

# Horizons

## SHTM Magazine

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

Vol 21 Issue 1, Feb 2021



- ✦ Three Global Conferences Organised by Students
- ✦ SHTM+ICON Consultancy Spearheads Industry Progress
- ✦ What Can Neuroscience Offer Tourism?
- ✦ Doctoral Programmes as Launchpad for Success



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### Bringing Tourism Research and Practice Together

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## DEAN'S MESSAGE

Extraordinary times call for extraordinary resilience, and this is a quality that the SHTM possesses in ample measure. From the 2003 SARS outbreak to today's COVID-19 pandemic, we have weathered storms of all shapes and sizes, and emerged the stronger for it. This year, not content with demonstrating fortitude in the face of the pandemic, the School has sought out opportunities in crisis, as we show in this issue of *Horizons*.

The issue begins with the perfect example of such resourcefulness. Wholly student-organised, the inaugural IMPACT2020 conference was delivered both online and offline, allowing delegates the world over to find new paths out of crisis. Students saved the day again when they stepped in to helm the APacCHRIE 2020 Conference and Youth Conference, initially cancelled due to COVID-19.

Another highlight of this issue is the 14th UNWTO/PATA Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook. The SHTM is proud to have co-organised this historic platform for debate, seeking to reinvent tourism for a post-pandemic world. Joining hands with the industry is also the focus of our coverage of SHTM+ICON Consultancy, whose services are promoting sustainable tourism across the globe.

Closer to home, teaching and learning have always been at the heart of what we do, and this year was no exception. In this issue, faculty shine a light on the School's Master of Science programmes, and we learn more about our doctoral and mainland China programmes from talented graduates. COVID-19 has not prevented the School from recognising alumni's remarkable achievements. The 2020 SHTM Outstanding Alumni Award went to Mr David Lau, Chief Executive Officer of Ocean Sky Hotel Management Limited.

Another pioneering hotelier and SHTM alumna featured here is Ms Sylvia Chung of L'hotel Management Company Limited and Chinachem Group. Ms Chung delivered the 2020 Dean's Distinguished Lecture online for the first time in the SHTM's history – just one way in which the School has maintained its exceptional teaching and learning during the pandemic. Other vibrant online-only activities include our revamped Executive Development Programmes and pioneering MicroMasters.

Along with our usual coverage of the School's latest news and ground-breaking research, we describe a pioneering workshop showing how neuroscience can inform hospitality and tourism research. This perfectly exemplifies the forward-looking mission of the SHTM, as a dedicated community of likeminded individuals ready to lead the hospitality and tourism industry out of crisis into a bright new future. **H**



Professor Kaye Chon

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

30 October | Hotel ICON

# IMPACT2020

Crisis Management and  
Recovery Strategies

## Deepening Collaboration in Crisis

For more than 40 years, the SHTM has sought to bridge the gap between hospitality and tourism research and practice, and 2020 was no exception. On 30 October, industry executives, government officials, and academics came together at the inaugural IMPACT2020 conference, jointly organised by the Hospitality and Tourism Research Centre of the SHTM and STR, to guide the recovery of the crisis-hit industry.

Taking the theme of "Crisis Management and Recovery Strategies", the conference was wholly organised by 32 SHTM students. The organising committee had just eight weeks to deliver the event to a global audience, both online and offline. Professor Jin-Guang Teng, PolyU President, honoured their achievement in his opening address. "My appreciation

goes to the undergraduates who arranged a rich programme with special arrangements for international participants".

Ms Elizabeth Randall Winkle, STR Chief Strategy Officer, went on to set the scene for the conference. "We come together to have a meaningful dialogue, debate for a better outcome, and deliver consequential solutions", she said. "Today, the most timely issue is crisis management".

### Road to Recovery

The first morning session was chaired by Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean and Chair Professor and Walter & Wendy Kwok Family Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management. Noting

that "most journals are read only by academics, not tourism industry professionals", Professor Chon described his vision for IMPACT2020: to bring theory and practice together to define future industry trends.

"Wei ji, the Chinese word for crisis, represents both danger and opportunity", said Dr Jennifer Cronin, President of Wharf Hotels Management Ltd, in the same session. Whilst acknowledging the challenges posed by COVID-19, she struck a positive tone. "There will be major structural changes, but it is an exciting future", she said. "We will travel again".

Next came detailed forecasts by industry experts. "Hotels will have to reinvent themselves", said Mr Steve Hood, Senior Vice President (Research), STR and Founding Director, STR SHARE Center. The same is true of air transport, according to Professor Andreas Papatheodorou, University of the Aegean. Dr Mario Hardy, CEO,

Pacific Asia Travel Association, stressed the need to “restart tourism in a more sustainable and responsible manner”. Finally, Professor Haiyan Song, SHTM Associate Dean and Chair Professor and Mr and Mrs Chan Chak Fu Professor in International Tourism, predicted that “Asia-Pacific regions will lead world tourism recovery where the pandemic is under control”.

After a session break, Professor Dimitrios Buhalis, Director of eTourism Research Lab, International Center for Tourism and Hospitality Research, Bournemouth University, explained that recovery will depend on “smartness” alongside “multiple technical resources and technologies”.

Next came a vibrant panel discussion, during which Mr Richard Hatter, General Manager, Hotel ICON and SHTM Adjunct Associate Professor, outlined Hotel ICON’s crisis response strategy. “We had to be smart, scrappy, and focused, with very clear goals”, he explained. Turning to the cruise line sector, Dr Zinan Liu, Chairman of Caribbean Cruises, Asia, Royal Caribbean International, stressed the need for “the most aggressive safety measures in the hospitality industry”.

Mr Martin Donovan, Publisher, Mix Meetings (Greater Bay Strategies Ltd), urged the meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions sector to embrace “creativity and digitalisation”. Delegates next learned from Dr Sangwon Park, SHTM Associate Professor, “how to understand the digital transformation and benefit from it”.

Dr James Mabey, Managing Director Asia & Middle East and Chief International Business Officer, Standard International, LLC, offered a “controversial” view. “The

structure of tourism will be largely unchanged”, he suggested. “The changes will be much more process- and system-oriented”.

## Impactful Research

Following a presentation by Mr Dane Cheng, Executive Director, Hong Kong Tourism Board, on Hong Kong’s strategy for tourism recovery, SHTM researchers delivered a series of impact presentations. First, Dr Faye Hao, Postdoctoral Fellow, expressed confidence in the industry’s recovery in mainland China. “Hospitality will come back”, she predicted, “and it will be stronger”.

To achieve this, noted Dr Catherine Cheung, Associate Dean and Associate Professor, the industry must “reconnect with consumers and regain their confidence”. The social cost of the pandemic has been severe, said Dr Jinah Park, Research Assistant Professor, explaining “how much local residents are willing to pay out of their own pockets to maintain public health”.

Dr Maxime Wang, SHTM Assistant Professor, explored leaders’ influence on employees’ well-being. “During a crisis”, he

said, “leaders’ communication should be future-focused, goal-oriented and problem-solving”. Professor Basak Denizci Guillet also advised leaders to “examine the core revenue management process during recovery and when the crisis is over”.

Customer relations were emphasised by Dr Daniel Leung, Assistant Professor, who shed light on “the communication strategies employed by leading tourism firms” during the pandemic. Taking delegates farther into the future, Professor Rob Law suggested that “a robot hotel service may ultimately replace frontline employees”.

Finally, Professor Cathy Hsu warned of the threats posed by overtourism. “Yes, we want tourists, but now we have the opportunity to step back and think”, she said. “Going forward, destination managers must monitor tourism and make appropriate policies”.

Closing the day, Professor Chon restated the SHTM’s commitment to making the IMPACT2020 conference an annual event. “Creativity and attention to detail are two important hallmarks of event management”, he said, noting that the organisers had demonstrated both. “They have done such wonderful work”, he concluded. The SHTM wholeheartedly agrees. **H**



# APacCHRIE 2020

27-28 October  
Hong Kong

*Still Connected,  
Undivided*

The SHTM has long played a pivotal role in APacCHRIE, the leading hospitality and tourism education association in the Asia-Pacific region. This collaboration was further strengthened in 2020. The annual APacCHRIE conference is a highlight in the regional events calendar, but its 2020 edition was initially cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, unwilling to lose such a valuable platform for debate, 32 talented SHTM students from the Special Events class rose to the challenge of organising APacCHRIE 2020 and its sister event, the APacCHRIE Youth Conference. Both were delivered simultaneously in person and online.

“I am delighted that we can unite as one community”, said Ms Margaret Heng, President of APacCHRIE and Chief Executive of The Singapore Hotel and Tourism Education Centre, in her uplifting welcoming remarks at APacCHRIE 2020. “This is the first time our

conference has been delivered in a hybrid format, which would not have been possible without the commitment of the SHTM”. She added that this partnership perfectly reflected the theme of the conference: “Still Connected, Undivided”.

At both conferences, held on 27-28 October, the participants were encouraged to share their research and engage in robust debate on the future of the industry and education. The conferences may have been delayed, but their spirit of optimism remained undimmed, according to Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean and Chair Professor and Walter & Wendy Kwok Family Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management. “The hospitality and tourism industry will get past the pandemic”, said Professor Chon at the opening ceremony for APacCHRIE 2020. “It will lead the way in driving recovery”.

## Looking to the Future

“What does the future hold in store for the hospitality sector and education?” asked Professor Brian King, SHTM Associate Dean, in a stimulating plenary session that kicked off the first day of APacCHRIE 2020. Other speakers offered optimistic responses. “This industry, as part of its DNA, has had to embrace resilience”, said Kwon-ping Ho, Founder and Executive Chairman of Banyan Tree Holdings. Forecasting a rapid return to profitability, data expert Mr Steve Hood, Senior Vice President (Research), STR and Founding Director, STR SHARE Center, was similarly positive. “Despite the impact of COVID-19, there are a lot of bright spots”.

In the post-COVID world, the tourism industry will be different for both travellers and employees. "What is important", observed Mr Tasos Kousloglou, CEO, Hotel Division, Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited, "is for us to be agile and adaptive and cater to these trends". A drop in business travellers and increase in leisure tourists and "staycationers" will necessitate new approaches, the panel agreed. Creativity will be key, according to Ms Shelley Perkins, Chief Talent and Culture Officer, Rosewood Hotel Group. "Gen Z and millennials love the fact that their jobs will change and they will do different things every day", said Ms Perkins.

On the second day of the conference, an international panel of experts explored the opportunities and challenges presented by online education in hospitality and tourism. "Students want to be able to create solutions to the problems they will face", said Professor Bruce Tracey, School of Hotel Administration, Cornell University. "We need to simulate the professional experience, virtually".

After a rewarding two days, the last word was left to the SHTM students who had organised the conference. "Our special thanks

go to our beloved Dean Chon for having faith in our ability to host this conference", said Janna Lee, final-year student and PR director for the organising committee. She summed up the SHTM's ethos clearly and concisely. "Knowing is not enough; we must apply".

## Leaders of Tomorrow

The 11th APacCHRIE 2020 Youth Conference brought together the leaders of tomorrow to learn, develop, and build connections. Professor Chon kicked off the event by recounting his life story, which provided rich inspiration for the attendees. "If you have passion, you can get many things done", he told them.

"There are leaders who want the role, but don't necessarily want the responsibility", warned Mr Joseph Chong, Regional Vice President, Asia, The Peninsula Hotels, in his keynote address. Successful leadership, he explained, "is a mindset where you must become an agent of change". Innovation, creativity, and embracing difference

are all fundamental skills that the next generation needs to have.

What advice would former graduates give to the class of 2021? "Try new things, travel, and see different cultures", suggested former SHTM student Zelotes Lam, Senior Manager - Operations & Efficiency, Swire Hotels. He was one of four graduates who explained how their time at the SHTM had helped them to forge successful and rewarding careers. "If you love people, you'll never get bored in our industry", added Mr Wesley Ling, Director of Talent & Culture, Carlyle & Co.

Inspired by her time at the SHTM, Ms Luna Wang, Customer Insights Manager, Cathay Pacific Airways Limited, had some wise words for final-year students. "If you study hospitality, you can do anything". The SHTM firmly agrees. **H**

# Revitalisation and Transformation

The SHTM has a rich history of collaborating with global partners to deliver innovation that takes hospitality and tourism to new heights. In 2020, the SHTM again joined forces with the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) and the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) to co-organise the 14th UNWTO/PATA Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook. The Forum was held at the Shangri-La Hotel, Guilin, China from 7 to 9 December.

This annual event provides a platform for tourism organisations, policymakers, NGOs, and academics to examine global and regional trends and to collaborate and learn from each other. This year, the SHTM was represented by Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean and Chair Professor and Walter & Wendy Kwok Family Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management, and SHTM Associate Professor Honggen Xiao.

Appropriately, the theme of the 14th Forum was "Tourism Revitalisation and Transformation".

"We are going through some very challenging times at the moment", acknowledged Professor Chon in his address at the opening ceremony. Travel restrictions, lockdowns, and other forms of disruption due to COVID-19 have massively reduced tourism demand. Nonetheless, according to Professor Chon, there are good reasons for optimism. "I have no doubt that our industry will come back even stronger after this crisis is over", he affirmed.

