

Horizons

SHTM Magazine

Official Magazine of the School of Hotel and Tourism Management, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Vol 19 Issue 1, Feb 2019



YEARS

1979-2019

LEADING HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM

School Celebrates 40th Year
SHTM+ICON Consultancy Launched
Students Embrace Future at Congregation
Graduate Couples Praise SHTM

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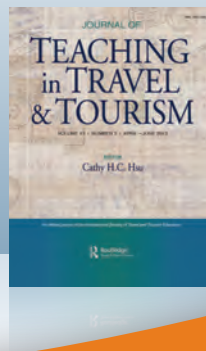
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Horizons
SHTM Magazine



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THE HONG KONG
POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY
香港理工大學

SCHOOL OF HOTEL AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT

40
1979-2019
Years

DEAN'S MESSAGE

One of the key tasks in hospitality and tourism education is to reflect on what has already been achieved and what might still be possible in the future. Indeed, we open this issue of Horizons in that light, celebrating the SHTM's 40th anniversary with a retrospective of the School's achievements since its humble beginning as the Department of Institutional Management and Catering Studies in 1979.

From that basis we look ahead, first to the recently launched SHTM+ICON Consultancy that is set to provide the industry with the very best of advisory services from the School and Hotel ICON, its award-winning teaching and research hotel. In the same light, we report on the 24th PolyU Congregation (SHTM) in October, at which a new cohort of graduates readied themselves to make their marks in their chosen fields.

Following from our coverage of family member graduates in our last issue, this time around we hear from husband and wife pairings who have also made the SHTM the centre point of their career advancement. Then we turn to three very important conferences through which we have maintained our regional influence – the "One Belt, One Road, One Tourism" International Conference in Palembang, Indonesia, the UNWTO/PATA Forum in Guilin and the CHINA TOURISM FORUM in Hangzhou.

Our coverage of postgraduate programmes in this issue also takes on an international tone, highlighting the hands-on nature of on-the-ground learning in Germany, Hong Kong, Italy, Macau, mainland China, Thailand and the United States.

Along with news of the outstanding response to the School's unique online MicroMasters in International Hospitality Management, this issue also covers findings from cutting-edge SHTM research, highlights staff and student activities and reports on the latest in F&B events, among numerous other things.

We know where we have been and what we have achieved – the SHTM is now moving in to the next 40 years of sustained excellence. **H**



Professor Kaye Chon

Dean and Chair Professor
Walter Kwok Foundation Professor in
International Hospitality Management
School of Hotel and Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

A stylized, handwritten signature in white ink, consisting of several loops and a final flourish.

Reaching the Summit

Reflecting on

40 YEARS

1979-2019

The future is never clear but it is always there, urging on individuals and organisations that seek excellence in their fields. Such has continuously been the case with the SHTM, from its inception as a small department in 1979 to its position as a world-leading school in 2019. We take this 40th anniversary opportunity to look back over those years and see how the School has boldly shaped its own destiny.

Established with only five academic staff members, the Department of Institutional Management and Catering Studies initially offered Diploma and Higher Diploma programmes to around 110 students. After being renamed the Department of

Hospitality management in 1986, it then offered Hong Kong's first Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Hospitality Management. The first recognition of its development came in 1989 with acceptance as an Institutional Member of the International Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education.

The 1990s saw an important broadening of scope, with a BA in Tourism Management offered in 1991, the same year that Ph.D. and MPhil students were admitted. Renaming as the Department of Hotel and Tourism Management in 1992 was then accompanied by acceptance as an Affiliated Member of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO).

Further key developments during the decade included the establishment of an MSc in Hotel and Tourism Management programme in mainland China run jointly with Zhejiang University – the first such programme recognised by the mainland authorities. As the decade closed, 1999 saw the Department designated by the UNWTO as one of 16 Education and Training Network Centres worldwide, and the only in Asia. Within a decade, it had come to epitomise quality standards in tourism education.

The beginning of a new decade saw a further commitment to mainland China, with the launch of an MSc programme in Hangzhou.

Professor Kaye Chon also arrived at the Department in 2000 as Head (now Dean), and oversaw the transition to the School of Hotel and Tourism Management the following year. By 2011 his efforts at the School and across the entire hospitality and tourism industry would be so well recognised that he would receive the highly prestigious Ulysses Prize from the UNWTO, widely considered the Nobel Prize in tourism.

The School's links to the UNWTO developed rapidly under Professor Chon, who was elected Vice Chairman of the UNWTO Education Council in 2001, concurrent with the SHTM being named an Affiliate Council Member. Further recognition came with designation by the International Academy for the Study of Tourism as its World Headquarters and Secretariat in 2002 and an Institutional Achievement Award from the International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators in 2003.

The SHTM became an independent School within PolyU during 2004, having expanded to 40 academic staff members from 15 countries and regions educating more than 1,100 students. From that position it launched the world's

efforts extended with the launch of the PolyU Tourism Service Quality Index.

Reaping the Rewards

Indications that the SHTM was developing in the right direction came quickly. In 2002 the School had been rated among the world's top 15 in terms of hospitality and tourism research and scholarship by the *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education*. That position changed to first among Asian institutions and fourth globally in 2005 according to the *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*. Yet this was only the start, with an exciting new development in the wings.

Announced first in October 2005, the upscale Hotel ICON opened in 2011 opposite the PolyU Campus in a building that also contained a new SHTM premises, providing the centrepiece of the School's educational and research model. The International Council of Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education recognised that synergy

2017, recognition by *Conde Nast Traveller* and the *Michelin Guide*, and a current ranking of third among hotels in Hong Kong by TripAdvisor.

At the same time, the School has moved into ever-more prominent positions in international rankings. 2009 saw it ranked second in the world in research and scholarship by the *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*. In 2015, the University Ranking by Academic Performance Research Laboratory ranked PolyU sixth internationally in Commerce, Management, Tourism and Services, which meant that the SHTM, as the only hospitality and tourism school within the top six institutions, led the world in its field.

In 2017 and 2018, the School ranked among the top three in the world in the QS World University Rankings by Subject, with the same two years seeing it ranked first in Shanghai Ranking's Global Ranking of Academic Subjects.

Now hosting a truly international blend of 75 academics from 22 countries and regions and close to 2,000 students from 50 countries and regions, the School has never lost sight of its primary purpose – serving the development of its

40 Years of Excellence

first Doctor of Hotel and Tourism Management (D.HTM) in 2007. By 2013 it had launched a version of the programme in the Chinese mainland.

Meanwhile, 2008 had seen the launch of the Web-based Hong Kong Tourism Demand Forecasting System, accompanied in 2009 by the PolyU Tourist Satisfaction Index. 2013 saw these industry-critical

in 2012 by bestowing the School with the McCool Breakthrough Award.

Hotel ICON itself has also received numerous forms of praise, prominent among which have been second runner-up in the UNWTO Ulysses Award for Innovation in Enterprises during 2014, the Pacific Asia Travel Association Grand Award in Education and Training in

industry. Such efforts solidified in 2018 with the launch of the SHTM+ICON Consultancy, covered elsewhere in this issue.

At the forefront of hospitality and tourism decision-making, education and research, the School is eagerly anticipating an innovative future. Here's to the next 40 years! **H**

Putting it All Together



The team of SHTM+ICON consultants: (front row from left) Dr Tony Tse, Mr Richard Hatter, Professor Kaye Chon, Professor Cathy Hsu and Mr Ian Lee; (back row from left) Dr Basak Denizci Guillet, Professor Haiyan Song, Professor Brian King and Dr Qu Xiao

Combining a unique educational model, cutting-edge research and an award-winning hospitality experience, the pairing of the SHTM and Hotel ICON is redefining possibilities in hospitality and tourism. Together with its teaching and research hotel, the School is always looking for innovative ways to advance the industry, and is now consolidating such efforts with the launch of the SHTM+ICON Consultancy.

Commenting on the launch, Dr Tony Tse, Professor of Practice and Programme Director (Industry Partnerships), noted that the pairing

would “combine our people, resources, and expertise into a dedicated, professional hotel and tourism-related consultancy service”.

Operating as a business unit under the PolyU Technology and Consultancy Co Ltd, the SHTM+ICON Consultancy will transfer knowledge developed through the School's research and Hotel ICON's practical endeavours. One of the key features of the pairing will be a focus on not only developing creative solutions for clients but also ensuring sustainable business growth. Ultimately, the aim will be to bridge theory and practice in the hospitality sector.

The SHTM already has a long history of offering high-level

consultancy to organisations around the world, including the China National Travel Service, the Hong Kong Tourism Board, Greaton Ribbon Australia, King Abdulaziz University in Saudi Arabia, the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education in Indonesia and the Ministry of Tourism in Jamaica. Drawing on that experience, the new consultancy will offer advisory services in hospitality management and development, executive education in hospitality and other service sectors, and higher education in hospitality.

Featuring in the consulting team will be Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean, Chair Professor and Walter Kwok Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management; Professor Haiyan Song, Associate Dean, Chair Professor and Mr and Mrs Chan Chak Fu Professor in International Tourism; Professor Brian King, Associate Dean; Dr Basak Denizci Guillet, Associate Professor; Dr Tse in his capacity as Professor of Practice; Mr Richard Hatter, Adjunct Associate Professor, SHTM, and

SHTM+ICON

Defining the Future

General Manager, Hotel ICON; and Mr Ian Lee, Director of Finance and Administration, Hotel ICON.

With unparalleled experience and a wealth of combined expertise, the SHTM+ICON Consultancy is set to advance the hospitality sector ever more as the focus of world tourism settles resolutely on Asia. For enquiries and proposals, please contact Dr Tse at tony.tse@polyu.edu.hk. #

Experience of a Lifetime



"Go for the experience, not for the glamour" implored Mr Steve Rushmore, founder of the globally leading hospitality consultancy HVS, at the 24th PolyU Congregation (SHTM) on 30 October. Advising the assembled students to seek employers with whom they could develop proficiencies rather than choosing to work without direction in well-known brands, Mr Rushmore set the scene for three sessions to focus on the experiential benefits of an SHTM education and beyond.

Held in the Jockey Club Auditorium on the PolyU campus, the 2018 Congregation saw the graduation of 6 Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), 40 Doctor of Hotel and Tourism Management (D.HTM), 169 Master of Science (MSc), 2 Postgraduate Diploma, 482 Bachelor of Science (BSc) and 60

Higher Diploma (HD) students.

In his hard-hitting speech, Mr Rushmore urged students to "make your career your hobby. My work is my hobby – I have the greatest job in the world". He also focused on the importance of mentors and networking, wisely suggesting to "stay in touch with everyone who shares your values".

A further highlight of the session, coming after the conferral of degrees, was the valedictory speech by Miss Lillian Tsang, BSc in Hotel Management graduate with the First Class Honours and recipient of the prestigious SHTM Student of the Year Award 2017/18. Miss Tsang told the audience of her many "first times" at the School, including finishing reports to meet deadlines, exchanges and internships. "Each

experience was a gift to me", she explained, even those that were less than pleasant. "They helped me discover my potential and build up my self-confidence".

The session wrapped up with the presentation of the Outstanding PolyU SHTM Alumni Award 2018 to Ms Betty Simpson, General Manager of The Helena May. Ms Simpson, who gained a HD in Institutional Management and Catering Studies from the School in 1986, recalled that even back then internships "were very valuable experiences for students to learn in unflattering environments". Overall, her time at the School had provided "important foundation knowledge" on which she could build career experience.

Endless Opportunities

The opening of the second session featured a speech by Mr Reto Wittwer, Chairman of the

of our School", she said. And this prepared them for a future that "may be uncertain but also brings endless opportunities".

The session also included the presentation of the Best D.HTM Thesis Award 2017/18 to Dr Manisa Piuchan for "Travel Motivations,

Kadoorie in 2017. Despite nervousness and facing over 300 distinguished guests she realised through receiving praise that "with perseverance and dedication, success will follow".

The session rounded out with the presentation of the Best



Advisory Board of World Tourism Forum Lucerne, who noted how an SHTM education would be a "door-opener" for graduates in their careers. Yet he cautioned realism, noting that "you will be hired for what you are, not what you pretend to be".

Those comments were surely on the minds of the degree recipients in the second session. Miss Pepper Tang put a similar sentiment to the audience by emphasising the importance of contributing to an organisation in her valedictory speech after receiving a BSc in Convention and Event Management. She told of her time with classmates organising the inaugural World Summit for Deans of Independent Schools of Hospitality and Tourism. "We were fully aware that it was not only our final year project but an event which represented the image

Benefits and Characteristics of Meditation Tourism in Thailand: The International Tourist Perspective".

Featuring at the opening of the third session was a speech by Mr David Sun, Chairman and CEO of Homeinns Hotel Group, China's largest budget hotel chain. Mr Sun encouraged the assembled students to become "excellent hoteliers". Amid dramatic changes in the hotel sector, he commented, "we need your passion, your dedication, your wisdom and your creativity".

After the final presentation of degrees, Miss Gladys Yau, who graduated with a BSc in Hotel Management, highlighted the importance of trying in her valedictory speech. She recalled being one of the masters of ceremonies at the SHTM Lifetime Achievement Award ceremony for The Honourable Sir Michael

Undergraduate Honours Thesis Award 2017/18 to Miss Danmei Lin, BSc in Hotel Management, for "The Influence of Valence and Platform on Readers' Perceptions and Reactions towards Online Hotel Reviews: An Experimental Approach Based on Information Adoption Model (IAM)". Mr Yuhao Chen, MSc in International Tourism and Convention Management, also received the Best MSc Dissertation Award 2017/18 for his "Children's Attention and Perception toward Tourism Photographs: A Multi-approach of Eye-tracking and Visual Methodology".

Regardless of their chosen fields, all of the year's graduates are set to become leading professionals in hospitality and tourism. The SHTM congratulates them and looks forward to the innovations through which they will advance the industry. **H**

to follow in his family's footsteps in the hospitality industry. Helen loved travelling with her parents and had long wanted to be part of the industry that "curates memorable experiences". As the "best hotel school in Asia", there was never any doubt that the SHTM was where they would study.

