

Horizons

SHTM Magazine

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TAN SIU LIN INNOVATION HUB

Opening Ceremony



Leading Hospitality and Tourism

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF HOTEL & TOURISM MANAGEMENT

- ✦ Grand Opening of a Major New Facility – the Tan Siu Lin Innovation Hub
- ✦ The School Announces the Launch of a Sustainability-Focused EDP
- ✦ Two International Conferences Chart the Path to Tourism Recovery
- ✦ Five Outstanding Alumni Share their Secrets to Career Success

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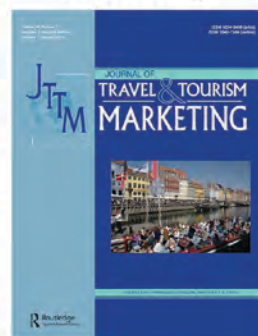
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Shaping the Future

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DEAN'S MESSAGE

Innovation is at the core of the mission and success of the SHTM. Rarely has this commitment been better illustrated than in October last year, when the School cut the ribbon on a brand-new facility designed to spearhead advances in hospitality and tourism education. The opening of the Tan Siu Lin Innovation Hub is commemorated in the cover story of this issue of *Horizons*.

Driving growth in the industry was also the vision of the IMPACT2022 conference co-organised by the SHTM in November. Readers can find out exactly how industry and academia came together at this event to "embrace the new normal". Another international platform for debate co-organised by the SHTM features later in the issue, with a story on the 16th UNWTO/PATA Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook.

We are delighted to take this opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of the next generation of professionals nurtured by the School. Congratulations go to those graduating at the 28th PolyU Congregation (SHTM) last year. In another highlight of the issue, five outstanding alumni tell us how studying at the SHTM shaped their paths to career success.

More inspiration for forging a bright future in hospitality and tourism came from this year's Dean's Distinguished Lecture, which was delivered by industry expert Mrs Jennifer Su Tan whose insights into the power of communication are well captured in this issue.

Equally inspiring is a series of stories that showcase the School's pioneering and ever-expanding offering of Executive Development Programmes, as well as our on-campus and online academic programmes. Those interested in exploring the evolving frontiers of hospitality and tourism can also peruse the latest ground-breaking research by SHTM faculty.

Academic endeavours at the SHTM are always complemented by a rich calendar of student activities and food and beverage activities, and this year was no exception! Rounding off the issue are snapshots of the year's vibrant extracurricular initiatives, along with memorable events and staff updates.

By immersing themselves in this issue of *Horizons* magazine, readers can join the SHTM on its latest quest to find new directions and explore new horizons for hospitality and tourism. My sincere thanks go to everyone for their unfailing support for the School. #

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




Mrs Jennifer Su Tan, Dr Tan Siu Lin, Prof Kaye Chon and Dr Miranda Lou, with honoured guests and SHTM faculty members and students, at the opening ceremony

A New Space for Innovation

As 2022, PolyU's 85th anniversary year, drew to a close, the SHTM still had some surprises in store. On 18 October, the School was delighted to announce the opening of the Tan Siu Lin Innovation Hub (the Hub), established with the generous support of the Tan Siu Lin Foundation. Spanning more than 130 square metres on the School's third floor, the Hub is equipped with state-of-the-art digital equipment and specialised software to prepare students and researchers to realise their full potential in the hospitality and tourism industry.

The Hub was officially opened by Dr Tan Siu Lin, founder of the Tan

Siu Lin Foundation; Mrs Jennifer Su Tan, the Foundation's Executive Director; Dr Miranda Lou, Executive Vice President of PolyU; and Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean, Chair Professor and Walter and Wendy Kwok Family Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management.

The establishment of this major new facility represents a vital milestone in the evolution of the SHTM and its valued educational partnership with the Tan Siu Lin Foundation, a nonprofit philanthropic organisation committed to enhancing quality of life in the communities it serves.

Thanks to the Hub, the SHTM is now even better equipped to realise its motto of "Leading Hospitality and Tourism" in the digital age.

Our Technological Tomorrow

Whilst hospitality and tourism are, of course, people-oriented, they rely increasingly on technology. As technological development accelerates and a "new normal"

emerges in the wake of the pandemic, the industry's success will depend on its ability not only to adapt to change but also to lead the way in innovation. This is precisely the mission of the newly established Innovation Hub. The School's third floor is now home to a vibrant new learning environment in which students can experiment with and master the tools and technologies that represent the future of hospitality and tourism.

"The School of Hotel and Tourism Management is one of the best hospitality schools in the world", said Mrs Su Tan, speaking at the Hub's opening ceremony. "The Tan Siu Lin Innovation Hub will give students the opportunity to stay up to date with technological advances that are very important to the future of the industry".

Students are not the only beneficiaries of this landmark initiative. With regular classes already in full swing at the Hub and substantial overlap with the SHTM's Executive Development Programmes, a broad range of researchers and practitioners are expected to gain industry expertise and experience in this important new learning space. "It will give a fresh impetus to the SHTM's ongoing efforts in the advancement of hospitality and tourism education and research", said Dr Lou.

Mutual Commitment

In the morning of 18 October, the Hub's opening ceremony began with a speech by Mrs Su Tan, a visionary leader with a wealth of experience in the industry. Speaking on behalf of the Tan Siu Lin Foundation, she congratulated the SHTM on the establishment of this major new facility – another

pillar girding the School's efforts to nurture globally minded industry leaders for the digital age.

As both Executive Director of the Tan Siu Lin Foundation and a member of the SHTM's Advisory Committee, Mrs Su Tan has witnessed first-hand the fruits of the Foundation's evolving educational partnership with the School. As well as providing diverse social welfare, cultural and sports opportunities, the Foundation is committed to enriching education. "This is one of our core



principles", Mrs Su Tan explained.

The Foundation's pledge is to empower young people and "pay it forward". "Whatever industry we're working in", said Mrs Su Tan, "we need to give back". The Tan Siu Lin Foundation's commitment to this altruistic goal perfectly chimes with the SHTM's efforts to advance hospitality and tourism education and research for the good of the industry and society at large.

In the words of PolyU's Dr Lou, also speaking at the opening ceremony, "the Foundation's support will empower young people with opportunities to excel and to benefit the community and the world they belong". The new Hub will also "reinforce the School's

leading international position in the field as a force for industry progress", said Dr Lou.

Cultivating Future Leaders

Dean Chon shared his excitement about the world of new possibilities brought by the Tan Siu Lin Innovation Hub. Through advancing hospitality and tourism education, the Foundation's generous aid "demonstrates the industry's deep commitment to nurturing future leaders", he said. Looking

to the future, Dean Chon expressed the hope that the SHTM will be remembered "as a school that transformed the hospitality and tourism industry through technology innovation". The opening of the Hub is a milestone in the School's efforts to "nurture the industry's finest, empowering them to lead the industry into its sustainable future", he emphasised.

The SHTM seizes every opportunity to inspire and empower the next generation of passionate, pioneering professionals who will thrive in the digital age. This generous support from the Tan Siu Lin Foundation will take the SHTM to the next level of excellence in hospitality and tourism education and research. By offering students and researchers the opportunity to reach their fullest potential in a world of rapid technological development, the Tan Siu Lin Innovation Hub will support the growth of the industry in Hong Kong, the region and the world. **H**



Embracing the New Normal

The hospitality and tourism industry has shown particular resilience and versatility in the last three years, embracing game-changing ways of conducting business to adapt to COVID-19 and the new post-pandemic landscape. On 18 November 2022, the SHTM brought together academics, industry practitioners and policy makers to drive forward progress at its annual IMPACT conference, this year entitled "Embracing the New Normal". The conference, held both online and offline, was co-organised by the SHTM and STR and managed entirely by SHTM undergraduates from the Special Events Class.

Exploring creative ways to strengthen the impact of recent research in industry practice and developing sustainable strategies with societal benefits were major

aims of the day. "Practitioners have been adopting innovative and path-breaking methods", said Professor Jin-Guang Teng, President, PolyU, who opened the conference. "Some new normals are fleeting, and others are long-lasting", added Ms Elizabeth Winkle, Chief Strategy Officer, STR, in her welcome address.

Adapting and Evolving

The conference's Opening General Session, "Embracing Changes in the Post-pandemic Era", was chaired by Professor Cathy Hsu, SHTM Chair Professor, with commentary from Professor Haiyan Song, SHTM Associate Dean, Chair

Professor, and Mr and Mrs Chan Chak Fu Professor in International Tourism.

Featured speaker Dr Jennifer Cronin, Former President, Wharf Hotels, and Chair of SHTM Advisory Committee, said that a crisis "can be an opportunity to do things better". One way to resolve the labour shortage, she said, would be to implement a four-day week, which would increase productivity, well-being, and engagement. Professor Billy Bai, SHTM Visiting Chair Professor, added that this strategy could "attract young people to the labour force, because we're losing talent."

Insights into the latest industry trends provided by Mr Steve Hood, SVP of Research, STR and Director of SHARE Centre, indicate that Asian tourism is on the mend. "The

revenue per available room forecast should surpass 2019 levels in 2023", said Mr Hood.

Despite this reassuring trend, Asia is recovering more slowly than elsewhere in the world. "Hong Kong is one of the few places on earth that hasn't fully reopened", pointed out Mr Dane Cheng, Executive Director of the Hong Kong Tourism Board, which is investing efforts in creating a new tourism brand for the city. "We need to reposition ourselves and retell the Hong Kong story", he said.

One of the changes expected to endure in the post-pandemic landscape is the use of innovative technological solutions that reduce direct person-to-person contact, such as contactless payment and self-check-ins. The potential for technology to influence industry practice and policy was discussed in Parallel Session I, entitled "Smart Hospitality and Tourism Technologies" and moderated by Dr Catherine Cheung, SHTM Associate Dean and Associate Professor. Featured SHTM scholars included Assistant Professors Dr Hailey Shin, Dr Faye Hao and Dr Abbie-Gayle Johnson.

Parallel Session II, entitled "Firm Performance and Tourism Development", was moderated by Dr Qu Xiao, SHTM Associate Professor. Research insights on firm performance during a crisis, optimal business models, and cross-border tourism and hotel acquisitions

were presented by SHTM Assistant Professors Dr Michael Lin, Dr Linda Woo and SHTM Research Assistant Professor Dr Jinah Park.

A Caring Future

In light of the conference's overarching theme of "embracing the new normal", a post-lunch panel session invited industry experts to deliberate on human capital, customer evolution, and strategy-making in the future hospitality and tourism industry. Moderated by Dr Pearl Lin, SHTM Associate Professor, and Dr Nicholas Thomas, SHTM Visiting Associate Professor, the session showcased wisdom from panellists Mr Martin Donovan, Publisher, MIX, Mr Tasos Kousloglou, CEO, Hotel Division, Sun Hung Kai Properties Ltd., and Mr John Lui, Brand and People Director APAC, Pizza Express.

A major thread running through this session was the idea that a caring work culture could help to redress global labour shortages. Ms Katy Fox was happy to report that the Regent Hong Kong hotel, where she serves as Director of Human Resources, has seen a throng of returning ex-employees – along with their friends. "They feel a sense of belonging here", she said, "and told us that they came back because the company

cares", Small touches and open communication, she explained, can foster care and inclusion. "People are looking for equality," added Ms Winnie Woo, General Manager, The Mariners. "We should treat our team members as well as we treat our customers".

Parallel session III, "Consumer Behaviour", was moderated by the SHTM's Professor Basak Denizci Guillet. Featured researchers from the SHTM were Assistant Professors Dr Neil Li, Dr Richard Qiu and Dr Anyu Liu. Parallel session IV, "Organisational Behaviour and Resident Behaviour", moderated by Dr Vincent Tung, SHTM Associate Professor, showcased the recent research findings of SHTM Assistant Professors Dr Crystal Shi and Dr Maxime Wang, SHTM Research Assistant Professor Dr Yitong Yu, and SHTM alumna Dr Serene Tse.

In his closing remarks, Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean, Chair Professor, and Walter and Wendy Kwok Family Foundation, Professor in International Hospitality Management, shared some exciting news. In the future, he said, IMPACT2023 will feature research from other institutions and, given the prolonged online "fatigue," will be "entirely in person." The SHTM is honoured to have hosted this quintessentially impactful conference and looks forward to collaborating with the industry and academia on future events in the series. **H**



Taking the Next Step

will help them to continue to grow, innovate and serve the hospitality and tourism industry in Hong Kong and beyond.

The class of 2022 included 9 Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), 33 Doctor of Hotel and Tourism Management (D.HTM), 193 Master of Science (MSc) and 271 Bachelor of Science (BSc) graduates. The event was held in two sessions, morning and afternoon, and began with a procession of staff and students to the PolyU Jockey Club Auditorium.

Lifelong Learning

As well as marking scholarly achievements, graduation marks the beginning of a new life chapter. Graduating students celebrated this milestone moment at the 28th PolyU Congregation (SHTM) on 6 November. Completing their studies during a global crisis, this year's graduates have demonstrated unmatched passion and perseverance – qualities that

Our graduates' university lives may have come to an end, but their learning has just begun. This was the important message conveyed by the guest of honour at this year's Congregation, Mr Tasos Kousloglou, CEO, Hotel Division of Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited.

Before discovering his passion for hospitality, Mr Kousloglou had embarked on a career in business consulting and investment banking. That was in 2003, when the SARS virus was a major concern. Building a career during crisis may be a "great trial", he said, but his inspirational career trajectory shows it is never too late to embrace new directions. "You may find yourself out of your comfort zone, but fear not: this is where the learning happens", he said.

Next up was the presentation of D.HTM, MSc and BSc awards, followed by valedictory speeches. Postgraduate representative Ms Maria Alejandra Carrasco Acosta, who obtained an MSc in International Hospitality Management with Distinction, stressed the opportunities and unexpected lessons that come with obstacles. Had it not been for the lockdowns, said undergraduate representative Mr Joshua Tan, "I wouldn't have learned the extent of Hong Kong's kindness". Mr Tan graduated from the BSc in Tourism and Events Management with First Class Honours.



Student Organising Committee

Cherishing Others

The best D.HTM Thesis Award 2021/22 was received by Dr Yuheng Zheng, and the Best Undergraduate Honours Thesis Award 2021/22 went to Mr Yuxuan Deng, BSc in Hotel Management. This year's recipient of the PolyU SHTM Outstanding Alumni Award (Scholarly Achievement) 2022 was Professor Billy Bai, Professor and Associate Dean of Research, William F. Harrah College of Hospitality, the University of Nevada Las Vegas. As a Visiting Chair Professor at the SHTM and frequent speaker at PolyU conferences, Professor Bai has an enduring connection with his alma mater.

Professor Bai's devotion to the SHTM extends to its students, who benefited from his generous donations during the pandemic. This thread of connection and support was in Mr Kousloglou's speech opening the second session of the Congregation. Quoting Aristotle, he said "Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all". To be sure, compassion is the beating heart of the hospitality industry.