Sharing this optimism was Mr Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary-General of the UNWTO, who urged the industry to seize the opportunity to make tourism more sustainable and local communities more resilient. "Revitalisation and lifting travel restrictions are our current priorities", he explained. To accomplish these tasks, the private and public sectors must come together to deliver innovative, sustainable, and responsible tourism practices.

With this theme in mind, the Forum's delegates sought to inspire each other to develop strategies for

regenerating tourism, ranging from digital transformation to destination management. The challenges of revitalisation and transformation were addressed in detail in a panel discussion, and a thought-provoking keynote presentation focused on recovery in the Chinese context. Many of the delegates then enjoyed tours of outstanding local attractions, allowing them to experience first hand the diversity and potential of the region's cultural and natural heritage.

The synergies and innovations created at this year's Forum will benefit all stakeholders in tourism, from individual businesses to the industry as a whole. The School is proud of its role in organising this historic platform for collaboration, as an emphasis on innovation, sustainability, and partnerships for future growth is more relevant now than ever before. **H**



Sharing from future industry leaders



Participants at the 14th UNWTO/PATA Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook in Guilin

The close ties developed between students at the SHTM remain strong long after graduation, as our alumni can attest. As a global leader in hospitality education, the SHTM boasts a tightly knit international network, and the connections made between students, faculty, and industry partners shape the careers and lives of all who pass through. Our students not only enjoy plentiful opportunities for collaboration and ideas exchange, which provide substantial competitive advantages, but also forge lifelong friendships.

We asked some of our graduates to share their experiences, and they were only too happy to oblige.

of the Macao Institute for Tourism Studies, who graduated from the SHTM in 2014. Although her classmates and fellow researchers are now widely spread across the world, they continue "exchanging ideas and collaborating thanks to the friendships established at the SHTM".

For Dr Joanne Yoo of the Alfred Lerner College of Business & Economics, University of Delaware, such exchange and collaboration provided "excellent opportunities to extend my research versatility and develop my communication skills". Dr Miju Choi, SHTM Ph.D. graduate and now Senior Lecturer

group of fellow graduate students has been and continues to be supportive, thought-provoking and entertaining".

## A Culture of Research Excellence

The success and reputation of the SHTM stem from its research and teaching excellence, developed over more than 40 years. Our

D.HTM graduate Dr James Mabey, who now serves as Standard International, LLC's Managing Director Asia & Middle East and Chief International Business Officer, noted that "the diversity of the faculty, the students, and Hong Kong itself is very valuable, considering the ever-changing landscape of our industry".

Guidance and support for learning are equally important, noted Dr Ryan Smith, Assistant Professor in the Lam Family College of Business, San Francisco State University. "Working with my doctoral advisor,

hub. "Graduates with Asian backgrounds like me can go on to teach at European universities, while students with European backgrounds can learn about the hospitality that is rooted in Asian cultures".

The School's teaching and research environment is not only of the highest academic calibre, but is also nurturing and positive. As Dr Daisy Fan, Senior Lecturer in Bournemouth University's Business School, explained, "positive thinking is essential when looking for jobs globally".

# A Truly Global Network

Dr Jimmy Chiang, now Associate Director-General at Invest Hong Kong, found the School's academic network invaluable. Enrolling in the Doctor of Hotel and Tourism Management (D.HTM) programme, he said, "increased my social capital by allowing me to connect with distinguished and multinational faculty members and students".

This view was wholeheartedly supported by another D.HTM graduate, Dr Edward Roekaert, now Rector at the Peruvian University of Applied Sciences, who suggested that networking is critical to "becoming a true global citizen". Dr Alex Grunewald, now Principal Director at Accenture, recalled that the SHTM's Ph.D. programme "allowed me to boost my personal network to global proportions".

Global connections were also emphasised by Professor Eve Ren

in Events, Tourism & Hospitality Management at Leeds Beckett University, maintains "close links with renowned scholars and professors working for the SHTM, conducting collaborative research".

Another graduate of the Ph.D. in Hotel and Tourism Management, Dr Vera Lin of Zhejiang University, recognised the truly international flavour of the SHTM's teaching and research team. Even after graduating, said Dr Lin, she is "still benefiting as an SHTMer through networking with leading tourism scholars worldwide".

The long-lasting value of studying at the SHTM was highlighted by Dr Robert Van Der Veen, Research Fellow in Business at Oxford Brookes University. "I still benefit from the network I established at the SHTM, both professionally and personally", he said. "The tight-knit

graduates' expertise in critical thinking and analysis, nurtured in a rigorous research environment, sets them apart from their peers.

For recent Ph.D. graduate Dr Matias Jørgensen, now Associate Professor at Roskilde University, the most important aspects of the SHTM experience are the "international student environment and high-calibre researchers". Whilst noting that an academic career involves "lifelong learning", Professor Sam Huang of the School of Business and Law, Edith Cowan University told us that the "solid research training I obtained from the SHTM was certainly a booster!"

Learning from faculty members with diverse backgrounds and cultures gives SHTM graduates a significant advantage in the increasingly globalised tourism and hospitality market. Indeed,



Professor Cathy Hsu, was and still is something I cherish", he said. "Her stringent revisions are always on my mind when I write or read something".

Dr Anyu Liu, SHTM Ph.D. graduate and now Senior Lecturer in Hospitality at the University of Surrey, added that "the great research culture of the SHTM helps us to secure publications in top tier journals, which makes us more competitive in the job market". Graduates thus enjoy opportunities in all corners of the globe. Dr Yong Chen, Associate Professor, École hôtelière de Lausanne, described the SHTM as a talent exchange

She advised students to "prepare yourself from day one, set a goal in front of you, and you will eventually get there".

The SHTM's supportive, professional, and diverse network of alumni will help to cement its status as a world-leading hospitality and tourism management school for many years to come. **H**

Postgraduate studies are an increasingly popular way for students to enhance their career prospects, and the SHTM offers several Master of Science (MSc) programmes that should inspire those seeking to become leaders in the international tourism and hospitality industry. We recently asked the leaders of these programmes to share their highlights and explain how students can benefit from them.

schools in Hong Kong, Switzerland, and the U.S. Selected in 2020 as the McCool breakthrough recipient for its unique approach, the programme is a “true pioneer of innovation in global hospitality education”.

The two MSc programmes led by Dr Kam Hung, in International Hospitality Management and International Tourism and

International Wine Management Programme, led by Professor Haiyan Song, offers students an excellent postgraduate education in “all areas of the wine business, including marketing finance and economics”, and equips graduates for positions in wine retailing, import and export, winery management and fine wine investment. Taught by “top wine management experts”, the programme features a residential



The tripartite MSc in Global Hospitality Business, led by Dr Catherine Cheung, offers a unique opportunity for students to develop an “in-depth understanding of cultural immersion in the global hospitality business”. The programme’s vision is to create international business managers with a global awareness derived from first-hand local business knowledge and ready to excel in a multicultural environment. The programme, which can be completed in 18 months, involves a semester at each of three leading international tourism and hospitality

Convention Management, offer a “blend of strategic perspectives and pragmatic implementation” to advance students’ knowledge and management skills. During these 12-month programmes, students develop their practical, management and research skills through “interdisciplinary subject exposure, problem identification, decision making theory and management application”.

The “huge expansion” of the wine market in mainland China has opened up new opportunities for those seeking a professional career in wine management. The

trip to a wine region where students can “visit wineries, wine marketing and trade organisations”.

The programme leaders were unanimous in their recommendation of Hong Kong as a place to study. “Hong Kong is an international city and culturally rich society for students to live, explore, and experience”, said Dr Hung. With students from around the world and more than 70 international faculty members, the SHTM offers a culturally diverse environment and an opportunity to study at the highest-ranking hospitality and tourism school in the world. **H**



Professor Kaye Chon,  
Dean of the SHTM,  
thanking Ms Sylvia  
Chung for her  
inspiring lecture

What is the best way for companies and individuals in the hospitality industry to set the highest standards and define the key qualities that drive their success? In an inspiring Dean’s

strategy making for a multi-award-winning hotel group, serving as Deputy Managing Director of L’hotel Management Company Limited and Director of Corporate Communications for its parent

and using technology to set ever higher standards for customer service.

The brand DNA of the highly successful L’hotel Group is aligned with that of Chinachem, but includes further elements. First, the concept of “hospitality from the heart” is nurtured in every employee. Second, staff members as well as customers are well looked after, making the hotels a welcoming place for everyone. Third, team members are empowered to offer personalised touches that make guests feel at home. “This turns a pleasant experience into a truly memorable one”, noted Ms Chung.

Ms Chung advised students to build their own brand DNA, inspired by these elements, to guide their careers. “Keep asking yourself: which qualities will make me stand out from the crowd?” she counselled. Proud of her close connection with one of the world’s foremost schools of hospitality, she encouraged SHTM students to “take full advantage of this precious opportunity”. The School is immensely grateful to Ms Chung for her fascinating and inspirational lecture. **H**

## Cultivating a Brand Identity

### Distinguished Lecture

delivered online on 1 September, SHTM alumna and pioneering hotelier Ms Sylvia Chung described the strong brand identity she has developed for one of the largest hotel groups in Hong Kong, which she termed its “brand DNA”.

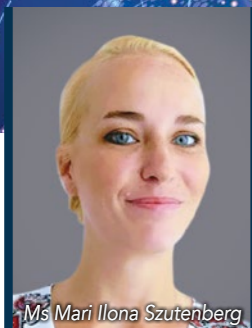
It is difficult to imagine a speaker more well versed in the drivers of success than Ms Chung, whose career since graduating from the SHTM’s MSc in Hotel and Tourism Management has gone from strength to strength. Awarded PolyU’s Bauhinia Cup Outstanding Entrepreneur Award in 2002, she now guides branding and

company, Chinachem Group. Little wonder, then, that Ms Chung received the SHTM’s Outstanding Alumni Award in 2014.

Ms Chung explained her concept of brand DNA by introducing the three key elements that power Chinachem. First, it is proudly a purpose-driven company, “creating sustainable value for people, prosperity and planet”. Second, it is people-centric – a must for the hotel and tourism industry. “We want to create all-round experiences that our guests will treasure for years to come”, said Ms Chung. Third, it is quality-led, always moving forward

# Unlocking Potentials Online

## MicroMasters in International Hospitality Management



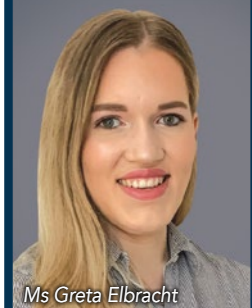
Ms Mari Ilona Szutenberg



Mr Gandhi Paul Ubalde Marquez



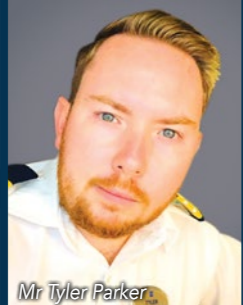
Mr Benoit Amado



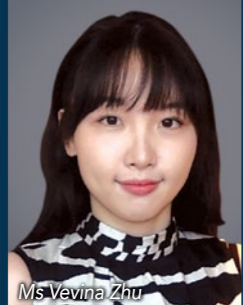
Ms Greta Elbracht



Ms Anna Liang



Mr Tyler Parker



Ms Vevina Zhu



Ms Cherry Chin

On 8 January 2021, the SHTM PolyUx MicroMasters (MM) in International Hospitality Management entered its fifth year, enjoying another successful spring run. Hosted on the world-renowned edX online learning platform, this first-of-its-kind programme allows learners to study at any time and anywhere. This makes it supremely well equipped to overcome the logistical challenges to education posed by COVID-19.

In these uncertain times, rarely has it been more important to bridge the knowledge gap between higher education and the workplace. Recognising this, students from across the world flocked to enrol in four eight-week courses, gaining managerial insights into topics ranging from human resources to innovation and technology. For MM Star Mr Benoit Amado from France, Complex Managing Director for Hoiana Hotels, Rosewood Hotel Group (Vietnam), the courses struck just “the right balance between learning and application of knowledge”.

Indeed, the programme proved inspiring for all. MM Star Ms Greta Elbracht from Germany, International Hostess for Cunard Line, rediscovered her “passion for the tourism and hospitality industry”. For Ms Mari Ilona Szutenberg from France, named MM Outstanding Learner, the opportunity to “dig deeper” and increase her knowledge of the sector encouraged her to pursue a Master’s degree.

MM Star Ms Cherry Chin, who is pursuing a Diploma in Western Culinary

Skills at the Macao Institute for Tourism Studies, became even “more determined to pursue her studies in this field”. A full-time student from mainland China, MM Star Ms Vevina Zhu, also found the programme “a perfect stepping stone” towards further education.

Outstanding teaching from SHTM faculty and a host of experts honed the professional confidence and skills of this year’s MicroMasters students. “It cultivated my mind and nurtured my potentials”, said MM Star Mr Gandhi Paul Ubalde Marquez from the Philippines, Senior Guest Services Officer at Royal Caribbean International. For entrepreneurs like Ms Anna Liang from mainland China, MM Star and Founder of Chintech International Limited and Ecourse (Shenzhen) Education Technology Co. Ltd, the MicroMasters brought fresh ideas for “the direction of further business planning”.

