

Horizons

SHTM Magazine

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

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45
years
1979-2024

- ✦ The School Celebrates its 45th Anniversary
- ✦ Fresh Graduates Prepare to Take Next Steps at 29th PolyU Congregation
- ✦ SHTM Faculty Win Competitive Research Grants
- ✦ A Groundbreaking Report Sheds New Light on Retail Tourism

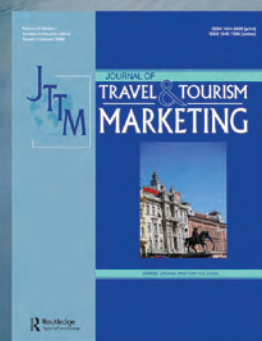
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Leading Change

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Contributions from readers are welcome in the form of articles and photographs. All contributions should be sent to: Editor, *Horizons*, School of Hotel and Tourism Management, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, 17 Science Museum Road, Tsim Sha Tsui East, Kowloon, Hong Kong.

The Editor reserves final editing rights on all material submitted for publication.

Telephone: (852) 3400 2634 Fax: (852) 2356 1390

Email: pauline.ngan@polyu.edu.hk Website: <https://www.polyu.edu.hk/shtm>

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DEAN'S MESSAGE

Forty-five years ago, history was made with the founding of the institution now known as the School of Hotel and Tourism Management (SHTM). In this issue of *Horizons*, readers of our cover story can join us in reflecting on four and a half decades of success and looking ahead to the future as we celebrate the SHTM's 45th anniversary. Next, in a story on the 29th PolyU Congregation, we honour the graduates who will shape the School's reputation and the landscape of hospitality and tourism in the decades to come.

The last year has been one of seizing opportunities and reaping rewards, as demonstrated by the host of exceptional faculty members who received major publicly funded research grants in 2023. After learning about their achievements, readers can turn to our "Research Horizons" inset later in the issue to explore for themselves some of the SHTM's latest cutting-edge research.

In this issue, we unveil the fruits of our latest collaboration with the World Travel and Tourism Council: a ground-breaking report that may change the way we think about retail tourism. The power of partnership comes under the spotlight in two stories that showcase the SHTM's commitment to organising and hosting international platforms for exchange, namely the IMPACT2023 conference and the 17th UNWTO/PATA Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook.

Never resting on its laurels, the SHTM is dedicated to providing a world-class educational experience. This issue announces the exciting new programmes to be launched this year under our updated MSc Scheme in Hospitality and Tourism Management, as well as offering readers the latest on our Mainland China programmes, Executive Development Programmes and more. We also hear from two outstanding learners who exemplify the pioneering ethos of our MicroMasters in International Hospitality Management.

On Rosewood Day, lucky student participants found out exactly what it's like to work for one of Asia's finest hotels. More insights from the frontline were gained at two Dean's Distinguished Lectures delivered by renowned industry experts.

Of course, the SHTM's vision of learning is not limited to the academic sphere; as readers will discover, this year saw current students and alumni alike broaden their extracurricular horizons through exchange and networking activities and a smorgasbord of food and beverage events.

My thanks go to all of the students, staff, alumni and supporters who have taken the SHTM to the next level of excellence in the last year. I invite you all to join us in celebrating their achievements and raising a glass to the next 45 years! #



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

45

years
1979-2024

Our 45-Year Legacy

This year marks the 45th anniversary of the founding of the SHTM, and there is much to celebrate. Who better to capture the scale of the School's achievement in the last 45 years than its visionary leader, Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean, Chair Professor, and Walter and Wendy Kwok Family Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management?

"From its humble beginnings as a diploma-conferring programme", noted Dean Chon, "the School has grown into one of the largest and most prestigious schools of hospitality and tourism management in the world".

Today, students, staff and visitors alike are reminded of just how much we have achieved in the last four and a half decades every time they pass by our student-run training restaurant Bistro1979, whose name commemorates the year of the School's founding as the Department of Institutional Management and Catering Studies (IMCS).

Humble these beginnings might have been, but the successes of the SHTM's earlier incarnations set the stage for its meteoric rise. In the 1990s, the newly renamed Department of Hotel and Tourism Management launched two new tourism-focused bachelor's and master's programmes and was admitted to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) as an Affiliate Member. Already, the Department was aligning itself with the needs of the industry and preparing to meet the growing demand for talented tourism professionals with the influx of visitors into Hong Kong in later years.

Having risen to the status of School in 2001, the SHTM achieved academic autonomy within PolyU in 2004. By that time, it boasted 40 academic staff from 15 countries and regions, who were responsible for educating more than 1,100 students. Three years later, it launched the world's very first Doctor of Hotel and Tourism Management, followed by a Mainland China version in 2013.

From Strength to Strength

The opening of Hotel ICON in 2011 was another milestone, winning the School the I-CHRIE McCool Breakthrough Award in the very next year. This award celebrated the paradigm-shifting approach to hospitality education represented by Hotel ICON – a quality also shared by the School's innovative tripartite Master of Science in Global Hospitality Business, which received the same award in 2020.

It is no coincidence that 2011 was also the year in which Dean Chon received the UNWTO's prestigious Ulysses Award for advancing the frontier of tourism knowledge. By 2011, since joining the then Department in 2000, Dean Chon had not only overseen its transition to a School of PolyU but also masterminded and brought to fruition the establishment of the world's first fully integrated teaching and research hotel and testbed for innovation in hospitality.

Under Dean Chon's inspirational leadership, the School continued to go from strength to strength in the 2010s. 2018 saw the creation of a unique industry-focused synergy between the SHTM and Hotel ICON, with the establishment of SHTM+ICON Consultancy. In 2017, the School took the top spot in Shanghai Ranking's Global Ranking of Academic Subjects, marking the beginning of an unbroken string of global world first rankings into the 2020s.

From Crisis to Confidence

"I have full confidence that the School will achieve even greater global excellence and lead the development of the field in the years to come". These are the words of Philip C. H. Chan, then Deputy President and Provost of PolyU, speaking at the SHTM's 40th anniversary celebrations.

Indeed, while the last 5 years may have been unprecedentedly difficult for hospitality and tourism, they have also seen a surge in innovation, with the School at the helm. Standing firm with our academic and industry partners and doubling down on our research and innovation efforts, we have succeeded in building resilience and charting a path to a smarter, safer, more sustainable industry.

One pillar of this mission is providing an environment in which for faculty to conduct timely, impactful research and platforms for academic-industry exchange. This was perfectly exemplified by the establishment of the Hospitality and Tourism Research Centre in 2018, with a view to enhancing the practical impact of the high-quality research conducted by SHTM faculty.

Along with providing world-class facilities for learning and research, the SHTM continues to nurture the next generation of passionate, versatile leaders of hospitality and tourism and continuously deepening its innovative programme offering. In 2023, the School became a two-time recipient of the ISTTE Institutional Achievement Award, exactly two decades after first receiving this award in 2003.

Indeed, 2023 was a year of honours for the SHTM. Among its 90 distinguished faculty members, who hail from 20 countries and regions, 12 were named among the world's top 2% of scientists in the field of Sport, Leisure and Tourism. At the university level, the School continued to excel in global rankings, claiming the top spot in the "Hospitality and Tourism Management" category of ShanghaiRanking's Global Ranking of Academic Subjects for the seventh consecutive year. For the sixth year, the SHTM also ranked first in the world in the Field Based Ranking of the University Ranking by Academic Performance Research Laboratory.

"The no. 1 ranking is a tribute to the SHTM's dedicated faculty members, trail-blazing graduates and culture of academic and research excellence", said Dean Chon. As we celebrate 45 years of success, we can look forward to scaling even greater heights in the years to come. **H**



Graduating into the World

Graduation is not just the culmination of studies, but the opening of a door into the world. Equipped with a first-rate education from the world's foremost school of hotel and tourism management, SHTM alumni are ready to blaze trails in every sector they enter. At the 29th PolyU Congregation (SHTM) on 7 November, our new graduates were rewarded for their hard work and reminded of the breadth of opportunities now open to them.

Our graduating cohort in 2023 comprised 9 Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), 39 Doctor of Hotel and Tourism Management (D.HTM), 258 Master of Science (MSc) and 263 Bachelor of Science (BSc) graduates. Each of the Congregation's sessions, at 10:30 a.m. and 3 p.m., commenced with a procession of staff and students into the PolyU Jockey Club Auditorium.

Ready for Challenges

The Congregation was declared open by Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean, Chair Professor, and Walter and Wendy Kwok Family Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management. Next, Professor Haiyan Song, Associate Dean, Chair Professor, and Mr and Mrs Chan Chak Fu Professor in International Tourism, addressed attendees before introducing the Guest of Honour, Mr William Ellwood Heinecke, Founder and Chairman of Minor International Public Company Limited.

In a rousing speech, Mr Heinecke shared many pearls of wisdom gleaned from the six decades of his career. "The hospitality and tourism industry is full of opportunities and challenges", he said, adding that

"you're never too young or too old to take on a new challenge". Stressing the importance of adaptability in the hotel sector, he urged the SHTM's fresh graduates to "embrace change and be willing to learn and grow with it".

Following this, Professor Song presented the first batch of D.HTM, MSc and BSc graduate awards. Proceedings continued with two valedictory speeches by student representatives. Postgraduate representative Ms Lena Bresean, who graduated with Distinction from the MSc in International Hospitality Management, described her year at the SHTM as "the most intense yet rewarding year of my life". Looking forward, Ms Bresean added that "the skills we've learned here will continue to guide us into the future".

Next to speak was undergraduate representative Ms Lian Chan, First Class Honours graduate of the BSc in Tourism and Events Management

and recipient of the SHTM Student of the Year Award 2022/23. Ms Chan invited the Congregation to “take a moment to recall the cherished memories and lessons” of their time at the School. “Now is our turn to shine”, she said, advising her fellow graduates to “take challenge as an opportunity rather than a risk” in their future careers.

Hot on the heels of these inspiring student addresses came two prestigious individual accolades. The Best D.HTM Thesis Award 2022/23 was conferred upon Dr Wenjun Shan in recognition of his doctoral research on factors impacting rural tourism entrepreneurial performance. Ms Liting Zhou then received the Best MSc Dissertation Award 2022/23 for her linguistic study of user perceptions of Airbnb’s online experience.

The morning’s final honour went to Dr Elton Sun, CEO and Managing Director of Yusu Hotel Management Co., Ltd., who received the PolyU SHTM Outstanding Alumni Award (Professional Achievement) 2023. Dr Sun first studied here in 2002 to further his development after more than a decade in the industry. He has now fulfilled his dream of completing a doctorate, despite his studies coinciding with the global downturn. “The challenge was huge”, he said, “but I did it”.

Proud of Who We Are

Dean Chon re-opened proceedings in the afternoon session. Dr Catherine Cheung, Associate Dean and Associate Professor, then introduced the day’s second Guest of Honour: Dr Jeff Ning, President of Wanda Hotels & Resorts. Dr Ning had sage words for the 2023 graduates, advising them to continue taking advantage of the support provided by the School throughout their careers. Encouragingly, this industry expert told listeners that “SHTM alumni have great influence in the hotel industry in mainland China”.

It was Dr Cheung’s honour to present the second batch of D.HTM, MSc and BSc graduate awards. Another pair of inspiring valedictory speeches then followed. The first was delivered by Mr Johannes Zhu, who graduated with Distinction from the MSc in International Tourism and Convention Management. He spoke warmly of the bonds forged between students as they faced and overcame challenges. “We are SHTMers, and we should be proud of who we are”, he concluded.

Miss Beatrice Yu, First Class Honours graduate of the BSc in Hotel Management, recalled the

many ways in which overcoming hurdles brought students closer together. She thanked our faculty for equipping graduates with one of their most priceless skills, adaptability, noting that “the SHTM has nurtured us to be collaborative individuals with international exposure”.

The Best Ph.D. Thesis Award 2022/23 was then bestowed upon Dr Ermias Kifle Gedecho, Doctor of Philosophy, for an insightful study of Ethiopian diaspora festival attendees. Completing the day’s events, Mr Jason Yuan, BSc in Tourism and Events Management, was presented with the Best Undergraduate Honours Thesis Award 2022/23 for his important research into the impact of refugees on tourist perceptions of Sweden.

The SHTM congratulates all graduates as they join the ranks of our esteemed alumni, ambassadors for the School, who represent us with distinction wherever they travel and whichever fields they enter. **H**



The School has a long history of conducting cutting-edge research, and its researchers have been involved in myriad pioneering projects that bridge the gap between hospitality and tourism theory and industry practice. Testifying to the School’s commitment to producing impactful research to build a smarter, safer and more sustainable industry, a host of SHTM faculty have again received major publicly funded research grants from highly competitive bodies, as well as generous funding from PolyU.

General Research Fund Support

Last year, the Hong Kong Research Grants Council announced the results of the 2023/24 round of the General Research Fund (GRF)

and Early Career Scheme (ECS), revealing that a grand total of 14 SHTM projects would be funded.

Supported by the GRF, Professor Jinsoo Lee is working with US colleagues to develop and validate a scale measuring the environmental, social and governance performance of convention and exhibition centres in Hong Kong. Sustainability is also the focus of a project by Dr Dan Wang, Associate Professor, and local colleagues, who ask how travel livestreaming can inspire tourists to choose eco-friendly hotels.



In another GRF-supported project, Dr Sabrina Huang, Associate Professor, and her US co-author tackle the issue of working from home in the hospitality industry. Their interest in employment is shared by Associate Professors Dr Ada Lo and Dr Nicholas Thomas, who are working with overseas colleagues on employer branding in the hotel industry; and by Dr Maxime Wang, Assistant Professor, who serves as Principal Investigator on a project addressing employees' goal orientation.

Several SHTM researchers are funded under the GRF to explore key psychological constructs in hospitality and tourism. Mortality salience and how travel helps to buffer existential anxiety are the focus of Dr Nan Chen, Research Assistant Professor; Professor Cathy Hsu, Chair Professor; and Dr Ying Wang, Associate Professor. Meanwhile, Associate Professor Dr Deniz Kucukusta and Assistant Professor Dr Maxime Wang address mindfulness in the hospitality context.

