab* = .37, [.21, .53], *p* <.01,); and 3) tourism information search on actual behavior (*ab* = .43, [.28, .59], *p* <.01). These results suggest that the social media channel, tourism promotions, and tourism information search affect tourists' actual behavior via their behavioral intention.

Table 10
Regression Results for the Mediation Analysis 2

Relationship	Mediator	Indirect Effect	BBC 95% CI Lower	BBC 95% CI Upper
Push Motivation to Actual Behavior	Overall Satisfaction	.05 (.02)*	**.01**	**.09**
Pull Motivation to Actual Behavior	Overall Satisfaction	.06 (.02)**	**.02**	**.11**

Note: *p<.05, **p<.01; Bootstrap sample size =5,000; BBC = Bootstrap Bias-Corrected; CI = Confidence Interval

Similarly, we investigated the mediating effect of tourists' overall satisfaction on the relationship between push and pull motivations and actual behavior using Hayes' (2013) Macro Process in SPSS. The results indicated that the indirect effects of both types of motivations on tourists' actual behavior were statistically significant: 1) push motivation on actual behavior (ab = .05, [.01 -. 09], p <.05,) and 2) pull motivation on actual behavior (ab = .06, [.02, .11], p <.01). These findings indicate that push and pull motivations impact tourists' actual behavior through their overall satisfaction.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the study revealed that majority of the respondents were female (79.41%), between the ages of 20-24 years old (99.14%). Moreover, social media channels influence the planning, selection, and decision-making of Filipino Gen Zs with respect to their vacation and/or leisure trips. Consistent with similar research, this generation travels primarily with family members (97.4%); are driven to save their allowances to allocate monies for travel (79.3%) and hopes to travel more than three times a year (49.3%). Furthermore, the mediation analyses showed the statistically significant relationships between social media channels, tourism promotions, and tourism information search, thus affecting Gen Z's actual behavior via their behavioral intention. In terms of the motivating factors on Gen Zs' actual behavior, the study revealed that push and pull motivations affect their actual behavior through their overall satisfaction.

The researchers conducted a study on how travel establishments and tourism marketing companies can tap into this lucrative Gen Z tourist market. Moreover, a review of behavior and intentions anchored on the use of social media may prove to be invaluable given the shifts in travel preferences, motivations, needs, and interests (Conde Naste Britain, 2023; Deloitte & Trip.com, 2023).

5.2 Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

It would be beneficial to include a larger sample of respondents from other tertiary universities in the National Capital Region (NCR) and/or replicated the study in other higher education institutions (HEIs) for other regions in the Philippines and in selected countries in Southeast Asia.

Future research agenda may include an inter-generational study comparing the motivations and travel behavior of Southeast Asian Baby Boomers, Millennials, and Gen Zs on key outcomes using structural equation modeling (SEM) or a mixed-methods design. Industry practitioners may benefit from an updated study on how social media influences Gen Zs as well as how their generation consume and engage with content that may form the basis for travel promotions, publicity, and event-driven initiatives. Higher education institutions (HEIs) may use the results of the study to design options for educational tours focusing on student interests, develop internship programs that achieve student learning objectives.

Moreover, the academic community from related disciplines may find value in the development, management, and evaluation of andragogical strategies leveraged on social media platforms to optimize learning. Furthermore, the study may be redesigned to focus on special interest tourism such as adventure tourism, luxury travel, and intangible cultural heritage tours. In addition, the questionnaire may be expanded to include surveys on the tourists' awareness and interest in sustainable travel practices, as well as their interest in participating in community-based travel initiatives.

REFERENCES

ABS CBN News. (2024, January 24). *More Millennials, Genzs seen traveling with loved ones in 2024.* https://news.abs-cbn.com/business/01/24/24/more-millennials-genzs-seen-traveling-with-loved-ones-in-2024

Acharya, S., Mekker, M., & Jonas De Vos, J. (2023). Linking travel behavior and tourism literature: Investigating the impacts of travel satisfaction on destination satisfaction and revisit intention. *Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives, 17.* https://doi.org/10.1016/j.trip.2022.100745

Adinegara, J., Suprapti, N. W., Yasa, N. K. K., & Sukaatmadja, I. P. G. (2021). Antecedents and consequences of tourist satisfaction: A literature review. *ASEAN Marketing Journal, 9(*2). https://scholarhub.ui.ac.id/amj/vol9/iss2/1

Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 50*(2), 179–211. https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T

Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. (1973). Attitudinal and normative variables as predictors of specific behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 27*(1), 41–57. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0034440

Condé Nast Britain. (2023). *The biggest travel trends for 2023*. https://www.cntraveller.com/article/travel-trends-2024

Correia, A., & Pimpa˜o, A. (2008). Decision-making processes of Portuguese tourist travelling to South America and Africa. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research, 2* (4), 330 – 373. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/17506180810908989

Crompton, J. L. (1979) Motivations for pleasure vacation. *Annals of Tourism Research. 6*(4): 408-424. https://doi.10.1016/0160-7383(79)90004-5

Dann, G. M. S. (1977). Anomie, ego-enhancement, and tourism. *Annals Of Tourism Research.* https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(77)90037-8

De Vos, J. (2022) The shifting role of attitudes in travel behaviour research. *Transport Reviews, 42*(5), 573-579. https://doi.org/10.1080/01441647.2022.2078537

De Vos, J. (2019). Analysing the effect of trip satisfaction on satisfaction with the leisure activity at the destination of the trip, in relationship with life satisfaction. *Transportation 46*, 623–645. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11116-017-9812-0

De Vos, J., Singleton, P. A. & Gärling, T. (2021) From attitude to satisfaction: Introducing the travel mode choice cycle. *Transportation Review 44*(2), 204-221. https://doi.org/10.1080/01441647.2021.1958952

Debczak, M. (2024, February 22). *These revised guidelines redefine birth years and classifications for Millennials, Gen Z, and Gen Alpha*. Minute Media. https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/609811/age-ranges-millennials-and-generation-z

Deloitte & Trip.com. (2023, January). A world in motion: Shifting consumer travel trends in 2022 and beyond. https://www.deloitte.com/content/dam/assets-shared/legacy/docs/analysis/2022/gx-wttc-consumer-trends-report-2023.pdf

Dimock, M. (2019, January 17). *Defining generations: Where Millennials end and Generation Z begins*. Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2019/01/17/where-millennials-end-and-generation-z-begins/

Fareed, I. (2023, January 1), *Gen Z travel trends 2023: Rethinking the future of tourism*? Trip Pursuit. https://trippursuit.com/gen-z-travel-trends-2023/

Hair, J. F., Bush, R. B., & Ortinau, D. J. (2006). *Marketing research within a changing* *information environment* (3rd ed.). McGraw Hill/Irvin.

Hanafiah, M. H. H., Rojulai, N., & Zulkifly, M. I. (2017). Tourist motivation and future behavioral intention: The moderating effects of the push factor. *Service Experience and Innovation in Hospitality & Tourism*, 40-46. https://doi.10.5829/idosi/wasj.seiht.2017.40.46

Hinton, T. (2023, June 6). *Social media has the greatest influence on travel destination choices*. Statista. https://www.statista.com/chart/30135/media-influences-on-travel-destination/

Hootsuite. (2023). *Social media trends 2023*. https://www.hootsuite.com/research/social-trends

Indeed. (2022, November 6). *Gen Z vs. millennials: Definitions and key differences*. https://ca.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/gen-z-vs-millennials

Irena, T., Todorovi´c, N., Pavlovi´c, S., & Parra-López, E. (2022). Are image and quality of tourist services strategic determinants of satisfaction? Millennials' perspective in emerging destinations. *Administrative Sciences, 12*(88). https://doi:10.3390/admsci12030088

Javed, M., Tuˇcková, Z., & Jibril, A. B. (2020). The role of social media on tourists' behavior: An empirical analysis of millennials from the Czech Republic. *Sustainability, 12,* 7735, 1-19. https://doi:10.3390/su121877356

Jenkins, R. (2023). *Generation Z versus Millennials: The eight differences you need to know.* Inc. https://www.inc.com/ryan-jenkins/generation-z-vs-millennials-the-8-differences-you-.html

Jiménez-García, M., Ruiz-Chico, J., & Peña-Sánchez, A.R. (2023). Generation Z and intention to travel: Effects of the perception of Covid-19. *International and Multidisciplinary Journal of Social Sciences, 12*(1), 40-68. https://doi.org/10.17583/rimcis.10539

Kemp, S. (2023, January 26). *Digital 2023: Global overview report*. Dataportal. https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-global-overview-report?utm_source=DataReportal&utm_medium=Country_Article_Hyperlink&utm_campaign=Digital_2023&utm_term=Philippines&utm_content=Global_Promo_Block

Khan, M. (2023, July 5). *Gen Z vs. Millennials: Key differences and similarities.* Medium, com. https://medium.com/illumination/gen-z-vs-millennials-key-differences-and-similarities-e24f92df74d3

Loan, N., & Viet Hoang, N. (2023). Generation Z's travel trend and behavior: A systematic literature review. *Journal of Economics, Finance and Management Studies*, *06*. https://doi.10.47191/jefms/v6-i4-13

Loucks, J. (2023). *Gen Z and millennial travel: The wanderlust generations*. Deloitte. https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/technology-media-and-telecommunications/articles/gen-Z-and-millennial-travel-the-wanderlust-generations.html

Ma, A. T. H., Chow, A. S. Y., Cheung, L. T. O, & Liu, S. (2018). Self-determined travel motivation and environmentally responsible behaviour of Chinese visitors to national forest protected areas in South China. *Global Ecology and Conservation, 16*, 1-15. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gecco.2018.e00480

Mize. (2023). Gen Z travelers: How their travel behavior compares to Millennials. https://www.hotelmize.com/blog/gen-z-travelers-how-their-travel-behavior-compares-to-millennials/

Nilplub, C., D.B. Khang, & D. Krairit, (2016). Determinants of destination loyalty and the mediating role of tourist satisfaction. *Tourism Analysis, 21*(2-3), 221-236. https://doi.10.3727/108354216X14559233984818

Nonofo, J. (2023, September 20). *Interesting online travel booking statistics & trends.* Trav Heir. https://www.travheir.com/interesting-online-travel-booking-statistics-trends/

Nonofo, J. (2023). *Booking and research habits (smartphone usage).* Trav Heir. https://www.travheir.com/millennials-travel-statistics-and-trends/

Pahrudin, P., Chen, C. T., & Liu, L. W. (2021). A modified theory of planned behavioral: A case of tourist intention to visit a destination post pandemic Covid-19 in Indonesia. *Heliyon, 7*(10). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e08230

Phonkaew, S., Jittithavorn, C., Madhyamapurush, W., Li, X., & Lee, T. (2020). The push-pull motivation factors of Generation Y tourists and their travel intentions towards Thainess tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism Development, 4*(2). 78-93. https://doi.10.47836/pjssh.30.2.15

Pine, J. II., & Gilmore, J.H. (1998). Welcome to the experience economy. *Harvard Business Review*. https://hbr.org/1998/07/welcome-to-the-experience-economy

Roller. (2024, April 3). *Gen Z travel trends & statistics in 2023*. https://www.roller.software/blog/gen-z-travel-trends-and-statistics

Sahin, G.G., & Sengün, G. (2015). The effects of social media on tourism marketing: A study among university students. *Management and Administrative Sciences Review, 4*(5), 772-786. https://www.academia.edu/15765164/ The_Effects_of_Social_%20Media_on_Tourism_Marketing_A_Study_among_University_Students

Sigala, M. (2020). Tourism and COVID-19: Impacts and implications for advancing and resetting industry and research. *Journal of Business Research, 117*, 312-321. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.06.015

Soliman, M. (2019): Extending the theory of planned behavior to predict tourism destination revisit intention. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration, 12*(1), 40-68. https://doi.org/10.1080/15256480.2019.1692755

Statista. (2022). Philippines as of June 2022 (in Philippine pesos). https://www.statista.com/statistics /1315591/philippines-individual-travel-budget-allocation/

Tran, H. (2021). Effect of memorable tourism experiences on revisit intention to community-based tourism destination of domestic tourists in Vietnam. Proceedings of the International Conference on Research in Management & Technovation, 307–313. https://doi.10.15439/2021KM44

Travel Perk. (2024). *30+ Gen Z travel statistics and trends [2024 update].* https://www.travelperk.com/blog/gen-z-travel-statistics-trends/

Truyols, M. (2021, September 20). *Gen Z travelers: How their travel behavior compares to millennials*. MIZE. https://mize.tech/blog/gen-z-travelers-how-their-travel-behavior-compares-to-millennials/

Uysal, M., Li, X. & Sirakaya-Turk, E. (2008), Push–pull dynamics in travel decisions. In Haemoon Oh & Abraham Pizam, *Handbook of Hospitality Marketing Management*, Taylor & Francis.

Visser, K. (2019, July 9). *Gen Z prioritise travel over material possessions.* Booking.com. https://partner.booking.com/en-gb/click-magazine/bookingcom-news/gen-z-prioritise-travel-over-material-possessions

Vo-Thanh, T., Tran, T.A.C., & Dang, R. (2018). Satisfaction as a bridge to loyalty in a tourist destination. *Tourism Analysis*, *23*, 45–60. https://doi.Org/10.3727/108354218x15143857349486

Yousaf, A., Amin, I., & Santos, J.A.C. (2018). Tourists' motivations to travel: A theoretical perspective on the existing literature. *Tourism and Hospitality Management, 24*(1), 197-211. https://doi.org/10.20867/thm.24.1.8

More is better? Effectiveness of auxiliary information on online travel agencies

Tsai, Tsung-Hsien
Department of Tourism Management
National Quemoy University

Hsu, Hsiao-Yueh
Department of Tourism Management
National Quemoy University

Abstract:

Information presented on online travel agencies is crucial in encouraging users to make booking decisions. This study aims to evaluate users' preferences for both existing and potential purchase auxiliary information on online channels. A stated preference experiment, comprising eleven attributes, is proposed based on the framework of Decomposed Theory of Planned Behavior. Logit-based models are applied to analyze choice behaviors. The results indicate that not all existing information adopted by online channels is perceived to be essential, implying that operators should pay close attention to the information presented on the platform.

Keywords: Online Travel Agency, Auxiliary Information, Presentation and Evaluation, Planned Behavior

1. Introduction

Online travel agencies (OTAs) are recognized as effective channels for distributing hotel services and increasing revenues. Notable players in the market are like Travelocity, Expedia, Agoda, Eztravel, among others. Nowadays, OTAs have become convenient and economical platforms for consumers to search, compare, and book hotel services (Chiou, Lin, & Perng, 2011; Kim, Kim, & Han, 2007; Rianthong, Dumrongsiri, & Kohda, 2016). On the flip side, OTAs also become vital channels for hoteliers to distribute sales information and compete with other listed properties (Binesh, Belarmino, & Raab, 2021). Consequently, OTAs strive to capture users' attention by implementing various strategic actions, such as integrating diverse tourism products, offering various types of discounts/cashback, implementing membership programs, among others. As such, more and more tourists utilize OTAs to reserve accommodation service for their journeys (Lee, 2020). In general, pricing on OTAs is normally regarded as an attractive feature compared with that on hotel brand websites because of the provision of plenty accommodation alternatives with competitive prices. Nevertheless, pricing is not the only lever that OTAs apply to attract users. In fact, OTAs also utilize additional auxiliary information to prompt users to make instant bookings.

With the provision of purchase auxiliary information such as illustration, location, payment, limited offers, and facilities, OTAs aim to encourage users to engage in making their bookings while browsing. Related studies have shown that users typically visit multiple OTAs and brand websites before finalizing their reservations (Kim et al., 2020). On one hand, the quantity, quality, and transparency of product information provided on the website is already confirmed to be effective on online purchasing behaviors (Abou-Shouk & Khalifa, 2017; Busser & Shulga, 2019; Tanford, Baloglu, & Erdem, 2012). Lin, Liu, & Chen (2022) also showed that transaction transparency is associated with convenience and financial benefit of using a travel-related tourism e-commerce platform. From another perspective, each listed property only has limited space to showcase relevant information intended to attract tourists' attention. As a result, various sources of information are often crammed onto webpages to provide information as much as possible. Nevertheless, presenting too much information at one time may result in ineffective communication and information overload (Iyengar & Lepper, 2000; Kim et al., 2021). In this regard, Hu & Krishen (2019) claimed the existence of information boundary conditions and verified that information overload has a positive effect impacts on both decision difficulty and decision satisfaction. Kim et al. (2021) found that visual information has a positive impact on consumers' responses on OTAs but the responses tend to become negative as the number of photos increases. Thoreson (2022) also pointed out that comparing excessive information is challenging for users and may result in obstacles of choice making. As such, distinguishing which information should be presented on the website and vice versa is a critical issue for both OTAs and listed properties. Although related studies focusing on particular futures can be retrieved from the literature, there is a lack of an integrated and comprehensive framework to address the presentation of auxiliary information (Binesh, Belarmino, & Raab, 2021; Ivanov, Del Chiappa, & Heyes, 2021; Jeong and Crompton 2018; Khandeparkar, Maheshwari, & Motiani, 2020; Lee, 2020). As users access various types of information on the webpage simultaneously while searching for accommodation plans on OTAs, understanding the effectiveness of multiple sources of information is then worthy of research.

Decomposed Theory of Planned Behavior (DTPB), proposed by Taylor and Todd (1995), has been widely applied and modified to explain behavioral intentions in the tourism and lodging industries (Garay, Font, & Corrons, 2019; Manosuthi, Lee, & Han, 2020; Olya, Bagheri, & Tümer, 2019). In an early study, Huh, Kim, & Law (2009) concluded that DTPB is a preferred theoretical framework, compared with other theories, to explain employees' intentions to adopt hotel technology. According to the review by Ulker-Demirel & Ciftci (2020), DTPB emerges as a suitable social-psychological model in terms of feasibility, testability, methodological suitability, and validity in the field of tourism, leisure and hospitality management. Hence, this study seeks to address the gap by conducting an ex-ante assessment of extant and prospective purchase auxiliary information on OTAs, utilizing the DTPB framework. The primary objective is to evaluate the perceived (in)effectiveness of extant and prospective purchase auxiliary information perceived by users during their search on OTAs.

2. Literature Review

Listing on OTAs offers hoteliers valuable access to potential market segments and can enhance sales performance, particularly for small to medium independent hotels (Binesh, Belarmino, & Raab, 2021). Hoteliers must strategically allocate their rooms across multiple channels to maximize revenue potential (Kim et al., 2020). Regarding the use of OTAs, Kim et al. (2020) indicated that the ease of comparing prices of goods and services is a primary attraction for users. Furthermore, OTAs also adopt various pricing tactics to increase the attractiveness of deals on the channel. In addition to pricing, numerous non-price factors influence viewers' decisions while using OTAs, such as booking time point, instant confirmation, competitive alternatives, user generated contents, and among others (Lee, 2020). In this line of research, Law and Hsu (2006) have evaluated the significance of website information and highlighted the importance of booking-related information such as price, room availability, cancellation policies to users. Kourtesopoulou et al. (2018) indicated that ease of understanding, response time, and the website intuitive operation is highly related to platform information quality. Islam, Jebarajakirthy, & Shankar (2021) conducted an experiment to investigate the role of customer's involvement (ie. photos, videos, colors, automatic recommendation) regarding the usefulness and ease-of-use on a retailing website. Lin, Liu, & Chen (2022) confirmed the effect of deal transparency on tourism-related products on e-commence platforms. Ho et al. (2022) researched the intention of using OTAs and indicated that the platform image of social media is helpful to improve hotel images and result in the increase of service quality perception and motivation. Drawing from these related findings, we argue that the presentation of comprehensive information on online channels still poses a significant operational challenge for OTAs and hoteliers (Park, Gretzel, & Sirakaya-Turk, 2007).

In order to address the relationship between information presented on OTAs and booking intentions, DTPB is adopted in this study to focus on the factors of perceived usefulness, perceived ease-of-use, compatibility, peer norm, self-efficacy, and facilitating conditions when classifying webpage information. Firstly, perceived usefulness relates to users' beliefs regarding the ability of stay alternatives to offer reliable and superior accommodation services (Garay, Font, & Corrons, 2019). Awards/certifications serve as appealing endorsements to show operational capabilities (Lee, Lee, & Gunarathne, 2019). Additionally, other relevant information presented to ensure service guarantee, such as best available room rate and unconditional/specific coverage of service, holds potential effects (Rohlfs & Kimes, 2007; Wu et al., 2012). Perceived ease-of-use refers to the degree to which users believe that the content of stay alternatives is free of effort to understand (Garay, Font, & Corrons, 2019). Room interior and location are pivotal in revealing a property's physical features, and employing various types of pictures, texts, and frames can evoke emotions and increase purchase intentions (Islam, Jebarajakirthy, & Shankar (2021); Jo et al., 2021; Judge et al., 2021). Compatibility is relevant to tourists' living style and daily routines. As a result, if booking conditions required by properties can fit users' preferences, such as payment timing and length of stay, the stay intention can be elevated as a consequence (Jang, Miao, & Chen, 2023; Lee et al., 2021).

Booking behaviors from peer groups often generate a sense of urgency. Consequently, information like limited offer or room popularity is widely adopted by OTAs to convey scarcity. Teubner & Graul (2020) demonstrated that limited offers indeed impact booking intentions via urgency and perceived value. Park, Kim, & Kim (2022) further found that tourists with different childhood sociodemographic features exhibit varying attitudes towards scarcity. Self-efficacy refers to the guests' belief in their abilities to successfully make bookings (Garay, Font, & Corrons, 2019). As a result, it is crucial to assist users when they require help, and response speed is also an important concern in the process. Assistance adopted by OTAs, such as chatbot or avatar, to aid in resolving inquiries then becomes essential (Lei, Shen, & Ye, 2021; Nguyen, Phong, & Chi, 2023). The last DTPB factor involves facilitating conditions that provide an enabling environment for making reservations. Free cancellation is an appealing practice to encourage instantly booking and minimize purchase risks from users' perspectives (Masiero, Viglia, & Nieto-Garcia, 2020; Sánchez, Sánchez-Medina, & Pellejero, 2020). In the airline industry, no-shows are even permitted (Suzuki, 2006). Last but not least, the overall duration required to complete the deal is also considered important from the cost perspective. In summary, these DTPB-based attributes, along with realistic levels of service, are considered in the stated preference experiment to comprehensively explore the issue.

3. Methodology

3.1. Conceptual framework

In this section, a stated choice experiment is conducted based on the DTPB-derived attributes with the consideration of management activities. Both extant and prospective activities are addressed and tested in the experiment to evaluate their effects on tourists' booking decisions. Ultimately, we adopt three alternatives with varying volumes of information exposed and develop eleven attributes to form the experiment. This approach allows us to comprehensively and simultaneously evaluate the value of website information on OTAs. Figure 1 illustrates the proposed conceptual framework.

The presented eleven attributes with corresponding levels of service in Figure 1 result in a complicated experiment. If a full factorial experiment was conducted based on the design, there would be a huge number of experimental cases. As such, a fractional factorial experiment, which is a common approach to create hypothetical scenarios, was conducted using the orthogonal table $L_{32}(2^{31})$ to reduce the number of test cases to thirty-two in this study. These scenarios were then randomly assigned to form eight subsets, each of which consists of four scenarios. As such, each respondent needed to evaluate only one randomly assigned subset.

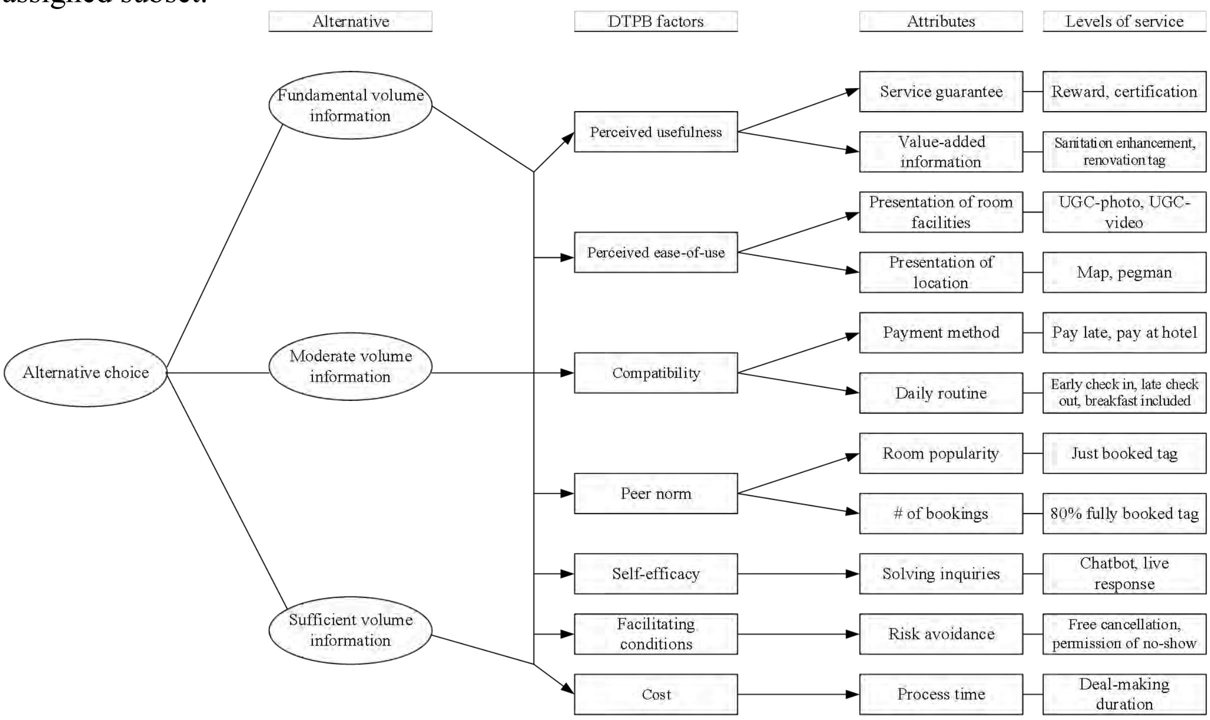


Figure 1 The proposed conceptual framework

3.2. Logit Models

Discrete choice models are suitable for analyzing discrete dependent variables and have been widely applied in a variety of fields of research including tourism. Originally, the goal is to maximize utilities in the derivation of theoretical choice models. In this way, the utility of each alternative is estimated through the evaluation of respondents' overall feelings regarding the applied attributes. Equation (1) shows the calculation of utility where V_{it} is the systematic component and ε_{it} is the error term for individual *t* to choose alternative *i*. X_{it} is a vector of the applied attributes and β represents the unknown parameters which need to be calibrated using the collected responses. The most popular and widely applied prototype is Multinomial Logit model (MNL) as shown in Equation (2) where P_{it} represents the probability for individual *t* to choose *i* from *j* alternatives.

$$\mathrm{U_{it}} = \mathrm{V_{it}} + \varepsilon_{\mathrm{it}} = \beta'\mathrm{X_{it}} + \varepsilon_{\mathrm{it}} \quad (1)$$

$$\mathrm{P_{it}} = \mathrm{prob}\left[\left(\mathrm{U_{it}} > \mathrm{U_{jt}}\right)\right] = \frac{e^{V_{it}}}{\sum_j e^{V_{jt}}} \quad (2)$$

3.2. Data collection

The targeted population is Taiwanese adult travelers (above 18 years old) who have booked on OTAs within a year at the time of surveying. For each hypothetical scenario, respondents were expected to choose one alternative from the choice set after considering the combination of attributes and service levels. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with tourists at transportation terminals from January 2023 to April 2023. Trained interviewers explained what attributes and corresponding levels of service are before answering the questionnaire. In addition, questionnaires were filled in front of interviewers who were always available to clarify the meaning of the research and interpret the content of the experiment. The surveying process was carried out from 9 am to 5 pm on both weekend and weekday at transportation terminals. The principle of systematic sampling with the interval of five was followed to maintain randomness at our best efforts and seven hundred and fifty-four valid questionnaires were collected at the end. These collected responses were then turned into dichotomous and numeric values for the following empirical analysis.

4. Results

4.1. Demographic profile of respondents

Table 1 summaries the characteristics of the collected 754 responses. First of all, 51% of the respondents are male tourists and 36% of them are married. Regarding the major group of age, the 18~30-year-old and 31~40-year-old groups are the first two dominant age groups. For the occupation, the table indicates that respondents come from various career categories, with public sector (25%), service sector (21%), and student (21%) being the top three major groups. Among all samples, around 80% of them possess university degree and above. Regarding the monthly income, most respondents earn between 20k~40k (35%) and 40k~60k (22%). In summary, we adopted the principle of systematic sampling to ensure randomness. The results in Table 1 demonstrate a variety of backgrounds. Therefore, the collected responses are considered to be representative and suitable to projecting the behaviors of the targeted population.

Table 1 Profile of respondents

Characteristic	Percentage	Characteristic	Percentage
Gender		Education	
Male	51%	Senior high	8%
Female	49%	University	72%
Age		Graduate	20%
18~30 yrs	49%		
31~40 yrs	20%	Monthly income (NTD)	
41~50 yrs	16%	<20k	18%
51~60 yrs	12%	20k~40k	35%
>61 yrs	3%	40k~60k	22%
Occupation		60k~80k	12%
Student	21%	>80k	13%
Public sector	25%	Marriage	
Service	21%	Married	36%
Business	12%	Single	64%
Freelance	6%		
Manufacture	12%		
Others	3%		

$30 NT Dollard = $1 US Dollar

4.2. Modeling results

Multinomial Logit Model (MNL) is employed to analyze tourists' discrete choices, serving as the vehicle to investigate the impact of attributes in the empirical study. The modeling results are summarized in Table 2. First of all, the presentation of sanitation enforcement is significant; however, the sign is negative, indicating an inferior effect on utility. The results suggest that, for OTAs, maintaining neutrality without emphasizing sanitation post-pandemic is suitable, as it aligns with the essential standards in accommodation. Other activities derived from the factor of perceived usefulness such as rewards, certifications, and recent renovations are found to be inconsequential. In this manner, OTAs often conduct voting for properties, leading to various reward titles such as "Astonishing Hotels of the Year", "Best Design Hotels", "Best Hotels for Families", among others. However, the empirical results indicate that this type of information has a limited impact on utility increase. Furthermore, the inclusion of certification from external parties also proves unhelpful. In short, presentation related to service guarantee and other value-added information do not appear to be significant in capturing users' interests on OTAs.

Secondly, within the dimension of perceived ease-of-use, the room interior and location of properties are identified as crucial factors. Nevertheless, user-generated photos and videos have a negative influence compared with information provided by the hotel. While user-generated content (UGC) such as comments and ratings is perceived as influential in decision making, OTAs should exercise caution when using UGC materials to showcase architecture, interior decorations, and facilities as suggested by the findings. This is because the information quality of the property introduction provided by the hotels can be ensured. Conversely, the use of map and the Pegman function to locate the property and showcase its surrounding area are verified to be vital. As such, investing in a presentation on an online map system to display the property's location and its distances to other attractions is advisable. Furthermore, the modeling results also suggest adopting the Pegman function, which can further display the street view surrounding properties.

Thirdly, compatibility addresses activities that aim to align with users' daily routines (ie. things that users take for granted). In Table 2, information related to payment method does not increase utility. As demonstrated by Jang, Miao, & Chen (2023), tourists' decisions on payment method are related to discount offers and booking time points. In this study, we focus on the effectiveness of auxiliary information and avoid the interference from rates in the experiment to mitigate complexities. In other words, the payment method (ie. pay now or late) is shown to be trivial without the incentive of discounts based on the findings. In terms of daily regularities, information showing the-icing-on-the-cake benefits of stay alternatives such as early check-in, late check-out, and supplementary breakfast is proved to be a plus. Therefore, if properties can offer such flexibilities, OTAs should highlight these features to increase the probabilities to be selected.

Fourthly, different methods of resolving inquiries in the booking process do not exhibit significant differences. As such, it is not a prioritized consideration to influence users' booking decisions. Having a response system is helpful in addressing inquiries. However, the application of chatbot and live response does not differ significantly from the traditional practice (ie. leaving a message and waiting for a response). In this way, OTAs should maintain only a proper effort in establishing a response system. Fifthly, the urgency of booking is verified to have a surprisingly negative influence in the experiment. This outcome is due to the marginalization of the effect, as it is nowadays common to see this type of information tag on OTAs and users tend to develop indifference towards it. Additionally, OTAs provide multiple lists for users to compare stay alternatives, making the process much easier for users to choose other offers.

Fifthly, the flexibility of cancellation is shown to be positive and significant. As free cancellation has become prevailing on OTAs nowadays, it is essential to disclose this information to encourage users to make instant bookings and mitigate risks. Furthermore, the practice of no-show, which is widely adopted by airlines, is explored in the experiment. The results show that this prospective activity is welcome. As no-show policies are normally associated with the practice of overbooking, OTAs may further consider the deployment of overbooking in the future. Last but not least, the duration of deal-making is considered to be another influential feature, emphasizing on the importance of providing concise, clear, and also attractive information.