MM Star Mr Tyler Parker, Guest Services Manager at Royal Caribbean International, summed it up very well when he called the SHTM’s MicroMasters in International Hospitality Management a “game-changer”. To be part of this learning journey and advance your own career in the international hospitality industry, simply visit <https://www.edx.org/micromasters/hkpolyux-international-hospitality-management>. Enrolment is now open for the summer and autumn runs of the MicroMasters programme. **H**



# Research Horizons

## Tourism in Technicolour

Cartoons might just hold the key to attracting an important new niche in the tourism market, according to a pioneering recent study by SHTM researchers Dr Mimi Li and Mr Yuhao Chen and their co-authors. With society’s increasing emphasis on family togetherness and bonding, especially through leisure activities, more families are travelling together than ever before. How can destination marketing be targeted to meet the needs of different generations? Focusing on child tourists, a growing yet remarkably understudied market, the researchers provide novel empirical evidence of how visuals can best be used to engage and entice these young consumers. The results have important implications for destination marketers focusing on the family sector in Hong Kong, mainland China, and beyond.

### The Visual Side of Tourism

Photography is inextricably linked with tourism. From serene landscape panoramas to “selfies”, photos offer tourists a way to capture and preserve their travel memories. More than just snapshots of a place or a moment in time, say the researchers, tourism photography may aid in “constructing memory and self-identity, cultivating relationships, and attracting viewers’ attention to destinations”.

Little wonder, then, that pictures and photographs are key tools in tourism marketing, offering curious travellers a virtual experience of a destination. “Photographs are

thought to be essential in forming a destination image”, say the researchers, “and a positive image can influence consumers’ attitudes and intentions to patronise a specific tourism product or destination”. When booking a holiday, an eye-catching photo may mean the difference between one hotel and the next, or tip the balance in favour of a particular tourist attraction.

However, not all visuals are equally effective in promoting a destination. Choosing the right content is crucial, the researchers tell us, but format also matters. Stock photos may fail to hold viewers’ attention, whereas augmented reality offers tourists an exciting and authentic way to connect with a destination before travelling there. The colour, size, and position of photos may also affect viewers’ visual attention. “Consequently”, the researchers note, “advertisers should use photos and text in advertisements appropriately and position them effectively”.

### Children as Tourists

The effectiveness of visual marketing may also depend on who is doing the observing. Unsurprisingly, most studies so far have focused on adults’ responses to tourism advertising. However, the researchers warn that this overlooks a growing trend in the 21st century: “children’s substantial influence on the decision-making process around family holidays, especially in deciding where to go and what to do”. In today’s highly visual world, what kinds of destination images are most likely to appeal to this

important new niche in the tourism market?

The researchers explain that visual marketing may be effective even with children as young as 2 to 4 years, who “can begin to make sense of pictures and symbols and are becoming more interested in media content”. As children are easily distracted, however, “marketing content should feature lively action, sound effects, and loud music to attract and hold their attention”. Cartoons are widely used in child-centric marketing, note the researchers, due to their unique ability to “draw children into an animated or fantasy world and infuse a sense of fun and adventure into their experiences”.

Pulling these threads together, the research team wondered whether children might respond differently to cartoon visuals versus normal photos of tourism attractions. They hypothesised that cartoons would better capture the attention of young viewers, “who tend to be willing audiences and react positively to visual materials rooted in fantasy”. According to the researchers, this could have exciting implications for child-oriented destination marketing. “Stimuli with unique or distinct features are thought to foster the fluent processing of information”, they explain, “which can then generate a sense of affection and elicit closer attention”.

### Hong Kong Tourism Attractions

To put this theory to the test, the team’s first task was to create a

set of visual stimuli. As a popular tourism destination for family travellers, especially from mainland China, Hong Kong offered the perfect research setting. Another important factor to consider was the content of the visuals, as viewers' attitudes tend to differ according to what is depicted. For example, say the researchers, "photographs of natural scenery attract more attention than those showing a built environment".

They thus investigated the most popular attractions of each type in Hong Kong, and settled on three: the Tian Tan Buddha statue (cultural), Lamma Island (natural) and Hong Kong Disneyland (recreational). A photo of each attraction was selected, and the three photos were then digitally manipulated to create cartoon versions.

Next, the researchers recruited 51 children aged 10–13 from a primary school in mainland China. "Children around this age", explain the researchers, "can generally retrieve, organise and use available information from visual stimuli". They are also well equipped to express their feelings and opinions in conversation. Both qualities made these children ideally suited to the study's innovative combination of research methods: eye-tracking followed by interviews.

Tracking the participants' eye movements enabled the researchers to explore their visual behaviour and patterns of attention while looking at the cartoon-executed and normal photos of the three Hong Kong tourism attractions. Next, the researchers conducted interviews to find out from the children themselves how they felt about the different types of images.

### **Cartoons or Photographs?**

Careful analysis of the findings of both the eye-tracking experiments and the interviews yielded some interesting insights. Most

importantly, write the researchers, "the children's preference for cartoon execution varied depending on the type of tourism attraction". Approximately half of the children were attracted to the cartoon visuals of the recreational attraction, Disneyland. "They enthusiastically described the magical, fantasy world portrayed in the images", the researchers report. "The use of colours and an animated scene especially seemed to capture their attention".

In contrast, when viewing the natural attraction, Lamma Island, most of the children preferred the normal photos to the cartoon visuals. "The details of the normal photos were easier to recognise", explain the researchers, "whereas the cartoon manipulations were more difficult to view and diminished the natural beauty of the attractions". Similarly, the children much preferred to look at normal photos of the cultural Hong Kong attraction, the Tian Tan Buddha statue, than cartoon visuals.

These findings have important implications for destination marketers targeting children and families. Broadly, say the researchers, the study "underscores the usefulness of cartoon effects in tourism photographs in attracting children's attention and building a child-friendly image". Therefore, "cartoons or sketches could be applied in visual representations or tourism marketing materials to attract the eyes and interest of young tourists".

Crucially, however, this is only true for certain kinds of photographs: those depicting recreational attractions, such as theme parks. Natural attractions are much better suited to realistic photographic representation. With this in mind, the researchers urge destination marketers to "distinguish products and employ cartoon execution under clear advertising objectives". When seeking to entice young viewers to a destination, they say, "the match between an attraction

and corresponding marketing materials should be considered prior to cartoon execution".

### **Travelling Together**

Empowered by an increasingly democratic parenting style, recent decades have seen children worldwide contribute more and more to their families' purchasing decisions. Holidaying is no exception, with families representing a huge and growing market for the global travel industry. As this market is characterised by increasingly sophisticated and disparate traveller demands, tourism destinations must cater to the needs and preferences of several age groups. Expertly pulling together two streams of tourism scholarship, the researchers show how destination marketers can best capture the attention of young travellers by selecting the right kinds of pictures – which can be understood by speakers of any language and visitors of any age. The findings are expected to help the industry support the emerging trend of multigenerational tourism as we navigate through an increasingly interconnected world.

### **POINTS TO NOTE**

- Photographs and other visuals are key tools for marketing tourism destinations.
- Pictorial marketing may be particularly effective in attracting the attention of child tourists.
- Recreational attractions such as theme parks are most attractive to children in cartoon form, whereas natural attractions should be depicted realistically.
- Destination marketers targeting children and families should use cartoon visuals strategically, depending on the type of attraction.

Mimi Li, Yuhao Chen, Jingqiang Wang and Tingting Liu (2020). Children's Attention toward Cartoon Executed Photos. *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 80, 102799.

# **A Little Incentive Goes a Long Way**

With the right email marketing campaign, a hotel can thrive in an industry characterised by cutthroat competition, according to SHTM researchers Dr Daniel Leung and Ms Megan Tsou. Drawing on the experiences of real-life Chinese consumers, the authors provide pioneering empirical evidence of how hotel firms can optimise their email advertising to attract and retain customers. By appropriately framing their price promotions and personalising their emails to suit travellers' unique cultural backgrounds, hotels can regain a foothold in their weakened industry. This will in turn support the swift recovery of hospitality and tourism in mainland China and beyond.

### **Digital Marketing for Hotels**

In the Internet age, more hoteliers are turning to digital marketing channels to attract new guests and maintain their connections with existing ones. Cultivating rich, personalised relationships through targeted online marketing can help to transform first-time visitors into loyal guests who return time and again – and perhaps even bring their friends! It is no secret that today's most successful hotels invest heavily in building customer relationships online as well as in person.

Despite the recent rise of social media and mobile technologies, email remains one of the most dependable marketing routes for hospitality and tourism businesses. As "an agile and inexpensive tool for information dissemination", the researchers explain, email plays an indispensable role in building customer–brand relations in the highly people-oriented hospitality sector. Indeed, they tell

us, "companies in the hotel and food service industries are widely acknowledged as the most prolific users of email marketing".

The best email marketing strategies trigger interested responses from readers, which may vary "from clicking on links to gathering more information to keeping the advertised information for future reference", according to the researchers. These activities can create new sales opportunities and ultimately bring in revenue for hotel firms. But how should hotel managers and marketers design their emails to engage existing customers and entice new ones? Surprisingly, studies to date have shed little light on this important issue.

### **Crafting Promotional Emails**

Seeking to fill this gap in the literature and supply much-needed insights for practitioners in the ever more competitive hotel industry, the team focused on two critical components of any good email marketing strategy. The first was monetary incentives, which are generally framed as either "amount off" (e.g., "Save 500 HKD!") or "percentage off" (e.g., "10% off your next purchase!") deals. Such price promotions are increasingly common in the hotel industry in the wake of the economic downturn and COVID-19 pandemic. The researchers wondered "which incentive framing format is more effective in terms of inducing readers' intention to purchase and recommend the promoted products".

"Another overlooked albeit pivotal cue that may influence readers' responses to hotel-related email advertisements",

say the researchers, is language congruency. Whether an advertisement is presented in a customer's native or non-native language may affect their response to the advertised product. Sometimes, say the researchers, "using consumers' native language in marketing and service communications can reduce their psychological distance and increase their behavioral intention".

However, the team also warns that "localizing the advertising language is not universally feasible in improving advertising efficacy". For example, the use of a foreign language may "provide a distancing mechanism that moves people towards a more deliberate mode of thinking". Given the rapid pace of globalisation and increasingly lucrative market of international travellers, it has never been more important for hoteliers to choose the right language – or languages – for their email marketing.

Armed with these insights, the researchers set out to discover "how these two communication-related cues – incentive framing format and language congruency – interactively influence readers' post-reading responses to hotel-related email advertisements". They hypothesised that amount-off promotions would be more attractive than percentage-off ones. However, they expected the degree of this impact to depend on "whether the language used in advertisements is congruent with the native language used by readers".

### **A Fictitious Hotel**

To shed light on how real consumers perceive and respond to hotels' email advertisements, the first step was to select an

appropriate sample of prospective hotel guests. “Consumers from mainland China were recruited”, the researchers explain, “because many international hotel companies have personalised their marketing programmes for this group of travelers”. Furthermore, they add, “China is the country with the highest number of Internet users and checking emails is one of the most popular online activities of Chinese Internet users”.

Next, the researchers carefully developed a cover story. They asked the participants to imagine that they had received an email advertisement from a fictitious hotel in Hong Kong, the primary travel destination for outbound Chinese tourists. As dining offers are the main type of email advertising created by hotels, the advertisement described a price promotion in the hotel restaurant to celebrate an upcoming festival.

To explore the interactive effects of incentive framing and language congruency, the research team developed multiple versions of the email advertisement. Some described an amount-off promotion: “110 HKD off”. Others gave the same reduction in percentage form: “20 per cent off”. Some were in the participants’ native Chinese, and the rest were in English (which all of the participants spoke as a foreign language). After viewing these advertisements, the participants were asked how likely they would be to search for more information on the hotel, book the deal, and share the advertisement with friends and family members.

**Personalisation is Key**

Meticulous analysis of the participants’ responses generated important insights. First, the amount-off deal was more attractive to readers than the percentage-off deal. As expected, the participants who received the

amount-off incentive were more likely to search for information on the hotel, share the advertisement with others, and make an online reservation. “Percentage-off discounts are naturally considered less favorable by customers”, the researchers explain, “because they require customers to process an additional arithmetic operation”.

However, the situation became more complex when the researchers considered the effect of language congruency. Only when presented in the readers’ native language was the amount-off incentive more effective in inducing readers to purchase the deal and recommend the hotel. Again, this was consistent with the researchers’ expectation. Using a foreign language in communication, they note, “is often accompanied by increased stress, because more cognitive load is required to decode the exchanged messages”.

These novel findings, obtained from real-life consumers, have two key implications for hotel managers and marketers seeking to optimise their email marketing campaigns. First, when promoting high-priced services such as restaurant dining, the researchers advise, hotels “should present the incentive in the form of amount off rather than percentage off”. Customers who believe that they are getting a better financial deal are more likely to make a reservation and recommend the hotel to others.

However, it is not enough to simply frame the price promotion correctly. “As customers appreciate and reward marketers’ sensitivity to their culture”, say the researchers, “hotels should abandon the conventional approach of sending a standardised message to all prospective recipients”. Instead, “they should personalise the language used in the email advertisement according to the readers’ native language”.

**Culturally Sensitive Communication**

Filling gaps in the literature and offering vital managerial recommendations for an industry under pressure, this pioneering study stresses the need to tailor hotel marketing campaigns to guests’ cultural backgrounds and preferences. Demonstrating cultural sensitivity is not only a matter of courtesy, but also a tool for hoteliers to tap into the lucrative and rapidly expanding market of international travellers. The study’s recommendations for optimising email advertising will be enormously beneficial not only to hotels, but also to firms and managers in other service sectors. This may be more important than ever in the post-COVID-19 world, as digital channels are becoming an indispensable way for businesses to communicate with and reassure their customers.