Other GRF-supported projects this year include a study of peer-to-peer accommodation-sharing services by Dr Jinah Park, Research Assistant Professor; Professor Haiyan Song, Associate Dean, Chair Professor and Mr and Mrs Chan Chak Fu Professor in International Tourism Professor; and Dr Richard Qiu, Assistant Professor. How social information affects consumers' selection of hospitality products is the focus of Dr Daniel Leung, Associate Professor, and colleagues. Along with a local colleague, Dr Pearl Lin, Associate Professor, asks how dietary restrictions affect people's dining-related values. Our final GRF-supported Principal Investigator is Dr Richard Qiu, who is working with co-authors to model Hong Kong outbound tourism demand.

Early Career Scheme Support

Three SHTM researchers won funding under the ECS. The first was Assistant Professor Dr Faye Hao, for a project on "virtual humans" undertaken with Professor Kaye Chon, Dean, Chair Professor, and Walter and Wendy Kwok Family Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management; Dr Jason Zhang, Assistant Professor; and a colleague. The second was Dr Michael Lin, Assistant Professor, who is working with a colleague on restaurants' adoption of innovations oriented towards food waste sustainability. The third was Dr Seunghun Shin, Assistant Professor, for a project on metaverse marketing in hospitality undertaken with three overseas colleagues.

More Competitive Grants Obtained

Three SHTM staff members have successfully obtained financial support for book writing from PolyU. With this assistance, Professor Mimi Li will write a book on the principles of tourism planning; Dr Dan Wang will use case studies of Chinese domestic brands to explore digital transformation and innovation in the hospitality context; and Dr Anyu Liu will take a dual (micro-macro) perspective on tourism development and common prosperity in China.

Along with her support under the ECS, Dr Faye Hao obtained a grant from the Hong Kong government's Innovation and Technology Support Programme for a project entitled "An Interaction Framework of Hospitality Virtual Human Persona and Brand Personality Consistency". Her Co-investigators are Dean Kaye Chon; Dr Jason Zhang; and Professor Qing Li, PolyU Chair Professor.

Dr Hao's pioneering research on avatars and sustainability in the hospitality industry also won her funding from PolyU's Postdoc Matching Fund Scheme 2022/23. Working with Dr Jason Zhang, she obtained further funding for a project named "I Love Halal" from PolyU's Greater Bay Area Start-up Postdoc Programme – Hong Kong Scheme.

We are also delighted to report that two SHTM staff members secured grants from the government-financed Public Policy Research Funding Scheme this year. The Scheme will fund a project by Professor Kam Hung entitled "Developing a Tourism Cluster in the Greater Bay Area: A Dual Branding Perspective", as well as Dr Dan Wang's efforts to construct an index of environmental sustainability management for hotels in Hong Kong.

Finally, Dr Junchuan Wang and Dr Yitong Yu have obtained support from the National Natural Science Foundation of China for research on "scenescapes" and gig workers, respectively.

We congratulate each of these outstanding scholars on their contribution to the SHTM's reputation for research excellence, and we look forward to the fruits of their newly funded projects. **H**



Applying our knowledge to support the industry has always been high on the School's agenda – and never more so than in the rapidly evolving landscape of hospitality and tourism post-COVID-19. This year, the SHTM is proud to announce the fruition of a partnership with the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) that is set to change the way we think about retail tourism. The groundbreaking "Global Retail Tourism: Trends and Insights" report is the latest in a series of industry-focused

knowledge-sharing projects that the School has undertaken as a WTTC Knowledge Partner.

A Spotlight on Shopping

Every year, travellers collectively spend billions of dollars on shopping. So far, however, there has been no accurate estimate of

Unveiling the Power of Retail Tourism

the contribution of retail tourism to destination economies. Teams from the SHTM and the WTTC set out to fill this gap and shed light on the vast untapped potential of shopping for the hospitality and tourism industry. Their context was the post-COVID-19 rebound in international tourism, which saw revenue from inbound visitors grow by a massive 81.9% in 2022.

This important collaboration kicked off with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the two partners in July 2022. The School's team comprised Professor Haiyan Song, Associate Dean, Chair Professor and Mr and Mrs Chan Chak Fu Professor in International Tourism, Dr Richard Qiu, Assistant Professor, and Dr Anyu Liu, Assistant Professor, together with two research assistants. Headed by Professor Song, they worked closely with the WTTC research team led by Mr Nejc Jus, WTTC Head of Research, over the subsequent year.

The project had three main objectives. The first was to capture the current economic landscape and importance of retail tourism. The second was to shed light on the factors that are shaping



(From left) Ms Julia Simpson, WTTC President and CEO; Prof Haiyan Song, SHTM Associate Dean; Ms Desirée Bollier, The Bicester Collection Chair and Global Chief Merchant; and Ms Elena Foguet, The Bicester Collection Business Director Spain

demand and supply in the sector at the global and regional levels from the perspectives of tourists and practitioners. The third was to provide guidance for stakeholders on managing the sustainable development of the sector.

Together, the SHTM and WTTC teams used a range of methods to draw together and analyse a comprehensive set of economic, consumer and industry data. First, they assessed the overall contribution of retail tourism to the GDP of major destinations based on data from Oxford Economics, a leader in global economic forecasting and econometric analysis. Next, they surveyed nearly 4,600 tourists in 24 major source markets to gather consumer data on tourists shopping behaviours before and after COVID-19. Finally, they interviewed 13 industry leaders from retail businesses, NGOs and the travel trade to obtain an industry perspective on the key challenges and opportunities facing the sector. This step was conducted with the help of The Bicester Collection, which represents luxury shopping destinations across Europe and China.

Recovery through Retail

The insights gained from this research were drawn together in a report entitled “Global Retail Tourism: Trends and Insights”, which was launched to great acclaim at a thought leadership event at La Roca Village in Barcelona, Spain on 7 September 2023. This event featured a series of conversations among key figures across business sectors, and it concluded with a resounding call for attention to the importance of retail tourism to economic recovery in the wake of the pandemic.

The report’s key findings and recommendations were introduced by a panel consisting of Professor Haiyan Song; Ms Julia Simpson, President and CEO, WTTC; and Ms Desirée Bollier, Chair and Global Chief Merchant, The Bicester Collection. As the attendees discovered, the report sheds light on the immense unrealised potential of retail tourism for both businesses and destinations.

It offers insights into travellers’ shopping habits and intentions and pinpoints emerging trends such as sustainable retail and “retailment” – the fusion of retail and entertainment. After delving deep into the retail tourism landscape through detailed case studies of the UK and Hong Kong, the report concludes with recommendations for retailers, destination management organisations and governments.

“Our report reveals that retail tourism is not only about shopping; it’s about major revenue, job creation and influencing travellers’ choices,” said Ms Simpson. “I urge stakeholders worldwide to read, reflect and act on this report’s findings.”

Professor Song also stressed the importance of sustainability in retail tourism, saying, “It is imperative that retailers understand how much shoppers and travellers are willing to pay for sustainable products.”

The School is proud to have made such an impactful contribution to understanding of the global retail tourism sector, which is playing a pivotal role in the recovery of travel and tourism post-COVID-19. “We are delighted to be part of the WTTC–SHTM Global Retail Tourism project, as applying our knowledge to support the global industry is high on the School’s research agenda”, said Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean, Chair Professor and Walter and Wendy Kwok Family Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management. **H**



Review of IMPACT2023



On 7–8 December last year, opportunities and challenges in the wake of COVID-19 came under the spotlight at the IMPACT2023 conference. Each year, the School partners with its Hospitality and Tourism Research Centre and STR to bring this important event to fruition. Held in Hotel ICON, the conference brought together academics, industry executives and government officials to tackle the all-important theme of “Tourism and Hospitality in the Post-Pandemic Era”.

“The SHTM is proud to have initiated the IMPACT conference in response to the unprecedented challenges imposed on hospitality and tourism by the pandemic”, said Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean, Chair Professor, and Walter and Wendy Kwok Family Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management, as he welcomed attendees to the conference.

This sentiment was warmly reciprocated by Mr Steve Hood, Senior Vice President of Research, STR, in his Welcome Address. “I am excited to see everyone in person, look at the data together, discuss top issues, and brainstorm research and education opportunities”, he said.

This agenda is perfectly in line with PolyU’s mission, said Professor Jin-Guang Teng, PolyU President. “We have a very strong emphasis on producing innovation through research”, he said. “Research should not stop at writing papers; it has to be practically relevant”.

Embracing Recovery

Practical relevance was certainly the goal of the Opening Session,

held in the morning of 7 December. The session featured three distinguished speakers and was chaired by Dr Joseph Tormey, Director, Hospitality Management Program, Jack H. Brown College of Business and Public Administration, California State University San Bernardino.

Mr Noor Ahmad Hamid, Chief Executive Officer, Pacific Asia Travel Association, shared a “hot off the press” forecast, noting that “Hong Kong has the potential to be the number 3 destination in the world by 2025”. Digital transformation was next on the agenda. “The direction we are going is artificial general intelligence”, said Professor Shawn Jang, Director of the Center for Hospitality and Retail Industries Business Analytics, White Lodging–J.W. Marriott School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Purdue University.

Continuing this theme was Professor Iis Tussyadiah, Professor of Intelligent Systems in Service, Head of School of Hospitality and Tourism Management and Fellow of the Institute for People-Centred Artificial Intelligence, University of Surrey. "How can we leverage exciting new AI tools to make tourism more sustainable?" she asked.

After refreshments, attendees gathered for a Panel Session chaired by Dr Qu Xiao, SHTM Associate Professor. Four industry leaders came together to discuss the post-pandemic future of hospitality: Ms Mandy Fan, Senior Vice President, Development & Strategic Owner Relations – China, Langham Hospitality Group; Ms Amanda Hyndman, Chief People Officer, Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group; Mr Tasos Kousloglou, CEO – Hotel Division, Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited; and Mr Tao ZHOU, Managing Director, Head of JLL Hotels & Hospitality, Greater China.

Two Parallel Sessions were held in the afternoon of 7 December, during which SHTM faculty presented research findings with the potential to majorly impact industry practice and future policy decisions. Four such sessions were held across the two days of the conference, including a "Belt and Road Special Session" and a "Hotel ICON Research Showcase".

The first day concluded with a Gala Dinner, at which the Best Paper Awards and Undergraduate Student Research Competition Awards were presented.

More Illuminating Insights

The second day of the conference began with a Featured Speakers session chaired by Professor Honggen Xiao, SHTM Assistant Dean. The latest plans for local tourism were unveiled by Mr Dane Cheng, Executive Director, Hong Kong Tourism Board, who promised that "2024 will be a year of conversion".

Environmental, social and governance strategies were the topic of the next talk, delivered by Professor Ki-Joon Back, Associate Dean for Research & Graduate Studies, Moores Chair Professor, Conrad N. Hilton College of Global Hospitality Leadership, University of Houston. "There are so many things we can do as researchers to help", he said.

The SHTM's Chair Professor Cathy Hsu described the findings of TOUROMETER, a cutting-edge cloud-based tool for monitoring tourism. "This will be useful for post-COVID-19 tourism policy and strategy development", she noted.

Sharing his views on the continued resurgence of the hotel and tourism industry in China and Asia, Mr Hood said, "I expect that we will see more group recovery in the Asia-Pacific in 2024".

The conference's second Panel Session was chaired by SHTM Assistant Professors Dr Nicholas Thomas and Dr Dori Davari. The four Featured Speakers were Professor Haiyan Song, SHTM Associate Dean, Chair Professor and Mr and Mrs Chan Chak Fu Professor in International Tourism; Ms Sarah Wang, Regional Director for Asia, World of Travel & Tourism Council; and Mr Herbert Yum, Research Manager, Euromonitor International. Their discussion ranged from the long-term challenge of "overtourism" to ways of increasing stakeholders' awareness of sustainability.

The conference culminated with a Concluding Session chaired by Dr Dan Wang, SHTM Associate Professor. The three SHTM panellists were Professor Mimi Li; Dr Daniel Leung, Associate Professor; and Dr Abbie-Gayle Johnson, Assistant Professor.

The SHTM is grateful to all those who helped to make this conference a milestone in the evolution of the industry post-pandemic. Special thanks go to the conference's Organising Committee, a team of remarkable SHTM undergraduate students from the Practice of Special Events class, who designed a fruitful and illuminating programme for our delegates. We look forward to hosting IMPACT2024! **H**

Attendees of the IMPACT2023 Conference



Panel discussion at Rosewood Day



Rosewood Social Impact Challenge 2023

Few achievements are more prized by the SHTM than the partnerships it has forged with industry leaders in Hong Kong and beyond. Working closely with this valued network not only helps our faculty to conduct impactful research that meets the industry's immediate and rapidly evolving needs but also gives students opportunities to gain real-life, first-hand experience of the sectors in which they will forge their future careers.

One of these esteemed partners is Rosewood Hong Kong, a member of the Hong Kong headquartered Rosewood Hotel Group, which is fast expanding internationally. Following the success of the inaugural Rosewood Day in 2022, the SHTM was delighted to join hands again with Rosewood Hong Kong to host this signature event on 24 November 2023.

Experts Share their Knowledge

Kicking off this memorable day was a speech by Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean, Chair Professor, and Walter and Wendy Kwok Family Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management. After congratulating Rosewood Hong Kong on achieving an outstanding global ranking, Dean Chon described another facet of the fruitful partnership between the SHTM and this exemplar of excellence in the hotel sector: an internship programme that will see students work for 3 months at Hotel ICON and 3 months at Rosewood. "Our School is very happy to collaborate with this prestigious,

progressive hotel group", he concluded, thanking Rosewood Hong Kong for its support.

This sentiment was warmly reciprocated by the next speaker, Mr Hugo Montanari, Managing Director of Rosewood Hong Kong, who began by thanking the SHTM for hosting the event. "This collaboration is truly commendable", he added. "Rosewood Day represents a celebration of talent, creativity and excellence that can inspire future leaders and drive meaningful change in our industry".