Finding Inspiration

Studying at the SHTM was a shared ambition for Kirk Yan Ka Kui and Yvonne Chen Yi-Fan.

Shared Me

Many alumni have happy memories of their time spent studying with us, but for some the School holds a special place in their hearts, as couples. As part of our 40th Anniversary celebrations, we interviewed three such couples recently to find out how their lives have changed since their time with us.

When Only the Best Will Do

Owen Li and Helen Wang connected through an online forum before they even arrived in Hong Kong to study in the Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Hotel Management programme. They then met in the Student Halls of Residence, dated for almost seven years and eventually married in June 2015. For Owen, the decision to study at the SHTM was motivated by the desire

After graduating in 2012, Owen joined the IHG hotel group in Hong Kong before moving to the US to pursue graduate studies, and he is currently working as an Associate Product Manager, Intelligence Product at MediaMath in New York. Originally aiming to be a hotel General Manager, he eventually realised he wanted to focus his energy elsewhere, and becoming a product manager meant he could develop advanced technological products that have the power to influence the industry.

Helen knew she wanted to work with data and research after graduating, and began her career as a corporate finance research analyst. She has continued in this line of work as a Business Intelligence Analyst at Charter Communications in New York. One day, she hopes to return to the hospitality field.

The couple still hold fond memories of studying at the SHTM. Their happiest memories are those they spent together in and outside class, with friends they're still in contact with after all these years.



Ms Helen Wang and Mr Owen Li

The couple met while working at the Central Plaza Hotel in Zurich, Switzerland, where Yvonne was working as an intern and Kirk was working full-time. The couple went on to study together at the SHTM, and today, they are still working together, for the Galaxy Entertainment Group (GEG) in Macau.

For Kirk, the chance to study for an MSc in Hotel and Tourism Management at the SHTM was a dream he believed would

never come true. The course that particularly stays in his mind is the training development course taught by Dr Simon Wong, which came in very useful when he started working for the corporate office of GEG.

Yvonne, meanwhile, studied for a Doctor of Hotel and Tourism

Career Revival

In 2015, Jing Zhengbo and Jin Baodan enrolled in the MSc programme offered jointly by the

recently became proud parents. After graduating and some travel, Zhengbo started out at HNA Huagang Resort and is now responsible for the financial systems of new hotels. Baodan also works in finance, assisting management at Zhejiang Investment and Financing Association.

Memories



Ms Yvonne Chen and Mr Kirk Yan

Management degree and graduated in 2015. The class that made the greatest difference to her future career was Dean Chon's Asian Paradigm in Hospitality Management, which she says echoes GEG's "World Class, Asian Heart" philosophy. Describing Dean Chon's class as "very forward looking and inspirational", Yvonne says that many of the issues discussed in class, such as how Asian hotel brands can succeed in Western countries, frequently arise in her work at GEG.

School and Zhejiang University. As veterans of the hotel industry they felt their careers had stalled, and they were attracted to the SHTM as a "world-famous school" that "always led in the international rankings". Even more importantly, they recalled, "colleagues and friends who introduced us to the School had made significant career advancement after taking the SHTM programme".

Indeed, the MSc programme helped them develop a more international perspective, update their professional skills and industry knowledge and improve their ability to solve complex problems. Their two years of study at the School flew by, but they still treasure the "sweet memories" of their time here, "meeting and gathering with friends in every class, attentively listening the lectures in the classroom and the intense discussions when doing assignments late into the night".

Less than three years after meeting during the self-introduction session, the couple married in Hangzhou in March 2018, and



Ms Jin Baodan and Mr Jing Zhengbo

Reflecting on the SHTM's 40th anniversary brought back happy memories for all three couples, who expressed pride and gratitude in being SHTM graduates. Helen and Owen recall celebrating the School's 30th anniversary when in their second year, and are excited to be part of this year's celebrations. Kirk and Yvonne hope the SHTM "keeps up the good quality" and continues to produce new talents. Finally, Zhengbo and Baodan offer their "best wishes for the School's 40th anniversary celebrations!" **H**



Officiating party at the opening ceremony

Fostering International Cooperation

Cooperation and close coordination between destinations is crucial to the sustainable development of the hospitality and tourism industry worldwide. One of the key ways in which that can be achieved is organising conferences that bring together key players working to advance far-sighted government initiatives.

Such was emphatically the case in Palembang, Indonesia on 22-23 November 2018, when academics and industry professionals from 11 countries gathered at the inaugural One Belt One Road One Tourism (OBOROT) conference in response to mainland China's Belt and Road initiative. Organised by the SHTM, the Faculty of Tourism at King Abdulaziz University in

Saudi Arabia and the Bandung Institute of Tourism in Indonesia, the conference was hosted by the Palembang Polytechnic of Tourism. Co-hosts included the Bali Institute of Tourism, Lombok Polytechnic of Tourism, Medan Polytechnic of Tourism, and Makassar Polytechnic of Tourism.

Benefits to Come

Themed “A New Age of Wonderful Tourism” and focusing on innovation, research and education, the conference provided an interactive platform for sharing the latest research findings and analyses of industry trends. Just as importantly, delegates had the opportunity to build connections in relation to the Belt and Road initiative, for which tourism – with its far-reaching economic impact – is expected to play a leading role.

Speaking ahead of the conference at a preparatory event in June, Dr Zulkifli Harahap, Director of the Palembang Polytechnic of Tourism, emphasised that it would help to foster international cooperation in the sector, “considering that tourism is the largest foreign exchange earner in several countries including Indonesia”.

Indeed, one of the key benefits of the Belt and Road initiative, covering the economic interconnections of over 60 countries in Asia, Europe and northeastern Africa that constitute the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, is expected to be the seamless flow of capital, goods and services in areas that house around half of the world’s population. Another, and perhaps even greater, benefit is likely to be increased intercultural understanding – a key ingredient in sustainably developing tourism.

Wide-Ranging Conference

With such a high-stakes background, it is fitting that the conference launched with an opening ceremony at Griya Agung, Government House, in Palembang. Officiating were Mrs Irene Camelyn Sinaga, Head of the Tourism Department of South Sumatra Province; Professor Indroyono, Honorary Advisor to the Minister of Tourism; Dr Harahap in his role as Director of the Palembang Polytechnic of Tourism; Dr Nasser Albogami from Jeddah University; and Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean, Chair Professor and Walter Kwok Foundation Professor of International Hospitality Management.

The remainder of the day saw two plenary sessions, an all-important networking session and an evening of Indonesian cultural performances. In the second plenary session, featuring Dean Chon and Dr Albogami, the focus was on the link between academia and the industry.

Delivering a speech on “Connecting the Dots between University Education and Research with Industry Practices”, Dean Chon considered the historical scope of hospitality and tourism studies, noting the recent rising importance of top institutions based in Asia as the region becomes tourism’s centre of gravity. He highlighted the SHTM’s own leadership in academic rankings and the role that Hotel ICON, the School’s teaching and research hotel, plays in putting many innovations developed through

research into practice. Of particular relevance in extending that partnership to benefit the industry, he said, was the SHTM+ICON Consultancy, the launch of which is described elsewhere in this issue.

Events on the second day, held at the Palembang Polytechnic of Tourism, featured 10 parallel presentation sessions with papers focusing on tourism in China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia and Thailand. The topics ranged from the Belt and Road readiness of the hospitality and tourism industry, health tourism opportunities under the initiative, and sustainable tourism in China and the ASEAN countries, along with capacity building, Halal tourism, destination marketing and smart tourism, among many others.

Dr Tony Tse, SHTM Professor of Practice and Programme Director (Industry Partnerships), presented a paper, which he co-authored with Ms Elaine Zhang, SHTM Research Assistant, on “Chinese Culture and Luxury Travelers” – a topic that should resonate with tourism practitioners worldwide.

The day climaxed with a gala dinner and further cultural performances. Dean Chon and Dr Harahap then gave closing speeches for a conference that had set the initial scene for a greater appreciation of how the Belt and Road initiative will affect the future of the hospitality and tourism industry. The focus will shift to China later this year, with the second OBOROT conference to be hosted by Guilin Tourism University. **H**

With eyes fixed firmly on current realities in anticipation of global tourism development over the next 12 years, academics, industry leaders and senior administrators gathered in Guilin, China, on 25-26 October for the 12th UNWTO/PATA Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook. Organised by the

is proud to be a staunch supporter of this important Forum for global tourism exchange in driving innovations and sustainability in tourism development while keeping pace with international trends".

Held at the Shangri-la Hotel Guilin, the forum kicked off with

Professor, on female leadership in hospitality and tourism, and Mr Chris Bottrill, PATA Chairman and Director International, Capilano University Canada, on youth development through tourism.

The first keynote session, moderated by Dr Cheung, then

Anticipating the Future



Panelists speaking at the conference

World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), and co-organised by the Guilin Municipal People's Government and the Guangxi Tourism Administration in collaboration with the SHTM, the forum guided enthusiastic participants through dialogue and knowledge exchange based on the theme "The Future of Tourism: Road to 2030".

Commenting on the significance of the theme at the event, Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean, Chair Professor and Walter Kwok Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management, said that "as a world-leading hospitality and tourism educational institution, the SHTM

a technical session featuring discussions of tourism trends in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond, tourism education, and sustainable tourism development. Featured were moderator Mr Michel Julian, UNWTO Programme Officer, Tourism Market Intelligence and Competitiveness; Professor John Koldowski, Leshan Normal University, China and Special Advisor to PATA; Professor David Airey, University of Surrey, UK and Mr Haitham Matter, CEO of the Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority, United Arab Emirates.

At the following panel session on human capital development, moderator Dr Honggen Xiao, SHTM Associate Professor, noted that the Forum was "helpful to the development of tourism in Guilin", offering the latest global perspectives in support of local decision makers. The session also featured addresses by, among others, Dr Catherine Cheung, SHTM Associate Dean and Associate

focused on the future of tourism in China, with participants highlighting such key considerations as village tourism in the country, Chinese outbound tourism and the development of wellness tourism. A following panel session on the technological future of tourism featured a speech by Dr Sangwon Park, SHTM Associate Professor, on moving from Big Data to artificial intelligence in future tourism, with some of the other topics under discussion including machine learning and the role of data in the next generation of travel marketing.

Toward Sustainability

The second day began with the Forum's official opening ceremony, moderated by Mr Qin Chunheng,



Participants at the 12th UNWTO/PATA Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook in Guilin

Mayor of Guilin. Mr Zhao Leqin, Deputy-Director of the Standing Committee of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region People's Congress highlighted how the Forum was helping Guilin's "efforts in building an international tourist destination, national sustainable area of innovation" and "national demonstrative destination for health tourism". Mr Zhu Shanzhong, Executive Director of the UNWTO, then said that the Forum was "proof of the city's significance in international tourism". Mr Mario Hardy, CEO of PATA, concurred, and further highlighted the need to ensure sustainable industry development over the next 10 years.

Also speaking were the SHTM's Dean Chon, Mr Li Bin, Vice Chairman of the People's Government of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, and Mr Li Shihong, Member of the Party

Group, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, China.

The day's opening keynote session, moderated by the UNWTO's Mr Julian, featured speeches on the future of tourism, most notably by Dean Chon on human capital development in the hospitality and tourism industry and Mr Eduardo Santander, CEO of the European Tourism Commission, on Chinese outbound tourism from the European perspective.

A panel session moderated by Professor Koldowski of PATA then narrowed the focus to tourism policies and business in the 2030s, ranging in its coverage from trends and expectations in Asia-Pacific hospitality and the integration of culture and tourism to tourism policies in Japan.

The final keynote session, on the future of technology in and for

tourism, moderated by the SHTM's Dr Sangwon Park, covered smart tourism, revitalising the industry through Big Data and the use of mobile positioning data for tourism in Indonesia. Closing out the Forum, Mr Zhu of the UNWTO, Mr Hardy of PATA and Dean Chon provided final remarks.

The School is proud of its long association with the Forum, and looks forward to the many future developments discussed, always with an eye on the sustainable development of hospitality and tourism in China and beyond. **H**

Where does the future of tourism in China lie? That vital question was at the forefront of all minds when industry leaders, academics and government representatives gathered in Hangzhou for the 12th CHINA TOURISM FORUM: Innovations in Hospitality and Tourism Practices on 19-20 November. Hosted by the SHTM and organised by Fliggy, the Alibaba Group's travel division, the event attracted over 1,000 local and international participants to help further the growth of the industry through dialogue and idea exchange focused on promoting sustainable innovation.

The event, held at the Midtown Shangri-La Hotel, launched with an invitation-only session on the super intellectual property of Culture and Tourist Villages in China, and then broadened with an SHTM Alumni Salon themed "How to Solve the HR Dilemma in the Hotel Industry", hosted by the dynamic Mainland China Branch of the SHTM Alumni Association.

Officially opening the forum on the following morning were Mr Xu Peng, Deputy Director of the Zhejiang Culture and Tourism Department, and Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean, Chair Professor and Walter Kwok Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management. Mr Xu highlighted the recent shift away from business and resort hotel development to the "comprehensive development of all kinds of lodging" in the province, and Dean Chon told the assembled delegates that the "joint exploration of ideas" at the forum would further help advance the sector and the entire industry throughout China.

Overseeing the ceremony were Ms Chen Fujiao, Secretary General of the Hunan Tourism Association and Hunan Tourist Hotel Association, and Mr Murphy Zhu, Chief Commercial Officer of Accor Hotels Greater China.



Professor Haiyan Song (left) and Dr Dan Wang (right) participating in the panel discussion

Attendees were treated to invited speeches throughout the day by Dr Feifei Li, Scientist and Head of Database and Storage Lab at the Alibaba Academy for Discovery, Adventure, Momentum and Outlook, who discussed the extraction of Big Data for use in tourism, and Mr Leo Liu, President and Managing Director, Greater China, of the Wyndham Hotel Group, who considered hospitality innovation in the age of the mobile Web. Ms Vincci Yang, Business Development Manager at STR, looked at the opportunities and challenges inherent in China hotel market updates, and Mr Wu Yizhou, Senior Data Analytics Specialist at Alibaba, asked how new consumers could be profiled.