**POINTS TO NOTE**

- Email marketing is extensively used by hotel firms to attract and retain customers.
- Price promotions are the most common form of hotel-related email advertising.
- To attract customers, hotels should frame their email price promotions as “amount off” rather than “percentage off”.
- Hotels’ email price promotions are more effective when they are in the reader’s native language rather than a foreign language.

Daniel Leung, and Megan Tsou (2019). The Impact of Incentive Framing Format and Language Congruency on Readers’ Post-Reading Responses to Email Advertisements. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 31, Issue 8, pp. 3037-3057.

**A Table for One, Please!**

Solo diners represent one of the fastest-growing markets in the restaurant sector, but little is known about the factors that influence their menu choices. Do solo diners express their uniqueness through their selection of dishes, or do they seek a sense of belonging? This is just one of the questions answered by the SHTM’s Dr YooHee Hwang and co-authors in a study that sheds light on the interplay between power, food choices, and crowding in the solo dining context. As restaurateurs seek new ways to tap into this lucrative and rapidly expanding market of diners, such findings are more relevant than ever.

**The Rise of Solo Dining**

Globally, the number of single-person households is soaring, with at least 28% of US households consisting of just one person. Increasingly, those who live alone are choosing to eat out alone. “The rise in single-person households makes ‘solo diners’ one of the fastest-growing segments in the restaurant industry”, the researchers tell us. Indeed, reservations for individual diners have increased by more than 60% in recent years.

Surprisingly, however, researchers and restaurateurs know little about solo diners’ attitudes towards menus and how they choose their dishes. When targeting group diners, restaurants use various tactics to influence menu choices, including “scarcity cues” (limited time offers) and “popularity cues” (bestsellers). “Consuming a product with scarcity cues (limited in time, limited edition) can satisfy one’s need for uniqueness”, the researchers explain. Conversely, consuming a best-selling dish can

enhance social connectedness, “meeting one’s need for belongingness”.

These subtle promotional techniques have proven to be highly effective in influencing group diners’ decisions, but more factors affect choice in the solo dining setting. Whether a restaurant is empty or full, for example, can exert a powerful influence on solo diners. Those dining alone in a crowded restaurant may make menu choices that express their individuality, say the researchers, as they wish to “reassert their freedom”. However, others may seek to blend in by choosing popular dishes.

Our sense of power, or agency, affects how influenced we are by restaurant tactics and environmental cues. However, the researchers note, “little is known about the joint impact of environmental- and individual-level factors on solo diners’ responses to popularity and scarcity cues on restaurant menus”. As each element influences the others, this is a multi-faceted and complex problem. “Social crowdedness (an environmental factor) and solo consumers’ sense of power (an individual-level factor) jointly determine attitudes toward menus”, the researchers hypothesised.

**A Sense of Belonging**

In some cases, say the researchers, “individuals in a crowded environment perceive that their personal space is violated”, which encourages them to assert their individuality. But does this happen when eating alone? Based on a thorough literature review, the team concluded that for solo diners, the desire for uniqueness may co-exist

with the desire for belongingness, as “two fundamental human needs”. However, they suggest that “one is more activated than the other, depending on situational and environmental cues”.

The researchers hypothesised that solo diners are more likely to feel a need for belongingness than uniqueness, making them less likely to want to stand out. This, they posited, “should lead to more favourable attitudes toward menus with popularity (vs scarcity) cues”, especially in a more crowded restaurant.

Delving deeper, the researchers hypothesised that the impact of social cues and environmental factors on solo diners is “moderated” by the diner’s sense of power. More powerful individuals “tend to focus more on themselves (vs others)”, say the researchers. Therefore, “powerful individuals should not be influenced by external cues in restaurants such as menu promotions and crowding”. Conversely, low-power individuals are likely to be “communal” and seek the relative safety and approval of a group. This, the researchers explain, “may augment their need for belongingness during solo consumption, particularly in crowded environments”.

**Solo Diner Survey**

To test their hypotheses, the researchers surveyed a diverse sample of 181 US residents aged over 18. “Crowding and promotional cues were manipulated as between-subject factors”, reports the team, “and sense of power was measured”. The participants were invited to imagine enjoying a Thai meal alone at an airport while waiting for a flight. Each was assigned one

of four scenarios. The restaurant was either crowded or sparsely populated. Once seated, they were handed a menu that featured either a “limited time offer” cue or a “most popular” cue.

The questions that followed assessed the participants’ perceptions of restaurant crowdedness, sense of personal power, and attitudes towards the menu. The restaurant scenario proved to be highly relatable and realistic for the participants, who took an average of 11 minutes to complete the survey. After being asked to grade how busy the restaurant was, the participants described their sense of personal power. They were asked to agree or disagree with such statements as “In my relationships with others, I can get others to do what I want”. Finally, the fictitious guests were asked to make the all-important menu choices that would prove or disprove the researchers’ hypotheses.

### **Attracting Solo Diners**

Based on detailed analysis, the researchers were encouraged to find that the proposed three-way interaction between social crowdedness, promotional cues, and solo consumers’ sense of power was indeed statistically significant. “Low-power individuals exhibited more favourable attitudes toward the menu involving a popularity cue in the crowded (vs non-crowded) environment”, the researchers report. However, their attitudes towards the menu involving scarcity did not differ across crowding levels.

In practice, this suggests that solo diners who lack a sense of power will choose popular dishes that enhance their sense of belonging to a group. Powerful individuals, on the other hand, are unlikely to be influenced by either popularity cues or scarcity cues, “regardless of the crowding level”. Critically, say the

researchers, the findings suggest that “solo consumers’ sense of power and promotional cues collectively predict their responses to crowding”.

This research represents a valuable addition to the literature on crowding, providing insights into the growing market of solo diners. It offers an important counterpoint to the prevailing theory that in a crowded environment, consumers invariably seek to assert their freedom. In fact, solo diners may make choices that encourage feelings of belongingness and communality – particularly if they are from a low-power group.

“Dining alone can be a daunting experience”, the researchers state. It may induce feelings of “loneliness and social exclusion”. These may prove insurmountable barriers for potential restaurant-goers, particularly individuals who lack a sense of power. Such diners may be especially reluctant to visit crowded restaurants.

To tap into this market, say the researchers, restaurants need to activate the sense of belongingness of diners with low power. They advise restaurant managers to “leverage promotional cues on a menu to enhance solo diners’ experiences”. Specifically, managers may wish to highlight popularity cues at busy times or customise menus to appeal to different types of consumer. New technologies, such as tablets, kiosks, and mobile apps, can be used to personalise menus.

In contrast, powerful solo diners tend to hold “consistently favourable attitudes” towards a menu, regardless of promotional cues or crowding levels. The researchers suggest that restaurants can “lead diners to feel that they are valued and powerful” by making changes to the physical environment or using certain words in marketing materials, such as “energy” or “power”. “Another way

of inducing power”, the researchers add, “is to acknowledge solo diners’ loyalty tier in the company’s loyalty reward program”.

### **Blueprint for the Future**

Eating alone should be a comfortable, fun, and rewarding experience, regardless of one’s social status or confidence. With more and more people living alone and dining alone, restaurants need to refine and personalise their offering to appeal to solo diners, capturing a share of this lucrative and socially mobile market. This pioneering research challenges several theoretical assumptions about consumer behaviour, suggesting that the urge to belong is more important to consumers than previously thought. Most importantly, the research provides a practical and inexpensive blueprint for restaurants seeking to maximise the enjoyment of solo diners. Whether you’re eating in a restaurant or managing one, these findings offer essential food for thought.

### **POINTS TO NOTE**

- Solo diners are a rapidly growing market for the restaurant sector.
- The menu choices of solo diners may be affected by promotions (best-sellers or limited time offers) and how crowded the restaurant is.
- Solo diners’ sense of power may influence their choice of dishes.
- To attract solo diners, restaurants should cultivate their sense of belonging and make them feel powerful and valued.

YooHee Hwang, Na Su, and Anna Mattila (2020). The Interplay between Social Crowding and Power on Solo Diners’ Attitudes toward Menus with Popularity and Scarcity Cues. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 32, Issue 3, pp. 1227-1246.

# How to Cope in a Crisis

Health crises are every hotel manager’s worst nightmare, but they are becoming increasingly common. In a fascinating and prescient case study that bridges the gap between theory and practice, SHTM researchers Dr Clare Fung and Dr Alice H. Y. Hon and a co-author show that embracing a four-stage crisis management model can help hotels to protect their residents, reputations, and revenue. Written before the COVID-19 pandemic, their study documents the responses of Hong Kong China Travel Service Hotels Limited to the outbreaks of SARS and swine flu, showing just how critical a crisis management plan is. As the hospitality and tourism industry emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic, the lessons contained in this case study will prove invaluable.

### **Challenges Abound**

In recent years, the global hospitality and tourism industry has faced numerous shocks, including acts of terrorism, geopolitical instability, and the 2008 global financial crisis. Threats to health have been particularly severe. “The hospitality industry has faced a considerable disease crisis challenge in the past 15 years”, say the researchers. The short-term impact is a loss of revenue, and the longer-term consequences may be devastating. “An unexpected and potentially disruptive crisis can threaten tourism demand and harm the business performance of a hotel, as well as the reputation of its location”, the researchers caution.

Hong Kong China Travel Service Hotels Limited (HK CTS Hotels) operates more than 18,000 rooms in Hong Kong, Macau, and mainland China, as well as 50 UK hotels. The success of the hotel

group lies in “dedicating the best hospitality services to hotel guests”, the researchers tell us. Over time, the group has had to adapt to several emerging threats, making it the ideal focus for a case study of crisis response. The researchers examined how HK CTS Hotels dealt with two serious health events – the outbreaks of SARS and swine flu.

### **Patient Zero**

In February 2003, a guest checked in to room 911 at the Metropole Hotel, Hong Kong. Along with his luggage, he was carrying the deadly SARS virus, which he would subsequently pass on to at least 12 other guests. “There was no awareness of SARS at the time”, note the researchers. However, the world soon learned of this deadly disease, which ultimately claimed more than 700 lives. The crisis took the hotel completely by surprise, and it was slow to react.

“The SARS outbreak had a significant impact on the Metropole Hotel’s business as well as that of other Hong Kong hotels”, say the researchers. This included a 90% drop in reservations. Investigators publicly stated that the professor’s vomiting on the floor outside his room had caused the virus to spread. For a chain that prides itself on cleanliness, this report was hugely damaging. “The investigation finding shocked the hotel guests and the wider community of Hong Kong”, the researchers report. The hotel itself became known as the “SARS hotel”, a name it would struggle to shake off. It was eventually rebranded as Metropark Hotel Kowloon.

The hotel’s failure to contain the crisis caused significant damage to the business and the brand.

Recognising the risk posed by future health outbreaks to the hotel group’s reputation and profitability, the chain’s management team acted decisively. “The SARS infection case in the Metropole Hotel forced HK CTS Hotels to develop its crisis management system to ensure that its hotels could smoothly handle any potential crisis”, explain the researchers. The group soon had the chance to put this system into action.

### **Effective Management**

As soon as news of the 2009 swine flu outbreak emerged, HK CTS Hotels’ crisis planning taskforce created preventative guidelines for all of the group’s hotels. Despite these measures, the group was unable to avoid its first infection case. A traveller from Mexico who checked in at Metropark Hotel Wanchai was confirmed as the first swine flu case in Hong Kong.

To contain the outbreak, the hotel’s guests were forced to stay inside for seven days. This caused significant “dissatisfaction and anger”, the researchers tell us. The hotel became the focus of global media attention. “Guest satisfaction became a critical factor in the public image and the reputation of the hotel”, say the researchers, and it quickly became the focus of crisis management efforts. The hotel sought to distance itself from the quarantine arrangements. It was made clear to residents, the public, and the press that “the role of the hotel was to provide excellent service to all guests”.

An enquiry desk was set up to field calls and provide information and advice. It also conducted an impact assessment to identify practical ways to make guests feel more comfortable and informed.

The hotel made guests' health and safety its "first priority", note the researchers, arranging for them to receive relevant information from government health experts. To put its guests further at ease, the chain waived all costs, organised meals and events, and even handed out Sony PlayStation Portable consoles to bored children. A crucial line of communication with the head office was established. This, say the researchers, enabled Metropark Hotel Wanchai "to receive suggestions and support from the HK CTS Hotels management team and resources and support from HK CTS Hotels".

Clearly, the detailed crisis management plan and decisive action taken by the hotel manager and other decision-makers ensured that Metropark Hotel Wanchai was well prepared to cope with the swine flu outbreak. As well as providing essential support for residents, the researchers note, the hotel's action plan helped to protect its reputation.

## Lessons Learned

Comparing the responses of HK CTS Hotels to these two dramatic health events, the authors found evidence that adopting a four-stage crisis management process is highly effective. To manage a crisis, they explain, a hotel must go through four key stages: "reduction, readiness, response and recovery". This theoretical model provides hotel managers with a "general crisis management framework which provides guidelines on how to handle a crisis properly", the authors state. Going further, they outline a blueprint for crisis management informed by experience.