Next on the day's packed schedule was a panel discussion featuring senior executives from Rosewood Hong Kong: Mr Hugo Montanari; Ms Ada Ng, Director of Social Impact; Ms Vickie Ho, Director of Marketing and Communications; and Mr Dennis Wong, Director of



Talent and Culture. The discussion was moderated by SHTM Assistant Professors Dr Dori Davari and Dr Jaehee Gim. Students and faculty alike gained invaluable insights from the leaders of this exemplar of excellence in the hotel sector. From Mr Wong, they learned about the ethos of transparency, teamwork and collaboration at the heart of Rosewood's mission. "We are one family", he said. "You should treat your colleagues and coworkers the same way you treat your brother and sister, your mother and father".

Describing her career-long commitment to social impact, Ms Ng stressed the importance of corporate social responsibility to the ecosystem of Hong Kong and beyond. "How can you equip yourself for a career in this field?" she asked. "Try out positions in lots of different companies, beginning with volunteer and part-time roles".

From Ms Ho, the audience learned about the third pillar of Rosewood's mission, along with teamwork and social impact. "A sense of purpose is the core brand philosophy of Rosewood Hotels", she said, explaining that every hotel is designed to reflect and uplift the local culture and community.

SHTM students not only benefited from the insightful knowledge shared by these seasoned hoteliers but also had the invaluable opportunity to network with them for professional development during a Meet Up Session at the end of the day.

A Lasting Social Impact

Another highlight of Rosewood Day is the Rosewood Challenge, which is open to all SHTM students. This year, students were invited to propose strategies and activities to help Rosewood Hong Kong empower its employees and promote environmental sustainability. "This is not just about creating a business proposal", said Mr Montanari. "It's about addressing global challenges, this year focusing on social impact". He went on to share his belief that all businesses have the responsibility to give back to the communities of which they are part. "We must be agents of change and catalysts of progress", he said.

Meeting these criteria and winning first prize in the Rosewood Day Social Impact Challenge 2023 was a team of three BSc in Hotel Management students: Mr Songmeng Liu, Miss Qing Shu and Miss Jiaqi Zhang. They had the chance to present their proposal to the assembled guests and received certificates and prizes from Dean Chon and Mr Montanari. Two finalist teams were also honoured by Dr Catherine Cheung, SHTM Associate Dean and Associate Professor, and Mr Dennis Wong.

In the words of Mr Montanari, "social impact is here to stay". The SHTM could not be more proud of its talented, creative student prize-winners and vows to continue deepening its collaboration with valued partners like Rosewood Hong Kong. Here's to next year's Rosewood Day! **H**



Bright Futures and the Science of Luxury

Elegant and timeless; resurgent and sustainable – these watchwords of hospitality and tourism were emphasised in two recent Dean's Distinguished Lectures. On 31 August, Mr Joseph W. Y. Chong, Regional Vice President, Asia, The Peninsula Hotels and Managing Director, The Peninsula Hong Kong, gave a stirring speech on the themes of hospitality and luxury. He was followed on 19 September by Ms Julia Simpson, President and CEO of the World Travel and Tourism Council, who set out the exciting prospects for career-beginners in travel and tourism.

The Evolution of Elegance

Few have achieved as much in our field as the first speaker. Since joining the renowned Peninsula Hotels group in 2000, Mr Chong has risen to the senior

positions he holds today. His story is intertwined with that of Shanghai, where he played a key role in launching The Peninsula Shanghai and was recognised for his contributions to tourism by the city government. Speaking at the Jockey Club Auditorium, Mr Chong focused not on his own career but on the "relentless, growing human science" of hospitality and achieving timeless elegance in the hotel industry.

"Being considered timeless is the epitome of praise for a luxury hotel brand", Mr Chong noted – and he is well-placed to know about timeless hotels, pointing to the 95-year history of the Peninsula. We are now enjoying the enduring fruits of its labour, thanks not to the mere passage of time but to a thoughtful pursuit of the "intricate dance between constancy and evolution" that defines timelessness. Hospitality is a scientific discipline uniting physics, chemistry and biology, with a special focus on creating space – "the space of time, of privacy, of options" – to create the intangible thing called luxury.

Mr Chong's lecture left no doubt that timeless elegance in luxury hospitality means evolving with the age while staying true to your essence. He gave particular consideration to the SHTM students in attendance, recalling that he was once like them. Describing hospitality as "the science of understanding people", he emphasised the need to understand not only guests but also employees, ending with the wise insight that to retain their best staff, hotel managers must heed the fact that "every employee wants to know what's in store".

A Sector in Resurgence

Nobody is better qualified to forecast our industry's future than the second speaker. Ms Julia Simpson has been leading the way in travel and tourism (T&T) for many years, holding senior positions at major airlines and even advising the UK prime minister. When Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean, Chair Professor and Walter and Wendy Kwok Family Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management, said in his introductory remarks that the

Dean's Distinguished Lecture series was designed to feature "renowned international personalities in the hospitality and tourism field", he meant people of Ms Simpson's calibre.

Ms Simpson returned the compliment, lavishing deserved praise on the SHTM. "The world would be a different place were it not for the research of this school's esteemed faculty", she said, reminding the audience that we have been the world's number one hospitality and tourism school for seven years running. "There is nowhere better to imagine the future", she said, noting that our graduates enter an industry that contributes a sizeable chunk of the global economy, has bounced back from the pandemic and is going from strength to strength.

Like Mr Chong, Ms Simpson was keen to stress the importance of evolution. As technology develops, trends arise and new markets emerge, the very essence of a career in T&T is evolving. As Ms Simpson told those who are soon to finish their studies and embark on exciting professional journeys, "Many of the roles you start once you graduate don't even exist yet!" In her inspiring words, "you're not just studying the sector, you're shaping the sector".

Sustainability is central to the changes taking place in our industry, and Ms Simpson unveiled some heartening statistics on the strides made in this direction. "For the first time in history, the link between T&T's growth and its carbon footprint has been broken", she said, underlining that "our success no longer comes at the expense of the planet".

The talk was followed by a dialogue session with three students: BSc Year 4 student Winnie Chan and Ph.D. students Mehrnaz Alizadeh and Terence Kong. Eager to learn from an industry leader, they posed important questions on future trends in T&T and how the World Travel and Tourism Council is spearheading changes to improve sustainability and inclusivity. Ms Simpson's insightful answers armed our graduates with a wealth of knowledge on the directions our industry is moving in and the opportunities this creates.

Combining the themes of these two memorable lectures, it is clear that the timeless essence of hospitality has a long future yet. **H**

Dialogue with SHTM students



INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY OF THE YEAR WINNER

Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Hong Kong

THE Awards Asia 2023

THE Awards Asia 2023



Dr Catherine Cheung received an award in the International Strategy of the Year category in the 2023 THE Awards Asia on behalf of the tripartite Master of Science in Global Hospitality Business programme

A Momentous Year for MSc Students

As our myriad awards and global rankings attest, the School is committed to continuously updating its educational provision to embrace innovation and meet the industry's need for fresh talent in the fast-changing landscape of hospitality and tourism.

One of the key pillars of educational excellence at the SHTM is its internationally recognised Master's programmes, which empower students to seek out new frontiers of knowledge and fast-track their careers. This year, we celebrate the launch of two brand-new MSc programmes and the 10th anniversary of the ground-breaking MSc in Global Hospitality Business (MGH).

A Brand-New Chapter Begins

Never resting on its laurels, the School has this year begun a new chapter in the history of its postgraduate programme offering, with a major update to the MSc Scheme in Hospitality and Tourism Management (the Scheme). Under the updated Scheme are "packaged" three of our existing world-renowned MSc programmes – International Hospitality Management, International Tourism and Convention Management, and International Wine Management – and two entirely new programmes, which will be launched in September 2024.

"The offering of multiple programmes in one scheme allows students to choose a major that best fits their career interests", says Professor Kam Hung, Programme Leader of the Scheme. "As a world-leading hospitality school, our jobs are to nurture young talents and to help the industry thrive in every possible way."

This is precisely the vision of the first new programme under the Scheme, the MSc in Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Hospitality. In line with the SHTM's legacy of anticipating and shaping industry trends, this programme meets a crucial emerging need in hospitality and tourism.

"The importance of innovation and entrepreneurship in the hospitality industry has significantly increased", explains Professor Hung, "particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic". Businesses are investing more in innovative practices and seeking out talents with professional qualifications in this area, with many of the SHTM's graduates embarking on their own entrepreneurial journeys in the hotel, restaurant and information technology sectors. Against this backdrop, the new MSc programme will nurture students with the entrepreneurial and creative mindsets they need to grow their careers in the age of innovation.

Perfectly complementing this forward-thinking focus is the second new programme under the Scheme, the MSc in Luxury Experiences Management (LEM). Students lucky enough to enrol in this programme from September will benefit from an in-depth exploration of luxury service management, a sector that has recently seen explosive growth, at the heart of Asia, one of the world's fastest-expanding luxury markets.

"The LEM will provide students with knowledge of how the luxury industry responds to the changing

landscape by balancing 'high-touch' and 'high-tech' approaches, thereby creating unique and memorable experiences", notes Professor Hung. As well as gaining cutting-edge insights in the classroom, LEM students will have the opportunity to study consumers' perspectives and the operational side of luxury service management through an immersive residential workshop.

An Anniversary to Remember

This year represents a milestone in the evolution of the School's MSc programme offering. In 2024, the SHTM will not only launch two brand-new MSc programmes but also celebrate 10 years of its world-renowned MGH programme. Back in 2014, three international leaders of hospitality and tourism education – the SHTM, EHL Hospitality Business School in Switzerland, and the Conrad N. Hilton College of Global Hospitality Leadership at the University of Houston, USA – made history by jointly establishing the award-winning tripartite Master's programme in global hospitality business, spanning three continents.

Representing the best of the East and the West, the MGH programme offers students an unparalleled cultural and learning experience. In the words of Dr Catherine Cheung, SHTM Associate Dean and MGH

Programme Leader, "students' learning encompasses Europe's historical hospitality legacy, Asia's fast-paced market, and America's expansive hospitality domain, endowing them with an extensive toolkit for leadership and innovation in this ever-evolving industry".

It is no surprise that this pioneering programme has gone from strength to strength in the last 10 years, nurturing graduates equipped to excel in a globalised environment and take the reins of the global hospitality industry. In 2020, its innovative approach to hotel and tourism education was selected for the McCool Breakthrough Award by the International Council of Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education, the world's largest organisation of hospitality and tourism educators.

Last year, the programme was honoured with the International Strategy of the Year award at the Times Higher Education (THE) Awards Asia 2023, taking the top spot among 700 submissions from 16 countries and regions. This award acknowledged the programme's effectiveness in offering students a global perspective and helping them develop essential future-oriented management skills.

The SHTM is delighted to celebrate these twin milestones in 2024 and looks forward to providing its Master's students with an ever-evolving, ever-expanding repertoire of opportunities for learning and professional growth. **H**

MSc in Luxury Experiences Management



MSc in Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Hospitality



Research Horizons

Does the Fate of Tourism Hinge on Land Use?

Changes in land use rights to encourage tourism can have unexpected negative consequences for tourist businesses, according to the SHTM's Michael Lin and co-authors. Noting that the impact of land use regulation on tourism has historically been understudied, the researchers performed an impact assessment of a unique form of tourist business in Namibia. They found that although regulatory changes had expanded access to land use rights, the economic outcomes for these ventures were not entirely positive, due to legal complexities and conflicts between stakeholders.

Unknown Effects of Legislation

How we use land is central to how our societies function. Societal progress therefore frequently involves changes in land use, and in modern civilisation this is generally accomplished by official legislation. As the authors note, "land use change through a formal and regulatory framework is relatively recent, dating back to the mid-17th century, and the more comprehensive regulations to the early 20th century". Being inherently tied to distinct local features, the fate of the tourism sector is particularly closely intertwined with land use legislation.

The economic consequences of land use changes are conventionally gauged through regulatory impact assessments. In societies

worldwide, tourism is a key pillar of the economy. According to the researchers, however, "despite the importance of land use in tourism, there remains a critical gap in the literature of the assessment of changes in land use regulations". This lack of understanding contrasts with the well-established literature on the impact of land use legislation in other economic contexts, such as agriculture, and may lead to regulatory changes being made by policymakers who are blind to their potential effects.

In both the developed and developing worlds, the reallocation of land for touristic usage is intended to support the economy. However, it is often a source of conflict, which "usually involves citizens opposing tourism development, and businesses supporting it for the reasons of economic growth". However, even when efforts to redirect land use towards tourism succeed, economic growth is not guaranteed. The authors draw particular attention to a dearth of research investigating how small tourism businesses respond to regulatory changes, and whether the effects are positive.

The Case of Namibia

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the bedrock of tourism, accounting for 70% of businesses in the sector, and are especially important in developing countries. Lacking the power and resources of larger firms, they are also particularly sensitive

to regulatory changes. Tourism SMEs, as the researchers observe, are generally "dependent on debt financing due to limited access to other sources [of funding]" and tend to rely on fixed assets as collateral. Land is a major type of fixed asset, and therefore land use changes directly intersect with tourism SMEs' attempts to grow using external financing.

The researchers' focal country, Namibia, is an African nation that has seen a boom in land use allocation for tourism. "In 1990", the authors note, "when Namibia gained independence, the government inherited an unbalanced distribution of land ownership". This situation initially stifled economic growth by restricting communities' ability to tap the country's huge tourist potential. In the last two decades, however, the state has taken legislative steps to remedy this, including increasing the amount of land with communal access. Such land can legally be used for commercial ends, notably including tourism.

Specifically, a 2002 law opened the possibility of touristic land use under the auspices of communal conservancies, a type of local body governed by communal authorities. "This resulted in the development of Communal Joint Venture lodges through a partnership between the communal conservancies and the private sector", the researchers tell us. The 46 Lodges now operating in Namibia employ numerous workers from local communities and have been supported by international development agencies. However, the Lodges' ability to secure

market financing and thus cement their long-term viability remains unproven.

