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Under pressure: Predictors of depression, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion in hospitality and tourism students executing a stressful event

Annamarie Sisson (Edinburgh Napier University)

Melanie Peele (Private practice psychotherapist)

Nicholas Thomas (Abu Dhabi Hospitality Academy - Les Roches)

Abstract. The purpose of this working paper is to extend the current literature on mental health in hospitality and tourism by examining the impact of planning and executing a stressful event on students' emotional exhaustion, depression, and anxiety. Predictors including emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, perceived group emotional variability over time, and student demographics will be explored for their impact on student mental health outcomes. A mixed methods approach including focus groups will be used to assess hospitality and tourism undergraduate students before, during, and after planning and executing a stressful event. Results will also be used to inform educational programs at participating universities about students' mental health experiences while involved in the stressful event.

Keywords: hospitality, event management, mental health

Collaborating on a Global Perspective of Sustainability and Stewardship: An Example of Teaching the UN Tourism Model

Michael M Scantlebury (Grand Valley State University)

Lorie Tuma (Grand Valley State University)

Mohammed Lefrid (Grand Valley State University)

Abstract. The purpose of this workshop is to bridge the existing gaps between academic research, sustainability education within hospitality and tourism programs, the activities of practitioners, and the mission of the World Tourism Organization (WTO). Various studies have explored the impact of sustainable tourism on local communities and stakeholders, but there is a lack of research utilizing the WTO's Statistical Framework to analyze sustainable tourism. This workshop aims to address this gap by applying the WTO's Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism.

Keywords: Sustainable tourism, WTO Statistical Framework, Economic sustainability, Environmental sustainability, Social-cultural sustainability

Tourism-Industry Voluntourism - The Case of a Sustainable Tourism Improvement Program

Dr. Paul Stansbie (Grand Valley State University)

Dr. Patty Janes (Grand Valley State University)

Dr. Lorie Tuma (Grand Valley State University)

Abstract. This case study highlights the challenges and unexpected benefits faced by Michigan Cares for Tourism, a non-profit organization that mobilized tourism-industry professionals to give back to their communities through infrastructure and beautification projects. It details the formation of unique partnerships, offers insights into the evolution of a sustainable business model, demonstrates the success and positive outcomes of collaborative work, and recognizes the role of leadership even with limited resources and a 100% volunteer workforce. Additionally, the study explores how the organization adapted and thrived during the global pandemic, showcasing the resilience and dedication of the tourism community in making a positive impact despite significant challenges.

Keywords: Sustainable Tourism, Voluntourism, Collaborative Partnerships, Community Impact

Workshop Proposal: Best Practices in Hospitality & Tourism Study Abroad Courses

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Qu Xiao (The Hong Kong Polytechnic School of Hotel & Tourism Management)

Abstract. The hospitality and tourism industry remains one of the largest industries in the world, requiring that current students and graduates in related academic programmes have a deep understanding of diverse cultures, customs, and business practices. Study abroad programs have become an invaluable tool for students to gain this crucial international exposure. However, designing and implementing effective industry-focused study abroad courses can present unique challenges. This workshop aims to explore best practices for developing, executing, and assessing high-impact hospitality and tourism study abroad programs.

Keywords: Study Abroad, International Travel, Experiential Learning

The Bermuda Anchor designation; Training designed to equip employees with knowledge & skills to deliver exceptional & authentic Bermudian hospitality!

Lawrence Sticca (Bermuda College & Bermuda Tourism Authority)

Abstract. Certified by the City & Guilds Assured programme, AnchorBDA offers external validation from a trusted global brand, providing a mark of learning quality and credibility. ‘Assured’ status is only awarded to programmes that meet City & Guilds strict benchmark standards, demonstrating commitment to quality learning pathways. Individuals that successfully complete the 6-module programme receive a certificate and a co-branded digital credential/badge to highlight they acquired the skills to help elevate Bermuda’s hospitality and tourism industry. The AnchorBDA primary designation courses include; the National Tourism Plan 2019-2026, Understanding Hospitality and Tourism in Bermuda, Blue Flag: The Transformation of Bermuda from Past to Present, Introduction to Sustainability, Introduction to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion in Hospitality and Tourism, and Excellence in Service: Elevate Bermuda Together.

Keywords: BTA, City & Guilds Assured, AnchorBDA

Understanding the internet celebrity restaurant’s servicescape in developing quality of life

Pei-Yu Sung (Southern Taiwan University of Science and Technology)

Kuo-Ning Liu (Southern Taiwan University of Science and Technology)

Abstract. With the rapid development of Taiwan’s food and beverage industry and the diversification of consumer demands, the emergence of internet celebrity restaurants is a testament to the changing landscape. A 2022 survey indicates that, with the easing of the pandemic, the revenue of the food and beverage industry is expected to grow significantly in 2023. This growth, however, is contingent on one crucial factor-customer satisfaction. Restaurateurs need to focus on improving the servicescape and service quality to enhance customer emotions, satisfaction, and happiness, thereby improving their quality of life. Despite a declining population, the strong demand for dining necessitates innovative and differentiated strategies to maintain competitiveness.

Keywords: Customer emotion, Happiness, Satisfaction, Servicescape, Quality of life

Education for Sustainable Development in Hospitality and Tourism: Nurturing Future Professionals with Sustainability and GenAI Competencies

Catherine Cheung (The Hong Kong Polytechnic University)

Mag Xu (The Hong Kong Polytechnic University)

Abstract. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is a critical component of preparing future hospitality and tourism (H&T) professionals to address the complex challenges of sustainability and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This 60 minutes' face to face workshop organised in the School of Hotel and Tourism Management premise aims to facilitate interested educators to explore the potential future (H&T) professional roles that align with the SDGs, the key competencies for sustainability, and the emerging GenAI competencies. It also examines teaching and learning innovations that target these key competencies for sustainability and GenAI-related competencies. In this workshop, digital tools such as Padlet and Google forms will be used as well as GenAI tools such as ChatGPT and Midjourney.

Keywords: Education for sustainable development, Learning design, Hospitality and tourism, Transformative pedagogy, Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)

Mega-Events as Catalysts for Urban Regeneration: A Case Study of South Korea

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Abstract. The modernization process in South Korea (hereafter referred to as Korea) over the past 30 years has been closely linked to hosting mega-events, which have helped to spur urban regeneration. As catalysts for urban regeneration, mega-events strengthen the city's infrastructure, update transportation systems, revitalize the tourism industry, and develop cultural exchanges, enabling the host city to gain global awareness and become an international city by adapting to the latest globalization trends. This article analyzes and summarizes the historical process and impact of four global mega-events in Korea and focuses on implementing urban regeneration strategies in conjunction with these events. The paper evaluates the tangible and intangible regeneration strategies through case analysis, emphasizing different kinds of regeneration in Korea. Considering Korea's current social, cultural, political, and economic factors, a theoretical model of mega-events as catalysts for urban regeneration is proposed for future research.

Keywords: Mega-Event, Event Industry, Urban Regeneration, Case Analysis

Internationalization of Hong Kong Universities: Facilitators and Inhibitors

Dori Davari (Hong Kong Polytechnic University)

Abstract. The internationalization is crucial for the global reputation of Hong Kong universities. The key factor associated with university/destination choice for the most qualified students is the quality of education. Meanwhile, international students are additionally likely to seek a package of experiences that extends beyond their academic focus. The overall travel experience is critical for long-term student satisfaction. This study is aimed at examining the decision-making process of a potential international student who is interested in studying in a globally reputable university. Such a student is

likely to be interested in exploring diverse cultures, seeking sensation, and enjoying the novelty of the destination where his/her university is located. Therefore, it is important to determine the attributes of highly competitive universities to potential international students in terms of providing a pleasant travel experience during their residence in the host community affiliated with their universities.

Keywords: Education experience; internationalization; global competition; destination-community hospitality; student life

Does Showing off Make Luxury Tourists Happy?

Miaosen Li (Hainan University)

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Abstract. This study investigates if tourists' public display of luxury tours could improve their wellbeing by examining a "characteristics-public display-wellbeing" framework. The characteristics of a luxury tour are studied as price, quality, conspicuousness, uniqueness, aesthetics, hedonism, idleness, and authenticity. It also examines the moderating effect of face consciousness in the relationships above. Data were gathered through questionnaires from 467 tourists in a luxury destination in China. This study divided these data into luxury and non-luxury groups, and then analyzed the two groups separately using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling. Results show that for luxury tourists, quality, conspicuousness, aesthetics and authenticity have a significantly positive impact on public display. Compared with non-luxury tourists, luxury tourists engaging in public display can be happier. For luxury tourists, those with higher face consciousness gain more wellbeing by showing off. The findings deepen our understanding of the psychological and behavioral patterns specific to luxury tourists.

Keywords: Luxury tourism, Public display, Well-being, Face consciousness

Introduction

Luxury tourism, as an important branch of the tourism industry, has been growing rapidly worldwide in recent years (Statista, 2022). The global luxury travel market size was USD 1. 20 trillion in 2021 and is expected to double by 2030 (Grand View Research, 2022). This demonstrates the growing significance of luxury tourism in the global tourist sector and its pivotal role in the development of the tourism industry. Meanwhile, luxury tourism has received increased attention from scholars (Iloranta, 2022). However the definition of luxury tourism is still vague. Based on previous literature (Heine, 2012; Parguel et al., 2016; Correia et al., 2020; Cristini et al., 2022), we identified eight characteristics (price, quality, conspicuousness, uniqueness, aesthetics, hedonism, idleness, authenticity) for describing luxury tourism.

Luxury tourism has had a significant impact on tourists (Li & Stodolska, 2021) by providing them with unique consumption experiences (Yeoman, 2009), helping to satisfy their social and psychological needs such as self-actualization and social identity (Ahn et al., 2015; Correia et al., 2020), and influencing tourists' behavioral patterns (Park et al., 2010). In addition, luxury tourism experiences also influence tourists' well-being (Kang, 2020; Lin et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2023).

Well-being is seen as an important indicator for evaluating individual life satisfaction and has received increasing attention. In the tourism industry, tourists' well-being has been recognized as an important factor in measuring the quality of tourism services and products (Neal et al., 1999). Subjective well-being is an integrated experience that includes life satisfaction, positive affect, and low levels of negative affect (Diener, 1984). Few studies have explored the relationship between luxury tourism and wellbeing. However, there is a considerable amount of research suggesting that luxury consumption can enhance individual well-being, mainly because the purchase and use of luxury goods can provide hedonic experiences, fulfill material and social needs, and shape self-image (Heaney et al., 2005; Tynan et al., 2010). In addition, tourism is seen as an important way to enhance personal well-

being. It provides an escape from the stresses of everyday life and has the potential to enhance an individual's life satisfaction (Neal et al., 1999).

The small number of studies on luxury tourism and well-being have shown that luxury tourism has a positive impact on well-being. Specifically, luxury tourism brings the experiential value such as service excellence, happiness and uniqueness, all of which positively impact well-being (Kang, 2020; Gladkikh & Séraphin, 2023; Wang et al., 2023).

For luxury tourists, they do not only value the quality and service of the product when choosing a luxury tourism product, but also the ability of the product to fulfill their social status and identity needs (Tynan et al., 2010). This need often manifests itself as a display behavior, whereby consumers attempt to demonstrate their status, wealth, or taste by purchasing and using expensive products or services to gain recognition or envy from others (Wiedmann et al., 2009). Luxury tourism provides tourists with the opportunity to display wealth and status in their social circles, and display behavior during tourism affects tourists' well-being (Nawijn, 2011). The well-being theory by Newman et al. (2014) is embedded in this study and thus we propose the “characteristics - public display - wellbeing” framework.

Face consciousness also influences tourists' choices and behaviors. Consumers with higher face consciousness are more inclined to purchase luxury goods because it enhances their social status and prestige (Zhang & Kim, 2013). For many tourists, being able to demonstrate their social status and maintain face is an important consideration in their choice of destinations and activities (Kim et al., 2012).