One of the special highlights of the day was the invited presentation

session themed "Developing the New Species for New Markets". Among the presenters were Ms Sheng Cong, General Manager of Business Development and Fresh Food Business at the Alibaba Group's HeMa Fresh, detailing her company's highly innovative "New Retail" business model. Mr Li Wei, CFO of OYO Rooms, India's largest hospitality chain, then spoke about his company's innovative global strategies.

A pair of innovative three-person "talk shows" also featured industry leaders such as Dr Joanne Jia, President of Christie Group – Asia Pacific, and Mr Hu Jun, Head of Digital and Regional Vice President, Greater China, of the Hyatt Hotel Group. And the morning culminated with a roundtable discussion moderated by Mr Li Shaohua, Vice

es Ahead



President of the Alibaba Group, on the new wave, new drivers and new directions of hospitality and tourism innovation.

Academic- Industry Alliance

Featuring on the final afternoon were two very timely sessions that considered academia's role in moving forward the Chinese hospitality and tourism industry. The first, entitled "Cutting Edge Research and Implications in the New Era", was hosted by the

SHTM's Hospitality and Tourism Research Centre.

Chairing the session was Professor Haiyan Song, SHTM Associate Dean, Chair Professor and Mr and Mrs Chan Chak Fu Professor in International Tourism. Professor Robert Li from the School of Sport, Tourism and Hospitality Management at Temple University in the United States set the tone with an invited presentation on the application of research results to the industry. The following roundtable discussion featured industry leaders such as Mr Frank Huang, Vice President and General Manager of Hotel Business at Fliggy, and the SHTM's Dr Dan Wang.

The second session, hosted by the newly launched SHTM+ICON consultancy, itself an exemplar of

the academia-industry crossover, was themed "Path to Sustainable Innovation" and kicked off with an invited presentation by the SHTM's Dr Qu Xiao on "Hotel ICON and the Innovation Journey of Independent Hotels".

With the School's teaching and research hotel firmly in mind, participants then took part in a roundtable discussion of how the path to sustainable innovation could be explored. Speakers included such industry luminaries as Mr Michael Chen, Vice President of Wanda Hotels and Resorts, and Dr James Mabey, Chief International Business Officer and Head of Middle East and Asia, Standard International. Dr Mabey, notably, is both a graduate of the SHTM's unique professional Doctor of Hotel and Tourism Management programme and the School's 2015 Outstanding Alumni.

Such intersections are typical of the SHTM's engagement with its industry, and the forum provided another critical opportunity to strengthen many connections, highlight the opportunities ahead and broaden the scope for further cooperation and detailed collaboration in an always challenging future. **H**



Experiential learning is one of the most powerful ways in which education can be delivered. The SHTM's postgraduate programmes take full advantage of that dynamic, ensuring that students have ample opportunities to experience the complexities of the hospitality and tourism industry first-hand.

Take the School's ground-breaking Doctor of Hotel and Tourism Management as a prime example.

The Hong Kong leg of the Master of Science (MSc) in Global Hospitality Business programme, delivered in conjunction with the Lausanne Hotel School in Switzerland and the Conrad N. Hilton College at the University of Houston in the United States, continued to offer high-impact field trips during the year. The 2018-19 cohort had already been exposed to industry practices and leaders in Italy and Berlin, and went on to

ICON, and consultancy projects delivering fresh ideas and insights for sector leaders such as the Grand Hyatt Hong Kong, the Mandarin Oriental and Grayline Tours.

Students in the MSc in International Wine Management programme spent two weeks during May on an intensive tour of Piedmont and Tuscany in Italy, learning about the wine production and management practices of estates such as Castello di Grinzane Cavour and Tenuta di Biserno.

In all of the SHTM's postgraduate programmes, learning extends well beyond the classroom, widening student perspectives in ways that make them ideal future leaders of the hospitality and tourism industry. **H**

Unparalleled Exposure

The professional programme, designed for academics, senior industry executives and senior administrators, features a residential field trip unparalleled in the way it exposes participants to best practice in the hotel sector.

In August 2018, the Asian Paradigm in Hospitality Management class, led by Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean, Chair Professor and Walter Kwok Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management, toured and participated in seminars and lectures delivered by senior management at The Peninsula Hong Kong, Dusit Thani Bangkok and the Mandarin Oriental Bangkok. The students analysed and evaluated the practices they encountered and presented their findings as the culmination of the trip.

experience the same in Washington DC and Las Vegas. During their Hong Kong semester they visited Macau in January to understand the context of the city's rapidly developing hospitality and tourism industry. A second trip to mainland China in March featured exposure to the operations and senior management of leading hotels in Beijing and Shanghai, along with a visit to Chinese multinational Alibaba in Hangzhou.

Also featuring in the programme was student participation in consultancy projects focusing on organisational issues within leading hospitality companies. Likewise, the MSc programmes in International Hospitality Management and International Tourism and Convention Management featured the Management Practice subject in which students undertook paid internships for 480 hours at Hotel



Research Horizons

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Raise a Glass to Wine Tourist Diversity

Not all Chinese wine tourists are the same. Although wine tourism is becoming more popular in China according to a study published recently by a group of researchers including SHTM professors Hanqin Qiu Zhang and Brian King, there is wide variation in tourists' level of involvement in wine-based activities. Drawing on the findings of a survey measuring levels of involvement in and perceptions of wine tourism, the researchers provide useful information for marketers aiming to develop targeted trips and marketing strategies.

Chinese Wine Tourism

Interest in wine tourism has increased worldwide as tourists seek "authentic and individualistic experiences" while on vacation, the researchers state. Chinese consumers' increased interest in wine tasting and general wine consumption is particularly notable, probably developing as new opportunities to experience wine culture have emerged. For instance, in 2012 the Australian government introduced a number of measures to increase the number of Chinese wine tourists, including Chinese-language websites and wine tours with Chinese-speaking staff.

Indeed, the researchers observe that although the emergence of Chinese wine tourism has "elicited

considerable industry attention", little effort has been made to understand and segment this new market. To develop effective marketing strategies, they claim, destination marketers need information about differences in consumer behaviour, motivations and attitudes. For instance, wine tourists may be "motivated by wine, lifestyle experiences that involve food and wine" or by the "passive enjoyment of the natural beauty of wine regions".

Central to understanding these sorts of consumer behaviours is the concept of "involvement". The level of tourist involvement in an activity or product is influenced by many factors, such as their perceived importance and risk and their anticipated pleasure.

The researchers contend that including the concept of involvement in market segmentation studies provides more sophisticated information than merely measuring socio-demographic and behavioural factors. Hence, they set out to differentiate Chinese wine tourists based on their involvement, travel behaviour and demographics.

Involvement Measured

Following interviews with 19 tourists attending wine tasting events in China, Hong Kong and

Australia, and a pilot study, the researchers developed the Wine Tourism Involvement scale. They then incorporated this scale in a survey of Chinese tourists in Australia between December and February, a peak period for visits.

The 503 tourists who completed questionnaires after winery visits were mainly aged between 18 and 55, and about 60% were female. More than 60% were from the mainland, and the rest were from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan. Just over half had visited the country before, but only 36% were "serious wine tourists". Still, more than 60% indicated that they were looking forward to "experiencing excellent wine".

Segmenting Wine Tourists

In analysing their findings, the researchers identified the four key dimensions of Interests and Importance, Risk Importance and Possibility, Risk Avoidance, and Status Value. Just over 20% of the respondents scored low in all four dimensions and were classified as "low involvement wine tourists". More than half of these came from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan, and they regarded wine tourism as an incidental activity. Indeed, they were more interested in the overall experience than in trying excellent wine.

In contrast, 27% of respondents scored high on all four dimensions and were classified as “highly involved wine tourists”. For many of these, who originated in “diverse locations across Mainland China” according to the researchers, wine tourism and tasting excellent wine was their main purpose of visit, and they were highly involved in the activities on offer.

The third category was the smallest, representing 18% of the respondents, who again were more likely to come from the Chinese mainland. This group of “interest-driven wine tourists” scored highly on the Interests and Importance dimension, with almost 80% saying that they were mainly interested in tasting excellent wine.

The fourth and biggest category, accounting for almost 34% of the respondents and largely comprising Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan and Beijing residents, were “high wine-risk perception wine tourists”. These respondents reported low levels of involvement but high levels of risk perception and avoidance. They were concerned, for instance, that they might be disappointed if they bought wines that did not live up to their expectations. Hence, they were likely to choose familiar or famous wines to avoid making the wrong decision.

The researchers note that tourists in the fourth category were quite similar to those in the “low involvement” category. For them, wine tasting was only an incidental part of the trip and they were less involved in wine-related activities.

Marketing Wine Tourism

Even so, the four categories of Chinese wine tourist were quite distinct, which would not have been

as obvious had the researchers adopted a more conventional route to understanding market segments. Comparison of the four tourist groups showed “more similarities than differences” in their demographic and socio-economic characteristics, which are far more commonly measured.

The findings, then, will provide marketers with a better basis for targeting wine tourists with different strategies and destinations. For instance, only a minority of the respondents considered wine to be the focus of their trips. This reflects the recent emergence of interest in wine among Chinese consumers, but also works against any presumption that wine is the primary motive for wine tourists. Indeed, marketing organisations promoting tours should be aware that Chinese tourists usually include visits to wineries only as part of what the researchers describe as “a wider mix of attractions”.

Moreover, the respondents noted that sharing their experiences with others was an important motivation for undertaking wine tourism. The researchers interpret this as suggesting that marketers could design activities “in an interesting way” to provide opportunities for tourists to “show off their lifestyle and taste within their social circle”.

The perception of risk amongst respondents could also provide an opening for marketers. Although many of the respondents considered wine a “good quality gift”, an equally large number perceived it to be rather risky, as buying the wrong wine could mean losing face. To reduce their concern, marketers should emphasise the features and qualities of different wine regions and categories. Even more importantly, the researchers suggest, service employees could “develop an understanding of consumer demands and of Chinese gift-giving culture” so that they

could provide more appropriate information and assistance.

An Evolving Market

Concerned with helping to “establish future marketing strategies and destination positioning”, the researchers ably demonstrate the heterogeneity of Chinese wine tourists. Yet they note the market’s dynamism, pushed by “the combined forces of globalisation and the Internet”, and conclude with a call for further investigations in the area. Wine consumption and culture are, after all, evolving rapidly among Chinese consumers.

POINTS TO NOTE

- Wine tourism is an evolving and growing market among Chinese travellers.
- Chinese wine tourists can be broadly classified as “low involvement”, “highly involved”, “interest-driven” and having “high wine-risk perception”.
- Most of the tourists include wine tasting as one of a variety of activities.
- Marketers could benefit from helping to increase Chinese tourists’ knowledge of wine to reduce perceived risks when gift-giving.

Qiushi Gu, Hanqin Qiu Zhang, Brian King and Songshan (Sam) Huang. (2018). “Wine Tourism Involvement: A Segmentation of Chinese Tourists”. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, Vol. 35, No. 5, pp. 633-648.

The State Isn't That Great

Types of ownership can be crucial determining factors in hotel firm performance. Indeed, domestic and international institutional shareholders have different effects on the performance of hotel firms in China, according to the SHTM's Henry Tsai and his co-researchers. In a recent study, the researchers found that firms with high levels of state ownership performed poorly in terms of future growth potential, but the effects of domestic and international shareholders were rather more complex.

Institutional Shareholding in China

China's hotel industry has grown tremendously in recent years, from 137 hotels with less than 16,000 guest rooms in 1978 to 11,180 hotels with 1.5 million rooms in 2014. The researchers note that this expansion began with the introduction of the Open Door policy, which allowed many international hotel chains to enter the market, accompanied by "surging demand" from domestic tourists. The Belt and Road initiative of investment and infrastructure development through 65 countries, implemented in 2015, has brought further noteworthy opportunities for the hotel sector, and indeed the entire hospitality and tourism industry.

With these developments, the hotel sector has become an important constituent of China's economy, and its performance deserves "careful attention", according to the researchers. In particular, how the ownership structure of Chinese hotel firms affects their performance should be monitored, because the state has "maintained a strong influence in many publicly listed hotel firms".

The Complexities of State Ownership

Unfortunately, although state-owned firms have become more profitable, they still underperform non-state-owned firms by about 10%. One reason for their poor performance, the researchers suggest, is their failure to "prudently separate management from ownership", which leads to poor monitoring and control. In developed economies, institutional investors tend to engage in active monitoring of management and to voice disagreement when dissatisfied, because it is "more beneficial and lucrative" for them to boost stock performance than to "exit and sell their stocks at a loss".

This seems to suggest that allowing institutional investors to invest in state-owned hotel firms in China might improve their monitoring and corporate governance. Institutional investors have, in fact, become what the researchers describe as a "strong force" in China's securities market since 2000, and have been influential in "shifting hotel ownership from the state to non-government enterprises". However, it is not unusual for the government to intervene in the tourism sector by helping firms to "obtain funding from the securities market and incentivise investment", which may complicate firm governance and prevent effective monitoring, leading to underperformance. Hence, it is unclear whether institutional investors have an overall positive effect in China.

The situation is further complicated by the difference between foreign and domestic institutional investors. Foreign investors in developing economies usually have positive effects on economic development

and employment because they bring advantages such as greater technological, financial and human expertise and international experience. Domestic institutional investors, on the contrary, may have less positive effects on firm performance because they are more likely to be government affiliated, less profit driven and less vigilant in their monitoring role.

The researchers thus aimed to clarify the various influences of foreign and domestic institutional investors to examine "how China's share reform may have influenced the performance of hotel firms" and to offer insights into "how corporate governance in the transitional economy can be improved".

Six Hotels Analysed

The researchers conducted a series of analyses to examine the effects of institutional holdings on firm performance. They selected six hotel firms – Century Plaza, Huatian, Lignan, Dadonghai, Jinjiang and Jinling – and collected information on their performance over 18 years. They also collected information on the proportion of shares held by international shareholders, domestic shareholders and the state.

To assess firm performance, the researchers used various measures, including return on assets and return on equity to measure past performance and stock returns and a variant of Tobin's Q to measure future growth opportunities. Tobin's Q, the researchers comment, is a "commonly used corporate finance measure", which is high when the firm "has valuable intangible assets in addition to its physical capital" and indicates the firm's growth potential.