In the afternoon session, following the D.HTM, MSc and BSc award presentations, postgraduate representative Mr Pierandrea Falchi of the MSc in Global Hospitality Business with Distinction delivered a valedictory speech. He attributed his "resilience" and "confidence" to supportive peers and friends. His reflections on finding beauty and strength in the "priceless" moments shared with others at the SHTM served as a poignant reminder of what students have endured during

the pandemic, and the merits of moving forward with a positive mindset. "Whether we see the rose bush that's been cursed with thorns or the thorn bush that's been blessed with roses, the choice is ours", said Mr Falchi.

For undergraduate representative Miss Habin Jeong, who graduated from the BSc in Hotel Management with First Class Honours, the "silver lining" of the pandemic was relationships "that will last a lifetime". She urged her peers not to feel discouraged if they are still unsure what path to take, as "everyone has their own unique journey".

Welcoming New Beginnings

At the end of the afternoon session, Miss Chenxi Yu, who graduated from the BSc in Hotel Management with First Class Honours, received the SHTM Student of the Year Award 2021/22.

Dr Frank Badu-Baiden received the Best Ph.D. Thesis Award 2022. Ms Yang Zhou, a graduate of the MSc in International Tourism and Convention Management with Distinction, received the Best MSc Dissertation Award 2021/22.

Mr Calvin Yuen, Senior Manager, Food & Beverage, Shangri-La Group, was "humbled" to receive the PolyU SHTM Outstanding Young Alumni Award (Professional Achievement) 2022. He offered valuable advice to graduates embarking on careers in the post-pandemic world of hospitality and tourism. "You will be the ones to set a new norm, so be brave", he said. "Stay focused and motivated".

Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean, Chair Professor, and Walter and Wendy Kwok Family Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management, concluded the day with richly deserved congratulations for the graduates and a quotation from Eleanor Roosevelt: "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams". The School is immensely proud of its graduates and wishes them every success in the future. **H**



TESTIFYING TO SUCCESS

For more than four decades, the SHTM has sought new ways to prepare its students for the ever-changing hospitality and tourism industry. Since 2011, it has gained new momentum for innovation from Hotel ICON, a purpose-built hotel that fully integrates teaching, learning and research in a full service environment. The valued partnership between the School and Hotel ICON provides a launchpad for graduates' career success, as we learned from five exceptional alumni.

Preparing to Succeed

Alumnus Mr Zelotes Lam, who is currently Assistant Director – Operations and Efficiency at Swire Hotels, recalled the historic opening of Hotel ICON, which happened during his BSc studies in Hotel Management. Being there at the very beginning was "formative" for Mr Lam's career trajectory, as it showed him how a hotel is built from scratch. "This honed my hotel knowledge", he said.

Another witness to the establishment of the School's "hotel with a purpose" was Ms Adriane Li, Senior Asset Manager for the Hotel Division of New World Development. Ms Li, another BSc in Hotel Management graduate, explained that Hotel ICON is "not just another teaching hotel for students", but "a place for students to learn and innovate".

Indeed, classroom learning at the SHTM alongside hands-on experience in Hotel ICON provides a unique blend of theoretical and practical knowledge that has served many SHTM graduates in their professional evolution. Hotel entrepreneur Mr David Lau told us that Hotel ICON's state-of-the-art facilities and outstanding reputation prepared him to "transform industry fundamentals into his own concepts and apply them in real settings".

Hotel Management alumnus Mr Calvin Yuen, who is now Senior Manager, Headquarter Food & Beverage at Shangri-La Group, was in full agreement. "This all-round and systematic learning approach", said Mr Yuen, "served as a good base for my career".

Connecting Worlds

Students flock from far and wide to benefit from the School's world-class educational model. Hailing from Korea, Ms Calista Kim seized the opportunity to travel to Hong Kong to study Hotel Management at the SHTM in 2012. "Hong Kong is a dynamic and international city with great opportunities for career growth", said Ms Kim. "At the SHTM, I learned the essence of Asian hospitality".

The SHTM offers a truly global education through its internship and travel opportunities. "These greatly help international students like me to develop a career", added Ms Kim. The International Tourism course was

the "most memorable" experience for Mr Lam, who is now a hotelier with extensive local and overseas experience. The chance to discover new places and cultures "opens students' minds and allows them to see the diversity in this industry", Mr Lam said. Similarly, studying and interning overseas taught Mr Yuen to "embrace and be sensitive to cultural diversity before entering the industry".

Sparkling Innovation

The SHTM's cutting-edge courses and hands-on experience mean that driven students can remain in the workforce while putting new skills into practice. By day, Mr Lau monitored the construction of his first independent venture, Popway Hotel, and by evening, he studied for the MSc in International Hospitality Management. In his stellar career to date, Mr Lau has applied the entrepreneurial spirit and "innovative mindset" instilled in him by the School's teaching to "stay ahead of the game".

This spirit of innovation is exemplified by the career to date of Ms Kim, a passionate young professional who now holds the post of W Insider at W Hong Kong – a one-of-its-kind position in the industry. Having served as Class Representative and Student Ambassador at the SHTM, Ms Kim is now an industry ambassador, connecting hotel guests with major events and entertainment in Hong Kong.

The School's focus on finding new, creative ways of doing business also left a mark on Mr Yuen, who graduated from the BSc in Hotel Management 11 years ago and has since moved from strength to strength in the F&B sector. Mr Yuen was recently recognised for his cutting-edge ideas with the 2022 Outstanding SHTM Young Alumni award.

A Bridge to the Industry

Many of the School's world-class alumni have maintained strong bonds with their alma mater. Mr Lau, who received the 2020 SHTM Outstanding Alumni award, is now a mentor for the SHTM Mentorship Programme and the PolyU Inspire Mentorship Programme, as well as a member of the School Advisory Committee.

Mr Lau advises future entrepreneurs to keep an eye on "rapid technology advancements" and make full use of the SHTM's diverse range of programmes to "visualise the future and provide innovative solutions for industry pain points".

Mr Lam has been overjoyed to see Hotel ICON grow as a "launch pad for innovative hospitality ideas" in the last decade. "Young, creative minds are what will continue to push our industry forward", he emphasised.

Mr Yuen also serves as a member of the Mentorship Programme. In turn, he learns from his mentees' "open-minded and innovative thinking", which motivates him to "stay on trend". He expects the industry to adopt more and more sustainable practices, requiring students and graduates to "be agile and adaptable".

Similarly, Ms Li urged future graduates to develop "empathy, agility, and resilience" – qualities at the heart of the SHTM's vision and mission. She also underscored the importance of teamwork, which she learned during her own time at the School.

The SHTM and Hotel ICON applaud these five outstanding graduates, who represent the next generation of pioneering hoteliers. By training critical thinkers and offering intimate knowledge of the industry and future trends, the School strives to help the industry prosper, both in Hong Kong and beyond. **H**



Mrs Jennifer Su Tan delivers the annual Dean's Distinguished Lecture

Listening lies at the heart of communication. This was the message conveyed by Mrs Jennifer Su Tan, Executive Vice President and Executive Director of S.A.I. Leisure Group Company Limited, in this year's Dean's Distinguished Lecture. Delivered to 634 new students in PolyU's Jockey Club Auditorium on 2 September, the lecture was a highlight of Welcoming Day – an annual event that marks the start of the academic year and celebrates the SHTM's inclusivity and unique traditions.

After graduating with a bachelor's degree in hotel and restaurant administration from Cornell University in 2005, Mrs Su Tan held a series of leadership roles in digital marketing for US hospitality clients. In 2018, she joined the S.A.I. family as Executive Director. Her eminent career has shown her "the power of knowing when and how to communicate". Yet the art of communication, she told her audience, is seldom a priority in the workplace, despite its sundry rewards for companies.

During her first front-desk internship, Mrs Su Tan learned the value of clear, concise verbal communication in dealing with customer enquiries and de-escalating complaints. Awareness of one's audience is also important, she noted; hospitality employees

should know not only "what they're talking about" but also "who they're talking to". Extra care should be taken when communicating in writing, as this creates "a permanent record in your name". Mrs Su Tan also acknowledged the potential of non-verbal communication, such as photographs, to boost sales by evoking customers' emotional responses. However, she warned that such channels can be more difficult to control than writing or speaking.

The Power of Communication

The most important part of communication, according to Mrs Su Tan, is listening – or, more precisely, understanding, remembering and evaluating. A true hospitality professional should be prepared to hear things that they "don't want to hear". She urged her audience of fresh SHTM students to listen carefully and remain open-minded at every stage of their careers, no matter how junior their role. "My time making beds taught me so much", she shared.

Effective workplace communication, according to Mrs Su Tan, also involves actively engaging with

company culture, embracing technological development and cultivating an international outlook. She reminded her audience that SHTM graduates are ideally placed to build careers in the "cultural hub" of Hong Kong within the Greater Bay Area, where tourism is sure to boom in the wake of the pandemic.

The final piece of advice offered by this visionary speaker was to respond flexibly to external circumstances and focus on

achieving "win-win" outcomes. This is precisely why Mrs Su Tan decided to upgrade and rebrand S.A.I. hotels in 2020, taking advantage of the upheaval caused by the outbreak of COVID-19. "I was going to renovate anyway", she said. "Why not then?"

Our thanks go to Mrs Su Tan for this stimulating lecture, which testifies to the School's commitment to promoting communication between industry and academia to guide and inspire the next generation of hospitality professionals. **H**



Executive Course on **ESG in HOSPITALITY and TOURISM** Environment, Social, and Governance

Powering the Industry

To thrive amidst uncertainty, hospitality and tourism professionals must embrace change and seize every opportunity for growth. The SHTM's ever-evolving Executive Development Programmes (EDPs) provide invaluable support for the industry by equipping practitioners and organisations with the very latest knowledge and skills.

Environmental, Social and Governance

The SHTM is delighted to announce that a brand-new EDP, the ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) EDP, will be launched in March 2023. The hospitality and tourism industry rigorously upholds ESG standards and implements ESG strategies, supported by rapid technological advancement. Against this backdrop, industry executives

have much to gain from the SHTM's cutting-edge ESG EDP.

Three rigorously designed 4-hour modules will introduce the participants to core ESG concepts and teach them how to analyse risks and opportunities, evaluate costs and benefits, and recommend responsible actions for their companies.

The first module, "Caring for the Environment", will be taught by Dr Deniz Kucukusta, Associate Professor. It will cover key environment-related topics such as energy use, resource conservation and animal welfare, as well as corporate strategies for managing environmental risks.

The second module will be entitled "Creating a Positive Impact on Society". Led by Dr Sebastian Filep, Assistant Dean and Associate Professor, the participants will explore ways of fostering diversity, equity and inclusivity in the workplace and how companies can serve their local and global communities.

Good governance can enhance stakeholder transparency and alleviate conflicts of interest and illegal/immoral practices. This core ESG concept will be the focus of the EDP's final module, "Upholding Good Governance", which will be taught by Dr Michael Lin, Assistant Professor.

A Flagship EDP

On 4–6 January 2023, the SHTM hosted its flagship EDP, the Hong Kong PolyU Winter School. This year's programme comprised six 3-hour modules crafted to hone the skills and knowledge of practitioners in the service industry. The first module, themed "Hospitality and Tourism Consumers in the Post-Pandemic Environment", was held on 4 January. Dr Nicholas Thomas, Visiting Professor, invited the participants to explore strategies for developing a roadmap for the industry's recovery.

On the same day, Dr Seung Hun Shin, Assistant Professor, delivered a module entitled "Metaverse in Hospitality and Tourism: New Opportunities to Explore". The goal of this module was to prepare practitioners for metaverse-driven changes in tourism and hospitality and help their own businesses to capitalise on the multifaceted opportunities afforded by the metaverse.

The third module, delivered on 5 January, was entitled "ESG in the Hospitality Industry: Choices, Benefits and Impact". Guided by Dr Deniz Kucukusta, Associate Professor, the participants explored

module, "Creating Quality Service Experience". Dr Gao taught the participants how to apply service quality management techniques in pursuit of service excellence.

The final module of the 2023 Winter School, also held on 6 January, was entitled "Building an Outstanding Team". In the world of hospitality and tourism, service quality relies on effective collaboration between individuals, teams and departments. Dr Crystal Shi, Assistant Professor, showcased major theories and methods of organisational team building, accompanied by real-life service industry cases.

(International) Eye Care Group Limited undertook an EDP designed to enhance their communication, teamwork and leadership and help them identify and embrace novel directions for healthcare system development.

From October to December 2022, the SHTM delivered a hybrid EDP tailored for executives from Nanjing Jinling Holdings Limited. The programme covered topics ranging from green hotels, strategic marketing and asset management to social media.

In November–December 2022, the SHTM joined hands with the

Hong Kong PolyU Winter School 2023



ESG standards at every level of the hospitality industry.

The fourth module, "Social Media and Big Data Analytics: A Journey through Basic Concepts to Applications", also took place on 5 January. Led by Dr Emily Chen, Research Assistant Professor, the participants learned how to extract useful information from big data to develop new products and services in the tourism and hospitality industry.

On 6 January, Assistant Professor Dr Lisa Gao delivered the fifth

An Array of EDPs

Another highlight of the year's busy EDP calendar was the 2022 Online Wine Educational Programme, which was organised jointly by the School and Grapea & Co. Limited to enhance the wine knowledge of industry practitioners and academics.

On 24 September 2022, executives from Hong Kong

Education Bureau, Hong Kong SAR Government, to deliver the Tourism and Hospitality Studies Series. More than 200 Hong Kong secondary-school teachers completed four modules on topics ranging from world geography to tourism in China, the GBA and beyond.

Building on these successes, the SHTM looks forward to further enhancing its EDP offering in the coming year! 

Next-Level online Learning

Every new academic year, the SHTM deepens its efforts to make hospitality and tourism education more accessible and cater to students' evolving learning needs. Testament to the SHTM's dedication to lifelong learning are two 100% online credit-based programmes: the MicroMasters (MM) programme in International Hospitality Management (IHM) and the MSc in Hospitality Business Innovation (HBI). These pioneering online credentials grant students from around the globe access to education of the highest calibre, priming them for career success in the fast-moving hospitality industry, wherever they may be.

Pioneering MicroMasters

The first-of-its-kind MM in IHM is infused with a wealth of theoretical and real-world insights, and its focus on strategic thinking, implementation, problem identification and decision making furnishes students with a solid footing for managing high-quality businesses. "It is adapted to suit the needs of industry professionals, academics and students who want to be equipped or refresh themselves with in-depth knowledge and the latest trends in the industry", said

Ms Wimintira Jangnin, Founder of Hotelintel.co and Head of Thailand for NFO Thailand, in her endorsement of the MM. Speaking to the colossal success of this programme, 106,928 students from 198 countries and regions had enrolled as of January 2023.

Led by Professor Cathy Hsu, SHTM Chair Professor, the MM consists of four MOOCs hosted on the world-renowned edX online learning platform. The four courses are entitled Managing Human Resources in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry; Innovation and Technology Management in Tourism and Hospitality; Managing Marketing in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry; and Luxury Management. They are completed over spring, summer and autumn runs. Students enjoy "great video content, well-designed assignments and continuous interaction with peers, tutors and instructors", said Ms Jangnin.