Therefore, the aim of this paper is to examine how display affects tourists' well-being in luxury tourism. First, we need to investigate how the eight characteristics of luxury tourism influence public display. Second, we examine the influence of public display on luxury tourists' well-being. In addition, we investigate the moderating role of face consciousness in the relationships between characteristics and public display, as well as between public display and well-being. This paper adopts a quantitative analysis method, and the data are collected from luxury tourist

destination in China. By examining how display behavior affects luxury tourists' well-being, it is possible to deepen our understanding of the psychological and behavioral patterns specific to luxury tourists. From the perspective of display, it reveals the intrinsic relationship between luxury tourists' consumption motivation and well-being, which is an important insight for enriching and developing theoretical research in the field of luxury consumption and well-being. Meanwhile, it will help luxury tourism practitioners to better understand their target consumers and thus provide products and services that are more capable of enhancing consumer well-being.

Theoretical Framework

Luxury tourism

Traditionally, luxury tourism has been understood from a product perspective, which is similar to the attributes associated with luxury goods, i.e. quality and price create specific expectations of luxury (Iloranta, 2022). In these contexts, luxury tourism refers to the provision of premium, exclusive, comprehensive, or customized high-quality services and products (Huang & Hsu, 2009; Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2006), which tend to exhibit functional and symbolic characteristics (Lai & Hitchcock, 2017; Hung et al., 2021). There are more scholars who understand luxury tourism from a non-traditional perspective, viewing it more as an experience (Tynan et al., 2010). In this perspective, luxury tourism is viewed as a prestigious and show-off consumer experience, where novelty, escapism, authenticity, and aesthetics are all part of the experience (Otto & Ritchie, 1996; Morgan et al., 2010; Tung & Ritchie, 2011).

However, all of the above studies have focused on a relatively narrow area, and therefore a comprehensive framework is needed to understand luxury tourism. Derived from the literature (Iloranta, 2022), this latent framework comprises three overarching dimensions encompassing eight key characteristics to describe luxury tourism consumption in general. The functional dimension is represented by price and

quality; the symbolic dimension by conspicuousness and uniqueness; the experiential dimension by aesthetics, hedonism, idleness, and authenticity.

Public display

Public display refers to the tendency of consumers to purchase goods and services that are visible to other people as a way of expressing their social identity and economic status (Veblen, 2017). Consumer behavior of public display is a way of reflecting consumers' self-worth and social status, where consumers enhance their status by purchasing expensive goods or choosing to consume them in crowded places (Sundie et al., 2011).

In luxury consumption, public display manifests itself in the form of consumers purchasing high-priced as well as high-quality products and displaying them in public as a way to gain the approval and envy of others (Nicolao et al., 2009; Hennigs et al., 2013). Consumers' quest for uniqueness also drives them to display these unique experiences as a way to differentiate themselves from others and thus gain psychological satisfaction (Berger & Ward, 2010; Lee et al., 2018). For tourists, public display is mainly manifested by tourists sharing their travel experiences and photos via social media, showcasing their travel locations and activities (Hennigs et al., 2013). Aesthetics is vital in tourism, enhancing visual and sensory pleasure and making it more likely to be shared and displayed (Schmitt, 1999; Kirillova & Wassler, 2019). Idleness is an important indicator of an individual's quality of life (Gershuny, 2003). In addition, hedonic experiences bring emotional satisfaction and authenticity enhances the value of luxury experiences (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Gilovich et al., 2015), both of which promote consumers to engage in display .

To explore the relationship between the characteristics of luxury tourism and public display, the following hypotheses are proposed.

H1a: Price has a positive influence on public display.

H1b: Quality has a positive influence on public display.

H1c: Conspicuousness has a positive influence on public display.

H1d: Uniqueness has a positive influence on public display.

H1e: Aesthetics has a positive influence on public display.

H1f: Hedonism has a positive influence on public display.

H1g: Idleness has a positive influence on public display.

H1h: Authenticity has a positive influence on public display.

Well-being

In the present study, we suggest that public display enhances well-being. Luxury consumption often involves salient display behaviors that can strengthen an individual's social status and self-identity, which are strongly associated with increased well-being (Richins, 1994; Diener et al., 2018). Display behaviors in tourism such as sharing travel experiences on social media help to enhance participants' sense of social support (Hudson & Hudson, 2006). This enhanced sense of social support not only improves well-being but also helps to alleviate stress and anxiety (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Kim & Tussyadiah, 2013). In addition, public display can enhance life satisfaction. Experiential consumption brings more lasting happiness compared to material consumption, and displaying these experiences can amplify this effect (Gilovich et al., 2015). By displaying luxury tourism experiences, individuals can continually recall and share these pleasant memories, thereby increasing well-being.

Therefore, the study hypothesizes a positive effect of public display.

H2: Public display has a positive influence on well-being.

Face consciousness

Face has been defined as the projection of self-image that one can obtain from others in a social network (Hu, 1944). Face consciousness is the behavior and attitude adopted to maintain social status, dignity and self-image (Ho, 1976). In China and some other Asian societies, face consciousness is considered an important social psychological phenomenon that influences people's behavior and decision making

(Hu, 1944). People want to manage their face in order to present themselves in favorable ways in social situations.

People high in face consciousness are highly concerned about their social image and are more likely to engage in activities to enhance, maintain, or protect their face, such as luxury spending (Bao et al., 2003; Wiedmann et al., 2007). This is because the consumption of luxury goods provides the opportunity to display one's wealth and social status, thus satisfying the consumer's need for face (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004; Wang & Griskevicius, 2014). Consumers who are highly face-conscious are more inclined to purchase luxury goods and goods or services that can display their status to others (Zhang & Shrum, 2009). In addition, face consciousness also influence consumers' behavior during tourism. Consumers may be more inclined to engage in display spending, such as purchasing expensive travel goods or sharing their travel experiences on social media, as a way to enhance their face (Wang et al., 2016). In other words, people with strong face consciousness are more likely to display their luxury experiences.

Meanwhile, face consciousness may promote social identity and enhance an individual's sense of self-worth, thus increase well-being (Leung & Cohen, 2011). However a high level of concern about others' perceptions of oneself and face maintenance may lead to an increase in individuals' psychological stress, which may have a negative impact on well-being (Islam et al., 2022). Individual display behavior is often influenced by face consciousness. Consumers with a high degree of face consciousness may be more inclined to display luxury consumption in order to gain recognition and respect from others (Zhang & Wang, 2019), which may enhance individual well-being. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed in this study. And Fig. 1 describes the conceptual model of this research.

H3a: Face consciousness moderates the effect of price on public display.

H3b: Face consciousness moderates the effect of quality on public display.

H3c: Face consciousness moderates the effect of conspicuousness on public display.

H3d: Face consciousness moderates the effect of uniqueness on public display.

H3e: Face consciousness moderates the effect of aesthetics on public display.

H3f: Face consciousness moderates the effect of hedonism on public display.

H3g: Face consciousness moderates the effect of idleness on public display.

H3h: Face consciousness moderates the effect of authenticity on public display.

H4: Face consciousness moderates the effect of public display on well-being.

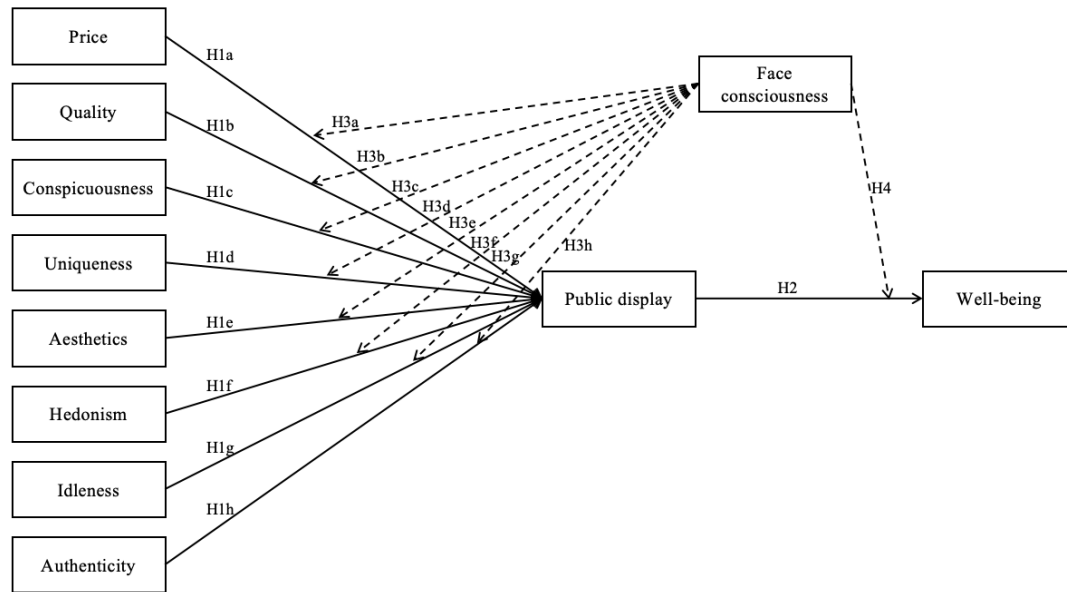


Fig. 1. The conceptual model

Methodology

Data collection

Data were collected from Chinese tourists traveling to Sanya, China. Chinese consumers have been at the forefront of global luxury spending, particularly on luxury goods and services, including tourism (McKinsey Quarterly, 2019). Sanya, often referred to as “the Oriental Dubai,” is a luxury tourist destination that seamlessly blends high-end resorts, pristine beaches, duty-free shopping, culinary delights, and premium entertainment options (China Daily, 2017; Statista, 2023). The study employed convenience sampling by distributing paper questionnaires to tourists in Sanya International Duty Free City. Participants chose to complete the questionnaire voluntarily, and the study’s purpose was explained to them before they began.

Participants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their personal information. Data collection took place from May 22 to June 27, 2024, with a total of 596 questionnaires distributed. After filtering out incomplete and patterned responses to refine the sample, 467 valid responses were obtained, resulting in a valid response rate of 78.35%.

To achieve the research objectives, a two-point scale was employed in the questionnaire, inviting participants to indicate whether their current tour is a luxurious one in the end of the questionnaire. The resulting data were divided into two groups, comprising 360 responses indicating luxury and 107 indicating non-luxury tours. As the respondents' demographic information shown in Table 1, there were more male than female respondents. The majority of respondents were between the ages of 19 and 39, and most participants had a bachelor's degree or higher. In addition, the largest number of people had a monthly household income between RMB 10,000 and 20,000, with only 4.5% having a monthly household income of less than RMB 5,000, which may be due to the fact that people with higher income are more likely to be able to afford the cost of luxury travel. The majority of participants chose a travel duration of 3-4 days. It is worth noting that respondents' spending levels varied, with spending level between RMB 10,000 and 20,000 being the most common. These results reflect that luxury travel presents diversity and dynamism, attracting many types of participants.