To rule out the influence of other factors, the analyses also included measures such as the size of the firm, the growth rate of China's gross domestic product, the firm's financial leverage and the growth rate of its sales revenue.

Overall Influence of Institutional Investors

When looking at international and domestic institutional holdings overall, the researchers found that as institutional shareholdings increase, performance initially improves up to a point, and then declines. The most likely explanation, they remark, is that up to a certain level, institutional shareholders improve performance by expressing their dissatisfaction to the management.

However, beyond an "optimal point", it becomes too costly for institutions to sell off all their shares when a firm is performing poorly. This potentially causes a conflict of interest and the development of a "strategic alliance" between the management and the institution, thus further worsening performance.

Domestic Institutional Investors

A rather different picture emerged when foreign and domestic investors were considered separately. Rather surprisingly, most of the effect of institutional holdings on performance came from domestic investors. As domestic holdings increased, firm performance measured by return on assets and return on equity at first decreased before increasing, which suggests that investors' monitoring efforts eventually "seemed to start paying off". However, domestic holdings had the opposite effect.

The researchers surmised that there must be an "optimal point" between the level of domestic institutional holdings and

optimal firm performance. Their calculations indicated that Chinese hotel firms should "seek to increase and attract" domestic institutional shareholding to a level of at least 17.3% but no greater than 25% to optimise return on assets and return on equity.

These values were calculated on the averaged values from the six hotels, and thus the researchers acknowledged that they "may not be precisely applicable to each individual firm". The hotels could benchmark their levels of domestic holdings against the calculated optimal points to decide whether they should "continue to engage or disengage" such investors to enhance their performance.

State holdings were negatively related to hotel firm performance, which the researchers state "clearly reflects the fact that some Chinese hotel firms were still under the influence" of state ownership and have "less opportunity for growth". It would be wise, they suggest, for the governing authorities to reduce the state's ownership of hotel firms, while continuing to maintain support for the industry.

Foreign Institutional Shareholders

Contrary to expectations, foreign institutional shareholders did not seem to "exhibit any impact on the four hotel performance measures". A possible explanation for their ineffectiveness, the researchers posit, is that there are too few of them to make a difference: only 3.5% of shares were held by foreign institutions. The researchers explain that foreign investors tend to "operate on the principle of portfolio diversification", and thus have limited power and incentive to "exert their professional knowledge" and "contribute directly to corporate governance" to enhance firm performance.

This finding is important because it suggests that the Chinese government's decision to open up

the capital market has not had the intended positive effect, at least among hotel firms. However, it is still likely that foreign investors will exert a positive influence if their shareholdings increase in the future. Chinese hotel firms, the researchers urge, should "work on encouraging and attracting" foreign domestic investors so that they have greater incentives and power to exert their monitoring expertise and corporate governance.

Balancing Ownership Structure

The study provides hotel firms in China with clear insights into how best to balance their ownership structure. Yet given that share reform in China is what the researchers describe as a "work in progress", they conclude with the caution that the effects of institutional ownership may differ in other hospitality and tourism sectors and in other countries. Further research could show just how different the Chinese context is in this case.

POINTS TO NOTE

- Economic reform has gradually reduced state ownership in Chinese hotel firms.
- Further reduction of state ownership is needed to improve firm performance.
- Institutional ownership has a U-shaped relationship with firm performance.
- There is an optimal level of domestic and international shareholding that maximises performance.

Ming-Hsiang Chen, Henry Tsai and Wan Qing Lv. (2018). "The Effects of Institutional Holdings and State Ownership on Hotel Firm Performance in China", *Journal of China Tourism Research*, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 20-41.

What Price Loyalty?

Loyalty programmes have long been a feature of the hotel sector, but little evidence has traditionally supported whether they represent an operationally and financially beneficial form of investment. Yet a recent study by the SHTM's Dr Dan Wang and her co-researchers provides strong evidence that hotels are justified in making such investments, and provides suggestions for how hotels can further capitalise on the benefits.

Why Reward Loyalty?

The researchers begin by highlighting the longevity of loyalty programmes – they were introduced almost forty years ago with American Airlines' "frequent guest" programme, and soon caught on in the hospitality sector. Most hotels now have their own such programmes, which guests often expect, and they are considered a better means of building brand loyalty than other forms of marketing. Indeed, by 2015 the loyalty programmes of major hotel groups had more than 300 million members, although the researchers caution that the number of "real active members" was probably far lower.

It is not hard to see the potential benefits of loyalty programmes for hotels. For instance, by helping to build loyalty between the company and its most profitable customers, a programme can increase repeat business, and hence profits, while also reducing the need to attract new customers. Loyal customers who have built what the researchers term an "emotional commitment" to the company are less likely to switch to another brand.

Loyal customers are also more likely to perceive the company's products and services as providing good value and so they are less sensitive to the company's price premium. They are further likely to act as brand ambassadors by recommending the company through word of mouth, either through personal recommendations or via online review sites. Such recommendations, the researchers comment, are highly valued by hotel companies as they are known to be highly effective.

Challenges Abound

Nevertheless, loyalty programmes also bring challenges. They are, for instance, expensive to set up and maintain, and the profits they generate are hard to separate from those of other marketing efforts. The researchers note that it is also challenging for marketers to create and manage profitable loyalty programmes because there are high costs associated with adding value to customers' experiences, especially given their widely differing needs and interests. Overinvestment is thus an ongoing concern.

The researchers warn that loyalty programmes also open up the possibility of "service encounter failures", which can sour the relationship between a hotel company and its customers and thus damage its reputation. Another potentially negative effect is that "bystander customers" sometimes perceive "unfairness in comparison to target customers", which could put them off the brand.

Consequently, uncertainty remains over whether loyalty

programmes actually have an overall positive effect on hotels and whether investing in them is really worthwhile. The researchers were motivated to study this issue given the "surprising contradiction" between the popularity of loyalty programmes and "the lagging number of active members". Hence, they set out to empirically test the impact of such programmes on the "key operational and financial indicators of hotel performance".

Hotel Expenditure and Performance

The researchers gathered information on the expenditures of 2,120 hotels on loyalty programmes and affiliation fees from the database of CBRE, a "leading hospitality consulting firm". They determined the scale of each hotel chain and hotel's operational performance by recording the average room rate, occupancy rate and revenue per room.

To take account of other "contextual factors" that could influence the impact of loyalty programmes and hotel performance, the researchers also collected information on a variety of other factors. For instance, they recorded hotel franchise expenses because franchising is an important contributor to the "overall revenues" of a hotel. The experience and resources available from the franchisor increase operational efficiencies and thus provide added value for the hotel.

Moreover, in today's "world of technology", the researchers argue, e-commerce is essential, and investing in the "e-footprint"

of a hotel – the “design, delivery, fulfilment, communication, promotion and evaluation” of the hotel experience – can improve room revenue. Hence, they also considered e-commerce expenses. Likewise, advertising and other forms of marketing, such as direct mail, signage and photography, are presumed to have positive effects on performance, so these data were included.

The researchers then conducted a series of analyses that took account of these factors when assessing whether loyalty programme expenses had an effect on the hotels’ performance one year later, as measured by the revenue per room, the average daily room rate and the room occupancy rate.

The hotels in the study ranged in size from 41 to 2,860 rooms, with an average of 199. The average expenditure on loyalty programmes was US\$126,616, although the highest amount spent was almost US\$3.5 million. The average cost of a room ranged from US\$20 to almost US\$1,000 a night, with an average of around US\$100, while the revenue per room ranged from US\$10 to US\$680. The average occupancy rate ranged from 25 to 105 per cent, with an average of 72 per cent. The hotels spent around \$350,000 on franchise expenses each year, \$10,000 on e-commerce, over \$30,000 on advertising and \$18,800 on other forms of marketing.

Loyalty Programmes Improve Performance

The researchers found that hotels’ spending on loyalty programmes was associated with better performance, as measured by the average daily room rate, revenue per room and occupancy rate. Spending on loyalty programmes also paid off in terms of hotels’

overall gross operating profit. This is particularly interesting because it implies that loyal customers do not just increase room occupancy, but their spending on “food and beverage at the hotel, spas or other amenities” also contributes to better overall financial performance.

Even when factors such as the amount spent on e-commerce, advertising, marketing strategies and the size of the hotel and scale of the hotel chain were taken into account, spending on loyalty programmes still had the most positive effect on hotels’ operational and financial performance. In other words, loyalty programmes brought the greatest returns compared with investments in other forms of advertising and marketing, regardless of the type of hotel.

These findings, the researchers suggest, provide managers with “strong and scientific justification regarding the investment budget on loyalty programmes”. They imply that “among the major marketing initiatives in the hotel industry”, managers are justified in placing more emphasis on loyalty programmes because they bring the greatest returns.

The researchers also suggest that hoteliers could consider improving performance by “exploring synergies between the marketing initiatives” that were studied, to enhance the efficiency of resource allocation. For instance, they could consider integrating a “variety of distribution channels”, including websites and social media sites, into their loyalty programmes to improve the “positive impact of both e-commerce and loyalty programmes”. As the proportion of active loyalty programme members was quite low, the benefits of the programmes could be further enhanced if hoteliers could find ways to “further engage” members.

Settling the Debate, For Now

Overall, the researchers provide strong evidence for “the school of thought that advocates a hotel’s financial investment in loyalty programmes would eventually pay off”. Yet they note that the overabundance of such programmes in the very competitive hotel marketplace has the potential to “make it harder for hotels to gain exclusive loyalty from programme members” in the future. More study, they say, is needed to determine just how significant that overabundance may be.

POINTS TO NOTE

- Almost all hotels offer loyalty programmes, but their value has been debated.
- In Hong Kong, such programmes are worthwhile investments.
- Loyalty programmes improve hotels’ operational and financial performance.
- Other marketing strategies have less of an influence on performance.

Nan Hua, Wei Wei, Agnes L. DeFranco and Dan Wang. (2018). “Do Loyalty Programs Really Matter for Hotel Operational and Financial Performance?” *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 30, No. 5, pp. 2195-2213.

When Beauty Signifies Quality

When making hotel bookings online, potential guests' expectations of service quality are influenced by the aesthetics of the hotel's website, according to the SHTM's Dr Ksenia Kirillova and Ms Janelle Chan. In a recent experimental study the researchers manipulated the level of attractiveness portrayed by a hotel website's photos to examine how aesthetics influenced perceptions of quality and intention to book. Their results provide important insights into how hotel managers can use visually attractive images to stimulate positive perceptions of quality and thus increase bookings.

"What is Beautiful is Good"

Appearances are important in all sorts of contexts, as highlighted by the expression "what is beautiful is good". This, the researchers explain, is demonstrated by the halo effect, whereby physically attractive people are rated as having more positive and desirable qualities and traits.

The halo effect has also been shown to apply to products and services. A consumer's first impression of a product is generally based on its visual appearance. This first impression elicits an emotional reaction that "initiates the process of connection between consumer and product", according to the researchers. Perceptions of a product based on its aesthetic appeal can thus influence the product's commercial success.

Aesthetics are clearly important in high-design and artistic products but are also influential in perceptions of non-tangible goods and services. The researchers hypothesise that the effect may

be particularly strong in an online context, where product quality is largely judged by website quality because the actual product or service cannot be experienced before purchase. As hotel bookings are commonly made online, prospective guests must rely on hotel websites when making their decisions. Thus, the image of the hotel portrayed by the website could influence perceptions of different aspects of quality.

The physical setting in which a transaction occurs and the qualities of a transaction environment are known to influence consumer behaviour, but the researchers note that there has been little attempt to explore these factors in the hospitality sector. Usually, considerations are limited to on-site evaluations of the consumption experience. They thus sought to explore how the aesthetics of hotel websites, such as the quality of photographs, influence perceptions of hotels' service quality and hence consumers' booking intentions. Also of concern was the "interplay between aesthetic value and functional value in forming consumer expectations of hotel service quality and determining booking intention".

Online Experiment

The researchers conducted an online experiment in which participants were told to imagine they were "planning a short beach vacation and searching for a suitable four-star hotel online". Four randomly assigned groups were then presented with different photographs of a hotel façade, lobby area, front desk, dining area, swimming pool and a room, depicting either a high or low aesthetic value. They were also

shown a list of hotel attributes representing either extensive or limited hotel amenities.

After being exposed to the information, the participants responded to questions about their perceptions of the hotel's expected service quality, as measured by tangible features – such as facilities, equipment and staff appearance – reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. The participants' booking intentions and their tendency to appreciate visual aesthetics were also measured.

The 203 participants were all residents of mainland China and had stayed in a 4 or 4.5 star hotel in the past year. Their average age was 38, there were slightly more males than females, and their level of education was high, with a majority having at least a Bachelor's degree.

Influence of Aesthetics

Perhaps not surprisingly, when the hotel projected a high aesthetic value, the participants rated it as having superior physical facilities. The researchers admit that this is predictable given the visual nature of aesthetic judgement, but they point out that their findings show the importance of this effect before the service encounter has even taken place.

Perceptions of expected hotel service quality and credibility were also influenced by the depiction of the hotel's aesthetics. The researchers observe that if potential guests regard a visually appealing hotel as more reliable and dependable, then "aesthetic cues carry insights into a hotel's professionalism and thoroughness as a business operation". This is

particularly important in an online purchasing context, where website aesthetics represent a critical decision-making criterion.

These findings obviously have important implications for hotel managers. For instance, the researchers note that sales and marketing teams could use professional photographers and artists to take beautiful photographs with appealing compositions. They further advise that such professionals should seek to create compositions that balance “the elements of classic and expressive aesthetics”. The components of classic aesthetics include image, order, legibility, symmetry and clearness, whereas expressive aesthetics encompass more hedonic features such as originality, fascination and colour vibrancy. A product with high aesthetic value should have both high classic and high expressive aesthetic value. However, given the subjective nature of aesthetic value, the researchers advise testing such materials on target audiences to ensure they have the desired effects before posting them on a hotel’s website.