Table 2 Results of MNL model

DTPB factors	Attributes	Level of service	Coeff	t value
Alternative specific constant		Sufficient alternative	1.157***	4.683
		Moderate alternative	0.525***	4.020
Perceived usefulness	Service guarantee	Reward	-0.026	-0.305
		Certified	0.045	0.400
	Value-added information	Sanitation enhancement	-0.141**	-2.260
		Renovation	-0.023	-0.315

Perceived ease-of-use	Room facilities	UGC-photo	-0.532***	-6.123
		UGC-video	-0.237**	-2.078
	Location	Location-map	0.163***	2.667
		Location-Pegman	0.179*	1.880
Compatibility	Payment method	Pay late	-0.073	-1.169
		Pay at hotel	-0.072	-0.771
	Daily regularities	Early check in	0.222***	2.590
		Late check out	0.181**	2.101
		Breakfast included	0.354***	3.036
Self-efficacy	Solving inquiries	Chatbot	-0.041	-0.470
		Live response	-0.018	-0.158
Peer norm	Popularity	Just booked	0.018	0.323
	Urgency	80% fully booked	-0.112*	-1.868
Facilitating condition	Risk avoidance	Free cancellation	0.149***	2.465
		No-show allowed	0.242***	2.571
Cost	Process time	Duration	-0.058***	-3.521
LL(B)		-3056		
LL(0)		-3313		
ρ^2		0.078		

***:99% Confidence level; **:95% Confidence level; *:90% Confidence level

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and implications

Based on the empirical results, several interesting findings are further summarized below. First of all, this study integrates the concept of DTPB, choice experiment, and logit models to propose a conceptual framework and examine the effectiveness of purchase auxiliary information on OTAs. Based on the developed process, the extant practices can be evaluated for better execution, and prospective ones can be pre-evaluated before actual implementation. In this way, OTAs can be confident and focused when introducing new types of information on their platforms. Additionally, this study has identified information with positive, neutral, and negative impacts. As such, OTAs can understand which type of information should be enhanced, maintained, and modified correspondingly. Thirdly, the practice of no-show is not as prevalent in the accommodation industry as it is in the airline industry. While allowing no-shows can significantly increase choice probabilities, there is a need for a comprehensive mechanism to handle situations of denied stays. Fortunately, lessons from the airline industry can be appreciated and learned.

5.2. Conclusion

This study classifies the information based on the theory of DTPB to evaluate its effectiveness on OTAs, and aims to comprehensively understand the role of purchase auxiliary information. By doing so, we emphasize the importance of webpage design in encouraging users to book instantly while browsing. A stated-preference choice experiment is conducted to verify the significance of the eleven attributes applied. The MNL results in Table 2 reveal that almost all the applied attributes influence tourists' choice behaviors in the empirical study, except for self-efficacy. Thus, the proposed framework can be considered valid in explaining tourists' preferences for the presentation of information on OTAs.

The modeling results confirm that not all extant information adopted by OTAs is effective in encouraging users to book. The adoption of directory guidance, flexibility in stay plans, and the permission for cancellation are verified to have positive and significant impacts. Nevertheless, some frequently applied information, such as reward/certification titles, sanitation enhancement, and booking urgency, either have trivial effects or even result in opposite effects. As a result, it is essential for OTAs to consider reorganizing the information presented to users. Furthermore, some proposed prospective information features yield distinct outcomes. For instance, allowing no-show is demonstrated to potentially increase users' utilities. Conversely, the utilization of UGC photos and videos should be approached with caution due to the uncertainty of information quality. Based on these research findings, OTA operators can gain insights into the effectiveness of information on their platforms and, more importantly, continue revising the content to remain competitive in the market.

5.3. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

There are several limitations that pave the way for future research. First, this study treats tourists' behaviors as homogeneous; however, tourists may possess different attitudes and perceptions towards the examined attributes. Therefore, future studies may apply other advanced models that consider behavioral heterogeneity. Secondly, innovative auxiliary information can be further investigated within the structure of DTPB (or its variant) to gain insights into providing appealing information on OTAs. Thirdly, pricing is another vital factor influencing the use of OTAs, and price-based information on OTAs is diverse. Hence, future studies can develop a price-based experiment to examine the effectiveness of pricing information.

REFERENCES

Abou-Shouk, M. A., & Khalifa, G. S. (2017). The influence of website quality dimensions on e-purchasing behaviour and eloyalty: A comparative study of Egyptian travel agents and hotels. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 34*(5), 608-623.

Binesh, F., Belarmino, A., & Raab, C. (2021). A meta-analysis of hotel revenue management. *Journal of Revenue and Pricing Management, 20*, 546-558.

Busser, J. A., & Shulga, L. V. (2019). Involvement in consumer-generated advertising: Effects of organizational transparency and brand authenticity on loyalty and trust. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 31*(1), 1763-1784.

Chiou, W-C., Lin, C-C., & Perng, C. (2011). A strategic website evaluation of online travel agencies. *Tourism Management, 32*, 1463-1473.

Garay, L., Font, X., & Corrons, A. (2019). Sustainability-oriented innovation in tourism: An analysis based on the decomposed theory of planned behavior. *Journal of Travel Research, 58*(4), 622-636.

Ho, J-L., Chen, K-Y., Wang, L-H., Yeh, S-S., & Huan, T-C. (2022). Exploring the impact of social media platform image on hotel customers' visit intention. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 34*(11), 4206-4226.

Hu, H-F., & Krishen, A. S. (2019). When is enough, enough? Investigating product reviews and information overload from a consumer empowerment perspective. *Journal of Business Research, 100*, 27-37.

Huh, H. J., Kim, T., & Law, R. (2009). A comparison of competing theoretical models for understanding acceptance behavior of information systems in upscale hotels. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 28*, 121-134.

Islam, H., Jebarajakirthy, C., & Shankar, A. (2021). An experimental based investigation into the effects of website interactivity on customer behavior in on-line purchase context. *Journal of Strategic Marketing, 29*(2), 117-140.

Ivanov, S., Del Chiappa, G., & Heyes, A. (2021). The research-practice gap in hotel revenue management: Insights from Italy. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 95*, 102924.

Iyengar, S. S., & Lepper, M. R. (2000). When choice is demotivating: Can one desire too much of a good thing? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 79*(6), 995-1006.

Jang, Y., Miao, L. & Chen, C. C. (2023). Book now, pay later: the effects of delays in payments and temporal distance on consumers' perceptions and purchase intention. *Journal of Revenue and Pricing Management, 22*, 374-384.

Jeong, J. Y., & Crompton, J. L. (2018). Do subjects from high and low context cultures attribute different meanings to tourism services with 9-ending prices?. *Tourism Management, 64*, 110-118.

Jo, H., Chung, N., Hlee, S., & Koo, C. (2021). Perceived affordances and regret in online travel agencies. *Journal of Travel Research, 61*(5), 1024-1042.

Judge, C., Penry, G. S., Brown, M., & Witteveen, M. (2021). Clear waters: Assessing regulation transparency of website advertising in South Africa's boat-based whale-watching industry. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 29*(6), 964-980.

Khandeparkar, K., Maheshwari, B., & Motiani, M. (2020). Why should I pay more? Testing the impact of contextual cues on perception of price unfairness for the price-disadvantaged segment in dual pricing. *Tourism Management, 78*, 104075.

Kim, D. J., Kim, W. G., & Han, J. S. (2007). A perceptual mapping of online travel agencies and preference attributes. *Tourism Management, 28*, 591-603.

Kim, J., Franklin, D., Philips, M., & Hwang, E. (2020). Online travel agency price presentation: Examining the influence of price dispersion on travelers' hotel preference. *Journal of Travel Research, 59*(4), 704-721.

Kim, M., Lee, S. M., Choi, S., & Kim, S. Y. (2021). Impact of visual information on online consumer review behavior: Evidence from a hotel booking website. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 60*, 102494.

Kim, W. G., & Lee, H. Y. (2004). Comparison of web service quality between online travel agencies and online travel suppliers. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 17*(2-3), 105-116.

Kourtesopoulou, A., Theodorou, S-D., Kriemadis, A., & Papaioannou, A. (2018). The impact of online travel agencies web service quality on customer satisfaction and purchase intentions. In V. Katsoni & M. Segarra-Oña (Eds.), *Smart Tourism as a Driver for Culture and Sustainability* (pp. 343-356). Switzerland: Springer Cham.

Law, R., & Huang, T. (2006). How do travels find their travel and hotel websites. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research, 11*(3), 239-146.

Lee, K.-H., Lee, M., & Gunarathne, N. (2019). Do green awards and certifications matter? Consumers' perceptions, green behavioral intentions, and economic implications for the hotel industry: A Sri Lankan perspective. *Tourism Economics, 25*(4), 593-612.

Lee, M. (2020). Will this search end up with booking? Modeling airline booking conversion of anonymous visitors. *Journal of Tourism Analysis, 27*(2), 237-250.

Lee, M., Jeong, M., & Shea, L. J. (2021). Length of stay control: Is it a fair inventory management strategy in hotel market? *Tourism Economics, 27*(2), 307-327.

Lei, S.I., Shen, H., & Ye, S. (2021). A comparison between chatbot and human service: customer perception and reuse intention. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 33*(11), 3977-3995.

Lin, H-C., Liu, X., & Chen, H-Y. (2022). Determinants of continued use of tourism and hospitality e-commerce platforms and the role of information transparency. *Current Issues in Tourism, 26*(19), 3140-3159.

Manosuthi, N., Lee, J.-S., & Han, H. (2020). Predicting the revisit intention of volunteer tourists using the merged model between the theory of planned behavior and norm activation model. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 37*(4), 510-532.

Nguyen, V. T., Phong, L. T., & Chi, N. T. K. (2023). The impact of AI chatbots on customer trust: an empirical investigation in the hotel industry. *Consumer Behavior in Tourism and Hospitality, 18*(3), 293-305.

Olya, H. G. T., Bagheri, P., & Tümer, M. (2019). Decoding behavioural responses of green hotel guests: A deeper insight into the application of the theory of planned behavior. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 31*(6), 2509-2525.

Park, J., Kim, J., & Kim, S. (2022). Evolutionary Aspects of Scarcity Information with Regard to Travel Options: The Role of Childhood Socioeconomic Status. *Journal of Travel Research, 61*(1), 93-107.

Masiero, L., Viglia, G., & Nieto-Garcia, M. (2020). Strategic consumer behavior in online hotel booking. *Annals of Tourism research, 83*, 102947.

Park, Y. A., Gretzel, U., & Sirakaya-Turk, E. (2007). Measuring web site quality for online travel agencies. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 23*(1), 15-30.

Rianthong, N., Dumrongsiri, A., & Kohda, Y. (2016). Improving the multidimensional sequence of hotel rooms on an online travel agency web site. *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications, 17*, 74-86.

Suzuki, Y. (2006). The net benefit of airline overbooking. *Transport Research Part E, 42*(1), 1-19.

Thoreson, B. (2022). *The top 5 reasons why hotel guests look but don't book*, Sep, 2022. Retrieved on 17 March 2024 from https://www.hospitalitynet.org/opinion/4112409.html

Rohlfs, K. V., & Kimes, S. E. (2007). Customers' perceptions of best available hotel rates. *Cornell Quarterly, 48*(2), 151-162.

Sánchez, E. C., Sánchez-Medina, A. J., & Pellejero, M. (2020). Identifying critical hotel cancellations using artificial intelligence. *Tourism Management Perspectives, 35*, 100718.

Tanford, S., Baloglu, S., & Erdem, M. (2012). Travel packaging on the internet. *Journal of Travel Research, 51*(1), 68-80.

Taylor, S., & Todd, P. (1995). Decomposition and crossover effects in the theory of planned behavior: A study of consumer adoption intentions. *International Journal of Research in Marketing, 12*(2), 137-155.

Ulker-Demirel, E., & Ciftci, G. (2020). A systematic literature review of the theory of planned behavior in tourism, leisure and hospitality management research. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 43*, 209-219.

Teubner, T., & Graul, A. (2020). Only one room left! How scarcity cues affect booking intentions on hospitality platforms. *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications, 39*, 100910.

Wu, C. H-J., Liao, H-C., Hung, K-P., & Ho, Y-H. (2012). Service guarantees in the hotel industry: Their effects on consumer risk and service quality perceptions. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 31*(3), 757-763.

Sex tourism: Exploring the implication of transactional sex in the lived experiences, motivations and health-risks of transgender women

Masa, Jan Racky A.
Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management, Far Eastern University

Calderon, Ma. Rychelle Leia M.
Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management, Far Eastern University

Jumawan, Roxette V.
Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management, Far Eastern University

Abstract:

This study explores the underlying motivations, lived experiences and health risks faced by transgender women engaged in sex tourism. A qualitative study was conducted among 26 Transgender women who participated in individual, semi-structured interviews. The result of in-depth interviews was analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis representing Six themes encompassing the motivation to engage in transactional sex activities, health associated risk, experiences of discrimination and sexual abuse including the aspects of social acceptance and empowerment. Results revealed that transgender women engaging in transactional sex provided them with financial benefits that were instrumental in meeting their basic needs and improving their quality of life. Transgender women often face social exclusion and discrimination, leading to limited economic opportunities potentially leading their motivation in sex tourism. The study further revealed the propensity toward sex related health risks and the role social acceptance and empowerment in the experiences of transgender women. The implication of this study extends the academic discourse on a relatively under-explored subject by providing valuable insights that can inform policy formulation and the development of targeted intervention programs aimed at addressing the nuances of sex tourism among transgender women.

Keywords: sex tourism, transactional sex, transgender women, sex tourism motivation, discrimination

1. Introduction

Scholarly attention directed in understanding people's perceptions of and motivations for sexual risk-taking in tourism has been increasing. Sex tourism involves individuals travelling to foreign countries, particularly in Southeast Asia, to engage in sexual activities or relationships. This phenomenon raises significant concerns due to its involvement in exploitative and non-consensual activities, such as prostitution, trafficking, and the objectification of individuals' bodies. It is worth mentioning that sex tourism covers a wide range of forms and motivations, extending beyond just heterosexual encounters. Lately, there has been a growing curiosity in examining the connection between sex tourism and LGBTQI+ communities in Southeast Asian countries. Several research studies have been conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the connection between sex tourism and

LGBTQI+ communities in Southeast Asian countries. The study revealed a significant overrepresentation of LGBTQI+ individuals, specifically transgender women and gay men, in the sex tourism industry when compared to their heterosexual counterparts (Prior & Crofts, 2015). Although the majority of research on sex tourism focuses on the commercial sex worker industry, it is important to acknowledge that sex tourism can also involve non-transactional sexual encounters. The practice of sex tourism, often associated with prostitution, has long been stigmatized due to its link to sex trafficking (Hansen & Johansson, 2023). The persistence of the phenomena, despite its problematic nature and the legal and ethical concerns it raises, can be attributed to the significant economic benefits (Srsic et al., 2021).

Although the majority of research on sex tourism focuses on the commercial sex worker industry, which is still illegal in many places, there are also instances of non-transactional sexual encounters that occur within this context. These encounters often involve tourists from economically developed countries seeking sexual experiences in developing host destinations. In certain instances, individuals who travel may participate in sex tourism as a means of exploring and expressing their sexual identity in a more liberated manner than what is permitted in their home countries, which may have more conservative norms. The Internet has fundamentally transformed interpersonal connections in the digital era, encompassing the establishment and sustenance of both casual and romantic or sexual relationships. The technical progress mentioned has shown to be especially advantageous for marginalized or hidden communities, since it offers a medium for connectivity and self-expression that may be inaccessible within their immediate surroundings (Amichai-Hamburger, 2012). An example of this may be seen in the LGBTQIA+ community, particularly among men who participate in same-sex relationships, who have utilized the Internet for various objectives, including viewing adult content and seeking potential partners (Smith & Jones, 2020).

Research suggests that transgender women involved in the sex tourism industry experience a combination of socio-economic challenges, worsened by legal and societal exclusion, that can have a negative effect on their well-being. Thailand, a country with a reputation for being relatively accepting of the LGBT community, unfortunately still faces challenges due to conservative societal views. These views can result in discrimination and limited job prospects for LGBT individuals. As a result, individuals from these communities often end up working in the sex industry, which operates outside of formal regulations and lacks legal protections and social security. The tourism industry in Thailand, although not officially recognized, plays a major role in the country's economy by drawing a large number of international visitors (Yasami et al., 2023).

Transgender women in several Asian countries encounter significant challenges such as discrimination, social stigma, and limited job prospects. Consequently, they often find themselves compelled to turn to the sex tourism industry as a means of supporting themselves financially (Smith, 2018; Lee & Nguyen, 2019). In the Philippines, there is a perspective that regards sexual service providers and prostitutes as individuals affected by social inequality and societal change. As a result, efforts have been made to provide assistance and support to them instead of resorting to detention (Aguilar, 2019). Many transgender women are drawn to sex tourism due to financial constraints and the desire for acceptance in societies that often exclude them (Chacko et al., 2016).

The dual aspect of sex tourism provides a crucial perspective for understanding their motivations. However, there are other significant aspects that have not been explored in the literate when it comes to the experiences of transgender individuals, such as practices related to sex tourism. There is a lack of knowledge within the field of sex tourism regarding the motivations and experiences of transgender individuals engaged in transactional sex. The study aimed to document their motivations and experiential narratives associated with sex tourism among transgender women. This investigation endeavors to shed light on how sex tourism impacts their personal narratives, motivational drivers, and the associated health implications among transgender community.

2. Literature Review

Distinction of Transactional Sex and Sex worker

Central to understanding the complex nature of Sex tourism is the contextual distinction of prostitution, sex work and transactional sex typology. The characterization of prostitution as "the oldest profession" is widespread, yet the term carries significant legal and moral implications, overshadowing the perspectives of business and proficiency (Doe, 2020). Initially, the term 'prostitution' was employed in HIV research, policymaking, and prevention strategies, signifying the exchange of sexual services for compensation. It is also the terminology adopted within the legal frameworks of jurisdictions were engaging in such activities is considered a criminal act (Smith & Jones, 2021). Despite its widespread use, the exact definition of prostitution remains elusive, lacking a globally accepted delineation of the activities that precisely fall under this category (Brown, 2019).

The concept of sex work encompasses a broad spectrum of activities that extend beyond the traditional understanding of prostitution, which is typically characterized by direct physical exchanges. This broader category includes professions such as exotic dancing, adult entertainment, and other roles within the sex industry that may not involve direct physical contact (Agustín, 2005). Consequently, the term "prostitution" is often specifically applied to denote a narrower subset of sex work. The adoption of the term "sex work" marks a significant shift in perspective from a moralistic view to recognizing these activities as legitimate forms of labor. This reconceptualization not only challenges the stigmatization associated with these professions but also paves the way for advocating for labor rights and protections for those involved in this sector. Importantly, the discourse surrounding occupational hazards within the realm of sex work tends to shift away from attributing risk to individual behaviors or choices. Instead, it emphasizes the structural and systemic factors that influence working conditions and safety, advocating for interventions at the environmental and institutional levels to promote safer work environments (Agustín, 2005).

Transactional sex is often depicted as an informal, non-professional form of sexual activity that contrasts sharply with the more structured and stigmatized nature of professional sex work. This form of sexual engagement is typically seen as an ad hoc or temporary measure to meet immediate financial or material needs and is commonly referred to as transactional sex (McMillan et al., 2018). Notably, individuals engaged in the formal sex industry, both within the United States (Dewey, 2011) and China have been observed to transition between sex work and non-commercial sexual activities, further blurring the lines between these two realms. Additionally, transactional sex often intersects with the pursuit of more enduring romantic relationships, setting it apart from conventional sex work. This distinction, however, becomes less clear when considering the fluid dynamics between sex workers and their clients, who may sometimes form intimate bonds (Dewey, 2011; Zheng, 2009). Furthermore, other forms of compensated sexual interactions, particularly those involving casual relationships with multiple partners, diverge from traditional sex work in that the financial contributors are perceived more as 'boyfriends' rather than 'clients,' embedding these exchanges within a wider network of social and emotional obligations (Jewkes et al., 2012).

Transactional sex of Transgender women in sex tourism

Transactional sex is understood as a negotiated exchange wherein sex is provided in return for monetary compensation or material benefits. This form of engagement is particularly prevalent among marginalized communities, including transgender women, who frequently face systemic barriers to traditional employment avenues due to pervasive discrimination and stigma (Jones et al., 2022). Transactional sex is often rooted in a pragmatic assessment of available economic opportunities, coupled with the pressing need to secure a livelihood in the face of systemic exclusion (White, 2021). Traveling abroad and engaging exotic sex may represent tourists' status, and this distinction may be used by tourists to make an impression on their closest social circles wherein family is not included (Ying & Wen, 2019). According to Khan et al. (2018), People who have strong travel motives such as the desire to learn about a new culture, explore new areas, seek information, unwind and relax, go on an adventure, or just for fun and amusement, are more likely to visit the destination. Reproductive, relationship-affirming (relational), and recreational sex are the three varieties of sex that exist. All three have been practiced by humans throughout history, but conservative social and religious groups view recreational sex as wicked, unethical, and addicting. But even most people who think it's wrongdoing, immoral, and addicting have indulged in recreational sex (Drevitch, 2020). In contrast to most other types of travel, when spending time with family is an important tourism goal, researchers claim that in the context of sex tourism, the absence of various significant others enhances the self-indulgence desired by some tourists. Only socialization with friends, in my opinion, is a good interpersonal motivation for sex tourists.

3. Methodology

The study employed a phenomenological methodology to explore the subjective experiences, motivations, and potential health risks faced by transgender women engaged in transactional sex. In pursuit of this goal, our analysis employed a reflexive thematic methodology, as delineated by Braun and Clarke (2019). This qualitative approach allowed for the emergent themes to be organically shaped by the data itself. Reflexive thematic analysis serves as a framework for discerning, examining, and conveying recurrent motifs or themes, particularly within the context of transgender women's experiences in this study (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Through a meticulous examination of interview responses, we sought to uncover commonalities and patterns, thereby revealing both discrete and overarching thematic elements. These pivotal themes were meticulously cataloged and subsequently detailed in our findings.

Participant Selection

The study employed a purposive sampling strategy to enlist the participation of transgender women. This method involved obtaining informed consent from the participants and briefing them on the study's guidelines, as well as their rights to discontinue participation at any time. Eligibility for inclusion in the study was restricted to transgender women aged 18 and above, who had experience traveling to multiple countries for the purpose of engaging in transactional sex.

Data Collection and Analysis

Semi structure interview were conducted to explore the experiences of Filipino transgender women involved in transactional sex. These interviews were carried out between November 2023 and February 2024, under the direction of the principal researcher, with the aid of a research assistant. Conducted online, these discussions were subsequently transcribed for analysis. The interview framework was structured around an eleven-item guide, which was designed to facilitate in-depth exploration through carefully crafted follow-up inquiries. The duration of these interviews varied, lasting between 50 and 73 minutes, with the average interview taking approximately 53 minutes to complete.

4. Results

Socio Demographics and Sexual Health Practices

The data, as summarized in Table 1, provides a foundational understanding of the age demographics, educational attainment, sexual health practices, and substance use among this population, particularly within the context of sex tourism in South Asia and beyond.

The mean age of participants, positioned at 29.5 years, indicates a young demographic engaging in transactional sex. This statistic not only contextualizes the age bracket within which these individuals operate but also underscores the potential vulnerabilities associated with their age and occupation (Dewey & Zheng, 2013). Educational levels among these transgender women vary significantly, with a notable proportion (46.15%) having completed high school, followed by 34.61% who have attained a bachelor's degree. This diversity in educational backgrounds suggests a range of socio-economic circumstances among the individuals. Interestingly, a small fraction is either in the process of pursuing higher education (7.69%) or have discontinued their college education (11.53%), pointing towards the complex interplay between socio-economic factors and the pursuit of education within this community.

A concerning finding from the study is the reported 42.31% propensity among these transgender women to engage in unprotected sex during their transactions. This behavior significantly heightens the risk of transmitting sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, underscoring the urgent need for targeted interventions to promote safer sex practices within this population (Baral et al., 2012). Given PrEP's proven efficacy in preventing HIV transmission, this low utilization rate signals a critical gap in HIV prevention strategies among transgender women engaged in transactional sex (Grant et al., 2010). Regular monitoring of HIV status is reported by 42.31% of the participants, indicating a proactive approach to health management by a substantial segment of this population. However, this also suggests that a significant proportion remains unengaged with regular health checks, potentially due to barriers such as stigma, discrimination, or lack of access to healthcare services (Poteat et al., 2015).

Substance use during sexual encounters, reported by 30.77% of the participants, further compounds the health risks faced by these individuals, including increased susceptibility to STIs and impaired judgment leading to risky sexual behaviors (Santos et al., 2014). The study also highlights the prevalent use of hormone replacement therapy and dietary supplements among transgender women, pointing towards a conscious effort to maintain health and wellbeing despite the challenges posed by their social and professional environments (Sevelius, 2013). Finally, the global mobility associated with sex tourism, as evidenced by all participants engaging in travel for such purposes, underscores the transnational dimensions of the transactional sex industry and the complex interplay between socio-economic factors and health risks within this context (Davidson, 2001).

Table 1. Profile of transgender women in sex tourism

Code No.	Age	Education	Use of Condoms	Use of PREP	Regularly testing of HIV Status	Use of Drugs	Food Supplement and Beauty Regimen	Travelling to South East Asia	Travelling to Other Countries
T1	29	Highschool Graduate	Yes	No	Yes	No	HRT, Glutathione	Yes	Yes
T2	26	Highschool Graduate	Yes	No	No	No	Collagen, Vitamin C,E, Glutathione	Yes	Yes
T3	31	Bachelor's Degree	Yes	No	No	Yes	Collagen	Yes	Yes
T4	37	Bachelor's Degree	Yes / Sometimes Not	No	No	No	Vitamin C, E, Collagen, Glutathione	Yes	Yes
T5	30	Bachelor's Degree	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Vitamin C, E	Yes	Yes
T6	29	Bachelor's Degree	Yes	No	Yes	No	HRT, Glutathione, Vitamin A, C and E	Yes	Yes
T7	37	Bachelor's Degree	Yes / Sometimes Not	No	No	No	HRT, Glutathione	Yes	Yes
T8	31	Bachelor's Degree	Yes	No	No	No		Yes	Yes
T9	33	Highschool Graduate	Yes	Yes	No	No	Vitamin C,B,D,E Omega 3	Yes	Yes
T10	31	College Undergrad	Yes	No	No	Yes	Collagen Vitamin E	Yes	Yes
T11	25	Highschool Graduate	Yes	No	Yes	No	HRT, Multivitamins, Glutathione	Yes	No
T12	25	Highschool Graduate	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Glutathione	Yes	No

T13	28	Highschool Graduate	Yes	No	No	No	Multivitamins, Collagen	Yes	Yes
T14	30	College Undergrad	Yes / Sometimes Not	No	Yes	Yes	Vitamin E	Yes	Yes
T15	34	Highschool Graduate	Yes / Sometimes Not	Yes	No	No	Glutathione, Multivitamins	Yes	Yes
T16	24	Highschool Graduate		No	Yes	No	Vitamin C, Multivitamins	Yes	No
T17	27	Highschool Graduate	Yes / Sometimes Not	No	Yes	Yes	Vitamin C, E Collagen	Yes	Yes
T18	30	Bachelor's Degree	Yes / Sometimes Not	Yes	No	No	HRT, Collagen, Glutathione, Vitamin C	Yes	Yes
T19	23	College Undergrad	Yes	No	No	Yes	Glutathione, Vitamin E,C, B	Yes	Yes
T20	22	College level	Yes / Sometimes Not	No	No	No	Vitamin C,B,D,E Glutathione	Yes	No
T21	29	Highschool Graduate	Yes / Sometimes Not	No	Yes	Yes	Collagen, HRT Vitamin E	Yes	Yes
T22	30	Highschool Graduate	Yes / Sometimes Not	Yes	Yes	No	Glutathione, Vitamin C	Yes	Yes
T23	29	Bachelor's Degree	Yes	No	No	No	HRT, Vitamin E, C, Collagen	Yes	Yes
T24	20	College level	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	HRT, Glutathione, Vitamin C	Yes	Yes
T25	41	Bachelor's Degree	Yes / Sometimes Not	No	No	Yes	HRT, Vitamin E, Collagen Glutathione	Yes	Yes
T26	36	Highschool Graduate	Yes / Sometimes Not	No	No	Yes	HRT, Collagen, Glutathione, Vitamin C, E	Yes	Yes

Transgender Women Motivation For Sex Tourism

Table 2. provides the underlying motivations of transgender women engaged in transactional sex, the study revealed that transgender women derives financial benefits from engaging in

transactional sex, family motivation, personal needs and romantic relationship and job disparity. Moreover, there is a growing recognition of this phenomenon in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, as evidenced by the following quotation:
"That's the economic thing, when the pandemic really happened, we really suffered, maybe others didn't. The underprivileged or unprivileged people will suffer and suffer. Since my father is a jeepney driver, he didn't have a job before, and then there was no income at that time. It's a good thing that I am engaged in this kind of job, so that all the needs, also the wants, can be really supported." (T18 interview answer)

"It started when I was heartbroken and a friend introduced me to this work. At first, I told my friend that I was not for that job because that job required me to be physically beautiful and I wasn't physically attractive; my friends told me I was witty, quick thinking, and could speak English." (T23 interview answer)

"I started in this profession when I was studying and I feel like there is nothing work for us and I want to do something that's why I entered in this line of work." (T6 interview answer)

"At first, I really didn't know where I would end up when I started, but when I was making money and I was able to help my family, I fell in love in this profession." (T12 interview answer)

"When I was young, I felt that this is the profession where I can easily get a job - the type of job that won't ask me if I graduate from college." (T13 interview answer)

"The gays in the flower shop which was my former job and my current manager encouraged me to pursue the profession since the income is big." (T9 interview answer)

Table 2. Motivation for sex tourism

Themes	Concepts	Interview	Code No.
Motivation in Sex Tourism	Financial benefits	"Money. Money that's the motivation.	T22 T17
		"My motivation in this work is earning money and to grow myself"	T6
		"Uhm, I think, its money"	T13
		"To earn Money to finance my family needs"	T19
		To have money and to help my family"	T4
	Family matters	"My motivation is my family to help them have a good life and my dream is to have my own business."	T1 T8
		"My motivation was to help my family, its definitely my dream ti have m own business, because this is not my job for life"	T25
		"To help my family in order for them to experience good things"	T23 T5

	Personal Needs and Romantic relationship	"It's also fun as for my part, because of course we gays, we always have the excitement of seeing a man who is good, especially when he's hot and stuff like that."	T2
		"To meet prince charming and handsome guys while also saving money for my personal needs"	T16
		"Hormonal Replacement Therapy costs a lot of money, so it is very expensive and only privileged transgenders can afford it. In order for me to afford that, I need to think of a way to afford that kind of lifestyle."	T19
	Job Disparity	"I only graduated from high school and it's hard to find a legal job at the age of 17, and with that educational attainment."	T26
		"I want to earn money to save. I tried to apply for normal work but I am always rejected"	T10
		"Normal work pay less than engaging in this work"	T7

The dynamics of romantic relationships can sometimes create a blurry distinction between transactional sex and consensual romantic engagements (T2,T9 and T16). In certain cases, there are situations where the dynamics of a relationship may involve the exchange of material goods, where one partner offers financial assistance in exchange for affection or intimacy. The complex nature of these relationships, which involve both romantic and economic aspects, challenges the notion of categorizing them solely as transactional sex (Hunter, 2002).
In addition, the scarcity of formal employment opportunities, coupled with the unstable nature of available jobs, often leads individuals to seek alternative means of livelihood (T4,T7,T10 and T26. Transactional sex is perceived as a viable option due to its immediate financial rewards.

Discrimination and sexual abuse among transgender women in Sex Tourism

According to the interviews presented in Table 4, transgender women frequently encounter instances of prejudice and sexual mistreatment within the context of their employment in the sex tourism industry. Transgender women involved in sex tourism frequently face a dual layer of stigma that amplifies their vulnerability to discrimination and abuse. This is primarily due to societal attitudes towards both their gender identity and their association with the sex industry (Bockting, 2010). In the context of sex tourism, transgender women's identities intersect with societal stigmas surrounding sex work, further marginalizing this group and increasing their exposure to harm (Crenshaw, 1991). The cited interview provides additional insight into the real-life encounters of transgender women involved in the sex tourism industry.

Table 4. Discrimination experience of Transgender women in sex tourism

Themes	Concepts	Interview	Code No.
Discrimination and Sexual Abuse	Social Discrimination	"You would be dealing with stubborn clients, the nasty things about your race, about your identity, they would be mean and tell me just a I am only after for money and they would say nasty things."	T8
		"I have experienced verbal and emotional	T2,T3,T9

	discrimination.”	
	“Growing up as a member of the LGBTQ+ community as a child I was uhm prone to bullying my classmates often teasing me because my act is feminine and I think it is not fit to their masculine standards. Usually if you are a boy there are hobbies and behavior that will serve as a masculine type of guy, but I am not like them because my act is based on who truly I am which is on the feminine side. Aside from that, I also experienced being bullied for being fat and having dark skin.”	T22
	“The people around me discriminated me and told me scornful words.”	T14
	“I was told that I am just only a camgirl and I was never free of the fear since my job is not legal here in the Philippines.”	T7,T10
	“I had experience being belittled by other people due to the nature of my work.”	
	“Due to the nature of my work, people tell me demeaning words, they feel sorry for me and think that I am just wasting my time and opportunity especially that I have a bachelor’s degree.”	T15
	“I am one of the few fortunate enough that hasn’t been experience the violence and hopefully won't happen and hopefully won't experience.”	T16
	“None so far.”	T17
	“I did not experience any abuse.”	T19
	“None so far. I would try to communicate with them well, if for example I'm not in the mood, well I say it to them in a nice way. I will talk properly.”	T21
Sexual Abuse	“When it comes to violence or abuse, I haven't encountered one yet but uhm usually a lot of guys will send you unsolicited dick pics like that and then uhm a lot of them will invade your privacy as well.”	T24
	“Sometimes I don't like what customers suggest, but I don't do that, I don't entertain people like that who make me do other obscene things.”	T18
	“In some cases, I allow them because it’s part of the deal.”	T25
	“I don’t know if it is violence, since we are role playing”	T26

Social Acceptance of Sex Tourism Engagement

The social support received by transgender women involved in sex tourism, including their family and friends, exhibited a varied response in terms of awareness and acceptance. This can be attributed primarily to the transgender women's perception of potential rejection and judgement from their social support regarding their engagement in sex tourism. The concern for potential judgment and rejection by transgender women is indicative of broader societal attitudes towards both transgender identity and sex work. This duality of stigma can exacerbate feelings of isolation and may hinder open communication and support within their social networks.