Table 1 Descriptive information of participants

	Full sample (n=467) n (%)	Luxury (n=360) n (%)	Non-luxury (n=107) n (%)
Gender			
Male	245 (52.5%)	186 (51.7%)	59 (55.1%)
Female	196 (42.0%)	156 (43.3%)	40 (37.4%)
Others	4 (0.9%)	1 (0.3%)	3 (2.8%)
Prefer not to say	22 (4.7%)	17 (4.7%)	5 (4.7%)
Age			
Below 18 years old	8 (1.7%)	8 (2.2%)	0 (0.0%)
19-29 years old	194 (41.5%)	150 (41.7%)	44 (41.1%)
30-39 years old	176 (37.7%)	132 (36.7%)	44 (41.1%)
40-55 years old	82 (17.6%)	66 (18.3%)	16 (15.0%)
Above 56 years old	7 (1.5%)	4 (1.1%)	3 (2.8%)

The highest level of education			
Below university	92 (19.7%)	72 (20.0%)	20 (18.7%)
Bachelor's degrees	278 (59.5%)	211 (58.6%)	67 (62.6%)
Master's degrees	87 (18.6%)	67 (18.6%)	20 (18.7%)
Doctor's degrees	10 (2.1%)	10 (2.8%)	0 (0.0%)
Household income/month (in CNY)			
<5000	21 (4.5%)	13 (3.6%)	8 (7.5%)
5000-9999	68 (14.6%)	56 (15.6%)	12 (11.2%)
10000-14999	111 (23.8%)	83 (23.1%)	28 (26.2%)
15000-19999	81 (17.3%)	60 (16.7%)	21 (19.6%)
20000-24999	62 (13.3%)	45 (12.5%)	17 (15.9%)
25000-29999	56 (12.0%)	44 (12.2%)	12 (11.2%)
>30000	68 (14.6%)	59 (16.4%)	9 (8.4%)
Length of stay			
1-2 days	71 (15.2%)	54 (15.0%)	17 (15.9%)
3-4 days	255 (54.6%)	193 (53.6%)	62 (57.9%)
5-7 days	108 (23.1%)	88 (24.4%)	20 (18.7%)
one week to two weeks	21 (4.5%)	16 (4.4%)	5 (4.7%)
over two weeks	12 (2.6%)	9 (2.5%)	3 (2.8%)
Consumption of this trip (in CNY)			
<5000	111 (23.8%)	78 (21.7%)	33 (30.8%)
5000-9999	88 (18.8%)	71 (19.7%)	17 (15.9%)
10000-29999	133 (28.5%)	99 (27.5%)	34 (31.8%)
30000-49999	103 (22.1%)	83 (23.1%)	20 (18.7%)
50000-79999	18 (3.9%)	17 (4.7%)	1 (0.9%)
80000-99999	6 (1.3%)	4 (1.1%)	2 (1.9%)
>100000	8 (1.7%)	8 (2.2%)	0 (0.0%)
Mode of transport			
Train	78 (16.7%)	67 (18.6%)	11 (10.3%)
Airplane	339 (72.6%)	258 (71.7%)	81 (75.7%)
Ship	19 (4.1%)	15 (4.2%)	4 (3.7%)
Car	29 (6.2%)	18 (5.0%)	11 (10.3%)
Others	2 (0.4%)	2 (0.6%)	0 (0.0%)
Travel mode in this trip			
Package tour	46 (9.9%)	38 (10.6%)	8 (7.5%)
Self-guided tour	388 (83.1%)	298 (82.8%)	90 (84.1%)
Customized tour	31 (6.6%)	22 (6.1%)	9 (8.4%)
Others	2 (0.4%)	2 (0.6%)	0 (0.0%)

Data analysis

SPSS was used to perform descriptive statistical analysis to understand the basic characteristics of the sample. The model's relationships were estimated using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) by WarpPLS

programs. PLS-SEM is less impacted by normality and sample size than the covariance SEM approach, and has advantages in prediction (Hair et al., 2021). It can handle complex models containing a large number of variables and pathways including mediating, moderating relationships. In order to confirm whether public display makes luxury tourists happy, we analyzed the data of luxury group and non-luxury group separately by PLS-SEM and compared the results. Comparative analysis of the results of the two groups allows for an understanding of the characteristics and behavioral patterns of the different groups, validates the reliability and validity of the research model, and reveals the variability in the relationships of the variables between this two groups (Leguina, 2015; Sarstedt et al., 2021).

Results

Luxury group

Measurement model

The measurement model was checked by evaluating the reliability and validity of the constructs. All the items related well to their constructs with loadings being greater than 0.50. As shown in Table 2, the means of the luxury group scales were high, with the majority higher than 5, indicating that the participants had a better experience. All of the Cronbach's α and composite reliability (CR) scores were greater than the ideal value of 0.7 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Table 2 shows that the AVE values of all of the constructs ranged from 0.648 to 0.785, thus exceeding the suggested threshold of 0.5 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Finally, all the HTMT ratios were below the suggested 0.85 level (Henseler et al., 2015). Therefore, all constructs demonstrated good reliability and validity and could be used with confidence in the subsequent analysis.

Table 2 The constructs' descriptive statistics and measurement properties (luxury group)

Variable	Item	Loading	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
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Price	PRI1	0.867	5.431	1.087	0.863	0.916	0.785
	PRI2	0.897	5.539	1.020			
	PRI3	0.892	5.658	1.052			
Quality	QUA1	0.851	5.336	1.072	0.823	0.894	0.738
	QUA2	0.885	5.350	0.984			
	QUA3	0.842	5.478	1.042			
Conspicuousness	CON1	0.823	5.097	1.161	0.880	0.918	0.736
	CON2	0.878	4.964	1.334			
	CON3	0.875	5.025	1.274			
	CON4	0.854	5.167	1.323			
Uniqueness	UNI1	0.841	5.322	1.002	0.847	0.897	0.686
	UNI2	0.836	5.419	1.023			
	UNI3	0.845	5.486	0.941			
	UNI4	0.790	5.669	0.886			
Aesthetics	AES1	0.799	5.264	1.042	0.819	0.880	0.648
	AES2	0.823	5.286	1.015			
	AES3	0.782	5.369	1.068			
	AES4	0.816	5.547	1.000			
Hedonism	HED1	0.835	5.333	1.079	0.822	0.894	0.737
	HED2	0.869	5.456	0.998			
	HED3	0.872	5.497	0.987			
Idleness	IDL1	0.853	5.322	1.108	0.795	0.880	0.710
	IDL2	0.885	5.167	1.206			
	IDL3	0.788	4.956	1.384			
Authenticity	AUT1	0.786	5.119	1.253	0.911	0.931	0.692
	AUT2	0.826	5.256	1.125			
	AUT3	0.825	5.150	1.168			
	AUT4	0.825	5.200	1.191			
	AUT5	0.873	5.158	1.242			
	AUT6	0.853	5.194	1.211			
Public display	PD1	0.817	5.511	1.018	0.736	0.851	0.658
	PD2	0.884	5.281	1.162			
	PD3	0.724	4.678	1.709			
Well-being	WB1	0.861	5.306	1.048	0.857	0.903	0.701
	WB2	0.846	5.458	1.009			
	WB3	0.818	5.289	1.071			
	WB4	0.823	5.328	1.060			
Face consciousness	FC1	0.853	5.208	1.070	0.933	0.947	0.748
	FC2	0.834	5.128	1.166			
	FC3	0.879	5.131	1.195			
	FC4	0.871	5.092	1.260			
	FC5	0.902	4.969	1.357			
	FC6	0.850	4.903	1.396			

Structural model and hypothesis testing

WarpPLS was used to test our conceptual model and hypotheses, and the results are shown in Table 3. Quality, conspicuousness, aesthetics, hedonism and authenticity had a significantly positive impact on public display, supporting H1b,

H1c, H1e, H1f and H1h. Public display significantly positive influenced well-being which supporting H2. As shown in Table 4, face consciousness as a moderating variable positively moderated the relationship between uniqueness and public display , and positively moderated the relationship between public display and well-being. H3d and H4 were supported.

Table 3 Results of hypothesis testing (luxury group)

Hypothesis	Path	Coefficient	<i>p</i> -value	95% CI Lower Bound	95% CI Upper Bound	Effective Size	
H1a	Price→Public display	0.06	0.132	-0.04	0.16	0.02	Unsupported
H1b	Quality →Public display	0.17	<0.001	0.07	0.27	0.12	Supported
H1c	Conspicuousness→Public display	0.19	<0.001	0.09	0.29	0.13	Supported
H1d	Uniqueness →Public display	0.02	0.331	-0.08	0.13	0.02	Unsupported
H1e	Aesthetics →Public display	0.21	<0.001	0.11	0.31	0.15	Supported
H1f	Hedonism →Public display	0.10	0.033	-0.01	0.20	0.63	Supported
H1g	Idleness →Public display	0.07	0.094	-0.03	0.17	0.04	Unsupported
H1h	7→Public display	0.22	<0.001	0.13	0.33	0.16	Supported
H2	Public display → Well-being	0.70	<0.001	0.61	0.80	0.51	Supported

Table 6 Results of hypothesis testing (non-luxury group)

Hypothesis	Path	Coefficient	<i>p</i> -value	95% CI Lower Bound	95% CI Upper Bound	Effective Size	
H1a	Price→Public display	0.22	0.008	0.05	0.40	0.10	Supported
H1b	Quality →Public display	0.50	<0.001	0.33	0.66	0.32	Supported
H1c	Conspicuousness→Public display	0.24	0.004	0.06	0.42	0.14	Supported
H1d	Uniqueness →Public display	0.09	0.18	-0.10	0.27	0.05	Unsupported
H1e	Aesthetics →Public display	0.23	0.006	0.05	0.41	0.14	Supported
H1f	Hedonism →Public display	0.45	<0.001	0.28	0.61	0.29	Supported
H1g	Idleness →Public display	0.29	<0.001	0.12	0.47	0.18	Supported
H1h	Authenticity →Public display	0.54	<0.001	0.38	0.70	0.29	Supported
H2	Public display → Well-being	0.28	<0.001	0.10	0.45	0.15	Supported



Table 4 Moderating effect of face consciousness

Hypothesized moderated path	Luxury group		Non-luxury group	
	Coefficient	p-value	Coefficient	p-value
H3a: Price→Public display	0.04	0.23	0.00	0.48
H3b: Quality →Public display	-0.04	0.22	-0.12	0.11
H3c: Conspicuousness→Public display	-0.04	0.22	-0.04	0.35
H3d: Uniqueness →Public display	0.12	<0.01	0.14	0.06
H3e: Aesthetics →Public display	-0.05	0.16	0.59	<0.001
H3f: Hedonism →Public display	0.04	0.24	0.90	<0.001
H3g: Idleness →Public display	-0.05	0.20	0.86	<0.001
H3h: Authenticity →Public display	-0.09	0.05	0.41	<0.001
H4: Public display → Well-being	0.09	0.04	-0.38	<0.001

Non-luxury group

Measurement model

As shown in Table 5, the means of the non-luxury group scales were lower than luxury group. Combining other results it can be seen that all the constructs of non-luxury group demonstrated good reliability and validity.

Table 5 The constructs' descriptive statistics and measurement properties (non-luxury group)

Variable	Item	Loading	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
Price	PRI1	0.923	4.664	1.098	0.919	0.949	0.860
	PRI2	0.939	4.850	1.196			
	PRI3	0.920	4.813	1.290			
Quality	QUA1	0.885	4.701	1.167	0.864	0.917	0.786
	QUA2	0.904	4.748	1.150			
	QUA3	0.870	4.626	1.103			
Conspicuousness	CON1	0.735	4.477	1.262	0.849	0.899	0.691
	CON2	0.858	4.093	1.314			
	CON3	0.878	4.131	1.401			
	CON4	0.846	4.131	1.252			
Uniqueness	UNI1	0.892	4.336	1.197	0.902	0.932	0.774
	UNI2	0.884	4.421	1.289			
	UNI3	0.836	4.589	1.243			
	UNI4	0.905	4.514	1.254			
Aesthetics	AES1	0.861	4.477	1.136	0.847	0.897	0.685
	AES2	0.797	4.645	1.199			
	AES3	0.817	4.561	1.275			
	AES4	0.835	4.673	1.235			
Hedonism	HED1	0.872	4.542	1.208	0.864	0.917	0.786
	HED2	0.885	4.766	1.129			
	HED3	0.903	4.654	1.166			
Idleness	IDL1	0.787	4.645	1.238	0.643	0.809	0.590
	IDL2	0.873	4.336	1.259			
	IDL3	0.625	4.187	1.340			
Authenticity	AUT1	0.812	4.262	1.269	0.890	0.917	0.647
	AUT2	0.722	4.346	1.214			