Hearing from the Experts

To delve deeper into the Lodges’ situation, Lin and coworkers performed an impact assessment to investigate “whether the changes in land use regulations in Namibia impacted the Lodges’ ability to source market financing to continue growing, and their financial performance to stay competitive”. In other words, can these public-private joint ventures – which effectively represent a home-grown Namibian form of tourism SME – attract hard-nosed investors and become genuinely self-sufficient hospitality businesses in a market economy?

Interviewing representatives of key stakeholders in Namibia’s tourism sector, including banks, government departments, investors and law firms, the researchers acquired a wealth of expert opinion on the relationship between land use regulation and Lodge financing. They also personally visited a number of Lodges to obtain financial performance data, encompassing “a relatively well-rounded profile of operations in communal conservancies”. These statistics bolstered the study’s qualitative findings by providing a window into the financial status of the Lodges.

Tangled Web of Problems

From the interviews with stakeholders, four themes emerged regarding the barriers to providing financing for Lodges: “unclear business viability; lack of acceptable collateral; poor quality of project proposals and financial information; and availability of alternative financing”. For example, the Lodges’ viability as tourism enterprises was hampered by the unclear legal boundaries of the

sublease arrangements between conservancies and investors, while the relatively short (10-year) lease terms gave investors little confidence in their long-term prospects.

The legal robustness of the joint venture agreements was another sticking point for investors. “There was no explicit legal basis for the transfer of land use rights in communal conservancies for commercial purposes”, the researchers point out. This gave investors doubts about whether land use agreements would actually be upheld, making leases an ineffective form of collateral for obtaining financing for the Lodges. Meanwhile, financial institutions expressed doubts about some of the investors, noting that they were often owner-managers or “lifestyle” investors with little business acumen, thus providing inadequate operational data.

In their early days, communal conservancies received support from international agencies, often on relatively lax terms. While this had once played a vital developmental role, the continued availability of such “soft” alternative financing was now seen by banks as a safety net, preventing the Lodges from presenting as viable to investors. Those who did choose to invest encountered a complex web of parties expecting payment, often becoming subject to both lease fees and the land taxes passed on by conservancies, dubbed by one investor as “paying [twice] for the same product”.

Among the many other hurdles to investment were human resource issues and the terms of partnership agreements. These overlapped in the widespread stipulation for lodges to “hire from within the community, and not necessarily seek out the best trained, most productive staff from elsewhere as other non-joint venture lodges could”. Such terms made sense for conservancies, which often gained little economic benefit other than employment of locals, but clashed with the needs of private investors as they impaired the quality of

service offered by the ventures.

Need for More Understanding

The study’s conclusion is stark. Even if well intentioned, “land use regulations can negatively impact the growth and competitiveness of small tourism and hospitality enterprises through increased risk, lower financial performance, and unclear legality”. The authors call for caution by lawmakers who rule on land use changes, which can be a double-edged sword. They also note that possible agency conflicts – such as those between the governors of and investors in Namibian Lodges – must be considered as part of a holistic economic impact assessment of such laws, which will be crucial for devising better regulations in future.

POINTS TO NOTE

- The effect of land use regulations on small tourist businesses is under-researched.
- In Namibia, legal changes have put communal Lodges in charge of many tourist sites.
- Investors can be dissuaded from getting involved with Lodges by legal complexities and other potential flashpoints.
- To safeguard small businesses, holistic impact assessment of tourism-focused land use changes is essential.

Sharma, Amit, Messerli, Hannah, and Lin, Michael S. (2023). Land Use Regulations and Small Tourism Enterprises. *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 100, 103550.

Knowledge is Power in the Restaurant Sector

Publicly disclosing information can have mixed outcomes for catering enterprises, according to the SHTM’s Jaehee Gim and co-authors. Using recent data from the US, they reached this conclusion after probing the link between information asymmetry and firm value in the famously saturated and competitive restaurant sector. Their discovery of a curvilinear form of the relationship was accompanied by new, practical insights into how the effect of information transparency on firm value is moderated by firm age and debt.

To Share or Not?

Managers know more about their own firms than investors do. This straightforward fact leads to the well-known information asymmetry problem, which originated in the context of second-hand car sales but also applies in management. It causes unfairness in the stock market because managers can disclose private information to benefit selected parties at their discretion. Asymmetric information can also reduce firms’ own value and give rise to moral hazard. “These information asymmetry problems can collectively distort market efficiency or lead to a complete breakdown of the market”, say the researchers.

Not all sectors are affected in the same way, however. The classical explanation of why information asymmetry hurts firm value is twofold: the resulting high uncertainty discourages investors from buying expensive stocks, while self-serving managers exploit

their information advantage for personal gain at firms’ long-term expense. Yet in the restaurant sector, note the researchers, “an overly transparent information environment could also result in the deterioration of firm value”.

Catering is a notoriously uncertain market: restaurants face an environment of constantly shifting customer desires as trends pass by and new technologies appear. “Given customers’ rapidly and constantly changing needs”, say the researchers, “restaurant firms often choose to imitate their successful peers”. However, “disclosing too much information about a firm’s current and future status could create a situation in which the firm’s strategic information is inadvertently shared with its competitors”. This contradicts the usual expectation that sharing information should boost stock value by reducing asymmetry.

Key Factors to Consider

The authors thus set out to test, for the first time, the effect of information asymmetry on restaurants’ business value. Given the competing expectations outlined above, they hypothesised an inverted U-shaped profile, with firm value maximised at an intermediate level of information disclosure. Moreover, given the distinct features of the dining trade, they looked at two potential moderating factors of this relationship: firm age and financial leverage (indebtedness).

New restaurants have it tough: three in every 10 that go public are

bankrupt within five years. Getting external financing is hard, as investors stand to make few capital gains due to the sector’s high overheads and tight margins; even industry giants have relatively low credit ratings. “Young restaurant firms are in great need of cash to fund quick expansion and thus survive the competitive market”, the authors warn. As small firm size is a significant determinant of restaurant firms’ being delisted, the authors proposed that firm size moderates the information asymmetry-firm value relationship, making asymmetric information more harmful for new ventures.

Managers of highly leveraged firms might be expected to rein in their self-interest under scrutiny from creditors. This is known as the “debt monitoring” hypothesis. Conversely, they might become even more opportunistic to avoid breaching the terms of debt covenants, ultimately harming firm value. Noting that lenders are extra-cautious in the high-risk restaurant sector, the authors reasoned that “creditors in the industry serve as effective monitoring entities for opportunistic managerial behavior”. They thus proposed that leverage weakens the negative effect of information asymmetry on firm value.

Drilling into the Data

To test their hypotheses, the authors focused on the historical bid-ask spread of restaurant firms to measure information asymmetry, as the variation in opinion on companies’ stock value implies the existence of a few informed traders with private

access to firm information. As an alternative measure of asymmetry, they calculated a composite index of analysts' forecast dispersion and return volatility. "When little or no information about a firm's performance is publicly available, analysts' forecasts diverge", the authors explain.

Companies' ages and debt-to-equity ratios were also obtained to analyse the influence of firm age and leverage on the information asymmetry-firm value relationship. Finally, in this way the researchers obtained a data sample covering 51 restaurant businesses in the US between 1997 and 2019. Armed with this rich information, they proceeded to test whether their theoretical predictions matched the patterns in the data.

Full Disclosure? No Thanks

As hypothesised, the relationship between firm value and the bid-ask spread turned out to be non-linear. The results of the main test suggested that "a curvilinear (inverted U-shaped) relationship exists between information asymmetry, measured by the bid-ask spread, and firm value in the restaurant industry". This indicates that restaurant businesses maximise their value when they publicly disclose a specific level of operational information. It is disadvantageous to stray from this point in the direction of either more information transparency or asymmetry.

Turning to the moderating role of firm age in this phenomenon, the results were mixed. When the bid-ask spread was used to measure information asymmetry, the authors' prediction seemed to be confirmed. "The younger a firm is", they explain, "the

more downward and to the left the turning point of the inverted U-shaped curve is located". That is, for newer restaurants, not only was firm value itself generally lower than for more established businesses, but the ideal extent of information asymmetry was also smaller. However, no significant relationship of this kind was found when using the composite proxy for information asymmetry.

Similar conclusions were derived when investigating how leverage intersected with the role of asymmetric information. According to the model using bid-ask spread data, "the more financially leveraged a firm is, the more upward and to the right the turning point of the inverted U-shaped curve is located". Thus, less leveraged businesses were on average less valuable and benefited most from a lower level of information asymmetry. Again, however, the use of a composite proxy of information asymmetry caused this observation to vanish, which the authors tentatively attribute to limitations in the method of constructing the index.

The findings have some immediate managerial implications. "When firm managers in the restaurant industry engage in voluntary disclosure activities", note the researchers, "they may have to keep in mind that the cost of keeping the level of information asymmetry to the minimum might exceed its benefit". Managers of young and low-leverage restaurant businesses should be particularly wary of the dangers of too little disclosure. In addition, "managers' decisions to disclose firm information should be based on the trade-off between the cost and benefit of information disclosure", given that publicising information may harm competitiveness in the restaurant trade.

Lessons for the Sector

While previous studies have generally documented a simple negative linear relationship between information asymmetry and firm value, this important study shows that the situation can be more complex in specific sectors. Restaurant managers with an eye on stock value should not rush to share all. In an age when both voluntary and mandatory information disclosure are common, the study provides a useful reminder to practitioners that information transparency can be detrimental to certain firms in specific industries, while also setting the stage for more detailed research in this area.

POINTS TO NOTE

- Information asymmetry between managers and investors is usually thought to harm firm value.
- In the restaurant sector, too much information disclosure also reduces competitiveness.
- The ideal information asymmetry level is lower for newer, less leveraged restaurants.
- Restaurant managers should trade off the costs and benefits of voluntary disclosure.

Gim, Jaehee, Jang, SooCheong (Shawn), Tang, Hugo, Choi, Kyuwan, and Behnke, Carl (2023). Is Information Asymmetry Always Detrimental to Firm Value? Findings from the Restaurant Industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 111, 103481.

Hospitality in the Time of COVID-19

Hospitality employees' stress levels during the COVID-19 pandemic and their later career trajectories may depend on both their experiences in the workplace and personal traits, according to the SHTM's Wei-Jue Huang and co-authors. Hospitality work is demanding, and the pandemic and associated economic crisis may have led hospitality workers to reconsider their career trajectories. Through direct interviews with current and former employees in the U.S. hospitality industry, the researchers explored how workplace experiences during the pandemic affected these employees' subsequent career choices.

COVID-19 and Hospitality

Since early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has upended industries worldwide. However, few have been hit harder than hospitality and tourism. Globally, more than 60 million jobs in this industry were lost in 2020 alone. The spread of COVID-19 and related social distancing practices posed fundamental challenges to the hospitality and tourism industry. "Although the pandemic's impact on the hospitality workforce may seem similar to previous global crises and depressions", say the researchers, "COVID-19 is different, as it impacts hospitality and tourism directly".

In addition to hindering the warm interpersonal exchanges that are characteristic of hospitality settings, the pandemic led to "travel shaming", a form of social pressure that deterred potential travellers wishing to escape pandemic restrictions. Such pressure, along with tourists' concerns about their own health, further reduced demand for hospitality services.

These challenges struck directly at the heart of the industry. "Considering future prospects",

the authors note, "employees became more acutely aware of the vulnerability of the industry and developed 'backup plans' outside the industry". This led to "multiple talent crises". One such crisis that has received considerable attention in the press is the "Great Resignation", a trend of voluntary employee resignation in response to increased stress levels and untenable working conditions.

Given the excess demands placed on hospitality workers, this employment trend has led to substantial concerns that employees might pursue careers in new fields. Alternatively, however, situations such as the pandemic may present a "unique opportunity to bolster employer-employee relationships", say the researchers. Accordingly, they explored the circumstances affecting U.S. hospitality workers and their decisions to remain in, leave, or return to the industry after the pandemic.

Stress, Coping, and Careers

"Hospitality employees", according to the researchers, "are the backbone of the business and first-hand witnesses to the detrimental effects of the pandemic on the industry". The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly increased hospitality employees' stress levels, leading to negative consequences such as burnout and substance abuse. Employees under stress even may choose to leave their employers or the industry altogether.

During the pandemic, industry employees faced challenges such as layoffs and furlough arrangements, as well as wage decreases, which affected both their livelihood and mental health. The researchers thus consider it essential to understand hospitality employees' lived experiences during the pandemic, observing that "individuals experience the situation differently

based on where they are and how their daily life, work, family, health practices, etc. have changed".

They explored how employees coped with stress and other difficulties, aiming to understand "how those experiences shaped their ultimate decisions" regarding their hospitality careers. Their exploration was based on the transactional model of stress and coping, which states that a person's interactions with their environment affect their ability to cope with and adapt to challenges, and career construction theory, which explains "how individuals develop their professions by aligning their self and social identity with their work".

In particular, the researchers studied "career adaptability", a key component of the career construction theory previously shown to have a positive effect on employees' capacity to work beyond their formal job descriptions. Such adaptability, however, can be a "double-edged sword"; although it can promote employees' resilience in a supportive workplace, it can also increase their "turnover intention", or intent to pursue other employment, in a workplace that is hostile or uncertain.

Employees' Subjective Experiences

The researchers interviewed 31 adults who had worked in the US hospitality industry during the COVID-19 pandemic. Initially, the participants were recruited through the researchers' networks. These earliest participants were then asked to recommend other potential participants (i.e., snowball sampling). Nearly 30% of the participants had remained employed at the time of the interviews. The others had been laid off or furloughed.

The researchers describe their study as "phenomenological research",

a popular approach in tourism research that “sees the participants as ‘experts’, allows their voices to be heard, and gives credibility to their accounts within studies”. This approach allowed the researchers to learn directly from hospitality employees about how they had adapted during the pandemic. The interview questions thus were designed to gain information about the participants’ backgrounds, experiences in the industry before and during the pandemic, ways of coping with stress, and future career plans.