The quoted interview response is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Social acceptance of sex tourism engagement of transgender women.

Themes	Concepts	Interview	Code No.
Social Acceptance	Awareness of Family and Friends about the profession	"My family doesn't know about my work"	T2
		"My family, except my parents, knows that I work in the sex industry."	T16
		"My family knows but we don't talk about it. I do not also tell my friends about my work unless we are employed in the same industry."	T22
		"My family and friends knows about my job."	T11
		"I'm afraid to let them know because of rejection and judgement"	T23
		"I hide this to my friends and classmates to avoid judgement"	T24
		"I cannot tell my parents about the nature of my work because I know they will not accept it and they will look down on me."	T12
	Acceptance of Family and Friends about the profession	"My family are not shocked anymore, since I have a relative that is currently in the industry also. My close friends support my job. However, with my acquaintances that are conservative, I'm kinda hideous."	T26
		"My family is supportive in my job since I can help them through this. Some of my friends do not support the job but they cannot do anything about it; however, some approve of my job just like my parents."	T15
		"My family knows about it and accepted it"	T4,T5,T7, T9,T20
		"My family and friends know about it - I surrounded myself with good people"	T8

Empowerment of transgender women

Reason for continuing the profession

The interview revealed that transgender women continue to engage in the profession because of the economic benefits, future entrepreneurial plans and familial support. According to the interviewees, the major reason for continuing the profession are quoted:

"For a living, to have enough savings, and to build a business in the future." (T3 interview answer)

"I still want to continue this profession because I have a younger sibling that I want to help finish school so I will continue to do this until I fulfill my dream for my siblings." (T18 interview answer)

"To have my own parlor or to be a make-up artist." (T11 interview answer)

"To send my nieces and nephew to school and also myself." (T8 interview answer)
"One of the things that made me continue in this field is to save, and to save for my mother's medication in the US." (T6 interview answer)
"This is the only work I know for now, I take this opportunity for me to find my future partner and settle down in other country like some of my transgender friends who work in this profession before" (T9 interview answer)

Benefits in the profession: Travel and personal gains

In terms of the benefits derived in continuing the profession, The interviewee underscored the value of travel and economic advantages as pivotal reasons for persisting in their profession. As stated in the quoted response of the interviewee:

"One of the benefits in this profession is you get to travel. You get to visit countries that someone is paying for you. The gift, it's all about monetary value and material stuff" (T10 interview answer)

"Since my profession is like this traveling in other countries helps me to earn more money because of the foreign clients. It gives me more money which helps me to provide for the needs of my family and also the needs of myself." (T18 interview answer)

"There is easy money in this profession" (T20 interview answer)

"Well, I can buy any food that I want. I can go to places that I want. Usually, wants are what I really enjoy in this profession, because now I can spend money without thinking if there would be enough for me after. " (T26 interview answer)

"The money. I also benefit in a way that this studio that I am currently staying at is free including the water and electricity. " (T14 interview answer)

"The shopping and the experiences accompanying the client to different places - the accommodation is free." (T21 interview answer)

"Apart from the benefits at work, apart from getting rid of the itch, of course I get gifts, I get money, travel places and the happiness." (T13 interview answer)

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and implications

The study presented insights of the lived experiences of transgender women involved in sex tourism. According to the study, transgender women reported that engaging in transactional sex provided them with financial benefits that were instrumental in meeting their basic needs and improving their quality of life. viewed it as a means to secure financial stability and economic independence. This can be understood within the context of the socio-economic challenges faced by transgender women, such as discrimination, limited access to employment opportunities, and lack of social support networks.

The economic imperative, as highlighted in the study, is not merely a matter of survival but also intersects with broader issues of societal marginalization, limited employment opportunities, and the often precarious socio-economic positioning of transgender individuals

(Smith & Doe, 2023). Additionally, the satisfaction of individual desires also has a notable impact on participation in transactional sex. It goes beyond just getting by financially to encompass the desire for extravagant possessions, entry into exclusive social circles, or the achievement of a particular way of life that may be out of reach through traditional methods (Wamoyi et al., 2016). These motivations underscore the intricate nature of human wants and the extent to which people will go to fulfil them.

The literature provides numerous accounts that underscore the adverse effects of discrimination and sexual abuse on the mental and physical health of transgender women in sex tourism. Studies have shown a high prevalence of mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder, among transgender individuals in the sex industry (Nutbrock et al., 2009). The constant exposure to violence and discrimination exacerbates these health issues, often leading to a cycle of vulnerability where transgender women are further marginalized. Sexual abuse is a grim reality for many transgender women in the sex tourism industry. This abuse can range from coercive practices by clients and employers to physical violence and rape. The power dynamics inherent in the sex tourism industry, coupled with the dehumanization of sex workers, create an environment where sexual violence is both prevalent and normalized. The specific vulnerabilities of transgender women, such as societal marginalization and lack of legal protection, make them an easy target for such abuse.

It was also noted that disparities in employment opportunities significantly contribute to the prevalence of transactional sex. The gendered nature of job markets, where women often face higher barriers to entry and lower wages, can lead to an increased reliance on transactional sex as a means of economic empowerment (Stoebenau et al., 2016). Such disparities highlight the broader structural inequalities that perpetuate the practice of transactional sex.This insight aligns with existing literature that highlights the economic motivations behind occupational choices among marginalized groups. The need for financial stability and the pursuit of entrepreneurial ambitions are common threads that run through the narratives of many transgender individuals, reflecting a broader trend observed within this community. Additionally, the role of social support networks in the lives of transgender women engaged in sex tourism is critical, not only for their emotional well-being but also for their physical safety and socioeconomic stability.

The mixed approaches in acceptance and support from these networks can significantly impact the mental health and overall quality of life of transgender women in this industry. It is, therefore, essential to foster a deeper understanding and empathy within these networks, encouraging a more inclusive and supportive environment. Consequently, engagement to sex tourism among transgender women is often driven by a desire for recognition and validation of their gender identity in spaces that acknowledge and affirm their existence. The interpersonal dynamics within these transactional encounters can, at times, provide a sense of acceptance and recognition that is often lacking in other aspects of life. Moreover, participants uncovered the realities of transgender women in the domain of transactional sex, highlighting the intersection of economic necessity, quest for societal acceptance, and the overarching impact of systemic inequalities influence their motivation to engage in sex tourism. Although others society perceived negative impression in sex tourism, participants revealed that they are empowered to fulfill responsibilities in the family through the benefits derived in their line of work.

Conceptual Model of Sex Tourism Motivation of Transgender Women

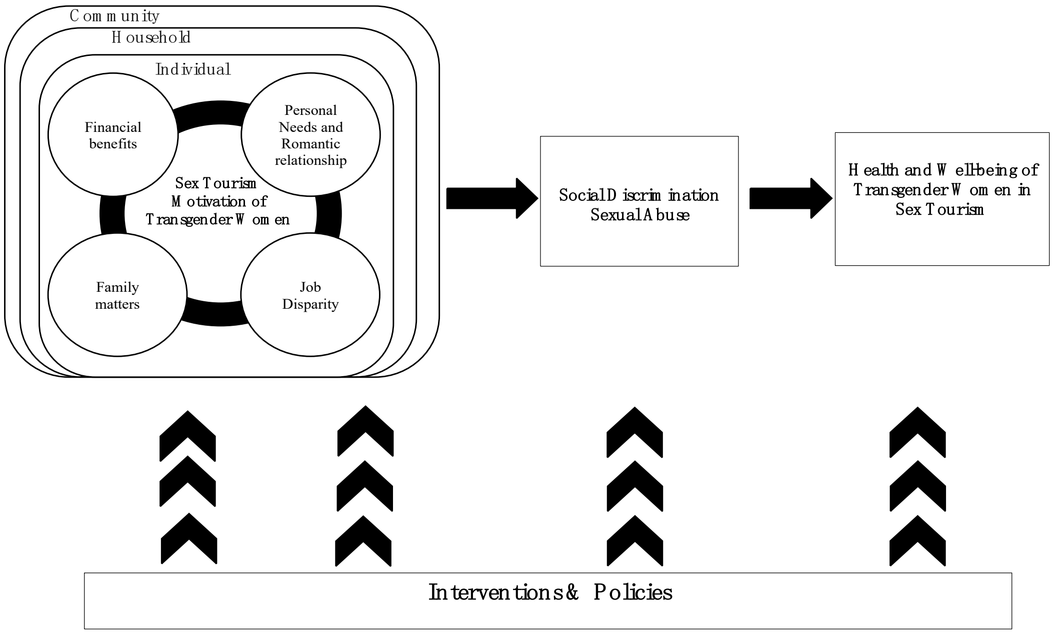


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Sex Tourism Motivation of Transgender Women

The conceptual model of sex tourism motivation for transgender women encapsulates various factors that operate on multiple levels: individual, household, and community. Each level comprises interconnected elements that influence transgender women's involvement in sex tourism which spans to financial benefits, family matters, personal needs and romantic relationship and job disparity experiences. All these factors contribute to social discrimination and sexual abuse, which are deeply intertwined with concerns about health risks and overall well-being. Thus, Interventions and policies are suggested to promote the safety and well-being of transgender women involved in sex tourism.

5.2. Conclusion

The economic allure of sex tourism often draws transgender women into its purview primarily due to limited employment opportunities prevail for them. The promise of financial gain in sex tourism is juxtaposed against the backdrop of systemic exclusion from formal employment sectors, driving many transgender women to partake in this industry. However, this economic dependency is fraught with risks, including exploitation, health hazards, and the perpetuation of societal stigma. Legal frameworks is necessary in shaping the lived experiences of transgender women in sex tourism. In jurisdictions where sex work is criminalized or stigmatized, transgender women are often disproportionately targeted by law enforcement, exacerbating their vulnerability to abuse and exploitation. Conversely, regions that have adopted more progressive approaches, recognizing sex work within a legal and regulatory framework, offer avenues for better protection and support for transgender sex workers, thereby potentially improving their quality of life.

Societal attitudes towards transgender individuals and sex workers also significantly impact their well-being. Stigmatization and discrimination can lead to social isolation, mental health challenges, and barriers to accessing essential services, including healthcare, legal aid, and social support systems. The intersectionality of transgender identity and engagement in sex tourism thus places transgender women in vulnerabilities, necessitating comprehensive policy interventions and societal shifts towards inclusivity and respect for human rights.

5.3. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

Limitation of the study

The narratives and themes extracted from the participants provide a profound, yet localized understanding, which may not necessarily be extrapolated to wider populations with precision. Additionally, the sensitive and stigmatized context of the study may have influenced participants' willingness to share, potentially leading to self-censorship or the omission of critical perspectives such as the extent of potential risk for abuse and health associated activity of transgender women engaging in sex tourism.

Recommendation for future research

In light of these limitations, we propose several avenues for future research. Expanding the scope of investigation to include a larger and more diverse cohort of transgender women could enhance the representativeness of the findings. Employing a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative measures with qualitative insights, would offer a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena.

Based on the findings of this research, it is possible to recommend the following for the development of theory and practice. Future research should also focus on exploring the intersectionality of identities and how various factors such as race, socioeconomic status, and geographical location intersect with gender identity to shape the experiences of transgender women in sex tourism. Research is needed to focus specifically on policy formulation to improve the quality of life of transgender women engaging in sex tourism.

REFERENCES

Aguilar, M. G. W. (2019, October 24). Sex Tourism in the Philippines: A Basis for Planning and Policy Making and Amendments. *Longdom.* *https://www.longdom.org/open-access/sex-tourism-in-the-philippines-a-basis-for-planning-and-policy-making-and-amendments-44895.html#9*

Agustín, L. M. (2005). Migrants in the Mistress's House: Other Voices in the "Trafficking" Debate. Social Politics: *International Studies in Gender, State & Society, 12(1), 96-117.*

Amichai-Hamburger, Y. (2012). Personality, individual differences and internet use. *Oxford Handbooks Online.* https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199561803.013.0013

Baral, S., Beyrer, C., Muessig, K., Poteat, T., Wirtz, A. L., Decker, M. R., Sherman, S. G., & Kerrigan, D. (2012). Burden of HIV among female sex workers in low-income and middle-income countries: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *The Lancet Infectious Diseases, 12(7), 538-549.* https://doi.org/10.1016/s1473-3099(12)70066-x

Bockting, W. (2010). Stigma, mental health, and resilience among the U.S. transgender population. *PsycEXTRA Dataset.* https://doi.org/10.1037/e609762010-001

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health, 11(4), 589-597.* *https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676x.2019.1628806*

Brown, A. (2019). The complexities of defining prostitution in legal and social contexts. Journal of Social Norms and Legal Paradigms, 8(2), 45-59.

Chacko, S., Panchanadeswaran, S., & Vijayakumar, G. (2016). Sex work as livelihood: Women, men and transgender sex workers in Karnataka. *Land, Labour and Livelihoods, 133-153.* https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-40865-1_7

Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. Stanford Law Review, 43(6), 1241-1299.

Davidson, J. O. C. (2001). The sex tourist, the expatriate, his ex-wife and her “other”: The politics of loss, difference and desire. *Sexualities, 4(1), 5-24.*

Dewey, S. (2011). Neon wasteland: On love, motherhood, and sex work in a rust belt town. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Doe, J. (2020). Historical perspectives on the profession of prostitution. Global Historical Review, 15(3), 77-93.

Drevitch, G. (2020, January 30). The Three Types of Sex: How Many Do You Engage In? Psychology Today.

Fox, Joshua A. (2021) "International Law After Dark: How Legalized Sex Work Can Comport with International and Human Rights Law," *Chicago Journal of International Law, 22(1),16.* https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/cjil/vol22/iss1/16

Grant, R. M., Lama, J. R., Anderson, P. L., McMahan, V., Liu, A. Y., Vargas, L., Goicochea, P., Casapía, M., Guanira-Carranza, J. V., Ramirez-Cardich, M. E., Montoya-Herrera, O., Fernández, T., Veloso, V. G., Buchbinder, S. P., Chariyalertsak, S., Schechter, M., Bekker, L. G., Mayer, K. H., Kallás, E. G., & Amico, K. R. (2010). Preexposure chemoprophylaxis for

HIV prevention in men who have sex with men. *New England Journal of Medicine, 363(27), 2587-2599.*

Hansen, M. A., & Johansson, I. (2022). Asking about “Prostitution”, “Sex work” and “Transactional sex”: Question wording and attitudes toward trading sexual services. *The Journal of Sex Research, 60(1), 153-164.* https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2022.2130859

Hunter, M. (2020). The materiality of everyday sex:. Readings in Sexualities from Africa, 191-205. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvx8b7xw.22

Jewkes, R., Morrell, R., Sikweyiya, Y., Dunkle, K., & Penn-Kekana, L. (2012). Men, prostitution and the provider role: Understanding the intersections of economic exchange, sex, crime and violence in South Africa. *PLoS ONE, 7, e40821. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone. 0040821*.

Khan, M. M., Chelliah, S., & Ahmed, S. (2019). Intention to visit India among potential travellers: Role of travel motivation, perceived travel risks and travel constraints. *Tourism and Hospitality Research, 19(3), 351–367.* https://doi.org/10.1177/1467358417751025

Lee, J., & Nguyen, T. (2019). Between survival and resistance: Understanding transgender women's engagement with sex tourism in Thailand. *Gender, Work & Organization, 26(4), 455-472.*

McMillan, K., Worth, H., & Rawstorne, P. (2018). Usage of the terms prostitution, sex work, transactional sex, and survival sex: Their utility in HIV prevention research. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 47(5), 1517-1527.* https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-017-1140-0

Nuttbrock, L., Hwahng, S., Bockting, W., Rosenblum, A., Mason, M., Macri, M., & Becker, J. (2010). Psychiatric impact of gender-related abuse across the life course of male-to-Female transgender persons. Journal of Sex Research, 47(1), 12-23. https://doi.org/10.1080/00224490903062258

Poteat, T., Wirtz, A. L., Radix, A., Borquez, A., Silva-Santisteban, A., Deutsch, M. B., Khan, S. I., Winter, S., & Operario, D. (2015). HIV risk and preventive interventions in transgender women sex workers. *Lancet (London, England), 385(9964), 274–286. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(14)60833-3*

Prior, J. H., & Crofts, P. (2015). Lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans-sexual: Commercial sex. *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences, 883-887. https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-08-097086-8.10213-2*

Sevelius, J. M., Keatley, J., & Gutierrez-Mock, L. (2011). HIV/AIDS programming in the United States: considerations affecting transgender women and girls. Women's health issues : *official publication of the Jacobs Institute of Women's Health, 21(6 Suppl), S278–S282. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.whi.2011.08.001*

Shannon K, Kerr T, Strathdee SA, Shoveller J, Montaner JS, Tyndall MW, et al. Prevalence and structural correlates of gender based violence among a prospective cohort of female sex workers. *BMJ. 2009;339:b2939.*

Smith, A. (2018). Economic imperatives and social realities: Transgender women in the sex tourism industry in Bali. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies, 49(3), 414-432.*

Smith, L., & Jones, M. (2021). Legal interpretations and the status of sex work: A global overview. *International Law Review, 22(4), 112-130.*

Srsic, A., Dubas-Jakóbczyk, K., & Kocot, E. (2021). The economic consequences of decriminalizing sex work in Washington, DC—A conceptual model. *Societies, 11(3), 112.* *https://doi.org/10.3390/soc11030112*

Stoebenau, K., Heise, L., Wamoyi, J., & Bobrova, N. (2016). Revisiting the understanding of “transactional sex” in sub-Saharan Africa: A review and synthesis of the literature. *Social Science & Medicine, 168, 186-197.* https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2016.09.023

Wamoyi, J., Stobeanau, K., Bobrova, N., Abramsky, T., & Watts, C. (2016). Transactional sex and risk for HIV infection in sub-saharan Africa: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of the International AIDS Society, 19(1).* https://doi.org/10.7448/ias.19.1.20992

Wang, Y. (2022). Beyond health: Government and NGO roles in supporting transgender sex workers in Asia. *Journal of Human Rights and Social Work, 7(1), 34-46.*

White, R. (2021). Beyond survival: The economic imperatives of transgender sex work. *Journal of Socio-Economics, 65, 102-110.*

Yasami, M., Zhu, H., & Dewan, M. (2023). Poverty, psychological distress, and suicidality among gay men and transgender women sex workers during the COVID-19 pandemic in Phuket, Thailand. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy, 20(3), 1203-1219.* *https://doi.org/10.1007/s13178-023-00793-4*

Ying, T., & Wen, J. (2019). Exploring the male Chinese tourists’ motivation for commercial sex when travelling overseas: Scale construction and validation. *Tourism Management*, *70, 479–490.* *https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2018.09.014*

Zheng, T. (2009). *Red lights: The lives of sex workers in postsocialist China*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Research on the capacity building of gateway communities: A case study of communities in qilian mountain national park, China

Xu, Yanmei
Department of Landscape Architecture
Beijing Forestry University

Cai, Jun
Department of Landscape Architecture
Beijing Forestry University

Li, Ruijie
Department of Landscape Architecture
Beijing Forestry University

Abstract:

In the construction of China's national park system, a coordinated development path between local communities and national parks must be sought, and the development of gateway communities and their capacity building is essential. This study focused on the gateway communities of Qilian Mountain National Park in ethnic minority areas, northwest China, and conducted a questionnaire survey and interviews to collect data to study the development status of the gateway community. The study summarized major issues that affect the capacity enhancement of the gateway community in the national park through quantitative analysis, and methods of building community capacity are proposed from the perspectives of livelihood transformation, scientific policy, management mechanisms, and talent nurturing in order to hope that gateway communities could develop together with national parks.

Keywords: National Park gateway community, Community capacity, Community livelihood, Qilian Mountain National Park

1. Introduction

Gateway communities refer to the areas that are adjacent to and at the entrance or exit of national public lands and parks (Yong & Lin, 2014). In China, numerous residents are distributed around nature reserves, including national parks. According to statistics, China has 1,657 nature reserves with well-defined borders, and 12.56 million people live inside these areas (Xingshuo et al., 2022). The establishment of national parks and certain pilot projects has hampered the economic activity of the people and impacted their traditional means of subsistence. Building community capabilities and changing livelihoods have so taken precedence in the development of national park gateway communities.

The current research mainly focuses on achieving a balance between community benefits and ecological protection. It covers topics such as community perception and attitudes, ecotourism development, conflict and coordination among national park communities, and management models for national park communities, which have yielded abundant theoretical results (Dongfang et al., 2021). However, there are limited studies on gateway communities within national parks in China, analyzing how to enhance the capacity of gateway communities and contributing to the existing theory of gateway communities. Qilian Mountain National Park is a pilot site of the national park, with a significant role in the ecological environment and cultural value (LI Ruijie, 2023). The park is surrounded by many communities, which creates a sharp contradiction between socio-economic development and ecological protection. Enhancing the self-development capacity of communities is a crucial approach for gateway communities and the national park to thrive together. The aim is to explore a new path of coordinated development with communities in the context of eco-environmental protection in the national park and provide suggestions for local development.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Community capacity building

The concept of "community capacity building" was initially proposed as a route to socio-economic development in the 1990s in the United Kingdom. Community capacity is defined as "the combined impact of a community's credibility, resources, and skills, which can be used to empower the community to solve its problems" (Bruce 2003). It involves enhancing community capacities through the cultivation of human and social capital and organizational building (Gary, 2007). Currently, scholars mainly view community capacity from two perspectives: resource-oriented and process-oriented (Hongge et al., 2022). Community capacity is the accumulation of the community's own skills, knowledge, etc., which mainly emphasizes the internal dynamics of the community to be able to achieve self-development. Community capacity, as a theoretical framework, is usually used to elaborate on the combination of important influences inside and outside the community to form strong actions to reach development goals.

Different dimensions of community capability have been identified by scholars. Four primary components were distinguished by Beckley and Nadeau (2004): result, interaction, catalytic, and structural. The six dimensions of community capacity, as outlined by Chaskin (2010), are community features, community agents' level of involvement, community functions, community strategies, variables influencing community capacity, and community outputs. Previous research reveals varying perspectives among scholars about the notion of community capacity, which may be broadly classified into two domains: internal community problem solving and external community resource organization and support (Labonte R& Laverack G, 2001; Montemurro, 2014; Liu Jiang, 2016). Improving the community's ability to control itself is vital, on the one hand. On the other hand, outside assistance is required to support the improvement of community capacity.

2.2. National parks and communities

According to Fuman et al. (2011), gateway communities are those that are close to the entrance or departure of national parks and public areas. The distribution of benefits, involvement, and influence between national parks and communities have been the subject of some research (Bystorm J. & Muller D. K., 2014). Cooperation between communities and national parks can resolve these conflicts and enhance the quality of life for locals (Nakakaawac et al., 2015). Most academics agree that community involvement through leisure, nature education, and other development options can lessen friction between communities and national parks, safeguard residents' interests, and improve employment and economic advantages. Nevertheless, in the absence of appropriate planning and oversight, these kinds of activities may result in environmental issues that run counter to the objectives of national parks.

Scholars have mostly concentrated on community interests, biodiversity maintenance, cultural adaptation, and other related topics since China proposed to establish its own national park system and set up pilot national parks. They have adjusted national park management within the framework of community empowerment and protection of rights and interests (Ma Jiao, et al.,2021; Hongge et al., 2022). There is currently a dearth of literature on national park gateway communities, despite studies on these communities having steadily surfaced. Shen Xingju and Liu Yun (2021) reviewed the history of building US national park gateway villages and provided an overview of the experience of leveraging tourism to advance rural development. In Qian Jiangyuan National Park, Wu Chengzhao and Wang Changlin (2022) examined the characteristics of development, demands, and nature of gateway communities.

2.3. Community Capital Theory and Community Social Capital Theory

The Community Capitals Framework (CCF) offers a systematic approach to community and economic development. Mary and Cornelia (2006) summarized the capital assets that impact community capacity, proposing seven types of capital: natural, cultural, human, social, political, financial, and material. They also noted that the movement of community capital affects the growth and decline of community capacity. The concept of social capital was first formalized by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, consisting of three core elements: social trust, social norms, and social networks. The theory of community social capital is derived from this concept and develops five aspects: community norms, participation, identity, trust, and network (Zhenlong, 2009). Community social capital refers to the relationships between people and organizations that facilitate economic and social activities within the community. In rural communities, social capital plays a significant role in gathering community consensus, improving community governance, and obtaining external resource support (Wenqi & Pingyan, 2022).

Livelihoods encompass asset acquisition and economic activities, and can be classified into individual, household, and community dimensions according to their scale (Chambers et al.,1992). The family dimension, most commonly used by scholars, considers factors such as family size, asset ownership, economic pursuits, and productivity. In this study, community capacity and livelihoods are assessed across five dimensions: natural capital, human capital, social capital, physical capital, and financial capital. This measurement combines previous research on community capacity dimensions, livelihood capital indicators (Jiajia et al.,2018), and the community capacity enhancement framework (Ruijie et al., 2023).

Due to the original resources being restricted in use, communities are forced to change their development patterns. Therefore, how to take advantage of the location as the entrance and exit of the national park to ensure the local community is benefited and empowered is a keystone and difficulty of the advancement of national parks. The gateway communities of the Qilian Mountains National Park have been in long-term dependency on grassland for agropastoral activities, which need to be lifted out of the dependence on natural resources and find new livelihoods and suitable development paths.

3. Methodology

3.1. Study area

The Qilian Mountains National Park covers an area of 50,200 km^2, with 15,800 km^2 in the northeastern part of the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau, straddling Gansu and Qinghai provinces, in China's north-west ethnic minority-populated areas (Zhixiang & Tianwei, 2021). The study focuses on three representative communities: Sujiwan Village, Dongtan Village, and Hongyahe Village, based on the connection between residents' daily life and the national park, and the main industries of the communities. These villages are located at the entrance to Qilian Mountain National Park and serve as gateway communities in Menyuan Hui Autonomous County, which rely on herding and agriculture as their main economic sources, and some residents are involved in the tourism reception business.

Figure 1. Geographical location of the study area

3.2. Research design

The author conducted a household questionnaire survey in Sujiwan Village, Dongtan Village, and Hongyahe Village in Menyuan County from 19 to 30 July, 2021. Questionnaires were distributed to 215 families, mainly focused on their economic situation, living conditions, contact with community management, and knowledge of the national park, etc. SPSS24 software was used to process the data. The local community mobilisation capacity, as well as the internal structure and capacity of different communities, were measured to understand the current status of the gateway communities in the Qilian Mountains National Park and the problems that exist. Finally, recommendations were put forward for construction in light of the problems and the actual situation in the area.

3.3. Questionnaire collection and sample profile

A total of 212 questionnaires were received. The reliability of the data was tested using Alpha coefficient analysis in SPSS 24, indicating the questionnaire used in this study has a reliability coefficient of 0.673 and each item greater than 0.5, demonstrating the data's reliability and validity. Of the respondents, 59.9% were male and 40.1% were female. Most respondents (75.9%) were adults aged 21–50. Regarding education level, 18.4% had little formal education, while 68.9% had a high school education or less, whereas among those under 20 years of age, many were either preparing to attend or currently attending university, which suggests a growing emphasis on culture and education. In terms of occupation, farmers and herders made up 42.5%, followed by shop and stall operators at 23.6%, and migrant workers at 13.7%.

4. Results

4.1. Economic situation of interviewed families

Economic sources determine household income stability, and diversifying these sources reduces reliance on primitive agriculture and animal husbandry. A significant difference in the proportion of choices for each economic activity was found, as shown in Table 1 (chi = 418.091, p = 0.000<0.05). The response rates for agriculture, animal husbandry, and running a restaurant or B&B were relatively high, indicating that these activities are the mainstay of local livelihoods. Regarding the source of household income, as shown in Table 2, however, the local agricultural and husbandry industry lacks deep-processed products, resulting in limited income. Only a small percentage of residents receive dividends from specialized farmers' cooperatives (prevalence rate: 1.89%), indicating the community's underdeveloped industry. Additionally, tourism has developed in the gateway communities of national parks, offering a potential way to transform the communities' livelihoods and increase residents' income in the future

Table 1. The economic activities of the householder surveyed

Name	Response		Popularity rate（n=212）
	n	response rate	
Agriculture and animal	136	41.21%	64.15%
husbandry	68	20.61%	32.08%
Outside work	7	2.12%	3.30%
Ranger or janitor	4	1.21%	1.89%
Tour guide or guide	0	0.00%	0.00%
Running a lodging house or restaurant	49	14.85%	23.11%
Cordyceps digging	36	10.91%	16.98%
Regular wage income	8	2.42%	3.77%
Other	22	6.67%	10.38%
Total	330	100%	155.66%

Goodness-of-fit：$\chi 2$=418.091 p=0.000

Table 2. Source of household income

Name	Response		Popularity rate（n=212）
	n	response rate	
Wage income	24	4.54%	11.32%
Pastoral income	123	23.25%	58.02%

Income from agricultural and sideline products	169	31.95%	79.72%
Income from tourism	47	8.88%	22.17%
Income from migrant work	122	23.06%	57.55%
Government Subsidy Income	40	7.56%	18.87%
Dividend income from cooperatives	4	0.76%	1.89%
Total	529	100%	249.53%

Goodness-of-fit：$\chi 2$=173.748 p=0.000

4.2. Participation and management of community residents

The attitudes of residents towards community affairs and management were evaluated using a Likert scale with five levels (Table 3.). P1, P2, and P5 scored 4 or higher, indicating positive relationships among residents and being relatively well-informed about community affairs. However, P3, P4, P9, P10, and P11 scored lower, suggesting that residents feel informed but lack influence in discussions and decision-making. The community lacks collective activities and tends to be more individual or family-oriented, hindering the development of community industries. Furthermore, there is a shortage of educated leaders and effective communication with the outside world. Some of the residents are involved in tourism and selling agricultural products, but interviews revealed that there is a need for better price management in areas beyond tourism, such as the sale of agricultural products and catering.

Table 3. Residents' perception of community participation and management

Factor Number	Title Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance
P1	In our village, people have good relations and often help each other out	4.481	0.763	0.583
P2	I'm good friends with the other villagers	4.476	0.775	0.601
P3	There are always group activities in the village (gatherings, etc.)	2.749	1.414	1.999
P4	Our village often has the opportunity to participate in decision-making.	2.962	1.420	2.018
P5	The village will notify the villagers through WeChat, QQ and other tools.	4.316	1.152	1.326
P6	There are good rules and regulations in the village.	3.905	1.138	1.296
P7	Village organizations work efficiently	3.611	1.195	1.429
P8	The village leadership is basically	3.797	0.950	0.902

	stable			
P9	The village has a high level of leadership, including college student village officials.	2.113	1.323	1.750
P10	Local agricultural products, food and lodging are managed at a uniform price.	2.929	1.533	2.350
P11	I can decide on the use of my own land	2.226	1.315	1.730

4.3. Livelihood status of community residents

4.3.1 Indicator Selection and Indicator Assignment

Based on the community capacity building framework constructed by Ruijie Li et al. (2023) and the livelihood capital indicators used by Jiang Jiajia et al. (2019), this paper quantifies and measures the livelihoods of communities in five dimensions: natural capital, human capital, social capital, physical capital, and financial capital, to respond to what is currently lacking and how they should be built. This paper combines the references with the actual situation of the gateway community to select the representative indicators of each capital, such as natural capital, which is measured by the pasture area indicator. Because in the gateway community of Qilian Mountains National Park, the most important natural capital is the pasture, and they are also the most affected by the conservation policy. The indicators for the five livelihood capitals were selected and allocated in the manner shown in the Table 4.

Table 4. Livelihood capital assignments for interviewed households

Types of Livelihood Capital (Factor Level)	**Indicators for Title Livelihood Capital (Indicator Level)**	**Assignment (Standardized Approach)**	**Basis for Selection of Indicators**
Natural Capital	Area of pasture or cropland	Grassland area/all households Maximum value of grassland area in the household	Natural Resource Reserves
Human Capital	Overall labour capacity of the household (percentage of labour force)	Number of labourers in the household/ Total number of households	Labor capacity
	Educational attainment	"No schooling" is assigned a value of 0; "Primary school" is 0.25; "middle school" is 0.5; "high school" is 0.75; "College, undergraduate and above" is 1.	Knowledge and skills
Social Capital	Opportunities for community residents to participate in decision-making	According to the degree from the heaviest to the lightest, assigned as 1, 0.75, 0.5, 0.25, 0	Community participation
	Good relations among community residents	According to the degree from the heaviest to the lightest, assigned as 1, 0.75, 0.5, 0.25, 0	Community member relationships
	Types of income	Type of Household Income	Diversification of

	sources	Sources / Maximum number of types of household income sources	livelihoods
Physical Capital	Number of livestock	Number of livestock/ Maximum number of livestock	Material reserves
	Size of housing	The housing area is assigned from largest to smallest as1,0.75,0.5,0.25,0	Quality of Family Life
	Household necessities and Transportation	Owned household goods and transportation/all types of household goods and transportation	Quality of family life
Financial Capital	Government Subsidies	"Yes" is assigned a value of 1; "No" is assigned a value of 0	Policy support coverage
	Household income	Household Income/Highest Income in Respondent Households	Income capacity

This paper applies principal component analysis to determine indicator weights. The weight calculation involves three steps: calculating the linear combination coefficient matrix, calculating the composite score coefficient, and normalizing the composite score coefficient to obtain the weight value of each index. The purpose is to identify gaps among the five capitals of the interviewed households, providing a detailed understanding of the gateway communities' livelihoods.