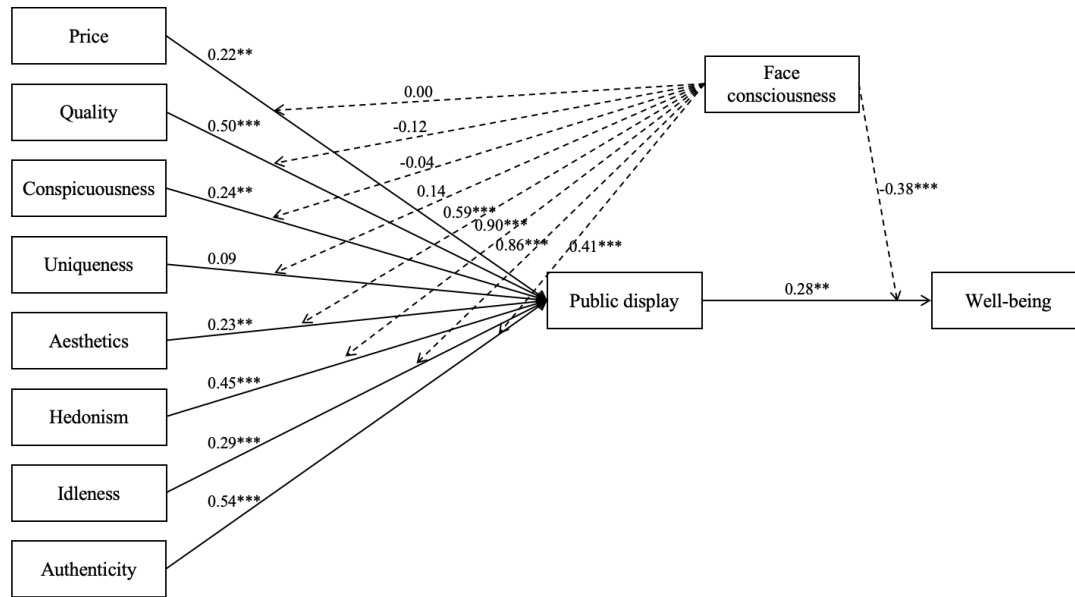
	AUT3	0.846	4.570	1.190			
	AUT4	0.850	4.570	1.214			
	AUT5	0.809	4.393	1.257			
	AUT6	0.781	4.421	1.281			
Public display	PD1	0.826	4.916	1.326	0.676	0.825	0.618
	PD2	0.907	4.589	1.331			
	PD3	0.591	3.804	1.718			
Well-being	WB1	0.898	4.682	1.194	0.905	0.934	0.778
	WB2	0.885	4.701	1.126			
	WB3	0.879	4.617	1.171			
	WB4	0.867	4.692	1.076			
Face consciousness	FC1	0.745	4.589	1.141	0.900	0.924	0.669
	FC2	0.799	4.542	1.184			
	FC3	0.808	4.523	1.152			
	FC4	0.813	4.458	1.283			
	FC5	0.884	4.290	1.259			
	FC6	0.851	4.308	1.335			

Structural model and hypothesis testing

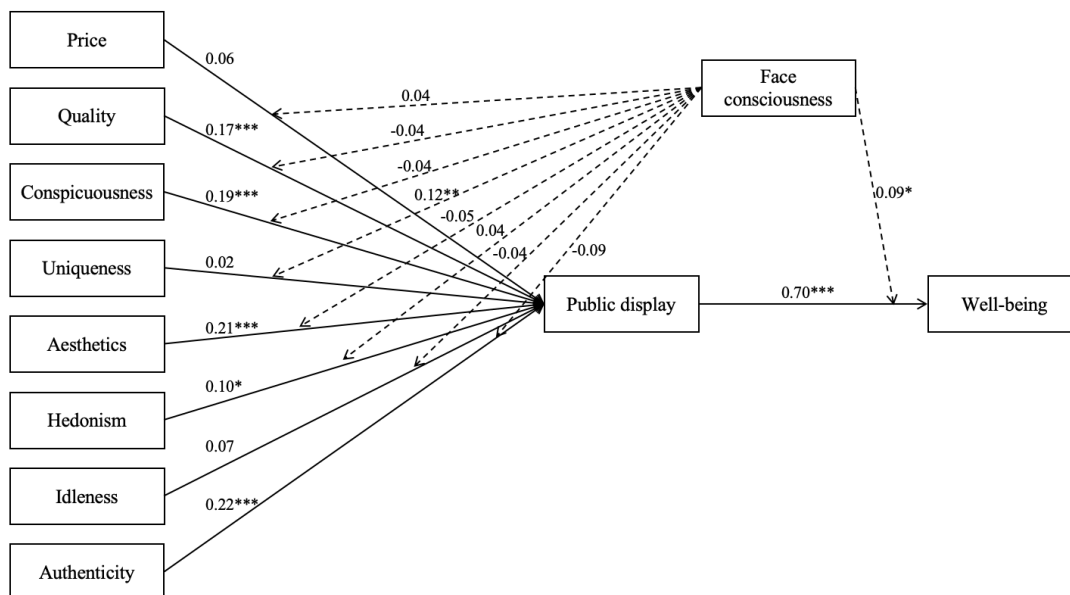
Table 6 shows the results of hypothesis testing. Price, quality, conspicuousness, aesthetics, hedonism, idleness, authenticity had a significantly positive impact on public display, supporting H1b, H1c, H1e, H1f and H1h. Public display significantly positive influenced well-being which supporting H2. And as shown in Table 4, face consciousness significantly positive moderated the relationship between aesthetics, hedonism, idleness, authenticity and public display. Contrary to luxury group, face consciousness significantly negative moderated the relationship between public display and well-being. Thus, H3e, H3f, H3g and H3h were supported.

Comparisons

The results of this two groups were shown in Fig. 2 and 3. Quality, conspicuousness, aesthetics, hedonism and authenticity had a significantly positive impact on public display. In addition, for the non-luxury group, quality and idleness also significantly positive influenced public display. Notably, for the luxury group, public displays had a greater positive effect on well-being, which can be interpreted to mean that display behavior can make luxury tourists happier. For the luxury group, face consciousness only positively moderated the relationship between uniqueness and public display, whereas for non-luxury group, face consciousness significantly positively moderated the relationships between aesthetics, hedonism, idleness, authenticity and public displays. Furthermore, for luxury group, individuals with more face consciousness derive more well-being from public display. But for non-luxury tourists, public displays by more face-conscious individuals may instead reduce their well-being.



Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$
Fig. 2. Results for non-luxury group (n=107)



Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$
Fig. 3. Results for luxury group (n=360)

Discussions and implications

The findings from this study provide valuable insights into the intricate dynamics between public display and well-being among luxury tourists. This discussion section will delve into the implications of these results and explore how they can inform both theoretical understanding and practical applications within the field of luxury tourism.



Theoretical implications

First, the positive relationship between quality, conspicuousness, aesthetics, authenticity, and public display underscores the multifaceted nature of luxury tourism. These characteristics not only define luxury tourism but also serve as pivotal factors that encourage tourists to engage in display behaviors. Quality and aesthetics, often perceived as inherent aspects of luxury (Kapferer, 2012), validate the tourists' investment and bolster their desire to showcase their experiences. The significant impact of conspicuousness on public display resonates with Veblen's (2017) notion of conspicuous consumption, where individuals derive satisfaction from being seen as affluent. This behavior is particularly pronounced in luxury tourism, where the act of showing off is intertwined with the tourists' identity and social status (Veblen, 1899 ; Li & Stodolska, 2021). The pronounced effect of authenticity suggests that modern luxury tourists seek not only to display wealth but also to project an image of sophistication and cultural awareness.

The results also reveal that public display significantly enhances the well-being of luxury tourists. This finding aligns with existing literature that posits social recognition and validation as key components of well-being (Hudders & Pandelaere, 2012). For luxury tourists, the act of displaying their experiences facilitates social comparison and approval, which in turn, boosts their sense of happiness and self-worth.

Furthermore, the moderating role of face consciousness highlights the cultural dimensions of luxury consumption. Tourists with higher face consciousness derive greater well-being from display behaviors, emphasizing the cultural importance of maintaining social status and prestige. This underscores the necessity for luxury tourism practitioners to consider cultural factors when designing and marketing their services.

Practical implications

The practical implications of this study offer actionable insights for industry stakeholders, helping them better meet the demands of the luxury tourism market. First, luxury tourism service providers can enhance customer satisfaction by emphasizing quality, aesthetics, and authenticity in their products and services. These features not only meet the high expectations of luxury tourists for premium experiences but also contribute to their overall happiness.

Second, marketing strategies should highlight the prestige and social recognition associated with luxury experiences, catering to tourists' desire to display their social status. By crafting such an image, providers can more effectively attract their target customers and increase market competitiveness.



Third, understanding the role of face consciousness can assist tourism operators in tailoring experiences to different cultural contexts, ensuring that marketing messages resonate with the values and motivations of the target audience. For instance, in markets where face consciousness is particularly strong, promotional strategies should emphasize how luxury products can enhance social status and gain peer recognition.

Limitations and future research

This study has several limitations. First, the data were collected from a single luxury destination in China, which may limit the generality of the findings. Cultural specificities inherent to Chinese society, such as high levels of face consciousness, might not be as pronounced in other contexts. Future research should consider cross-cultural studies to validate and extend these findings across different geographical and cultural settings. Second, the reliance on self-reported questionnaires introduces the possibility of social desirability bias, where respondents might overstate their display behaviors or well-being to align with perceived social norms. Employing a mixed-methods approach, including qualitative interviews or observational studies, could provide a more nuanced understanding of these phenomena. Third, the study focuses predominantly on the positive aspects of public display, potentially overlooking negative consequences such as social anxiety or decreased well-being due to excessive comparison and pressure to conform. Future research should explore these potential downsides to provide a more balanced view of the impact of display behaviors on well-being.

In conclusion, while this study sheds light on important aspects of luxury tourism, further research is needed to address its limitations and build on its findings. By expanding the scope of inquiry and employing diverse methodologies, future studies can deepen our understanding of the intricate relationship between public display and well-being in luxury tourism, ultimately enhancing both theoretical and practical knowledge in this field.

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Connecting Cultures: A Case Study of the Language Dilemma between Chinese Tourists and Saudi Tourism Service Providers

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Abstract. Connecting and communicating with locals is an important aspect of the tourism experience. However, language barriers have always been a challenge facing effective communication between tourists and locals. This case study delves into the complexities of the language barrier that Chinese tourists visiting Saudi Arabia face. Led by its ambitious Vision 2030, the government of Saudi Arabia has made significant investments and strategic planning to attract tourists from around the world, focusing on Chinese visitors as the largest targeted market. The study examines the impacts of this barrier on tourism experiences, safety concerns, destination perception, and ethical considerations drawing on Social Identity Theory. Overall, this study contributes to a nuanced understanding of the language barrier dilemma in Saudi Arabia's tourism sector and provides actionable insights for fostering cross-cultural understanding and enhancing the tourism experience for Chinese tourists and beyond

Keywords: Chinese tourists, communication, cultures, Saudi Arabia tourism, social identity theory

The Future of a Chef's Profession

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Abstract. The profession of a chef is unique, as it combines a stressful work environment with opportunities for creativity and a distinct occupational culture. This study explores the future of the chef's profession, investigating whether broader changes in the hospitality industry, including increased demands for work-life balance, particularly among the younger generation, will impact the chef's role and identity. Using a qualitative, interpretative approach, the researchers will conduct interviews with experienced chefs to understand how recent industry trends may affect the occupational identity and future of the chef's profession. Specifically, the study examines changes in the chef's role, management styles, and work-life balance. The findings can inform curriculum development and the preparation of future hospitality and tourism professionals, aligning educational programs with the evolving landscape of the chef's profession.