What Can Employers Do?

During the interviews, the participants spoke candidly about their stresses and coping strategies during the pandemic. Those who remained in the workplace faced new responsibilities and work formats (e.g., remote work) and increased workloads and expectations. Those who were laid off or furloughed faced financial challenges. Both groups of participants expressed concerns about the risks to their own health and that of their loved ones.

To cope with these stresses, those facing financial difficulties applied new budgeting strategies, relied on unemployment benefits, or even took other jobs. For those seeking new opportunities, “relationship-building and networking appeared to be popular strategies”. Some participants took the opportunity to rest and “engaged in various recreation and leisure activities to help themselves feel better”. The researchers suggest that employers “consider promoting various employee-assistance programmes that cover aspects such as mental health consultancy and leisure/recreation activities”.

The participants had experienced a great deal of uncertainty due to the quickly changing pandemic situation. However, the researchers observe that “transparent communication is the key to maintaining a positive

employer–employee relationship”. Participants whose employers were candid about their decisions to lay off employees viewed their employers positively. Those whose employers were not transparent tended to negatively view their employers and, in some cases, the industry, leading them to seek employment elsewhere. These findings suggest that in a crisis, employers can do much to alleviate their employees’ uncertainty and anxiety by simply being transparent and communicating openly.

Other factors also influenced the participants’ attitudes and decisions regarding their careers. Those “who remain[ed] employed appeared to be well adapted to the circumstances” and were passionate about their work and optimistic about the industry’s future. Among those who were laid off and furloughed, “positive working experiences, including a healthy working environment and a strong bond with the team, as well as a sense of empathy towards the employer”, influenced the participants’ decisions to remain in the hospitality industry. Employers are advised to provide a supportive workplace and to foster team-building and professional investment among their employees.

Beyond the Pandemic

Although this study focused on experiences in the U.S. hospitality industry during a global pandemic, the researchers note that the participants’ concerns were “comparable to those of other major career crises”. The finding that support and transparency from employers can both reduce employees’ stress and help to retain them in the industry may be applicable to other crises and to the global hospitality industry. “To create a sustainable, resilient, and engaged workforce”, conclude the researchers, “hospitality practitioners must commit to crafting positive relationships with their employees both in regular and crisis times”. Employers are encouraged to maintain open

channels of communication, support employees’ development and provide stress relief.

POINTS TO NOTE

- The hospitality industry was hard hit by COVID-19, putting pressure on employees’ health, finances and well-being.
- Employees’ decision to leave the industry has led to a major talent crisis in hospitality.
- At this critical juncture, hospitality employees’ career decisions are influenced by their personality traits, industry involvement and relationships with their employers.
- To retain talent, hospitality employers should seek to foster positive employer–employee relationships.

Liu-Lastres, Bingjie, Huang, Wei-Jue, and Bao, Huilin (2023). Exploring Hospitality Workers’ Career Choices in the Wake of COVID-19: Insights from a Phenomenological Inquiry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 111, 103485.

Encouraging Employees to Invest in the Environment

As the carbon footprint of the hospitality and tourism industry continues to grow, increasing attention is being paid to how employees can help mitigate the industry’s environmental impact. In a timely study with far-reaching implications for the sustainability of hospitality and tourism, the SHTM’s Lisa Gao and Mimi Li, working with co-authors, ask how leaders can foster employees’ pro-environmental behaviours. Their insightful theoretical analysis and empirical results provide invaluable guidance for senior managers in hospitality corporations. Above all, they show that optimising leadership might be more effective than compensation programmes in motivating employees to engage in green practices.

Employees’ Pro-environmental Behaviours

Compared with heavily polluting industries such as the petroleum and chemical industries, hospitality and tourism have traditionally received much less attention from environmental conservationists. “Nevertheless”, the researchers tell us, “recent studies have shown that the tourism and hospitality industry is also a major contributor to carbon emissions and that its rapid development is harming the natural environment”. With increasingly pressing concern about the industry’s environmental impact, scholars and practitioners have turned their attention to employees as agents in implementing corporate pro-environmental practices.

Drawing particular interest are employee pro-environmental behaviours (PEBs). Such behaviours encompass a range of eco-friendly activities undertaken by employees in the workplace, “such as learning

and thinking about the environment, developing and applying ideas to reduce the company’s negative effects on the physical environment, developing green products and processes, and recycling as well as reusing”. How can such behaviours best be promoted and maintained?

“Leaders have a substantial impact on employees’ behaviour”. say the researchers. “Therefore, interest in the effects of leadership style, such as charismatic leadership, ethical leadership and environmentally specific transformational leadership, on employees’ PEBs is growing”. Nevertheless, there remain three major gaps in this research, which the authors set out to fill.

First, the influence of leadership on employees’ PEBs has received surprisingly little attention in hospitality and tourism, even though the industry’s dynamism and increasingly institutionalised nature make it an important playing field for transformational leaders and transactional leaders.

Second, the link between leadership style and employee PEBs is rarely considered in relation to work-related individual characteristics. “Although employee PEBs fall into the domain of extra-role behaviours”, note the researchers, “the decision to participate is still highly correlated with one’s work-related characteristics, such as career plans and strategies”.

Third, the limited research on the work-related mechanisms underlying this relationship has focused on cognitive factors, neglecting employees’ affective (emotional) responses. This is a significant omission. After all, the researchers tell us, “hospitality employees are required to perform not only intellectual and physical work but also intense emotional labor”.

A Solid Theoretical Foundation

To fill these gaps, the researchers posed the following question. “How do transformational and transactional leadership affect employees’ PEBs in the tourism and hospitality industry, and what roles do work regulatory focus and emotional exhaustion play in this process?” Moving away from previous studies’ focus on the roles of corporate social responsibility and green human resources management in fostering employees’ PEBs, the authors instead examined the influence of “transformational and transactional leadership, two effective leadership styles in the tourism and hospitality industry”.

They hypothesised that transformational leaders promote employees’ PEBs through their inspiring and personalised approach to leadership. “Subordinates are expected to be more proactive toward PEB”, the researchers explain, “which, though not part of their responsibilities, has a positive effect on the organization”. In contrast, transactional leaders do not motivate employees to engage in PEBs, because they “build relationships with employees exclusively to exchange short-term financial benefits”.

Drawing on regulatory focus theory and conservation of resources theory, the researchers further posited that work regulatory focus – which leads employees to work either to seek pleasure (promotion focus) or to avoid pain (prevention focus) – mediates the relationship between leadership style and employees’ PEBs. Transformational leaders induce a work promotion focus in employees, while transactional leadership induces a work prevention focus. “Promotion-focused employees with their optimism and resilience will not be afraid of potential objections and will insist on participating in PEBs that

are positive for the organization in the long term,” say the researchers, “while prevention-focused employees will fear being involved in PEBs.”

Finally, Gao, Li and colleagues proposed another mediator of the influence of leadership style on employees’ PEBs: emotional exhaustion. “Transformational leaders can effectively compensate for the emotional depletion associated with intense emotional labor in the tourism and hospitality industry,” the researchers note. Reducing employees’ emotional exhaustion can foster their PEBs. In contrast, transactional leadership “makes employees feel deprived of their autonomy and resources”, say the researchers, “thus exacerbating emotional exhaustion”. This in turn discourages employees from engaging in PEBs.

Surveying Frontline Employees

To empirically test their hypotheses, the authors’ first step was to distribute a questionnaire to frontline employees and junior managers from 42 tourism and hospitality organizations in the Yangtze River Delta region of China. The questionnaire was designed to measure the managers’ leadership style (transactional or transformational) and their subordinates’ work regulatory focus (prevention or promotion), emotional exhaustion and PEBs.

The questionnaire responses were subjected to rigorous statistical testing, with two distinct strategies used to test the robustness of the findings. Almost all of the researchers’ hypotheses were supported. “Transformational leadership had a significant positive effect on employee PEBs”, report the authors, “and transactional leadership had a significant negative effect”. Also as predicted, work regulatory focus significantly mediated the relationship between both transformational and transactional leadership and employee PEBs. Emotional exhaustion significantly mediated the influence of transformational leadership on PEBs.

The authors also found that work regulatory focus and emotional exhaustion played a chain-mediating

role. “A distinct personality system consisting of work regulatory focus and emotional exhaustion mediates the relationship between leadership style and employee PEB”, the researchers report. This was consistent with their hypothesis, based on cognitive–affective personality system (CAPS) theory, that leadership style induces in employees different combinations of work regulatory focus and level of emotional exhaustion. “These distinct personality systems later enable employees to make critical decisions regarding PEBs”.

Practical Insights for Managers

These findings have critical theoretical and practical implications. “Our study’s thorough assessment of leader characteristics in the tourism and hospitality industry based on CAPS theory”, say the researchers, “suggests that the unique personality system that combines employees’ cognitive and affective responses to leadership styles is a key determinant of their participation in PEB”. Therefore, scholars should pay more attention to the cognitive–emotional dimension of various employee behavioural challenges in the tourism and hospitality industry.

The study also contributes to the literature by demonstrating the relationship between work regulatory focus/emotional exhaustion and employee PEBs. Interestingly, the finding that emotional exhaustion did not mediate the relationship between transactional leadership and PEB may reflect the high power distance between leaders and employees in Eastern cultures, thus shedding new light on a unique quality of the Eastern workplace.

Practically, the researchers’ findings offer guidance for the daily management practices of tourism and hospitality managers. To promote employees’ PEBs, managers should emphasise a vision of the future and support employees in achieving their goals. Organisations should focus on candidates with transformational leadership traits when recruiting managers. In addition, the researchers note, “hospitality corporations may consider offering relevant leadership

workshops to improve leaders’ ability to deal with negative employee emotions and providing spaces and activities for employees to reduce workplace stress”.

Going Green

Employees could play a critical role in reducing the carbon footprint of the hospitality and tourism industry and helping society to tackle the ever more severe problem of climate change. This timely study sheds light on the specific and nuanced mechanisms underlying the influence of hospitality and tourism leaders on their subordinates’ pro-environmental activities in China and beyond. Their research opens up new pathways for scholars and practitioners to make hospitality a greener and more sustainable industry of the future.

POINTS TO NOTE

- Employees have a role to play in mitigating the carbon footprint of the hospitality and tourism industry.
- Leadership style can affect employees’ willingness to engage in pro-environmental behaviours.
- Work regulatory focus and emotional exhaustion can also influence how likely employees are to engage in green practices.
- To promote employees’ pro-environmental behaviours, organisations should aim to recruit transformational leaders and reduce workplace stress.

Zheng, Yuheng, Gao, Yixing (Lisa), Li, Mimi, and Dang, Ning (2023). Leadership Styles and Employee Pro-Environmental Behavior in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry: A Cognitive-Affective Personality System Perspective. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 113, 103509.

Robotics, Hotels and Storytelling

With rapid technological progress and a renewed emphasis on health and safety in the wake of COVID-19, more and more Chinese hotels are relying on robotics to facilitate customer service provision. Yet we still know little about how such service robots influence customers’ brand experience – a critical determinant of hotels’ growth and profitability in today’s highly competitive market. Rising to this challenge, the SHTM’s Vincent Tung and a co-researcher bridge the gap between tourism and humanities research to explore customers’ narratives of hotel robotics with respect to different dimensions of brand experience. Their novel literacy-based framework – focusing on “microstories” on social media – offers important insights for hotel marketers seeking to enhance customers’ brand experience in the era of robotics technology.

Brand Experience and Robotics

What makes one hotel, destination or hospitality service provider stand out from the rest? The answer may lie in brand experience: how customers perceive and interact with a brand at every stage of the customer journey. “Brand experience represents customers’ perceptions during moments of contact with a brand”, the researchers tell us. “It is crucial for differentiating a brand from others, and for maintaining long-term relationships with customers”. In today’s extremely competitive hospitality landscape, cultivating a positive brand experience is a powerful strategy for business growth and profitability.

Brand experience has four key dimensions: sensory, affective, cognitive and behavioural. Sensory experiences involve smell, sight, touch, taste, and hearing. Cognitive experiences stimulate customers’ curiosity and problem-solving. “Behavioural experiences

involve the body as a whole”, say the researchers, “such as customers’ physical actions during an experience”. Finally, affective experiences reflect customers’ emotional connections with brands and influence the quality of the relationships they build with organisations.

Given the importance of brand experience, researchers have begun examining its connection with another major trend in the world of hospitality and tourism, especially in the wake of the pandemic: hotel service robotics. “Customers’ evaluations of the four dimensions of brand experiences could be affected by their engagement with robotics”, say the researchers. For example, learning how to interact with robots in a hotel could enhance customers’ cognitive experience of the hotel brand. Meanwhile, “the nature of robotics may require customers to be more physically involved, particularly during service encounters”, improving their behavioural experience of the brand.

Narrating Brand Experience

However, a vital piece of the puzzle is still missing. To date, studies have either treated brand experience as a single measure, without conceptualising its four distinct dimensions, or assessed these dimensions as independent constructs, without considering how they are connected.

“This is a crucial conceptual gap”, the authors warn. “The connections between the four dimensions need to be considered together, since they form a customer’s overall evaluation of brand experience”. For example, a customer who is asked to recall their interaction with a hotel service robot may focus on the robot’s actions (behavioural experience) or appearance (sensory experience) before discussing how

they felt about the interaction (affective experience).

Furthermore, most previous studies have used quantitative methods to assess the link between brand experience and robotics, failing to provide a qualitative assessment. “While quantitative studies measure the extent to which customers rate their experiences”, say the researchers, “they do not provide deeper insights into how customers share their brand experiences, such as the words they use and narratives that they write.” This is an important omission, because customers’ narratives on online and other platforms can serve as crucial word-of-mouth marketing for brands.

To overcome these limitations, the researchers qualitatively examined the patterns of influence of hotel service robotics on different dimensions of brand experience. To answer this question, they turned to another field entirely: the humanities. The concept of microstories – defined as “narratives that seek to condense a big, rich and complex story into the fewest words possible” – allowed them to connect tourism and humanities research to understand how customers share their brand experiences.