4.3.2 Data processing and calculations

Before calculating the data, it is first necessary to standardize the data by converting all the data to a uniform order of magnitude, the data processing methods used are shown in Equation 4-1.

$$X_j = \frac{X_{ij}-Xmin}{X_{max}-X_{mir}} \quad (4\text{-}1)$$

The principal component analysis method starts with the KMO and Bartlett's Test, which are designed to test whether the selected data are suitable for calculation using the principal component analysis method. The KMO statistic for the sample data is 0.656, which is greater than 0.5, and the Bartlett's ball test statistic is 267.376, P value is less than 0.05, indicating that the interpretation effect is good. The total explained variance, loading coefficient, and linear combination coefficient matrices are shown in Tables 5, 6,7, and the results obtained from the explained variance and the matrices can be used to derive the weights of the indicators. According to the weights of each livelihood indicator, the score of each livelihood capital can be derived. The calculation formula is shown in 4-2, in which 'a' represents the number of households interviewed, 'i' refers to the value of the indicator after initialization, 'w' denotes the score of each indicator for the households interviewed, and 'k' represents the type of livelihood capital.

$$P_i = \sum_{k=1}^{a} P_{ki}/a = W_i * I_{ki} \qquad (4\text{-}2)$$

Table 5. Variance interpretation rate table

Factor Number	Eigen			Principal Component Extraction		
	Eigen Value	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative % of Variance**	**Eigen Value**	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative % of Variance**
1	2.490	22.636	22.636	2.490	22.636	22.636
2	1.287	11.698	34.334	1.287	11.698	34.334
3	1.231	11.186	45.520	1.231	11.186	45.520
4	1.118	10.159	55.679	1.118	10.159	55.676
5	0.984	8.941	64.620			
6	0.915	8.317	72.938			
7	0.817	7.430	80.367			
8	0.715	6.496	86.863			
9	0.616	5.602	92.465			
10	0.442	4.019	96.484			
11	0.387	3.516	100.000			

Table 6. Load Factor table

Name	Factor loading				Commonality (common factor variance)
	principal component 1	principal component 2	principal component 3	principal component 4	% of Variance
Area of pasture or cropland	0.696	0.010	-0.419	0.145	0.680
Ratio of labour force to total	-0.068	0.226	-0.057	-0.627	0.452
Education	-0.056	0.726	-0.001	-0.218	0.578
Opportunities for residents to participate in decision-making	0.070	0.651	0.450	0.213	0.677
Good relations between residents	0.130	0.291	0.130	0.591	0.467
Types of income sources	0.725	0.055	-0.224	-0.165	0.606
Number of livestock	0.717	0.177	-0.282	0.201	0.665
Size of housing	0.480	-0.379	0.421	0.110	0.563
Ownership of household goods	0.463	-0.091	0.508	-0.078	0.487
Income from government subsidies	0.649	0.073	0.043	-0.348	0.549
Household income ratio	-0.268	0.094	-0.516	0.233	0.401

Table 7. Linear combination coefficient matrix

Name	Component			
	principal component1	principal component2	principal component3	principal component4
Area of pasture or cropland	0.441	0.009	-0.377	0.137
Ratio of labour force to total	-0.043	0.199	-0.052	-0.593
Education	-0.036	0.640	-0.001	-0.206
Opportunities for residents to participate in decision making	0.045	0.574	0.406	0.202

Good relations between residents	0.082	0.256	0.118	0.559
Types of income sources	0.459	0 .049	-0.202	-0.156
Number of livestock	0.454	0.156	-0.255	0.190
Size of housing	0.304	-0.334	0.379	0.104
Ownership of household goods	0.294	-0.080	0.458	-0.073
Income from government subsidies	0.411	0.064	0.039	-0.329
Household income ratio	-0.170	0.083	-0.465	0.220

\

4.3.3 Calculation results

The results of the calculations based on the weighting of the indicators and the method of calculating the scores in the previous section are detailed in Table 8 and Figure 2. As seen from the table, the respondent households have the highest score (0.085) for physical capital among the five types of livelihood capital, indicating that the basic livelihoods of the community residents in the gateway communities can be secured. Almost every household keeps livestock, up to a maximum of 1,000 animals in the case of those whose main source of economic income is herding, and thus the stock of physical capital is relatively high. The human capital score is rather low (0.043), which indicates that the human capital of the gateway community is not abundant, as reflected in the low level of education of the family's main labor force, and that more needs to be paid to develop education and skills training for residents in order to enrich human capital. The low natural capital score (0.047) is due to the very large disparity in pasture area owned by local households, with some households in Dongtan and Sujiwan villages having no pasture or cultivated land, while some herding households own thousands of hectares of pasture; the area of pasture in the village of Hongyahe Village has been greatly reduced or transformed into collective pasture, from grazing to captive breeding, so that in general the natural capital is not considered to be rich. The national park's construction has further reduced the amount of grazing pasture available, which had an impact on traditional livelihoods and forced herders to adapt.

Table 8. Index value of Livelihood capital

Standardized Layer	Factor Layer	Indicator Layer	Indicator Weights	Factor Level Score
Livelihood capital	Natural Capital	Area of pasture or cropland	0.105	0.047
	Human Capital	Ratio of labour force to total	0.063	0.043
		Education	0.069	
	Social Capital	Opportunities for	0.096	0.074

	residents to participate in decision-making		
	Good relations between residents	0.079	
	Types of income sources	0.099	
Physical Capital	Number of livestock	0.113	0.085
	Size of housing	0.108	
	Ownership of household goods	0.089	
Financial Capital	Income from government subsidies	0.092	0.022
	Household income ratio	0.082	

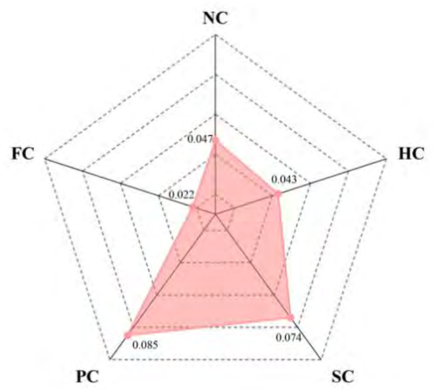


Figure 2. The livelihood of the interviewed families

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and implications

This paper analyses the problems faced by gateway communities in the Qilian Mountains National Park and suggests ways to build their capacity based on questionnaire surveys conducted among interviewed families. The conclusions drawn from the statistics of the questionnaires are presented below:

Community livelihood-transformation is an important process in community capacity building. Currently, the gateway communities appear relying on single sources of livelihood. To improve their economic situation, the community should make full use of external resources while also paying attention to local cultural and natural capital. Developing local industries and products that align with the community's characteristics will help reduce dependence on the agricultural and animal husbandry economy, improving industrial structure and diversification. The community could develop an eco-industry market and prepare for the establishment of a national park eco-brand, and collaborate with relevant associations, enterprises, and public welfare organizations to promote the branding and marketing of eco-products. Additionally, the development of eco-tourism can provide various livelihood channels for the community's residents, leading to employment opportunities in the catering and lodging industries.

Strengthening community participation is a crucial element of community empowerment. To achieve self-development, communities must first change their status quo of vulnerability and lack of voice. The current policy for ecological compensation mainly involves direct financial compensation; however, a more sustainable approach would be to promote the development and capacity-building of the community itself. Residents in the communities surrounding Qilian Mountain National Park generally have a sense of community participation; however, they tend to be in a passive state and lack participatory mechanisms.

It is also important to prioritize organizational capacity. On the one hand, it is necessary to focus on community resources, promote the flow of capital, cultivate social capital, and find resources to support community development. On the other hand, it is essential to develop the human capital of the community, which refers to enhancing the personal capacity of residents, which is the endogenous power of the community in building its capacity. To achieve this, community residents should actively engage with government and social capital at all levels and utilize their knowledge and abilities to identify potential resources within and around the district to support and promote community development. Furthermore, developing organizational capacity also involves enhancing residents' identification with national parks, which will facilitate their integration into the national park construction process and provide opportunities for community development. Consequently, national parks can have a constant positive impact on communities.

Stable and sustainable institutional guarantees are also necessary. Policies have a significant impact on the community, affecting all aspects of community life and the realization of community rights and interests. In the research area, residents have reported ambiguity in the government's policy, with development policies changing with the leadership, making it difficult for community residents to understand how to cooperate with the policy. Furthermore, the distribution of benefits from collective industries is also a concern. While the development of tourism resulting from the national parks has improved the livelihoods of gateway communities, it also impacts land use and consumes resources without providing corresponding benefits to the communities.

5.2. Conclusion

Taking Qilian Mountain National Park as a case study, this paper explores the issues and ways of community capacity-building development by using questionnaires and quantitative analysis. The study shows that strengthening livelihood expansion and transformation, enhancing community participation, organizational capacity development, and strengthening institutional guarantees have a significant impact on capacity building and are the main directions for community capacity enhancement. Expanding community participation is necessary to increase the capacity of national park gateway towns. The government should design a sensible system of development policies that integrates "top-down" policy direction with "bottom-up" public participation. It should also form an alliance of various governance bodies, such as the authority, neighborhood committees, social organizations, volunteers, and locals, establishing an online-offline community governance platform where various actors collaborate to develop and govern together. To enable communities to take on more roles on professional abilities, skills training must be given; talent importation must be actively encouraged; and education must be actively expanded to help the younger generation of the gateway community become usable talents.

5.3. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

Building the capacity of gateway communities in national parks is a topic of significant discussion as national park system construction moves forward in China; however, since many gateway communities have been relocated, there is a limited amount of literature available for reference. Two of the three villages studied in this research are sparsely populated pastoral villages, and the other is an agricultural and pastoral village with a rather single industrial structure, so the relative small number of samples selected may have a certain impact on the results of the study. In the future, further study could be carried out to explore the factors affecting community capacity building, the mechanism models, and development paths, thus further refining the theory of community capacity.

REFERENCES

Allendorf T D， James L D. (2007) Residents' perceptions of Royal Bardia National Park， Nepal[J]. Landscape and Urban Planning ,82(1):33-40．

Beckley T, Nadeau S, Wall E， Martz D, Reimer W. (2004)Multiple Capacities， Multiple Outcomes: Delving Deeper into the Meaning of Community Capacity[J]. Journal of Rural and Community Development, (3):56-75.

Bystorm J, Muller D K. (2014) Tourism labor market impacts of national parks[J]. Zeitschrift fur Wirtschaftsgeographie ,58(1):115-126．

Changlin W. C. (2022). The Nature, Development Characters and Policy Needs of National Park Gateway Communities in China. Chinese Landscape Architecture, *38*(04), 14-19.

Chaskin R J. (2010) Building Community Capacity: A Definitional Framework and Case Studies fr om a Comprehensive Community Initiative. Article in Urban Affairs Review[J]. 36(3), 291-323.

Dongfang Z., Linsheng Z., & Hu Y. (2021). Research progress of community development of national parks and implications. Resources Science, *43*(09), 1903-1917.

Gary C. (2007) Community capacity-building: something old, something new. . .?[J]. Critical Social Policy, 27(3):335-359.

Goodman R M, Speers M A, McLeroy K, Fawcett M, Fawcett M, Parker S R, Smith T D, Wallerstein N. (1998) Identifying and defining the dimensions of community capacity to provide a basis for measurement[J]. Health education& behavior ,25(3):258-278.

Hongge Z., Menghan Z., Yaru C., & Yutong Z. (2022). Community Governance in National Parks: International Experience and Enlightenment. World Forestry Research, *35*(05), 1-6.

LI Ruijie C. J. (2023). Discussion on Capacity Building of Gateway Community ofQilian Mountain National Park. Journal of Beijing Forestry University（Social Sciences）, *22*(01), 54-63.

Liqi J., Jiayi L., & Luhui Q. (2023). Coupling Symbiosis between Qilian Mountain National Park and Multi-Ethnic Communities: Logic, Dilemma and Paths. Chinese Landscape Architecture, *39*(12), 28-32.

Mary E， Cornelia F. (2006) Spiraling-up: mapping community transformation with community capit als framework[J]. Community Development, 37(1):19-35.

Wenqi W., & Pingyan L. (2022). Reserach on the Impact and Mechanism of CommunitySocial Capital on the Implementation Performanceof Rural Revitalization. Journal of Agro-Forestry Economics and Management, *21*(06), 660-669.

Xingshuo Z., Daqing1 Z., & Yuan X. (2022). Comparative Study of the 10 Pilot Areas for National Park System in China. Sichuan Journal of Zoology, *41*(06), 672-680.

Yong W., & Lin L. (2014). Community Tourism Support Model and Application Based on Social Exchange Theory - A Case Study of Gateway Community in Huangshan Scenic Area. Acta Geographica Sinica, *69*(10), 1557-1574.

Yunlin H. (2022). Review of Community Capacity Theory: Concepts, Origins, and Measurement. ournal of Shanxi Datong University (Social Science Edition), *36*(05), 17-20+25.

Zhenlong Y. (2009). Impact of community social capital on community policing. Journal of People's Public Security University of China, *25*(06), 61-68.

Zhixiang L., & Tianwei Z. (2021). An Analysis of the Construction of Multi-dimensional Co-Governance System in Qilian Mountain National Park. Journal of Northwest University for Nationalities(Philosophy and Social Science), *04*, 82-88.

The role of market knowledge in leadership- service delivery innovation relationship in travel agency industry

Chen, Kuan-Yang
Department of Leisure Industry and Health Promotion
National Taipei University of Nursing and Health Sciences

Chen, Forrence-HsingHung
Disciplines of Organization Management, College of Management
Yuan Ze University

Cheng, Li-Keng
Department of Social and Regional Development
National Taipei University of Education

Abstract:

This study explores the effect of transformational leadership and transactional leadership on service delivery innovation, with the mediating mechanism of market knowledge. This study conducted an empirical study in tourism and 160 travel agencies were taken as samples. The results demonstrated market organizational knowledge plays an intermediary role in the relationship between leadership style and service delivery innovation. While both transformational and transactional leadership have a positive impact on market knowledge, transformational leadership shows a significantly greater impact than transactional leadership.

Keywords: Service Delivery Innovation, Organizational Leadership, Market Knowledge, Tourism Enterprises

1. Introduction

Tourism operators, like other small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), must continue to innovate, but they face numerous uncertainties in service business world (Chen et al., 2021). The key to driving service delivery innovation for hospitality industry lies in a manager's leadership and an enterprise's understanding of market knowledge. The scenario set out for service SMEs in the current study is SMEs tourism and the knowledge resource discussed focuses on market knowledge. Inconsistent research results related to service delivery innovation imply problems awaiting investigation (Chen and Huan, 2020). Existing studies lack understanding of the mediating mechanism between leadership style and innovation. For instance, few studies (Chaithanapat, Punnakitikashem, Oo, and Rakthin, 2022) investigated the relationship among knowledge-oriented leadership, customer knowledge management, innovation quality and firm performance. A service process involves the knowledge input of many departments. Promoting a knowledge-oriented leadership or its culture is an indication of a manager's leadership style in knowledge management (Donate and Sánchez de Pablo, 2015). Leaders can promote innovation by encouraging employees to share their knowledge, skills, and work experience, thereby gathering knowledge and enabling everyone to exercise innovative behaviour. However, limited efforts have been made to investigate the impact of knowledge-oriented leadership on service innovation. Here is the first research gap.

Another research gap is that relevant literature lacks the investigation of mediating mechanism between leadership and innovation (Chughtai and Khan, 2024; Rodan and Galunic, 2004). The difficulty of tourism or hospitality industries to enhance their service delivery innovation from acquired knowledge (i.e., from employees) implies a lack of mediating mechanisms (Chen and Huan, 2020) and conduct an empirical study in tourism or hospitality industries. Recently, limited efforts have been made to confirm that knowledge-sharing behaviour and work engagement mediate the relationship between knowledge-oriented leadership and employees' innovative performance (Chughtai and Khan, 2024). In this study, we would investigate the mediator of market knowledge enhancement on the relationship between leadership and service delivery innovation. This study fills these research gaps to test.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Knowledge-based view (KBV) theory and Knowledge-oriented leadership (transformational and transactional leadership styles) on service delivery innovation

In this study, we draw upon the KBV theory, which indicated that communication within an organization is its most crucial function. Hence, the organization's structure is the most influential element in determining how employees communicate with other departments. Knowledge-oriented leadership performs like a mentor in an organization that everyone can talk to, and each person knows how their work can provide benefits (Manzoor, Zhang, and Ma, 2023). Scholars have stated that knowledge-oriented leadership is a mixture of transformational and transactional leadership styles, along with communication and motivational elements (Peet, 2012; Ribière and Sitar, 2003). When leaders adopt the perspective of cost and benefit to view their relationship with employees, they often adopt the "trade and reward" approach to manage their subordinates. The expectations and rewards of both parties must be identified clearly (Bass, 1985). This is a form of transactional leadership. From the "exchange" perspective between supervisors and subordinates, transformational leadership is based on inspiring employee work motivation and potential, enabling employees to achieve performance exceeding expectations (Yammarino, Dubinsky, Comer, and Jolson, 1997). This is why "transformation" was used to define this leadership style (Bass, 1985). Because service delivery innovation involves multiple departments, communication and coordination between members are critical (Kim et al., 2012). Therefore, a good knowledge-oriented leadership, no matter from transactional leadership and transformational leadership approach might have positive effects on service delivery innovation. Therefore, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H1: Transactional leadership positively influences service delivery innovation.

H2: Transformational leadership positively influences service delivery innovation.

2.2. Market knowledge in tourism and hospitality industries

Market knowledge is drawn from market-oriented theory and refers to knowledge about how firms value customers' needs in their product-market domain (Li & Calantone, 1998). Yang (2004) suggested that hotel managers should emphasize the concept of organizational learning to capture market knowledge and the concept of knowledge thus includes customer, competitor, supplier, and governance aspects. Turkson and Riley (2008) adopted cognitive task analysis from 17 hospitality managers and indicated that individual structured their knowledge value is different from the degree level hospitality education. Nieves and Haller (2014) discovered that when hotel operators had knowledge of the market, they were highly perceptive to it, could learn, and had the ability to integrate organizational resources. Chen and Lee (2017) discussed the concept of market knowledge in the tourism industry and extended it to describe this knowledge as including information regarding how an enterprise could create value for and satisfy customers.

Although some studies show that an enterprise's market knowledge does exert influence on its product innovation, some others have found that the effect of knowledge on innovations is inconsistent. According to the knowledge base view (KBV) theory, organizational sustainable competitive advantages or innovation performance are constructed on significant strategic resources of relevant knowledge (Chen and Huan, 2020). From market orientation perspective, the market-oriented firms act more quickly and they are quicker when it comes to collecting and disseminating information across departments, and designing market action plans for responsiveness (Chen and Lee, 2017). The value of market knowledge for firms is embedded into business operational process and strategic action. Therefore, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H3: Market knowledge positively influences service delivery innovation.

2.3. The mediator of market knowledge on the relationship between knowledge-oriented leadership and service delivery innovation

One study mentioned that the thoughts, leadership culture, and style of higher-level managers in an enterprise affect the future operation of an enterprise, especially in the obtainment of market knowledge (Chang, Bai, & Li, 2015). Also, the influence of market knowledge on innovation may only be realized in the way the enterprise integrates knowledge (De Luca and Atuahene-Gima, 2007). Knowledge-oriented leadership structures the organization so that when knowledge is discovered and applied, each employee can leverage knowledge assets to perform better (Banmairuroy, Kritjaroen, & Homsombat, 2023). That is why the KBV emphasizes the importance of teams because they help create, share, and apply knowledge. Knowledge-oriented leaders in particular can manage, create, attract, and organize to transfer knowledge and information well across organizations. Therefore, a knowledge-oriented leadership generates a culture that individual members of a group or organization supporting the learning cycle needed to achieve a firm's goal, like service delivery innovation.

When an enterprise has rich market knowledge, it can optimize its operational process to control production cost and increase production performance (Johnson, Christensen, and Kagermann, 2008), thereby achieving favorable market performance (Martín-de Castro, 2015). This study infers that leadership style affects the knowledge contribution of all members and can be conducive to innovative performance. From the perspective of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), before an individual takes social actions, they calculate the pros and cons. In the employment relationship, employees consider the social exchange relationship and interaction to balance their relationship with the organization. Sin et al. (2005) studied the service industry and maintained that when an organization has a broad understanding of market knowledge, it can more effectively generate innovation. Therefore, in the influence of leadership style on organizational service delivery innovation, a leadership style promotes the critical mediating role of organizational market knowledge. The following hypothesis was proposed:

H4: Market knowledge mediates the relationship between transactional leadership and service delivery innovation.

H5: Market knowledge mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and service delivery innovation.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants and Data Collection

The research population of this study included the tourism industry in the six major metropolitan areas of Taiwan. Travel agencies were taken as samples. The research questionnaire collected data on transformational leadership, transactional leadership, market knowledge, service delivery innovation, organizational cohesion, and control variables. Because many items in the questionnaire involved critical decisions of an enterprise, regarding the constructs in the research framework, major operators of an enterprise were required to answer the questionnaire personally (Wu et al., 2015). By convenience sampling from the six major metropolitan areas of Taiwan, a total of 193 questionnaires were retrieved. After invalid questionnaires were removed, 160 valid samples were obtained. Criteria for invalidating a questionnaire includes incomplete response, blank, omission, multiple choice, failure to reach sampling standards, and all scores being similar.

3.2. Assessing Variables

All the items were based on literature. We referred to in-depth interview results to locally adjust the content to account for practical scenarios. A 7-point Likert scale was adopted to measure the responses. The dependent variable in this study was service delivery innovation. It mainly measures the method an enterprise adopts to generate or improve production, service, or management operation regarding a product or service (Weerawardena, O'Cass, and Julian, 2006; Wang and Ahmed, 2004). This study adopted three itemsfrom. Market knowledge was set as the mediating variable in this study. This construct measures the amount of knowledge an enterprise has obtained about clients or competitors in its industry. Items for this construct were revised from De Luca and Atuahene-Gima (2007) and from Zhou and Li (2012). A total of four items were used, and their mean reliability was 0.89.

The independent variables of this study were transformational leadership and transactional leadership. They were used to assess the enterprise supervisors' perceptions of their own leadership style. Transformational leadership values that the entire company shares or possesses a set of value concepts, views, or thoughts (Bass, 1985). Five items were adopted from Chang et al. (2015) to measure this construct. Their mean reliability was 0.97. The second independent variable was transactional leadership. Transactional leadership emphasizes that the leader can make subordinates believe that their contributions and rewards are fair and reasonable. The obedience and loyalty subordinates have for the leader are also established on the basis of exchange and mutual benefit (Bass, 1985). Items for this construct were adopted from Chang et al. (2015). A total of four items were used. Again, the aforementioned constructs were measured using 7-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting strongly disagree and 7 strongly agree. The items were used to assess the perceptions, attitudes, and viewpoints of higher-level managers with regard to the constructs.

3.3. Nonresponse Bias and Common-Method Variance

Questionnaires were separated into two groups based on return time. Independent samples t-test was conducted on enterprise capital, founding time, and the main variables. The results indicated that the two groups did not exhibit significant differences and thus the survey did not have a response bias (Armstrong and Overton, 1977). In addition, we adopted Harman's one factor test to test measurement effectiveness (Podsakoff and Organ, 1986). Principal component analysis was conducted on all items. Finally, Varimax approach was adopted for exploratory factor analysis; the results suggested that the maximum variance of the first factor is less than 50%. The study did not have a severe common-method variance problem.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Statistics of the Samples

Approximately half (53.94%) of the participants had over 15 years of work experience; approximately two-thirds (69.94%) were the enterprise's responsible person (CEO), general manager, deputy general manager, factory head, or deputy factory head. The founding times of the enterprises were more even; each category (5 years or less, 6–10 years, 11–15 years, 16–20 years, 21–25 years, 26–30 years, and 31 years or more) comprised approximately 10%. Most (79.4%) enterprises had capital of NT$20 million or less. Most (89.7%) enterprises had 50 employees or fewer. The turnover of most of the enterprises (89.7%) was less than NT$1 billion.

4.2. Measurement Model Analysis

We adopted confirmatory factor analysis to assess the overall measurement model. The results for the model's goodness of fit were as follows: χ^2/d.f. = 2.15, NFI = 0.90, IFI = 0.94, CFI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.08. All values met the recommendations in the literature (Bollen, 1989; Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson, 2010). Table 1 displays the results regarding reliability and validity. The factor loadings of all items were greater than 0.5. Squared multiple correlation coefficients were between 0.40 and 0.65, and *t* values were all statistically significant. Therefore, all items reflected the latent variable of the constructs and exhibited good convergent validity (Hair et al., 2010). In addition, the composite reliability of all the study constructs were greater than 0.7, and the average variances extracted were greater than 0.5, signifying that every construct had acceptable convergence validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The square root of the average variance extracted for each construct was greater than the correlation coefficient between constructs (Table 2), signifying that they had favourable discriminative validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Table 1. ***Measurement items and confirmatory factor analysis***

Measurement items	Cronbach's α	Loading	CR	AVE
Transformational Leadership	0.97		0.97	0.85
We have a clear vision on the future opportunities of the group		0.90**		
We set a good example		0.88**		
We demonstrate high levels of competence in work behaviors		0.93**		
We provide a good role-model for me to follow		0.94**		
We project a convincing, powerful, and dynamic presence in his actions at work		0.96**		
Transactional Leadership	0.93		0.94	0.78
Our leader points out what I will receive if I do what is required		0.95**		
Our leader tells me what to do to be rewarded for my efforts		0.94**		
Our leader is alert for failure to meet standards		0.80**		
Our leader works out agreements with me on what I will receive if I do what needs to be done		0.85**		
Market Knowledge	0.89		0.92	0.69
We have accumulated knowledge of multiple market segments		0.90**		
Our R&D expertise consists of knowledge from a variety of background		0.71**		
We get a wide range of knowledge about our competitors from the outside		0.81**		
We possess market information from a diversified customer portfolio		0.88**		
Service delivery Innovation	0.93		0.93	0.83
We are constantly improving our business processes		0.92**		
Our company changes production methods at a great speed in comparison with our competitors		0.94**		
During the past five years, our company has developed many new management approaches		0.87**		

$^{*}p < 0.05$; $^{**}p < 0.01$

Table 2. ***Descriptive statistic and zero-order correlations***

Construct	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

(1)Transformational Leadership	**0.921**			
(2) Transactional Leadership	0.646**	**0.886**		
(3) Market Knowledge	0.552**	0.446**	**0.829**	
(4) Service delivery innovation	0.496**	0.533**	0.399**	**0.909**

**p < 0.01; ( ) reports the square root of AVE

Table 3. ***Mediating effects***

Path	Bootstrapping 95% Bias CI	
	Lower	Upper
Transformational Leadership → Market Knowledge → Service delivery innovation (Indirect Effect)	0.11	0.37
Transformational Leadership → Service delivery innovation (Direct Effect)	0.00	0.00
Transactional Leadership → Market Knowledge → Service delivery innovation (Indirect Effect)	0.01	0.23
Transactional Leadership → Service delivery innovation (Direct Effect)	0.00	0.00

4.3. Structural Model Analysis

We used structural equation modeling to test the model and the hypotheses. Analysis results suggested that the overall structural model had favourable model fit (χ^2/d.f. = 1.99, GFI = 0.85, AGFI = 0.81, NFI = 0.91, IFI = 0.95, CFI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.078; Bollen, 1989). Transformational leadership positively and significantly influences market knowledge ($t = 5.21$, $p < 0.01$), and transactional leadership positively and significantly influences market knowledge ($t = 2.01$, $p < 0.05$). These results indicate that when an enterprise adopts one of these two leadership methods, it is conducive to increasing market knowledge. We further tested whether the path coefficients of transformational leadership and transactional leadership on market knowledge significantly differed. The χ^2 values of the two models exhibited significant differences ($\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 4.02, $p < 0.05$), with transformational leadership having a higher standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.49$) than transactional leadership ($\beta = 0.18$). This indicates that transformational leadership has a greater influence on market knowledge than does transactional leadership. Therefore, hypothesis 1 and 2 was supported.

Market knowledge positively and significantly affects service delivery innovation ($t = 6.19$, $p < 0.01$). Thus, hypothesis 3 was supported. Specifically, an enterprise's effectiveness in service delivery innovation increases with market knowledge. We further adopted the bootstrap method to confirm the mediating effect of market knowledge (Zhao, Lu, Wang, Chau, and Zhang, 2012) (Preacher and Hayes, 2008). With a 95% confidence interval (CI), Table 3 presents the results. The upper and bottom limit of the bias CI of the indirect effects did not cover zero, meaning that the indirect effect was significant. In other words, the mediation effect existed. We also examined the direct effect of transformational leadership and that of transactional leadership on service delivery innovation. Their CIs all included 0 (their upper and bottom limit were all 0), thus, no direct effect was present (Zhao, Lynch, and Chen, 2010). That is, on the two paths of transformational leadership to service delivery innovation and of transactional leadership to service delivery innovation, market knowledge had a complete mediation effect. Thus, hypothesis 4 and 5 was supported.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and implications

First, past studies all used motivation to determine the influence of leadership style (e.g., Su et al., 2020). Transformational leaders tend to inspire internal motivation, whereas transactional leaders adopt error control to control their employees and often offer external rewards. The output and process viewpoints of manufacturing practitioners differ greatly from those of practitioners in the service industry. The products of the manufacturing industry are more tangible and concrete, whereas the service industry focuses on the management of the service process. Service process quality is often more critical than the product itself (Honarpour et al., 2018). A previous study uncovered that the core of the service industry lies in service value, which differs from general tangible products, whose core lies in the demonstration of product functions (Hu et al., 2009). Service personnel's professional knowledge and experience can hardly be presented concretely or externally, but they remain precious assets to the service industry (Chen and Lee, 2017). Therefore, this study offers a perspective for different industries, which can mend discrepancies arising from using different perspectives to understand organizational innovation.

Second, this study detailed the mediation mechanism of leadership style in service delivery innovation, which is the promotion of the market knowledge of organization members. That is, leadership style promotes the sharing of knowledge among members, and the accumulated knowledge can further affect how an organization demonstrates service delivery innovation (Zhu and Zhang, 2019).

5.2. Conclusion

Past studies revealed that to discuss organizational innovation, we must simultaneously consider the internal and external motivation of employees, the overall effect, and organization's external environmental factors (Amabile and Pratt, 2016; Yoo, Jang, Ho, Seo, and Yoo, 2019). The results of this study demonstrated that although the management concept and value underlying a leadership style benefit organizational innovation, the detailed effects differed. From the perspective of motivation, managers can consider constructing a comprehensive reward system and a mechanism to clarify goals (to provide external motivation), communicating organizational target values and inspiring employee potential (to increase internal motivation), and even uniting organization members and their beliefs (i.e., external environment) to achieve the ultimate goal of increasing organizational innovation. This study offers other practical suggestions.

The market knowledge an organization possesses is a critical mediating mechanism. From the perspective of knowledge management and knowledge sharing, this study revealed that in the process of their leadership style influencing organizational innovation, transformational leaders can better inspire employee internal motivation so that organizational members will be more willing to obtain external market knowledge and to share knowledge within the organization, thereby promoting the innovation of organizational processes. An organization can even provide platforms for knowledge exchange to facilitate sharing, and it can keep individual employee knowledge within the organization, which will be conducive to organization innovation.

5.3. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

First, although this study confirmed that it did not have a severe common-method variance problem, future researchers are advised to adopt multiple data collection methods. Second, other leadership styles or variables related to organizational capacity may be included in the research framework for discussion. For example, Dai et al. (2015) proposed the leader–member exchange relationship. Although the impact of these constructs was not the focus of this study, future studies may consider including them to construct a more comprehensive model.

REFERENCES

Amabile, T. M., & Pratt, M. G. (2016). The dynamic componential model of creativity and innovation in organizations: Making progress, making meaning. *Research in Organizational Behavior, 36*, 157-183.

Armstrong, J. S., & Overton, T. S. (1977). Estimating nonresponse bias in mail surveys. *Journal of Marketing Research, 14*(3), 396-402.

Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectations.* Free Press; Collier Macmillan.

Blau, P. M. (1964). *Exchange and power in social life.* New York, NY. J. Wiley.

Bollen, K. A. (1989). *Structural Equations with Latent Variables.* New York: John Wiley.

Banmairuroy, W., Kritjaroen, T., & Homsombat, W. (2022). The effect of knowledge-oriented leadership and human resource development on sustainable competitive advantage through organizational innovation's component factors: Evidence from Thailand's new S-curve industries. *Asia Pac. Manag. Rev*, *27*(3), 200–209.

Chang, J., Bai, X., & Li, J. J. (2015). The influence of leadership on product and service delivery innovations in China: The contingent role of knowledge acquisition capability. *Industrial Marketing Management, 50*, 18-29.