A major asset of this MM is that students are shown how interdisciplinary knowledge and research results can have concrete applications in international hospitality management. "The MM integrates current topics and issues in hospitality and tourism research into the industry reality", added Ms Jangnin. "Experts in their fields, the programme instructors interweave their research findings and practical experiences into the courses they teach".

By offering a taster of MSc-level coursework, the MM also helps students to envision the feasibility of investing time and energy in MSc studies later down the line. The option of a credit transfer means that the MM can act as a bridge to the SHTM's celebrated on-campus MSc in International Hospitality Management, MSc in International Tourism and Convention Management, or MSc in International Wine Management, or the newly launched 100% online MSc in Hospitality Business Innovation.

Innovative Online MSc

The online MSc in HBI is geared towards busy professionals keen to supplement their existing industry experience with advanced postgraduate level study that converges on innovation, creativity and hospitality leadership. "Increasing competitiveness within the industry is pushing organisations to seek highly adaptable hospitality professionals who aspire to sharpen their knowledge and skills in the digital age", said SHTM Professor Basak Denizci Guillet, the programme leader.

The Web-based courses include Innovation and Technology Management, Hospitality Financial Management, Integrated Hospitality Marketing, Hospitality Business Research Methods, Hospitality Leadership and Human Capital Development, Pricing Strategy and Revenue Management in the Hospitality Industry, Hospitality Business Strategies, Artificial Intelligence and Data Analytics in Hospitality Business, Hospitality Asset Management, and Project Management in Hospitality. Applicants are required to have a BSc in a related field and at least one year of

relevant industry experience or current employment in the hospitality and tourism industry.

Deploying the SHTM's trailblazing participant-centred teaching techniques, the programme emphasises experiential exercises, seminars, lectures and syndicated group work. "Students can be truly satisfied with the interactive and engaging learning experience by mastering new skills and specific know-how in hospitality innovation and technology, artificial intelligence and data analytics", said Dr Jennifer Cronin, Former President, Wharf Hotels Management & Chairman, in her endorsement of the MSc.

Vitality, students enrolled in this self-financed programme have the much-needed freedom to complete subjects in their own time. The 3-year programme can either be offered in part-time mode or fast-tracked in 2 years. This gives "the flexibility and benefits of online learning while balancing your work schedule or pursuing a second degree", noted Dr Cronin. "All you need to do is simply start the learning journey wherever you want and gain valuable knowledge at your own pace".

Consistently ranked no. 1 in the world by numerous independent bodies, the SHTM has an unrelenting commitment to serving the industry. "It is by far one of the best schools you can find in terms of academic excellence and skill acquisition in the hospitality sector", said Dr Cronin. The valuable online credentials offered by the HBI and MM bridge the gap between professional practice and higher education and support students in their efforts to remould the global hospitality industry, helping it to thrive in today's digital age. **H**



With its unique vision of hospitality and tourism education refined over more than 40 years, the SHTM prides itself on fostering globally minded graduates with multi-cultural perspectives. Its four flagship MSc programmes maintain an international focus while taking advantage of opportunities unfolding in the booming Asia Pacific region. Lectures, seminars, workshops and study trips provide crucial service-oriented practical and theoretical knowledge, nurtured by the SHTM's very own teaching and research hotel, Hotel ICON. These credit-bearing programmes are taught by more than 90 faculty members with more than 400 cumulative years of international industry experience. Moreover, accelerated 1-year MSc programmes are available for industry professionals studying to advance their careers.

Four Flexible Programmes

The MSc in Global Hospitality Business is jointly offered by three world-class institutions, namely the SHTM; the EHL Hospitality Business School in Switzerland; and the Conrad N. Hilton College of Global Hospitality Leadership at the University of Houston, US. Packed with a rich blend of learning and hands-on experience, the programme immerses students in the cultures and business practices of three continents. This 36-credit course offers students access to three buoyant international markets and three exceptional alumni networks. One highlight is a real-world consultancy project overseen by industry partners across the globe. The programme can be completed in 1.5 years.

Shaping Global Outlooks

The first of its kind in the region, the MSc in International Wine Management offers students insights into some of the fastest-growing and potentially most lucrative wine markets in the world, while also allowing them to learn more about mainland Chinese wine consumers. The 31-credit programme, in which students discover best practices in wine production, trade and management, was developed in consultation with industry expert and Master of Wine Jeannie Cho Lee, who teaches the programme alongside fellow Masters of Wine Steve Charters, Debra Meiburg and Sarah Heller.

Geared towards professionals wishing to supplement their existing know-how with top-shelf postgraduate recognition, the programme affords welcome flexibility. As well as making the most of a paid internship opportunity, students can choose to complete the MSc in 1 year or hop between full-time and part-time study and traditional/intensive block formats.

The MSc in International Hospitality Management and the MSc in International Tourism and Convention Management can also be completed in 1 or 3 years. These 31-credit interdisciplinary programmes help students bring classroom-based learning into the workplace and develop problem identification, decision-making and management application skills. The SHTM is proud to provide flexible learning experiences and international exposure that equip MSc students for global success as leaders, educators and researchers.

Applications for admission to the 2023–2024 intake for these unique programmes are now open! **H**



Research Horizons

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Singleton Employees in the Hotel Industry

Many organisations take pride in their ability to offer a rich variety of supportive programmes for employees with families. However, the growing number of single childless people in the workforce, especially members of Generations Y and Z, rarely benefit from equivalent perks or policies. Does the hospitality industry care about single childless employees? Curious as to whether organisational support can benefit hotels and their employees, the SHTM's Dr Xiaolin (Crystal) Shi and her co-author quizzed hotel employees in China about their experiences. The fruits of their comprehensive analysis will help organisations to create more supportive environments for employees, whilst also boosting hotel outcomes.

Organisational Support

Now more than ever, single employees without children dominate the labour-intensive hotel industry. Perhaps thanks to the false assumption that they have more free time and fewer responsibilities, "members of this group are often expected to shoulder heavier workloads, work longer hours, and travel more for work to support the family demands of their married colleagues", say the researchers. They have also been found to engage in more emotional labour, to have less decision-making latitude, and to face more negative work-

nonwork spillover than employees who are in a couple and/or have children. This highlights the emerging need to ascertain the workplace challenges faced by single childless employees in the hotel industry.

Common to all employees is the challenge of achieving a "work-life balance", which is the harmony between an individual's different roles, responsibilities and personal values. Whilst the concept of a work-family balance has been examined in great depth, it is not necessarily relevant to single childless people, whose "personal" roles are less likely to be family-related. "The commonly used terms 'work-family conflict' and 'family-supportive organisational culture' do not apply to all", explain the researchers.

They therefore inspected the experiences of "personal-to-work conflict", which occurs when personal activities infringe on professional ones, and "work-to-personal conflict", which occurs when job demands require a sacrifice of personal time and energy. A potential way to minimise these kinds of conflicts and strike a healthy work-life balance is through the provision of "organisational support".

Family-supportive work cultures can increase job satisfaction and performance—similar benefits might reasonably be expected by providing organisational support to single people without children. A

singles-friendly organisational culture is one that nurtures a work-life balance equally among employees, and not just in those who are married or with children. For this, it is crucial to acknowledge that family life and personal life are not one and the same. "Previous work has suggested that the work domain, family domain, and personal domain should be treated separately", explain the authors.

Social Inclusion

Social inclusion is a key dimension of a singles-friendly work culture, and especially relevant to single childless employees, who are known to suffer more from social isolation and loneliness. "A high level of organisational support is typically linked with positive organisational outcomes", say the authors, "and social inclusion has been associated with both affective organisational commitment and perceived organisational support." The researchers therefore predicted that a strong socially inclusive organisational culture would reduce personal-to-work and work-to-personal conflicts.

Dissatisfaction and apathy can ensue when there is a discrepancy between desired and actual work-life balance. In addition, employees who feel that the available support is simply not enough to overcome work-life conflicts have heightened

stress levels. “For single childless employees, the incongruence between their perceptions of work–personal conflicts and relevant support from their organisations may result in negative consequences, such as lower job performance”, say the researchers. Accordingly, they predicted that an organisational-level social inclusion of a singles-friendly culture would yield better job performance.

Social inclusion of a singles-friendly culture might also have the power to boost the enjoyment got from leisure activities. Leisure activities contribute to psychological well-being and life satisfaction, and the loss of the freedom to engage in them can sour attitudes towards one’s own personal life. “Hospitality employees in particular may have less time and energy for leisure activities after work, preventing them from satisfying their need for relaxation or resulting in lower levels of leisure satisfaction”, say the researchers. An organisational culture geared towards improving employees’ work-life balance could therefore boost leisure satisfaction.

Multiple-Source Surveys

The researchers gathered rich data from total of 639 full-time employees, who were recruited from 29 full-service hotels in China. Participants completed a pre-developed questionnaires that measured personal-to-work and work-to-personal conflicts, leisure satisfaction, and their perception of the degree of social inclusion of a singles-friendly culture. Job performance was assessed using a survey completed by participants’ direct supervisors, who rated items such as “this employee performs tasks that are expected of him/her.” Hierarchical linear modelling was then applied to examine the relationships between variables, whilst controlling for potential confounding variables, such as whether participants were men or women.

All-Round Benefits

The results were unambiguous. Single childless employees who worked in hotels with a socially inclusive culture had notably less conflict between their work and personal domains, a more impressive job performance, and more satisfaction from leisure activities. “These findings highlight the significance of the social inclusion of a singles-friendly culture for both employees and organisations”, say the researchers. As a second intriguing finding, the effect of an inclusive organisational culture on employees’ job performance and leisure satisfaction were shaped by their degree of work-to-personal conflict. This, clarify the authors, could be explained by the important role of personal domain variables in influencing employees’ perceptions.

Such clear-cut findings should easily persuade managers to embrace a singles-friendly culture to enable a balance between the work and personal roles of single childless employees. Hotels could establish programs and policies to eliminate negative stereotyping, and should not solely focus on the needs of married and parent employees. “Although single childless employees do not require support for family responsibilities, they do require support for personal and social matters”, reiterate the authors. Hotels could also facilitate an enhanced mutual understanding between single and married employees through team-building activities, which would inspire more harmonious and productive relationships in the workplace.

The nature of social inclusion of a singles-friendly culture varied from hotel to hotel. “As such”, explain the researchers, “hotels should take their unique organisational cultures and characteristics into consideration when developing socially inclusive programs.” Hotel chains could, for instance infuse their mission and core values into inclusive policies and programs, and make sure that the same support is pro-

vided across all of their hotels. This would mean that employees who are transferred from one hotel to another of the same chain can more rapidly assimilate into their new working environment and immediately feel a sense of belonging.

Beyond Family-Friendly

With fewer people than ever in their 30s and 40s choosing to get married or have children, the hospitality workforce is increasingly home to single childless workers. This pioneering new work shows that the time has come to address their needs. “The study can assist hotel industry managers in recognising single childless employees as an important, distinct, and growing segment of the labour force”, conclude the authors. As well as several managerial implications, this investigation also paves the way for more exciting research. For example, future work could additionally consider how a supportive culture affects other workers who also have a “non-traditional” family structure, such as those in a same-sex relationship.

POINTS TO NOTE

- Hotel employees who are single and childless often get fewer perks and less policy support.
- Single childless workers have a unique set of personal needs and are vulnerable to work–life imbalance.
- This growing segment of hospitality staff can benefit from singles-friendly workplaces.
- Establishing a uniform singles-friendly culture is good for employee retention in hotel chains.

Shi, Xiaolin (Crystal), and Shi, Jieyu (Jade) (2022). Who Cares about Single Childless Employees in the Hotel Industry? Creating a Workplace Culture Beyond Family-Friendly. *Tourism Management*, Vol. 90, 104477.

To Refund or Not to Refund?

2020 saw unprecedented swathes of holiday cancellations. The year COVID-19 hit was a tough one for hospitality and tourism firms, who were forced to make swift decisions about changes to their refund policies. However, no one could clearly envisage how those crisis-induced changes would impact customer loyalty and trust. In the first study of its kind, Dr Daniel Leung and Ms Christine Seah from the SHTM looked at customer reactions to generous or self-serving refund policy changes, and whether these are shaped further by the magnitude of changes and the format in which refunds are offered. This inspiring work will help industry practitioners to optimise refund policy strategies in the future.

The Refund Rush

Without question, the COVID-19 pandemic was a brutal shock to the hotel industry. Confronted with unimaginable numbers of cancellation requests and refund claims, for the main part the industry reacted sympathetically to customers. Some hotels, such as Hilton and Premier Inn, started allowing refunds on previously non-refundable purchases during the crisis, and Expedia and Travelodge offered customers cash or vouchers to be used on future bookings. “Helping consumers in need during crises is considered to be an altruistic behaviour, even though the changes may result in financial losses”, say the researchers.

However, a few companies took a more selfish path. EasyJet and British Airways, for instance, breached cancellation promises and denied their customers any refunds

during the pandemic period. Negatively changing refund policies from fully refundable to partially or non-refundable might go some way to limit a firm’s financial losses in the short term, but it is a rude violation of the initial promises made to customers. According to the researchers, these actions are “likely to reduce consumers’ trust of the company and even their intention to repurchase products from that same company in the future”.

How did these two strategically distinct crisis-induced reactions affect customer behaviours and attitudes? Until now, the effect of the “polarity” of change, that is, whether refund policy changes are positive or negative for consumers, has been left unmapped. The researchers reasoned that “if one hotel behaves egoistically and changes a policy to benefit themselves only, consumers would perceive that policy change as an unfair business practice”. They predicted that this “opportunistic” behaviour would decrease consumers’ trust and lower their intention to repurchase products from that company. Conversely, positive changes should increase trust and repurchase intentions.

Big and Small, Cash and Credit

Imagine your feelings on learning that you are to receive a refund, only to then find out that the refund is small, or that it comes in the format of a voucher that can only be used within the next two months. Would that token gesture be satisfactory? Previous work has considered refund policy as a “one-off” or “static” event, without fully considering the detailed

characteristics of changes. “Another objective of this study was to examine the effects of the interplay of the polarity of change in refund policy, the magnitude of change in refund policy, and refund format on consumers’ trust of the company and repurchase intention”, explain the researchers.

Larger price reductions can boost consumers’ purchase intention. After all, who wouldn’t prefer a 30% over a 15% discount? Indeed, larger magnitude changes can be exponentially beneficial for companies. “One study shows that consumer spending in a store with a larger magnitude of change increases by 12%, while the corresponding figure in a store with a smaller magnitude of change increases by just 1%”, report the researchers. This magnitude-of-change effect might also translate to a refund policy context. Meanwhile, refund format can also affect customer responses, whereby cash refunds are generally preferred over credit refunds. “This research complements existing literature by demonstrating how consumers react differently when a company changes its refund policy in various forms”, say the researchers.

Clues from past work indicate that a large magnitude of change causes a strong “contrast effect” that drives the intensity of customer responses, be it in a positive or negative direction, whilst a small magnitude of change results in an “assimilation effect” that dampens customer responses. For companies that implement a negative change in refund policy, the researchers hypothesised that a large magnitude of change would decrease consumer trust and intention to repurchase products more than a small change. “If a

company changes its refund policy positively”, specify the authors, “and the magnitude of change is high (low), consumers’ trust in that company and intention to repurchase products from the same company will be significantly higher (lower)”.