Analysing Real Microstories

To collect such microstories, the researchers focused on Xiaohongshu, an emerging social media platform in China. “The narratives of hotel brand experiences with robotics in Xiaohongshu are oftentimes long and detailed”, say the researchers. “Narratives are written in an approachable and relatable way and could even be in the form of descriptive ‘diaries’ about personal experiences”.

Thirty-one such narratives were collected from Xiaohongshu

and thematic analysis was used to connect them to the four dimensions of brand experience. “This study sought to capture information from customers’ entries to gain insights into how well they thought the robots served their purposes”, report the researchers, “and how well the robots fit the brand experiences of the hotel”.

Although brief, the narratives allowed the users to elaborate and reflect on their experience of interacting with hotel robots. “They set a fun, entertaining and relatable tone before progressing into details of their hotel brand experiences”, say the researchers. They usually began by recalling what the robots had done (behavioural experience) and wondering what they could do (cognitive experience). Next, they described their affective (emotional) experiences of interacting with the robots, followed by what they saw (sensory experience) when the robots responded. Finally, the researchers note, “the customers often ended by providing an informative or humorous conclusion”.

Implications for Hotel Marketers

Based on these findings, the researchers developed an innovative framework that sheds light on the patterns of influence of robotics on the four dimensions of customers’ brand experience. Their results show that behavioural and cognitive experiences can elicit affective experiences and, subsequently, sensory experiences. “Meanwhile”, the researchers add, “affective experiences act as an interface between the behavioural and cognitive dimensions”.

The analysis also offered insight into the salience associated with the different dimensions of brand experiences. “Not all brand experiences dimensions with robotics were emphasized equally by the customers”, report the authors. “They emphasized behavioural, affective, and sensory experiences more than cognitive experiences (problem-solving)”. This may be because hotel robots

are designed to be easy to use and may thus require few problem-solving skills.

In addition, the study highlighted “how common it is for customers to use micro-stories to convey delightful and humorous narratives”. Although brand experiences can be positive or negative, micro-stories may increase the intensity of readers’ positive emotions and “tangibilise” brand experiences.

This framework has crucial marketing implications. First, “as customers did not reflect on all four brand experience dimensions in the same way”, the researchers say, “marketers need to be cognizant of the target market, where the deployment of robotics in hotels is growing rapidly”. Second, marketers could focus on the patterns offered by the framework to elicit more relatable and deeper customer narratives about their brand experiences. “For instance, marketers could take a step-by-step approach to let customers explore and reflect on what they would like to do when they engage with a robot”.

Third, the study shows that marketers should closely monitor micro-stories on social media, “as real experiences are perceived as more authentic from a reader’s perspectives than a firm’s promotional material”. Replying to users’ posts and interacting with customers online “could benefit hotels by establishing a positive image of responsiveness and service quality”.

The Future of Brand Experience

This innovative study contributes important interdisciplinary insights to the tourism and marketing literature, filling important gaps in studies of brand experience. Forging a novel link between tourism and humanities research through the concept of micro-stories, the researchers offer a fresh and deeper understanding of customers’ brand experiences with robotics. “The framework presented in this study”, they say, “could provide marketers

with insights into how customers are narrating their hotel brand experiences in a promising literacy format that is enjoyable, engaging, and immersive”.

POINTS TO NOTE

- Hotels in China are increasingly adopting robotics for customer service provision.
- Hotel robotics may have a complex influence on the four dimensions of brand experience.
- Examining customers’ “microstories” on social media can shed light on how they narrate their brand experiences with hotel robotics.
- Hotel marketers can use insights from customers’ narratives to enhance their brand experience.

Tung, Vincent Wing Sun, and Tse, Serene Wai Tsz (2023). A Patterns Perspective of Customers’ Brand Experiences with Robotics in Hospitality. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, Vol. 40, Issue 1, 75-89.

A Fair Deal for Food Delivery Workers?

The perks of “gig work” in the online food delivery sector are clear – pick up work whenever suits you, go at your own pace and never lack opportunities. Yet there is a darker side to online catering platforms, which stand accused of exploiting workers – a charge that has been amplified since the COVID-19 pandemic. As argued by the SHTM’s Pearl Lin and Wilson Au and co-authors, simply raising a red flag is not enough. Hence, China’s government resolved in 2021 to protect workers through regulating the marketplace and ensuring labour welfare. Their study investigated the impacts of this all-too-recent system, and their rich insights will help online catering platforms strike a balance between cost-effectiveness and respect for gig workers and human rights in the post-pandemic era.

The Cost of Prosperity

The pandemic dealt a devastating blow to the hospitality and tourism industry, with hotel rooms vacant and restaurants deserted. Of course, those would-be guests were instead hunkering down at home, replacing the dining experience with a take-away meal delivered direct to their door. “Deliveroo, an online catering platform in Hong Kong, reported that the company’s sales and orders doubled in the first quarter of 2020”, report the authors. Where other services in the industry fell by the wayside, online catering platforms thrived.

As one of the rare “winners” during the COVID-19 pandemic, the online catering platform sector has since experienced a steady

boom in restaurant partners and demand. In 2020, the Chinese food delivery sector contributed to more than one third of global revenue. Accordingly, the number of individuals employed by online catering platforms – gig workers – has also increased exponentially. In 2020, it was reported that there was a 150% rise in gig workers in the USA, and the story is similar in China. “Myriad workers in China are engaged in on-demand work, and this proportion is rising”, say the researchers.

Hiring on-demand gig workers, such as food delivery drivers, is cheap and convenient for online catering platforms. By capitalising on work flexibility, human resource allocation can be optimised and more money made. The pandemic acted as a catalyst for this labour structure shift, with more gig workers than ever in hospitality. It is therefore no surprise that, as the authors write, “more than 32% of organisations plan to replace their full-time employees with contingent workers as a cost-saving measure”. However, cost-effectiveness should not take precedent when human resources and well-being are in the mix. Those gig workers also desperately need to be protected from exploitation.

Worker Welfare

From the employee perspective, getting a “gig” is easy in today’s world, where ordering meals online is a matter of habit. However, their working conditions are far from ideal. Gig workers have irregular schedules based on customer demand, often need to self-supply work materials such

as vehicles and mobile phones, and receive salaries at a piece rate. “These workers find themselves in high-stress settings facing heavy workloads, long hours, low job security and limited socialisation”, state the researchers. Clearly, there has been a stark lack of attention to gig workers’ welfare.

Whilst online catering platforms have enjoyed a booming market share and revenue, no such advantages have been felt by the unsung gig workers themselves. To add insult to injury, unethical practices have become the norm, such as the collection of big data to calculate performance indices. This might indeed stimulate performance and increase efficiency in the short term, but it could also lead to immense feelings of powerlessness and pressure among gig workers. “These stringent standards violate the principles of humanity”, write the researchers. This is certainly not a good look for the brand value and social image of online catering platforms.

“Online catering platforms’ cost-profit nature leaves gig workers’ welfare concerns untouched until government interventions”, explain the researchers. Thus, in 2021, seven Chinese governmental departments issued a governance system named “Guides on Implementing the Responsibilities of Online Catering Platforms for Effectively Protecting the Rights and Interests of Food Delivery Personnel” (“the Guides”). The Guides’ institutional governance protects gig workers’ labour welfare and well-being in seven major areas: guaranteeing labour income, ensuring labour safety, maintaining food safety, improving

social security, optimising the work environment, strengthening organisational construction and providing conflict resolution mechanisms. However, the real-life implications of the Guides have yet to be determined.

Exploring Expert Opinion

In an ambitious study, the researchers aimed to clarify how the Guides impact both online catering platforms and gig workers. To achieve truly in-depth insights, a mixed-methods qualitative design was employed. This involved two major steps: first, a series of focus groups, and second, the “Delphi technique” survey-based framework. The focus groups were crafted to foster dynamic discussions and hear various perspectives on the impact of the Guides. The participants comprised panels from five universities and five institutions related to China’s food delivery sector. All were familiar with the Guides. The Delphi technique involved three rounds of questionnaires with four scholars and four food delivery practitioners, which enabled the researchers to identify consensus on the items.

A Labour Lodestar

The scholars identified the direct, indirect and derived impacts of the Guides. Regarding direct effects, the Guides ensure that online catering platforms offer remuneration that meets the local minimum payment threshold. Furthermore, the Guides stipulate that the onus is on online catering platforms and third-party agents to cover gig workers’ social security insurance. “The Guides, which online catering platforms should implement, protect on-demand workers’ legal status and boost gig workers’ motivation to

continue participating in the sharing economy”, say the authors.

The panellists also reached a consensus on the indirect impacts of the Guides. For instance, the Guides forbid the use of algorithmic rating indices that calculate “performance scores” based on delivery numbers, time limits, punctuality rate and 5-star reviews. Online catering platforms are also obligated to improve the order-scheduling mechanism, optimise delivery routes, and put reasonable limits on the amount of labour. “In other words”, say the researchers, “online catering platforms’ technological advantages have taken a backseat in favour of more humane labour”.

Finally, the main derived impacts of the Guides were determined. As a key point, the Guides promote online catering labour unions. Such unions seek to negotiate labour rights and interests and improve job security for gig workers, which could work to increase gig workers’ bargaining power. By cultivating more productive relationships with co-workers, supervisors and family, such labour unions are also likely to enhance gig workers’ well-being – something that has long been overlooked. Whilst this may compromise online catering platforms’ focus on profit and bring adverse short-term consequences, the “demand for food delivery remains high enough to support online catering platforms’ long-term survival”, the authors point out.

Win-Win Solutions

The researchers’ findings shed light on what institutional governance can offer gig workers and how online catering platforms can strike a healthy balance between cost-effectiveness and upholding workers’ rights and interests. “The future labour structure must attend to gig workers’

welfare and implement mutually beneficial measures in the sharing ecosystem”, conclude the authors. Undeniably, the Guides’ short-term impact on online catering platforms’ operating costs will probably affect the industry’s cost advantages, but long-term advantages can only be achieved by creating fair labour conditions for gig workers. In particular, it is vital to avoid turning gig workers into what the researchers describe as “extrinsically motivated machines”, lacking any inherent sense of purpose in their work.

With this in mind, there is a clear need for governance that can balance business competitiveness with gig workers’ welfare.

POINTS TO NOTE

- Food-sector gig workers in China were neglected until 2021’s cross-departmental Guides.
- The Guides improve gig workers’ welfare at the expense of online platforms’ profit.
- This governance system is believed by gig workers to well redress the injustices they face.
- A long-term shift to an equitable, state-governed market in equilibrium is possible.

Lin, Pearl M.C., Peng, Kang-Lin, Au, Wai Ching Wilson, and Baum, Tom (2023). Labor Market Transformation in the Hospitality Gig Economy in a Post Pandemic Era: Impacts of Institutional Governance. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 35, Issue 4, 1490-1510.



As tourism evolves in the wake of the pandemic, the SHTM remains in the driving seat of change. This was demonstrated at the 17th UNWTO/PATA Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook, the latest edition of this key annual event in the hospitality industry’s calendar, co-organised by the SHTM, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) and the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA).

Under the theme “Transforming Tourism for People, Planet, and Prosperity”, this year’s Forum was held from 26 to 28 October. As in previous years, the location was Guilin, China, and the proceedings were co-organised by the Guilin Municipal People’s Government and the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region’s Department of Culture and Tourism. China Daily ensured the high profile of the event through international media support.

Naturally, the SHTM was well represented, with Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean, Chair Professor and Walter and Wendy Kwok Family Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management; Professor

Haiyan Song, Associate Dean and Chair Professor; Professor Cathy Hsu, Chair Professor; Professor Honggen Xiao, Assistant Dean; and Dr Nicholas Thomas, Associate Professor all travelling to Guilin to

People, Planet and Prosperity

contribute their expertise.

Evolution was the watchword of this two-day conference. Representatives of national tourist authorities, practitioners across the travel sector, and tourism and hospitality academics gathered at Guilin’s Shangri-La Hotel to map out the future of sustainability in tourism – a sector that is moving fast with the times – through a packed

programme of technical and plenary sessions.

A key figure in the Forum since the early years, Dean Chon was well placed to reflect on its particular significance in this post-lockdown era of growth and development. “The theme of this conference is very meaningful”, he said, “especially after experiencing the pandemic, which makes us think deeply about how to benefit people, how to protect the planet, and how to promote prosperity.”

The aim of the Forum was also well summed up by Mr Jiabin Zhou, Deputy Director of the Standing Committee of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region People’s Congress and Secretary of the Guilin Municipal Committee of the CPC. Mr Zhou pointed out that the Forum’s theme was “highly consistent with our pursuit of Chinese-style modernisation, which promotes harmonious coexistence between humans and nature”.

A Busy Schedule

Following registration, the event proper commenced with the day's first Technical Session, which addressed the topic of "Rethinking Tourism in Post-Pandemic Times: Understanding and Adapting to New Trends" and featured participants from the UNWTO, ForwardKeys and the Korea Tourism Organisation.

Indeed, the need for such a reimagining of travel and hospitality was aptly explained in the official programme for the forum, which described how "balancing preservation, people and productivity can support the industry's long-term viability and contribute to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals".

The day's second Technical Session was entitled "Exploring Sustainable Tourism Development: Leveraging China's Tourism Potential". It was moderated by the tourism marketing expert Mr Shanhua Xiong and featured panellists from Airbnb, Odynovo Tours, and the Global Tourism Economy Forum.

Completing the first day, several SHTM representatives were involved in two more debates on important

topics. First, Professor Hsu acted as a panellist in a Technical Session on "Digital Frontiers: Leveraging Technology for Sustainable Tourism". Next, Professor Xiao moderated the day's final Technical Session on "Empowering People in Tourism", featuring Dr Thomas as a panellist. The day finished with an educational evening visit to the Guilin Intangible Cultural Heritage Experience Museum.

As the attendees discovered, the museum is just one of many local attractions. "Guilin is developing rapidly and has great potential, thanks to the efforts of the local government", stated Mr Beka Jakeli, UNWTO Director of External Relations, who praised the area's "unique ecological environment and unparalleled tourism resources". He was backed up by PATA chairman Mr Peter Semone, who said, "if a friend asks me, 'Should I go to Guilin?', my answer is 'yes'".