Chen, K. Y., & Huan, T. C. (2020). Facilitating weaker firms' market knowledge in asymmetric B2B relationship from structure, process, and strategy aspects: A case of travel industry. *Journal of Knowledge Management, 24*(3), 697-716.

Chen, K. Y., & Lee, C. F. (2017). Market knowledge of the travel industry from knowledge-based view: A case of two Taiwanese travel agencies. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research, 22*(7), 781-797.

Chughtai, M.S., & Khan, H.S. (2024). Knowledge oriented leadership and employees' innovative performance: a moderated mediation model. *Current Psychology*, *43*, 3426–3439.

Dai, Y. D., Chen, K. Y., & Zhuang, W. L. (2015). Moderating effect of work-family conflict on the relationship between leader-member exchange and relative deprivation: links to behavioral outcomes. *Tourism Management, 54*, 369-382.

De Luca, L. M., & Atuahene-Gima, K. (2007). Market knowledge dimensions and cross-functional collaboration: Examining the different routes to product innovation performance. *Journal of Marketing, 71*(1), 95-112.

Donate M. J., & Sánchez de Pablo, J. D. (2015). The role of knowledge-oriented leadership in knowledge management practices and innovation. *Journal of Business Research, 68*(2), 360–370.

Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research, 18*(1), 39-50.

Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2010). Multivariate data analysis. (7th ed.) N.J.: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Honarpour, A., Jusoh, A., & Nor, K. M. (2018). Total quality management, knowledge management, and innovation: an empirical study in RandD units. *Total Quality Management and Business Excellence, 29*(7-8), 798-816.

Hu, M. L. M., Horng, J. S., & Sun, Y. H. C. (2009). Hospitality teams: Knowledge sharing and service innovation performance. *Tourism Management, 30*(1), 41-50.

Johnson, M. W., Christensen, C. M., & Kagermann, H. (2008). Reinventing your business model. *Harvard Business Review, 86*(12), 57-68.

Kim, D. Y., Kumar, V., & Kumar, U. (2012). Relationship between quality management practices and innovation. *Journal of Operations Management, 30*, 295-315.

Li, T., & Calantone, R. J. (1998). The impact of market knowledge competence on new product advantage: Conceptualization and empirical examination. *Journal of Marketing, 62*(4), 13-29.

Martín-de Castro, G. (2015). Knowledge management and innovation in knowledge-based and high-tech industrial markets: The role of openness and absorptive capacity. *Industrial Marketing Management, 47*, 143-146.

Manzoor, Amna, Zhang, B., & Ma, H. 2023. Knowledge-Oriented Leadership in Powering Team Performance and Sustainable Competitive Advantages through Innovation: Evidence from Higher Education Institutions. *Sustainability*, *15*(20), 14715.

Nieves, J., & Haller, S. (2014). Building dynamic capabilities through knowledge resources. *Tourism Management, 40*, 224–232.

Peet, M. (2012). Leadership transitions, tacit knowledge sharing and organizational generativity. *Journal of Knowledge Management, 16*(1), 45-60.

Podsakoff, P. M., & Organ, D. W. (1986). Self-reports in organizational research: Problems and prospects. *Journal of Management, 12*(4), 531-544.

Preacher, K. J., & Hayes, A. F. (2008). Asymptotic and resampling strategies for assessing and comparing indirect effects in multiple mediator models. *Behavior Research Methods, 40*(3), 879-891.

Chaithanapat, P., Punnakitikashem, P., Oo, N. C. K. K., & Rakthin, S. (2022). Relationships among knowledge-oriented leadership, customer knowledge management, innovation quality and firm performance in SMEs. *Journal of Innovation & Knowledge*, *7*(1), 1-10.

Ribière, V. M., & Sitar, A. S. (2003). Critical role of leadership in nurturing a knowledge-supporting culture. Knowledge *Management Research & Practice, 1*(1), 39-48.

Rodan, S., & Galunic, C. (2004). More than network structure: How knowledge heterogeneity influences managerial performance and innovativeness. *Strategic Management Journal, 25*(6), 541-562.

Sin, L. Y. M., Tse, A. C. B., Heung, V. C. S., & Yim, F. H. K. (2005). An analysis of the relationship between market orientation and business performance in the hotel industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 24*(4), 555-577.

Su, X., Xu, A., Lin, W., Chen, Y., Liu, S., & Xu, W. (2020). Environmental leadership, green innovation practices, environmental knowledge learning, and firm performance. *Sage Open*, *10*(2), 1-14.

Turkson, E. R., & Riley, M. (2008). The problem of eliciting management knowledge: A case of research into hospitality management knowledge. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 27*(4), 584–593.

Wang, C. L., & Ahmed, P. K. (2004). The development and validation of the organizational innovativeness construct using confirmatory factor analysis. *European Journal of Innovation Management, 7*(4), 303-313.

Weerawardena, J., O'Cass, A., & Julian, C. (2006). Does industry matter? Examining the role of industry structure and organizational learning in innovation and brand performance. *Journal of Business Research*, *59*, 37-45.

Wu, L. Y., Chen, P.Y., & Chen, K.Y. (2015). Why does loyalty-cooperation behavior vary over buyer-seller relationship? *Journal of Business Research*, *68*(11), 2322-2329.

Yammarino, F. J., Dubinsky, A. J., Comer, L. B., & Jolson, M. A. (1997). Women and transformational and contingent reward leadership: A multiple-levels-of-analysis perspective. *Academy of Management Journal, 40*(1), 205-222.

Yang, J. T. (2004). Qualitative knowledge capturing and organizational learning: Two case studies in Taiwan hotels. *Tourism Management, 25*(4), 421–428.

Yoo, S., Jang, S., Ho, Y., Seo, J., & Yoo, M. H. (2019). Fostering workplace creativity: Examining the roles of job design and organizational context. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources, 57*(2), 127-149.

Zhao, L., Lu, Y., Wang, B., Chau, P. Y., & Zhang, L. (2012). Cultivating the sense of belonging and motivating user participation in virtual communities: A social capital perspective. *International Journal of Information Management, 32*(6), 574-588.

Zhao, X., Lynch, J. G., & Chen, Q. (2010). Reconsidering Baron and Kenny: Myths and truths about mediation analysis. *Journal of Consumer Research, 37*(2), 197-206.

Zhou, K. Z., & Li, C. B. (2012). How knowledge affects radical innovation: Knowledge base, market knowledge acquisition and internal knowledge sharing. *Strategic Management Journal, 33*(9), 1090-1102.

Zhu, C., & Zhang, F. (2019). How does servant leadership fuel employee innovative behavior? A moderated mediation framework. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources, 58*(3), 356-377.

Defensive versus Adaptive: Examining strategic decisions on short-term rental property design

Zhang, Huihui
Feiertag Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Virginia Tech

Zach, Florian J.
Feiertag Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Virginia Tech

Xiang, Zheng
Feiertag Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Virginia Tech

Abstract:

This research aims to identify the effectiveness of two strategic orientations of short-term rental design: adaptative versus defensive. The adaptative approach suggests that hosts should design properties by following neighboring rivals, whereas the defensive orientation indicates defending cost efficiency by keeping a high consistency among the listings under the same host. The results identify benefits in both strategic choices but found conflict under high geographic dispersion. It brings theoretical contributions and offers guidance for practitioners.

Understanding hospitality students' intentions to reduce food waste: Integrating cognitive and non-cognitive factors within the TPB-TIB framework

Junsuthonpoj, Sumeth
Faculty of Hospitality Management
Dusit Thani College

Roswarn, Visawat
Faculty of Hospitality Management
Dusit Thani College

Abstract:

The food waste (FW) problem is so serious that are concerns about environmental impacts. This research aims to examine cognitive and non-cognitive factors determinants of hospitality students towards FW behaviour within the framework of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) extended with the Theory of Interpersonal Behaviour (TIB). The research findings have led to the conclusions that the hospitality school students' cognitive and non-cognitive factors are related to intentions to reduce FW behaviour significantly. Emotions, including both positive and negative, also play a crucial role in shaping intentions. The findings suggest the importance of integrating cognitive and non-cognitive factors in understanding FW behavior. While cognitive factors influence intentions, emotions also significantly impact behavioral decisions. The study highlights the need for targeted interventions to address FW reduction efforts, considering both cognitive and non-cognitive determinants of behavior.

Keywords: Food Waste, Behaviour, Attitude, TPB

1. Introduction

Food waste (FW) is a pressing global issue with far-reaching consequences, including environmental degradation, economic inefficiencies, and exacerbation of food insecurity. Recent estimates suggest that approximately 1.3 billion tonnes of food, suitable for human consumption, are lost or wasted annually, amounting to one-third of the food produced for human consumption worldwide (FAO, 2019). As the impact of FW increases, the problem of hunger may worsen and become a problem of starvation (Özdemir and Güçlü, 2018). In general, FW exhibits variations influenced by the socioeconomic dynamics of different countries. Beyond the direct environmental costs associated with FW, such as the depletion of natural resources and the release of greenhouse gas emissions, the drivers of FW in developing or underdeveloped nations extend beyond solely socioeconomic factors (Buzby et al., 2012). For instance, in Thailand, the reasons for FW are multifaceted and encompass a range of socio-cultural, infrastructural, and institutional factors. Moreover, institutional factors, including weak regulatory frameworks and limited access to FW management technologies and expertise, pose significant challenges in addressing FW effectively (Bellemare et al., 2017). In Thailand, despite growing awareness of FW issues, there remains a gap between policy formulation and implementation, hindering progress in FW reduction efforts (ReFED, 2020).

In the hospitality industry of Thailand, FW poses significant challenges, reflecting broader global trends while also presenting unique contextual factors. Research indicates that FW in hospitality establishments accounts for a considerable portion of overall waste generation, with hotels, restaurants, and catering services contributing substantially to the issue (Chang et al., 2019). The situation is exacerbated by cultural norms emphasizing hospitality and abundance, leading to generous portion sizes and buffet-style dining, which can result in excess food being prepared and subsequently discarded (Lee & Padilla, 2020). Furthermore, inadequate infrastructure and lack of proper waste management systems in many hospitality facilities contribute to FW, with limited options for composting or recycling organic waste (Rattanapan et al., 2018). Despite growing awareness of FW issues in the industry, there remains a need for concerted efforts to address the problem effectively. Initiatives such as food waste audits, staff training programs on portion control and food handling practices, and collaborations with food donation organizations are emerging as potential strategies to mitigate FW in the hospitality sector of Thailand (Numpaqueen et al., 2021). However, more research and targeted interventions are required to develop sustainable solutions that align with the unique challenges and opportunities within the Thai hospitality industry.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), proposed by Ajzen in 1991, offers a theoretical framework elucidating the role of behavioral intention as a primary determinant of subsequent behavior. Within this framework, attitudes toward behavior, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms collectively shape individuals' intentions, thereby influencing their actions (Ajzen, 1991). This suggests that individuals engage in a cognitive process wherein they anticipate the outcomes of their behavior, make decisions accordingly, and act to achieve desired outcomes. Notably, intention formation is significantly influenced by attitudes, which encompass individuals' evaluations of the behavior in question (Ajzen, 1991). Building upon the TPB, Aydin and Aydin (2022) argue that consumers' attitudes toward waste avoidance, perceptions of control over their actions, and adherence to societal norms regarding waste reduction play pivotal roles in shaping their intentions to minimize food waste. Consequently, these intentions are likely to influence consumers' actual behavior in terms of waste generation and disposal practices. Thus, the TPB serves as a valuable tool for understanding and measuring behavior, particularly within the context of food waste management in the hospitality industry.

While existing literature has predominantly examined cognitive determinants like normative aspects and attitudes to comprehend food waste (FW) behaviors (Stancu et al., 2016), recent research has begun to shed light on the role of emotional factors in shaping consumers' FW intentions (Talwar et al., 2022). Specifically, emotions such as anticipated pride have emerged as significant influencers of individuals' intentions to mitigate FW. Despite this recognition, there remains a notable gap in the literature regarding the differential impacts of positive and negative emotions on attitudes and intentions toward FW. While emotions encompass a spectrum of positive and negative states, research into how these emotional dimensions distinctly influence FW attitudes and intentions remains limited. This highlights the need for further exploration into the nuanced interplay between emotions and cognitive factors in shaping FW behaviors, thus providing a more comprehensive understanding of the psychological mechanisms driving FW reduction efforts.

This study aims to investigate the multifaceted determinants of FW behaviors among hospitality students, encompassing both cognitive factors, such as attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavior, and knowledge, as well as non-cognitive factors, including emotions. By surveying students at Dusit Thani College (DTC) in Bangkok, this research seeks to elucidate the interplay between cognitive and emotional factors in shaping FW behaviors within the hospitality education context. The data collected will be utilized to construct and test a comprehensive conceptual model of FW behavior, drawing upon theoretical frameworks such as the TPB and the TIB. The findings will provide valuable insights for developing tailored interventions and strategies aimed at reducing FW within educational contexts.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

The TPB has been extensively employed to elucidate behavioral intentions across various domains, including environmental behavior, encompassing food-related actions. Kaiser et al. (1999) proposed a model wherein environmental attitude emerged as a robust predictor of environmental behavior. In their study, Ajzen's TPB was applied to validate three measures—environmental knowledge, environmental values, and environmental behavioral intention—as orthogonal dimensions through factor analysis. The results indicated that environmental knowledge and environmental values collectively accounted for 40% of the variance in environmental behavioral intention. Subsequently, this behavioral intention was found to predict 75% of the variance in overall environmental behavior. The TPB posits that behavior is directly influenced by intentions, which are, in turn, shaped by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (PBC) (Stancu et al., 2016).

Attitudes toward food waste management behaviors play a pivotal role in shaping individuals' actions and decisions regarding food consumption and disposal practices. These attitudes encompass individuals' positive or negative evaluations of efforts aimed at reducing food waste. Russell et al. (2017) explored the role of attitudes in shaping consumers' intentions and behaviors related to food waste reduction. The study found that individuals with positive attitudes toward minimizing food waste were more likely to adopt sustainable consumption practices, such as purchasing imperfect produce and repurposing leftovers. Furthermore, studies have highlighted the importance of targeted interventions aimed at shaping individuals' attitudes toward food waste reduction. For example, Evans et al. (2013) investigated the effectiveness of educational campaigns in promoting attitudes conducive to reducing food waste. For instance, research by Thøgersen (2004) conducted research examining the relationship between attitudes toward reducing food waste and actual behavioral engagement in food waste reduction practices. The findings revealed that individuals with more favorable attitudes toward reducing food waste demonstrated a higher likelihood of engaging in behaviors such as meal planning and proper food storage.

Subjective norms play a crucial role in shaping individuals' decisions and behaviors related to food waste reduction by reflecting their perceptions of social pressures or expectations in this regard. Barr et al. (2015) explored the role of cultural and social influences on subjective norms regarding food waste management across different cultural contexts. Their study revealed the nuanced ways in which subjective norms vary across cultural settings, highlighting the importance of considering cultural factors when designing interventions to promote food waste reduction. Moreover, interventions targeting subjective norms have shown promise in promoting sustainable food consumption practices and mitigating food waste. Russell et al. (2017) investigated the effectiveness of interventions aimed at altering subjective norms related to food waste reduction behaviors. The findings underscored the potential of interventions to reshape individuals' perceptions of social norms surrounding food waste management, thereby fostering intentions and behaviors conducive to waste reduction. In summary, subjective norms exert a significant influence on individuals' intentions and behaviors regarding food waste reduction.

Perceived behavioral control reflects individuals' beliefs about their ability to reduce food waste effectively. Evans et al. (2013) examined the effectiveness of educational interventions in empowering individuals to exert greater control over their food waste reduction efforts. Their findings underscored the potential of interventions to bolster individuals' perceived control, thereby facilitating the adoption of sustainable consumption behaviors. Additionally, interventions aimed at enhancing individuals' perceived control over food waste reduction behaviors, Russell et al. (2017) explored the role of perceived control in driving individuals' engagement in food waste reduction practices. Their research highlighted the significant influence of perceived control over food waste reduction behaviors on individuals' intentions and actions to minimize waste. In summary, perceived behavioral control plays a critical role in influencing individuals' intentions and behaviors related to food waste reduction.

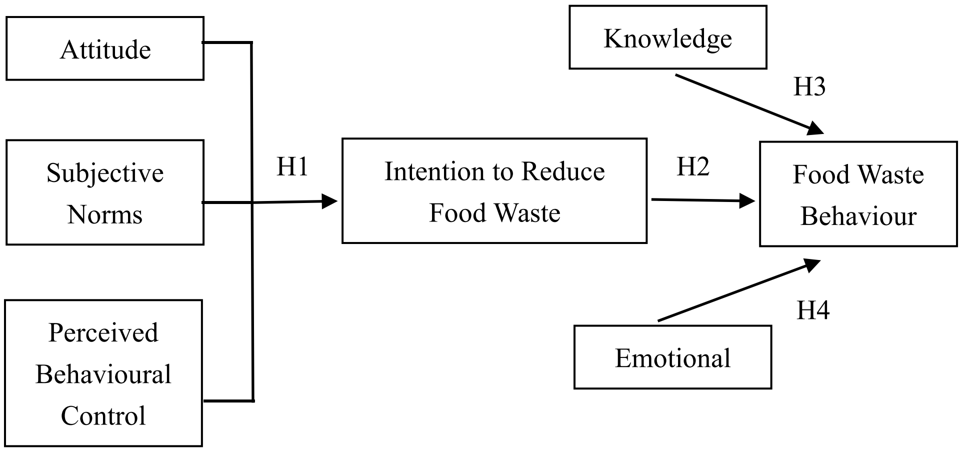
Research has consistently demonstrated a significant relationship between knowledge about food waste (FW) reduction practices and individuals' FW behavior. Individuals who possess greater knowledge about FW reduction strategies are more likely to engage in behaviors aimed at minimizing waste. This relationship underscores the importance of education and awareness initiatives in promoting sustainable FW management practices. For instance, a study by Vermeir and Verbeke (2008) found that individuals with higher levels of knowledge about FW reduction were more inclined to adopt sustainable food consumption practices. These findings highlight the critical role of knowledge acquisition in shaping attitudes and behaviors toward FW reduction, emphasizing the need for educational interventions to enhance public awareness and understanding of FW issues.

Accordingly, it is anticipated that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control will collectively explain a substantial portion of the variance in individuals' intentions related to FW reduction. Moreover, in line with the tenets of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), researchers anticipate that intention will serve as a significant negative predictor of FW behavior, signifying that heightened intentions to mitigate food waste will correspond with reduced observed FW behavior (Russell, 2017). The framework of the conceptual model is shown in Figure 1, and the following research hypotheses (Hs) were formulated:

H1: Attitudes, Subjective norms and Perceived behavioural control of FW will be related to intentions to reduce food waste.H2: Intentions to reduce FW will be related to FW behaviour.

H3: Knowledge in FW reduction will be related to FW behaviour.

Figure 1. Conceptual model framework to determine of FW behaviour



2.2. The Theory of Interpersonal Behaviour (TIB)

The TIB, introduced by Triandis in 1997, underscores the pivotal role of emotions as a key driver of behavior. Researchers posit that emotions are likely to exert significant influence on FW behavior, providing a more comprehensive understanding of factors contributing to individuals' adoption of FW reduction practices. The TIB framework offers insights into the broader spectrum of determinants that may lead to the personal adoption of FW reduction practices. Despite the acknowledged importance of emotions in shaping behavior, previous research has highlighted a noticeable gap in studies emphasizing the non-cognitive determinants of FW behavior. However, investigations into pro-environmental behavior have demonstrated the significance of non-cognitive variables, particularly emotions, as influential drivers of behavior (Russell, 2017). Recent studies have further indicated that emotions influence conservation decisions, with evidence suggesting that positive emotions may also play a crucial role in determining environmentally relevant behaviors.

Previous research has utilized the Theory of Interpersonal Behavior (TIB) to investigate the influence of emotions on behavioral intentions across various domains, including healthcare (Kupfer et al., 2019) and travel and tourism (Pronello, 2018). While limited studies have explored the relationship between emotions and food waste using TIB (e.g., Russell et al., 2017; Attiq et al., 2021), its effectiveness in elucidating the impact of emotions on consumer decisions across diverse contexts renders it a suitable conceptual framework for this study. TIB offers a sound theoretical basis for examining emotions, with a demonstrated history of predicting key factors such as attitudes and behavioral intentions. Moreover, TIB has been successfully applied in previous research to investigate consumer food waste behaviors within household settings (Attiq et al., 2021). Building upon this foundation, the current study leverages TIB to explore the complex interplay between emotions and food waste behaviors among hospitality students. By adopting TIB as a conceptual anchor, this research aims to expand our understanding of the underlying mechanisms driving FW behaviors, thereby contributing to the broader literature on sustainable consumption practices within the hospitality industry and beyond.

This study, grounded in both cognitive and non-cognitive determinants to offer a comprehensive understanding of FW behavior. Building upon existing research, additional studies have delved into the intricate interplay between emotions and FW behavior. For instance, investigations by Pinto et al. (2016) have explored the emotional responses elicited by FW reduction initiatives and their subsequent impact on individuals' behavioral intentions. These studies underscore the multifaceted nature of emotions in influencing FW behavior, highlighting the need for further exploration within this domain. The intricate connections between this multifaceted behavior and the diverse components outlined within this conceptual model framework are depicted in Figure 1. Subsequently, the following research hypotheses (H4) were formulated:

H4: Emotions in response to FW will be related to FW behaviour.

While the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and Theory of Interpersonal Behavior (TIB) has been utilized to qualitatively assess food waste behaviors, there remains a notable gap in quantitative, generalizable research employing this framework to elucidate the determinants of consumer food waste behaviors. The inclusion of emotions and knowledge in this study aligns with recent scholarly discourse acknowledging the profound influence of emotions on behavioral decision-making processes. The theoretical integration of these variables acknowledges the significance of non-cognitive determinants in shaping intentions and behaviors, complementing traditional cognitive factors. Moreover, from a practical standpoint, the findings of this research hold pragmatic implications for various groups and organizations aiming to influence college students' food waste behaviors. By recognizing the multifaceted nature of factors influencing food waste behaviors, interventions and strategies can be developed to effectively address and mitigate food waste at both individual and societal levels. This comprehensive approach, encompassing both theoretical insights and practical applications, underscores the importance of advancing our understanding of food waste behaviors and implementing evidence-based interventions to foster sustainable consumption practices.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data collection

A comprehensive online questionnaire study will be administered to participants to investigate various factors related to FW reduction behavior. The questionnaire comprises several independent measures, including demographic characteristics, attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control (PBC), emotions, knowledge, intention to reduce FW, and actual FW reduction behavior. The target population consists of 365 hospitality students enrolled at Dusit Thani College (DTC) in Bangkok. Participation in all four survey components of this study is mandatory for respondents.

The initial questionnaire survey encompasses inquiries regarding demographic characteristics, attitudes, subjective norms, PBC, intention to reduce FW, and past FW reduction behavior. Subsequently, a second survey will assess respondents' emotions and knowledge pertaining to FW reduction practices. Participants will indicate their level of agreement with statements using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). The validity and reliability of the scales utilized in these studies have been confirmed through rigorous analyses.

3.2. Data analysis

The quantitative data acquired will be subjected to analysis utilizing descriptive statistics, including measures such as mean and standard deviation, as well as inter-correlations among both independent and dependent variables. Specifically, variables such as attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control (PBC), knowledge, emotional responses, and behavioral intentions will be assessed for their internal reliability through Pearson correlation analysis. This analytical approach aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationships between these variables and their influence on FW behaviors among hospitality students, within the context of the Theory of Interpersonal Behavior (TIB).

4. Results

4.1. Profile of the respondents

Based on a survey conducted among 365 hospitality students, the demographic distribution revealed a majority of male respondents, comprising 59.5% of the sample, while the remaining 40.5% were female. In terms of academic year, the majority of participants were in their first year of study, accounting for 57.5% of the total, followed by second-year students constituting 18.6%. Notably, the predominant area of study among respondents was kitchen management and culinary arts, encompassing 95.1% of the surveyed cohort. In terms of monthly expenditure on food, the majority of participants reported expenditures falling within the range of 5,001 to 10,000 baht, representing 54.0% of the sample, followed by expenditures below 5,000 baht, comprising 29.6% of respondents.

4.1. Hypothesis testing

The analysis examined the relationship between participants' behaviors influencing FW generation, as delineated in Table 1. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) presented in the table ranges from -1 to 1, where negative values (-) indicate an inverse relationship, positive values (+) signify a direct relationship, and a value of 0 denotes no correlation. The findings of the analysis revealed statistically significant support for Hypothesis 1 (H1), indicating that attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control (PBC) were positively associated with the intention to reduce food waste (r = 0.274, r = 0.496, and r = 0.422, respectively) at the 0.05 significance level.

Table 1. Shown Pearson Correlation analysis on TPB

	Attitude		Subjective Norms		PBC		Intention to Reduce FW	
	r	Sig	r	Sig	r	Sig	r	Sig
Attitude	1		-0.086	0.100	0.374*	0.000	0.274*	0.000
Subjective Norms			1		0.117*	0.025	0.496*	0.000
PBC					1		0.422*	0.000

Intention to Reduce FW	1	0.000

According to Table 2, a significant correlation was observed between the intention to reduce food waste and actual food waste behavior (H2) (r = 0.504) at the 0.05 significance level, indicating a consistent relationship. Similarly, Table 3 revealed a positive correlation between knowledge and food waste behavior (H3) (r = 0.168), which was statistically significant. Additionally, the analysis demonstrated that emotions were associated with food waste behavior (H4), with a correlation coefficient of r = 0.433 ($p < 0.001$), indicating a significant positive relationship between the two variables.

Table 2. Relationship between opinions on FW reduction intentions and FW behaviors.

	FW Behaviour	
	r	Sig
Intention to Reduce FW	0.504*	0.000

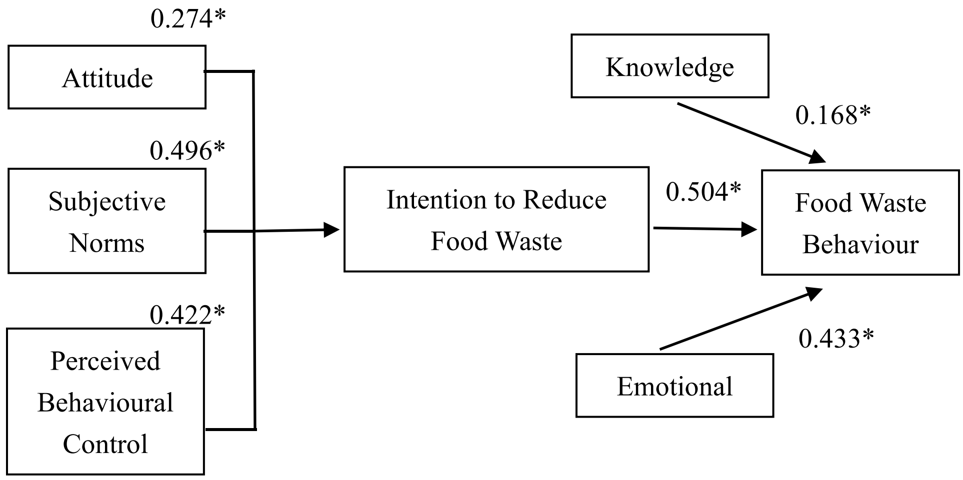
Table 3. Relationship between Knowledge in FW reduction and FW reduction behaviors.

	FW Behaviour	
	r	Sig
Knowledge	0.168*	0.001

Table 4. Relationship between Emotions in response to FW and FW reduction behaviors.

	Food Waste Behaviour	
	r	Sig
Emotional	0.433*	0.000

Figure 2. Results of level of internal reliability by Pearson correlation.



5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and implications

In accordance with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), it is anticipated that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (PBC) will serve as positive predictors of intentions to reduce food waste. Additionally, intentions are expected to be a significant and negative predictor of food waste behavior, indicating that stronger intentions to reduce food waste should correspond to lower levels of food waste behavior. In line with the Theory of Interpersonal Behavior (TIB), emotions are deemed significant predictors of behavioral intentions. These findings provide empirical evidence supporting the significant influence of knowledge and emotions on driving food waste behavior. Our results contribute to a more comprehensive model of food waste behavior, consistent with theories such as the Theory of Interpersonal Behavior (Triandis, 1977) and the Comprehensive Model of Environmental Behavior (Klöckner, 2013), which emphasize the pivotal role of emotions and knowledge in shaping behavior related to food waste.

The outcomes are deliberated in connection with the impact of consumer practices concerning attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, following TPB principles. Despite subjective norms endorsing the avoidance of food waste, attitudes toward food waste avoidance appear nonsignificant, failing to translate into reduced levels of food waste. This trend potentially leads to a surplus of food, stemming from either overbuying or over-preparation, thereby resulting in increased leftovers. A paradox emerges, as avoiding food waste is also regarded as one of the foremost issues related to food consumption. This study advocates for supplementary frameworks for the TPB that account for the contradictory interaction between concern and intentions. Although self-reporting questionnaires may introduce systematic biases, the findings indicate a potential inclination toward an awareness of food waste that may be driven by economic, ethical, or environmental motivations. While hypotheses H1, H2, and H3 were affirmed, these practices also center on respondents' perceptions related to food waste, such as an appreciation for food abundance and self-image perceptions.

In contrast to hypothesis H4, positive emotions were found to be associated with intentions. One possible explanation for this outcome could be that students who harbor positive emotions about food waste may not contemplate it sufficiently to reassess their future intentions. Drawing from prior research (Bamberg and Möser, 2007), we anticipated that heightened emotional experiences would lead to increased intentions to reduce food waste and subsequently result in consistent reductions in food waste behavior (Bamberg and Möser, 2007). However, our findings suggest an inverse relationship between emotions and subsequent behavior, indicating that despite intending to reduce food waste, individuals experiencing negative emotions do not effectively translate these intentions into behavior.

In other words, users with relaxed attitudes about food waste may not feel compelled to alter their intentions to reduce food waste in their lives. Another plausible explanation for this result could lie in the varying feelings and perceptions of users, which may not simultaneously influence attitudes and intentions, as observed in previous studies. However, a definitive conclusion awaits further examination in different settings and with a larger dataset. These findings underscore the complexity of the relationship between emotions, intentions, and behavior concerning food waste reduction. Despite individuals' intentions to mitigate food waste, negative emotional experiences may hinder their ability to enact behavioral changes effectively. This highlights the necessity for further research to elucidate the underlying mechanisms driving this discrepancy and to develop targeted interventions addressing both emotional responses and behavioral outcomes in food waste reduction initiatives.

The findings of our study carry implications for both scholars and practitioners alike. Our results underscore the significance of integrating knowledge and emotions alongside traditional cognitive predictors in elucidating food waste behavior. While this approach may effectively enhance intentions to reduce food waste, it may not necessarily translate into tangible reductions in food waste behavior. In fact, interventions that evoke negative emotions could potentially exacerbate food waste behavior, suggesting that such strategies might inadvertently yield adverse outcomes. This discovery holds implications for pro-environmental behavior campaigns beyond food waste, particularly those employing negative messaging.

Furthermore, our findings suggest that fostering stronger subjective norms and instilling a greater sense of control may offer more efficacious avenues for altering food waste behavior. This could entail initiatives that highlight the actions taken by others within educational settings to curtail food waste, such as optimizing food storage, meal planning, and utilizing leftover food, thereby encouraging students to diminish their food waste footprint. Our results underscore the complexity of food waste behavior and emphasize the pivotal roles of knowledge and emotions in shaping behaviors within educational contexts. This insight is critical for refining theoretical models of food waste behavior, suggesting that frameworks neglecting the influence of habits and emotions may inadequately capture the psychological underpinnings of food waste behavior.

5.2. Conclusion

This quantitative study aims to investigate the food waste behavior of college students by employing a comprehensive model that integrates cognitive factors, determined by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, in line with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), and non-cognitive factors, determined by emotions, in accordance with the Theory of Interpersonal Behavior (Triandis, 1977). While there is some alignment between survey respondents' self-reported and curbside avoidable food-wasting behavior, this study demonstrates that the extended Theory of Planned Behavior effectively analyzes the influence of variables in the context of non-wasting food behavior and the intention not to waste food. Considering these findings, both cognitive and non-cognitive factors emerge as determinants of hospitality students' food waste behavior in Bangkok.

5.3. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

There are several limitations to the research model in this study. Firstly, only three new internal variables, emotions, and knowledge, were added to the model to extend the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). To enhance the comprehensiveness of the model, additional variables such as habits, donation behavior, concern, and personality could be incorporated. Secondly, the study focused solely on assessing food waste behavior among students in a hospitality school in Bangkok. Further research could explore food wastage in other geographical areas and among different demographic groups to provide a more comprehensive understanding. Lastly, the study introduced the model of intention not to waste food and non-wasting food behavior as external variables. However, these variables may be perceived differently in other cultures, where FW prevention intention and behavior might have distinct meanings and implications.

REFERENCES

Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 179–211.

Amato, M., Verneau, F., Coppola, A., La Barbera, F., 2021. Domestic food waste and Covid19 concern: an application of the theory of planned behaviour. *Sustainability*, 13 (15),1–12.

Attiq, S., Shah, S. M. M., Mubeen, R., & Rizwan, M. (2021). Investigating the role of emotions in reducing food waste: A study on young consumers. *British Food Journal*, 123(9-10), 3103-3119.

Aydin, H. and Aydin, C., (2022). Investigating consumers' FW behaviours: An extended theory of planned behaviour of Turkey sample. *Cleaner Waste Systems,3*, 100036

Bamberg, S., & Möser, G. (2007). Twenty years after Hines, Hungerford, and Tomera: A new meta-analysis of psycho-social determinants of pro-environmental behaviour. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 27(1), 14-25.