During the first phase, *crisis reduction*, hotels should seek to "minimise the impact of an upcoming crisis", say the

researchers. This involves gathering information on the potential threat from all sources, including, crucially, social media. This stage is not about acting – yet. Instead, it "should mainly be about knowledge acquisition, creation and storage", advise the authors.

On reaching the *crisis readiness* stage, the organisation has already been affected. Therefore, "providing protection for staff, guests and property will be the main aim of the contingency plan", the researchers explain. The crisis should be categorised according to its seriousness and its impact, or the "type of damage" it inflicts. Its categorisation should dictate the particular strategy to be taken.

Communication is paramount during the *crisis response* stage. Having activated and implemented its contingency plan and tactics, the hotel should now "build up effective internal and external communication channels so that its employees, hotel guests and the public can access updated information", the researchers recommend. Ongoing evaluation is required to assess the impact of the crisis and to re-evaluate and refine approaches.

Once the danger has passed, the hotel enters the *crisis recovery* stage. It must now "focus on implementing a recovery plan and reconstruction", suggest the researchers. Although disruption and damage are unavoidable, there is room for optimism, as a "well-devised recovery plan and marketing strategy can change the crisis into an opportunity in the long term". Such tactics might include price differentiation, service quality enhancement, the efficient use of social media, and public relations tactics. The ultimate aim of this stage, explain the researchers, "is to consolidate the organisation's competitive advantage and its positioning".

## Knowledge Transfer

Translating theory into practice is not always simple, but it is vital – especially at times of crisis. As this case study shows, by adopting and implementing a four-stage crisis recovery plan, HK CTS Hotels was able to safeguard – and even strengthen – its reputation. The paper is a powerful illustration of the important work that SHTM academics carry out in bridging the gap between theory and practice, applying lessons learned in the classroom to the real world. It is this practical and pragmatic approach to management that sets our students and researchers apart.

### POINTS TO NOTE

- Public health crises are becoming increasingly common, and can severely damage hotel firms' reputations and revenue.
- To draw lessons for hotels on crisis management and recovery, the researchers compared the responses of Hong Kong China Travel Service Hotels Limited to the outbreaks of SARS and swine flu.
- Following its belated response to the SARS outbreak, the hotel group developed a robust crisis management strategy that allowed it to effectively contain the impact of swine flu.
- To minimise the damage done by future health crises, hotels should rigorously implement a four-stage crisis recovery plan, comprising crisis readiness, reduction, response, and recovery.

Clare Fung, Bruce Tsui, and Alice H.Y. Hon (2020). Crisis Management: A Case Study of Disease Outbreak in the Metropark Hotel Group. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 25, Issue 10, pp. 1062-1070.

# Counting the Social Costs of Tourism in the COVID-19 Era

During the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism scholars and practitioners have directed their attention to local communities in tourist destinations, examining their safety and well-being and the costs that they bear due to tourism activities. Yet according to the SHTM's Professor Haiyan Song and Dr Jinah Park and their co-researchers, it is now time to discuss the social costs of tourism during crises. How much are local communities willing to sacrifice to reduce these costs? Analysing local residents' willingness to pay to alleviate public health risk, the researchers explored the situation through an economic lens. Their findings have important implications for the formulation of recovery strategies and policies in destinations affected by COVID-19.

## Tourism and Disease

"Tourism has a profound impact on society", note the researchers, "and alongside its positive effects it can interfere with the social and economic well-being of residents in tourist destinations". Most concerningly, the rapid increase in tourism and mobility due to globalisation has led to the emergence (or re-emergence) of infectious diseases. Urbanisation and globalisation drive the rapid spread of the virus, but tourism clearly plays a role in exacerbating the resulting public health crises. The 2003 SARS epidemic prompted many researchers to study the impacts of and responses to infectious respiratory diseases

such as swine flu and Ebola. They found that the spread of disease via human travel poses the main risk to tourism, as it leads to restrictions on international movement.

"In addition to the health risks to tourists", the researchers note, "there are obvious concerns that infected tourists may spread the disease to local residents". Yet, little attention has been paid to how tourism can amplify public health crises for residents and stakeholders at tourist destinations. Given the threat posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is more important than ever to study the risk perceptions of residents of tourism destinations, whose views are shaped by experiences that tourists do not share.

## Residents' Responses to Crisis

At the peak of the COVID-19 crisis in China, the researchers surveyed 1,627 residents in three urban tourism destinations (Hong Kong, Guangzhou and Wuhan). Responding to hypothetical scenarios, each respondent was asked to indicate their willingness to pay (WTP) to reduce three types of risk associated with tourism during the pandemic: health risk (i.e., risk of cross-infection, shortage of medical supplies, the difficulty of prevention and patient tracing), social risk (i.e., social panic and instability, commodity shortage, and environmental degradation), and three elements of the negative effects on tourism (i.e.,

reputational crisis in tourism, host-guest conflicts and xenophobia).

Most of the respondents in these three cities were willing to pay to reduce the risk posed by tourism during the COVID-19 public health crisis. Indeed, "the residents of the three cities were willing to pay an average of 300 in local currency (Hong Kong dollars or Chinese RMB) to reduce the risk of negative tourism-generated pandemic effects", write the researchers. They stressed that although the intensity of the pandemic differed between the three cities, "no significant differences were observed in the basic WTP of residents between the cities". This, they reasoned, was attributable to the extensive media coverage of COVID-19, which meant that all residents were aware of the pandemic's severity, even when their cities had relatively few confirmed cases.

The researchers also found that younger residents were willing to pay more for risk reduction. "Younger generations are more digitally savvy and more often connected to the Internet than older residents", the researchers explain, "which allows younger generations to access the most up-to-date information about the pandemic crisis in real time". This implies that local authorities and tourism organisations should seek to involve young people in crisis recovery actions in the aftermath of the pandemic.

## **Quantifying the Cost of Tourism**

The researchers found that the estimated social costs of tourism during the pandemic ranged from 917 million HKD (in Hong Kong) to 1,417 million RMB (in Guangzhou). The total social costs for Hong Kong, Guangzhou and Wuhan were similar. “As the pandemic has spread worldwide”, write the researchers, “the social cost to local populations has been generalised”. This suggests that tourism destinations can and should follow a broad global framework in responding to the crisis.

At times of crisis or disaster, stakeholders in a tourist destination become ever more tightly connected. The researchers suggest that during the COVID-19 crisis, “residents perceive their individual WTP and the costs borne by the community . . . as inseparably linked, which makes them more willing to individually pay more to maintain public health”.

## **Post-Pandemic Community Recovery**

This ground-breaking study provides useful suggestions for recovery and stimulus measures during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Although China’s tourism industry is gradually regaining momentum in some leisure destinations at weekends, this is not the case in major cities. “To satisfy people’s need for safety and their desire for travel”, the researchers suggest, “recovery strategies should be formulated with a holistic and innovative mindset instead of focusing narrowly and directly on tourism recovery”. Welfare policies and

relief packages should be designed to allocate financial support across all sectors, including tourism and health, to ensure the balanced recovery of cities and regions.

### **POINTS TO NOTE**

- Little attention has been paid during the COVID-19 pandemic to the negative impacts of tourism on local communities at tourism destinations.
- The researchers explored how much residents of three Chinese cities were willing to pay to reduce the risk of tourism during COVID-19.
- Younger residents were willing to pay more to reduce the risk associated with tourism, but the estimated social cost of tourism was similar across the three cities.
- Holistic and innovative recovery strategies, including welfare and relief packages, should be designed to ensure the balanced recovery of cities and regions in the aftermath of COVID-19.

Richard T.R. Qiu, Jinah Park, ShiNa Li, Haiyan Song (2020). Social Costs of Tourism during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 84, 102994.

# **Lessons from Disaster: COVID-19 and Chinese Hotels**

## **Financing and Branding**

Little can be achieved without a steady cash flow. Hotel firms should not only seek financial aid from the authorities, the researchers suggest, but also apply “self-save” strategies to reduce non-essential costs, enhance their operating capabilities, monitor their cash flow and make dynamic adjustments promptly. Some hotels in China have set a good example, the researchers tell us, “by strategically closing, partially closing or reducing properties and facilities, postponing non-essential building and system maintenance, minimising fixed costs and cutting non-essential services”.

Other hotels have collaborated with their parent firms to overcome financial hurdles, as many hotel brands in China today are offering reduced management and franchise fees, waived marketing and system fees, and discounted COVID-19 protective supplies. Indeed, the revitalisation of the hotel market after the pandemic is likely to generate a new pattern of brand expansion, with an increased focus on leading brands. The researchers note that “hotel firms should seize this opportunity to increase their market share and individual hotels can actively cooperate with major firms for transformation and upgrading”.

## **Serving Customers and Society**

No less important to the recovery of the hotel sector is restoring customer confidence. Several hotel brands in China already offer free cancellation, re-booking assistance

revitalise its performance”. Realising that the world could learn much from Chinese hotels’ response to the pandemic, the researchers set themselves the important task of identify the “major strategies that have been or should be implemented by the hotel sector to alleviate the catastrophic effects of COVID-19”.

## **Leadership, Communication and Consultation**

The unprecedented and rapidly evolving challenges presented by COVID-19 call for innovative communication to facilitate the exchange of information for fast, flexible decision-making. “As in all disaster situations”, write the researchers, “the first step involves the formation of an efficient and responsible disaster management team and the appointment of a team leader”. As high-performing teams are invaluable assets at times of disaster, hotel firms should strive to retain, retrain and incentivise outstanding employees during the pandemic.

Meanwhile, cost and efficiency savings can be generated by sharing labour, installing intelligent systems, and laying off low-performing workers. “Hotels must also establish a responsive and efficient standard operating procedure to enhance their disaster management capabilities”, advise the researchers. They should organise and maintain a team of expert consultants to tackle the challenges posed by COVID-19, and compile and update guidelines for responding to the pandemic.

Few industries have suffered more from the COVID-19 pandemic than hospitality and tourism, and China’s hotel sector has many lessons to learn. In a thought-provoking exploratory study published recently, the SHTM’s Dr Fei Hao, Dr Qu Xiao and Dean Kaye Chon cast light on the fundamental impact of COVID-19 on the sector, and propose strategies for Chinese hotel firms to overcome their current difficulties and emerge ever stronger. First and hardest hit by the devastating impact of COVID-19, Chinese hotels now have the chance to lead the global sector out of crisis and into a bright new future.

## **Devastating Impact**

The global health crisis sparked by the outbreak of COVID-19 in early 2020 has affected every stakeholder in the tourism industry, casting a dark shadow over China’s formerly thriving hotel market. Tourists’ inability or reluctance to travel have made cancellations rife, threatening the survival of hotel firms and the income security of employees. The expansion of domestic hotel groups has decelerated, and all too many hotels have been forced to close. The researchers observe that this scenario has “led to a sharp decline in the market value of stocks in the hotel sector”.

However, all is not lost. Although China’s hotel sector was the first to be hit by the pandemic, it has implemented timely measures to cushion its economic losses, protect its employees and customers, and contribute to society’s efforts to wage war on COVID-19. “After witnessing positive signs”, the researchers add, “the sector adopted a series of innovative measures to

and extended loyalty programme membership. As well as offering strict hygiene and sanitary measures, many leading brands have set in motion technological solutions to protect and reassure their guests. For example, Dossen, Huazhu and New Century now offer contactless services to limit physical interaction and minimise their customers' stay in public areas. "This reduces the risk of COVID-19 transmission and cross-infection", explain the researchers.

These efforts reflect a wider commitment to society on the part of Chinese hotel firms. At the height of the pandemic's first wave, the researchers note, they were quick to show solidarity and demonstrate their social responsibility by providing invaluable infrastructure and services for those in need. Many hotel owners worked closely with government authorities to repurpose their premises as hospital extensions, medical crew dormitories and quarantine stations. Others provided free accommodation, meals and transportation for frontline medical staff.

### **New Trends in China and Beyond**

The health and economic impacts of the pandemic have irrevocably changed the supply-demand balance of the global hotel market, requiring hotel firms to re-evaluate their current business model and set a new agenda to enhance competitiveness. This may be a blessing in disguise. Even before the pandemic, the hotel sector was facing fundamental challenges, with increasing pressure to become more customer-centric, digital, agile and sustainable. The researchers thus suggest that the "disaster may be a trigger or catalyst for a robust and more adaptable hotel sector".

Traditional hotel business models, focusing solely on catering and accommodation, are already a thing of the past. In the post-pandemic era, the hotel sector will embrace reforms facilitating multi-business and multi-channel platforms. "Hotels can maximise their space and utilize it for accommodation, catering, retail, public activities, and the off-line demonstration of products", write the researchers. They are also expected to rely increasingly on online travel agencies and e-commerce.

Meanwhile, customers will demand ever higher standards for hygiene, health, and sustainability. "New hotel products should allow customers to maintain a healthy and balanced lifestyle, exercise at will, work effectively, ensure social distancing and reduce close contact", the researchers advise. Identifying and meeting customers' needs will be facilitated by the use of digital and intelligent services to "eliminate human error, increase service efficiency, stabilise service quality and achieve cost reductions". This will in turn enhance customer satisfaction and hotel performance in a highly competitive business environment.