Changing with the Times

The second day began with a keynote session by Professor Jigang Bao of the UNWTO and Sun Yat-sen University, whose theme,

appropriately, was "Changes in Supply and Demand: Development and Innovation of Guilin Tourism Industry". After that glimpse into the future of tourism in this beautiful and fascinating part of the world, the focus shifted to some pressing topics in today's global tourism landscape.

Two Panel Sessions, entitled "How to Work Together to Get Prepared for a Better Future" and "Empowering Local Economies: Financial and Digital Literacy for Sustainable Tourism", were moderated by representatives from the UNWTO and PATA, respectively. They featured international line-ups of distinguished tourism experts who generously contributed their insights.

The SHTM's Professor Song then delivered the Forum's concluding keynote presentation, drawing together the various strands of the two days' discussions under the theme "Sustainable Travel Behaviour of Chinese Tourists". After closing remarks by Dean Chon, all of the Forum's attendees sat down to enjoy dinner. The next day, a Technical Tour took place to familiarise the participants with Guilin's unique local culture.

As ever, the SHTM is proud of its annual involvement with this important event and thanks all of the participants and speakers who came together to make it so fruitful. **H**

Participants at the 17th UNWTO/PATA Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook



On 9 December, the School proudly celebrated the 10th anniversary of the official launch of its pioneering doctoral programme – the Doctor of Hotel and Tourism Management (D.HTM) – on the Chinese mainland. As the world's first professional doctoral programme in hotel and tourism management, the D.HTM broke new ground when it was launched in Hong Kong in 2007. Ten years ago, as part of its commitment to advancing hospitality and tourism education in mainland China, the SHTM joined hands with Zhejiang University, Hangzhou to introduce the programme's advanced teaching philosophy and model to the mainland.

Since then, the D.HTM has helped the School to forge ever stronger links between academia and the industry in Hong Kong

and mainland China. Today, the programme attracts industry leaders and innovators from around the world who wish to augment their careers in the hospitality and tourism industry – all the way from government representatives to academics. Aptly, then, the theme of last December's event was "10 Years of Excellence in Cultivating Scholar Leaders".

Indeed, many of the scholar leaders whose careers were nurtured in the rich learning environment of the Hangzhou campus returned to the city to join fellow alumni, students and faculty in celebrating the programme's 10th anniversary. Organised by the Zhejiang University-PolyU Joint Centre and hosted in the Pearl Room at the Dragon Hotel, Hangzhou, this memorable event comprised a D.HTM Salon with over

100 attendees and an Anniversary Dinner attended by more than 140 guests.

Co-Building a Better Future

Eleven classes of alumni and students gathered at the Salon to reminisce about their experiences of the programme and learn from industry experts. A representative alumni speaker was Dr Elton Sun (D.HTM 2020 Class), CEO and Managing Director, Yusu Hotel Management Co., Ltd. Dr Sun encouraged current students to pursue lifelong learning and self-improvement, and to cultivate forward-looking attitudes.



Dr Elton Sun shared his remarks

The excellence of alumni is inseparable from the efforts of their mentors. Representing the faculty members who set a shining example for D.HTM students, SHTM Professor Kam Hung, and Dr Vera Lin, Associate Professor of the School of Management, Zhejiang University, spoke about the enriching interactions between teachers and students.

Professor Haiyan Song, SHTM Associate Dean, Chair Professor, and Mr and Mrs Chan Chak Fu Professor in International Tourism, delivered a presentation entitled "Research on Sustainable Tourism Behaviour in China's Tourism". Starting with sustainable travel behaviours such as eco-friendly accommodation and low-carbon transportation, he offered invaluable insights into the importance of carbon emissions, carbon offsets and carbon neutrality in the tourism industry.

Celebrating Together

Following a cocktail reception, guests at the Anniversary Dinner were introduced to the two Masters of Ceremony: the scholar leaders and Dr Ray Wang (D.HTM 2013

Class), CEO, Haozhu Network Technology Company Ltd; and Dr Jojo Chen (D.HTM 2020 Class), Secretary General of the Hunan Provincial Tourism Association and Vice President and Secretary General of Hunan Tourist Hotel Association.

The first speaker to offer welcoming remarks was Dr Miranda Lou, Executive Vice President of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. She congratulated the two universities on establishing such an impressive programme and reminded her audience of the SHTM's pre-eminence in global rankings.

This sentiment was echoed by the next speaker, Professor Lianzhen He, Vice President of Zhejiang University. Reflecting on the history of the collaboration between PolyU and Zhejiang University, Professor He praised the two universities for nurturing high-end talents in hotel and tourism management. "I hope that D.HTM alumni will contribute to the country, brace for challenges, and develop entrepreneurship in the construction of a 'world tourism power'", she said.

Next to offer congratulations was Mr Yuan Zhu, Senior Associate Dean of the School of Management at Zhejiang University, who pointed

out that his School is the first in mainland China to provide undergraduate, master's degree and doctoral degree programmes. He emphasised the importance of being "a wall-breaker and cross-border player in the hotel industry" and integrating cultural tourism with digital technology and big data.

The final distinguished speaker was Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean, Chair Professor and Walter and Wendy Kwok Family Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management. Dean Chon reiterated the SHTM's commitment to serving the industry and academia by promoting education and knowledge transfer. "Ten years ago, when the programme was launched, the ceremony was also held in Pearl Hall", he said. "Today, it takes on special significance to celebrate the programme's 10th anniversary in the same place".

The Next Chapter

To date, 121 D.HTM students have completed their doctoral dissertations. On the occasion of the programme's 10th anniversary in mainland China, the SHTM Mainland Alumni Network also published the "Special Issue of the 10th Anniversary of D.HTM", which showcased the abstracts of all 121 dissertations. Dr Shaohua Li (D.HTM 2016 Class), Chairman of VisioTrip Ltd, introduced the editing and printing of this special issue.

The success of this programme has paved the way for mainland China to become a global tourism power by nurturing the next generation of passionate leaders of hospitality and tourism. We look forward to the next 10 years! 🍷



Tailormade Industry Solutions

Since its launch in 2018, SHTM+ICON Consultancy has made its mark on the professional landscape of hospitality and tourism by delivering innovative, research-powered solutions to organisations across the world. The last year has been no exception. As the industry rebounds in the wake of COVID-19, the SHTM and Hotel ICON's team of expert consultants have been busy developing and delivering a host of professional projects tailored to their clients' precise needs.

Summer 2023 began with a bang, as June saw the Consultancy organise not one but two customised programmes – the first with an academic focus and

the second for a leading industry practitioner. On 26 June, 28 students from Stewards Pooi Kei College in Hong Kong embarked on a 2-day programme designed by SHTM+ICON Consultancy to fit the College's educational vision of "Learning Without Walls". The students gained invaluable insights into the hospitality and tourism industry, from the latest trends in digital transformation to service experience and even dining etiquette.

Next to benefit from the Consultancy's expertise were 25 managers from Chanco Investment Group (Butterfly Hospitality Group and ibis Hong Kong Central and

Sheung Wan), who attended a customised seminar developed by the SHTM on 30 June. Designed to enhance attendees' knowledge and skills in the area of high-quality service, the seminar honed Chanco's competitive edge in serving customers in an ever more saturated market.

July was also a busy month for the team. From 4 to 6 July, SHTM+ICON Consultancy provided a six-module Executive Development Programme (EDP) tailored to the needs of Jiangsu Huayi Mingdu Hotel Group in Hong Kong. Twenty-four general managers and senior executives were in attendance.

Their first training module tackled strategic marketing, followed by digital transformation in hospitality and the all-important topic of green hotel management. Next up was a module on governance in hospitality, with a focus on nurturing an environmental, social and governance mindset. After an exploration of customer behaviour analysis, the programme closed with a sixth module examining product development and innovation in the food and beverage sector.

Developing professional skills and knowledge was on the agenda again on 6 and 25 July, when the SHTM delivered two identical sessions of a customised EDP to employees of Lai Wah Footwear Trading Limited. Named the Joy & Peace Professional Development Programme, this learning experience provided invaluable training in luxury retail service for 67 store managers and sales associates.

On 16–18 October, another EDP was delivered to Huazhu Hotel Group. This custom-made programme comprised three modules: “Service Quality Management”, “Strategic Management in Hospitality” and “Innovation in Hospitality”.

Two Flagship Programmes

The winter months saw the delivery of two flagship EDPs: the Certified Hospitality Educator (CHE®) workshop in December 2023 and the Hong Kong PolyU Winter School® in January 2024. Every year, these prestigious events exemplify the School’s commitment to setting ever-higher standards for professional development and

certification in the hospitality and tourism industry.

On 19 December, a group of hospitality educators keen to refine their skills and knowledge embarked on an exclusive 4-day “train-the-trainers” workshop designed by the SHTM in collaboration with the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute. Held at the School and delivered by Dr Fred Mayo, the CHE® workshop provided attendees with an intensive, interactive learning experience that furnished them with the latest know-how in global hospitality education. Those who successfully completed a final examination were designated Certified Hospitality Educators.

Co-organised by the SHTM and the Hong Kong Hotels Association, the Hong Kong PolyU Winter School® 2024 was held on the School’s premises on 8–13 January. The vision of this prized annual event is to help the service industry nurture people and discover new opportunities, and this year’s Winter School was no exception. Attendees had the chance to learn about the industry from leading SHTM academics and an industry expert in a series of six in-depth, interactive modules.

The first day’s topic was “Metaverse in Hospitality and Tourism: New Opportunities to Explore”, with insights shared

by Dr Seung Hun Shin, SHTM Assistant Professor. On the second day, attention turned to the task of building an outstanding team, with a module led by SHTM Assistant Professor Dr Crystal Shi. The third module, delivered on 10 January by Dr Michael Lin, SHTM Assistant Professor, was entitled “Revenue Management in a Dynamic Environment”.

On the fourth day of the Winter School, social media and big data analytics came under the spotlight in a module led by Dr Emily Chen, SHTM Research Assistant Professor. The next day, Dr Pearl Lin encouraged attendees to delve into the topic of “Communication and Conflict Management”. The final module was jointly led by Dr Lisa Gao, SHTM Associate Professor, and Mr Peter Caprez, Cluster General Manager, JW Marriott Hotel Bangkok. The two speakers shared their insights from academia and the industry into creating a high-quality service experience.

Participants who completed each of these absorbing one-day (6-hour) modules received a Certificate of Completion for Hong Kong PolyU Winter School® issued by the SHTM. **H**

Attendees at the Hong Kong PolyU Winter School



In Brief...

SHTM Tops World Ranking

The SHTM has again excelled in university rankings by claiming the top spot in the “Hospitality and Tourism Management” category of **ShanghaiRanking’s Global Ranking of Academic Subjects 2023**. This is the seventh consecutive year in which the School has been recognised as the world’s number one by this internationally respected institution, whose Academic Ranking of World Universities is one of the three most influential and widely observed measures of university performance. This ranking is a tribute to the SHTM’s commitment to global excellence in hospitality and tourism education and research.



Prestigious Appointment to Tourism Strategy Committee

Professor Kaye Chon has been appointed as a member of the Tourism Strategy Committee (TSC) from 22 January 2024 to 31 December 2025. The TSC is a high-level advisory body established by the government to provide strategic advice and foster collaboration amongst stakeholders in tourism and related sectors to promote the long-term sustainable development of Hong Kong’s tourism industry.



Top 2% of Scientists Worldwide

In recent research by Stanford University, **Professor Haiyan Song** and **Professor Cathy Hsu** were recognised as being among the **world’s top 2% of scientists** throughout their careers in the field of “Sport, Leisure and Tourism”. This recognition is based on the number of citations of research papers published by faculty members.

In addition to Professor Song and Professor Hsu, 10 SHTM faculty members were recognised among the world’s top 2% of scientists in 2022: Professor Kaye Chon, Professor Kam Hung, Professor Sam Kim, Professor Jinsoo Lee, Professor Mimi Li, Dr Sebastian Filep, Dr Alice Hon, Dr Ada Lo, Dr Vincent Tung, and Dr Eric Chan.



2023 ISTTE Institutional Award

The SHTM was honoured to receive the **2023 ISTTE Institutional Award** from the **International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators (ISTTE)** in recognition of its significant contribution to tourism education. The award was bestowed at the Annual Conference of the ISTTE in Toronto, Canada on 16–18 October 2023. The SHTM was praised for its leadership in advancing tourism education in the region and the world, and for its innovative academic programming and world-class teaching and research facilities.

Teaching and Research Excellence Awards

Two SHTM faculty members have been rewarded for their outstanding teaching and research performance in their fields in the 2022/23 academic year.

Dr Dan Wang received an **SHTM Teaching Excellence Award** for her dedicated efforts to inspire students' learning and professional development in a stimulating environment. **Professor Mimi Li**, who has authored and co-authored 71 refereed articles in high-impact journals, received an **SHTM Research Excellence Award** in recognition of her contribution to research excellence at the School.



Faculty Members Appointed to RGC Panel

Professor Kaye Chon and **Professor Haiyan Song** have been appointed to the **Research Grants Council (RGC) Business Studies Panel** as local members.

The RGC is a semi-autonomous advisory body within the organisational structure of the University Grants Committee. It recruits qualified professionals, both local and international, from diverse subject fields and academic institutions, to ensure impartiality and the effective use of resources when considering applications for research grants and fellowships.

Prestigious Wine Awards

Five MSc students in International Wine Management programme including **Mr Stéphane Favreau**, **Mr Issac Ho**, **Mr Jeff Lee**, **Ms Elsa Zhang** and **Ms Tracey Zhu** received the **Grand Prize** at the 2023 Intercollegiate Wine Business Invitational wine business plan development competition hosted by the Wine Business Education.