Limitations of the Aesthetic Effect

The aesthetic effect did not extend to the participants’ perceptions of the hotel’s responsiveness or empathy, even though such soft skills are often the best predictors of overall service quality. The researchers were rather surprised to find that favourable aesthetic appraisals did not spill over to their evaluations of the more human-related characteristics, as the halo effect would predict. Indeed, they suggest that the major contribution of the study may be the finding that the aesthetic effect is limited to the evaluation of product usability and function.

To overcome this limitation, when producing marketing photographs and videos, the researchers advise that hotels could consider employing “attractive individuals to pose as hotel staff” and show them interacting with customers to communicate their “warmth, empathy and care”. The human touch could be emphasised by photographs showing hotel employees interacting with guests with particular needs, such as older people and children.

The attractiveness of the hotel, the researchers note, seemed to “deflect attention” from the hotel’s amenities. In other words, prospective guests’ service quality judgements and booking intentions were unaffected by differences in the description of the available amenities in the presence of the aesthetic effect. Hence, hotels could provide attractive photographs of amenities rather than just listing them, as this will provide a more holistic perception of the hotel’s aesthetic and functional features.

However, it is worth mentioning that the participants were not equally swayed by the hotel’s aesthetics. It was, explain the researchers, their “individual tendency to appreciate beauty” that exerted “considerable influence” on their evaluations of the expected service quality and booking intentions. This suggests that despite the strong influence of aesthetics, the effect should not be over-estimated or assumed to apply to all potential guests.

Harnessing Social Media

One final tip from the researchers is that many consumers trust user-generated content more than sales and marketing content, so engaging with social media could be a useful channel for enhancing a

hotel’s aesthetic effect. Pictorial and video content “enjoys unrivalled popularity” on social media sites such as Instagram, Snapchat and Yupoo. Encouraging guests to share images through such sites could help hotels to reach much wider audiences.

The researchers caution that further consideration is needed in other contexts, such as midrange and budget hotels, and with different types of travellers in mind, such as families and business travellers. They also point out that Chinese consumers “differ from their Western counterparts in terms of aesthetic appreciation patterns”, so the findings might be less applicable to Western tourists. Nevertheless, they provide tourism businesses with valuable insights into how they can boost their image and maximise bookings in the highly competitive online travel market.

POINTS TO NOTE

- Hotels with websites that portray high aesthetic value are rated as having better tangible services and reliability.
- Aesthetic value does not influence perceptions of responsiveness or empathy.
- Increasing the perceived aesthetic value of a hotel could increase bookings.
- Social media sites are useful platforms for presenting images with high aesthetic value to large audiences.

Ksenia Kirillova and Janelle Chan. (2018). “‘What is Beautiful We Book’: Hotel Visual Appeal and Expected Service Quality”. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 30, No. 3, pp.1788-1807.

Surviving the Air Travel Stress Test

Differences in airline passengers' profiles account for some of the differences in their levels of tolerance toward other passengers' unruly behaviour, according to a recent SHTM study. Mr Steven Tsang, Dr Lorenzo Masiero and Dr Markus Schuckert asked travellers to assess how acceptable they considered different types of anti-social behaviour, and then investigated whether the level of acceptability differed among travellers of different types and cultural background. The findings provide helpful information that airlines can use to minimise the effects of unruly behaviour on other passengers.

Air Travel is Stressful

Travelling by air was once regarded as an exclusive service available only to a select few. Yet the researchers point out that by 2016 there were more than 3.6 billion passengers annually. At the same time, unfortunately, it seems there are almost daily reports of "disruptive and unruly passenger behaviour" that contradict the "exclusive and comfortable image that airlines wish to project".

Of course, air travel has long been associated with stress, anxiety and fear of flying, and such feelings can lead to antisocial and aggressive behaviour. Yet in an attempt to maximise their profits, the researchers note, airlines have introduced larger planes that offer smaller, cramped seats with no personal space, leading to "increasing crowdedness, stress, and discomfort". The environment onboard is often stressful and reactions include claustrophobia, anxiety, fear and a sense of loss of control, as well as frustrations

due, for instance, to boredom and dissatisfaction with the service.

Perhaps it should be no great surprise, then, that flight crews regularly need to deal with stressed travellers who start arguments and fights with crew members and other passengers. The researchers suggest that a key factor in such incidents is intoxication. Alcohol is often freely available in airports and onboard aircraft, yet its effects can be exacerbated by changes in oxygen at altitude, causing passengers to experience "irritability, tension and tiredness". The ban on smoking on airlines can also cause additional stress for some people, although this is becoming less of a problem than in the past.

Airlines recognise that these overarching problems put many people at risk and make efforts to address them, but the researchers were more specifically interested in exploring other passengers' responses to unruly behaviour. In particular, they sought to identify the level of acceptability of various types of behaviour, and whether this level differed among passengers with different cultural backgrounds, travel motivations and travel experience.

Travellers Surveyed

With the aim of gaining responses to statements about unruly passenger behaviour ranging from getting drunk and becoming aggressive, using foul language, kicking the seat in front and monopolising the cabin crew to occupying the shared armrest for the whole journey, the researchers interviewed passengers near the entrance of the Hong Kong

International Airport. They also set out to gain answers from roughly half Asian and half non-Asian passengers to "ensure a balanced representation of different cultural backgrounds".

Of the 298 passengers surveyed, there were slightly more males (60%) and about 40% were aged over 36 and held a secondary education. The majority travelled four to six times a year. Of the most recent flights, 46% were for leisure and 43% were for business purposes, and 27% flew business or first class. Most of the passengers had flown short or medium distances, and only 11% had flown more than 7 hours.

The passengers were in general agreement about the unacceptability of several forms of behaviour, including alcohol abuse, vandalism, the use of foul language and kicking the seat in front. Becoming drunk and aggressive was the least acceptable behaviour, whereas using the overhead reading light was the most tolerated. Being impolite to cabin crew when requesting service was quite well tolerated, whereas yelling at the cabin crew was considered highly unacceptable.

Differences Among Travellers

When further investigating the patterns of passenger responses, the researchers found that they fell into three broad dimensions, related to personal space, disruption and aggressive acts. Yet their individual profiles determined just how sensitive they were in those areas.

For instance, passengers with higher levels of education, who travelled in business or first class or who flew long distance considered violations of personal space less acceptable than those without these characteristics. Conversely, travellers with Asian cultural backgrounds were more willing to “accept the manifestation of unruly behaviours related to personal space” than non-Asian travellers. Overall, those who were travelling for business or leisure (rather than to visit friends and family) and those with high levels of education were the least tolerant of this type of behaviour.

Behaviour that disrupted service, such as occupying the cabin crew for a long time so that other passengers had to wait, was considered equally unacceptable among the majority of travellers. Leisure and business travellers seemed to have been less disturbed by service disruptions than those who were travelling to visit family and friends, the researchers note, while Asian travellers were again more tolerant than non-Asians.

Interestingly, those passengers who indicated that they “would consider flying with other airlines to avoid unruly behaviour” were less tolerant of behaviour that affected in-flight service. The researchers interpret this to mean that “flight attendants are considered responsible”, along with the airlines’ poor training programmes, for behaviour that disrupts service delivery.

There was little variation in the unacceptability of aggressive behaviour among travellers with different profiles. Cultural background, for instance, had no effect on perceptions of such behaviour. Those flying business or first class were least likely to find aggressive behaviour acceptable, whereas older passengers and

frequent flyers were the most tolerant.

What Can Airlines Do?

The researchers identify a number of measures that airlines could implement to reduce the likelihood of unruly passenger behaviour and lessen the effects on other travellers. In terms of hardware, they recommend the use of more “shock-resistant seats offering more space and individuality” and with a limited recline angle. They acknowledge that it is tricky to solve the problem of the shared armrest, but note that this is exacerbated by the move towards smaller seats.

In terms of what the researchers call “software and service design”, airlines could be more aware of allocating seats to better accommodate passengers’ needs and backgrounds, which could lead to “higher levels of relaxation” and reduce the pressure on flight attendants. Airlines could also promote the additional comfort and personal space available in business and first-class, and perhaps offer “dedicated seating arrangements” to frequent flyers and business travellers.

Finally, providing “passenger information on the ground and in the air” would decrease frustration, while training staff to deal with unruly behaviour would reduce dissatisfaction associated with disruptions to in-flight service.

Responsible Action

Although many of us enjoy the benefits of air travel, no-one enjoys the associated stress and discomfort. The researchers provide practical suggestions for helping to overcome this situation,

but their findings also make it clear that there should be plenty more ways for airlines to reduce passenger stress levels. This would not only minimise the potential danger to other passengers but would also be in airlines’ best interests because passengers might end up blaming them for their negative travel experiences, even when it is other passengers who cause the problems.

POINTS TO NOTE

- Unruly passenger behaviour is a growing problem for airlines.
- Passengers differ in their views of what behaviour they find most and least acceptable.
- Asian travellers tend to be more tolerant of disruptive, but not aggressive, behaviour than non-Asians.
- Airlines could consider various measures to reduce unruly behaviour.

Steven Tsang, Lorenzo Masiero and Markus Schuckert. (2018). “Investigating Air Passengers’ Acceptance Level of Unruly In-Flight Behaviour”. *Tourism Analysis*, Vol. 23, pp. 31-43.

Why Seek the Good Things in Life?

The motivations of Chinese luxury travellers are not very well understood, and little studied, but with persistence they can be determined. Having reviewed the literature on the topic in a recently published study, Ph.D. student Elaine Yulan Zhang and Dr Tony Tse of the SHTM argue that “a subset of relatively wealthy Chinese luxury travellers” are driven by the desire for “status, interpersonal relationships, relaxation and hedonism, self-improvement and perfection”. These may seem incompatible with traditional Chinese Confucian values, but by examining the motivations behind the desire for luxury the researchers explain how such values shape the differences between Chinese and other luxury travellers. With such information in hand, tourism practitioners will be much better able to understand this under-researched market segment.

Chinese Luxury Travel and Consumption

One of the key features of the global hospitality and tourism industry is the rise in spending power of Chinese travellers abroad. Indeed, the researchers note that China is the world’s “number one tourism source market in the world” in terms of expenditure. In 2016, for instance, Chinese international tourists spent more than US\$261 billion, “way ahead of Americans” at US\$122 billion. Many Chinese tourists are what can be termed “middle to high-end” consumers, including wealthy tourists for whom luxury travel is a popular activity as well as a growing number of less wealthy tourists who save up to enjoy luxury holidays and customised travel services.

This increase in spending on luxury travel has been accompanied by

an expansion in the development of travel agents providing dedicated high-end travel services in China. The researchers provide several examples of the kinds of trips offered by such agents, including a round the world trip for RMB1,280,000 and a package tour via private jet for RMB972,000. These luxury travel agents also attend the increasing number of “luxury travel themed events”, such as the International Luxury Travel Market Shanghai, and participate in preparing industry reports such as *The Chinese Luxury Traveller*.

It is clear, then, that the tourism sector is strongly interested in Chinese luxury travel, but the researchers reveal that there has been “very little discussion” of this market in the academic literature and no adequate explanation of the “new trend of luxury travel among Chinese”. Nevertheless, there have been numerous considerations of the motivations for travel and for luxury consumption in general, so the researchers suggest that our understanding of the Chinese luxury travel market can be “enriched by integrating knowledge” about luxury consumers, travellers and Chinese.

Luxury consumption, they note, refers to products such as “haute couture and accessories, perfume and cologne, jewellery” as well as “boutique hotels, fine dining, great wines, champagne and cognac”. Luxury travel can thus be classed as a type of luxury consumption, and it presumably has similar motivations. Hence, the researchers sought to analyse the “motivations of luxury consumers together with travel motivations” while considering Chinese cultural influences to offer a deeper understanding of Chinese luxury travellers’ specific motivations.

Literature Reviewed

To identify relevant previous studies, the researchers searched various online databases using the keywords “luxury”, “travel”, “motivation”, “tourism”, “conspicuous consumption” and “Confucian”, identifying 299 articles from 135 journals, 7 conference proceedings and 3 book chapters.

After an initial review, these were sorted into three categories according to their topics: luxury consumption, travel motivations and Chinese travellers or consumers. As some of them could be grouped into more than one category, three overlapping categories were also identified: luxury consumption by Chinese, motivations of Chinese travellers and luxury travel.

Status, Uniqueness and Conspicuous Consumption

The researchers found that status was the most frequently mentioned motivation for both travel and luxury consumption. The term “conspicuous leisure” was coined in 1899 to refer to a small group of people (the “leisure class”) who were so wealthy that they had no need to work and “signalled their status by spending their time on non-utilitarian leisure activities”. The concept gradually expanded to “conspicuous consumption”, reflecting the increasing trend toward spending on unnecessary luxury goods “for display purposes”.

Status is a strong motivation for luxury tourist activities such as bird watching, extreme sports, cruises and shopping. As the researchers explain, birdwatchers are driven by status and they will “travel long

distances to see a rare bird" that their peers have not seen. Similarly, extreme sports enthusiasts seek out dangerous activities that give them high status among like-minded travellers.

Uniqueness motivates luxury consumption because luxury goods tend to be unique and highly exclusive travel destinations are considered the most prestigious. The uniqueness dimension is also related to status, the researchers note, and Chinese luxury travellers in particular may seek "unique and exclusive" travel experiences that set them apart from other tourists.

Relationships, Relaxation and Hedonism

Interpersonal relationships are also a strong motivation for travel, such as visiting friends and family, socialising with other travellers and making new friends. Relationships have been shown to provide motivation for luxury consumption, as some consumers seek what the researchers term a "sense of belonging" when purchasing luxury goods and consider their families' opinions about their purchases.

Relaxation is, of course, a strong motivation for travel, as people seek to escape from the stress of daily life. The researchers also note that relaxation has been identified as a motivation for purchasing luxury goods, which can serve as a means of stress release. Luxury travel, then, is likely to be motivated by a "desire for optimal relaxation" and the enjoyment of "hassle-free facilities and services". Similarly, hedonism is an important dimension of both luxury consumption and travel, which provides opportunities for "excessive indulgence and comfort".