### **Planning for Tomorrow**

Although the long-term economic ramifications of COVID-19 are still far from certain, it seems clear that the global landscape of hospitality and tourism has changed for good. As hotel firms and brands worldwide continue to encounter new and evolving challenges, the lessons learned by and from Chinese hotels will prove invaluable. According to the researchers, the findings of this study – the first to propose a COVID-19 management framework in the context of China's hotel sector – will "enable hotel

practitioners reeling under the pandemic to live better for today and plan well for tomorrow".

### **POINTS TO NOTE**

- China's hotel sector was first and hardest hit by COVID-19, but its experiences of recovery offer lessons for the global market.
- To overcome current COVID-19 related challenges, hotels should strengthen their leadership, customer service, financing and social responsibility.
- The pandemic may be a blessing in disguise for the hotel sector, forcing an overhaul of agendas and business models.
- In the post-pandemic world, successful hotel firms and brands will be more robust, flexible, digitally savvy, and sustainable.

Fei Hao, Qu Xiao and Kaye Chon (2020). COVID-19 and China's Hotel Industry: Impacts, a Disaster Management Framework, and Post-Pandemic Agenda. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 90, 102636.

# **Training Critical Thinkers**

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has put the hospitality and tourism industry under pressure, it has also confirmed the robustness of the SHTM's pedagogy. Two talented graduates of the Doctor of Hotel and Tourism Management (D.HTM) and Master of Science in Hotel and Tourism Management (MSc in HTM) told us how the School's mainland China programmes taught them to think critically and apply their knowledge in all types of situations, even crises.

At the core of these postgraduate programmes are research-based social sciences and finance topics. "Research was the most unforgettable part of my study; every research report was full of rewards", said Mr Haochun Xu, CEO of Hanting Hotel, Shanghai and a 2020 graduate of the MSc in HTM programme.



Dr Daoqiang Liu

The programmes' rigorous instruction integrates theory and practice through case studies and in-residence classes. "Assignments are closely related to practice", noted Dr Daoqiang Liu, CEO of Fantawild Holdings Inc., who graduated from the D.HTM programme in 2020. During his overseas study, Dr Liu attended seminars given by hotel managers in Bangkok, Thailand. He described this on-site instruction as "a real, thrilling and impressive experience".

Although class topics vary widely, they all teach students to think effectively and transfer knowledge from the classroom to the workplace. Dr Liu told us that on graduating from the SHTM, he was well equipped to "look at problems from different angles, think from different levels and solve problems in a more systematic way".

Both Dr Liu and Mr Xu have already used these critical thinking skills in response to the pandemic. They have overseen rapid adaptations to meet customers' changing needs while controlling cost. "The COVID-19 pandemic is a pressure test for any hotel and brand", acknowledged Mr Xu. "However, we can promote brand evolution by meeting customer demands", he added.

With vaccines on the horizon, customers will soon be ready to travel again, and there is good reason for optimism. "There is vast room for development in the

Chinese mainland, and the market space for tourism will continue to expand", said Dr Liu. Sharing this confidence, Mr Xu suggested that after the pandemic, "customers will have more trust in socially responsible tourism enterprises and hotel brands".

The future of hospitality and tourism is bright, and there has never been a better time to pursue a postgraduate degree at the SHTM. Mr Xu urged prospective students to apply, saying, "I am waiting to meet you via the SHTM Alumni Association!" **H**



Mr Haochun Xu

Insights from other disciplines are always eagerly welcomed by the SHTM and its Hospitality and Tourism Research Centre (HTRC), as we can learn so much from new perspectives. On 18 November, the HTRC provided just such an opportunity for interdisciplinary learning, hosting an innovative workshop entitled Application of Neuroscience Approach in

faculty and students, helping us to better understand tourists' needs, preferences, and behaviour.

In the workshop's first session, SHTM Associate Professor Dr Mimi Li and her research assistant Mr Guyang Lin introduced the principles and applications of electroencephalography (EEG), a neuroimaging technique. SHTM

used to map eye positions and eye movement in various disciplines, including cognitive science, human-computer interaction, and marketing. An equipment supplier explained how an eye-tracking instrument works and how to use it. In the following demonstration session, attendees were able to take a closer look at the device and try it out for themselves.

This pioneering workshop combined an introductory overview of an unfamiliar field and methodology with interactive activities to stimulate attendees' interest and enthusiasm. As demonstrated by the innovative work already done by SHTM academics in this area, neuroscience has huge potential to contribute to tourism and hospitality research. The SHTM and its HTRC look forward to even deeper and broader interdisciplinary collaboration as these fruitful conversations continue. H

## Learning from Neuroscience



Hospitality and Tourism Research. The workshop gave attendees a hands-on understanding of how neuroscientific work is carried out and its potential to support and enhance hospitality and tourism research.

Cognitive neuroscience can unveil the secrets of the human brain by exploring how mental processes work physically. Neuroimaging is used to map how we perceive the world, through either direct or indirect observation of the brain. Neuroscientific techniques and theories are relevant to several fields of interest to the SHTM's

Assistant Professor Dr Youngjoon Choi discussed his own recent research project using EEG data, suggesting an intuitive way to integrate neuroscience with hospitality and tourism research. Thanks to a presentation by an EEG equipment supplier, the attendees had the chance to take part in a simple and vivid EEG experiment, which was enthusiastically received.

In the second session, the participants were treated to a demonstration of the eye-tracking technique, which is often used alongside neuroimaging technology. Eye-tracking sensors are



The electroencephalogram technique was demonstrated during the workshop



## Industry Advancement through Consultancy

The SHTM has a long history of supporting the hospitality and tourism industry by providing consultancy and professional advisory services in Hong Kong and across the world. In 2018, the School took these efforts to the next level by joining forces with Hotel ICON to further drive innovation and knowledge transfer to the industry and other educational institutes.

The result, SHTM+ICON Consultancy, is the perfect synergy of the strengths of these institutions. The practical knowledge and experience of Hotel ICON, a test bed for innovation, help to translate the SHTM's research prowess into cutting-edge management,

customer relations, and other hospitality solutions. The talented team of SHTM+ICON consultants has already offered its unique and innovative expertise to satisfied clients across the globe, from mainland China to Australia, Jamaica and the Middle East.

**SHTM+ICON**  
Defining the Future

International tourism in the Middle East continues to grow, and with it the demand for highly trained tourism staff. The University

of Tabuk (UT) has recognised the need to nurture and cultivate local tourism professionals, and the SHTM is proud to have been asked to develop a series of academic programmes to support the university in this endeavour.

The potential for tourism in Saudi Arabia is enormous, and the large-scale development of luxury destinations in its north-western region, where Tabuk is located, is well under way. Working closely with the UT, the SHTM will support the establishment of its new College of Tourism and Hospitality. It will also develop a Bachelor's programme, three vocational programmes (Hospitality, Food and Beverages, and Tourism), and a bridging

programme enabling graduates of the vocational programmes to complete the Bachelor's programme.

This exciting new project follows on from the SHTM's collaborative endeavour with King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia five years ago. This project resulted in three programmes designed specifically for the Saudi Arabian context: a diploma programme in Travel and Tourism Management, a Bachelor of Science degree in Travel and Tourism Management, and a Master of Science degree in Event and Tourism Management.

COVID-19 landscape, will rely on exceptional talent, which the SHTM and SHTM+ICON Consultancy are committed to delivering.

## Smart Innovation

The SHTM is also proud to have taken on an important hotel consultancy project closer to home. The GDH Group's holdings include many of the leading urban hotels in mainland China and Hong

To complement and position this refurbishment, the SHTM has worked to further develop the brand guidelines of the hotel. It has focused on the story of the renovation, the meaning and mission of the brand, and its role in Hong Kong's future tourism. To support the service standards of Oasis Avenue, the SHTM has synchronised this brand strategy and core values with the hotel's front of house, service quality department, housekeeping, and IT infrastructure. This will ensure that the holistic, efficient, and on-brand operation of the hotel is fully sustainable.

SHTM+ICON has drawn on the educational resources and practical experience of Hotel ICON, which has innovation, sustainability, and style at its heart, to further support Oasis Avenue Hotel in developing its premium service standards, integrating smart technology, and improving its operational efficiency. SHTM+ICON offers a wide range of tourism-related services that are carefully customised to meet individual organisational needs. As a result, Oasis Avenue has received fully personalised consultancy services of the very highest calibre.

As technology advances and standards for hospitality service provision rise, we are confident that Oasis Avenue will become established as one of the most innovative urban hotels in the region. This is perfectly in line with the mission of SHTM+ICON Consultancy – to define the future of hospitality and tourism in Hong Kong and beyond. **H**



The SHTM is very proud to share its experience and knowledge with peer institutions and help nurture talent for the sustainable development of the industry, particularly in regions such as the Middle East, which are currently focusing on rapid expansion.

The SHTM and its exciting new venture SHTM+ICON Consultancy have already achieved great success in designing tailor-made academic hospitality management programmes. Their consideration of local needs and their professionalism ensure that these programmes nurture and train capable and innovative graduates. The future development of the industry, especially in a post

Kong. The SHTM was appointed to provide consultancy services to support the group's renovation of the Oasis Avenue Hotel, which is located in the heart of downtown Hong Kong.

This major renovation project has transformed Oasis Avenue into an innovative and impressive smart hotel, replete with robot concierges, smart controls in every room, and a stylish yet friendly new urban look. The GDH Group's inventive approach to new technology is based on the "smart green" concept, seeking to reduce the waste created by disposable products.



## Nurturing Human Capital

The COVID-19 pandemic has dealt a devastating blow to industries worldwide, and the hospitality and tourism industry is no exception. However, change is at the heart of the work we do, and few institutions are better equipped than the SHTM to lead the industry out of crisis into a "new normal". Redoubling its efforts to develop human capital for a smooth recovery, the School revamped its Executive Development Programmes in 2020 to tackle the numerous logistical challenges associated with the pandemic.

Both the Hong Kong PolyU Winter School and a Certified Hospitality Educators workshop went online, with a further three

workshops on the horizon. The attendees – ranging from senior executives to educators – had the chance to upgrade their skills and broaden their knowledge in the comfort and safety of their own homes.

## Towards Recovery

The SHTM's flagship Executive Development Programme, the Hong Kong PolyU Winter School (HKWS-X), went online in December 2020. The 18th annual Winter School offered 12 one-

hour modules that covered a wide range of hospitality and tourism management topics, all centred on recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The opening module happened on 2 December. Dr Ada Lo, SHTM Associate Professor, and Mr Patrick Yeung, SHTM Professor of Practice (Tourism Marketing), discussed the benefits of digital marketing, which offers "endless new opportunities to interact with customers". Thriving in the digital era was also the theme of the next day's module. Dr Dan Wang, SHTM Associate Professor, explained how organisations can cope with "fast emerging technological innovations that are changing travellers' behaviour

and competition in tourism and hospitality”.

Wellness tourism was the topic on 4 December. Dr Deniz Kucukusta, SHTM Associate Professor, urged tourism businesses to explore this exciting new sector by “catering to the well-being needs of travellers”, such as a healthy lifestyle and stress-free experiences.

Next, attendees discovered the importance of a sense of purpose in achieving organisational goals. On 7 December, Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean and Chair Professor, described the six steps involved in dynamically and effectively leading an organisation: “purpose, goals, passion, creativity, humility, and leadership”.

Collaboration is also crucial – especially during crises. In the next module, held on 8 December, Dr Jennifer Cronin, President of Wharf Hotels Management Ltd, delivered the inspiring message that “in times of adversity, a collaborative spirit brings together like-minded leaders for the benefit of the industry and the greater community”.

The next day, the participants learned from Dr Sangwon Park, SHTM Associate Professor, how destination management organisations can capitalise on “massive tourist data information”, such as data on smart card use, car rentals, mobile navigation, and Wi-Fi access.

On 10 December, Mr Jonathan Glover, SHTM Instructor, identified five concrete steps that will help food and beverage operators to survive the pandemic, from “health and hygiene” to “marketing and communication with customers”. Surviving difficult times was also considered by Dr Pearl Lin, SHTM Associate Professor, on 11 December. Similar to Dr Lin’s summer workshop, this module

prepared attendees to “resolve conflicts and manage difficult situations in the workplace”.

A novel approach to problem solving was offered on 14 December by Dr Harah Chon of the School of Design Communication, LASALLE College of the Arts. “Against today’s changing hospitality landscape”, she explained, “design thinking provides a creative approach to addressing business challenges”.

The module on 15 December covered the influence of COVID-19 on the luxury sector. SHTM Professor Basak Denizci Guillet discussed the “major challenges faced by luxury brands, followed by short-term and long-term considerations and priorities for luxury industry executives”.

In his module on 16 December, Dr Maxime Wang, SHTM Assistant Professor, noted that due to COVID-19 and high labour costs, “the hospitality industry increasingly adopts service robots to replace human beings”. He suggested ways of balancing this reliance on technology with the people-oriented nature of the hospitality business.

Reflecting on our current situation and looking to the future, the final module of the HKWS-X, led by Professor Brian King, SHTM Associate Dean and Professor, taught the participants “what it takes to become a change agent” during crises such as COVID-19.

## On the Horizon

Soon after the Winter School, the SHTM rang in the new year

with a January virtual workshop for Certified Hospitality Educators, developed by the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute. Five intensive, interactive learning sessions were led by Dr Fred Mayo of New York University. This was the perfect culmination to the year’s series of Executive Development Programmes.