Keywords: chef's identity, chef's profession, occupational identity, Generation Z, work-life balance



INTEGRATING AI FUNDAMENTALS INTO TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY CURRICULA: PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION OF INDUSTRY LEADERS

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Abstract. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming various sectors, including tourism and hospitality. This review investigates the integration of AI fundamentals into tourism and hospitality education, aiming to prepare future industry leaders. It discusses the current state of AI integration, challenges, and strategies for effective implementation. Case studies and best practices are analyzed to provide insights into successful AI integration. The article also explores future directions and the impact of AI on the tourism and hospitality industry, ensuring graduates are equipped to drive innovation and efficiency.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), Curriculum Integration, Hospitality Management, Industry Leadership, Tourism Management Education

Digital Learning in Culinary Education: The Roles of Parasocial Interaction, Stickiness, and eWOM

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Abstract. This study investigates the effect of consumer attitudes toward co-branded products with social influencers in supermarkets on purchase intentions, with a focus on the role of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and the bandwagon effect as mediating factors. Utilizing statistical tools such as reliability analysis, descriptive statistics, t-tests, analysis of variance, and regression analysis, the research demonstrates that consumer attitudes significantly influence purchase intentions. Furthermore, the findings emphasize the importance of the bandwagon effect in mediating the relationship between eWOM and purchasing behavior. The study provides practical insights for marketing strategies, suggesting that co-branding with social influencers can effectively enhance consumer engagement and drive purchase decisions.

Keywords: social influencer, purchase intentions, bandwagon effect, electronic word-of-mouth(eWOM), stickiness



Consumers' Perceptions of Robot Services in Lodging Operations: A Case Study of Flyzoo Hotel

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Abstract. The rapid development of the Internet of Things (IoT) and artificial intelligence (AI) has facilitated the extensive integration of robots into the service industry, particularly within the hospitality sector. Flyzoo Hotel, established by Alibaba—one of China's leading internet companies—has gained recognition for its high degree of robotic services. This study adopts the Service Quality (SERVQUAL) model as a theoretical framework and applies Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) to analyze 738 consumer reviews collected from Trip.com on June 23, 2024, using the Bazhuayu tool. The results reveal that although consumers acknowledge and value technological innovations, traditional elements of hospitality, such as cleanliness, staff interaction, and overall service quality, continue to play a crucial role in guest satisfaction. Based on the LDA analysis and sentiment classification, this study offers specific recommendations for robotic hotel operators to improve the overall consumer experience.

Keywords: Hospitality, Service robots, AI, SERVQUAL model, LDA

Exploring how tourism short video atmospheric cues affect viewers' travel intention

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Abstract. Short videos significantly promote the dissemination of information in the tourism sector. Atmospheric cues play an important role in short video. However, there is a lack of research exploring the relationship between atmospheric cues and travel intention. Through the lens of the AIDA model, the current study developed a theoretical model and explored the rationales behind how atmospheric cues in tourism short video influence tourist behavior. A survey via online platform led to several interesting findings. The result starts with atmospheric cues of tourism short videos, which strongly evokes destination interest, tourism short video interest, destination desire, and ultimately leads to travel intention. The study is one of the first to uncover the tourism short video atmospheric cues behind the short video driven tourism phenomenon. The result provides useful references for tourism short video producers, destination marketers and DMOs in future inspirational and promotional campaigns.

Keywords: Tourism short video, Atmospheric cues, Destination interest, Destination desire, Travel intention



Strategic Influencer Marketing to Affluent Millennials: A Case Study of the Four Seasons Hotel Houston

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Abstract. This case study explores the strategic shift undertaken by the Four Seasons Hotel Houston to expand its target audience of predominantly business travelers to include affluent millennials. The goal of the shift, based on influencer marketing, modernized brand communications, and unique experiential programming, was adopted to appeal to a younger, affluent demographic. The study highlights the influencer selection process, risk management strategies, and the tangible impacts on social media management and revenue. By targeting affluent millennials, Four Seasons Hotel Houston has further positioned itself as a premier urban resort destination. The findings demonstrate the effectiveness of adapting marketing strategies to evolving consumer trends and underscores the significant role of social media in the luxury hotel segment of the hospitality industry.

Keywords: Influencer marketing, Luxury hotels, Millennials, Positioning, Social media

From Screen to Reality: Drama-Induced Tourism in Non-Touristic Places

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Abstract. Drama-induced tourism is on the rise, popularizing locations including some that were not originally tourist attractions. However, much remains unknown regarding how tourists consume this type of tourism in non-touristic places, especially when tourists encounter discrepancy-induced disappointment. Drawing on disconfirmation theory, this research examines how the above unique experience and perceived discrepancy influence the tourists' overall satisfaction and subsequent behavioral intentions in the popular drama tourism destination of Jiangmen, China, with a notable focus on the moderating role of likability of the TV dramas. Through a quantitative survey (N = 602), the study identified interesting results, showing that drama-induced experience indeed positively shapes tourists experience, and likability of the drama has a significant moderating effect between disconfirmation and overall satisfaction; which means that likability of the TV dramas can mitigate the negative impact of disconfirmation on tourists' overall satisfaction and behavioral intentions. The result provides important references for future destination management and marketing.

Keywords: Drama-induced tourism, Disconfirmation, Overall satisfaction, Likability of the drama



Evaluating the Impact of the International Learner Program™ at SickKids: Enhancing Global Paediatric Healthcare through Structured Immersive Learning

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Abstract. The International Learner Program (ILP) at The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) offers tailored educational experiences for international healthcare professionals. Aligning with SickKids' mission to enhance global paediatric healthcare and affiliated with the University of Toronto, the ILP engages in partnerships with academic and healthcare institutions worldwide. This initiative promotes educational tourism by offering advanced knowledge and skills in child health. It aims to fill gaps in access to quality paediatric education that participants may experience in their home countries. It immerses learners in diverse cultural and clinical environments, promoting the exchange of healthcare practices and innovations. Since its inception in 2009, the ILP has welcomed over 2,500 professionals from over 80 countries. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the ILP hosted 336 participants, 194 of whom met the inclusion criteria of having returned to their home country for at least six months. These participants were invited to complete self-assessments, and 92 responded. The results were analyzed through a mixed-methods approach, revealing significant satisfaction and application of knowledge. Participants also noted new paediatric practices and improved child health standards, demonstrating how the ILP enhances SickKids' global reputation and fosters sustainable international collaborations.

Keywords: International Learner Program, Paediatric Healthcare, Educational Tourism, Self-Assessment, Global Health

ChatGPT as a teaching moment for ethics in hospitality and tourism education

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Abstract. This workshop aims to present a systematic approach to incorporate Open AI technology into hospitality and tourism education and research professionally. The workshop contains 4 steps, including an introduction of using Open AI in tertiary education. Presenting the pros and cons of using Open AI in hospitality and tourism education. Co-constructing guidelines and policies of using Open AI ethically and professionally. Lastly generating the consented guidelines based on the liaised results. The expected outcome of this workshop is to develop consented guidelines so that Open AI can be ethically and professionally used in hospitality and tourism education.

Keywords: ChatGPT, Ethics, Open AI, Education, Guidelines to use, Hospitality and Tourism Research



“Old people running wildly”: examining the spatial behavior characteristics and influencing factors of the “special forces-style tourism” embraced by the silver-haired tourists

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Abstract. "Special Forces-style Tourism" is a recent travel trend in China which refers to young people who aim to visit attractions as many, quickly and cheaply as possible. This typical kind of travel pattern has now sprung up and spread from Z generation to the silver-haired group. However little research has examined how this type of travel is embraced by the silver-haired tourists in China. Using web data mining and MapGIS, this study examines senior tourists in China who engage in such a whirlwind travel style with an attempt to understand their motivations, spatial behavior and visitation preferences. The preliminary findings show that senior Chinese tourists are increasingly seeking adventurous travel experiences, in which a sense of rejuvenation and vitality is felt.

Keywords: Silver haired generation, Special forces style tourism, Web data mining, GIS

Spanish Kong: The case of a western restaurant under "dynamic 0 strategy" in Hong Kong

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Abstract. External factors that are out of the control of a restaurant's management e.g., social unrest, local political instability and global pandemics are bound to have a negative effect on business and challenge a restaurants ability to stay profitably in business. In this case study, we present the multiple crisis that that a group of chefs who are also restaurateurs and investors in Hong Kong faced trying to successfully operate their restaurant business, between 2014 to 2022. We'll focus on the case of Spanish Kong, a high-end Spanish cuisine restaurant, and the impacts that the local, regional, and global crisis had on it.

Keywords: Covid-19, Pandemic, restaurant recovery, case study, lockdown

THE SOCIAL CONTAGION OF SUSTAINABLE BELIEF IN TOURIST DYNAMIC NETWORKS: EVIDENCE FROM CLEAN ENERGY VEHICLES IN TOURIST DESTINATIONS

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Xinlu Suzy Song (Macao University of Tourism)

Abstract. In response to carbon neutrality initiatives, the global automotive industry has begun transitioning towards clean energy (Chen et al., 2022). The development of clean energy vehicles (CEVs) generates multifaceted impact on travel destination development and people's sustainable belief (Hung et al., 2019; Sovacool, 2009). CEVs have far less impact on the environment than traditional fuel-powered vehicles, as they reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality, and decrease dependency on fossil fuels (Kammen & Sunter, 2016). However, they have profoundly influenced people's conventional wisdom and have fueled the ongoing debate between clean energy and fuel vehicles (Chen & Kim, 2020).

Tourists in urban destinations naturally encounter CEVs as part of their dynamic and static presence on the streets. Unlike in their permanent residences, tourists are keen observers, often seeking out differences in objects and experiences (Baars, 2003; Desforges, 2000). As they explore the destination, they will unconsciously notice and interact with CEVs, adding to their overall perception and experience of the destination.

According to social contagion theory (Aral & Nicolaides, 2017; Christakis & Fowler, 2013), individuals are influenced by the behaviours and attitudes of those around them, leading to the propagation of particular actions or beliefs within a group or community. This raises the question of whether tourists' exposure to and perception of CEVs at tourist destinations will have a contagion effect on their own sustainable consciousness and behaviour. Additionally, based in the interdependence of behaviours across the human social network (Aral & Nicolaides, 2017; Christakis & Fowler, 2008), Early research demonstrated the correlations in individual behaviour in network space and time (Christakis & Fowler, 2007; Fowler & Christakis, 2008), signaling the possibility that tourist's sustainable belief and behaviour cascade through social interaction. However, subsequent research has revealed that identifying causal peer effects in social networks also shows significant relationships (Aral, 2011), especially in terms of confounding effects (individuals with connections tend to be exposed to the same external stimuli) and simultaneity (individuals with connections tend to influence each other) (Aral, 2011; Currarini et al., 2010). Therefore, this research hypothesizes that the sustainable beliefs and behaviours of tourists can influence others in their social networks, and that this influence is mutual. Building on existing literatures, we propose examining whether the number and density of CEVs in a destination affect the dynamics of tourists' social networks and the influence exerted by people related to the tourists.

This study posits the following hypotheses:

- (1) Exposure to CEVs in tourist destinations positively influences tourists' sustainable beliefs and behaviours.
- (2) The density of CEVs in a tourist destination amplifies the contagion effect on tourists' sustainable consciousness and behaviour.



(3) There is a threshold effect between CEVs density and tourists' perception of CEVs. Once the number of vehicles reaches a critical level, the impact on tourists' sustainable consciousness deepens and spreads more widely within their social networks.

(4) Tourists' perception of the number of CEVs at tourist destinations is higher than that of their place of residence. This perception influences their attitudes towards sustainable development and their environmental behaviour.

Keywords: social contagion theory, sustainable belief, clean energy vehicle, social dynamics network, complex network

The Embodied Heritage Tourism Experience: An Exploratory Study in Sichuan

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Abstract. As one of the fundamentals of cultural tourism, heritage is considered the most significant and fast-growing aspects of tourism. There is no doubt that if cultural heritage resources are used wisely in tourism development, heritage can play a profound role in the formation of national consciousness, national unity as well as economic and social development, achieving a win-win situation for both cultural heritage and tourism. The core of cultural heritage is the identity, and its value is not only in the objective physical form of heritage, but also in the exploitation of cultural heritage. Therefore, by participating in cultural heritage tourism activities, tourists co-construct the authenticity of cultural heritage and promote the development of cultural heritage tourism. Many studies focus on heritage tourism development and management, sustainable development and conservation, authenticity of heritage tourism experiences, exploring memorable cultural heritage tourism experiences, and visitor perceptions and attitudes. Few studies investigate heritage tourism experiences from the perspective of embodied perceptions or tourists' bodies. This study can provide new insights and opinions on tourists' embodied experiences. This study takes tourists' embodied experience in heritage tourism places as the research theme and explores four main aspects: 1) the composition of heritage tourism experiences; 2) the characteristics of embodiment in heritage tourism and its formation process.