Self-improvement, Curiosity and Nature

Some forms of motivation described in the studies were related only to travel, rather than to luxury consumption. Self-improvement,

for instance, has been shown to be a strong motivation because many travellers are interested in finding out about different cultures and ways of life, or in learning a foreign language. Novelty and curiosity have also been linked to self-improvement, and to inspiring travellers to seek out new and unusual places and experiences.

Focusing a little more, enjoyment of nature has been identified as a particular motivation for Chinese travellers, who the researchers note are inspired by the Confucian tenet to "seek inspiration from the landscape" and its connection to Chinese poetry, paintings and calligraphy. As all three of these motivations – self-improvement, curiosity and the appreciation of nature – are likely to be best satisfied by luxury travel services and products, they may be equally relevant to Chinese luxury travellers.

Confucianism and Conspicuous Consumption

Yet how can Confucian values match with conspicuous consumption? Confucianism advocates frugality and the avoidance of extravagance, to be sure, but the researchers offer several explanations for why this does not stop Chinese people buying luxury goods.

Status, for instance, may be a particularly important motivation for Chinese luxury travellers because of the importance of "face" in Chinese culture and daily life. Rooted in Confucianism, face is a measure of social power and status, which can be signified by luxury consumption. It is an important cultural concept that explains some of the differences between Chinese and Western consumers and travellers.

For instance, some customers may seek good value, but face-conscious Chinese customers are willing to pay more for luxury products and may be put off by discounting on luxury goods. Similarly, while some customers, particularly in the West, dislike luxury products once they become too popular, in China popular luxury brands are considered indicators of social position and prestige.

The researchers also argue, for instance, that luxury consumption contributes to the Confucian ethos of "wealth equalisation", because spending on luxury goods benefits the poor. Confucianism also values group orientation and conformity, which are motivations for luxury travel. Such conformity, the researchers argue, is evident in the "bandwagon effect", or how people tend to follow other people's brand choices. Finally, they note, travel is "promoted in Confucianism" as a way of learning and enriching oneself.

Understanding Cultural Differences

Chinese luxury travellers share many of the characteristics of other luxury travellers, but distinct cultural differences do leave very important marks. Tourism practitioners should be aware, in particular, of how Confucianism underpins Chinese luxury travel motivations. Yet the researchers emphasise that these are preliminary findings, and empirical research will be needed to draw "more robust and generalisable conclusions".

POINTS TO NOTE

- China's luxury travel market has expanded rapidly.
- Yet Chinese luxury travellers' motivations have been little discussed.
- Broadly, luxury travellers are driven by the desire for status, enhanced relationships, relaxation, self-improvement and curiosity.
- In the Chinese case, these motivations are underpinned by adherence to Confucian values.

Elaine Yulan Zhang and Tony S. M. Tse. (2018). "Tapping into Chinese Luxury Travelers". *Journal of China Tourism Research*, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 71-99.

Amazing Learning Experience

PolyUx MicroMasters in International Hospitality Management

Marking its place at the leading edge of hospitality and tourism education delivered on a truly global scale, the SHTM's MicroMasters in International Hospitality Management, led by Chair Professor Cathy Hsu and delivered on the edX online platform, is moving ahead in leaps and bounds.

Reflecting huge demand for the programme from students in 175 countries during its initial year, the School has scheduled four sessions for the 2018-19 academic year. An autumn session ran from September to December, and the spring session launched in January will wrap up in April. A summer session will be delivered from May to July, and a second autumn session will run from late August to November.

As the only online hospitality and tourism MicroMasters in the world, the programme offers unique courses in Managing Human Resources in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry, Managing Marketing in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry, Hospitality and Tourism Technology and Innovation, and Luxury Management. All of these are credit-eligible and can lead to further studies in the School's on-campus Master of Science in International Hospitality Management programme.

Ms Yanxin Sima, from mainland China, completed the online programme as a precursor to applying for, and gaining admission to, the on-campus programme. Her aim was to dive back into "study mode", which was made possible by a flexible class schedule, very well-structured course content, guest speakers from around the world and very personable and knowledgeable SHTM faculty. "I felt like I already knew my professors" she said, even before applying for on-campus studies.

Other students mentioned the significance of the programme to their current careers. Ms Olga Gerasimenko of Russia, recently returned to the hospitality sector after a career break, noted it "helped me to learn from great professionals about different areas of today's hospitality world". Mr Askar Kamis, an Indonesian hospitality professional of long standing, commented that the programme helped him "anticipate the needs of the industry and think about new ways of doing business".

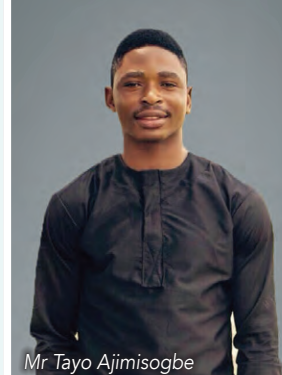
Nigerian student Mr Tayo Ajimisogbe, director of an e-commerce company, praised the Luxury Management course in particular,

but went on to explain that "because of my amazing learning experience, I decided to pursue the other courses to earn my credential in International Hospitality Management".

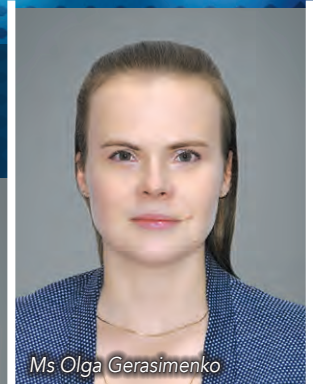
You, too, can experience the sort of career-changing education these students have undertaken. Further information on the programme is available at <https://www.edx.org/micromasters/hkpolyux-international-hospitality-management>. **H**



Ms Yanxin Sima



Mr Tayo Ajimisogbe



Ms Olga Gerasimenko



Mr Askar Kamis

A Happy Sense of Ritual

Proud father Mr Zimu Jin describes the graduation of his daughter, Ms Liuhe Jin, a student in the Doctor of Hotel and Tourism Management (D.HTM) Class of 2014, at the 24th PolyU Congregation (SHTM) on 28 October 2018.

To celebrate the graduation of my daughter Liuhe, seven members of my family arrived in Hong Kong to share her happiness at the Congregation.

In 2014, Liuhe was admitted to the D.HTM programme in Hangzhou, and now she was to become one of its earlier graduates. I felt most honoured to have received an invitation to attend her graduation. With my seat in the front row, this was the happiest, warmest and most memorable treat in my life.

What had driven Liuhe over her years of study was the desire to learn more and enhance her competence as a qualified teacher. The learning process was quite challenging, but all D.HTM

classmates helped and learnt from each other. Here they were again, reunited for a day.

After the conferral of degrees, the SHTM held an open-air reception at which Dean Chon told the graduates that the "SHTM is proud of you. Starting today, you have a dazzling cap on your head. At the same time, you shoulder greater social responsibility".

Dr Qu Xiao, my daughter's supervisor, happily posed with her for a photo. He had given her great support in researching and writing her dissertation on the authenticity of intangible cultural heritage, which she is now translating into English for publication in an academic journal.

Then my grandson insisted on having a photo taken wearing Liuhe's academic cap. What's was going on in his mind? Parents

are the role models for children and I hope that he has respect for knowledge and community contribution from an early age.

It is said that a happy life should have a sense of ritual. But what is a sense of ritual? It may be an important ceremony in a stage of life. It may also be a process of determining life goals, pursuing them and never giving them up.

My wife was seriously ill when we learned that Liuhe had been admitted to the D.HTM programme. Her greatest wish was to recover and attend the graduation ceremony. Thankfully she did. So perhaps the greatest ritual may be the tears of a mother and daughter after the ultimate excitement. I am grateful to be able to share that with you all. **H**

Ms Liuhe Jin with PolyU President Professor Timothy W. Tong (right) at the Congregation



Ms Liuhe Jin with her parents



Professor Kaye Chon (centre) with participants at the Hong Kong PolyU Winter School

Headlined by the annual Hong Kong PolyU Winter School, the SHTM's executive development programmes were key contributors to regional hospitality and tourism industry training in recent months. Whether focusing on necessities and innovations at the senior management level, the complexities of wine quality or industry development in China's "Red Triangle" region, the cutting-edge courses struck just the right note with all participants.

Co-organised with the Hong Kong Hotels Association and the Institute for Entrepreneurship at PolyU, the Hong Kong PolyU Winter School – long the flagship of the SHTM's executive development programmes – attracted senior industry executives to the Mr and Mrs Chan Chak Fu Building in December for two weeks of highly interactive modular learning led by renowned local and international educators and executives.

Delivered as a series of six in-depth modules relevant to the changing business environment, the Winter School launched on 3 December with a module on leadership and the innovations needed in hospitality management. Drawing on their wealth of world-class experience, Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean, Chair Professor and Walter Kwok Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management, and Mr Mark Conklin, General Manager JW Marriott Hotel Hong Kong, led participants through the relationship of innovation to guest aspirations and how innovative design is supported by the right kind of operation and people management.

In the following module, Dr Sangwon Park, SHTM Associate Professor, surveyed the digital marketing landscape, highlighting how managers can embrace data analytics to convert big data into valuable insights. A special guest

Just the *Right* Note

speaker during the module was Ms Crystal Li, Senior Account Manager, Travel at Google, who commented on the role her company plays in digital travel marketing.

Hotel industry analytics and the strategic inferences drawn from them were under the spotlight next, in a module delivered by the SHTM's Dr Catherine Cheung, Associate Dean and Associate Professor; Dr Basak Denizci Guillet, Associate Professor; Dr Eka Diraksa Putra, Assistant Professor; and Miss Tiffany Cheng, Instructor.

The School's second week launched with a shift of focus to nurturing human capital for hospitality industry leadership. Dr Alice Hon, SHTM Associate Professor, and Mr Philip Yu, Regional Vice President Operations, Greater China Hyatt Hotels and Resorts, worked with participants on how to select the right people for their organisations and create supportive work environments. The SHTM's Dr Basak Denizci Guillet then teamed up with Mr Bobby S H Saw, Revenue Optimiser Specialist, to deliver a module on revenue management in today's very competitive business environment.

Leading the final module on the management of luxury hospitality brands, Professor Denis Morisset of the ESSEC Business School drew on experience gained in CEO and COO positions at international luxury brands such as Ralph Lauren and Giorgio Armani to highlight how participants could strengthen their marketing strategies, push the boundaries of the luxury guest experience and adapt to evolving luxury consumer expectations through new branding approaches.

Deeper Knowledge

Providing eager participants with a broader and deeper knowledge of wine was the focus earlier in 2018, when the SHTM worked in conjunction with the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) to provide two courses themed “Seeking Greatness –

In the first course, Ms Sarah Heller, Asia’s youngest Master of Wine, covered how wine quality could be judged according to style or regional context, using Italian fine wines as examples. The second course featured Ms Jeannie Cho Lee, SHTM Professor of Practice (Wine) and the first Asian Master of Wine. Ms Lee, who was instrumental in developing the School’s MSc in International Wine Management programme, led participants through the regional context of French wines. Participants in the two courses were awarded certificates of completion endorsed by the HKTDC and the SHTM.

Further from home, the School cooperated with the Hong Kong Pei Hua Education Foundation on 3-10 January to provide a training programme for 40 Chinese tourism officials from the “Red Triangle” region comprising the cities of Shaoguan, Zhangzhou and Ganzhou, famed revolutionary areas renowned for their red sand shale mountains.

Wherever it delivers executive development programmes, the School’s understanding of the regional context feeds directly into world-class training outcomes. **H**



Master of Wine and SHTM Professor of Practice (Wine) Jeannie Cho Lee delivering a course

Participants who successfully completed each module received a Certificate of Completion for the Hong Kong PolyU Winter School, and those who completed all six, or completed six different modules over a maximum of three years, received a Certificate of Completion for Advanced Level Hong Kong PolyU Winter School.

Decoding Wine Quality” during the Hong Kong International Wine and Spirits Fair at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre on 8-10 November. Based on the School’s Master of Science (MSc) in International Wine Management programme and delivered as part of its Asia Wine Academy, the intensive courses led both industry professionals and discerning consumers through the complexities of wine knowledge and tasting.

In Brief...

UNWTO Secretary General Visits

The SHTM was honoured to host a visit from **Mr Zurab Pololikashvili**, recently elected **Secretary General of the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)**, on 22 October. During the visit, Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean, Chair Professor and Walter Kwok Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management, presented Mr Pololikashvili and a UNWTO delegation with an overview of the School and took them on a tour of its teaching and research facilities, including Hotel ICON.

Mr Pololikashvili and the delegates also met with Professor Haiyan Song, SHTM Associate Dean, Chair Professor and Mr and Mrs Chan Chak Fu Professor in International Tourism, and other faculty members. The visit allowed representatives of the two institutions to explore future collaboration and forge a closer partnership.



Hospitality and Tourism Research Centre Launched



Hospitality
and Tourism
Research Centre

The **SHTM's Hospitality and Tourism Research Centre**, dedicated to bridging the gap between hospitality and tourism theory and industry practice, was **officially launched** on 29 October. A unique research-based platform with an expansive network of hospitality and tourism academics from the School and partner institutions, along with leading industry executives, the Centre supports academic research for the development of hospitality and tourism knowledge on topics of importance to industry performance.

Research Alliance Established

In a major effort to strengthen the international tourism status of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau, on 21 November **the SHTM signed a Memorandum of Understanding** with the **School of Tourism Management of Sun Yet-Sen University in Guangzhou** and the **Institute for Tourism Studies in Macau** to establish the **Greater Bay Area Tourism Research Alliance**.

Under the five-year agreement the three institutions will produce an annual Report for Tourism in the Greater Bay Area, conduct collaborative research and contribute to the development of public infrastructure, tourism attractions and services. They will also provide mutual support in liaising with governmental units and tourism industry partners in tracking the tourists' satisfaction and the quality of accommodation in the Greater Bay Area.

These co-operative endeavours are expected to provide the respective local governments with meaningful insights and references to facilitate policy making for tourism development.



General Manager of the Year

With great pride we can announce that **Mr Richard Hatter, Hotel ICON General Manager and SHTM Adjunct Associate Professor**, received the **General Manager of the Year Award at the BMW Hoteliers Awards Greater China** on 30 October 2018. Hailed as the 'Oscars' of the sector, the awards stand alone in Asia for honouring hoteliers and their professional excellence.