Barr, S., Gilg, A. W., & Shaw, G. (2015). Pro-environmental behaviour and the countryside: Evidence from surveys of rural residents in England and Wales. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 38, 51-64.

Bellemare, M. F., Çakir, M., & Peterson, H. H. (2017). The Short-Run Impact of Raising Economic Damages from Food Safety Incidents. *Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics*, 42(1), 109-124.

Buzby, J. C., Hyman, J., & Stewart, H. (2014). Total and Per Capita Value of Food Loss in the United States. *Food Policy*, 37, 561-570

Chang, S. H., Lee, S. Y., & Lee, M. S. (2019). Analysis of Food Waste Generation in Hotels. *Sustainability*, 11(10), 2807.

Evans, D., Abouzeid, M., & Leckie, G. (2013). Understanding the drivers of food waste in hospitality: Insights from the UK. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 33, 19-27.

FAO. (2019). The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World. Rome, Italy: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Giordano, C., Piras, S., Boschini, M., & Falasconi, L. (2018). Are questionnaires a reliable method to measure food waste? A pilot study on Italian households. *British Food Journal*. 120: 2885–2897.

Kaiser, F. G., Wölfing, S., & Fuhrer, U. (1999). Environmental attitude and ecological behavior. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 19(1), 1-19.

Klöckner, C. A. (2013). A comprehensive model of the psychology of environmental behaviour—A meta-analysis. *Global Environmental Change*, 23(5), 1028-1038.

Lee, E. Y., & Padilla, J. (2020). Sustainability initiatives in the hotel industry: A comparison between the US and Thailand. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 42, 100-108.

Loebnitz, N., Schuitema, G., & Grunert, K. G. (2015). Who buys oddly shaped food and why? Impacts of food shape abnormality and organic labeling on purchase intentions. *Psychology & Marketing*, 32(4), 408-421.

Numpaqueen, P., Siengthai, S., & Kamnerdtim, S. (2021). Food waste management in the hotel industry in Thailand: A literature review. *International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Science*, 23, 100285.

Pinto, F. M., Silva, J. A., & Filho, M. G. (2016). Determinants of food waste in the context of developing countries: The case of Brazil. *Waste Management*, 47, 15-23.

Pronello, C. (2018). An assessment of attitudes, emotions, and subjective norms toward sustainable travel behavior: A case study of urban commuters in Italy. *Transportation Research Part F: Traffic Psychology and Behaviour*, 53, 44-56.

Porpino, G. (2016). Household food waste behavior: Avenues for future research. *Journal of the Association for Consumer Research*, 1(1), 41-51.

Stancu, V., Haugaard, P., Lahteenmaki, L., (2016). Determinants of consumer food waste behaviour: Two routes to food waste. *Appetite*. 96, 7-17

Rattanapan, K., Boonyawat, P., & Dulyakasem, K. (2018). Food waste management practices among hotels in Phuket, Thailand. *Environment, Development and Sustainability*, 20(4), 1485-1500.

ReFED. (2020). *A roadmap to reduce U.S. food waste by 50%.* https://refed.org/uploads/refed_roadmap2030-FINAL.pdf

Russell, S. V., Young, C. W., Unsworth, K. L., Robinson, C., (2017). Bringing habits and emotions into food waste behaviour. *Resources Conservation & Recycling*. 125,107–114.

Talwar, S., Kaur, P., Ahmed, U., Bilgihan, A., & Dhir, A. (2023). The dark side of convenience: How to reduce FW induced by food delivery apps. *British Food Journal*, 125(1), 205-225.

Thøgersen, J. (2004). A cognitive dissonance interpretation of consistencies and inconsistencies in environmentally responsible behavior. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 24(1), 93-103.

Triandis, H.G., (1977). *Interpersonal Behaviour*. Brooks/Cole Pub Co.

Özdemir, G. and Güçlü, E., (2018). FW management within sustainability perspective: a study on five-star chain hotels. *Journal of Tourism and Gastronomy Studies*, 6 (1), pp. 280-299

Vermeir, I., & Verbeke, W. (2008). Sustainable food consumption: Exploring the consumer "attitude-behavioral intention" gap. *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics*, 19(2), 169-194.

Tourists' intention to use the hanok stay around the historical and cultural sites

Yu, MengFei
Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Sejong University

Ahn, Young-joo
Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Sejong University

Abstract:

Cultural tourism has been a notable rise in significance, leading tourists to display heightened interest in bed-and-breakfast (B&B) establishments with specific destination-related characteristics over traditional business hotels. This study aims to investigate tourists' intention to utilize Hanok Stays, thereby enhancing our understanding of customer preferences and decision-making processes regarding accommodations. Conducted through an on-site survey targeting Chinese tourists intending to visit Korea and may preference Hanok stay experience. The results suggest important Hanok attributes and the effects on attitudes toward Hanok stay and Chinese tourists' intention to stay. This study provides important insights for understanding inbound tourists and their intention to use Hanok Stay around cultural and heritage sites.

Keywords: Hanok Stay, Attributes, Attitude, Intention to use, Inbound tourists, Cultural and heritage tourism

1. Introduction

Bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodations have garnered increasing favor among tourists, emerging as an important element of the tourism landscape (Sun et al., 2013). Understanding the experiential aspects of B&Bs is crucial for service providers to effectively grasp and fulfill the diverse needs of their guests (Xu & Chan, 2010).

South Korea, known for its vibrant tourism sector, annually draws a significant increase of inbound tourists for pleasure travels (South Korea: Visitors by Purpose 2022 | Statista, 2023). Alongside the traditional choice of star-rated hotels and Western-style services, there is a growing trend towards selecting homestays to deeply immerse oneself in the cultural essence of the destination (KTO, 2012). Hanok accommodations offer a traditional Korean lifestyle, offering a deeper cultural immersion into cultural and heritage aspects (Buyers guide, 2016).

Hanok accommodations have garnered substantial attention from both domestic and international tourists, emerging as one of South Korea's foremost tourist attractions (KTO, 2012). Representing a unique facet of the country's tourism accommodation industry, Hanok stays demand comprehensive research attention to bolstering Korea's tourism infrastructure (Lee et al., 2016).

However, homestays in South Korea are not as diversified and widespread as in other countries. There are approximately 3,568 B&Bs in Seoul, Korea, but only 2,191 remain in active operation after closures (VISITKOREA, 2023). Moreover, 34 B&Bs have obtained the prestigious KQ Korea Tourism Quality Certification, with 24 of them being traditional Hanok accommodations (VISITKOREA, 2023). Moreover, in October 2023, the number of inbound tourists visiting Korea surged dramatically by 158.3%, totaling 1.23 million individuals (Shin, 2023). Given their representation of Korean cultural distinctiveness, Hanok stays hold an immersing allure for foreign tourists, thereby warranting significant emphasis within South Korea's tourism accommodation industry. Consequently, it is imperative to investigate tourists' intention to increase interest in Hanok stay among inbound tourists.

A review of existing literature reveals a relative scarcity of research on the Hanok stay industry and B&B industry. This study aims to examine the relationship between attributes of Hanok stays, attitudes, and their intention to use Hanok stay among Chinese tourists. This study can contribute to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence and insights into the factors influencing tourists' attitudes and intentions to use among Chinese tourists. The results also highlight the evolving trends in cultural tourism and the sharing economy in the context of Hanok stay.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Social network

Hanok originating from the Joseon Dynasty, represents a traditional Korean house (Bukchon Hanok Village, 2013), these structures serve multifaceted purposes in modern-day Seoul. Many Hanoks in the city function as cultural centers, offering visitors the opportunity to immerse themselves in and learn about traditional Korean culture (KTO, 2012).

The Hanok stay program, initiated in the late 1980s, aimed to preserve cultural heritage while also serving as a recognized brand to bolster sales and profits within the lodging industry (Oh, 2012; Ryu, 2012). This form of accommodation provides tourists with a unique historical and educational experience within the tourism environment, catering to their desire for authentic experiences that transcend the ordinary (MacCannell, 1989). As a prominent aspect of Korean historical and cultural heritage, Hanok stays hold significant importance within the Korean homestay industry, highlighting the need for meaningful research on the Hanok stay and B&B for inbound tourists.

2.2. External Attributes

Iconic landmarks and significant tourist destinations hold considerable allure for travelers, drawing attention to the pivotal role of hotel location in shaping consumption patterns within a destination (Wang & Hung, 2015; Guo et al., 2017). The strategic positioning of hotels in proximity to such attractions allows travelers to optimize their time and enhance their overall experience within the constraints of time and space (AlKahtani et al., 2015). It is widely noticed that most travelers express a preference for accommodations situated near major tourist attractions (Arbel & Pizam, 1977). Previous research has underscored that traveler visits often involve selective spatial activities. On one hand, regardless of the hotel's location, iconic tourist destinations invariably attract a significant influx of visitors. Conversely, drawing from prior research, Sutherland et al. (2020) identified three key dimensions pertinent to accommodation location, encompassing accessibility to and from outlying areas, mobility within the local vicinity, and the appeal and the neighborhood. Hence, building upon existing literature, this study delineates cultural and natural attractions, neighborhood amenities, and accessibility as external attributes influencing hotel selections.

2.3. Internal Attributes
To enhance the overall service experience, managers concentrate on refining specific service attributes (Bacon, 2012). The service quality emerges as an important factor in tourists' evaluations of homestay accommodations (Kasuma et al., 2016), highlighting the significance in shaping guests' perceptions. Research exploring the nexus between food and the tourism industry originated in the early 1980s (Belisle, 1983). Existing literature suggests that tourists not only seek culinary delights but also crave immersive experiences and opportunities to delve into local cuisine and culture (Elis et al., 2018). Sampling local foods and beverages serves as an immersive experience (Chung et al., 2016) and facilitates tourists' understanding of destination culture and traditions. In the context of B&Bs, breakfast holds particular importance (Lanier & Johnson, 1996). Nummedal and Hall (2006) enhanced the significance of offering locally inspired cuisine for breakfast at guesthouses and increased tourists' interest in B&Bs.

Effective interpersonal communication by hosts plays a pivotal role in enriching the guests' experiences during their travel (Scerri & Presbury, 2020). Moon et al. (2018) reported the importance of host interactions. Host communication traits are highly valued by guests, and these are positively related to guest satisfaction (Johnson & Neuhofer, 2017). This study identifies service, food, and host interactions as important internal attributes of Hanok Stay that significantly influence the homestay experience, emphasizing their critical role in shaping guest perceptions and satisfaction levels.

2.4. Attitude
Allport (1935) defined attitude as a mental and neural predisposition shaped by experience, guiding or dynamically influencing an individual's responses to associated objects and situations. Attitudes serve to define our perceptions of situations and determine our approaches to objects or circumstances (Pickens, 2005). They encapsulate internal emotions and the positive or negative evaluations evoked when engaging in specific behaviors (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Attitudes can be understood as individuals' overarching assessments of particular behaviors (Ajzen, 1991, 2020). Within the tourism industry, tourists' attitudes represent their positive or negative appraisals of specific behaviors throughout the tourism journey, influenced by diverse factors such as destination infrastructure, services, and the overall tourism experience (Meng & Cui, 2020).

2.5. Intention

In the Theory of Planned behavior (TPB), behavioral intention acts as a crucial mediator of individual actions, reflecting the level of inclination an individual possesses to engage in a specific action (Chen and Yang, 2018). Behavioral intention represents the conditional likelihood of individuals engaging in a behavior; it encompasses the motivational factors influencing a particular behavior, where a stronger intention to enact the behavior correlates with a higher likelihood of its execution (Hamid & Bano, 2021). Within the realm of tourism, behavioral intention is shaped by tourists during their engagement in tourism activities and pertains to specific behavioral inclinations or tendencies towards tourist destinations and products (Zhang et al., 2023). It serves as an indicator of a traveler's readiness to engage in travel, with actual behavioral actions being measured by one's intention to perform said behavior (Al Ziadat, 2015). As noted by Joo et al. (2024), attitude exerts a positive influence on behavioral intentions, a finding suggested by Kara (2024). In addition, the mediating role of attitude between intention and attraction has been identified (Joo et al., 2024), a conclusion further supported by Tiwari et al. (2024), who suggested that attitude serves as a high-quality mediator of intention. Therefore, the related hypotheses were provided as follows.

Hypothesis 1: Cultural and natural attractions positively affect tourists' attitude
Hypothesis 2: Neighborhood attractions positively affect tourists' attitude
Hypothesis 3: Accessibility positively affects tourists' attitude
Hypothesis 4: Service positively affects tourists' attitude
Hypothesis 5: Hanok Stay food and beverage positively affect tourists' attitude
Hypothesis 6: Host interaction positively affects tourists' attitude
Hypothesis 7: Attitude positively affects tourists' intention to use Hanok Stay

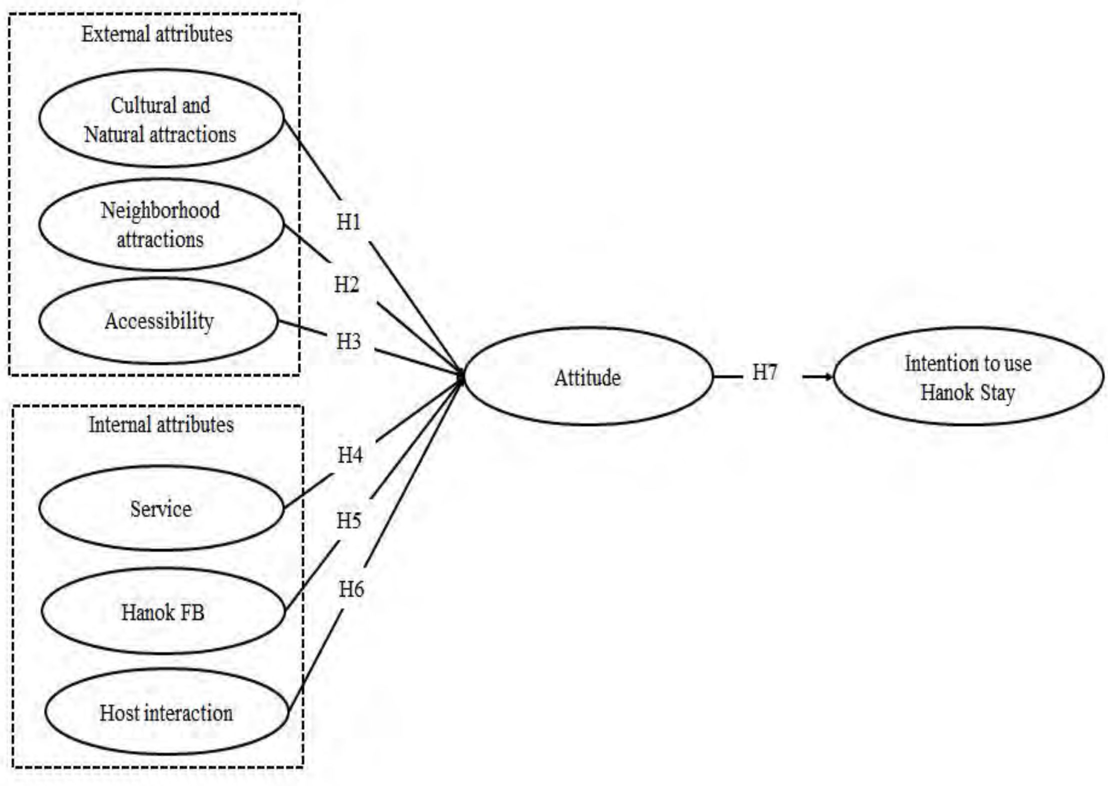


Figure 1. The proposed model

3. Methodology

3.1. Measurement
The questionnaire includes six external and internal attributes of Hanok stay (Dey et al., 2020; Qui et al., 2022; Tribe & Snaith, 1998; Voon et al., 2022), attitude (Lee et al., 2020), and intention to use Hanok Stay (Lee et al., 2020; Park & Hwang, 2023). The measurement

items were measured by a seven-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). Finally, demographic characteristics are added.

The questionnaire was developed based on previous research and the developed questionnaire was translated from English to Chinese by bilingual experts. The pilot test was conducted to check mistakes, typos, and question flow.

The data was collected from the panel of a research company in China in March 2024. The online survey was distributed to the panel. All participants who filled out all questions were allowed to submit their questionnaires. A total of 316 surveys were collected and this study focused on potential Chinese tourists who plan to travel to Korea and prefer to use Hanok Stay around Jongno historical sites in Seoul, South Korea. After screening the participants, a total of 293 surveys were used for final analysis.

4. Results

4.1. Profile of the respondents

As shown in Table 1, the demographic profile was presented. Regarding gender, approximately 58.0% were female (n=170) and 42.0% were male (n=123). Age groups varies and the mean age was 32 years old. In terms of education, a majority of the respondents (n=233, 79.5%) were those who received a bachelor's degree. Income levels varies and approximately, 37.5% of the respondents earn household income between 50,000 and less than 150,000 RMB. A majority of them are full-time employees (n=245, 83.6%).

Table 1 Demographic Information

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	123	42.0
	Female	170	58.0
Age (M=32)	18-24	40	13.7
	25-29	70	23.9
	30-34	80	27.3
	35-39	58	19.8
	40-44	26	8.9
	45-49	19	6.5
Education	High school degree or less	8	2.7
	Associate degree	25	8.5
	Bachelor's degree	233	79.5
	Graduate degree or more	27	9.2
Income	Under 50,000 RMB	24	8.2
	Between 50,000 less than 150,000 RMB	110	37.5
	Between 150,000 and less than 250,000	91	31.1
	Between 250,000 and less than 350,000	39	13.3

	Between 350,000 and less than 500,000	18	6.1
	More than 500,000	11	3.8
Occupation	Full time employment	245	83.6
	Part-time employment	3	1.0
	Self-employed	14	4.8
	Student	31	10.6

This study conducted two factor analysis steps such as exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (Anderson & Garbing, 1988). After conducting EFA, six dimensions were derived from the data. Attitude and intention to use Hanok Stay also was tested its dimensions based on the results of EFA (Hair et al., 2010). CFA also conducted to test the latent dimensions and reliability and validity. As shown in Table 2, the standardized factor loadings were presented between 0.640 and 0.799.

The model fit met the recommended threshold values ($\chi2$ (161) = 333.060, $p < .001$ $\chi2$ /df = 2.069; GFI =.871; CFI = .927; TLI = .905; RMSEA = .060; SRMR = .049). The composite reliability in Table 3 ranged from 0.613 to 0.884. The AVE values were higher than 0.5 except for two dimensions of attributes. The convergent validity and discriminant validity were tested in Tables 2 and 3 (Byrne, 1998; Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 2 Confirmatory factor loadings.

Item	Standardized loading	Composite reliability	AVE
Cultural and natural attractions		0.884	0.561
Palaces are important when choosing a Hanok stay.	0.762		
Ruins and forts are important when choosing a Hanok stay.	0.798		
Museums and galleries are important when choosing a Hanok stay.	0.770		
Monuments are important when choosing a Hanok stay.	0.799		
Habitat conservation is important when choosing a Hanok stay.	0.694		
Natural scenery is important when choosing a Hanok stay.	0.658		
Neighborhood attractions		0.613	0.443
Variety of local restaurants and cafes is an important element in my travel destinations.	0.640		
Variety of entertainment facilities is an important element in my travel destinations.	0.690		
Accessibility		0.679	0.514
Close distance to the core attractions is important when choosing a Hanok stay.	0.696		
Nature trail(s) is important when choosing a Hanok	0.737		

stay.			
service		0.646	0.478
Host is professional.	0.687		
Host responds quickly.	0.696		
Hanok Food and beverage		0.676	0.511
I can get exotic (special) local food in the homestay.	0.731		
I can taste Korean style breakfast.	0.698		
Host interaction		0.753	0.505
Hosts introduce guests to their friends and other guests.	0.691		
Host invites guests to dinner or an event.	0.731		
Host shares life experiences with guests.	0.708		
Attitude		0.700	0.538
Using a Hanok stay is beneficial.	0.719		
Using a Hanok stay is valuable.	0.749		
Intention to use Hanok Stay		0.672	0.508
I am planning to use a Hanok Stay.	0.779		
I intend to visit a Hanok Stay.	0.640		

Table 3: Summary of Confirmatory Factor Analysis results

	Items	Mean (Std dev.)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
(1) Cultural and natural attractions	6	4.919 (1.192)	**0.749**							
(2) Neighborhood	2	5.326 (1.066)	0.620	**0.691**						
(3) Accessibility	2	5.782 (.972)	0.504	0.308	**0.715**					
(4) Service	2	5.739 (.941)	0.308	0.303	0.299	**0.666**				
(5) Hanok FB	2	5.994 (.910)	0.237	0.195	0.203	0.332	**0.711**			
(6) Host interaction	3	5.174 (1.143)	0.704	0.521	0.308	0.452	0.347	**0.717**		
(7) Attitude	2	5.677 (.972)	0.414	0.244	0.265	0.448	0.373	0.571	**0.733**	
(8) Intention	2	6.031 (.836)	0.271	0.114	0.303	0.354	0.372	0.375	0.467	**0.713**

goodness-of-fit statistics:
***Note**: $\chi2$ (161) = 333.060, $p < .001$ $\chi2$ /df = 2.069; GFI =.871; CFI = .927; TLI = .905; RMSEA = .060; SRMR = .049.*

As shown in Table 4, the structural equation model was conducted to test the hypotheses. Five hypotheses were supported (i.e, H2-5, H7), however, H1 and H6 were not supported.

Neighborhood attractions are statistically significant and positively influence attitude among Chinese tourists (β=0.434, $p<0.01$). Accessibility has a positive effect on attitude (β=0.276, $p<0.01$). Hanok Food and Beverage has a positive effect on attitude (β=0.403, $p<0.01$). However, service shows a negative effect on attitude (β=0.-409, $p<0.01$). Finally, attitude shows a positive effect on the intention to use Hanok Stay (β=0.810, $p<0.001$). The results of the SEM are also presented in Figure 2.

Table 4. Standardized parameter estimates for structural model

				Standardized Estimate	z	Hypothesis
H1	Cultural and natural attractions	→	Attitude	0.170	1.25	Not supported
H2	Neighbourhood	→	Attitude	0.434**	3.10	Supported
H3	Accessibility	→	Attitude	0.276**	2.84	Supported
H4	Service	→	Attitude	-0.409**	-2.74	Not supported
H5	Hanok F&B	→	Attitude	0.403**	3.06	Supported
H6	Host interaction	→	Attitude	0.121	1.03	Not supported
H7	Attitude	→	Intention to use Hanok Stay	0.810***	15.99	Supported

*Note: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001*

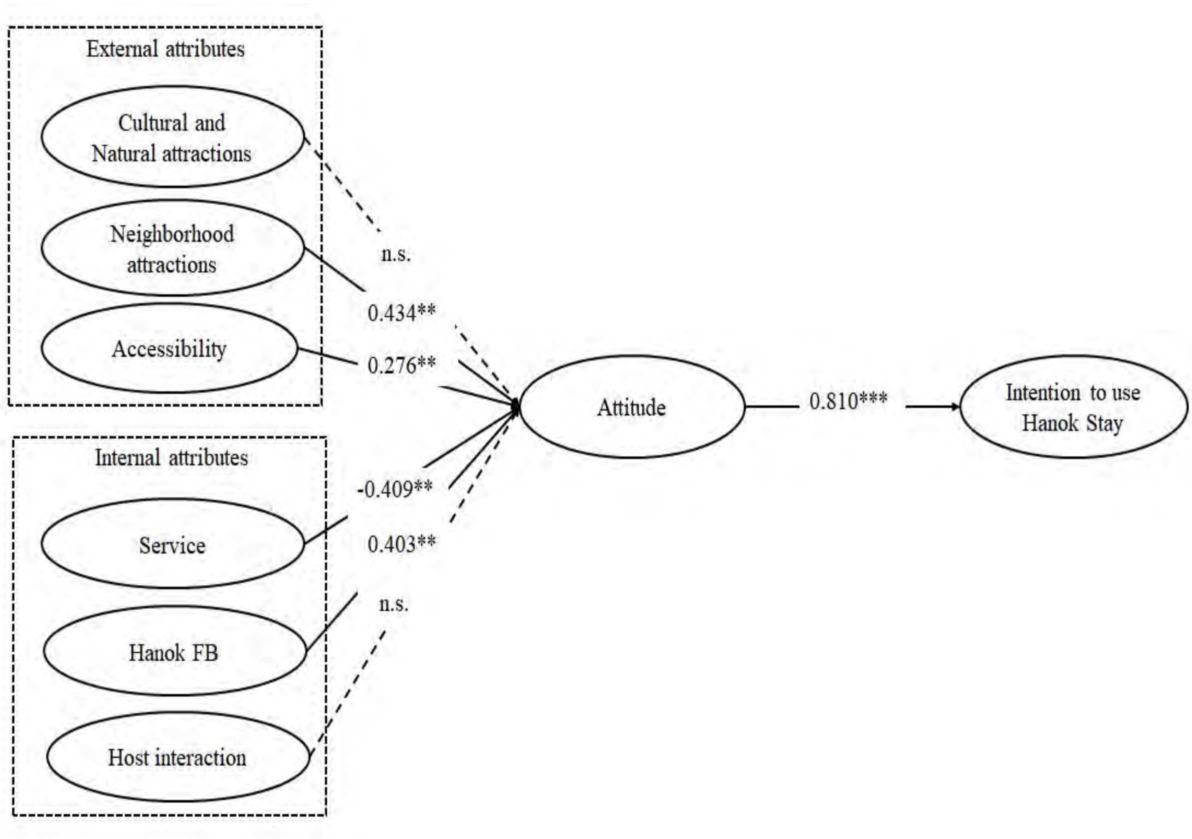


Figure 2. The SEM model

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and implications

Cultural tourism has emerged as a notable focal point of interest. Increased by the widespread promotion on various social media platforms, foreign tourists have begun to express keen interest in Korean homestays distinguished by unique features. Concurrently, there exists a substantial influx of Chinese tourists traveling to Korea, making them a significant demographic to study. This research investigates the process underlying the formation of tourists' intention to utilize Hanok Stay by gathering data on Chinese tourists' inclination to visit such accommodations. It explores the crucial relationship between the internal and external attributes of Hanok Stay and tourists' attitudes.

The findings of this study reveal several implications. First, external attributes such as neighborhood attractions and accessibility show a significant and positive influence on tourists' attitudes. Moreover, the internal attribute of Hanok food and beverage also positively influence tourists' attitudes. However, it was observed that the internal attributes of service had a negative effect on tourist attributes. Cultural and natural attractions, as well asl interactions with the host, did not yield any significant impact on tourist attitudes. These results contribute both theoretical and practical to the understanding of Chinese tourists' intentions to stay in Hanok Stays.

5.2. Conclusion

The results reveal that external attributes such as neighborhood attractions and accessibility significantly and positively influence tourist attributes. Additionally, the internal attributes of Hanok food and beverage also exhibit a positive impact on tourist attitudes. This suggests that the environment plays a crucial role for Chinese tourists when selecting a B&B, possibly because they prioritize shopping and culinary experiences while traveling. Chinese tourists tend to favor non-face-to-face service when staying in B&Bs, leading them to feel uncomfortable with overly enthusiastic interactions. Consequently, this explains the negative and non-effect of service and host interaction on Chinese tourists' attitudes. By examining the intention to stay in Hanok Stay, this study suggests important attributes of Hanok Stay and determinants influencing tourists' decisions and behaviors among Chinese tourists.

5.3. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

First, the results of this study cannot be generalized. Future research should replicate the proposed model and it is recommended that future research extend the duration of the data collection period to gather a large and more diverse dataset. Second, as this study employed quantitative research methods, there is a suggestion for future studies to employ qualitative research approaches. Qualitative methods can provide deeper insights into the intentions of tourists interested in Hanok Stay, offering a more nuanced understanding of their motivations and preferences. Finally, this study focused on Chinese tourists. To broaden the research scope and increase the generalizability of findings, future research could include diverse tourists with various cultural backgrounds.

REFERENCES

Anderson, J. C., & Garbing, D. W. (1988). Structural modelling in practice: A review and recommended two-step approach. *Psychological Bulletin, 103*(3), 411–423.

Bacon, D. R. (2012). Understanding priorities for service attribute improvement. *Journal of Service Research, 15*(2), 199-214.

Bi, J. W., Wang, Y., Han, T. Y., & Zhang, K. (2024). Exploring the effect of "home feeling" on the online rating of homestays: A three-dimensional perspective. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 36*(1), 182-217.

Buyers guide. (2016, March 8). Why not try Hanok stay? Korean-Products.com. https://korean-products.com/2016/03/08/why-not-try-hanok-stay/

Byrne, B. M. (1998). *Structural equation modelling with LISREL, PRELIS and SIMPLIS: Basic concepts, applications and programming*. Psychology Press Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Dey, B., Mathew, J., & Hua, C. (2020). Influence of destination attractiveness factors and travel motivations on rural homestay choice: the moderating role of need for uniqueness. *International Journal of Culture. Tourism, and Hospitality Research, 14*(4), 639-666.

Fornell, C., & Larcker, D.F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research, 60*(4),7-18.

Guo, Y., Barnes, S. J., & Jia, Q. (2017). Mining meaning from online ratings and reviews: Tourist satisfaction analysis using latent dirichlet allocation. *Tourism management, 59*, 467-483.

Hair, Joseph F., Jr., Black, William C., Babin, Barry J., & Anderson, Rolph E. (2010). *Multivariate data analysis* (7th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Johnson, A. G., & Neuhofer, B. (2017). Airbnb–an exploration of value co-creation experiences in Jamaica. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 29*(9), 2361-2376.

KTO. (2012). Bukchon Hanok Village. Korea Be Inspired. Available online: http://visitkorea.or.kr/enu/SI/SIEN3111.jsp?cid=561382 (accessed on 5 April 2024)

Lee, A. H., Lee, D. B., Shin, Y., & Wall, G. (2016). Creativity and traditional cultural accommodations in sustainable community development: The case of 'Hanok-stay'program in South Korea. *The Journal of Rural and Community Development, 11*(1), 16-29.

Lee, C. K., Ahmad, M. S., Petrick, J. F., Park, Y. N., Park, E., & Kang, C. W. (2020). The roles of cultural worldview and authenticity in tourists' decision-making process in a heritage tourism destination using a model of goal-directed behaviour. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, 18*, 100500.

MAC CANNELL, D., ADLER, J., COHEN, E., SWEET, J., & CAMPBELL, M. (1989). Semiotics of tourism. *Annals of tourism research, 16*(1), 1-118.

Meng, B., & Choi, K. (2016). The role of authenticity in forming slow tourists' intentions: Developing an extended model of goal-directed behaviour. *Tourism Management, 57,* 397-410.

Moon, H., Miao, L., Hanks, L., & Line, N. D. (2019). Peer-to-peer interactions: Perspectives of Airbnb guests and hosts. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 77*, 405-414.

Oh, H. S. (2012). Gotaek/Jongtaek myeongpum-whasaeop-uihyoyuljeokchukinbanganyeongu [A study on the efficient measures for "the project for being a Masterpiece of the Korean Traditional House, the Old House & the Head Family House"]. Korea Culture & Tourism Institute.

Park, H., & Hwang, J. (2023). The decision-making processes of fine-dining restaurants using a model of goal-directed behaviour: The moderating effect of gender. *Culinary Science & Hospitality Research, 29*(9), 80-90.

Qiu, H., Chen, D., Bi, J., Lyu, J., & Li, Q. (2022). The construction of the affinity-seeking strategies of Airbnb homestay hosts. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 34*(3), 861-884.

Ryu, G. H. (2012). Gwangwang-sukbak-siseolhwakchung-eulwihanhawi-beopryeongjejeongyeongu [Enactment of special law for expanding tourist accommodation]. Korea Culture & Tourism Institute.

Shin, H.Y. (2023, November 29). 1.23 mil. foreigners visited S. Korea in October, 10 mil. expected for whole year: KTO. Arirang: The Korea International Broadcasting Foundation. https://www.arirang.com/news/view?id=262408&lang=en

South Korea: visitors by purpose 2022 | Statista. (2023, August 22). Statista. https://www.statista.com/statistics/624316/south-korea-visitors-by-purpose/

Sun, A., Chen, L., Yoshida, K., & Qu, M. (2023). Spatial Patterns and Determinants of Bed and Breakfasts in the All-for-One Tourism Demonstration Area of China: A Perspective on Urban–Rural Differences. *Land, 12*(9), 1720.

Sutherland, I., Sim, Y., Lee, S. K., Byun, J., & Kiatkawsin, K. (2020). Topic modelling of online accommodation reviews via Latent Dirichlet Allocation. *Sustainability, 12*(5), 1821.

Tiwari, A., Kumar, A., Kant, R., & Jaiswal, D. (2024). Impact of fashion influencers on consumers' purchase intentions: theory of planned behaviour and mediation of attitude. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal, 28*(2), 209-225.

Tribe, J., & Snaith, T. (1998). From SERVQUAL to HOLSAT: Holiday satisfaction in Varadero, Cuba. *Tourism Management, 19*(1), 25-34.

VISITKOREA. (2023). Total number of Hanok Stay in Seoul Korea. Available online: https://safestay.visitkorea.or.kr/usr/main/mainSelectList.kto (accessed on 15 October 2023)

Voon, B. H., Jee, T. W., Joseph, C., Hamzah, M. I., Jussem, P. M., & Teo, A. K. (2022).Homestay service experience for tourist satisfaction and sustainability amidst COVID-19 challenges. *International Journal of Business and Society, 23*(2), 1127-1246.