The study is set in the southwest region of China, the Chengdu Plain, and uses participant observation and in-depth interviews to collect data. Among them, five cultural heritage sites were selected as targets for participant observation, while 20 in-depth interviews were conducted. The results of the study were analyzed from the perspective of participant observation results on tourists' behaviors and embodied experiences on the one hand, and at the same time, using Nvivo12 to assist, the in-depth interview data were coded at three levels using grounded theory to form the five dimensions of embodied experiences of heritage tourism, which are: perceptual experience, emotional psychology, cognition and learning, social interactive space experience, body movement and physical spatial environment. Finally, the characteristics and formation process of embodied heritage tourism are discussed, and an attempt is made to construct a model of heritage tourism embodied experience.

Keywords: Cultural Heritage, Heritage Tourism, Tourism Experience, Embodied Experience, Authenticity, China Tourism

A dedicated 'concepts and theories' subject in undergraduate program curriculum? Examining subject relevance and suitability in a rapidly evolving digital and academic landscape

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Abstract. Higher education in tourism and hospitality (T&H) has transformed into a knowledge-based field worldwide. The general lack of a 'concepts and theories' subject in T&H undergraduate programs, however, could hinder the field's progress into a conceptual, theory-based field of study, with significant implications for students' education in a rapidly evolving digital and academic landscape. Consequently, the objective of this working paper is to examine the relevance and suitability of a 'concepts and theories' subject in undergraduate program curriculum via in-depth interviews with key parties, including students, subject tutors, faculty members, as well as senior management (e.g., program leaders). Theoretically, this study contributes by providing insights into how constructivist principles can be effectively applied to curriculum design. Practically, this study suggests how early exposure to concepts and theoretical foundations could further enhance students' abilities to integrate and apply new technical knowledge (e.g., theory-based explanations for big data and AI models).

Keywords: Concepts, theories, undergraduate program, curriculum



The multifaceted nature of edutainment experience in educational travel: key attributes and dimensions

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Lianping Ren (Macao University of Tourism)

Cora Un In Wong (Macao Polytechnic University)

Abstract. The word “edutainment” is a fusion of education and entertainment, which has been frequently applied in the tourism industry, aiming to facilitate learning during travel. Although the concept of edutainment has been addressed in previous research, the current understanding is still superficial, especially in the context of educational travel. A mixed-method approach including in-depth interviews (N=22) and a survey questionnaire (N=317) is adopted to investigate the attributes and dimensions of the edutainment experience with educational travel. Content analysis is conducted to analyze the interview data, followed by exploratory factor analysis to identify key attributes and dimensions through utilizing the items extracted from interviews and literature review. The preliminary result revealed 22 items, categorized into 5 dimensions. The result provides valuable insights for educational travel operators to design and market educational travel products more effectively.

Keywords: Edutainment experience, Educational travel, Attributes, Dimensions, Mixed-method approach

Visual art in hotels as an indicator of good service quality? An application of halo effects

Luyang Wang (Macao University of Tourism)

Lianping Ren (Macao University of Tourism)

Abstract. Rooted in hotels, visual art leverages its glamour to add to hotels’ attractiveness and distinctiveness, leaving customers a pleasant stay. While hotel art gains popularity among customers, the effects of art on hotel customers received scant attention from the academia. This research aims to fill the research gap by examining the influences of visual art on perceived service quality, attitudes and behavioral intention in hotels under the theoretical lens of halo effects. Quantitative approach is used to explore the variables’ correlations. Data will be collected from customers who have patronized hotels with recognizable artistic features within one year via questionnaires. Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) will be conducted for data analysis. Implications for academia and industry will be discussed.

Keywords: Hotel art, Visual art perception, Service quality, Halo effects, Behavioral intention



A Global Perspective on Canal Revitalization: Assessing the Impact of Integrated Culture and Tourism Development on the Economic and Cultural Significance of the Hangzhou Grand Canal

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Abstract. The revitalization of the Hangzhou Grand Canal represents a pivotal case study in the integrated development of cultural and tourism sectors. This research employs a mixed-method approach, combining thematic analysis of policy documents and qualitative interviews with stakeholders to explore how the canal's transformation enhances its global economic and cultural significance. Key findings reveal that optimizing cultural and tourism industry development through regional integration, expanding the market via innovative strategies, and leveraging technological advancements significantly bolster the canal's appeal and competitiveness. The study highlights the canal's success in preserving cultural heritage while driving economic growth and fostering global cultural exchange. Theoretical implications underscore the value of integrating cultural and tourism strategies for sustainable regional development, while practical implications suggest actionable insights for policymakers engaged in similar heritage-led projects. However, the focus on a single case study limits generalizability, and future research should explore comparative analyses and social-environmental impacts to provide a more comprehensive understanding of heritage redevelopment outcomes.

Keywords: Canal Revitalization, regional development, cultural integration, technological advancement, economic growth, culture preservation

Is GenAI tool the next Google for students? Leveraging GenAI Tools to Enhance Student Research Capabilities

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Abstract. In the evolving landscape of education, Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) tools, such as ChatGPT, are emerging as transformative technologies, potentially revolutionizing how students access information and conduct research. This paper explores the adoption of GenAI tools in educational settings, assessing their benefits in enhancing research capabilities akin to traditional search engines like Google, while also addressing the associated concerns and challenges.

Keywords: ChatGPT, Research, Tutorial, Education, Student Engagement



From Taste Bud to Place Attachment: Unraveling the Impact of Gastronomy Experience on Place Attachment and Behavior Intention

Zhenzhen Wang (Macao University of Tourism)

Lianping Ren (Macao University of Tourism)

Abstract. This research investigates the effects of gastronomy experiences on place attachment and behavioral intentions among gastronomy fest participants. Grounded in the theories of cue utilization and place attachment and using a quantitative approach, we surveyed fest attendees (N=271) to evaluate their gastronomic experiences, place attachment, behavioral intentions, and green perceived value, during the Gastronomy Fest in Macau, which was honored with the title of World Heritage List and the Creative City of Gastronomy. The results indicate that positive gastronomy experiences significantly enhance place attachment and behavioral intentions, with green perceived value acting as a significant moderator. These findings offer valuable insights for fest organizers to design sustainable and engaging gastronomy experiences that strengthen emotional connections and promote revisits and positive recommendations.

Keywords: Gastronomy experience, Place attachment, Behavioral intention, Green perceived value, Cue utilization theory

The Digital Tiger: AI-Driven Workforce Development in Bangladesh's Tourism Sector

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Abstract. Per World Bank projection, despite the multiple layers of challenges, Bangladesh aims at continuous economic growth in the Post-COVID-19 Pandemic Era. This study aims to bridge the existing gap in understanding the initiatives taken for workforce development in the country's tourism industry. More specifically, this study will explore how Artificial Intelligence (AI) can impact workforce development and contribute to tourism growth. By integrating AI into workforce development strategies, Bangladesh can enhance service quality, operational efficiency, and customer satisfaction within the tourism sector. This research proposes to employ the modified Delphi technique to assess the contributions of the tourism and hospitality workforce in Bangladesh. The study will involve a six steps procedure based on the RAND/UCLA modified Delphi technique. Overarching objectives will be defined, and experts representing diverse perspectives from the tourism and hospitality industry in Bangladesh will be selected through a nomination process. This process will consider logistical aspects like geographic dispersion, time constraints, and financial implications. The anticipated impact of this research involves providing findings and recommendations to inform policymakers, tourism stakeholders, and academics about effective strategies for enhancing the tourism and hospitality workforce in Bangladesh. In this study, diverse perspectives and priorities of stakeholders within Bangladesh's tourism and hospitality sector are anticipated to be addressed.



Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Bangladesh tourism, Modified Delphi, Workforce development strategies

IN-HOUSE VS THIRD-PARTY: THE IMPACT OF QUICK SERVICE FOOD DELIVERY SERVICES ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND BRAND IMAGE

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Abstract. This case study explores the comparative impact of in-house versus third-party delivery services on customer satisfaction and brand image within the quick service food industry, specifically examining Chick-fil-A's delivery model. Utilizing a case study approach, this research identifies key distinctions in service processes between the two delivery options and their relation to customer perceptions. It proposes a strategic framework informed by cost control theory and the ServQual Model to guide business owners in enhancing their delivery services. Through specific delivery testing methods, the study aims to develop a model assessing the influence of delivery services on user experience and brand.

Keywords: In-House Delivery, Third-party Delivery, Food Delivery process, Cost Control, Customer Satisfaction

Hotel WIL Orientation Induction and Student Mentoring in Hong Kong

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Abstract. Hotels hosting internships to bachelors students offer orientation induction and mentorship which varies in content, length, and conduct. The purpose of the study is to investigate the orientation, induction, and mentorship provided to bachelors students of Hotel Operations Management and Culinary Arts and Management programmes in Hong Kong. Hotel orientation induction, and mentorship details, and views and interns responses and experiences were surveyed in a qualitative multi-case research study using open-ended questions via semi-structured email communication. Purposive sampling was applied and twenty-one hotels and twenty-one students were invited to participate, with nine hotels and sixteen students responding. The study found that hotels provide from forty-five minutes to four days of orientation induction. Additionally, mentorship is primarily peer-to-peer on the job training. Therefore, hotels should consider to offer structured and comprehensive orientation induction, and mentorship to engage, train, and retain new hires including interns to promote business strategies and goals.

Keywords: Work-integrated Learning, Internship, Orientation, Induction, Mentorship



Coffee as Catalyst for Innovative Services Management: A Workshop of Three Service Experience Blueprint Techniques

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Abstract. This workshop will be conducted with a four-stage interactive workshop involving panelists from coffee related industries and research in hospitality and tourism. Taking case study design protocol, this workshop will be conducted with hands-on services experience blueprint (SEB) methods from three innovative services management projects involving coffee. This workshop is intended to not only provide hospitality/tourism scholars with opportunities to apply SEB design protocol to hospitality and tourism context, but also is relevant for scholars and professionals from interdisciplinary studies. Attendees will gain insights into applying the three SEB protocols for coffee tourism, coffee retailing and coffee shops contexts. The workshop provides participants to exchange views and promote collaboration with services management researchers and professionals internationally.

Keywords: Extended Services Experiences Blueprint, Hospitality and Tourism, Interdisciplinary Online-to-Offline Services Experience Blueprint, Product–Service System (PSS) Board, Service experiences blueprint

Rethinking Wine Education, a Pedagogical Shift

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Abstract. The landscape of wine education is evolving rapidly, driven by shifts in cultural movements, technological advancements, and changing consumer behaviors. Traditional methods of learning through the glass—focusing on tasting and sensory evaluation—are being complemented and, in some cases, replaced by innovative pedagogies. This workshop aims to explore these new approaches, focusing on learning through wine labels, understanding wine flaws, and redefining the role of the modern sommelier. The workshop is designed for hospitality and tourism educators, graduate students, and industry professionals, with the goal of equipping participants with new skills and philosophies to enhance their wine education pedagogical practices.

Keywords: Wine education, pedagogy, sommelier, wine flaws



Analysis on Core Competences and Digital Literacy Needs Required by Hotel Employees in the Digital Age

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Abstract. Over the past few years, the hotel industry has been disrupted by technological revolution and the COVID-19 pandemic. As many past best practices become obsolete and many new practices emerge, it is essential for hospitality schools and educators to re-examine the core competencies required by hotel employees in the digital age. This working paper presents the idea, methodology and the expected findings of an ongoing project that aims to outline all core competencies and digital literacy needs required by hotel employees in the digital age. Unlike previous studies, this project applies and conducts the LEGO Serious Play workshops with hotel management graduates who are working in the hotel field. Although this project is not completed yet, the findings shall provide useful references for academic institutions to reform their curriculum in an effort to nurture competent talent which can support the strategic human resource needs of the hotel industry.