Award for Leading Scholar

Professor Cathy Hsu recently received the **Alumni Achievement Award from the College of Human Sciences at Iowa State University**, where she gained her MSc and Ph.D. degrees. The award fittingly recognises her as "one of the world's most accomplished scholars in hospitality and tourism education." The School offers its most sincere congratulations to Professor Hsu.

Outstanding Individual Contribution

Professor Brian King received the **Outstanding Contribution by an Individual award at the 2018 RACV Victorian Tourism Awards** ceremony in Melbourne, Australia, on 22 November. The Awards are an industry framework for peer recognition that fosters a culture of business development excellence and innovation.



Staff Excellence Recognised

The School is proud to announce that two faculty members were recently rewarded for excellent performance in their fields. **Dr Lorenzo Masiero** received an **SHTM Teaching Excellence Award** for adopting an interactive teaching approach and providing qualitative feedback to students. **Dr Vincent Tung**, who has published 11 refereed articles as lead author and one as sole author since joining the SHTM, received an **SHTM Research Excellence Award**. Congratulations go to both scholars for their outstanding efforts.

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Showing Unity with Colour

In celebration of **World Tourism Day** each year, the SHTM organises its own **Dress Orange Day**, when staff and students wear the School's colour to demonstrate unity. Held on 28 September last year, the event featured the annual Best Dressed competition. Professor Brian King took out the staff prize and Ms Cecilia Ngwira did likewise among the students.



New SHTM Website Launched

To keep pace with technology trends and cater to the changing needs of current and potential students, staff, other academics, industry participants and key stakeholders, the **SHTM recently launched a new website**. Developed with input from across the School, the site offers information, reports and news on all aspects of our programmes, scholarship and activities. Visit shtm.polyu.edu.hk to find out more!



Staff Updates



Ms Karen Ng joined the School as an Executive Assistant on 18 November 2018.



Ms Sandy Keung joined the School as an Executive Officer on 27 December 2018. She provides administrative support for the Hospitality & Tourism Research Centre.



Dr Mingming Hu joined the School as a Postdoctoral Fellow on 19 November 2018.



Ms Karen Leung joined the School as an Assistant Officer on 2 January 2019.



Novel Ideas and New Directions

Innovation starts early at the SHTM, with students across programmes expected and very willing to develop forward-looking ideas that help to redefine the hospitality and tourism industry worldwide. They are also exposed to cutting-edge teaching methods that offer them entirely new learning experiences, always encouraging them to think outside the box. Recently they have demonstrated a remarkable willingness to take on substantial challenges, both abroad and at home.

New York City was the scene of a very impressive effort at the 4th annual STR Student Market Study Competition, when the SHTM graduate team placed first of the ten teams in its division and the undergraduate team came a highly creditable fifth out of 25. Tasked with researching and

analysing a major metropolitan market, Hong Kong in both cases, the SHTM teams excelled amid stiff international competition.

Advised by Dr Basak Denizci Guillet, the winning graduate team included Ms Angela Chu, a Doctor of Hotel and Tourism Management (D.HTM) student, Mr Guy Llewellyn, a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) student, and Ms Christina He, a Master of Science (MSc) student. The undergraduate team, under the guidance of Dr Sung Gyun Mun, included Mr Jason Lam, Miss Janet Leung and Mr Hayden Ng, all Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Hotel Management students.

Reflecting on the win, the graduate team commented that "we are delighted to bring this award to the SHTM", hoping that "it adds to the already robust reputation the School has received". The undergraduate team described

the event as "undoubtedly an extremely meaningful learning experience", with Miss Leung humbly commenting that "the result of a competition is never the most important outcome, but how you have enjoyed the process, learnt from each other and developed friendships" is what counts.

Showcasing an Emirate

Two months earlier, the Trip Adventure Team of Ms Tammy Cheung, a student in the MSc in International Tourism and Convention Management programme, and Ms Cindy Chiu, from the MSc in Hotel and Tourism Management programme, took out the inaugural RAK Innovation Challenge in Dubai on World Tourism Day, 27 September 2018.

Under the guidance of Dr Ada Lo, Dr Chloe Lau and Dr Alan Wong, the pair held off competition from around the world with their proposal for an international

the tourism industry". Mr Haitham Mattar, CEO of the Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority, commented that "we look forward to integrating the winning concept into our destination strategy to support our adventure tourism development goals".

Inspiring the Next Generation

Attention then turned to China on 10-12 October for the Young Hoteliers Summit Asia at the Beijing Hospitality Institute. In attendance were SHTM undergraduates Miss Wing Liu and Miss Sophie Ni. Miss Liu said that while she learned a lot from professionals at the event, "what impressed me most was the passion and the hospitality spirit of the other hoteliers from different schools". This was particularly evident during the final challenge, in which the assembled students were placed in groups and set the goal of introducing a new business mode for an innovative hotel.

In Ms Ni's case, the group presented the concept of "U-Space" for a five-star hotel, putting forward the possibility of guests designing their own rooms via a mobile app. The objective, she said, was to foster the "guest experience across the five senses during the whole booking process".

A student activity of a different kind also took place throughout the semester when the School's Ms Pia Kwan and Dr Karin Weber, together with Dr Cathy Jin of Griffith University in Australia, led an international student collaboration project. After the coordination of class timetables, the Hong Kong and Australian students were joined via WhatsApp groups to facilitate communication. They then participated in joint online classes by internationally renowned industry guest speakers sharing insights into event sustainability and event technology that involved a three-country link-up via Skype, Q&A sessions facilitated by Slido and a game element using Socrative software.

During two days of further, face-to-face collaboration in Hong Kong, the students designed an event utilising an innovative event design game developed in Austria and considered meeting-management challenges related to the 2019 APacCHRIE & EuroCHRIE Joint Conference that the SHTM will host this May at Hotel ICON. Having visited the hotel's ballroom, they presented joint group projects that focused on offering solutions to challenges relating specifically to sustainability and technology. The students from both universities enthusiastically embraced this international collaboration, and in the process hopefully laid the foundations for long-lasting friendships.

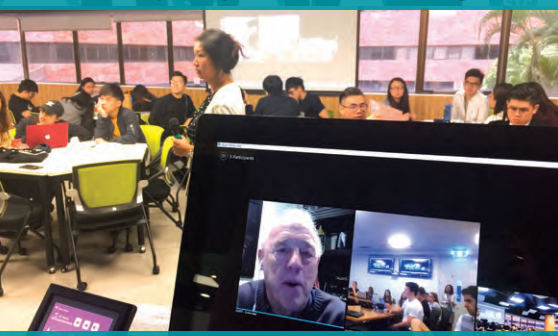
The School is proud to facilitate this and many other eagerly grasped enrichment opportunities. **H**

orienteering event to showcase the Ras Al Khaimah Emirate's mountain, desert and seaside terrain. Participants would simultaneously be exposed to authentic Arabian experiences such as Bedouin camps, traditional tribal performances, cultural and historical sites and local cuisine.

Commenting on what she gained from the event, Ms Cheung reflected back on the School, saying that the team had benefited from it "offering valuable opportunities for us to expose to the global nature of



Winners of the STR Student Market Study Competition: (from left) Mr Guy Llewellyn, Ms Christina He and Ms Angela Chu



3-country joint online classes link-up via Skype



Ms Tammy Cheung (right) and Ms Cindy Chiu (left) receiving the champion cheque at the RAK Innovation Challenge

Fondness for Food

The SHTM's recent headline F&B activities have had a distinct focus on food, with the School benefiting from its presence at the Seafood Expo Asia and Hotel ICON hosting the Food's Future Summit. Students have also been involved in theme dinners and country-based culinary workshops, among many other things. Let's have a taste of what has been cooked up!

Seafood Focus

SHTM representatives Ms Erin Shih, Instructor, and Mr Lucas Tanner, Executive Chef, were in attendance at Seafood Expo Asia, held at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre on 4-6 September, to provide support for

US seafood in cooperation with the Agricultural Trade Office of the US Consulate General in Hong Kong and Macau. Billed as the premium seafood marketplace for Asia, allowing buyers and suppliers from around the world to network and conduct business, the event featured business, trade association and country-oriented exhibits.

The SHTM pair conducted cooking demonstrations on the second day for American Indian Foods, a programme of the Intertribal Agriculture Council that promotes native America food businesses and tribal cultures internationally. The overall focus was on wild caught, sustainable seafood from Alaska and the US northwest.

Ms Shih, who represented the School at the event for the third consecutive year, said that the demonstrations importantly used some "ingredients sourced from SHTM alumni" and ensured that

the School received good coverage from social media commentators and traditional media reporters.

What Future Food?

With a focus on how to feed the world in the future, the School collaborated for the second year with progressive Hong Kong food website Foodie to present the Food's Future Summit at Hotel ICON on 21-22 September. Expanded from the inaugural one-day event in 2017, over two days the Summit gathered leading ground-breakers in the culinary and food-tech spheres. Discussions covered everything from fortified cassava porridge aimed at reducing malnutrition worldwide, food



investment, lab-grown meat and data on eating to using blockchain – linked electronic records resistant to modification – in the food service sector.

A special feature of the School's participation in the first day of the event was a session entitled "Gen Z: What Do They Eat?" The SHTM's Dr Murray Mackenzie, Education Specialist (Integrated Learning), and Ms Forest Ma, Instructor, presented research findings on Generation Z's health and environmental consciousness in relation to menu choices, along with Rose Chiu, one of the first food bloggers in Hong Kong, and Venus Chi, founder of Bakebe, a do-it-yourself baking studio.

Ms Lily Ng, CEO of the Foodie Group, praised Dr Mackenzie and Ms Ma for being "most generous with their time", commenting that "their session was very well received".

Also featuring across the two days was Little Sweetness, a Web-based start-up developed by SHTM students aimed at providing Glycaemic Index information, recipes and reviews for diabetics (see <https://www.littlesweetnesshk.com/>).

The group participated in the Summit's Pitch Competition and also took part in the Foodie Marketplace.

Given the Summit's success, Foodie is looking to take its cooperation with the School to the next level later this year, contemplating how it can incorporate more SHTM research topics and further student involvement into the 2019 version.

Student Learning

Students also benefited from numerous activities held on the School's premises recently, with a key element of F&B education continuing to be the themed Dinner Class. Mr Tanner, SHTM Executive Chef, explained that "in the Dinner Class students get to create a magical dining experience for their guests based around a regional theme. From marketing materials and decorations to food

presentations and cocktail creations, the students handle it all."

On 28 September the class was treated to a Whole Fish Butcher Demonstration, conducted by Mr Tanner using fish donated after Seafood Expo Asia. They were also visited by representatives from the US Consulate General during their themed Thanksgiving week dinner.

More recently, students have participated in culinary workshops co-organised with the US Agricultural and Trade Office, the Italian Consulate and the Mexican Consulate. In late September and October, some were treated to lunch with Professor Timothy W. Tong, PolyU President, who graciously taught them about coffee making using the siphon method.

The SHTM also organised a cocktail competition in late September, tasking students with making creative cocktails using Twining's tea infusions. Across a broad spectrum of food-related activities and beyond, the School is ever keen to engage in a whole world of F&B experiences. **H**

Pride of Place



Delighted parents, D.HTM students involved in teaching and SHTM staff were in attendance on 15 November when 73 of the School's Higher Diploma and undergraduate students received Academic Achievement Awards for grade point averages of 3.7 or above in semesters 2 and 3 2017/18. Followed by a Dean's Reception in the School's foyer, the Elite of the Elite ceremony also featured the presentation of certificates to ambassadors who had satisfactorily completed the requirements of the SHTM Student Ambassador Scheme.

The School thanks all of those in attendance and offers its hearty congratulations to the following award recipients. **#**

HIGHER DIPLOMA IN HOTEL MANAGEMENT

CHEUNG Hiu Lam
NGAI Chi Sheung

BROAD DISCIPLINE OF HOTEL AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT

CHUI Wing Ting
HSU Jo-yu
LAM Kin Wang
LAM Yiu Yu
LIU Xinying
MA Jing
MENG Jiayang
RIETBERG Wiebe
WONG Hei Ching

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (HONOURS) IN CONVENTION AND EVENT MANAGEMENT

CHEUNG Ching Man

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (HONOURS) IN HOTEL MANAGEMENT

CHAN Ambrose Pak Ho

CHAN Chantel Corrie
CHAN Wing Hsuan
CHEN Gerald Cheuk Chun
CHEN Weijia
CHEN Yu
CHEUNG Sau Yin
CHOI Ka Man
CHUNG Cheuk Hei
GUO Yilei
HUANG Jun
JIANG Jiang
KONG Hoi Ting Sabrina
KUO Fang-chen
KWAN Yuet Ying
LAI Ngo Ching
LAM Lok Yan
LEE Dongchan
LEE Gyuhee
LEE Long Hei
LEI Chung Yan
LIN Danmei
LIN Hon Yan Elise
LUI Ka Yee
LUI Shu Shing
MAK Ngar Wing
NG Hoi Lee
NG Ka Ho

TANG Cheuk Hin
TAO Yi
TSANG Ka Po Lillian
WAN Hoi Hang
WONG Cheuk Wai
WONG Ying Ming
XING Yifeng
YEUNG Kin
YEUNG Nga Pui
ZHAO Weiyao

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (HONOURS) IN TOURISM MANAGEMENT

CHENG Wai Chi
CHEUNG Ka Ling
HUNG Lam Wai
LAI Wing Kei Katie
LAU Hei Tung
LEUNG Wai Shan
LI Wing Man
LO Tsz Yan
LO Yiu San
LO Yuen Ting
LUK Yin Gigi
MAK Yee Ki
NG Hau Yin

NG Mei Ki
NG Xi Xuan
TSANG Sze Wing
WONG Kwok Tung
WONG Sze Wai
WONG Wing Kwan
YEUNG Wai Han
YIP Lai Ying
YU Pan
ZHUANG Ji



THE SHTMAA is Recruiting!