Two Scenario Studies

In two elegant studies, participants were asked to imagine that they had made holiday plans to visit New York but were obliged to cancel their hotel reservation due to a health crisis. In study 1, the researchers looked at the effect of the polarity and magnitude of changes in refund policy. For this, 144 participants read a set of emails that were carefully constructed to reflect either a positive or negative policy change, and either a large (100%) or small (50%) magnitude of change. For example, a negative change of large magnitude was reflected by an initial booking email explaining that a refund would be possible, followed by a cancellation email stating that no refund was offered due to the crisis. In study 2, 319 participants were shown emails that reflected either a positive or negative change, as well as whether the 50% refund that was offered would be in the form of cash or credit. In both studies, trust in the company and repurchase intention were assessed using a questionnaire.

Trust and Loyalty

As expected, positive changes to refund policies resulted in higher levels of consumer trust and repurchase intentions, whilst negative changes decreased trust and loyalty. “The execution of self-beneficial actions during crises reduces consumers’ trust of a company and their intention to repurchase products from that

same company in the future”, report the researchers. This means that hospitality practitioners should expect consumers’ brand evaluation and future behaviour to deteriorate when they change their refund policies negatively in response to a health crisis.

For companies that made a negative policy change that was large in magnitude, the detrimental impacts of negative change in refund policy on consumers’ trust and loyalty were magnified. This means that companies who enact negative changes should be careful to do so gently, at modest levels. “In contrast, when a refund policy is changed positively and mildly, the degree of gain becomes less evident”, say the researchers. In other words, if companies are prepared to bear financial losses to favour consumers during crises, they should make sure that those positive changes are large in magnitude.

Finally, refund format impacted the influence of polarity of change in refund policy. For both negative and positive policy changes, cash refunds amplified the impact of the polarity of change in refund policy. Namely, when companies that negatively changed their policy offered cash refunds, trust and repurchase intention were lower than when credit was offered. When companies that positively changed their policy offered cash refunds, trust and repurchase intentions were higher than when credit was offered. Hence, to mitigate losses, companies that negatively change their refund policy should offer credit refunds, whereas companies that make positive changes should offer cash rather than credit refunds. “This will further enhance consumers’ trust, as well as customers’ intention to repurchase products from the same company in the future”, explain the researchers.

Mitigating Losses

Whilst refund policies are widely embraced by hospitality and tourism business, research in this area has been lacking. This long-awaited investigation casts light on what practitioners can expect to see when they make strategic changes to refund policies. As well as keeping their heads above water, companies must strive to retain customer trust and loyalty in times of crisis. This fascinating work shows how consumers process and react to policy change, and could therefore prove to be immeasurably useful in strategic decision making about refund policy. “This research generates insights into how to adequately change refund policies in order to mitigate additional losses in the future”, conclude the authors.

POINTS TO NOTE

- Changes to refund policy during a large-scale crisis significantly impact consumer trust.
- Changes that are positive for consumers, e.g. allowing refunds in a crisis, only have an effect when large in magnitude.
- Negative changes should be small to avoid reputational damage and customer loss.
- The impacts of refund policy changes on consumer trust are smaller when credit rather than cash is involved.

Leung, Daniel and Seah, Christine (2022). The Impact of Crisis-induced Changes in Refund Policy on Consumers’ Brand Trust and Repurchase Intention. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 105, 103272.

Nostalgia-Motivated Tourism

Virtual trips are destination “teasers” and a valuable way to attract new tourists. But what about returning tourists? Timely new research by the SHTM’s Dr Hyejo Hailey Shin and a co-author offers an in-depth look at which elements of virtual trips are the most essential, and how these can be used to encourage returning tourists’ behavioural intentions via immersion and nostalgia. Intriguingly, stirring the emotions and nostalgia of returning tourists can boost their intention to revisit a destination, visit a similar destination and speak positively about travel experiences with others. These illuminating findings could prove vital for destination management organisations as the industry regains its footing in the wake of COVID-19.

Virtual Trip Immersion

Virtual reality is widely considered one of the most exciting advances in the technological world, with a vast array of anticipated applications in various domains. This immersive technology allows users to vividly interact with computer-generated features in a simulated virtual environment, and so has attracted keen interest in the tourism sector. “Many tourism organisations have launched virtual trips, a combination of virtual reality and tourism contents, to promote themselves as a travel destination choice during the post-pandemic era”, say the researchers.

Virtual “previews” of destinations are often used to showcase previously unimagined travel possibilities and surprising locations to new tourists, while simultaneously assuaging their travel doubts. Nonetheless, despite these advantages for attracting

first-time visitors, many tourism destinations’ primary targets are returning visitors who have already been to the destination in question. As the researchers note, “It would be ideal if tourism destinations could promote travellers’ positive feelings about their past memories in the destination in order to increase their revisit intentions”. This is where virtual reality could get a chance to shine.

For virtual trips to appeal to returning travellers, they need to evoke fond recollections of past travel adventures. For this, returning travellers need to feel fully immersed and involved. Building on previous work, the researchers hypothesised that better-quality interactivity, usability and sensorial appeal would increase immersion. They also predicted that more realistic representations of a destination would heighten immersion. This “authenticity” is all the more critical for returning travellers, who are bound to notice if a virtual trip does not match up with their actual experiences. Most crucially, true immersion in a virtual trip elicits an emotional response. “When travellers are deeply immersed, their emotional responses become stronger”, report the researchers.

Three Kinds of Nostalgia

Nostalgia is a person’s intense positive feelings about their own memories. Considering that travel is all about providing tangible experiences through which new memories are born, nostalgia naturally holds a special place in tourism research. Three types of tourist nostalgia are recognised in the literature: destination nostalgia; nostalgia for past lives and the

desire to relive days gone by; and nostalgia for social activities, or the emotion surrounding travel memories of moments shared with others. The researchers predicted that all three types of nostalgia would be positively influenced by travellers’ immersion in a virtual trip. Moreover, “although these three types of nostalgia are directed towards different objects, they might occur simultaneously”, they say.

When considering the potential effects of nostalgia, a key concept is the well-known “stimulus–organism–response paradigm”. This posits that emotions compel a person to behave in a certain way, such that strong feelings sway responses to the environment. If so, a virtual trip should also have behavioural knock-on effects for travellers. “As an affective response, nostalgia has been considered an important antecedent of travellers’ behavioural intentions”, report the authors. For this reason, they tested whether nostalgia increased a tourist’s intention to revisit a destination, intention to visit a similar destination, and intention to share their memories of the destination with others. These are three critical indicators of travellers’ favourable attitudes towards a destination.

To address a final point of curiosity, the authors looked at whether tourists’ personalities played a role in the relationships between nostalgia and behavioural intentions. More self-confident and daring “allocentric” tourists might rather discover uncharted destinations than revisit a previous one, despite a strong sense of nostalgia. Less adventurous “psychocentric” tourists, who tend to prefer comfort and convenience, might be more inclined to revisit a familiar place, even if they do not

feel particularly nostalgic on looking back. “Therefore, we investigated the moderating effect of travel personality in the relationship between nostalgia and future behavioural intention”, report the researchers.

Quizzing Orlando Visitors

What better study site than the theme park capital of the world? Sifting through travel records made available by the Orlando Destination Management Organisation, the researchers identified and contacted 303 individuals who had visited Orlando, Florida since 2015. These participants were invited to take a virtual trip via an Internet link and then complete a comprehensive survey compiled from previous publications. In this survey, the participants were asked to assess the interactivity, usability, sensorial appeal and authenticity of the virtual trip; their immersion in the trip; their felt nostalgia for the destination, past life and social activities; and their behavioural intentions. The authors also measured the participants’ travel “personality”, using an existing scale.

Moved by Destination Nostalgia

Immersion in the virtual trip was found to hinge on authenticity and sensorial appeal, which demonstrates the importance of including high-quality, representative content in virtual trips to intensify engagement and involvement. To get the most from revisiting tourists, tourism destinations should therefore devote energy to accurately portraying a destination’s atmosphere and including rich

sensorial appeals. “By increasing travellers’ immersion in virtual trips”, explain the researchers, “[destination marketing organisations] will be able to arouse nostalgia for the destination, generating travellers’ intention to revisit the destination”. Indeed, immersion in the virtual experience significantly increased all three forms of nostalgia.

Destination nostalgia increased the intention to revisit the destination and to visit a similar destination, which indicates that virtual trips could be used to attract both returning and new tourists. For this reason, the researchers recommend that marketing strategies incorporate “coopetition” to create a win-win situation for destinations. “It would be beneficial to form a strategic alliance with destinations which share similar destination characteristics so that they can offer virtual trips to the destination and partner destinations to attract potential visitors”, they suggest. Destination nostalgia also increased the intention to spread positive word-of-mouth, which is a sure-fire way to attract potential visitors in the tourism industry.

Travellers’ behavioural intentions were not affected by the two other types of nostalgia, however. According to the authors, the nonsignificant effect of nostalgia for past lives/social activities is not necessarily unsurprising – tourists may not actually need to return to the same destination to re-experience their past lives or social activities. Finally, whilst destination nostalgia had a much stronger effect on revisit intention in psychocentric travellers, “even allocentric travellers were willing to revisit the destination after their virtual trip because of their nostalgia for the destination”, report the researchers. This is welcome news for destination marketing organisations.

Tools to Inspire

These insights could inspire new ideas for channelling the skyrocketing significance of technology in the tourism sector. Virtual trips can invoke sweet, pleasant memories and thereby arouse nostalgia, which results in behavioural intentions that are ultimately beneficial for the tourism industry. However, the participants’ travel intentions were almost certainly affected by the COVID-19 travel restrictions imposed at the time of data collection. “As the travel restriction has continued, travellers’ intention to travel might be strengthened due to their reduced self-control”, acknowledge the researchers. “The findings could be different if there were no travel restrictions”. Certainly, never before have innovative tools to reboot the tourism industry been so urgently called for, further highlighting the important guidance provided by this research for destination marketing organisations.

POINTS TO NOTE

- Virtual reality “previews” of a destination can tempt returning as well as first-time visitors.
- Immersion is key to stoking tourists’ desire to visit the same or similar locations and recommend it to others.
- Virtual trips must be authentic and sensorial to trigger destination nostalgia in returners.
- Travellers who prioritise comfort and convenience are especially receptive to virtual trip promotion.

Shin, Hyejo Hailey and Jeong, Miyoung (2022). Does a Virtual Trip Evoke Travelers’ Nostalgia and Derive Intentions to Visit the Destination, a Similar Destination, and Share? Nostalgia-motivated Tourism. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, Vol. 39, Issue 1, 1-17.

The Cost of Faking a Smile

Perhaps surprisingly, the smiles that greet you upon arrival at a hotel might not be genuine. A positive, welcoming demeanour is part of the job description for housekeeping, front desk, and restaurant workers, whose smiles, moods, and emotions are distinguishing features of the hospitality sector. But when frontline employees have to fake it, what strategies do they use? Eye-opening new work from SHTM researchers Dr Deniz Kucukusta and Ms Yoo Jin Lim has revealed more about the emotional labour strategies adopted by frontline workers to counter the emotional dissonance experienced when their expressed and felt emotions do not match. Their novel findings show that suppressing or hiding internal feelings can be detrimental to employees and reduce their intention to remain their role, which has clear managerial and practical implications.

Emotional Labour

Frontline employees who interact directly with customers are also delivering a “product”. To be sure, customer interaction, satisfaction, and loyalty, hinge on frontline employees’ ability to display organisationally accepted positive emotions, which is a form of “emotional labour”. “Emotional labour takes the form of displaying fake or genuine feelings toward customers”, explain the authors. These emotional “products” are designed to enhance customers’ emotions and moods during service encounters. Yet for employees, excessive emotional labour can lead to burnout, poor job performance, low job satisfaction, and a strong intention to leave one’s job.

Putting on a positive, welcoming demeanour becomes far more taxing – and the emotional labour more intense – when employees’ authentic feelings do not match the emotions they display. This is known as “emotional dissonance”, which can lead to emotional exhaustion and burnout further down the line. It is therefore a major priority to understand the strategies used to cope with emotional dissonance. Namely, the researchers investigated the adoption of “surface acting”, “deep acting” and “genuine acting” strategies by frontline hotel workers in Hong Kong.

Surface acting involves simply hiding internal feelings and displaying fake emotions during customer interactions, which means that felt emotional dissonance remains. Deep acting occurs when employees actually suppress and modify their internal feelings to align with the moods required of them. This reduces emotional dissonance but might require more emotional labour. Finally, the emotional strategy of genuine acting refers to the display of sincere and actual feelings. “Because it does not involve fake emotions, employees tend not to experience emotive dissonance in their work role when engaged in genuine acting”, explain the researchers.

Generational and Demographic Differences

The modern generational groups are known as Baby Boomers (1946–1961), Generation X (1965–1981), and Generation Y, or “Millennials” (from 1981). The personalities, values, beliefs

and even work habits of each generation have been shaped by environmental, political and economic realities, which means that their adoption of emotional labour strategies might also differ. Given that most of the working world comprises members of Generation X and Generation Y, the researchers focused on these two groups. They made specific predictions regarding preferred emotional labour styles based on the documented characteristics of each generation. “By understanding how employees of different generations with different values react to and cope with emotive dissonance”, say the researchers, “managers will be able to offer the right mitigation solutions to the right employees”.

Whilst Generation X and Generation Y have been found to share work values and to similarly relish personal growth opportunities, Generation Y members have been characterised as having comparatively high self-esteem and low work engagement. For this reason, the authors hypothesised that “Generation Y members have a higher tendency to practice surface acting and deep acting”, and that “Generation X employees are experienced workers, so are more likely to practice deep acting and genuine acting”. If so, they expected emotional dissonance and its effects to be stronger among members of Generation Y than Generation X.

The decision to engage in surface acting, deep acting or genuine acting may also depend on a variety of demographic characteristics. For example, women have been found to more successfully communicate happiness and suppress anger in the workplace than men, which corresponds to deep acting. “Older employees are more likely to

control their emotions and display them appropriately, using genuine acting rather than surface acting”, add the authors. Therefore, the researchers also considered how frontline workers’ gender, years of work experience, monthly salary and the hotel service standards they are expected to uphold affect their use of surface acting, deep acting and genuine acting.

Frontline Worker Questionnaire

Adopting a data-driven approach, the authors asked frontline employees from seven hotels in Hong Kong to complete a two-part questionnaire. Of the 192 participants, 58.3% belonged to Generation Y and 41.7% to Generation X. The first part of the questionnaire collected demographic information, such as age, gender, and monthly salary. The second part of the questionnaire collected information on the respondents’ use of surface acting, genuine acting and deep acting, as well as their sense of emotional dissonance. Using these data, the researchers were able to study the preferred or default emotional labour states adopted by two different generational groups working in three-, four-, and five-star hotels.