Keywords: competencies, curriculum reform, digital literacy, digital transformation, human resources management

Revitalization of a heritage area through public and private collaborations: a case study of the Village of Our Lady in Ka Ho in Macao SAR

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Abstract. Revitalization plays a crucial role in achieving sustainability of tourism destinations. The research delves into the public and private collaborations on the revitalization of a heritage area with a dark history. Through a case study of a Macao historical village, formerly used as a leprosarium, the study examined how the collaborations between government departments and social enterprises contribute to the revitalization of a heritage area in a tourism destination. The findings highlight the importance of diverse experiential activities initiated by a social enterprise as a critical element in revitalization efforts, while also revealing the challenges that are associated with such initiatives. In addition, the study discusses the practical contributions arising from these initiatives.

Keywords: revitalization, public and private collaborations, social entrepreneurship



Live Action Role Play in Tourism

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Abstract. Live Action Role Play (LARP) tourism has recently become popular among Chinese tourists, and has attracted numerous tourists to travel. Yet little is known about the rationales behind the craze. Under the lens of serious leisure and hyperreality, this study explores the rationales behind sudden popularity of LARP (Live Action Role Play) tourism in China. The study utilized user-generated content (UGC) and analyzed travel logs (N=154) collected from the Internet. The result showed a three-leveled structure of LARP tourism experience, including (1) story-interwoven core experience, (2) character-induced social experience, and (3) destination-integrated sensorial experience. These elements contribute to an immersive experience where tourists can temporarily escape from their everyday routines. Implications are discussed.

Keywords: LARP tourism, Serious leisure, Hyper-reality, Existential authenticity

1. Introduction

Live Action Role Play (henceforth LARP) tourism emerged as an alternative to traditional tourism activities during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in China (He, 2022). Initially played as a parlor game, LARP has since evolved to become a popular tourism activity as people are now travelling long distances to engage in multi-day experiences. The players become characters in the play, often dressed up in costumes to recreate characters and participate in such places as theme parks, ancient towns, historical sites, and other spaces that reflect the flavor of the game's theme. According to the China Business Journal (2022), there are over 45,000 LARP providers throughout China, while a survey reported by iiMedia Research (2021) said it was expected to generate 23.89 billion RMB in revenue by the end of 2022. Under the lens of serious leisure and hyperreality, this study explores the rationales behind the sudden popularity of LARP tourism by exploring the key attractions of LARP tourism. The study utilized user-generated content (UGC) and analyzed traveler logs collected from the Internet.

2. Literature review

2.1 LARP



LARP started as a boardgame and was later transformed into a three-dimensional action roleplay intertwined with sensorial cues. Due to the fact that LARP scripts are simulations of the past event and/or fantasies, the participants step outside of their mundane world into an extramundane realm which is based on hyperreal storylines as the core product. Sensorial cues from reality serve as supporting elements. The participants thus engage in an action roleplay game in a constructed hyperreal space mentally, while physically they immerse themselves into the script's scene by travelling to consume the sensorial cues which support the script. Similar to role play, LARP participants physically portray their characters. Yet, differing from a conventional role play, LARP involves following a mediated script with "long-form improvisation" in which the scenes are "collectively created and upheld through a communal bond formed from both the fictional premise and the rules system" (Owen, 2019:34). As the story unfolds, the players experience situations that they do not normally encounter in their routine life. Active participation is essential to co-create an immersive experience along with sensorial cues such as physical settings, costumes, and other props that support the shared reality of the premise (Owen, 2019).

2.2 LARP, Serious leisure, and hyperreality

In many senses, LARP can be regarded as a form of serious leisure. Stebbins (2001: 54) defines serious leisure as "steady pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or career volunteer activity that captivates its participants with its complexity and many challenges." As the term suggests, it is distinct from casual leisure by its level of seriousness (Veal, 2017) and commitment (Dilley & Scraton, 2010). It involves a profound, long-lasting systematic pursuit by an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer of an activity sufficiently substantial and interesting in nature for the participant to find a career there (Stebbins, 1996). Unlike casual leisure which requires less effort and training, serious leisure often requires a certain level of skill, experience, and knowledge, as well as some level of perseverance (Gould et al. 2008; Stebbins, 2001). Some forms may involve overcoming various constraints such as on space and time (Stalp, 2006). Gould et al. (2018) outlined the six most prominent qualities of serious leisure, including perseverance, leisure career, significant effort, durable outcomes, unique ethos, and identification with the pursuit. Thus, a serious leisure participant is typified by someone who visits places in search of exemplars of his or her serious leisure activity.



The result is a much more rewarding and satisfying experience, that enables participants to develop skills and knowledge, express their identities and have a very immersive experience, while offering opportunities to meet likeminded people, a situation resembles to a pilgrim who goes to his center of the world where fellows from the *communitas* are there as well (Stebbins, 2001; Wong, McIntosh & Ryan, 2013). It offers an opportunity to a quality escape from everyday chores that are exhaustive and uninteresting (Stalp, 2006). At times, participating in serious leisure involves traveling, making it a form of special interest tourism (Stebbins, 1996). Unlike other types of tourists, serious leisure tourists interact intensively with the places they visit to enhance their understanding and even affection for the place, in terms of both object-based authenticity and existential authenticity (Curan et al., 2018). In short, individuals' participation in serious leisure differs from that in casual leisure in various aspects including but not limited to its motivation, immersion intensity, as well as outcomes (Veal, 2017). Although the extant literature fails to present an exhaustive list of serious leisure undertakings, the term is usually associated with activities that are based on reality.

However, LARP also contains other elements that lie beyond and thus extend the existing concept of serious leisure. In particular, it focusses on the hyperreal and unorthodox outcomes (Lukka, 2014) whereas much of the work of serious leisure focuses on the real. The foremost element of a LARP is the script itself which is based on either a fictitious story or a simulation of historical events. When the story unfolds, sensorial cues and other props prepared in advance support the script and make the drama setting more real than real. A hyperreal world is then created enabling players to immerse themselves, which produces a high level of emotional arousal (Owen, 2019).

Baudrillard's seminal work "Simulacra and Simulation" (1994) elucidates this concept more clearly. He explains that there are four orders of simulation from which transformation can take place from imitation of reality to eventually a simulacrum. The key difference between an imitation and a simulacrum is that the simulacrum has no relation to any reality, "it is its own pure simulacrum" (Baudrillard, 1994: 6). As commented by Deleuze (1990: 257), "the simulacrum is an image without resemblance". There is no longer any distinction between reality and its representation, but there is only the simulacrum which is more real than real, creating a source of hyperreality. While the simulacrum may have no or limited reference associated to the real world, such a powerful abstraction appears to have a real connotation. A good example applying hyperreality in tourism context is Disneyland (Baudrillard, 1994) for it is a simulation of children's dream world where patrons can realize their fantasies and desires of having physical interactions with all those Disneyland's simulacra.



The original existence of Disneyland's simulacra has nothing to do with reality, but they are originated from Disney's animations. Within this American themed park, though reality is substituted by illusions, patrons, children in particular, think that this special space is more real than real. Disneyland in this regard as a popular tourism magnet, and a generating marker of some tourist destinations, showcases how hyperreality is integrated into tourism. Hyperreality is further fostered by technological advancement and tourism has been intensively shaped by images. Destinations have been romanticized via embellished image presentations in order to intensify consumer's interests, dreams and ecstasy. According to Jansson (2002: 436), tourists obtain "first hand tourism" experience of a destination through "spatial phantasmagoria" in which "imaginative hedonism" is generated. Phantasmagoria induces tourists to enter into the representations of marketing, popular culture, literature, photography and other socio-spatial sources of the destination. The potential patrons of a trip can thus have their sensory and emotional experiences in a desired environment with the aid of those images and touristic representations, including photographic slides or animated pictures with words which describe voices, scenes and whiffs that the potential visitor expects to encounter in the course of his journey.

In this regard, hyperreality is a product of "mediatization" in which tourists deliberately indulge in phantasmagoria and daydreams (Jansson, 2007). Likewise, virtual reality and augmented reality are regarded as hyperreal applications in the tourism context (Chung, Han, Joun, 2015). Panhale, Bryce and Tsoungkou (2021) note that augmented reality (AR) is a good means to be adopted at heritage settings for creating and delivering nostalgic experiences for heritage visitors. In a similar manner, the core product of LARP is the script itself in which the characters and storylines are created in a manner that may not necessarily reproduce any real events, but in the case of a fictitious script, or based on simulations of historical events that may have an essence of the real but are not bounded by reality. In this way, the LARP script is analogous to the simulacra. Even if some LARP stories are historically themed, the storylines are fictions only and do not necessarily copy correctly the historical movements. Thus, tourists immerse themselves into a world of hyperreality that was created by a LARP storyline which is more real than real.

3. Method



A qualitative approach adopting constructivist paradigm suits the research purpose of this study as the enquiry deals with meanings, rationales, and emotions behind actions and behavior (Creswell, 2009). In particular the research aims to reveal, from the perspective of LARP tourism players, how immersive tourist experience is obtained in a hyperreal context. The study draws on travel logs posted on social media by people who engaged in LARP tourism. To produce focused analyses, this research chose Jiaxing, China, where many LARP providers can be found, as the study locus. Jiaxing is located in Eastern China in the northeastern part of the Zhejiang Province. It is an important city in the Yangtze River Delta urban agglomeration and the Shanghai metropolitan area. Jiaxing is a famous national historical and cultural city. It was established in the Qin Dynasty and has thus more than two thousand years of history; it is rich in both natural and cultural attractions. This abundance of landscapes and culture make it an ideal place for researching LARP tourism.

To gain an initial understanding of tourists' experience with LARP-based tourism, user-generated-content (UGC) analysis was first adopted. UGC is considered a suitable source of data for purposes such as the present one (Leung, Law, van Hoof & Buhalis, 2013). With the keywords "LARP"/ "Script Murder"/ "Murder Mystery Game", "Real Scene LARP", and "Jiaxing", the research team collected 200 relevant travel logs, using the web crawler Bazhuayu, from a popular social media in China called "Little Red Book". Those logs were posted between September 20, 2020 and June 30, 2022. Irrelevant travel logs were discarded, as well as those that were very short (less than 100 words), leaving a viable sample of 154 logs suitable for further analysis. All logs were written in Chinese and then translated into English and the translations cross-checked. Information that could identify the author of a log was removed and a serial number was assigned to each log under analysis.

The 154 viable travel logs were cleaned with the software Python, deleting special symbols, removing extra spaces between characters and consecutive punctuation marks, as well as non-Chinese characters. The HowNet lexicon was applied to filter meaningless words, such as "I", "and", and "in". With the help of ROST Content Mining 6.0 version (Shen, 2008), the high frequency keywords were extracted from the travel logs. Further, a semantic network analysis was conducted to explore the relationships between those high-frequency words. Gephi was employed to visually exhibit the relationships (Cherven, 2013). The resulting network discloses the connections between nodes; which are created from co-occurrences of nodes in the same document. By reviewing the high frequency words and their co-occurrence patterns, the research team obtained an initial understanding of the tourists' most central concerns in the course of their LARP tourism experience.



According to the sematic network result as illustrated in Figure 1, those words reveal (1) a story-interwoven script experience, which refers to the key experiential elements that are induced by hyperreal scripts and roles, wordings such as “real scene”, “script”, “plot” and “immersion” are illustrative. (2) a destination-integrated sensorial experience, wordings that are associated with this theme represent the sensorial cues and touristic activities that could be found in a LARP play. Such as “accommodation”, “costume”, “attractions”, “game currency” (make-believe money used in some plays). (3) Lastly, character-acting social experience expresses how a LARP play is undertaken, words such as “acting”, “NPC (non-player character)” are illustrative, in addition, words such as “friends”, “buddies” are apparent examples to show that socializing takes place during the LARP process because of the role characters and interaction between players.