Building on the success on these online events, a series of three one-day online workshops is planned. Offering timely guidance on steering the industry out of crisis, the first will focus on leadership development. Professor Brian King, SHTM Associate Dean, will teach hospitality leaders and leaders-to-be the communication skills needed to strengthen organisational culture and manage change.

In the second workshop, Dr Pearl Lin, SHTM Associate Professor, will invite hospitality managers to discuss their experiences of conflict in the workplace and brainstorm novel approaches to conflict management. On the agenda in the final workshop of the series will be performance appraisal. Guided by Dr Maxime Wang, SHTM Assistant Professor, executives, managers, and HR staff will have the chance to view performance through the lens of organisational culture and apply their learning to real-life cases.

The SHTM firmly believes that by investing in people, we can together overcome any and all challenges faced by the industry. **H**

# In Brief...

## SHTM Excellence Awards

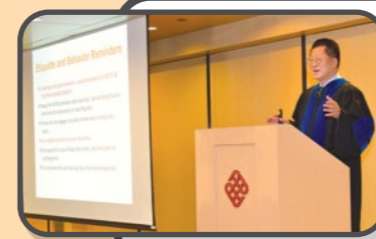
Four SHTM faculty members were recently recognised for outstanding performance in their fields.

**Professor Brian King** received an **SHTM Teaching Excellence Award** for his success in inspiring students’ global leadership aspirations in a stimulating learning environment.

**Professor Rob Law**, who has authored and co-authored 260 refereed articles in high-impact journals, received an **SHTM Research Excellence Award**.

**Ms Almen Yau** received an **SHTM Service Excellence Award** in recognition of her consistent operational excellence and exemplary service at the SHTM.

**Dr Daniel Leung** was awarded the inaugural **Online Teaching Excellence Award** for engaging students in an online environment through his well-designed virtual courses.



## Virtual Welcoming Day

On 1 September, the SHTM hosted its first-ever online **Welcoming Day**. **Professor Kaye Chon**, Dean and Chair Professor and Walter & Wendy Kwok Family Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management, welcomed all new students to the School and introduced the staff who would be teaching them. The School was also delighted to host **Ms Sylvia Chung**, Deputy Managing Director, L’hotel Management Company Limited, who delivered the annual **Dean’s Distinguished Lecture**. She inspired students and staff alike with a speech entitled “Brand DNA – Why it matters and how you can build it”.

## Virtual Dress Orange Day

Dress Orange Day is one of the most popular events in the SHTM’s calendar for both staff and students. This year, our celebration of World Tourism Day by dressing in the School’s colour took place online on 25 September. A range of fun activities proved popular with all of the attendees. A short video competition with the theme “What would you like to say to OUR industry?” was won by Ph.D. student **Provia Kesande**. The runners-up were Ph.D. student **Fanny Manner-Baldeon** and BSc student **Assem Ospan**. The winners of the Tourism Knowledge Competition were Ph.D. students **Ekaterina Chevtaeva** and **Farisha Nisha** and D.HTM student **Hongbo Zhang**.



## Award-winning Paper



**Professor Brian King** and his co-authors received an **Award for Highly Commended Paper** at the 2020 Emerald Literati Awards for a co-authored paper entitled “Co-Creation and Co-Destruction of Service Quality through Customer-to-Customer Interactions: Why Prior Experience Matters”, which was published in the International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management. The judges described the paper as one of the most impressive pieces of work that they had seen in 2019. This award-winning publication has been made freely available online for six months.

## Research with Global Impact

**Professor Rob Law**, SHTM Professor of Technology Management, was recognised as a **Clarivate™ Highly Cited Researcher 2020** in the Social Sciences category. This award recognises outstanding scholars from around the world who have published multiple papers that rank in the top 1% by citations in their field in the Web of Science™.



## A Tasty Masterclass

Students taking **Dr Pearl Lin's** course The Evolution of World Cuisine were treated to a very special online masterclass by the two Michelin star chef **Mr Javier Aranda**. Mr Aranda demonstrated the unique cooking methods used to make two Spanish beef dishes. Sponsored by the European Union's project to promote European beef in Hong Kong, the session was highly interactive despite being held online, with students excited to discover some of the secrets of Spanish cuisine.



## Student Success in STR Competition



Undergraduates **Eva Chau, Martin Meng** and **Marcus Yuen** took **third place** in the **STR Market Study**

**Competition**, which was held online in 2020. They were honoured for their insightful study of the Beijing hotel market.

The SHTM also congratulates **Lorsh Cheng, Muriel Wang** and **Rose Zhou** on obtaining **fifth place** in the postgraduate division of the competition.

Organised by the STR, the leading data analytics provider for the accommodation industry, the competition attracted its largest turnout on record this year.

## Prestigious Wine Awards

Five students in our Master of Science in International Wine Management programme (**Harrison Li, Xinmeng Liu, Yi Tang, Bring Wang** and **Huanyin Zhang**) received the **"Rookie of the Year Award"** at the 2020 Intercollegiate Wine Business Invitational wine label design and business plan development competition.

This prestigious annual event is hosted by the Wine Business Education and Washington State University, and attracts teams of wine and hospitality students from around the world to compete for the title.



## SHTM Represented at Highest Level

The SHTM's **Professor Sam Kim** was elected Vice President of the Asia-Pacific Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education (APacCHRIE) in 2020. He will succeed Ms Margaret Heng as President of APacCHRIE in 2021.



# Talented Students Rise to the Challenge

SHTM students have always benefited from diverse opportunities to gain real-world experience and learn from industry insiders, and 2020 was no different. The COVID-19 pandemic demanded a creative approach to engagement, but through the dedication of organisers, students were able to immerse themselves in a series of interactive and informative online events.

On 18 September, the HTM1010 Virtual Society Fair introduced the missions and activities of the SHTM's seven Student Chapters, which are organised by students for students. Members of the Bacchus Wine Society can explore their passion for the finer things in life, for example, while the SHTM Event Society hones students' event management skills. Capping off the event, three faculty advisors, Professor Sam Kim, Dr Youngjoon Choi, and Dr Daniel

Leung, offered guidance on forging a career in the industry.

The year also saw 32 students from the Special Events Class deliver three conferences tackling the biggest challenges facing hospitality and tourism. APacCHRIE 2020, the 11th APacCHRIE Youth Conference, and IMPACT2020 were simultaneously delivered in person and broadcast online, allowing attendees across the world to enjoy every minute of these fascinating events.

The talented group of undergraduates rose to the challenge of rapidly organising APacCHRIE 2020 and its sister event, the APacCHRIE Youth Conference, after they were initially cancelled due to COVID-19. "Now more than ever, the hospitality and tourism industry needs these platforms for debate", said Miss Sarah Cheung, who played an integral role in coordinating all three conferences.

At the APacCHRIE 2020 on 27-28 October, educators and researchers met with industry executives and government officials to discuss current and future challenges facing the industry. Taking place at the same time, the APacCHRIE Youth Conference, now in its 11th year, provided a unique opportunity for leadership development, networking, and communication among undergraduates. It also gave the participants experience of presenting their work, with prizes awarded for the best papers.

Just two days later, on 30 October, the inaugural IMPACT2020 conference was held at Hotel ICON and online. The organising committee brought together academics, industry executives, and government officials to debate the theme of "Crisis Management and Recovery Strategies" – a topic especially timely amidst geopolitical and socio-economic uncertainties and the global health crisis.

"Although we cannot travel physically, due to the pandemic", said Janna Lee, final-year student and PR director for the Special Events Class, "we have shown that we are still connected, undivided". The School sincerely congratulates its students on what they have accomplished and is proud to be represented on the local and international stage by such a committed, creative, and innovative group. **H**



Students from the Special Events Class discussing the flow of the conference

# Staff Updates



**Dr Gemmy Moon** joined the School as Research Assistant Professor on 21 September 2020.



**Dr Gianluca Goffi** joined the School as a Postdoctoral Fellow on 13 November 2020.



**Dr Judit Zoltan** joined the School as a Research Associate on 2 November 2020.



**Ms Elaine Cheng** was promoted to Assistant Officer with effect from 16 November 2020.

# Celebrating Student Excellence

## Dean's List

### SHTM Academic Achievement Award

Justly proud of the dedication and determination shown by its students, the SHTM is committed to celebrating their excellence and rewarding their hard work. Every year, each student who achieves a grade point average of 3.7 or above is honoured with an Academic Achievement Award.

The School regrets that it was not possible to hold an award ceremony this year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, each awardee received a certificate and a personal letter of congratulation.

The SHTM commends the following students on their impressive achievements in Semesters 1, 2, and 3 of the 2019–2020 academic year. #

#### BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (HONOURS) IN HOTEL MANAGEMENT

AHN Seo Won  
AN Hei Man  
CHAN Cherine  
CHAN Cheryl  
CHAN Hiu Fung  
CHAN Jeffrey Arthur  
CHAN Ka Ki  
CHAN Mang Cheong  
CHAN Yan Tung  
CHAN Yuen Ching  
CHAU Ming Wai  
CHENG Pui Yi  
CHEUNG Hiu Lam  
CHEUNG Ka Chun  
CHO Myounghun  
CHU Ka Man  
DAI Wenxuan  
DENG Yuxuan  
FENG Zibing  
FU Lun  
HO Hsiang-yu  
HO Ka Yiu  
HU Qian  
HUANG Ying  
JACQUES Megan Eliza  
JAPARDY Winny Wira  
JEONG Habin  
KAN Yan Chak  
KAY Tin Wai

KIM Da Young  
KIM Kyubeen  
KOO Cheuk Nam  
LAI Chi Lam  
LAI Hoi Tik  
LAI Ka Ki  
LAI Lok Tin  
LAM Shing Yuen  
LAM Wing Laam  
LAU Ka Yu  
LAU Sin Tung  
LAU Wing  
LAW Sin Yan  
LEE Chak Sum Alex  
LI Choi Yi  
LI Chun Bong Martin  
LI Tak Yi  
LI Xiaoran  
LIMBU Asha  
LIN Hanlu  
LING Chi Yeung  
LIU An-chi  
LIU Qianwen  
LIU Qiying  
LIU Shangshu  
LIU Xuechen  
LO Kei Ching  
LO Sze Ki  
LUK Yee Wa  
LUO Hanzhi  
MA Jing  
MA Shengrong  
MAK Sze Ting

MENG Jiayang  
MI Dubing  
NG Hayden  
NG Lai Wan  
NG Yan Kin  
NGAN Lok Tung  
OSPAN Assem  
SEAH Xin Yi  
SHIU Man Yee  
SMITH Amelia Jane  
SO Shiu To Tobias  
STEPHANIE  
SUEN Cheuk Hin  
SYLTE Leandra Celeste  
TAO Yi  
TSE Hei Yiu  
WAN Hoi Yan  
WANG Zhuoli  
WONG Ching Ching  
WONG Ching Man  
WONG Pui Ying  
WONG Suet Ting Snowy  
WONG Wui Sze  
WONG Yan Yung  
WONG Yat Ching  
WONG Yat Lam Scarlet  
WU Jinnuo  
WU Yini  
YANG Lei  
YANG Xiaoming  
YE Xuan  
YOUN Sung Bin  
YU Chenxi

YU Chin Yan Beatrice  
YU Yan Ting Stephanie  
YUEN Mei Sin  
YUNG Ka Yi Kelly  
ZHAO Zeyu  
ZHENG Kelly  
ZHU Ziwei

#### BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (HONOURS) IN TOURISM MANAGEMENT

LEE Jae Yeul

#### BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (HONOURS) IN TOURISM AND EVENTS MANAGEMENT

CHAN Lian  
CHENG Hiu Yin  
CHEUNG Gilda Man Ting  
CHEUNG Ka Man  
CHOI Yan Hei  
HE Zhaotang  
HUANG Yina  
HUNG Ling Keung  
JANDAY Sumanjit  
KEUNG Yu Hang  
KIM Ye Jin  
KWAN Yuk Yee  
LAI Tin Wing  
LAM Kin Wang

LAM King Hang  
LAU Yuen Shan  
LEE Kar Yee Noble  
LEE So Hyun  
LEE Sun Jin  
LEE Wing Kwan  
LEE Yun  
LONG Yiwei  
MOON Jina  
PANG Ka Wai  
SHIN Young Eun  
SUEN Wai Ting  
SUGIRBAYEVA Aidyn  
TAN Joshua Yee Chong  
TIAN Yushi  
TO Yuen Mei  
TUNG Wing Tung  
WONG Adelina Jia Hng  
WONG Hoi Yan  
WONG Po Kwan  
YAN Tsz Ching  
YIP Ka Yan  
YIP Man Ting  
YU Ka Lok  
YUAN Peiyi  
YUE Qiuyang

## SHTM Outstanding Alumni

Each year, the SHTM confers a special honour on a graduate whose outstanding professional leadership is shaping the future of the hospitality and tourism industry. It is difficult to imagine a better ambassador for the School than this year's winner of the SHTM Outstanding Alumni Award, Mr David Lau, Chief Executive Officer of Ocean Sky Hotel Management Limited.

An exemplary student, Mr Lau graduated from the SHTM's MSc in International Hospitality Management in 2013. Attending classes at night, he prepared for the launch of his independent boutique hotel in Tsim Sha Tsui during the day. Popway Hotel opened to great acclaim just two years later, followed by the expansion of the Popway customer base to Japan.