Unfeigned Feeling

For both generations, frontline employees who adopted surface acting had a lower intention to stay in their job. This suggests that surface acting is more labour-intensive and leads to more emotional dissonance and internal conflict. In contrast, genuine acting (expressing sincere feelings about one’s role) increased employees’ intention to remain with the organisation. The authors therefore

recommend that employees adopt genuine acting over surface and deep acting to reduce emotional burnout and turnover rate. “The most effective acting state”, they say, “is to act with heartfelt and sincere emotions”.

As predicted, Generation X employees tended to express genuine emotions more than did Generation Y employees, who more often engaged in surface acting and deep acting. This suggests “that Generation Y members may experience higher levels of emotional burnout and intention to leave their job”, say the researchers. However, Generation X members still reported feeling emotional dissonance. In addition, the use of genuine acting versus surface acting was affected by years of work experience – perhaps corresponding to age – and gender.

To minimise the effects of emotional labour, the researchers suggest that managers should help employees to understand the concept of emotional intelligence and encourage them to discuss their feelings. They recommend providing employees with tailored emotional intelligence training according to generational differences in the use of emotional labour states. This might increase involvement at work, reduce emotional burnout and enhance job satisfaction.

Right for the Job?

This innovative research acknowledges the burden commonly felt by frontline hotel employees, whose warm, positive manner during customer interactions can come at the expense of their own mental and physical resources. Most strikingly, this research offers hotel managers generation-based information that could be used to improve

working conditions, turnover and human resource policies. “By understanding how employees of different generations with different values react to and cope with emotive dissonance, managers will be able to offer the right mitigation solutions to the right employees”, conclude the authors.

Whilst steps can be taken by managers to reduce the negative impacts of internal conflicts in their employees and care for their existing workforce, the most effective way to increase employees’ intention to stay is that they express their own, authentic feelings. “This underlines the importance of selecting the right employees for the hospitality industry”, say the researchers. These results could therefore also prove extremely useful for hotel management in the process of recruiting new frontline hotel staff.

POINTS TO NOTE

- Frontline hotel staff may engage in “deep” or “surface” acting to display appropriate emotions.
- Surface acting is especially common among millennials and men but can lead to burnout as suppressing emotions is taxing.
- Deep acting and emotional genuineness are healthy signs of sincere, competent engagement with work challenges.
- Employers should encourage emotional authenticity and respect their experienced employees.

Kucukusta, Deniz and Lim, Yoo Jin (2022). Emotional Labor of Frontline Employees: Generational Differences and Intention to Stay. *Journal of China Tourism Research*, Vol. 18, Issue 3, 472-494.

A New Flavour for Hotels

A priority of hotels worldwide is, quite naturally, attracting and catering to the needs of guests. Seldom do hotels invest heavily in strategies to cater to non-guests. However, according to the SHTM’s Dr Sung Gyun Mun, Dr Linda Woo and a co-author, hotels’ food and beverage (F&B) departments can bring in big money by attracting customers from local communities – not just tourists. With important implications for businesses in the post-COVID-19 era of tourism recovery, the authors suggest that hotels may be able to use their F&B offerings to reach new customers and create competitive advantages.

More than Just a Place to Sleep

Discovering a destination’s unique culinary profile helps us to form a memorable connection with the local culture. “An exceptional gastronomic experience has a powerful impact on the overall image of a destination and tends to remain in tourists’ memories for long periods”, write the researchers. While hotels are already aware that quality dining and catering services can drive a certain degree of business success, the potential to use F&B to reach a brand-new crowd of customers remains relatively unexplored.

To maintain a competitive advantage, hotels must find original ways to reach prospective customers. “Diversification” involves creating new products or services and breaking through to untapped markets. Hotel diversification strategies have generally centred on rooms, the “core” resources of all hotels. For instance, providing rooms with different levels of quality and price

allows hotels to cater to guests with distinct needs and budgets. Another strategy is expanding a hotel chain to other locations, using the same room quality, to diversify internationally. “These types of diversification allow hotels to achieve economies of scale that reduce uncertainties and accelerate business growth”, say the authors. Yet the focus on rooms means that target F&B customers are limited to in-house guests.

Hotel restaurants and bars are generally regarded as “supplementary” services; their potential as a significant diversification strategy has only recently started to pique interest. Unlike rooms, for which hotels must follow strict procedures, hotels’ F&B offering is comparatively flexible and open to alterations in services and products. This means that hotels can stand out from the rest by offering more creative, more diverse and better-quality F&B services. “Hotel F&B should be regarded as a critical diversification strategy that can create competitive advantages”, underline the researchers. In particular, adapting hotel F&B can broaden target customer groups to outside-hotel customers – guests of a hotel’s restaurant or bar who are not actually staying at the hotel.

Targeting Outside-Hotel Customers

Revitalising hotel F&B services not only attracts more outside-hotel customers but has also been found to generate substantial revenues for hotels. This is welcome news, given reports of decreasing F&B revenue from minibars and in-room dining, which are only accessible to in-hotel guests. F&B

services that are accessible to outside-hotel customers, such as lounges and catering, are bringing in increasing revenue. “Catering and banquet services have become a major source of revenue”, say the authors, “accounting for approximately 60% of F&B revenue at full-service hotel operations, such as luxury, upper-upscale, and upscale hotels”. This means that targeting in-hotel guests is no longer sufficient to increase F&B revenue and overall hotel profitability.

Successfully appealing to new outside-hotel clientele through hotel F&B means offering something that local restaurants cannot, such as “exceptional food with experiential and hedonic value, personalised service, and premium physical environments”, say the researchers. Also important is surpassing traditional hotel F&B staples in terms of quality and diversity, which can help to broaden the customer clientele. Several of the world’s biggest hotel groups are already seeking to transform their F&B services to offer one-of-a-kind, holistic experiences to appeal to outside-hotel customers. Examples include Marriott’s “Grab & Go” meals, AccorHotels’ mission to open their F&B venues to both locals and travellers and many hotels’ renovation of their dining spaces.

To attract locals and make a mark on the local culinary scene, hotels have also started to partner with local businesses. Engaging with the community in this way can “influence overall hotel brand reputation for the company’s long-term profitability”, say the authors. For example, outside-hotel guests who have a memorable dining experience might, for their next trip, decide to book with

that same hotel brand in foreign destinations. Despite the great potential of targeting outside-hotel customers, there is currently no way to measure the contribution of outside-hotel customers to F&B revenue. The researchers therefore developed a pioneering measurement strategy to estimate F&B revenue from outside-hotel customers, which could help to develop better strategies for hotel F&B.

Three Mathematical Models

Using a wealth of data collected over a decade, the researchers examined the relationship between F&B revenue from outside-hotel customers and overall hotel performance in 464 full-service luxury, upper-upscale and upscale hotels in the five most popular tourist destinations in the US. While accounting for variability in hotel occupancy, revenue and profit, the researchers calculated the F&B revenue from outside-hotel customers using a new measure that they customised for the purpose. Controlling for hotel location, age, size, number of rooms, state revenue and average monthly employment in their analysis, the researchers compared the outcomes of three distinct mathematical models and reached robust conclusions about the effects of hotel F&B services.

Investing in F&B Services

The major finding was that through F&B services, hotels can transcend their original roles and attract outside-hotel customers. In addition, attracting outside-hotel clients enhanced hotels' resource efficiency, known as "operating performance", most

notably in luxury hotels. "The findings represent the effectiveness of hotel F&B services as diversification strategies", explain the authors. F&B revenue had a greater positive effect on luxury hotels' performance than on the performance of upper-upscale and upscale hotels. This suggests that luxury hotels can benefit most from making innovative F&B plans to attract local customers. Hotels need not concern themselves too much with pricing strategies, given that lowering or increasing the price of F&B offerings had no significant effect on hotel revenue or profitability.

Another consistent finding was that F&B revenue from outside-hotel customers was positively associated with "operating profitability", which is the profit left after paying off all operating expenses. "This finding supports the importance of attracting outside-hotel customers to increase the hotel's overall operating profitability", explain the researchers. This could also buffer seasonal fluctuations in hotel revenue. Moreover, this diversification strategy and easier accessibility of hotel F&B services would be beneficial for locals. The authors also highlight that simply investing more money in F&B services is not a fool-proof way to spontaneously attract more outside-hotel customers; instead, decisive and innovative moves should be made to reach outside-hotel customers to reap the rewards of diversification.

Engaging with the Local Community

This work provides meaningful practical suggestions for hotels in the post-pandemic era of tourism recovery. Importantly, the work accentuates the value of more deeply embedding a hotel into its

local surroundings and creating strategic F&B offerings for outside-hotel customers. For instance, hotel F&B departments could engage with local communities by hosting conferences, charity events and holiday parties, as well as with local F&B vendors. The enhanced brand image from improved hotel F&B reputation among residents and communities could allow hotels to increase their room prices, and thus overall profitability, without losing customer demand. "Considering the effects of outside-hotel customers on hotel performance", say the researchers, "hotel firms should treat outside-hotel guests as their main target and develop management practices related to them". These could include a system to track outside-hotel customer purchases and record details of hotel F&B activities.

POINTS TO NOTE

- Patrons of hotel restaurants and bars who are not staying at the hotel are a major revenue stream.
- Hotels should diversify their food and beverage services, e.g. offer different price brackets and takeaway options, to attract outside-hotel customers.
- High-quality restaurants and bars are an effective investment in brand strengthening.
- Hotels can connect with communities via outside-hotel customers, e.g. offering wedding services or partnering with local businesses.

Mun, Sung Gyun, Park, Eunhye Olivia and Woo, Linda (2022). Strategic Target Customers of Food and Beverage Offerings in Full-Service Hotels: Outside-hotel Customers. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 102, 103159.

Visiting Loved Ones May Drive Tourism Recovery

Whilst many tourists travel to experience new places, cultures and activities, others are visiting friends and relatives (VFR). VFR travel showed remarkable resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic, with many expats and immigrants returning to their countries of origin to weather the storm with loved ones. However, little is known about how pandemic-associated travel constraints were experienced by VFR tourists. Dr Pearl Lin from the SHTM, working with co-researchers from Macao, have constructed an impressive new framework to pinpoint the travel constraints experienced by VFR travellers during the pandemic. This framework could help tourism practitioners alleviate such travel constraints and, in doing so, breathe fresh life into the industry.

Driven by Emotion

VFR has been dubbed the "sleeping giant" of the tourism industry; it is a grossly overlooked motive for travelling. "Up to 48% of tourists worldwide travel for VFR purposes despite considering these trips leisure vacations, instead of self-identifying as VFR tourists", report the researchers. VFR travel comes in three broad flavours – "pure" VFR tourists travel expressly to see friends and relatives, and lodge with them; "commercial" VFR tourists also come to see friends and relatives, but stay in hotels; while "exploitative" VFR tourists, although they stay with friends or family, do not state VFR as their trip purpose.

Given the ongoing neglect of VFR tourism in the literature, there is a clear need to better understand what makes VFR travellers tick and how VFR tourism benefits the

industry as a whole. We already know that personal relationships are pivotal to VFR travel. "This market segment is primarily motivated by family/friend bonds", say the researchers, "instead of destination attributes". The specific benefits of VFR, in contrast with business or leisure travel, include revitalising local communities and increasing residents' quality of life. Connections with local communities and strong personal ties could also explain why VFR travellers often visit their places of origin after natural disasters or other crises.

VFR travel seems more robust to tourism crises and economic downturns than other market segments, perhaps due to its emotional driving force. Crises might even spur VFR travel, as was reported after Australia's Katherine region suffered a major flood in 1997. "VFR travellers are connected to communities that need emotional support rather than simply functional support", explain the authors. "Relatedly, research conducted in 2017 recommended this tourist segment as a marketing focus to help destination management organisations revitalise the tourism industry during and after disasters". The researchers were therefore eager to examine the needs of VFR travellers to understand the particularities of this market segment and cater better to their needs in the future.

Pandemic-Related Travel Constraints

The COVID-19 pandemic placed unprecedented constraints on international movement, stifling global tourism. Along with wide-ranging restrictions on their inbound and outbound travel, travellers faced

health-related risks and various psychological, economic and social challenges. "COVID-19 complicated travel- and leisure-related decisions more than ever", report the authors. During that trying time, strict border controls and other travel restrictions made leisure and business travel infeasible, sparking a tsunami of travel cancellations.

Marching bravely on, however, was VFR travel. Despite the difficulties and risks associated with travelling during the pandemic, many VFR tourists chose to batten down the hatches with loved ones in their overseas countries of origin. Meanwhile, many companies, such as Google, encouraged their international expat employees to work from home, further encouraging home-bound travel. "VFR trips thus potentially reflect the only form of travel that continues to support the tourism industry", say the authors. These trips might not seem equivalent to a joyful reuniting of friends and family, but staying with loved ones while engaging with the host-country community mimics "exploitative" VFR travel, as these travellers do not use hotels but do contribute to local life and economy.

If VFR travel is indeed propping up an industry in crisis, then all efforts must be made to support this crucial branch of tourism in the wake of the pandemic. "Despite the prominence of VFR travel and its strong resilience in the face of global crises, it has been one of the most underexplored tourism contexts in the literature", say the researchers. "We therefore examined the travel constraints of VFR travellers during the pandemic to enrich this tourism context". The COVID-19 context offered a unique opportunity to

examine VFR travel constraints in more depth and use these findings to lessen barriers to travel and help the industry get back on its feet.

Quantifying Constraints

The researchers set out to discover which travel constraints were experienced by VFR travellers during the pandemic period. They focused on expat workers who were originally from Taiwan (the “tourist-receiving country”). An estimated 2 million Taiwanese people were living abroad in 2019, making it an ideal context in which to study VFR travel. Armed with 167 online posts and 8,403 online comments from a private Facebook group for overseas Taiwanese, the authors conducted a thematic analysis to understand the lived experiences of these VFR travellers from “tourist-generating countries”.

Based on their analysis, the researchers classified the constraints faced by VFR travellers during the pandemic. Rather than considering these travel constraints in terms of their “nature”, the researchers categorised them according to their “root cause”. From this unique and fresh outlook emerged a framework with two distinct domains: an individual–family–community continuum and a tourist-generating country–tourist-receiving country continuum. Fourteen travel constraints were identified along these two continuums. For example, a fear of disturbing other house occupants while staying with friends or relatives in Taiwan is a family-level constraint in the tourist-receiving country.

What Worries Prospective VFR Tourists Most?

Each intersection along the two continuums was associated with specific travel constraints. For ex-

ample, individuals who made travel decisions based on their personal needs in the tourist-generating country were concerned about job requirements, high travel costs and the extent of pandemic control in their country of residence. In terms of the tourist-receiving country (Taiwan), inconvenient travel policies, high infection risk and misgivings about local circumstances were the major individual-level barriers to travel. “Destination management organisations should passively ease travel constraints for VFR travellers”, propose the researchers. “Such marketing strategies are likely to be effective because VFR travellers tend to be more willing to support these destinations’ economic recovery”.