Wang, S., & Hung, K. (2015). Customer perceptions of critical success factors for guest houses. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 48*, 92-101.

Xu, J., & Chan, A. (2010). Service experience and package tours. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research, 15*(2), 177-194.

Hotel booking intentions among Chinese visitors in Thailand

Pattanapokinsakul, Kanyapat
Faculty of Management Science
Phuket Rajabhat University

Kattiyapornpong, Uraiporn
Faculty of Business and Law
University of Wollongong

Angsumalee, Warakorn
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Phuket Rajabhat University

Abstract:

This study investigates how online reviews impact trust and hotel booking intentions. The findings of 400 Chinese tourists in Phuket, Thailand, showed that positive and negative reviews strongly influence trust among Chinese tourists, while the review quality, negative reviews, and trust directly affect hotel booking intentions, which are prominent in the post-COVID-19 period and aid in managing Chinese tourists' overall hotel booking services and experience for tourism recovery.

Keywords: Chinese tourists; hotel booking intention; online reviews, Thailand

Families' stress coping strategies when traveling with children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Shi, Shanshan
School of Hotel and Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Wang, Junchuan
School of Hotel and Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Li, Mimi
School of Hotel and Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Abstract:
Recent accounts indicate a rising prevalence of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). However, the tourism industry lacks adequate discourse on this demographic. This study aimed to investigate stress-coping experiences of families with ASD children during hotel stays. Using the Stress Coping Theory, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eighteen families. Findings revealed implicit needs, stressors, coping strategies, and outcomes during hotel experiences. This study sheds light on coping strategies in family tourism with ASD children, suggesting implications for ASD-friendly hotel services.
Keywords: Stress coping strategy; Family tourism; Autism spectrum disorder (ASD); Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA);

1. Introduction

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is defined as a neurodevelopmental disorder with symptoms in early childhood characterized by difficulty with social interaction and communication, restricted interests, and repetitive behaviors (Lauritsen, 2013; Hodges et al., 2020). According to the recent data published by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2023), the prevalence of ASD among children is approximately 1 in 100 children with ASD, a figure that is increasing annually. The WHO (2019) has called for closer attention to the fundamental human rights of individuals with ASD, covering essential aspects such as education, health, and leisure. Despite growing awareness of ASD and the growing number of families traveling with children diagnosed with ASD, there is a lack of research focusing on the hospitality experiences of these families. To narrow the gap, this study aims to investigate the stress-coping experiences of families engaged in tourism with children with ASD. Social Stress Theory is applied as a theoretical lens to address several objectives: Firstly, to identify the stressors facing families with children with ASD during tourism. Secondly, to discern the coping strategies that parent caregivers use under these circumstances. Lastly, to explore the outcomes of stress coping and their effects on parent caregivers' and children's well-being.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Families Tourism of Children Diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder

As ASD is better understood, more and more research is emphasizing the well-being of people with autism and their families (Lai et al., 2015; Mazurek, 2014). Families of children diagnosed with ASD attach great importance to positive social interaction in the therapeutic intervention, and tourism is an important way. However, they often have a different holiday experience compared to typical families (Fazil et al., 2022). Although travel and hotel experiences are usually enjoyable, those with ASD children often face additional stress and difficulties due to their children's special needs and behaviors (Freund et al., 2019). It is necessary to identify their implicit needs.

2.2. Stressors for Families Traveling with ASD Children

Children with ASD encounter challenges such as sensory overload, unfamiliar environments, and unknown tourism plan during travel, affecting both their behavior and their parents' experiences. Understanding these stressors is crucial for providing adequate support and accommodation.

2.3. Stress Coping Theory

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) proposed that general stress coping is a transitional process that involves the constant interaction between the individual and their environment. It involves cognitive appraisal of the stressors followed by the implementation of problem-focused or emotion-focused coping strategies based on individual circumstances. Short-term outcomes include the resolution of current problems and emotions, and long-term outcomes include subjective well-being, social functioning, and somatic health (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Based on the theory, the theoretical framework (Figure 1) will serve as a guideline for this study.

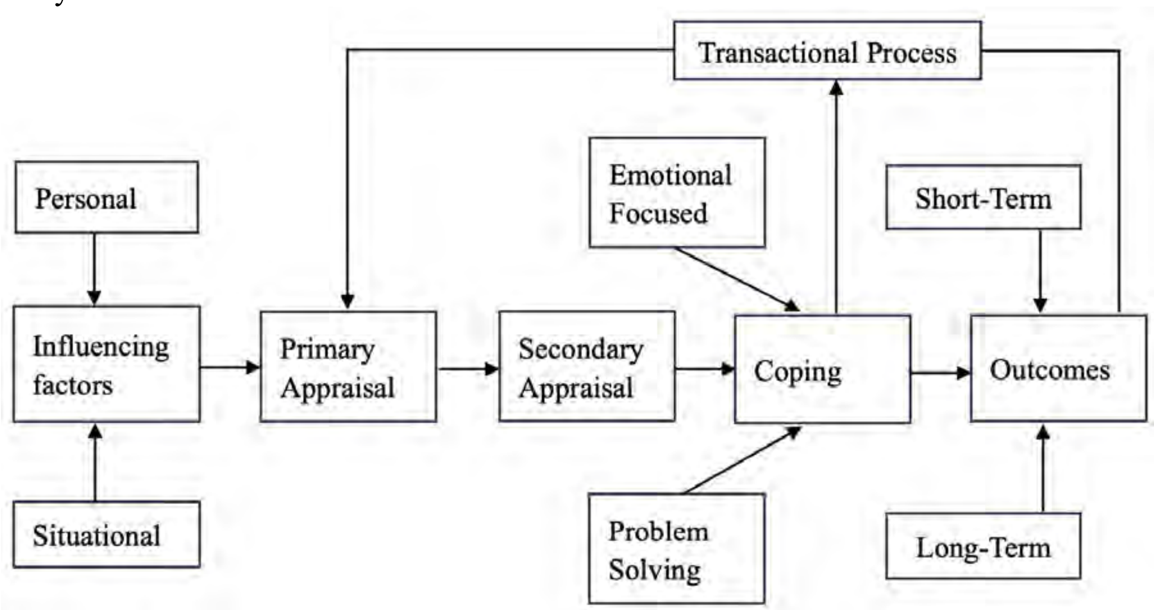


***Figure 1** Theoretical Framework (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984)*

3. Methodology

3.1. Methodological Approach

The study utilized an interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach to understand lived experiences of participants (Larkin, et al., 2021; Alase. 2017). Due to the elusive nature of personal stress as well as standardized quantitative measures, it can be helpful to use the IPA methodology, which places a strong emphasis on participants retelling their experiences as fully as possible, and where the researcher will scrutinize the participant's expression.

3.2. Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were held to gain in-depth insights into parents' subjective experiences and coping strategies. The participant sample was recruited by contacting parents of children diagnosed with ASD and by posting recruitment notices on *Xiaohongshu* and *WeChat*. Eighteen families who had a child with ASD were recruited via snowball sampling. All had engaged in family trips with children with ASD (age range: 2–16 years old) and stayed in hotels within the past year. All interviews were recorded and transcribed to be anonymous.

3.3. Data Analysis

The interviews were recorded, later transcribed, and prepared for data analysis. The audio recordings were converted into text files through the software iFLYTEK, and then the data analysis steps followed the IPA's six-step analysis method (Hou et al., 2019) and were performed on the qualitative analysis software NVivo.

4. Results

4.1. Stressors

A thorough analysis of the interview transcripts revealed that these parents still experience certain hidden and implicit stressors during their hotel experience, stemming mainly from personal and situational aspects.

4.1. Appraisal

The appraisal process is based on parents' understanding of their children's daily lives and past travel experiences, with responses based on the importance of the stress and the probability of its occurrence. Notably, this process of appraisal was not evident in the interviews.

4.1. Coping Strategies

Data analysis indicates three main types of strategies: behavioral-focused coping, emotional-focused coping, and cognitive-focused coping. When stressors are enabled to change, parents employ behavioral measures to address the issues; when stressors are difficult to modify and must be accepted, parents will adopt emotional or cognitive coping strategies.

4.1. Outcomes and Feedback

The successful resolution of problems that arose during the hotel stay for the child leads to a positive and enjoyable experience. Another outcome in this process is cultivating a sense of control. This positive feedback from stress coping strategies instills a belief that taking trips with ASD children in a hotel is achievable. It assures them that they can effectively manage various situations without losing control.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion and implications

This study complements the relevant literature on ASD travel and expands the literature on family tourism with special needs. Practical implications aim to assist the hotel industry in enhancing its services and increasing its social responsibility towards ASD families. The hospitality industry can make improvements in both facilities and services to ensure a welcoming environment for ASD groups and their families.

5.2. Conclusion

In summary, this study highlights the importance of focusing on the stressors faced by families with ASD while traveling and the coping strategies of stress. Through in-depth research and continuous exploration, the tourism and hospitality industries can better understand and meet the travel needs of this special group and create more memorable travel experiences for them.

5.3. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

This study interviewed families with ASD children in both Guangzhou and Hong Kong regions. Suggestions for future studies include conducting larger-scale research with diverse participant demographics and employing mixed-methods approaches for a more comprehensive understanding. In addition, this study examines the stressors experienced by families with ASD children in hotel settings, lacking discussions on other contexts. Future research can include various tourism settings, such as tourist attractions and transportation, to comprehensively understand the stressors and coping strategies of ASD families during travel.

REFERENCES

Alase, A. (2017). The interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA): A guide to a good qualitative research approach. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, *5*(2), 9-19.

FAZIL, F., CHOY, E., AHMAD, H., SINGH, S. J., & TAMBI, N. (2022). Experiences of Family Vacation with Children Diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): Leisure or Work. *Akademika*, *92*(1), 101-112.

Freund, D., Cerdan Chiscano, M., Hernandez-Maskivker, G., Guix, M., Iñesta, A., & Castelló, M. (2019). Enhancing the hospitality customer experience of families with children on the autism spectrum disorder. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *21*(5), 606-614.

Hodges, H., Fealko, C., & Soares, N. (2020). Autism spectrum disorder: definition, epidemiology, causes, and clinical evaluation. *Translational pediatrics*, *9*(Suppl 1), S55.

Hou, L., Tang, X., He, L., & Jia, X., (2019). Interpretative phenomenological analysis in China: A systematic review and guideline. *Advances in Psychological Science*, 27(11): 1826-1841 doi:10.3724/SP.J.1042.2019.01826

Lai, W. W., Goh, T. J., Oei, T. P., & Sung, M. (2015). Coping and well-being in parents of children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). *Journal of autism and developmental disorders*, *45*, 2582-2593.

Larkin, M., Flowers, P., & Smith, J. A. (2021). Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, method and research. *Interpretative phenomenological analysis*, 1-100.

Lauritsen, M. B. (2013). Autism spectrum disorders. *European child & adolescent psychiatry, 22*, 37-42.

Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal, and coping*. Springer publishing company.

Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1987). Transactional theory and research on emotions and coping. European Journal of personality, 1(3), 141-169.

Mazurek, M. O. (2014). Loneliness, friendship, and well-being in adults with autism spectrum disorders. *Autism*, *18*(3), 223-232.

World Health Organization. (2019). Autism spectrum disorders. Retrieved from https://cutt.ly/vgpWcSZ

World Health Organization. (2023). Autism. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/autism-spectrum-disorders

The role of changes in the relationship between leader-member exchange and newcomer deviance: A latent growth modeling approach

Shi, Xiaolin (Crystal)
School of Hotel and Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Shi, Hao (Mira)
Management School
Tianping College of Suzhou University of Science and Technology

Shi, Jieyu (Jade)
Hospitality Business
Singapore Institute of Technology

Abstract:

This study examines how changes in leader-member exchange between newcomers and their supervisors related to changes in deviant behavior via the changing trajectories of trust. To test a latent growth model, we collected data from newcomers in the hotel industry at four time points over a four-month period. The results increase our understanding of the newcomer exchange relationship – performance link over time and highlight the importance of examining the exchange relationship from a change perspective.

Keywords: Leader-member exchange, Trust, Newcome deviance, Latent growth modeling

REFERENCES

Aryee, S., Budhwar, P. S., & Chen, Z. X. (2002). Trust as a mediator of the relationship between organizational justice and work outcomes: Test of a social exchange model. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 23*(3), 267-285.

Bauer, T. N., & Green, S. G. (1996). Development of leader-member exchange: A longitudinal test. *Academy of Management Journal, 39*, 1538-1567.

Blau, P. M. (1964). *Exchange and power in social life.* New York: Wiley.

Bollen, K. A., & Curran, P. J. (2006). *Latent curve models: A structural equation perspective*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley

Chang, W., Liu, A., Wang, X., & Yi, B. (2020). Meta-analysis of outcomes of leader–

member exchange in hospitality and tourism: what does the past say about the future?. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *32*(6), 2155-2173.

Chi, N. W., & Wang, I. A. (2018). The relationship between newcomers' emotional labor and service performance: The moderating roles of service training and mentoring functions. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *29*(19), 2729-2757.

Cropanzano, R., & Mitchell, M. S. (2005). Social exchange theory: An interdisciplinary review. *Journal of Management*, *31*(6), 874-900.

Cropanzano, R., Anthony, E. L., Daniels, S. R., & Hall, A. V. (2017). Social exchange theory: A critical review with theoretical remedies. *Academy of Management Annals*, *11*(1), 479-516.

El Akremi, A., Vandenberghe, C., & Camerman, J. (2010). The role of justice and social exchange relationships in workplace deviance: Test of a mediated model. *Human Relations*, *63*(11), 1687-1717.

Elsetouhi, A. M., Hammad, A. A., Nagm, A. E. A., & Elbaz, A. M. (2018). Perceived leader behavioral integrity and employee voice in SMEs travel agents: The mediating role of empowering leader behaviors. *Tourism Management*, *65*, 100-115.

Fredrickson, B. L. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology: The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. *American Psychologist*, *56*(3), 218-226.

Gatling, A., Shum, C., Book, L., & Bai, B. (2017). The influence of hospitality leaders' relational transparency on followers' trust and deviance behaviors: Mediating role of behavioral integrity. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *62*, 11-20.

Graen, G. B., & Uhl-Bien, M. (1995). Relationship-based approach to leadership: Development of leader-member exchange (LMX) theory of leadership over 25 years: Applying a multi-level multi-domain perspective. *The leadership Quarterly*, *6*(2), 219-247.

Gursoy, D., Cai, R., & Anaya, G. J. (2017). Developing a typology of disruptive customer behaviors: Influence of customer misbehavior on service experience of by-standing customers. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 29*(9), 2341-2360.

Jokisaari, M. (2013). The role of leader–member and social network relations in newcomers' role performance. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *82*(2), 96-104.

Kammeyer-Mueller, J., Wanberg, C., Rubenstein, A., & Song, Z. (2013). Support, undermining, and newcomer socialization: Fitting in during the first 90 days. *Academy of Management Journal*, *56*(4), 1104-1124.

Kim, J., Yammarino, F. J., Dionne, S. D., Eckardt, R., Cheong, M., Tsai, C. Y., ... & Park, J. W. (2020). State-of-the-science review of leader-follower dyads research. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *31*(1), 101306.

Lee, A., Gerbasi, A., Schwarz, G., & Newman, A. (2019). Leader–member exchange social comparisons and follower outcomes: the roles of felt obligation and psychological entitlement. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *92*(3), 593-617.

Liang, L. H., Hanig, S., Evans, R., Brown, D. J., & Lian, H. (2018). Why is your boss making you sick? A longitudinal investigation modeling time-lagged relations between abusive supervision and employee physical health. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *39*(9), 1050-1065.

Liden, R. C. and Maslyn, J. M. (1998). Multidimensionality of leader-member exchange: an empirical assessment through scale development. *Journal of Management, 24*(1), 43-72.

Liu, J., Lee, A., Li, X., & Li, C. R. (2021). The role of change in the relationships between leader-member exchange/coworker exchange and newcomer performance: A latent growth modeling approach. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *12*, 600712.

Mackinnon, S., Curtis, R., & O'Connor, R. (2022). A tutorial in longitudinal measurement invariance and cross-lagged panel models using lavaan. *Meta-Psychology*, *6*. DOI: https://doi.org/10.15626/MP.2020.2595

Marques-Quinteiro, P., Vargas, R., Eifler, N., & Curral, L. (2019). Employee adaptive performance and job satisfaction during organizational crisis: the role of self-leadership. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, *28*(1), 85-100.

Martin, R., Guillaume, Y., Thomas, G., Lee, A., & Epitropaki, O. (2016). Leader–member exchange (LMX) and performance: A meta-analytic review. *Personnel Psychology*, *69*(1), 67-121.

McAllister, D. J. (1995). Affect-and cognition-based trust as foundations for interpersonal cooperation in organizations. *Academy of Management Journal*, *38*(1), 24-59.

Nahrgang, J. D., Morgeson, F. P., & Ilies, R. (2009). The development of leader–member exchanges: Exploring how personality and performance influence leader and member relationships over time. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *108*(2), 256-266.

Ployhart, R. E., & Vandenberg, R. J. (2010). Longitudinal research: The theory, design, and analysis of change. *Journal of Management*, *36*(1), 94-120.

Selig, J. P., & Preacher, K. J. (2009). Mediation models for longitudinal data in developmental research. *Research in Human Development*, *6*(2-3), 144-164.

van der Werff, L., & Buckley, F. (2017). Getting to know you: A longitudinal examination oftrust cues and trust development during socialization. *Journal of Management*, *43*(3), 742-770.

Vandenberg, R. J., & Lance, C. E. (2000). A review and synthesis of the measurement invariance literature: Suggestions, practices, and recommendations for organizational research. *Organizational Research Methods*, *3*(1), 4-70.

von Soest, T., & Hagtvet, K. A. (2011). Mediation analysis in a latent growth curve modeling framework. *Structural Equation Modeling*, *18*(2), 289-314.

Yu, Y., Kim, H., & Qu, H. (2020). A deep acting perspective generation Y hotel employees' workplace deviance. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 32*(2), 835-852.

Zhang, L., Goldberg, C. B., & McKay, P. F. (2020). From new hires to their supervisors: The influence of newcomer race/ethnicity on the leader–member exchange conveyance. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *93*(3), 767-789.

Zhao, P., Xu, X., Peng, Y., & Matthews, R. A. (2020). Justice, support, commitment, and time are intertwined: A social exchange perspective. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *120*, 103432.

Striving for performance bottom-line while being family-oriented? Employee responses to supervisor's bottom-line mentality and family-supportive behavior

Li, Mengxuan
School of Hotel and Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Wang, Xingyu
School of Hotel and Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Yan, Jingwen
School of Hotel and Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Che, Dongbo
School of Hotel and Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Abstract:
The abstract should be 20-50 words (full paper: 30-100 words). Outline the aim of the study with a brief background to explain why it was needed, what was done, and the main findings. Avoid quotes and extensive references.

Understanding the complementary roles of supervisor behaviors is important because research that synthesizes supervisor different behaviors as multiple informational cues to elucidate employee behaviors remains sparse. Our results revealed that supervisor BLM decreases employee proactive performance and OCBS via LMX, which could be tempered by higher level of FSSB.

Keywords: Supervisor BLM, Family-supportive Supervisor Behavior, Work-life Balance, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Proactive Performance

1. Introduction

Provide a brief background to the topic, with some statistics or data to provide a background to the environment or situation. Explain why the study is needed from the academic and practical perspectives. Research objectives should be clearly specified.

Consistent pressure in the competitive business environment has reignited attention to the prevalence of supervisor bottom-line mentality (BLM) in the workplace —that is, "a one-dimensional frame of mind that revolves around bottom-line outcomes are apt to neglect competing organizational priorities" (Greenbaum et al., 2012, p. 343). The hospitality sector, standing out as a particularly competitive domain (Agar, 2014), has experienced an aggressive emphasis on bottom-line outcomes, especially in the aftermath of the pandemic (Coyne, 2023). As a result, supervisor BLM pervades present-day hospitality organizations by pursuing short-term recovery to mitigate setbacks incurred by the pandemic (Guzzo et al., 2021). Meanwhile, work-life balance garners growing attention as employees perceive that the excessive demands of work begin to dominate life and a sense of work-life imbalance ensues (Guest, 2002). Given this, supervisors face the issue of how to balance the controversial leadership styles of BLM and work-life balance in tandem.

Previous research on supervisor BLM primarily examined BLM as the sole informational cue from supervisors that influences employees. However, leaders may convey heterogeneous information to their followers (Wang et al., 2023). In case of supervisor BLM, supervisors can play a conciliatory role in conducting family-supportive supervisor behavior (FSSB) as a discretional behavior to complement the information that alters employees' responses to unfavorable information conveyed by supervisor BLM. As such, employees' reactions are likely shaped by multiple information they receive. Ignoring the supervisor as a complex individual capable of emitting multiple types of information, like the existing literature did, may lead to an overly simplistic understanding of the leadership styles and employees' subsequent work behaviors. To address this gap, we examine how various information from supervisors (i.e., BLM and FSSB) jointly influence employees. Specifically, we draw on the social information processing (SIP) theory to explain **how and when the complementary role of supervisor BLM and FSSB may propel employees to restructure the employee-supervisor relationships and regulate their behaviors.**
To answer the abovementioned research question, we attempt to 1) test the negative relationship between supervisor BLM and employees' work behaviors via leader-member exchange; and 2) examine the role of FSSB in tempering the negative relationship between supervisor BLM and leader-member exchange.

2. Literature Review

Provide a critical review of the relevant literature in a sequential argument so it leads to the development of the research question. Review the different themes or research areas to be examined.

Note: examples of in-text referencing: (Johnson et al., 2021; Walker, 2022).

2.1. Supervisor BLM and Leader-Member Exchange
Employees as information receivers respond to informational cues given by supervisors in an adaptive manner. Supervisor BLM signals to employees that the achieving bottom-line outcome is the most worth pursuing objective over their personal welfare (Lin et al., 2022). Accordingly, employees receive the information from high-BLM supervisors as poor exchange partners, they thus reciprocate by a salient tendency towards relational distancing, thereby leading to low-quality exchange relationships (i.e., LMX; Quade et al., 2020). Given this, we hypothesize the following:

H1. Supervisor BLM is negatively related to LMX.

2.2. The Moderating Role of FSSB
Existing empirical findings supported the advantages of supervisor BLM in enhancing employees' productivity (i.e., Babalola et al., 2021). In contrast, many studies revealed that it

is pernicious to both employee wellbeing (i.e., burnout, Tseng, 2020; insomnia, Babalola et al., 2022) and organizational functioning in the long run through motivated employee unethical behaviors (i.e., social undermining, Greenbaum et al., 2012). The inconsistent findings on supervisor BLM not only reflect the intricate nature of supervisor BLM, but also indicate the existence of contingency factors in the supervisor BLM-employee outcome relationship. FSSB refers to supervisor behaviors that are supportive of employees' families and employees' efforts to balance work and non-work demands (Hammer et al. 2009). From social information perspective, FSSB could convey social information to employees that their supervisors care for their family-related issues (Shi et al., 2019). In doing so, employees tend to interpret FSSB as instrumental- and emotional-supportive and form positive perceptions of their supervisors. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H2. FSSB moderates the relationship between supervisor BLM and LMX, such that the relationship between supervisor BLM and LMX is more negative when FSSB is low rather than high.

2.3. Downstream Consequences of Proactive Performance and OCBS
For the distal outcomes, on the one hand, from the perspective of employees themselves, an unfavorable LMX will lead to a reluctance to engage in proactive behavior. On the other hand, employees tend to exhibit a diminished display of organizational citizenship behavior toward the supervisor (OCBS) in response to supervisor BLM. We examined the FSSB, which tends to optimize the image of the supervisor as another informative resource, thereby attenuating the adverse influence of supervisor BLM on the LMX and subsequent work behaviors of hospitality employees.

H3a. Supervisor BLM is negatively related to proactive behavior via the mediating role of LMX.
H3b. Supervisor BLM is negatively related to OCBS via the mediating role of LMX.

Figure 1 depicts the overall conceptual model of this research.

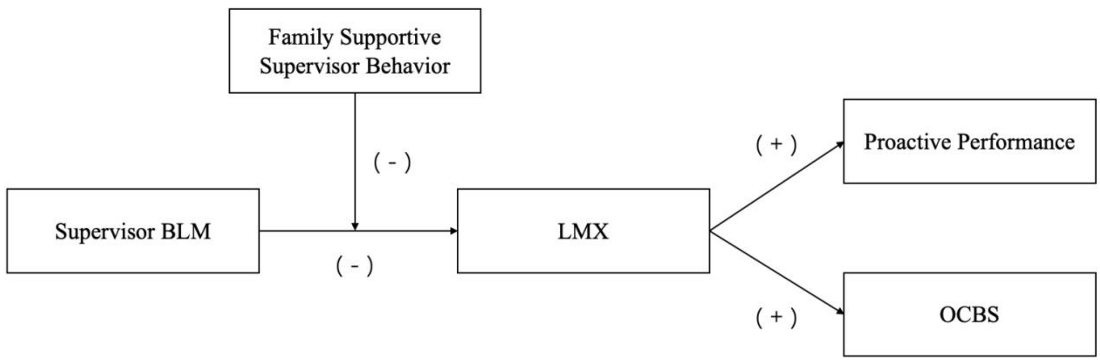


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

3. Methodology

Explain what research methods were used and why. Explain how they were applied. Measurement, Data collection, and Analytical methods may be included.

3.1 Samples and Procedure

In February 2023, we invited a total of 539 hotel full-time front-line employees from Southern China to participate in this research with a four-week interval between three times of data collection. At Time 1, we asked participants to report their perceived supervisor BLM and FSSB. At Time 2, they were asked to report their LMX. At Time 3, the participants were asked to rate their proactive behaviors and OCSB. We received 434 valid responses for all three surveys, with the response rate of 80.52%. Of the final 434 valid respondents, 61.5% of them were females, with the mean age of 34.95. 66.6% of the respondents had a high school diploma or above.

3.2 Measures

The translation and back-translation procedures was followed in preparing our survey in Chinese (Brislin, 1980). First, the original English scales were translated into Chinese by two authors who are fluent in both languages. Then, a research assistant who is also bilingual in English and Chinese back-translated all the scales into English. Such back-translated scales were compared against the original English scales to resolve any discrepancies while maintaining the scales' original meaning. Participants answered the questions using a 7-point Likert scale.

Supervisor BLM. Four-item scale was adopted from Greenbaum et al. (2012) to examine supervisor BLM. Sample item is "My supervisor only cares about the business".

FSSB. We measured FSSB by using 7 items developed by Hammer et al. (2009). Sample item is "My supervisor is willing to listen to my problems in juggling work and nonwork life".

LMX was tested by adopting a 7-time scale from Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995). Sample item is "My supervisor recognizes my potential.".

OCBS. Six-item scale developed by Lam et al. (2016) was adopted to test employees' OCBS. Sample item is "I try to help my supervisor.".

Proactive behavior. Participants reported their proactive behavior using a three-item scale developed by Griffin et al. (2007). Sample item is "I come up with ideas to improve the way in which my work tasks are done".

3.3 Data Analysis

We conducted a confirmatory factor analysis to assess the discriminant validity. We used path analyses with R 4.3.2 (R Core Team, 2023) and RStudio IDE 2023.09.1+494 for macOS (RStudio Team, 2023) to examine the hypothesized model. We used model constraints to estimate the simple slopes. We adopted the percentile bootstrap approach to assess the indirect effects (MacKinnon et al., 2004).

4. Results

Present results of data analyses. Tables and Figures will be helpful to explain the findings.

4.1. Measurement Model

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics. We conducted a confirmatory factor analysis to assess the discriminant validity. The results showed that the hypothesized five-factor model provided a good fit [Scaled $\chi 2$ (314) = 480.95, $p < 0.001$, Robust CFI = 0.92; Robust TLI = 0.91; Robust RMSEA = 0.09; SRMR = 0.051] and fit the data significantly better than the two possible best-fitting four-factor models [i.e. treating proactive behavior and family supportive supervisor behavior as one factor: Scaled $\chi2(318) = 581.44$, $p < 0.001$, Robust CFI = 0.84; Robust TLI = 0.83; Robust RMSEA = 0.12; SRMR = 0.07; treating proactive behavior and organizational citizenship behavior supervisor as one factor: Scaled $\chi2(318) = 641.37$, $p < 0.001$, Robust CFI = 0.81; Robust TLI = 0.79; Robust RMSEA = 0.13; SRMR = 0.12]. Next, the best-fitting three-factor model was examined (treating leader-member exchange, proactive behavior, and family-supportive supervisor behavior as the first factor, supervisor BLM as the second factor, and organizational citizenship behavior supervisor as the third factor; Scaled $\chi2(321) = 754.07$, $p < 0.001$, Robust CFI = 0.67; Robust TLI = 0.64; Robust RMSEA = 0.17; SRMR = 0.14). Finally, we tested the model fits of a two-factor model consisting of supervisor BLM and a second factor of the other constructs, as well as a single-factor model incorporating all five constructs. As indicated in Table 2, the five-factor model fitted better than the other five models based on Chi-square difference tests.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Age	34.95	11.73								
2. Gender	1.62	0.49	.05							
3. Education	3.45	1.55	-.40**	.04						
4. Tenure	2.69	1.28	.34**	.06	-.13**					
5. BLM	3.37	2.00	.08	-.06	-.06	-.08				
6. LMX	6.27	1.12	.06	.08	.04	.00	-.12**			
7. PROB	6.35	1.06	.12*	.07	.04	.13**	-.06	.37**		
8. FSSB	5.87	1.30	.00	.04	.02	-.01	-.13**	.46**	.54**	
9. OCBS	6.31	0.95	.09	.01	-.03	.08	-.20**	.32**	.38**	.38**

Note. N = 434. BLM = Supervisor Bottom Line Management, LMX = Leader-Member Exchange, PROB = Proactive Behavior, FSSB = Family Supportive Supervisor Behavior, OCBS = Organizational Citizenship Behavior Supervisor. $^{*}p < .05$, $^{**}p < .01$

Table 2

Confirmative Factor Analyses

Model	Scaled χ^2	df	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	Robust CFI	Robust TLI	Robust RMSEA	SRMR
Five-factor	480.95**	314			.92	.91	.09	.05
Best Four-factor	581.44**	318	100.49**	4	.84	.83	.12	.07
Best Three-factor	754.07**	321	172.63**	3	.67	.64	.17	.14
Best Two-factor	814.46**	323	60.39**	2	.53	.49	.21	.16
One-factor	1009.45**	324	194.99**	1	.34	.29	.24	.19

Note. Best Four-factor model treated proactive behavior and family-supportive supervisor behavior as one factor. Best Three-factor model treated leader-member exchange, proactive behavior, and family-supportive supervisor behavior as the first factor, supervisor BLM as the second factor, and organizational citizenship behavior supervisor as the third factor. Best two-factor model consisted of supervisor BLM and a second factor of the other constructs. One-factor model incorporated all five constructs. $^{**}p < .01$.

4.2. Hypothesis Testing

H1 argues that Supervisor BLM is negatively related to LMX. Controlling for age, gender, education level, and tenure, we ran a mediation model where the interaction between

Supervisor BLM and FSSB was not entered. Overall, the results indicated a significant relationship between Supervisor BLM and LMX (b = -.07, SE = 0.03, $p < 0.01$), supporting H1.
Then, we tested the moderating role of FSSB in the relationship between Supervisor BLM and LMX. As shown in Table 3, there was a significant interaction between Supervisor BLM and FSSB which influenced LMX (b = 0.07, SE = 0.02, $p < 0.001$). Specifically, Supervisor BLM was significantly positively related to LMX at low levels of FSSB (b = -0.14, SE = 0.04, $p < 0.01$). In comparison, Supervisor BLM was not significantly related to LMX at high levels of FSSB (b = 0.03, SE = 0.03, $p > 0.05$). A plot of the effect of enacted abusive supervision on embarrassment at ±1 SD of power distance belief is presented in Figure 1. Thus, the results supported H2.

Then, we tested the mediating effects of LMX, 5,000 bootstrapping samples were used to examine the indirect effect of Supervisor BLM on either proactive behavior or OCBS via LMX. LMX was positively related to proactive behavior ($b = 0.15$, SE = 0.04, $p < 0.001$) and OCBS ($b = 0.15$, SE = 0.04, $p < 0.001$). The results show that LMX mediated the relationship between Supervisor BLM and proactive behavior [unstandardized estimate = -0.03 (95% CI: -0.064, -0.002), $p < 0.05$]. Also, the relationship between Supervisor BLM and OCBS was mediated by LMX [unstandardized estimate = -0.03 (95% confidence interval (CI): -0.053 -0.004), $p < 0.05$]. Therefore, both H3a and H3b are supported.