The SHTM prides itself in nurturing innovative and entrepreneurial graduates capable of advancing the hotel industry in Hong Kong and beyond. A true hotel entrepreneur and role model for the industry, Mr Lau is keen to "keep generating ground-breaking ideas to make Hong Kong hotels more unique and successful in the future". Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, he believes that "where there is risk, there is opportunity". This inspiring alumnus is one to watch as he continues to innovate and drive success in the industry to ever greater heights.

### Award Recipients

**2020**  
**Mr David Lau**  
**Chief Executive Officer -**  
**Ocean Sky Hotel**  
**Management Limited**



**2019**  
Dr C. Louis Shih  
Executive Director - Old Stone Hotels  
Co., Ltd



**2018**  
Ms Betty Simpson  
General Manager of  
The Helena May



**2017**  
Mr Xu Peng  
Associate Director of Tourism  
Administration - Zhejiang Provincial  
Tourism Administration



**2016**  
Mr Jason Wong  
Director & General Manager -  
Hong Thai Travel Services Limited &  
Chairman - Travel Industry Council of  
Hong Kong



**2015**  
Dr James Mabey  
Chief International Business Officer,  
Head of Asia and Middle East -  
Standard International, LLC



**2014**  
Ms Sylvia Chung  
Deputy Managing Director - L'hotel  
Management Company Limited



**2013**  
Mr Victor Chan  
General Manager - The Kowloon Hotel  
& Former Chairman - Hong Kong  
Hotels Association



**2012**  
Mr William Lin  
Deputy General Manager -  
Guangzhou Lingnan International  
Enterprise Group Company Limited



**2011**  
Mr Maurice Kong  
Assistant General Manager of Food &  
Beverage - New World Development  
Company Limited



**2010**  
Mr Wilson Lee  
General Manager - Hyatt Regency  
Hong Kong, Sha Tin



**2009**  
Ms Alison Yau  
Chairperson - SHTM Alumni  
Association



**2008**  
Mr Jeremy Xu  
Chief Executive Officer, Mainland  
China Business - MTR Corporation Ltd



**2007**  
Mr Sunny Sun  
New Brand Development Advisor -  
Wyndham Hotel Group



**2006**  
Mr Wallace Li  
Head of Food & Beverage Operations  
(Designate), Racecourses & Special  
Projects - The Hong Kong Jockey Club



**2005**  
Mr Leo Lee  
Associate Director - K. Wah  
International Holdings Limited



**2004**  
Ms Zuleika Mok  
Senior Vice President of Human  
Resources - Wynn Macau



**2003**  
Mrs Kitty Byron  
Human Resource Manager - Apple  
Retail



**2002**  
Mr Nixon Chung  
Founder & Managing Director - Camloy  
International Limited



We invite you to stay  
connected!



# Alum-n-otes

## 1990s

**Ms Nancy Cheung**  
**HD in Hotel Management 1995** is Director, Sales – HK, Southern China & Taiwan at The Leading Hotels of the World Ltd.

**Mr Dennis Wong**  
**HD in Hotel Management 1996** is Director of Talent and Culture at the Rosewood Hong Kong.

## 2010s

**Dr Alexander Grunewald**  
**Ph.D. in Hotel and Tourism Management 2010** is Principal Director at Accenture.

**Mr Zelotes Lam**  
**BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2011** is Senior Manager - Operations & Efficiency at Swire Hotels.

**Ms Sindy Fu**  
**BSc(Hons) in Tourism Management 2012** is Assistant Manager, Digital Partnership, Card Usage & Loyalty at Citibank.

**Mr Wesley Ling**  
**BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2012** is Director of Talent & Culture at Carlyle & Co.

**Mr Leung Chi Ho**  
**HD in Hotel Management 2012** is Operations Officer at Ramada Hong Kong Grand.

**Ms Cherie Huen**  
**BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2013** is Assistant Event Manager at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (Management) Limited.

**Mr Santos Huen**  
**BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2013** is Guest Experience Manager at The Temple House Chengdu.

**Ms Carol Chan**  
**BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2014** is Implementation Consultant at Oracle Hong Kong.

**Mr Kevin Chan**  
**BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2015** is Guest Services Manager at Four Seasons Hotel London, Ten Trinity Square.

**Ms Ivy Yung**  
**BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2015** is Sales & Marketing Executive at Vietnam Airlines.

**Mr Alvin Cheung**  
**BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2016** is Sales Executive – Corporate (Hong Kong) at Shangri-La Group.

**Mr Benjamin Kot**  
**BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2016** is Assistant Market Manager at Agoda.

**Mr Kelvin Chiang**  
**MSc in International Hospitality Management 2017** is Memory Fitness Lead at Aljoia Thornton Place.

**Mr Matthew Kum**  
**BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2017** is Assistant Manager, Rooms at Shangri-La Hotels & Resorts.

**Ms Regene Tam**  
**BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2017** is Key Account Executive at Vita Green Health Products Co., Ltd.

**Dr Matias Jørgensen**  
**Ph.D. in Hotel and Tourism Management 2018** is Associate Professor at the Department of Social Sciences and Business, Roskilde University.

**Mr Simon Zhao**  
**MSc in International Hospitality Management 2018** is Senior Project Planning Manager at Huazhu Group Limited.

**Ms Lianne Lee**  
**BSc(Hons) in Convention and Event Management 2018** is Assistant Project Executive at Connexus Travel.

**Ms Maggie Sun**  
**MSc in Hotel and Tourism Management 2019** is Human Resources Manager, InterContinental Shenzhen.

**Ms Yannie Yau**  
**BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2013, MSc in International Hospitality Management 2019** is Catering Service Office I at Cathay Pacific Catering Services (HK) Ltd.

**Ms Maria Pia Morey Poma**  
**MSc in International Tourism and Convention Management 2020** is Assistant Manager at S&S Hospitality.

**Ms Pollyanna Cheng**  
**BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2020** is Manager in Training at Black Sheep Restaurants.

**Mr Martin Li**  
**BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2020** is Corporate Management Trainee at Hong Kong China Travel (Group) Ltd.

**Ms Carole Tsang**  
**BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2020** is Operations Trainee in Food and Beverage of Cordis Hong Kong.

## Invaluable Industry Input

The School thanks the industry executives who generously shared their knowledge and experience as professors for a day.

Speaker	Title and Company	Topic
Ms Aishah BOHARI	Director of Sales and Marketing, Sindhorn Kempinski Hotel Bangkok, The Residences at Sindhorn Kempinski Hotel Bangkok	Role of Sales and Marketing in Opening a New Hotel in the Midst of Challenges
Ms Karen BOLINGER	Managing Director, Asia Pacific, The Professional Convention Management Association	Challenges and Opportunities for the BE Industry Resulting from COVID-19
Mr Kenneth CHAN	Vice President, Culture Homes	Winning in Consultancy Life
Mr Avinash CHANDARANA	Global Learning and Development Director, MCI Hong Kong	Meeting Experience Design
Ms Zoe CHEN	Market Director of Revenue Strategy, South China, Marriott International Inc	Strategic Revenue Management
Mr Dane CHENG	Executive Director, Hong Kong Tourism Board	Discussing Leadership with Hong Kong's Tourism Chief
Dr Jennifer CRONIN	President, Wharf Hotels Management Limited	Leading Through Turbulent Times
Mr Wilfred FAN	Chief Commercial Officer, Klook	Online Travel Future Trends
Ms Jie FENG	Senior Consultant, Meituan	Corporate Universities as Core Competences: The Case of Meituan Hotel College
Mr Nathan GREEN	Head Chef, Henry Restaurant, Rosewood Hotel	Introduction to Food and Beverage Operations
Mr Richard HATTER	General Manager, Hotel ICON	Leadership – A Life Learning Story
Mr Alex HO	Assistant Director, Talent Development, Wharf Hotels	How to Prepare for Starting Your Hospitality Career Amid COVID-19
Mr Yuzhou HUANG	Vice President, Fliggy	Platform Strategies: How to Help the Hotel Industry
Ms Ellis JAYME; Mr CHAU Meng Han	Marketing and Communications Officer; Junior Trader, Sucafina HK Limited	Basics of Coffee, Popular Coffee Growing Areas
Dr Jane Shaojun JI	Associate Professor, Tourism College of Beijing Union University	Application of 5G in Tourism Products and Marketing
Mr Chao JIA	Founder and Chairman, Movie Hotel	Differentiation Strategy: Movie Hotel
Mr Jascha JIANG	Senior Revenue Manager, Hong Kong Revenue Cluster, Marriott International Inc	Strategic Pricing
Mr Anand JINDAL	Group Director of Revenue Management and Distributions, Wharf Hotels	Hotel Sales and Marketing and Revenue Management: Driving Success Through Technology and Innovation
Mr Peter JUNG	Executive Director, Milton Exhibits Group	The Unexpected Events
Ms Peggy LAI	Director of Human Resources, Classified Group	Restaurant Multi-Unit Management – Classified Group Human Resources' Challenges and Best Practices, Management Trainee Program and Career Opportunities
Ms Monica LEE MULLER	Managing Director, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre	Sustaining Excellence in the Convention and Events Sector: (Personal) Reflections on Leadership
Mr Joseph LEUNG; Mr Bailey BAI	Senior Director; Senior Manager, Food Service Operations, Universal Studio Beijing	Food Services
Ms Alice LI	Senior Manager, Public Affairs, Hong Kong Tourism Board	Crisis and Tourism
Ms Ping LIU	Founder, China Star Ltd.	Business Events Industry in Mainland China
Ms Wendy LIU	Executive Assistant Manager, Dubai Burj Al Arab Hotel	Tips for Daily Operations in Resort Hotel Management
Mr Michael LOH	Chief Accountant, Hotel ICON	Restaurant Multi-Unit Management – The Challenges of Food & Beverage Costing and Control in Multi-Unit Food & Beverage Outlets of Hotel ICON
Mr NGUYEN Duc Huy	Owner and Founder, Vietponics Cooperative	Restaurant Multi-Unit Management – Farm to the Table through Hydroponics for RMUM in Food Supply Chain
Ms Natalie O'BRIEN	CEO, Ballarat Regional Tourism (Australia)	Hotel and Tourism Senior Executive Seminars
Mr Bin RUI	Partner, Whales Capital	Strategic Renewal of Huawei
Mr Lavin SAMTANI	Director of Food & Beverage, Hotel ICON	Food & Beverage Management Experience, and Challenges of Food & Beverage Operations in Hotel ICON Outlets during COVID-19
Dr Sandy Ye SHEN	Lecturer, University of Guelph	Eye-Tracking Technology and Triangulated Approach in Tourism and Hospitality Research
Mr Mark SHRIVES	Senior Director, Client Services, MDS Asia Pacific, Marriott International	Digital Marketing – Chain Hotel
Mr Michael TAM	Founding Director, Café Sausalito Hong Kong	Specialty Coffee Extraction Methods and Cupping
Dr Jacky Chuanzhong TANG	Lecturer, Dongbei University of Finance and Economics	Aviation Industry of China
Mr Serge THERIAULT	Director, Nutrition Kitchen	Introduction to Food and Beverage Operations
Mr Sen TIAN	Founder and CEO, Menduner	My Entrepreneurial Journey at Menduner
Dr Simon TIAN	CEO, Menduner	Managing Employees in Service Quality Management
Dr Jacky TING	Head of Innovation and Digital Transformation, Midas	The Unexpected Events
Mr Chavanan URASYANANDANA	Chef Owner and Chef Consultant Klukhaus, Kidzilla BKK	Ghost Kitchen
Mr Stephen WONG	Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data, Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data	How Hospitality and Tourism Industry will be Impacted by Technology in the Context of Ethics and Data Privacy?
Mr David ZHANG	Founder and CEO, Showcase Technology	Online Souvenir Platform: Its Strategy
Mr Naihua ZHANG	President, Zhejiang Guoda Group Hospitality Management Group	Challenges of a Start-up Online Travel Souvenir Company
Mr Simon ZHAO	Consultant, Horwath HTL	Strategic Plan of Zhejiang Guoda Hospitality Management Group
		Life as a Consultant

## Upcoming Events

### 12 March

Event: Career Day 2021  
Organiser: SHTM  
Contact: Mr Chris Luk  
Email: chris.luk@polyu.edu.hk

### 27 March

Event: 26th PolyU Congregation (SHTM)  
Organiser: SHTM

### 2-4 June

Event: 19th Asia-Pacific CHRIE Conference, Singapore  
Organiser: SHATEC

### 30 June - 3 July

Event: The 26th Asia Pacific Tourism Association (APTA) Annual Conference, Chiang Mai, Thailand  
Organisers: APTA and Chiang Mai University  
Contact: Dr SooCheong (Shawn) Jang  
Email: jang12@purdue.edu

Website: <https://www.apta2021.org>

# 2021

**Dr Alexander  
Grunewald**  
(Ph.D. 2010)  
Principal Director  
Accenture

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

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

**Mr Robben Luo**  
(MSc 2017)  
Greater China Sales &  
Brand Ambassador  
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 2020, placed No. 1 globally in the "Commerce, Management, Tourism and Services" category in the University Ranking by Academic Performance in 2019/2020 and ranked No. 1 in the world in the "Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism" subject area by the CWUR Rankings by Subject 2017, 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, Korea, mainland China, Peru, Romania 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 strong international team of over 70 faculty members with diverse cultural backgrounds. The various postgraduate 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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