In terms of the tourist-receiving country, disturbing others and feeling unwelcome were the major family-level constraints on VFR travel; in terms of tourist-generating countries, the family-level constraints most commonly experienced were the need for a stable living situation and homelike feeling. That is, VFR travellers during the pandemic were motivated by the idea of their home country as a safe haven, especially if their living circumstances as expats were unstable. “Travel agents could invite VFR hosts to write blogs about the tourist-receiving country’s pandemic status and express willingness to welcome VFR tourists”, recommend the authors. “Doing so can link VFR travel with social cohesion and happiness while maintaining communication with prospective visitors”.

Finally, community-related barriers to VFR travel included a sense of responsibility to the tourist-generating country, the possible decision to settle there permanently and a sense of responsibility to protect the world as a whole from the global pandemic. Tourism businesses could find great value in these results, especially as VFR tourism constraints relate to both tourist-generating and -receiving countries. “Our framework allows for a clearer

understanding of how each travel constraint can be overcome”, say the authors.

Post-COVID-19 Revival

Innovative ideas for promoting and rejuvenating tourism are much needed following the difficult COVID-19 period. By unearthing new insights from the pandemic period, destination managers and businesses can make proactive efforts to reduce VFR travel constraints in the post-pandemic landscape of tourism. In turn, this will help boost VFR travel. “Clearly identified VFR travel constraints can help destination management organisations promote VFR tourism by reducing these barriers in the post-pandemic tourism industry”, conclude the researchers.

POINTS TO NOTE

- Visiting friends and relatives (VFR) is an understudied motivation for tourism that remained strong under COVID-19 restrictions.
- Expats returning home for VFR give social and economic support to their native country following crises there.
- Prospective VFR tourists weigh up individual, family and community concerns when deciding whether to travel home.
- Host families can boost VFR travel to their country by providing stable and home-like environments.

Lin, Pearl M.C., Peng, Kang-Lin and Au, Wai-Ching (2022). To Return or Not to Return? Identifying VFR Travel Constraints during the Pandemic. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, Vol. 39, Issue 1, 18-30.



Graduation celebration in mainland China

Mutual Empowerment

Today, more than ever, hospitality and tourism professionals must work together to develop their skills and strive for adaptive growth. Speaking to the SHTM’s commitment to educational partnerships that propel industry success are its two mainland China programmes, the Master of Science in Hotel and Tourism Management (HTM) and Doctor of Hotel and Tourism Management (D.HTM).

These programmes are jointly offered by the School and Zhejiang University and delivered on the Zhejiang University campus in Hangzhou, mainland China. Established in 1998, the Zhejiang University–PolyU Joint Centre seeks to synergise the strengths of these two world-respected institutions and has built a reputation for nurturing

competitive, globally minded professionals.

The MSc in HTM programme is designed for those who wish to hone their leadership skills and become internationally active practitioners in the hotel and tourism industry. This course is ideal for existing professionals, who have ample opportunities to apply lessons learned in the classroom in the workplace. The programme is co-led by the SHTM’s Dr Dan Wang, Associate Professor.

With the overarching aim of advancing tourism education and industry development in China, the D.HTM programme has cultivated numerous industry leaders and renowned academics. Through engaging

in multidisciplinary practical industry experience and academic research, senior industry executives, senior staff in governmental and non-governmental tourism organisations, and academics seeking a doctoral qualification are prepped for eminence in this fast-moving industry. The programme is co-led by the SHTM’s Dr Qu Xiao, Associate Professor.

Celebrating Students’ Success

On 29 October 2022, a grand Conclusion of Graduation Celebration saw D.HTM and MSc in HTM graduates of the

last few years accept recognition for their academic achievements in the stunning ballroom of the Midtown Shangri-La hotel in Hangzhou.

Presiding over the ceremony as guest of honour was Mr Kent Sun, Chief Development Officer -- Greater China of InterContinental Hotels Group, who extended his sincere congratulations to the graduating class of 2022. Graduates of the two programmes, he said, "join the largest and most influential alumni network in hospitality and tourism in China". Indeed, several are now valued employees of InterContinental Hotels Group itself, added Mr Sun.

Professor Haiyan Song, SHTM Associate Dean, Chair Professor and Mr and Mrs Chan Chak Fu Professor in International Tourism, also expressed warm congratulations and reminded the attendees that the event marked the beginning of their careers as "pillars of the hospitality industry in China, Asia, and the world".

During the celebration, the Best D.HTM Thesis Award 2021/2022 was given to Dr Yuheng Zheng. The "rigorous teaching and quality resources of both universities", said Dr Zheng, helped her to thrive in her studies and complete an exemplary doctoral thesis.

Another recent graduate, Ms Yuxue Song, who obtained her MSc in HTM in 2022, spoke about challenges encountered and overcome during her studies, such as the move to completely online

learning during the pandemic. This did not, however, stifle her passion for learning – reflecting the astonishing resilience of SHTM students in the last three years. For Ms Song, on the contrary, the HTM programme represented an "active process of cultivating happiness".

Continuously Evolving

The School never rests on its laurels, and its mainland China programmes are no exception. The SHTM is thrilled to announce that the 100th student of the D.HTM (Mainland China) programme graduated in 2022 – an important milestone. "The programme has become well recognised in both the hospitality and tourism related industries and universities in China", said Programme Leader Dr Xiao. "Our graduates and students are very grateful for their learning experiences throughout the D.HTM study. They are very proud of being SHTMers".

Indeed, anyone considering enrolling in this innovative programme in the future will find themselves in good company. "Its graduates and students include senior executives from most of the world's top 10 hotel companies", noted Dr Xiao, "and also from the three largest Internet companies in China, namely Alibaba, Tencent and Meituan".

These rich programmes equip students with up-to-date knowledge of emerging trends, markets and management strategies, as well as second-to-none practical experience. Hand in hand with Zhejiang University, the SHTM pledges to continue developing its mainland China programmes to nurture new leaders who will significantly advance the industry – in Hong Kong, the Greater Bay Area and beyond. Echoing the eminent speakers at October's Conclusion of Graduation Celebration, the School is immensely proud of its talented HTM and D.HTM students and alumni, whose impactful contributions offer a shining example for future SHTMers. **H**

School of Hotel & Tourism Management,
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University



Capitalising on Change in the Asia-Pacific

To secure a sustainable and resilient future, it is vital for the hospitality and tourism industry to keep abreast of the latest trends. This was the vision of the 16th UNWTO/PATA Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook, a fully online event held on 6 December 2022. This prestigious series of annual forums is co-organised by the SHTM, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) and the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA).

Every year, the UNWTO/PATA Forum brings together policy makers, researchers and industry professionals from across the Asia-Pacific to discuss global and regional trends in hospitality and tourism. A priority in the last few years has been coping with the turmoil caused by COVID-19. Now, however, the industry is ready not only to respond to change but also to lead it.

Fittingly, therefore, the theme of the 2022 Forum was "Transforming Tourism: Understanding Trends and Capitalising on Change". The SHTM was represented on the Organising Committee by Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean, Chair Professor, and Wendy and Walter Kwok Family Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management, and Professor Honggen Xiao, SHTM Assistant Dean.

"This is a time to reset and re-establish tourism in both supply and demand sides, for all destinations, DMOs and tourism suppliers", said Dean Chon, speaking at the Forum. "When we have an accurate assessment of changes taking place in society, we can capitalise on them".

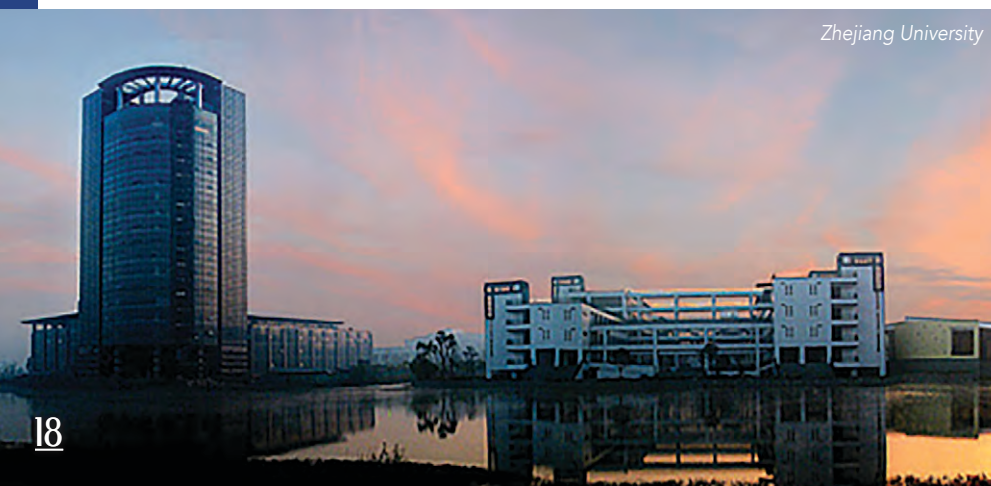
With this vision in mind, the Forum directed its analysis of industry trends toward innovation. The overarching goal was to help destinations overcome obstacles

involving infrastructure, security and human resources to ensure the sustainable, resilient and ethical recovery and growth of the sector.

Resilience and Innovation

The Forum commenced on 6 December with an Opening Ceremony moderated by Professor Honggen Xiao. One of the speakers was Mr Chunhua Jiang, Member of the Standing Committee of the CPC Guilin Municipal Committee and Executive Vice Mayor of Guilin. Mr Jiang urged Asia-Pacific countries "to give full play to the role of tourism in advancing balanced economic and social development", as well as promoting a green, sustainable and resilient industry in the wake of the pandemic. Indeed, Guilin is already on the "fast track" to realising this vision. "We look

Zhejiang University



forward to the insights of experts and scholars at this forum”, said Mr Jiang.

This sentiment was echoed by Dean Chon, who was joined by Ms Zoritsa Urosevic, UNWTO Executive Director, and Ms Liz Ortiguera, PATA CEO, in welcoming attendees to the opening of the Forum. These three eminent speakers were proud to represent the tripartite union between the SHTM, the UNWTO and PATA.

PATA stewards the responsible development of travel and tourism to, from and within the Asia-Pacific region. It has supported the recovery of the industry in various ways since the pandemic, such as by providing accessible policy updates for travellers, promoting new locations to avoid over-tourism, and establishing a Tourism Destination Resilience training programme. “Before a destination can be sustainable, it must first be resilient,” stressed Ms Ortiguera.

Meanwhile, the UNWTO provides online data dashboards to monitor trends and guide decisions. As noted by Ms Urosevic, the world is facing a “triple crisis” of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss, as well as inequality and economic instability. The UNWTO is committed to tackling this crisis. “We are growing our International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories”, said Ms Urosevic.

“We have also launched the Best Tourism Villages Initiative under our new Tourism for Rural Development Programme, and we have hosted the first Global Youth Tourism Summit”.

Shaping the Future of Tourism

Kicking off the Forum’s busy schedule on the morning of 6 December was a keynote presentation on “Tourism Trends and Outlook in China”, delivered by Mr Feng Liu, Founder, Davost Intelligence, Beijing, China. Next was a lively panel discussion on “Understanding Trends to Shape Tourism Transformation”, moderated by Professor Xiao and featuring leading figures from the UNTWO, Accenture, Mabrian, and the Shenzhen L&A Group.

Ending the morning was a second panel discussion on the theme of “Tourism Destination Resilience”, introduced by Ms Maggie Lv, Regional Director – Greater China, PATA. After a presentation by Ms Fanny Vong, President, Macao Institute for Tourism Studies, three expert panellists shared their ideas on enhancing resilience in a session

moderated by PATA’s Mr Pavnesh Kumar, Sustainability and Social Responsibility Program Head.

After lunch, a keynote presentation entitled “Trends, Changes, and Innovations in Tourism” was presented by Professor Billy Bai, SHTM Visiting Chair Professor. This was followed by the third panel discussion of the day, “Reimagining Tourism in Uncertain Times”, which was moderated by Mr Shanhua Xiong, Deputy Director, Livelihood Think Tank. The four panellists hailed from Huaqiao University, MOTI, Livelihood Think Tank, and Guangxi University.

“Technology Transformation in the Global Tourism Industry” was next on the agenda, in a panel session moderated by Professor Xiao. The panellists included SHTM Visiting Professor Noam Shoval and SHTM Visiting Associate Professor Nicholas Thomas.

The day ended with concluding remarks from Dean Chon and representatives of PATA and the UNWTO. “This exchange of information enriches our knowledge and helps us transform our industry for a better tomorrow”, said Dean Chon. The SHTM is exceedingly proud to have again provided a platform for such fruitful exchange on the most urgent issues facing the hospitality and tourism industry today. **H**



The team of SHTM+ICON consultants:
(front row from left) Dr Sebastian Filep, Dr Catherine Cheung, Dr Tony Tse and Mr Ian Lee

(back row from left) Prof Haiyan Song, Prof Basak Denizci Guillet, Prof Kaye Chon, Prof Cathy Hsu, Dr Deniz Kucukusta and Dr Qu Xiao

In Safe Hands

This year, the SHTM and Hotel ICON have redoubled their efforts to support the sustainable recovery and growth of the hospitality and tourism industry, now finding its feet in an uncertain post-COVID world. The synergy created by the School’s research prowess and Hotel ICON’s practical endeavour is encapsulated in the pioneering knowledge-transfer initiatives developed by SHTM+ICON Consultancy.

Since 2018, SHTM+ICON Consultancy has offered professional hospitality-related consultancy services to engineer the transfer of management know-how and practical experience of applying creative solutions and pursuing sustainable growth to educational institutions and the industry.

The team of consultants includes, among other distinguished SHTM faculty, Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean, Chair Professor, and Walter and Wendy Kwok Family Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management; Professor Haiyan

Song, SHTM Associate Dean, Chair Professor, and Mr and Mrs Chan Chak Fu Professor in International Tourism; and Professor Cathy Hsu, SHTM Chair Professor.

SHTM+ICON Defining the Future

The eminent members of the SHTM+Consultancy team pool their expertise to provide outstanding customised services in four main categories. The first is “Hospitality Management”, which ranges from project appraisal to staffing and marketing. Services in the second category, “Hospitality Development”, involve strategic planning and feasibility analysis for tourism and hotel projects.

The third category is “Executive Education in Hospitality and Other Service Industries”, which covers customised executive development

programmes, management attachment in Hotel ICON, online and offline education, and more. Services in the fourth category, “Higher Education in Hospitality”, involve designing academic programmes, certification and quality assurance.

Clients across the globe have joined hands with SHTM+ICON Consultancy. Its clients to date include the Hong Kong SAR Government; the Hong Kong Tourism Board; Chimelong Group, Guangdong; Greateon Ribbon Australia; King Abdulaziz University and the University of Tabuk, Saudi Arabia; Korea Telecom; and the Ministry of Tourism, Jamaica.

SHTM+ICON Consultancy continues to set new standards for knowledge transfer to the industry and academia. Its international partnerships and innovative programmes are paving the way for the swift recovery and growth of hospitality and tourism in Hong Kong, the GBA and beyond. **H**



(upper row from left)
Prof Honggen Xiao,
Prof Noam Shoval and
Dr Nicholas Thomas
participate in an online
panel discussion

In Brief...