Established 25 years ago, the SHTM Alumni Association (SHTMAA) has gone from strength to strength. Through it you can expand your network, share your experience and learn from fellow graduates. We hold fun, fulfilling and educational activities throughout the year.

In recent times, 20 members embarked on a four-day Vietnam adventure taking in Hanoi and nearby Ha Long Bay during early July, and 19 members attended a highly informative whisky workshop in J's Bar and Bistro at the Royal Garden Hotel in Tsim Sha Tsui in August. Also in August, 17 members visited the Hong Kong Food Expo at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, and around 20 members benefited greatly from their time at the Centre when they

attended the Hong Kong International Wine and Spirit Fair in November.

To reap the benefits, apply to join the SHTMAA today!

Further details are available through the QR code.



Alum - notes

1980s

Mr Charles Wong
HD 1985 is COO at Stintec Shanghai Ltd.

2010s

Mr Philip Wei
MSc in Hotel and Tourism Management 2010 is Founder & Managing Director of BTL Hospitality.

Ms Candice Lai
BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2011 is Director of Sales - Hong Kong at FASTBOOKING.

Ms Catherine Wong
BSc(Hons) in Tourism Management 2011 is Assistant Manager Digital Experience - Mobile at Cathay Pacific Airways Limited.

Mr Kirk Yan
MSc in Hotel and Tourism Management 2012 is Executive Manager, Food and Beverage Operations and Culinary at Galaxy Entertainment Group.

Mr Ronald Hang
BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2012 is Head of Revenue Management at K11 Concepts Limited.

Mr Owen Li
BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2012 is an Associate Product Manager, Intelligence Product at MediaMath.

Ms Helen Wang
BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2012 is Business Intelligence Analyst at Charter Communications.

Mr Calvin Yuen
BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2012 is Manager, Corporate Food and Beverage at Shangri-La International Hotel Management Limited.

Mr Steven Tsang
BSc(Hons) in Tourism Management 2013 is Sales Manager, Corporate at Novotel Century Hong Kong.

Dr Worarak Sucher
Doctor of Hotel and Tourism Management 2014 is Associate Dean for Administration and Director of Doctor of Philosophy Programme, Graduate School of Tourism Management, National Institute of Development Administration.

Ms Angela Zheng
MSc in International Hospitality Management 2014 is Director of Revenue Management at Crowne Plaza Macau.

Dr Yvonne Chen
Doctor of Hotel and Tourism Management 2015 is Manager, Leadership and Talent Development at Galaxy Entertainment Group.

Ms Sojin Choi
MSc in International Hospitality Management 2015 is Assistant Front Office Manager at Hyatt Regency Paris Etoile.

Dr Bona Kim
Ph.D. in Hotel and Tourism Management 2016 is an Assistant Professor at Singapore Institute of Technology.

Ms Vinci Wong
BSc(Hons) in Tourism Management 2016 is Senior Account Executive of Vpon Big Data Group.

Mr Alan Yang
MSc in International Hospitality Management 2017 is BD Manager of Huamei Consulting Group.

Ms Kristina Braun
BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2017 is Team Leader, The Grill at Grand Hyatt, Hong Kong.

Mr Matthew Kum
BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2017 is Assistant Guest Relations & Club Floor Manager at Hotel ICON.

Dr Carmen Lam
Doctor of Hotel and Tourism Management 2018 is Chief Customer Officer at Ananda Development Public Company Limited.

Dr Francis Ling
Doctor of Hotel and Tourism Management 2018 is Vice President of Finance and Systems at the Artyzen Hospitality Group.

Ms Loveday He
MSc in International Hospitality Management 2018 is Development Manager of the Shenzhen Grand Skylight Hotels Management Company Limited.

Miss Lisa Lee
BSc(Hons) in Tourism Management 2018 is Business Acquisition Manager at Connexus Travel Limited.

Miss Pepper Tang
BSc(Hons) in Convention and Event Management 2018 is an Engagement Associate at The Executive Centre.

Miss Lillian Tsang
BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2018 is a Human Resources Assistant at Rosewood Hong Kong.

Miss Gladys Yau
BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2018 is a Management Associate at AsiaWorld Expo.

Many Thanks to Professors for a Day

The School is extremely grateful to the following industry professionals who recently helped nurture students as professors for a day.

Speaker	Title and Company	Topic
Ms Elena ABERGO	Winery Visits and Sales, Contratto	Contratto Overview
Ms Nopparat AUMPA	General Manager, Banyan Tree Bangkok	Banyan Tree's Philosophy in Asian Hospitality
Ms Silvia BENINI	Brand Ambassador, Ruffino Poggio Casciano Estate	Ruffino Poggio Casciano Estate Overview
Mr Adrien BERNARD	Family Owner and Brand Ambassador, Domaine de Chevalier	Domaine de Chevalier Masterclass
Ms Chiara BOSCHIS	Owner, E. Pira & Figli	E. Pira & Figli Overview
Mr David BRADLEY	Community Member, US Consulate General in Hong Kong and Macau	A Look into US Regional Cuisines
Mr Federico CERETTO; Mr Edoardo VACCA	Owner; Hospitality Manager, Ceretto	Ceretto Overview
Ms Alisa CHAN	Vice Chairman, Association of Business Aviation Professionals	How Does a Private Jet Company Manage Its Inflight Quality Service?
Mr Kenneth CHAN	Assistant General Manager, Strategic Planning, New World Development Company Limited	Consultancy Strategies and Techniques
Ms Costanza CHIRIVINO	Brand Manager, Sallier de la Tour family	Sallier de la Tour Master Class
Dr Miju CHOI	Lecturer, School of Hotel and Tourism Management, Faculty of Business Administration, Chinese University of Hong Kong	Hotel and Tourism Management Research Seminar
Mr Ric CHOI	Sommelier, Bo Innovation	Marrying Food and Wine
Ms Angela CHU	Former Director of Revenue, Song Saa Resorts	Succession Planning in the Hotel Industry
Dr Jennifer CRONIN	President, Wharf Hotels Management Limited	Transformational Leadership
Ms Carol CUI	Strategy Director, OneSight	Consultancy Process in China and Hong Kong
Mr Gregory DE'EB	Concept Founder, Crown Wine Cellars	Crown Wine Cellar Tour
Ms Michela DOMINICI	Trade Hospitality Manager and Event Planner, Castello Banfi	Castello Banfi Overview
Ms Tracy DONG	Lead Advisor, lDeaS Advisory Services	Trends in Revenue Management and Data Analytics
Dr Lawrence FONG	Assistant Professor, Faculty of Business Administration, University of Macau	Hotel and Tourism Management Research Seminar
Mr Terence FONG	Digital Marketing Manager, Hotel ICON	E-marketing Strategy at Hotel ICON
Mr Stefano GAGLIARDO	Owner, Poderi Gianni Gagliardo	Poderi Gianni Gagliardo Overview
Mr Bibi GRAETZ; Mr Vincenzo D'ANDREA; Mr Francesco BACCARO	Owner; Sales and Marketing Director; Wine Maker, Bibi Graetz	Bibi Graetz Overview
Mr Richard HATTER	General Manager, Hotel ICON	Leadership – A Life Learning Story
Mr Daniel HEMSWORTH	Founder, International Capoeira Society and Grupo Capoeira Brasil Hong Kong	Capoeira and Tourism
Ms Siriphan HENSOOK	Deputy Director, Tourism Authority of Thailand, Hong Kong Office	Open to the New Shade of Amazing Thailand
Ms Alicia HERNANDEZ; Ms Darragh PARADISO; Ms Phoenix TORRIJOS; Ms Rachael PARRISH; Ms Carolyn NORTON	Director, US Agricultural Trade Office Hong Kong; Director of Public Affairs; Air Liaison Officer; Consular Officer; Community Member, US Consulate General in Hong Kong and Macau	A Look into US Regional Cuisines
Mr Anthony HEROLD; Ms Joan CHAN	General Manager; Training Manager, The Cheesecake Factory	The Importance of Great Service and How to Deliver It – the Cheese Cake Factory Secret
Mr David HUANG	CEO, MOTI Culture and Tourism	MOTI Travel: Telling the Brand Story for the Company through Industrial Tourism
Ms Nancy HUANG	Manager, Shenzhen OCT Resort	Quality Service Management
Dr Pengrui HUI	Senior Algorithm Engineer, Fliggy, Alibaba Group	Business Model Innovations in Travel Industry – The Power from IT and Design
Mr Cristobal HUNEUS	Co-Founder, La Cabane Group Hong Kong	The New Waves of Wines: Natural vs Organic vs Biodynamic
Mr Michael JOHNSON	Founder, MJ Tours Hong Kong and Lantau Lodge	All Roads Leading to Entrepreneurship
Mr Rocky KAM	Brand Director, Coffee Mountain Limited	Coffee Pairing with Thai cuisine
Ms Sandy KEUNG	Founder, Good BBQ and Table	All Roads Leading to Entrepreneurship
Dr Dae-Young KIM	Associate Professor, Department of Hospitality Management, University of Missouri	Mega-Trends in Tourism and Travel Information Technology
Ms Fifi KIRSTEIN	Managing Partner, Golden Gate Wines Company	California Wine Overview
Mr Hovan LAM	Mixology Consultant and Bartender, Ralph Lauren	Twining's Tea Mixology Workshop
Ms Lisa LAM; Ms Patricia LAM	Founders, Taboocha	Food and Beverage Pairing
Mr Siu Ping LAM	F&B Concierge, The Peninsula Hong Kong	Quality Restaurant Service in The Peninsula Hotel Hong Kong
Mr Alan LEE	Former General Manager of EGL Tours Company Limited and Former Director and GM of HK Fourseas Tours Limited	Culture and World Travel Experience
Ms Vivian LEE	Co-Founder, Vinotopia Asia Limited	Sherry 101
Mr Wilson LEE	General Manager, Hyatt Regency Hong Kong, Shatin	Contemporary and Future Leadership in Hospitality Industry
Ms Cynthia LEUNG; Ms Alice LI; Ms Vicki KWOK	General Manager, Corporate Affairs; Manager, Corporate Communications; Senior Executive, Public Affairs, Hong Kong Tourism Board	Branding and Positioning of Hong Kong as a Destination
Ms Meg LEUNG	Director of Human Resources and EMS Manager, New World Millennium Hong Kong Hotel	The Importance of Employee Evaluation in the Hotel Industry
Ms Alice LI	Manager, Corporate Communications, Hong Kong Tourism Board	Hong Kong Tourism Board's Promotional Efforts
Dr Gang LI	Associate Professor, School of Information Technology, Faculty of Science Engineering and Built Environment, Deakin University	Hotel and Tourism Management Research Seminar
Mr Greg LIDDELL	General Manager and Area Vice President Operations, Mandarin Oriental, Bangkok	Asian Paradigm in Hospitality Management
Ms Helena LINDBERG	Wine Maker, Tenuta di Biserno	Tenuta di Biserno Overview
Dr Jiaying LU	Associate Head, Department of Tourism and Hotel Management, School of Management, Zhejiang University	Cruise Servicescape and Experience: Perspective of Chinese Tourists

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Upcoming Events

2019

22 March

Event: Career Day 2019
 Organiser: SHTM
 Contact: Mr Chris Luk
 Email: chris.luk@polyu.edu.hk

22-25 May

Event: 2019 APacCHRIE & EuroCHRIE Joint Conference cum 4th Global Tourism and Hospitality Conference, Hong Kong
 Organiser: SHTM
 Email: chrie.hk2019@polyu.edu.hk
 Website: <http://www.chriehk2019.com/>

2-5 June

Event: International Conference on Wine, Market and Cultures of Consumption, Hong Kong
 Organisers: SHTM and the UNESCO Chair of the University of Burgundy
 Contact: Ms Leslie Fung
 Email: leslie.fung@polyu.edu.hk

21-23 June

Event: 18th Asia Pacific Forum for Graduate Students Research in Tourism, Daejeon, South Korea
 Organisers: SHTM and Woosong University
 Website: <http://apf2019.sis.ac.kr/main/index.jsp>

1-4 July

Event: 25th Asia Pacific Tourism Association Annual Conference, Da Nang, Vietnam
 Organisers: Asia Pacific Tourism Association and Duy Tan University
 Website: <https://www.apta2019.org/>

21-22 July

Event: China Tourism Forum 2019-USA, Philadelphia, USA
 Organisers: SHTM and Temple University
 Contact: Dr Qu Xiao
 Email: qu.xiao@polyu.edu.hk

20 September

Event: SHTM Lifetime Achievement Award
 Organiser: SHTM
 Contact: Dr Barry Mak
 Email: barry.mak@polyu.edu.hk

**Dr Alexander
Grunewald**
(Ph.D. 2010)
Senior Manager
Accenture

Dr Daisy Fan
(Ph.D. 2016)
Lecturer
Bournemouth
University

**Dr Edward
Roekaert**
(D.HTM 2014)
Rector
Peruvian University
of Applied Sciences

Mr Robben Luo
(MSc 2017)
Brand
Ambassador
China
HINE Cognac

DO YOU KNOW US?

You might see some familiar faces because we're all graduates of the School of Hotel and Tourism Management (SHTM) at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

Rated No. 1 in the world in the "Hospitality and Tourism Management" category according to ShanghaiRanking's Global Ranking of Academic Subjects 2017/2018, placed No. 1 in the world in the "Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism" subject area by the CWUR Rankings by Subject 2017 and ranked among the top 3 "Hospitality and Leisure Management" institutions globally in the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2017/2018, the SHTM ensured that we would gain international recognition for the calibre of our learning. Over the years, we've put the knowledge and skills we gained into practice as proud professionals in the hotel, travel and tourism fields. The cosmopolitan mix of our classes – with participants hailing from Denmark, Hong Kong, Korea, Mainland China, Peru and the USA – is further testament to the SHTM's well-earned international reputation.

We invite you to advance your career in a dynamic global industry by enrolling in one of the SHTM's highly tailored programmes, led by a faculty of 75 talented academics from 22 countries and regions. The various programmes in hotel and tourism management lead to Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Hotel and Tourism Management, and Master of Science degrees.

Find out more about this world-class hotel and tourism school by visiting <https://shtm.polyu.edu.hk>.

You too can be recognised!



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