4. Findings

Word frequency and semantic network analysis of the 154 travel logs have shown a few emerging themes. Table 1 presents 40 words with highest frequency. Figure 1 illustrates the co-occurrence of the key items of concern. A three-layered experience structure emerged from both Table 1 and Figure 1, including (1) story-interwoven core experience, (2) character-induced social experience, and (3) destination-integrated sensorial experience. Firstly, according to the visual presentation in Figure 1, the node that takes the central position is “script”, which is the word with the highest frequency in Table 1. In fact, most travel logs started by describing the “script” as adopted in their LARP experience, including what type of script it was (such as thriller, suspense drama, love story etc.), the main plot of the “script”, the number of players, as well as the physical setting of the LARP etc. In addition, “script” has high occurrence with words such as “plot”, “game”, “story”, “roles”, “players”, and “experience”. It is interesting to note that “immersion”, as an important emotional state, appears as a separate node and is closely linked to “script”, while at the same time, it is interwoven with “roles”, “plot”, “game”, “attraction”, “experience”, and “player”. This shows tourists’ core experience revolves around the story that is ridden on the script and elements around the script. The following quotes from Log #B85 and #B84 are typical in representing this story (script) interwoven core experience.

“This is really a great script. All twelve characters have rich story lines, and the whole story revolved around the Stone Buddha, which is in good tune with the theme of this attraction. There are a lot of nice surprises. It is not difficult, slightly scary but ok. Very immersive experience indeed. I got back home last night, and now am still recollecting the plots and the role I played.” – Log#B85

“This is the first time I have played a real scene LARP. After being a bit nervous at the beginning, we started our “second life”. The script was well designed, with exciting plots and settings. The design of details was attentive and interesting as well. We need to complete all the tasks... when it reached the ending, I cried. So touched!” - Log # B84



Apparently strong emotional words were expressed by the informants and one can see that the intensity of emotion indeed was triggered by the script as well as by one's self immersion into the physical setting of LARP. Therefore, together they form the first layer of the experience, which is story-interwoven core experience.

Secondly, the people elements appear to be important as well in influencing LARP users' experience. It reflects tourists' social experience takes place in the LARP process. Among the 40 high frequency words, seven of them are about the people elements, including "player", "role", "NPC" (Non-player characters), "friends", "buddies", "characters", and "opposite roles". The co-occurrence map in Figure 2 shows the inter-relationships of those words. For example, "player" has co-occurrence with "NPC" and "role", while "role" is connected to "character" and "buddies". In addition, action words such as "acting", "task", "complete", and "clue (finding)" are connected to "players" and "roles". The fact that those words have high co-occurrence among each other indeed reflects the interactions among the players and NPCs are very important. Together they co-created the story as well as the desired storyline. The following quote is typically exemplifying.

"My role is similar to the host lady. My 'husband' loves and spoils me, and my 'daughter' is pretty and filial, and 'I' was the happiest person. It was so immersive (with emoji). The NPCs were also highly into the play, serious players they are! They brought out the different emotions from us. In task that I need to complete, there was a cry scene. Although I am not a person who cries easily, I could not help it (emoji)... " - Log #B71

To induce someone who does not cry easily to burst out indeed would require a high level of immersion into her own role. As frankly admitted by Log #B71, her cry was induced by her role as well as triggered by the hyperreal emotion that she had with other players. Character-induced social experience thus is apparent in this regard.

Thirdly, as LARPs all took place in tourist destinations and attractions, supplemented by different tourism components, such as accommodation and food, the importance of those items is presented in both Table 2 and Figure 2. As Table 2 shows, words such as "Meihuazhou" (the name of an attraction), "Jiaxing" (the name of a destination), "accommodation", "environment", "room", "real scene", "old-time fashion", and "breakfast" appeared in the top 40 highest frequency list. Log # A42 stated: "upon arrival, I was impressed by the environment here in the attraction already, the views are amazing, I feel I am already in the story...". While it is natural for the travel logs to contain the names of the attractions, it is also important to note that the supporting items such as costume and props, accommodation and the room decoration are important for the tourists to stay in the role-character for two days and support the above three layers of experience.

Log #B17 stated:

"... The staff helped us with make-up and dressing, this makes my play even better. The Chinese Han style costume is elegant, so beautiful. Even the accommodation is of old-time fashion. I quickly got into the character... it was an amazing experience."



Aside from LARP experience, the tourists displayed actions that are typically done by tourists, such as “photo-taking”. Log #A7 said,

“...we were all dressed up in old-time costumes, and the place is an old town, so all photos came out nicely, just like those in the movies. Besides, we have visited all attraction in the old town. Very nice indeed!”.

Table 1 Top 40 high-frequency result

Rank	Words	Frequency	Rank	Words	Frequency
1	Script	111	21	Clue	35
2	Game	101	22	Room	34
3	Attraction	94	23	Acting	34
4	Player	89	24	Buddies	27
5	Experience	87	25	Suggestions	27
6	Role	86	26	Real scene	26
7	Two-Day-One-Night	80	27	Choice	26
8	Immersion	80	28	Day Two	25
9	NPC	78	29	Characters	25
10	Meihuazhou	75	30	Mobile phone	22
11	Plot	69	31	Complete	21
12	Jiaxing	62	32	Old time fashion	20
13	Time	53	33	Opposite role	19
14	Task	51	34	Ending	18
15	Evening	47	35	Costume	18
16	Accommodation	42	36	Process	16
17	Problem (to be solved)	40	37	Breakfast	13
18	Friends	38	38	Game currency	10
19	Environment	36	39	Photo taking	10
20	Story	35	40	Setting	9

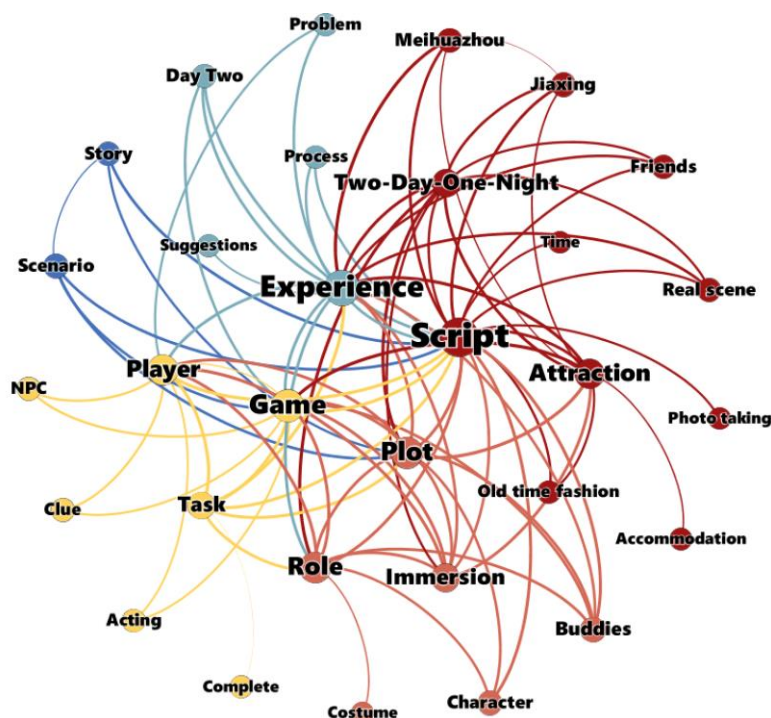


Figure 1. Sematic network result of LARP-based tourism

5. Discussion, implicaitons and conclusion

The purpose of the current study is to deconstruct LARP tourism and shows that rewarding experiences could be obtained via LARP tourism. LARP tourism represents a unique and emerging form of tourism that incorporates such diverse concepts as serious leisure and hyperreality, to create a novel form of touristic experience that, while physically located in a real space, is emotionally and experientially located in a place that is more real than real. This study has explored how LARP tourism engages tourists through an analysis of 154 traveler logs. The outcome reveals a three-faceted experience structure including story-interwoven script experience, destination-integrated sensorial experience, and character-acting social experience. The script is the magnet that draws the tourists. It is a thread that pulls all other components together, and underscores the nature of experience. The destination, including its attractions and hospitality elements form the backdrop of the event that helps place the story in a real scene. Most importantly, it is through the character-acting that the script comes alive and tourists are able to experience the kind of transcendence with other equally committed player. Optimal experience is dependent on the availability of all aforementioned elements.

5.1 Theoretical implication



Compared to traditional tourism, LARP implicates the participants in a number of novel ways. First, LARP tourism contains several features of serious leisure, such as requiring some level of persistence, significant effort, a total immersion, a sense of being, team accomplishment, and durable outcomes (Stebbins, 2001). At the same time, LARP tourism draws on hyper-reality in which a fictitious spatial and temporal world that is simultaneously created and lived in. The above two elements combined offer a temporal escape from the mundane world, via taking on another identity and living a different existence, as framed by a particular script selected. In other words, the current research presents how existential authenticity as an experiential outcome of undertaking serious leisure and tourism would work in a hyperreal context using LARP as an illustrative example.

According to Wang (1999), the state of being of an individual is activated not by a toured object, but by a tourist activity in which the individual independently immerses. The existential authenticity emancipated from LARP tourism, due to its hyperreal context, goes beyond the one that is grounded in reality. The right of authentication is no longer limited to a tourist, a host or a toured object, but co-created by the actors involved and intertwined with a hyperreal economic offering (a LARP role/script) and stage-settings, both physically and virtually. The co-creation process, on the other hand, further stimulates and enhances tourists' perception of existential authenticity, especially the inter-personal aspect (Wang, 1999).

A fundamental difference is thus created which differentiates LARP tourism from serious leisure as well as from conventional tourism. McKercher and Prideaux (2020) suggest that an important part of tourism is about "bubble creation". The main functions of a bubble are to remove risk that is associated with the strangeness of the host destination as well as to highlight the thrill. A temporal safe shelter is thus created for the tourists to obtain liminal experience grounded in reality. With LARP tourism, to the contrary, all the premises, costumes and props not only are for creating a liminal touristic space where tourists can do things that they normally would not do (Cohen, 1988), but also for encapsulating tourists in a script-driven hyperreal world which has little or even nothing to do with reality. In addition, as LARP setting is driven by the script-required story background, the setting thus might not necessarily be constructed within a physically strange and novel environment. This has an implication in the connotation of the "bubbles" being created. The "bubble" created for mass tourism is to maintain the level of strangeness that is non-life threatening while the "bubble" created for LARP is meant to encapsulate tourists in a hyperreal world that is trancelike and with a purpose to dissociate with reality.



The place (an attraction in a destination) still matters. The attraction or a place in which a given LARP takes place provides liminality where tourists feel free and safe to express themselves and to unfold the inter-subject relationship as the script has designed (Kim & Jamal, 2007). As the findings suggest, the match between the script and the place is important for LARP tourism. Rickly-Boyd (2013) argues that the place provides an imaginative space from which existential authenticity could be aroused. It is even more apparent in the context of LARP tourism because the LARP scripts are often fictional or partially inspired by reality. This also echoes Stebbins (1996) who points out that serious leisure players are particular about the place where they practice their hobbyist interest. However, the role of the attraction or destination differs from that of regular tourism where attractions are often the dominant nuclei (Leiper, 1990). In LARP tourism, the attractions are the backdrop of the activity. But this does not mean that the tourists/players interact less with the attractions (Curan et al., 2018). As evidenced in the logs, they often have high level of engagement with the physical settings where they undertake LARP. In addition to photo taking, tourists appear to have detailed understanding of the attractions.

5.2 Practical implication

The findings suggest that LARP is a viable alternative for tourism service providers. In an era when tourists are increasingly looking for an engaging experience, LARP tourism could be of economic value for the tourism and hospitality industry. As evidenced in the findings, LARP has good potential for providing immersive experiences. Here, the degree of escape/ evasion is not measured by the geographical distance from home but by the psychological distance created. When the tourists endeavor to escape from their everyday routines and move into a co-constructed hyperreal world where they can live an “alternative life”, physical distance matters less. As evidenced in the UGC, many tourists take a weekend to participate in LARP. While the physical setting of LARP is important, the cardinal magnet comes from the script itself and from how well it fits one’s inner motivation. In other words, LARP could practically take place anywhere as long as a suitable physical setting can be made-up and is congruent with the background of the script.

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