KATIE SHU SUI PUI CHARITABLE TRUST

Distinguished Lecture Series in Mainland China

The SHTM is honoured to announce a new agreement with the Katie Shu Sui Pui Charitable Trust, made on 6 September 2022. To support the School's unwavering dedication to sharing and disseminating knowledge in mainland China, the Trust has made a donation to establish the **Katie Shu Sui Pui Charitable Trust Distinguished Lecture Series in Mainland China**.

Ten lectures running from 2023 to 2025 will broaden the horizons of hospitality and tourism students and practitioners in mainland China, exposing them to current industry trends and forecasts for the post-pandemic future. Practitioners keen to unearth new opportunities related to the "One Belt One Road" initiative and hotel and tourism development in the Greater Bay Area will have access to valuable SHTM experience and knowledge through the programme's unique platform.



Partnership with Duy Tan University

On 11 November 2022, **Professor Kaye Chon** signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Dr Chulmin Mo, Dean of **Duy Tan University's (DTU) Hospitality and Tourism Institute**. This agreement paves the way for DTU graduates to pursue master's degrees at the SHTM and for BSc students at DTU to have the option of obtaining bachelor's degrees from both DTU and PolyU. Professor Chon also gave a special lecture on **"Your Future as Innovative Leaders in Tourism and Hospitality"** to DTU students.

SHTM Alumna Awarded Ernst Mach Grant Worldwide

In 2021, Ph.D. graduate Dr Ekaterina Chevtava was awarded the prestigious and competitive **Ernst Mach Grant Worldwide** by the Agency for Education and Internationalisation, within the framework of the Eurasia-Pacific Uninet.

Dr Chevtava had the invaluable opportunity to conduct a 3-month project entitled "Post COVID-19 employee experience in a digital nomad mode" at the University of Salzburg, Austria. Her innovative research revealed a new approach to interpreting and differentiating the "coworkation" experiences of digital nomads in the hospitality industry.



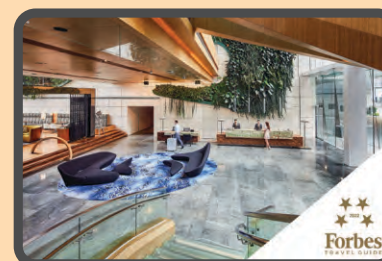
Dress Orange Day

Every year, the SHTM organises **Dress Orange Day**, inviting staff and students to dress in orange (the School's colour) to celebrate World Tourism Day. In 2022, this fun and team-building event was held on 27 September.

All participants were invited to take part in the **Dress Orange Fashion Show Contest** to show off their orange outfits on a catwalk in front of a panel of judges. Team Orange and Team QQQ won the First and Second prizes respectively.

2022 ICHRIE Hotel Challenge

The School congratulates three SHTM students on taking second and third places in the 2022 ICHRIE Hotel Challenge by Knowledge Matters, which featured a collection of hospitality case simulations. **Ms Yi Ho Tam**, Year 3 student in the BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management, took **second place**. **Third place** went to **Mr Mikul Manocha**, Year 2 student in the BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management, and **Ms Wing Kei Wu**, Year 2 student in the BSc(Hons) in Tourism and Events Management.



Hotel ICON Honoured by Forbes

Hotel ICON, the SHTM's fully integrated teaching and research hotel, was named a **Forbes Travel Guide Four-Star Hotel** for the eighth time in a row. The Forbes Travel Guide is the only global authority on luxury travel hospitality.

Third Prize at CoPIA Meeting 2022

At the Community of Practice on Conducting Learning Analytics to Inform Teaching and Learning (CoPIA) Meeting 2022, **Dr Catherine Cheung**, **Dr Vincent Tung** and D.HTM graduate **Dr Joselyn Goopio** received **third prize** in the Best Paper category for their paper **"Maximizing Study Abroad Learning Outcomes through Cultural Intelligence and Emotional Intelligence Development"**.



NSFC Grants Obtained by Staff

The School is delighted to announce that three staff members recently obtained **National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC)** grants. These grants will provide funding for **Dr Maxime Wang's** project "The Double-Edged Sword of Error Management Culture: Investigating When and How Error Management Culture Promotes Employee Unethical Behaviors"; **Dr Mimi Li's** project "Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Adolescents' Construction, Performance and Performativity of National Identity"; and **Dr Anyu Liu's** project "The Investigation of the Inherent Mechanism from Tourism Development to Common Prosperity Using a Micro-Macro Dual Perspective".



Awardees of SHTM Interdisciplinary Large Grant

Three eminent SHTM staff members recently obtained funding under the **SHTM Interdisciplinary Large Grant**, which will support **Dr Mimi Li's** project "Enduring Effects of Tourism as an Alternative Intervention for People with Mental Disorders: A Neurological Approach"; **Dr Neil Li's** project "Towards Business Sustainability and Resilience: Risk Modelling and Survival Prediction of Tourism MSMEs based on Multi-source and Multimodal Big Data Fusion"; and **Dr Dan Wang's** project "Design Travel Live Streaming (TLS) as A Psychosocio-technical System to Promote Pro-Environmental Behaviors".



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People



Ms Amina Yam joined the School as an Assistant Officer on 13 September 2022.



Ms Samantha Tam joined the School as an Instructor (F&B) on 19 September 2022.



Dr Jonathan Sutton left his Instructor role at the SHTM on 26 September 2022. He will now serve as Chief Operating Officer at Steak King Holdings Ltd.



Ms Sarah Chan joined the School as an Assistant Officer on 17 October 2022.



Dr Eden Jiao formerly a Research Assistant Professor at the School, was appointed Assistant Professor with effect from 3 January 2023.



Dr Hanyuan Zhang joined the School as a Research Assistant Professor on 3 January 2023.



Dr Yun Zhang joined the School as a Research Assistant Professor on 3 January 2023.



Miss Haoqing Luo joined the School as an Instructor on 3 January 2023.



Professor Takashi Oguchi joined the School as a Visiting Professor on 16 January 2023.



Dr Barry Mak will retire from his role as Associate Professor at the SHTM on 14 April 2023.



Seizing the Day

The SHTM has been delighted to see its students engage with passion and dedication in an assortment of extra-curricular activities this year, including volunteering at large-scale industry events. We are also gratified to witness such keen interest in the School's student clubs and chapters. What better way to meet new friends, embrace new experiences and refine real-world skills?

It was organised by the Hong Kong Billiard Sports Control Council.

Clubs and Chapters

On 19 September, ambassadors for student clubs set up desks in the School's foyer to promote club activities and recruit new members. All of the SHTM's student clubs provide rich global networking opportunities, connecting students not only with their peers but also with industry experts.

The Club Managers' Association SHTM Student Chapter attracts students drawn to the relatively niche private club sector. It arranges networking luncheons, sharing sessions and site visits. For aspiring managers, the Hospitality Financial and Technology Professionals HK SHTM Student Chapter organises seminars, field trips and management support. Students can also practise their event management skills by working alongside industry mentors – a unique opportunity provided by the student-founded SHTM Event Society.

Passionate would-be hospitality, leisure and tourism managers who want to hone their leadership skills can also join the Institute of Hospitality HK Student Chapter. Founded in 1938, this chapter has built a 10,000-strong network of alumni and business partners spanning 100 countries. Another student organisation with a rich history is the Pacific Asia Travel Association HK SHTM Student Chapter, which supports responsible travel and tourism development in the Asia Pacific region.

Representing students since 2005, the SHTM Students' Association organises various activities to cultivate communication and friendship, celebrate industry and community ties, and protect students' welfare. Students who join the prestigious Eta Sigma Delta HK SHTM Student Chapter enjoy a network system of over 90 chapters, enabling them to exchange ideas widely, volunteer and participate in fund-raising and tutoring activities. Finally, the Bacchus: SHTM Wine Society offers workshops, wine tasting, food pairing classes featuring industry experts, access to international F&B events, and internship opportunities. **H**

Making Sports History

A highlight for more than 30 student volunteers was the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to attend the 2022 Hong Kong Masters, a world-class snooker tournament held in the Hong Kong Coliseum from 6 to 9 October. The lucky students gained front-row insights into what it takes to organise a large-scale sporting event by providing logistical support. Marking the revival of the local events industry, the tournament was the first major sporting event held in Hong Kong since the pandemic, as well as the largest ever live snooker event and the first to be held outside Europe.

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Cultivating Socially Conscious Palates

Once again, the SHTM has organised numerous rich F&B seminars, workshops and courses in the last year. Students have thrown themselves into new experiences, polished their knowledge, and been inspired by industry leaders – all in line with the School's goal of cultivating socially conscious, globally minded F&B professionals.

The School is also pleased to report that most of this year's F&B activities were hosted in face-to-face format, although some events were offered in hybrid mode to cater to participants unable to reach the site. By the end of 2022, most F&B special events had been incorporated into undergraduate courses, which has enriched and complemented students' classroom learning.

Saving the Planet

How can we save the ocean while still enjoying the riches it provides? This was the important question asked at two popular events run by the Food and Wine Academy last year, which discussed the hot topics of seafood and sustainability. Attendees of the Scottish Seafood Workshop, held on 1 August, had the chance to learn from representatives of two prominent seafood suppliers: Ms Merlinda Ng, Sales Director, Worldwide Seafood Limited, and Mr Calvin Yu, CEO, Team River. This hybrid workshop was organised by the Scottish Development Office and hosted at the School's Vinoteca Lab. A related one-hour Seafood Sustainability Guest Lecture, organised by Worldwide Seafood, was held on 12 October.

Cultivating International Palates

Moving from sea to land, a series of F&B events showcased and celebrated international cuisine. On 3–4 November, SHTMers had the chance to experience some of the best of East and Southeast Asian cuisine. The first day featured a one-hour Thai Cooking Demo (Thai Curries) workshop organised by the Tourism Authority of Thailand HK Office. The next day, the SHTM's Vinoteca Lab hosted a two-hour Korean Kimchi Introduction Workshop. This inspiring session was delivered by experts representing the organiser, Daesang HK Ltd., namely Ms Aki Chung, Sales and Marketing Manager, and Ms Candice Ng, Senior Sales and Marketing Executive.

Also in November, the SHTM joined institutions across the globe in celebrating the Seventh Annual Week of Italian Cuisine in the World. Two events celebrated the glories of cheese and salumi (traditional Italian antipasto meats). On 15 November, SHTMers attended a 1.5-hour Salumi and Cheese & Cooking Demo, organised by the Italian Trade Commission, Hong Kong. On 18 November, participants savoured a full 2.25-hour in-person event on salumi and cheese, which celebrated "conviviality, sustainability, and innovation".

Organised by the Swedish Consulate, the Traditional Swedish Christmas Baking Workshop on 30 November invited participants – attending both in person and online – to immerse themselves in Sweden's baked treats. Ms Helen Alnar, expert Swedish patisserie chef, showed them how to make gingerbread (*pepparkakor*), vegan saffron buns (*lussekatter*) and

mulled wine (*glögg*), among other delicacies.

Beverage Activities

What would food be without drink to accompany it? The 2-hour Food and Wine Pairing & Social Etiquette Workshop on 11 October, organised by Links Concept and presented by Mr Ronald Sit, Links Concept Wine Merchant, introduced participants to the art of wine pairing. Fittingly, this event was held in the SHTM's fully student-run restaurant, Bistro 1979. Another event series hosted in Bistro 1979, the HTM3203 Managerial Concepts in Food and Beverage Operations lunchtime class, was a huge success during its very first semester, with several fully booked days.

Devoted wine enthusiasts took their pick from several events this year. The WSET Level 2 Award in Wines 17.5-hour intensive weekend course was held between 27 August and 3 September, and PolyU students, alumni and staff received a HK\$1,000 discount.

For the very first time, all PolyU staff and students were welcome to join the WSET Level 3 Award in Wines weekday evening course, which was held between 30 November and 6 January 2023. In this 36-hour course, participants tasted 75 wine samples and attended wine tasting and knowledge seminars. The two WSET courses were organised by Raymond So of the Fine Wines Association and the Wine and Spirit Education Trust.

On 26 September, as part of the Spanish Wine Series organised by the Spanish Trade Commission, a 1.5-hour seminar was held on Albarino, a white wine grape variety

from Rias Baixas, northern Spain. This event welcomed eminent online speakers, including Ms Aranzazu Zulueta, Winemaker, Martín Códax and Mr Javier Izurieta, Export Manager, Pazo de Señorans. The series continued on 27 September, when the red D.O. Toro Elegance wine was presented by online speaker Mr Santiago Castro González, Director Técnico of D.O. Toro.

On 29 September, a two-hour Les Jamelles Single Wines Horizontal Tasting was hosted at the SHTM's Vinoteca Lab and online. Joining online, the owner of Les Jamelles, Mr Olivier Hui-Bon-Hoa (who also serves as Regional Asia Director, Badet Clemen) guided tastings of cinsault rose, sauvignon blanc, viognier, pinot noir, merlot, cabernet sauvignon and syrah wines.

Attendees of the 1.5-hour South African Pinotage Wine Workshop held on 3 November at the Vinoteca Lab learned about the history of South African wine production, fair trade and sustainability practices, and pinotage from winemaker and educator, Ms Tersina Shieh. Ms Shieh also organised the 1.5-hour German Riesling Wine Workshop on 9 November, which exposed the "many faces" of Germany's most famous grape variety.

The SHTM is hugely grateful to the sponsors and industry partners who gave their time, resources and expertise to make the year's F&B activities so rich and meaningful. **H**



Exceptional Student Performance

Dean's List

SHTM Academic Achievement Award

In another year of outstanding student achievement, the SHTM congratulates the following recipients of the Academic Achievement Award for Semesters 2 and 3 of the 2021–22 academic year. **H**

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN HOTEL MANAGEMENT

CHAN SUNG YAN
CHONG NGA MAN JANICE
CHUM PAK LAM GORDON
DAI WENXUAN
HON WING YI
HONG JINSUN
HU QIAN
JEONG HABIN
LAI CHI LAM
LAM HOK YEE
LI XIAORAN
LIU XUECHEN
MUNIR AQSA
SO SHIU TO TOBIAS
SUEN WAI HANG
SYLTE LEANDRA CELESTE
TSANG CHING SUM
WAN LOK YI ANGEL
YANG LEI
YOUN SUNG BIN
YU CHENXI

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN TOURISM AND EVENTS MANAGEMENT

CHAN NIM CHI
GONG AN-SHENG
LIN SHIU JUNG
TAN JOSHUA YEE CHONG
WANG MICHELLE
WAT CHEUK YING
YU DIHNA



SHTM Alumni Homecoming Day

On 19 November 2022, alumni from far and wide gathered on campus for a day of celebration. Marking both PolyU's 85th anniversary and 28 years since the founding of the SHTM Alumni Association (SHTMAA), the SHTM Alumni Homecoming Day was the perfect occasion for graduates to reconnect with their alma mater, reminisce about their student days, and strengthen old and new bonds with their fellow alumni.