Table 3
Results of the Path Analysis

Variable	**LMX** *B(SE)*	**Proactive Behavior** *B(SE)*	**OCBS** *B(SE)*
Covariates			
Age	0.01(0.00)*	0.01(0.00)*	0.01(0.00)
Gender	0.10(0.10)	0.07(0.09)	-0.06(0.09)
Education	0.05(0.03)	0.05(0.03)	-0.01(0.03)
Tenure	-0.03(0.04)	0.09(0.03)**	0.03(0.03)
Independent variables			
BLM	-0.05(0.02)*	0.02(0.02)	-0.07(0.02)**
FSSB	0.37(0.04)**	0.39(0.04)**	0.21(0.04)**
BLM X FSSB	0.07(0.02)**	-0.04(0.02)*	-0.02(0.02)
LMX		0.15(0.04)**	0.15(0.04)**

Note. BLM = Supervisor Bottom Line Management, LMX = Leader-Member Exchange, PROB = Proactive Behavior, FSSB = Family Supportive Supervisor Behavior, OCBS = Organizational Citizenship Behavior Supervisor. $^{*}p < .05$, $^{**}p < .05$

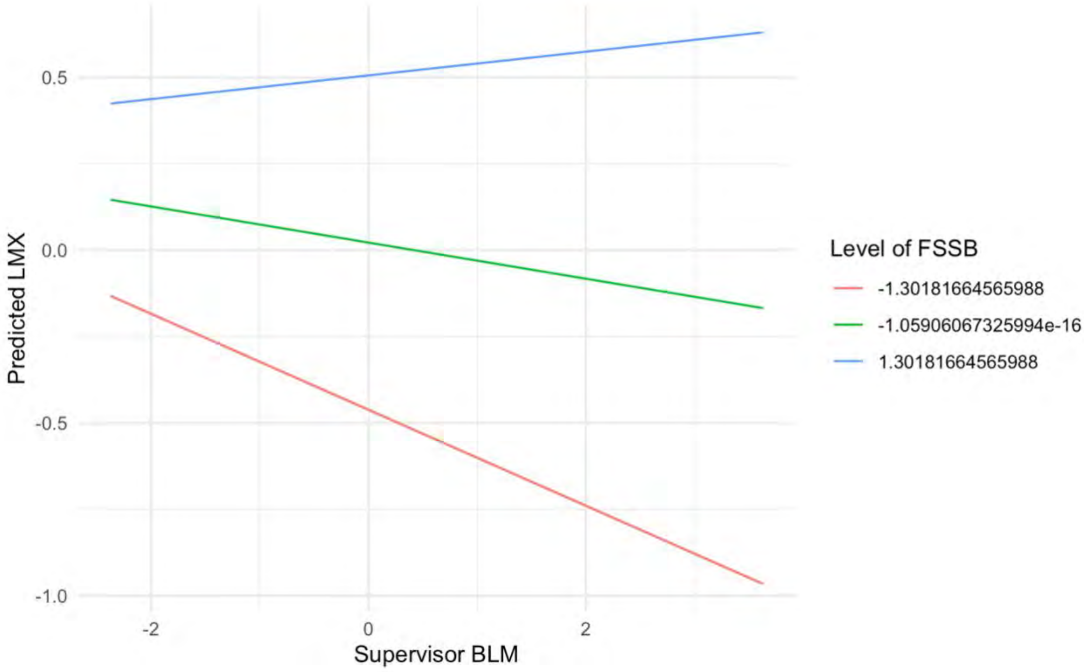


Figure 1. Moderating Effect of FSSB between Supervisor BLM and LMX

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Discuss your findings by comparing those of previous studies. Address academic and practical implications. Conclude with some directions for future research or practice, and any limitations of this study.

5.1. Conclusion and implications

Attaining work-life balance is the key for employees to enhance personal well-being. Theoretically, this research explicates how employees with increasing concern about work-life balance negatively react to supervisor BLM, which is consistent with previous findings on the effectiveness of supervisor BLM and further extends proactive behavior and OCBS as possible outcomes. Practically, considering the realistic pressing demands for hospitality organizations to survive and strive, it would be presumptuous for us to advise supervisors to simply eliminate BLM. Instead, hospitality managers could perform FSSB to temper employees' maladaptive reactions to supervisor BLM, thus promoting their work-life balance and performance.

5.2. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

The current research has a few limitations that could be resolved in the future research. First, this research adopted multi-wave survey design and corroborated significant relationship among proposed constructs. Nevertheless, survey study is not ideal to accurately test the causal relationships in the hypothesized model. In this sense, future research may conduct experimental designs with the manipulation of supervisor BLM to examine the causal relationship between supervisor BLM and employee LMX. Second, the behavioral outcomes of proactive behaviors and OCBS were self-reported by employees, which may pose a question about common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Although previous researchers similarly drew on employees' self-reports of these work behaviors, future researchers might invite external observers (i.e., supervisors or colleagues) to rate employees' OCBS and proactive behaviors.

REFERENCES

Agar, T. (2014). People Practices in the Hospitality Industry: How Employee First Mentalities Create Value for Employees and the Bottom Line. https://repository.tcu.edu/handle/116099117/10274

Babalola, M. T., Mawritz, M. B., Greenbaum, R. L., Ren, S., & Garba, O. A. (2021). Whatever it takes: How and when supervisor bottom-line mentality motivates employee contributions in the workplace. *Journal of Management, 47*(5), 1134-1154.

Babalola, M. T., Ren, S., Ogbonnaya, C., Riisla, K., Soetan, G. T., & Gok, K. (2022). Thriving at work but insomniac at home: Understanding the relationship between supervisor bottom-line mentality and employee functioning. *Human Relations, 75*(1), 33-57.

Brislin, R. W. (1980). Translation and content analysis of oral and written materials. *Methodology,* 389-444.

Coyne, P. (2023, July 6). The Impacts of Covid-19 Still Linger on the Hospitality Industry. ECBM Insurance Brokers & Consultants. Retrieved on February 20, 2024, from https://blog.ecbm.com/the-impacts-of-covid-19-still-linger-on-the-hospitality-industry

Greenbaum, R. L., Mawritz, M. B., & Eissa, G. (2012). Bottom-line mentality as an antecedent of social undermining and the moderating roles of core self-evaluations and conscientiousness. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 97*(2), 343-359.

Guest, D. E. (2002). Perspectives on the study of work-life balance. *Social Science Information, 41*(2), 255-279.

Guzzo, R. F., Wang, X., Madera, J. M., & Abbott, J. (2021). Organizational trust in times of COVID-19: Hospitality employees' affective responses to managers' communication. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 93,* 102778.

Hammer, L. B., Kossek, E. E., Yragui, N. L., Bodner, T. E., & Hanson, G. C. (2009). Development and validation of a multidimensional measure of family supportive supervisor behaviors (FSSB). *Journal of management, 35*(4), 837-856.

Lin, Y., Yang, M., Quade, M. J., & Chen, W. (2022). Is the bottom line reached? An exploration of supervisor bottom-line mentality, team performance avoidance goal orientation and team performance. *Human Relations, 75*(2), 349-372.

MacKinnon, D. P., Lockwood, C. M., & Williams, J. (2004). Confidence Limits for the Indirect Effect: Distribution of the Product and Resampling Methods. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, *39*(1), 99–128. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327906mbr3901_4

Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J. Y., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 88*(5), 879–903.

Quade, M. J., McLarty, B. D., & Bonner, J. M. (2020). The influence of supervisor bottom-line mentality and employee bottom-line mentality on leader-member exchange and subsequent employee performance. *Human Relations, 73*(8), 1157-1181.

R Core Team. (2023). *R: A language and environment for statistical computing* (Version 4.3.2 "Eye Holes") [Computer Software]. R Foundation for Statistical Computing, Vienna, Austria. https://cloud.r-project.org

RStudio Team. (2023). *RStudio: Integrated development environment for R* (Version 2023.09.1+494) [Computer Software]. RStudio, PBC, Boston, MA. https://posit.co/download/rstudio-desktop/

Shi, Y., Xie, J., Zhou, Z. E., Tang, H., & Ma, H. (2019). Family supportive supervisor behaviors and work engagement: A social information processing perspective. *Current Psychology*, 1-13.

Tseng, S. T. (2020). *When resource precedes human in human resource management: Organizational dehumanization and the roles of HR attributions and supervisor bottom-line mentality* (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Akron).

Wang, X., Shi, X., Hwang, Y., Yan, J., & Gip, H. (2023). A social informational processing lens on multi-foci mistreatment: roles of customer orientation and power distance. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 10963480231168610.

Does the foodservice environment affect employees' lung cancer susceptibility?

Lee, Chin A
Department of Food and Nutrition
Yonsei University

Ham, Sunny
Department of Food and Nutrition
Yonsei University

Abstract:

There are many cafeterias in Korea, and the labor-intensive working environment of cooks is predicted to be the cause of many diseases. Various studies conducted on musculoskeletal and skin diseases. However, research on the relationship between fumes and the health of cooks has not yet been conducted in depth.

The purpose of this study is to find out the current status and to use the HBM model to determine the impact of awareness of the connection between fumes and lung cancer on the work threats and preventive behavior of cooks.

Data will be collected from 1,000 cooks using survey.

Keywords: HBM, prevention behavior, cooking fume, lung cancer

1. Introduction

Currently, sales of KRW 14 trillion are generated from 58,174 cafeterias in Korea (Source: Korea Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs), and numerous workers work there. Although the quality of food and services provided at cafeterias is continuously improved in response to requests for improvement, the working environment for kitchen staff is worsening. The foodservice industry, one of the representative labor-intensive industries, causes inappropriate postures and movements such as handling heavy objects, bending at the waist, and repetitive manual work, which are risk factors for musculoskeletal disorders. (KOSHA, 2006). Additionally, exposure to various risk factors during the cooking process may cause health problems. Examples include skin burns due to boiling water or oil, heat exhaustion due to heat, hearing loss due to heat stress and noise exposure, mental fatigue, eczema, skin irritation, allergies, and respiratory diseases due to contact with various chemicals. (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2008) In addition to this, lung cancer caused by cooking fumes generated during cooking is emerging as a big topic in the food service industry.

Diseases in which the environment to which an individual is exposed is a contributing factor are called environmental diseases. Recently, the number of environmental disease-causing factors has been increasing continuously for various reasons, such as air pollution, industrialization, and exposure to hazardous chemicals. The relationship between cooking fumes in cafeterias and lung cancer is also continuously mentioned as an occupational environmental disease.

In Korea, lung cancer ranks second in incidence in men after stomach cancer, and in women it ranks fifth in incidence after breast cancer, thyroid cancer, colon cancer, and stomach cancer. It also ranks first in mortality among both men and women. (Source: National Cancer Registration Statistics 2023) In addition to direct and indirect smoking, which is said to be responsible for more than 70% of lung cancer, cooking fumes generated when cooking are said to be other causes along with factors such as radon, fine dust, air pollution, and genetics. Accordingly, the first case of lung cancer being recognized as an industrial accident occurred in a domestic food-service operations in 2020, and 117 of the 154 cooking workers who applied for industrial accidents in 2023 are recognized as industrial accidents. (Source: Korea Workers' Compensation and Welfare Service, 2023). It is a common opinion among lung cancer experts that smoke generated during cooking causes lung cancer (Source: Korean Lung Cancer Society, 2017), and the National Assembly is also trying to enact a law to prevent industrial accidents caused by cooking fumes (Source: Women's Newspaper, 2023) Internationally, the link between cooking workers and lung cancer is emerging as a big issue. However, little research has been conducted on the lung cancer awareness of cooks. In this situation, research on the perception of cooks working in actual cafeterias is expected to be of great help in preventing lung cancer, training for cooking workers, and improving food-service facilities. Furthermore, it will also help in national policies on cafeterias and workers.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the incidence and severity of lung cancer among cooks working in cafeterias and to use the HBM model to determine the impact of awareness of the relationship between work environment and cooking fumes and lung cancer occurrence on cook workers' job threats and preventive behavior. .

2. Literature Review

Health Belief Model (Becker & Maiman, 1975)
The Health Belief Model (HBM) is a social-psychological health behavior change model developed to explain and predict health-related behavior, particularly in relation to health care utilization. The HBM was developed by social psychologists at the U.S. Public Health Service in the 1950s and remains one of the best-known and most widely used theories in health behavior research. HBM states that people's beliefs about health issues, perceived benefits and barriers to behavior, and self-efficacy explain their participation (or lack of participation) in health-promoting behaviors.

Hill's Criteria (Sir Austin Bradford Hill, 1965)
The Bradford Hill criteria, also known as Hill's criteria for causality, are a group of nine principles that can be useful in establishing epidemiological evidence for a causal relationship between a presumed cause and an observed effect and are widely used in public health research.

A study by Bhurosy et al. conducted in 2023 reviewed papers that studied the relationship between cooking fume and lung cancer published from January 1, 2012 to December 6, 2022. In most cases, cooking oil fumes were found to increase the risk of lung cancer.
Trishnee Bhurosy et al (2023) Cancer Causes Control

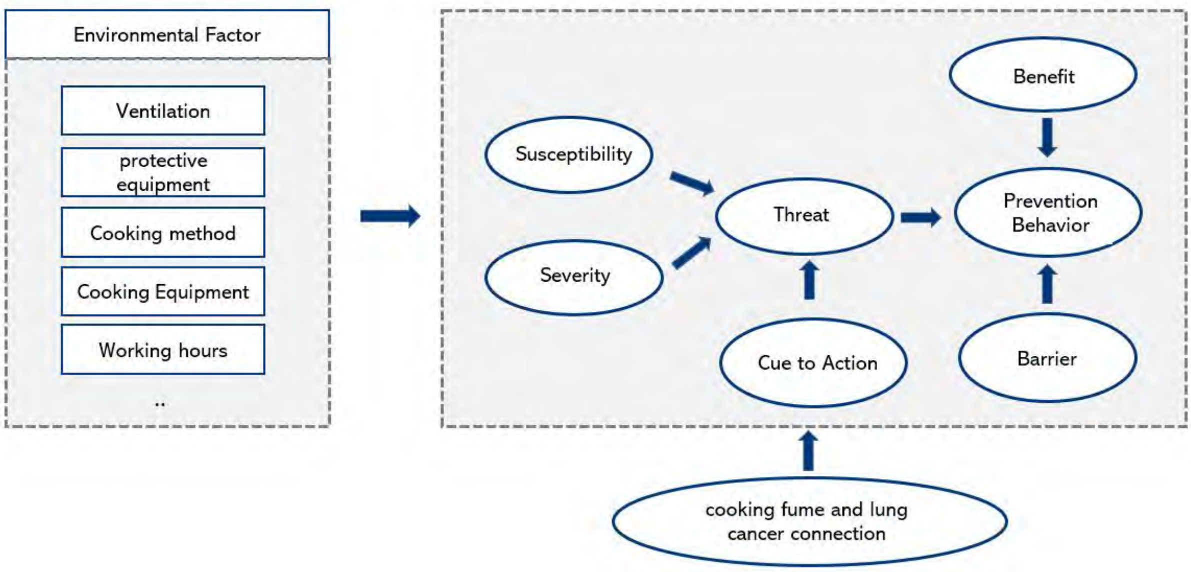
The International Agency for Research on Cancer found that polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and trans, trans-2, and 4-decadienal were defined as potential carcinogens.
William J. McCarthy, et al. (2012) Risk Ana.

A survey was conducted by dividing the research subjects into interest groups (school asbestos managers and asbestos industry managers) and the general group (general citizens whose residential environments contain asbestos), and analyzed public awareness and trust in the government's asbestos management policy. This was conducted to reveal the major factors that affect policy awareness and the correlation between each factor, and to derive basic data for establishing an asbestos risk communication methodology suited to the characteristics of the public, and the HBM model was used.

Ji-Hwa Son et al. (2013). Korean Soc. Indoor Environ

3. Research model and hypothesis

3-1 Research model



3-2 Hypothesis

1. Environmental factors that affect food service workers' perception of risk include ventilation, protective equipment, cooking methods, cooking utensils, and cooking time.
2. Environmental factors of food service workers will affect risk perception.
3. The sensitivity and efficacy of individual cooks will affect risk perception.
4. Benefits and barriers will affect the preventive actions of cooks who are aware of risks.

5. Awareness of the relationship between cooking fumes and lung cancer will influence risk perception and subsequent preventive actions.

4. Methodology

4.1 Survey design

Based on previous research, we will design a questionnaire to measure the environmental factors (ventilation, protective equipment, cooking methods, cooking utensils, cooking time) presented in the model of this study, factors affecting risk perception, and types of risk prevention behavior. In designing the questionnaire, PGI will be administered to 10 cooks with more than 20 years of cooking experience, and a pilot study will be conducted to test the measurement values. The pilot study will measure cooking experience (5~20 years), variance and deviation will be tested, and items with low deviation will be excluded from the factor scale. The final survey will be conducted on 1,000 currently working cooks with more than 5 years of cooking experience.

4.2 Data collection

The final survey will be conducted simultaneously in person and online for two months.

4.3 Data analysis

The data in this study were analyzed using SPSS 29.0 and AMOS 21.0 programs. We plan to conduct a frequency analysis on the demographic characteristics of the survey subjects and a difference analysis on changes in attitudes and perceptions.

5. Expected Outcome

1. Awareness of the connection between cooking fumes and lung cancer will affect the work risk awareness and job attitude of cooks
2. Different behavioral changes will occur depending on the individual's feeding environment, awareness of lung cancer, and personal environment, and even if the same or similar job risk awareness is accepted, different preventive behavior changes may appear.
3. However, these results require long-term data, the improvement effect cannot be confirmed immediately, it is not easy to independently determine the cause of multifactorial caused lung cancer, and there may be errors in interpreting the results, so a follow-up study targeting the same person is needed.

Since food service workers are exposed to cooking fumes, a lung cancer-related factor, a change in awareness and attitude of not only individuals but also the nation is needed to create a proper working environment and prevent risks. Accordingly, by creating a guidebook on occupational diseases, we will urge cooking workers to make efforts for personal health such as ventilation, urge business owners to improve the cooking environment, and help establish follow-up research and policies to protect the health of food service workers. We will be able to provide relevant information to relevant organizations and departments.

REFERENCES

YingboXue, Ying Jiang, Shan Jin, and Yong LiOnco Targets Ther(2016). Association between cooking oil fume exposure and lung cancer among Chinese nonsmoking women: a meta-analysis. 2016; 9: 2987–2992.

William J. McCarthy, et al.(2012) Lung cancer in never smokers Epidemiology and risk prediction models, Risk Anal. 2012 Jul; 32(Suppl 1): S69–S84.

TrishneeBhurosy, AmatulMarium, Ibraheem M Karaye, Tammy Chung. (2023). Where there are fumes, there may be lung cancer: a systematic review on the association between exposure to cooking fumes and the risk of lung cancer in never-smokers, 2023Jun;34(6):509-520. Cancer Causes Control

Tzu-Yu Chenet al.(2020) Impact of cooking oil fume exposure and fume extractor use on lung cancer risk in non-smoking Han Chinese women, Sci Rep. 2020; 10: 6774.

SONG， HAE RYONG 1， wonje kim 2， Jeong Se-il 3.(2010) Perception and Attitude about Risk from Science & Technology -Focused on Risk from Electromagnetic Wave- Jour. of KoCon.a 2010, vol.10, no.5, pp. 436-445 (10 pages)

Lei-Shih Chen1, Kimberly A. Kaphingst2,3, Tung-Sung Tseng4, and Shixi Zhao1.(2016) How are lung cancer risk perceptions and cigarette smoking related?—testing an accuracy hypothesis, Transl Cancer Res. 2016 October ; 5(Suppl 5): S964–S971.

M. Khan, MD, MPH, PhD1 , J. Gomes, MSc, PhD2, and S. Chreim, MSc, PhD3.(2021). A Mixed Methods Population Health Approach to Explore Radon-Induced Lung Cancer Risk Perception in Canada : Cancer Control Volume 28: 1–15

Hill AB(1965). Inaugural Meeting. Proc R Soc Med. (1965) 58:289.

Maarten Wensink1,2, Rudi G. J. Westendorp2,3 & Annette Baudisch (2014). The causal pie model: an epidemiological method applied to evolutionary biology and ecology
Ecology and Evolution 2014 Vol. 10 No.4 1924p ~ 1930p

Gwan-Hyeong Yi, Kyung-Yong Rhee.(1992). The recognition and the attitude about the hazard materials and occupational disease in the asbestos related industry, Korean J. of Preventive Medicine Vol. 25, No. 3, September 1992

Ji-Hwa Son1)・Sang-Hyo Sim2) · Esther Shin3) · Yoon Shin Kim2)* (2013). A Study of the Perception Degree on Asbestos Management Policy about the Asbestos Related Stakeholders. Korean Soc. Indoor Environ. Vol. 10, No.3, pp.199-216 (September 2013)

Jinyi Jeong. (2015). Application of the Health Belief Model to Customers' Use Intention of Menu Labels in Restaurants , The Graduate School Yonsei University Department of Food and Nutrition

Shih-Wei Wu(2023). Exploring the Moderating Effect of Positive and Negative Word-of-Mouth on the Relationship between Health Belief Model and the Willingness to

Receive COVID-19 Vaccine. National Taipei University of Technology

Eun-Su Son, Jong-Ho Lee. (2019). The Effects of Job Stress on Turnover Intention according to the Job Characteristics of food service workers Industrial innovation research, 03/31/2019, Vol. 35, Issue 1, p. 105-124 .

Jeong, Won Jin・Kim, Kyung-Ja・Moon, Seok. min. (2023). Effect of Job Environment of Group Catering Staff on Job Satisfaction - Mediating Effect of Coaching LeadershipJournal of Hotel & Resort Vol. 22 No. 3(297p~314p)

Lee, Saerom · Kim, KyooSang · Kim, Eun-A · Kim, Jihye · Kim, Dohyung. (2024) Job Stress and Musculoskeletal Disorder in Seoul City's School Foodservice Employees Korean Journal of Occupational Health Nursing Vol. 23 No. 4, 245-253, November 2014

Fast or slow: Impact of ChatGPT's response time on consumer evaluation

Kim, Jeong Hyun
Smart Tourism Research Center
Kyung Hee University

Kim, Jungkeun
Department of Marketing
Auckland University of Technology

Koo, Chulmo
Smart Tourism Education Platform (STEP)
Kyung Hee University

Chung, Namho
Smart Tourism Education Platform (STEP)
Kyung Hee University

Kim, Seongseop (Sam)
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Abstract:

This study explores the impact of response speed on consumer evaluation of ChatGPT recommendations, focusing on satisfaction and visit intention. Findings suggest that faster response speed enhances recommendation satisfaction, visit intention, and perceived usefulness. Serial mediation analysis confirms the indirect effect of response speed on satisfaction through usefulness. This research expands understanding of the importance of responsiveness in human-AI interaction and suggests prioritizing reduced waiting time for improved consumer experiences.

Keywords: ChatGPT, generative AI, speed, AI recommendation

1. Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies are reshaping industries, and tourism and hospitality are no exception. Among these, ChatGPT, known for its human-like conversational abilities, is gaining attention for its potential to enhance customer interactions. As online platforms are increasingly adopting generative AI technologies to travel planning, ChatGPT's role in offering real-time recommendations is crucial.

Waiting time is a significant factor in consumer service evaluation, impacting satisfaction and perceived quality. Despite its significance, the impact of waiting time on AI-service user perception remains unexplored. Therefore, this research aims to investigate how ChatGPT's response speed influences users' perception of recommended places. Insights gained can inform AI service providers in optimizing service design for the tourism and hospitality sector.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Waiting time

Studies have consistently shown that prolonged waiting time leads to lower customer satisfaction and perceptions of service quality. For instance, Kim & Lim (2001) found that consumers tend to perceive services with long waiting times as of lower quality. This perception extends beyond traditional service encounters including video advertising (Jung & Debois, 2023). Moreover, Chien et al. (2008) identified speed as a significant factor affecting consumers' reading comprehension. Additionally, waiting time influences customer mood and their likelihood of making future purchases (Taylor, 1994).

In the context of online interactions, delayed responses can lead to frustration and dissatisfaction among users, particularly for information-searching. Research has shown that slow website loading speeds lead to user abandonment, with approximately 57% of users leaving if a page does not load within 3 seconds (Nagy, 2013). Similarly, consumers are generally intolerant of even slight delays when searching for information online (Nah, 2004).

Despite the extensive literature on waiting time, its impact on consumer perception when using AI services remains largely unexplored. Borges et al. (2015) delineate two dimensions of waiting time perception: objective waiting time, which refers to the actual time spent waiting, and perceived waiting time, which is consumers' estimation of their waiting duration. This study focuses on the impact of objective waiting time on consumer evaluation.

2.2. Hypothesis development

Users tend to perceive websites as slow when waiting times increase (Hong et al., 2013). However, tolerance for delays may vary depending on the context (Otto et al., 2003). Given the real-time nature of decision-making processes on travel platforms like ChatGPT, users expect quick responses to their requests.

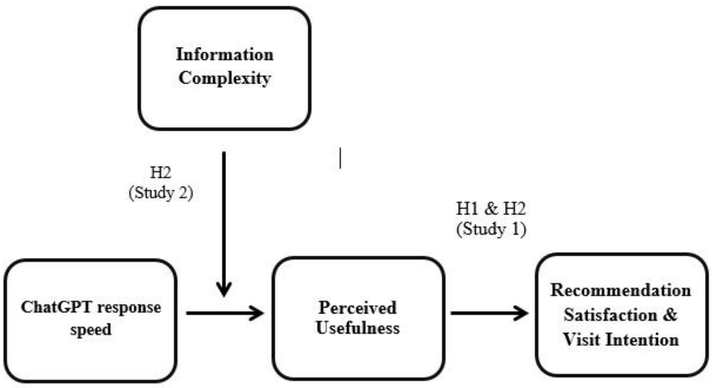
Perceived usefulness, a critical construct in technology acceptance, reflects consumers' assessment of how technology enhances task performance (Cho & Sagynov, 2015). Faster response times are generally associated with higher perceived usefulness of technology (Renko & Druzijanic, 2014). Based on Resource Allocation Theory (RAM), quick responses are expected to reduce cognitive effort and increase perceived usefulness, ultimately leading to greater satisfaction with recommendations and confidence in decision-making (Zakay, 1989). As satisfied users are more likely to express an intention to visit recommended places, users who perceive ChatGPT as useful are expected to have a higher likelihood of visiting suggested places.

Hence, we propose the following hypotheses:
H1: *Users' evaluation of recommended places by ChatGPT will be higher when ChatGPT's response is fast compared to slow.*

H2: *ChatGPT response speed will influence the evaluation of recommended places through the serial mediation of response speed → perceived usefulness → recommendation satisfaction → visit intention*.
The theoretical framework is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1.

Theoretical Framework and Empirical Studies



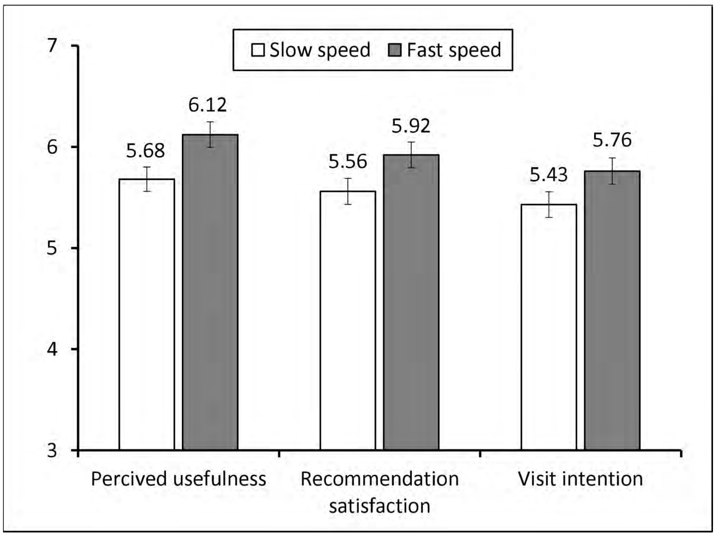
3. Study 1: Effect of Fast (vs. Slow) Response by ChatGPT (H1 & H2)

3.1. Measurement
The study involved 193 adults from the United States (mean age = 41.99, SD = 11.80; 101 female participants) recruited via Amazon Mechanical Turk through CloudResearch, receiving a nominal payment. Participants were randomly assigned to either the slow or fast ChatGPT response speed video condition using a between-subjects design.

3.2. Results
In order to examine H1, it was found that the satisfaction with ChatGPT recommendations was greater when the response was fast compared to slow (M_{slow} = 5.56, SD = 1.27 vs. M_{fast} = 5.92, SD = 1.25; $F(1, 191) = 4.07$, $p = .045$, $\eta^2 = .021$). Similarly, there was a slight increase in the intention to visit recommended places when the response was fast compared to slow (M_{slow} = 5.43, SD = 1.25 vs. M_{fast} = 5.76, SD = 1.28; $F(1, 191) = 3.12$, $p = .075$, $\eta^2 = .017$), supporting H1 and as illustrated in Figure 2. Additionally, the perceived usefulness of the recommended places was higher when the response was fast compared to slow (M_{slow} = 5.68, SD = 1.18 vs. M_{fast} = 6.12, SD = 1.24; $F(1, 191) = 6.20$, $p = .014$, $\eta^2 = .031$), as demonstrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2.

Results of Study 1

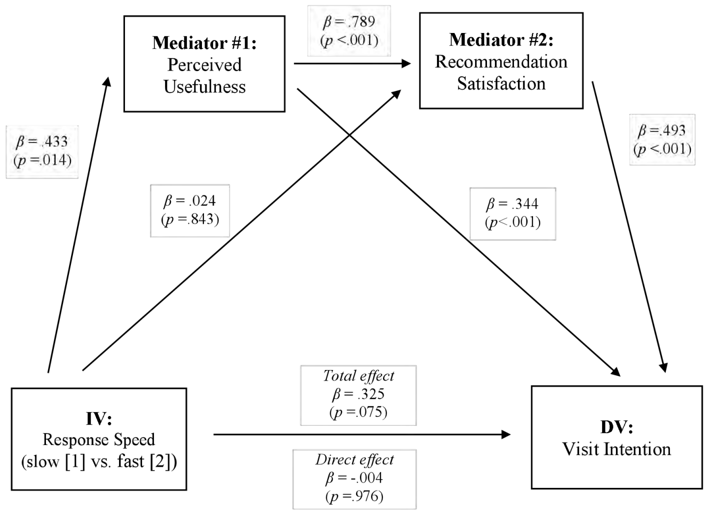


* Error bars represents the standard error.

For testing H2, we conducted a serial mediation using Hayes' (2017) macro #4 with 5,000 bootstrapping. As illustrated in Figure 3, the results indicated that the indirect effect of the mediation was significant (index = .169, 95% Confidence Interval [CI]: [.033, .323]), supporting H2.

Figure 3.

Serial Mediation Results of Study 1



* *Indirect effect*

- Response speed → perceived usefulness → visit intention, 95% CI: (.027, .301)
- Response speed → recommendation satisfaction → visit intention, 95% CI: (-.094, .135)
- Response speed → perceived usefulness → recommendation satisfaction → visit intention, 95% CI: (.033, .3.23)

4. Discussion and Conclusion

4.1. Discussion and implications

Our study makes a theoretical contribution to the field of consumer reactions to AI by broadening the literature on the influence of waiting time. This investigation represents one of the initial empirical inquiries illustrating the favorable outcomes of short waiting time on satisfaction and the intention to visit when interacting with AI systems. The findings collectively underscore the importance of response speed and waiting time in shaping consumer perceptions and satisfaction across various contexts (Chebat & Filiatrault, 1993; Jung & Debois, 2023; Herbst et al., 2012)

For practical implication, service providers are recommended to focus on reducing waiting time to align with user expectations. Managers and AI developers have the opportunity to utilize the beneficial effects of rapid response speed on recommendation satisfaction and visit intention to improve the overall consumer experience. This approach can further stimulate increased interaction with the AI service.

4.2 Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies

This study acknowledges certain limitations. Firstly, the use of online panel samples from Cloud Research may not fully capture the diverse range of consumers. Future studies could conduct field experiments to mitigate biases associated with participant selection based on demographic profiles. Secondly, the geographical focus on participants from the US may restrict the broader relevance of the results to a global context. Hence, future research is encouraged to utilize cross-cultural samples to ensure broader applicability.

REFERENCES

Borges, A., Herter, M. M., & Chebat, J. C. (2015). “It was not that long!”: The effects of the in-store TV screen content and consumers emotions on consumer waiting perception. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, *22*, 96-106.

Chien, Y. H., Chen, C. H., & Wei, W. L. (2008). Effects of dynamic display, presentation method, speed, and task type on reading comprehension of wristwatch screens. *Displays*, *29*(5), 471-477.

Cho, Y. C., & Sagynov, E. (2015). Exploring factors that affect usefulness, ease of use, trust, and purchase intention in the online environment. *International Journal of Management & Information Systems*, *19*(1), 21-36.

Hong, W., Hess, T. J., & Hardin, A. (2013). When filling the wait makes it feel longer: a paradigm shift perspective for managing online delay. *MIS Quarterly*, 383-406.

Kim, S. Y., & Lim, Y. J. (2001). Consumers' perceived importance of and satisfaction with internet shopping. *Electronic Markets*, *11*(3), 148-154.

Nagy, Z. (2013). Improved speed on intelligent web sites. *Recent Advances in Computer Science*, *1*(14), 215-220.

Nah, H. (2004). A study on tolerable waiting time: How long are web users willing to wait? *Behaviour & InformationTechnology*,*23*(3), 153–163.

Otto, J.R., Najdawi, M.K., & Wagner, W. (2003). An experimental study of web switching behavior. *Human SystemsManagement*,*22*(2), 87–93.

Renko, S., & Druzijanic, M. (2014). Perceived usefulness of innovative technology in retailing: Consumers′ and retailers′ point of view. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, *21*(5), 836-843.

Taylor, S. (1994). Waiting for service: the relationship between delays and evaluations of service. *Journal of Marketing*, *58*(2), 56-69.

Zakay, D. (1989). Subjective time and attentional resource allocation: An integrated model of time estimation. In *Advances in Psychology* (Vol. 59, pp. 365-397). North-Holland