The SHTMAA was overjoyed to host this event, sponsored by PolyU, to welcome "home" such talented and loyal former students. Although the last few years have been exceptionally trying, the Association remains committed to strengthening the connections between the School and its alumni for the benefit of all.

A Shared Spirit

The day began with a tour of the PolyU campus, giving alumni their first look at some of the School's brand-new facilities.

Next up was lunch. Once seated, the alumni were welcomed by Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean, Chair Professor, and Walter and Wendy Kwok Family Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management; Dr Miranda Lou, Executive Vice President, PolyU; and Ms Alison Yau, Chairman, SHTM Alumni Association.

Proud Past, Bright Future

"We are still connected after 20, 30 years, or more", said Ms Yau. "Distance doesn't keep us apart. Our SHTM spirit burns bright in our hearts".

As the guests enjoyed an eight-course luncheon, three of their former classmates shared their memories of the SHTM and their career paths since graduating. The speakers were Ms Sylvia Chung,

Chief Business Officer, Chinachem Group; Mr Wilson Lee, General Manager, Hyatt Regency Hong Kong Sha Tin; and Mr Perry Yiu, MH, Chairman, Hong Kong China Travel Service.

These outstanding alumni are carrying forward the SHTMAA's vision of service excellence. "During the pandemic", said Ms Yau, "we didn't stop serving our community". As well as donating thousands of facemasks and sanitisers, the Association organised donations from mainland alumni to the SHTM, maintained relationships with industry partners and provided scholarships for students. One such student was Miss Emily Wong, who received the SHTM Alumni Association Scholarship 2021/2022 in the fourth and final year of her Hotel Management degree.

Rounding off this remarkable day was a two-hour sake workshop in the SHTM's Vinoteca Lab.

"I must thank the wine and sake sponsors for making this Homecoming Day a success", concluded Ms Yau. "Most importantly, we must express our heartfelt gratitude to our university and our School for supporting the event!" **H**

Alum-notes

1990s		
Ms Jessica Kwok	BA in Hospitality Management 1993	General Manager, Shatin Clubhouse at The Hong Kong Jockey Club
Ms Elise Lau	HD in Hotel Management 1997	Director of Human Resources at The Ritz Carlton, Hong Kong
Mr Rick Lai	HD in Hotel Management 1998	Executive Assistant Manager – Rooms at The Peninsula Hong Kong
2000s		
Ms Crystal Chan	BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2008	Assistant Director of Human Resources at The Peninsula Hong Kong
2010s		
Mr Sonic Yang	BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2011	Head of Business Development at China Gingko Education Group Company Ltd
Mr Kenneth Ng	HD in Hotel Management 2012	Director of Food & Beverage Operations at The Peninsula Hong Kong
Ms Sojin Choi	MSc in International Hospitality Management 2015	Front Office Manager at Hyatt Regency Paris Etoile
Ms Athena Zou	MSc in International Hospitality Management 2015	Assistant Director Business Development at Wharf Hotels Management Ltd
Ms Calista Kim	BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2015	W Insider at W Hong Kong
Dr Bona Kim	Ph.D. in Hotel and Tourism Management 2016	Assistant Professor, Department of International Business & Trade, School of Global Convergence Studies at Inha University
Ms Vanessa Au-Yeung	BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2016	Executive Officer at Students Affairs Office, HK PolyU
Ms Krusty Li	BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2016	E-Commerce Manager, Digital Experience & Webmaster at Langham Hospitality Group
Ms Kerry Mok	BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2016	Senior Marketing Communication Officer at Rosedale Hotel Kowloon
Ms Emma Au	BSc(Hons) in Tourism Management 2017	Group Reservation Coordinator at Novotel Surfers Paradise, Australia
Ms Grace Mak	BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2017	Team Leader at Hong Kong Golf & Tennis Academy
Ms Christine Wong	BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2017	Assistant Officer at the SHTM, PolyU
Dr David Chin	Doctor of Hotel and Tourism Management 2018	Head of Strategy & Business Intelligence at Cafe de Coral Holdings Ltd
Ms Amanda Wantono	BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2019	Senior Business Process Improvement Consultant at Protiviti
2020s		
Ms Sophia Choi	BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2020	Front Office Team Leader at Grand Hyatt Jeju, Korea
Ms Natalli Tam	BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2020	Cluster Marketing & Communications Executive at CROSSROADS Maldives
Dr Guy Llewellyn	Ph.D. in Hotel and Tourism Management 2021	Assistant Professor at Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne Campus (Singapore)
Mr Pierandrea Falchi	MSc in Global Hospitality Business 2022	Cost Controller at Pirata Group
Mr Gordon Chum	BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2022	Graduate Trainee at Jones Lang LaSalle Ltd
Ms Jules Jeong	BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2022	Management Trainee, Global Future Leaders Program at Rosewood Hotel Group
Mr Elmo Lo	BSc(Hons) in Tourism and Events Management 2022	Host at Ritz-Carlton Hong Kong
Ms Aqsa Munir	BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2022	Manager in Training at Pirata Group
Ms Erin Sze-To	BSc(Hons) in Tourism and Events Management 2022	Assistant Librarian, Hong Kong Public Libraries
Mr Joshua Tan	BSc(Hons) in Tourism and Events Management 2022	Operations Management Trainee at Swire Hotels

Cherished Industry Support

The SHTM extends its sincere gratitude to the exceptional industry professionals who recently served as professors for a day.

Speaker	Title and Company	Topic
Mr Alberto ALDAVE	Business Development Manager – Spirits, Jebsen Beverage Company Limited	Whisky Tasting
Mr Vicent AN	VP & Head of China Business, Klook	The Birth and Development of Klook
Mr Giovanni ANGELINI	Former CEO, Shangri-La Hotels & Resorts	Evolution of Asian Hotel Brands
Dr Tania BARDHAN	Senior Director of Spa, Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong	The SPA Operations and Management in the Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong
Mr Alain-Thomas BRIERE	General Manager, W Hotel Chengdu	Asian Paradigm in Hospitality Management
Ms Xiaoxia CHAI	Manager, Atour Hotels	Service Training
Mr Clarence CHAN	Director of Operations, Asian Cuisine, Hong Kong & Club Manager, The China Club Hong Kong	From the Rich's Commodity to Globalization: The Story of the Development of the Wine Industry in Hong Kong
Ms Connie CHAN	Community Relations Officer, ICAC	ICAC Talk
Ms Cyrina CHAN	Area Director of Human Resources, Marco Polo Hongkong Hotel, Gateway Hotel and Prince Hotel	Hotel and Tourism Senior Executive Seminars
Mr Gaius CHAN	Founder & Sales Director, RNG Wine Ltd	Wine Business Model: A Case of RNG in Hong Kong
Mr Lawrence CHAN	Founder, Seal of Love Charitable Foundation	Hospitality Business Strategies in Asia - China Hotel and Tourism Business Studies
Ms Peggy CHAN	Founder, Grass Roots Pantry	Sustainability in the F&B Industry
Mr Dirk CHEN	Hotel Sommelier, China World Summit Wing, Beijing	Sommelier Job Responsibility
Mr Summer CHO	General Manager, The Ritz-Carlton Chengdu	Asian Paradigm in Hospitality Management
Mr Vallois CHOI	Director of Digital Marketing Strategy, Hotel ICON	Digital Marketing Hacks to Boost Business Results
Ms Jenny CHUNG	Director of Integrated Marketing & Communications, REGENT Hong Kong	Digital Marketing Strategies of Hotel ICON
Mr Ash CLARK	Co-Founder, "On the Wagon" Artisan Kombucha	Regent Hong Kong – The Grand Opening of a Legend Reborn: The Role of Brand Marketing and Communication in Preparation for the Opening
Mr Steven CO	Member of Board of Directors, HK Forum for Responsible Drinking (FReD)	What is Kombucha and Why is "On the Wagon" Different?
Ms Emilie COUTON	SVP Account Management & Partnerships of APAC, D-EDGE Hospitality Solutions	Responsible Serving
Ms Lisa DELCAMBRE	Director of Marketing Hong Kong & China, Links Concept Company Limited	Top 10 Marketing Trends Shaping the Hotel Digital Distribution
Mr Dean DIMITRIOU	General Manager, Niccolo Chengdu	Food and Wine Paring
Mr Theodore DL DURHAM	Managing Director, The Ortelius Group	Asian Paradigm in Hospitality Management
Ms Katherine ESTEY	Regional Director of People & Culture, Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong	Luxury Hospitality Trends & Emerging Paradigms in Mainland China
Mr Richard GOSLING	General Manager, Waldorf Astoria Chengdu	The SPA Operations and Management in the Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong
Mr Michael GROLL	Hotel Manager, Mandarin Oriental Hong Kong	Asian Paradigm in Hospitality Management
Mr Donny HO	Vice Chairman, HK Forum for Responsible Drinking (FReD)	Strategic Human Resources Management
Mr Stephen HO	President, Growth & Operations, Asia Pacific, Hyatt Hotels Corporation	Responsible Serving
Dr Hui HUANG	Hotel Manager, Shenzhen OCT East Theme Hotel Cluster	Hospitality Business Strategies in Asia – China Hotel and Tourism Business Studies
Mr Olivier HUI-BON-HOA	Regional Director – Asia, Badet Clement	Asian Paradigm in Hotels
Mr Paul KITAMURA	Head of Asset Management, CDL Hospitality Trusts	Introduction to Wine Grape Varietals
Mr Byron KO	General Manager, Hong Kong Ocean Park Marriott Hotel	Asset Management and Brand Restructuring
Mr Tasos KOUSLOGLOU	CEO, Hotel Division, Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited	Hotel Club Floor Operations Management
Ms Margaret KWOK	Director of Human Resources, Le Méridien Hong Kong, Cyberport	Hospitality Business Strategies in Asia - China Hotel and Tourism Business Studies
Mr Jun LAI	Vice President & General Manager, International Markets & Key Accounts, Trip.com	Interview Skills
Ms Wendy LAI	Vice President, Global Sources Exhibitions	Hospitality Business Strategies in Asia - China Hotel and Tourism Business Studies
Ms Amy LAM	Senior Community Relations Officer, ICAC	Exhibition Management
Mr Andy LAU	Managing Director, Ngong Ping 360 Limited	ICAC Talk
Ms Cherie LAU	Senior Central Operations Manager, PizzaExpress (Hong Kong) Limited	Hotel and Tourism Senior Executive Seminars
Mr David LAU	Founder & CEO, Ocean Sky Hotel Management Limited	Customer Satisfaction, Loyalty and Relationship Management
Mr Kelvin LAU	Assistant Show Operation Manager, Ocean Park Corporation	Creating Immersive Hotel Experience in the Metaverse
Ms Lucy LAU	Director of Marketing, Four Seasons Hong Kong	Halloween Events Management in Ocean Park
Mr Patrick LEE	Guest Relations Manager, WM Hotel	Innovating Marketing Programs during Crisis
Prof Willy LEGRAND	Professor, Department of Hospitality, Tourism and Event Management, IU International University of Applied Sciences	The Roles of Guest Relations Manager in Rooms Division and the Challenges during the Pandemic: The Case of WM Hotel
Ms Elyse LEUNG	VP for HK & MO, EternityX	Sustainability and Luxury Hospitality: Synergy or Dissonance?
Mr Larry LEUNG	VP, Site-in-charge of 11 Skies, K11 Concepts Limited	Digital Marketing Trends in the Hospitality Industry
Ms Kathy LI	Pilot Trainee, Cathay Pacific Airways Limited	11 Skies: How We Design and Co-Create a New Tourism Destination
Ms Vivian LIANG	Deputy Director & Fine Wine Account Manager, Sotheby's Wine	Strategic Human Resources Management
Mr Leo LIU	Director & President, BTG Annuo Hotels & Resorts	Wine Auction Market and Operations
Mr Vincent LIU	Learning & Development Manager, Conrad Hong Kong	Hospitality Business Strategies in Asia - China Hotel and Tourism Business Studies
Mr Crissie LO	Director of Learning & Development, The Peninsula Hong Kong	The Success of Conrad
Ms Regina LOURENCO	Commercial Director, REGENT Hong Kong	Marketing Management for the Hospitality and Tourism Industry
Mr John LUI	International Brand Director: Marketing, Food & People Development, PizzaExpress (Hong Kong) Limited	Regent Hong Kong - The Grand Opening of A Legend Reborn: The Role of Brand Marketing and Communication in Preparation for the Opening
Mr Andy LUK	Senior VP, Human Resources & Corporate Communication, Informa Markets	Franchising Strategy and Healthy Menu of Pizza Express
Dr Mao MAO	Regional Director of Sales and Marketing, Rosewood Hotel Beijing	Strategic Human Resources Management
Dr Damien MARCHENAY	General Manager, Hotel Pullman Changshu Leeman Chin	Asian vs. Western Hospitality
		Are Current Hotel Restaurant Offers Failing? An Analysis of the Main Existing Business Models of F&B Outlets in Upscale and Luxury Asian Hotels

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Upcoming Events

2023

24 February

Event: SHKP Hotels x SHTM Hackathon, Hong Kong
Organiser: SHTM
Contact: Ms Adelaide Lau
Email: adelaide.lau@polyu.edu.hk

24 March

11-12 April

Event: 5th Wine and Hospitality Management Workshop, Hong Kong
Organisers: SHTM
Contact: Ms Leslie Fung
Email: leslie.fung@polyu.edu.hk
Website: <https://wine-hospitality.org/events/5th-wine-hospitality-management-workshop>

21-22 May

22 May

Event: SHTM Lifetime Achievement Award, Hong Kong
Organiser: SHTM

25-27 May

Event: 2023 APacCHRIE Conference, Philippines
 Organiser: The International Management Schools and the Council of Hotel and Restaurant Educators of the Philippines
 Email: apacchrieseccretariat@gmail.com
 Website: www.apacchrie2023ph.org

5-7 July

Event: 28th Asia Pacific Tourism Association Annual Conference, Chiang Mai, Thailand
Organisers: APTA & Chiang Mai University
Contact: Dr SooCheong (Shawn) Jang
Email: jang12@purdue.edu
Website: <https://www.apta2023.org>



THE HONG KONG
POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY
香港理工大學



shtm
SCHOOL OF HOTEL &
TOURISM MANAGEMENT

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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.

Ranked No. 1 in the world in the "Hospitality and Tourism Management" category in ShanghaiRanking's Global Ranking of Academic Subjects 2022, placed No. 1 globally in the "Commerce, Management, Tourism and Services" category in the University Ranking by Academic Performance in 2021/2022, rated No. 1 in the world in the "Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism" subject area by the CWUR Rankings by Subject 2017, and ranked No. 1 in Asia in the "Hospitality and Leisure Management" subject area in the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2022, the SHTM ensured that we would gain international recognition for the calibre of our learning. Over the years, we've put the knowledge and skills we gained into practice as proud professionals in the hotel, travel and tourism fields. The cosmopolitan mix of our classes - with participants hailing from Denmark, Hong Kong, Korea, mainland China, Peru, 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 90 faculty members from diverse cultural backgrounds. The various programmes in hotel and tourism management lead to Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Hotel and Tourism Management, and Master of Science degrees.

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

You too can be recognised!

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