Padma and Hari Harilela Scholarship

D.HTM student **Mr Xiaohai Zhan** received the **Padma and Hari Harilela Scholarship 2022/23**. This scholarship was established in 2011 by Dr Hari N. Harilela, head of the Harilela Group, which plays a significant role in the professional development of the hotel industry.

Prof. Bob McKercher Scholarship

D.HTM student **Mr Katsuto Sandifer** received the **Prof. Bob McKercher Scholarship 2022/23**. This scholarship was created to assist students pursuing the School's D.HTM programme in Hong Kong.



Dress Orange Day

Every year, the SHTM marks **World Tourism Day** by inviting staff and students to dress in orange (the School's colour) for **Dress Orange Day**. In 2023, this celebration of unity and support for the industry was held on 26 September.



Attendees were invited to take part in the "Dress Orange Fashion Show Contest" to show off their orange clothes to a panel of judges. The winners were BSc student Miss Thea Shu, who entered as an individual contestant, and Ph.D. student Ms Mehrnaz Alizadeh and Research Assistant Professor Dr Emily Chen, who submitted a group entry.

To commemorate the day, the SHTM also invited guests to enter photos taken at the event into a competition with the hashtag #SHTMOrangeDay. The winners were Dr Bella Vongvisitsin, Postdoctoral Fellow, and Miss Sunny Sui, an MSc student.

People



Mr Charlton Chan joined the School as an Assistant Officer on 13 November 2023. He provides administrative support for the School's taught postgraduate programmes.



Mr Roshis Krishna Shrestha joined the School as a Research Assistant Professor on 8 January 2024.



Ms Sara Lam joined the School as an Executive Officer on 20 November 2023. She provides administrative support for the Hospitality & Tourism Research Centre.



Dr John Yoo joined the School as an Instructor 8 January 2024.



Professor Brent Moyle joined the School as a Visiting Professor on 2 January 2024.



Ms Stella Kong will retire from her role as Clerical Officer II at the SHTM on 27 April 2024.



Dr Yvonne Yang joined the School as a Research Assistant Professor on 2 January 2024.

A Stepping Stone to Success

For those seeking a pathway to the School's flagship MSc programmes, along with a prestigious qualification in its own right, the MicroMasters in International Hospitality Management (MM) is the answer. Hosted on the world-renowned edX platform, this 100% online programme offers anyone seeking to fast-track their careers in hospitality and tourism the opportunity to take instructor-led, graduate-level courses at any time and anywhere.

Two Exceptional Learners

"When searching for online programmes, I found the MicroMasters in International Hospitality Management to be the best option."

These are the words of Mr Marco Bajma, one of two Best-Performing Online Learners in the MM's 2023 Autumn Run. As Chef de Cuisine at Regala Skycity Hotel, Hong Kong, with decades of work experience in the hospitality and tourism industry, Mr Bajma was seeking new ways to

elevate his career. The MM offered him the perfect route.

"This is not just a job, it is a lifestyle", said Mr Bajma, "and I always like to keep myself updated about new trends and learn new techniques and skills". The MM allowed him to gain more skills and return to academic studies after a long time at a reasonable cost. "The well-organised and delivered courses gave me the knowledge I need to take further my professional career", he added.

Indeed, the four courses of the MM integrate cutting-edge research topics with real-world industry practice in international hospitality management. Through illuminating video content, well-designed assignments and thought-provoking tutorials by expert scholars, MM students learn the latest in human resource management, marketing strategies, innovation, and luxury brands – all with concrete applications in their current or future careers.

Our second Best-Performing Online Learner, Ms Asena Kumet, works as Tourism Director at

Avec Hotel in Turkey. "The MM is an efficient training programme that I can quickly integrate into real life with experienced professors and interactive activities", she said. The programme's flexibility, which allows students to learn whenever and wherever they want, was ideal for her busy work schedule. "It is the best among distance learning programme", Ms Kumet went on, "and the opportunity to continue the master's programme later is also great".

With the option of credit transfer from the MM to the School's prestigious MSc offering, this pioneering programme represents a crucial step towards the next level of career success for talented students and industry professionals like Mr Bajma and Ms Kumet. **H**



Ms Asena
Kumet

Mr Marco
Bajma

Students Engage with the World



SHTM students expanded their horizons this academic year through a range of fulfilling extracurricular events. The hotel and tourism sector transcends borders like no other, and cross-cultural learning and inventiveness underpinned all the activities in our city and overseas. Indeed, studying at the SHTM means understanding our industry's global context: travel and hospitality are intertwined with society's most pressing issues, including environmental protection and diversity, equity and inclusion.

Fruitful Cultural Exchange

From 6 to 19 August, 10 students from Chengdu University visited Hong Kong for an SHTM-sponsored

research trip, part of PolyU's Belt & Road Student Mobility Scheme. Their programme, "Forging Two-Way Tourism between Hong Kong and Chengdu", saw the Mainland students – accompanied by two teachers – attend lectures and benefit from research projects, talks with professionals and visits to hotels.

Our visitors were struck by the differences between hospitality student training in Hong Kong and the Mainland. As Chengdu student Ms May Chen was surprised to realise, SHTM undergraduates alternate between various hotel departments during internships, instead of working in just one. Ms Chen praised the system as "a way for students to make significant progress and understand the operating methods and conditions of different departments".

As well as appreciating the academic atmosphere, facilities and learning opportunities at PolyU, our

guests were impressed by Hong Kong as a destination. Exploring by public transport, they were thrilled to experience the diverse sights of the Peak, Mong Kok and Tai O and immerse themselves in the city's nightlife and vibrant culture. They took many cherished memories back to Chengdu, forging a partnership that will last into the future.

Two months later, a group of our students made their own memorable journey abroad. Together with Dr Ada Lo, 12 student representatives of the SHTM travelled to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia to attend the Youth Forum of the Middle East and North Africa Climate Week 2023. Between 8 and 12 October, the group learned about Saudi Arabia's green energy efforts, leveraged networking opportunities, and even had the chance to be interviewed by the organiser of Climate Week.

Our students were impressed by Saudi culture and hospitality as well as the serious efforts the country is making to combat climate change. Ms Yola Hao, a Year 3 student in the BSc in Hotel Management, pointed out that the Kingdom is "not only a major oil exporter but is also insisting on the development of a variety of sustainable and clean energy sources", while Ms Winnie Chan, a final-year student in the BSc in Hotel Management, praised the locals as "super open-minded and thoughtful".

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Under the theme of diversity, SHTM hosted two collaborative events involving the Hong Kong student chapter of the Institute of Hospitality (IoH). The first event, on 10 October, was an open seminar with the cloud kitchens operator Freshlane. During the seminar, professional insights were shared by Freshlane's Zoe Chow, General Manager, Matthew Chiu, Head of Operations, and Calista Hung, Head of Business Development, along with other stakeholders in the

food and beverage (F&B) industry. As noted by the IoH Hong Kong student chapter, "cloud kitchens have supported marginalised groups, such as racial minorities and seniors, to successfully open and run their F&B businesses".

Addressing another facet of diversity, the second collaboration was a student club co-organised with IHG China as part of the IoH's "Women in Leadership" programme. On 28 November, Ms Michelle Liu, IHG's Head of Operation South & West China, delivered a seminar on how to build a thinking process for a growth mindset. Her experience and insights as a talented female leader will help SHTM students understand how women in hospitality management can overcome barriers to career advancement.

Masters of Mixology

Another student activity held in Hong Kong proved that nothing says "hospitality" like the perfect cocktail. The venerable *South China Morning Post* (SCMP) celebrates its 120th anniversary this year, and what better way to mark the occasion than by inventing a brand-

new tippie? A competition to design an SCMP-themed cocktail was opened to SHTM students this autumn. Budding mixologists vied for a grand prize of a cash reward plus a voucher for our own Hotel ICON, with the runner-up prize being a Hotel ICON voucher.

Fittingly, it was a distinguished SHTM alumnus, the talented Mr Tel Chu, founder of Avenue 75 and B'hood, who helped the finalists prepare by running a mixology workshop. The winning cocktails, prepared under Mr Chu's supervision, were announced at the SCMP's Causeway Bay offices on 6 November. First prize went to Miss Deanna Choi (Year 3, Hotel Management) for her cocktail "Oriental Sunrise". Miss Yuqing Chen (Year 3, Tourism & Events Management) secured runner-up for "Sunup Canvas".

The SHTM is proud of all students who took part in this diverse range of activities and showcased our exceptional standards of hospitality to Hong Kong and the world. It is through engaging with partners from near and far that we keep evolving while continuing to provide a world-leading student experience. **H**



Student presenting his dishes to judges

A Taste of Italy in Hong Kong

A touch of *la dolce vita* came to the SHTM last year as Hong Kong celebrated "Week of the Italian Cuisine in the World". As autumn set in, the School organised three F&B activities in November to warm students' hearts and fill their stomachs, showcasing Italy's culinary treasures.

The outcome of a fruitful cooperation with the Italian Trade Agency, the activities spanned the range from sweet and savoury dishes to delectable drinks. Italy is justly famous for its cheeses and cured meats, and on 13 November Chef Paolo Monti presented a Cheese & Salumi workshop in the SHTM's Vinoteca Lab. An introduction to diverse products was followed by a tasting session, with the bonus of a recipe for a traditional Easter cake, "Casatiello Neapolitan".

Also on 13 November, the SHTM participated in the 1st Italian Cooking Competition at Boffi's Wong Chuk Hang Showroom and Studio. Our four student representatives competed to prepare a classic dish of saffron

risotto with lemon parsley sauce under the supervision of Chef Samantha Tam and Chef Katsuto Sandifer. The students participated in several practice sessions, following instructions from a recipe video provided by the renowned Italian culinary school ALMA.

The competition, supported by the Italian Consulate, was a great success for the SHTM, as our Year 1 student, Maeve Li, won first prize. Having impressed the tough judging panel (comprising representatives of the Consul General of Italy in Hong Kong, renowned Italian chefs, an ALMA instructor and a local Hong Kong food expert), Ms Li was rewarded with the chance to visit Italy and hone her skills through a short course at ALMA.

Italy's beverages are no less renowned than its food. On 30 November, the SHTM hosted an Italian Spirits and Cocktail Workshop at Bistro 1979. The knowledgeable Mr Enrico Ho from the Hong Kong Bartenders Association, as Workshop Leader, shared the history of Italian bars and the country's rich beverage culture. A professionally

guided tasting session was held to familiarise the student participants with Italian spirits and cocktails.

From October to December, the SHTM organised a busy programme of F&B events with other consulates and trade offices from around the world, including Argentina, Finland, New Zealand, Spain, and Sweden. We are very proud that our hard work paid off and broadened our students' culinary horizons this year. **H**



Students preparing a classic Italian dish



Ms Michelle Liu (middle) delivered a seminar at IoH's "Women in Leadership" event

Students from Chengdu University



Students at the Youth Forum of the MENA Climate Week 2023



Student preparing her designed cocktail



Ambassadors for the School

Since 1993, the SHTM Alumni Association (SHTMAA) has sought to forge new links and strengthen existing ones between the School and its alumni, who perfectly exemplify our motto of "Leading Hospitality and Tourism". Acting as ambassadors for the School in every sector of the industry across the globe, our alumni are passionate innovators, experienced leaders and wise mentors.

Every year, the SHTMAA is delighted to organise events at which our talented alumni – all the way from fresh graduates to members of the School's very first cohort – come together to share their experiences and gain rich opportunities for networking and professional development. This synergy was achieved at two fruitful alumni events in the last year: a tour

to the Greater Bay Area (GBA) and the SHTMAA Annual Dinner.

A Tour to Remember

The SHTMAA Alumni Tour 2023, which took place on 13–14 October, gave lucky alumni the chance to experience the GBA, one of the fastest-growing areas in China, in an entirely new way. The fun-filled and action-packed two-day tour took in Jiangmen, Dongguan and Shenzhen and treated alumni to a variety of enriching cultural and culinary activities. We were delighted to welcome on the tour five alumni from the School's very first cohort: Georgianna Chan,

Kanny Ho, Duncan Ko, Janet Wong and Emily Wu, all of whom graduated from the Diploma in Institutional Management and Catering Studies in 1981.

Early on 13 October, the tour began with a 2.5-hour coach ride from Hong Kong to the first destination, Jiangmen. The Association had organised a visit to the production facilities of Hiang Kie Coffee, Asia's renowned professional coffee roaster, where alumni enjoyed a special "coffee cupping" experience. In an enlightening sharing session, experts at Hiang Kie offered insights into future opportunities and challenges in China's coffee business.

Staying at Tao Heung Joyous Hotel in Jiangmen, the alumni also

had the chance to explore the city and savour authentic local Chinese cuisine at lunch and dinner.

The next stop, on day two of the tour, was the Dongguan Tao Heung Centre of Food Culture & Chinese Culinary Education Institute. This is a national AAA tourist site that attracts visitors from across China and around the world to learn about food culture in its culinary institute and museum; taste delicious local food in its restaurants, bakery, cafeteria, and tearoom; and even watch films about food in its integrated cinema. At a sharing session held at the Centre, our alumni also had the chance to learn from experts about Chinese restaurant operations in Shenzhen.

After an authentic Chinese lunch in Dongguan, our alumni travelled to Shenzhen, where they were treated to an exclusive tour of the newly opened luxury hotel Mandarin Oriental Shenzhen. They had the chance to marvel at the five-star service provided to guests and the hotel's stunning views of parks, skyscrapers and the busy Shenzhen Bay.

This exciting experience was followed by a delicious Spanish-style dinner at the hotel's Tapas 77, which takes its name from the floor the restaurant is located on, and a shopping trip to UpperHills Shenzhen, before the alumni headed back to Hong Kong, the home of their alma mater.

Rolling Out the Red Carpet

On 4 November, alumni gathered at Hong Kong's Happy Valley Racecourse for an evening of celebration. Themed "Movie Star Night", the SHTMAA Annual Dinner 2023 was an opportunity for guests to dress up as their favourite film stars as they reminisced about the SHTM and shared stories from their careers over cocktails, a delicious meal and parlour games.

After enjoying welcome cocktails, guests were ready for a feast. A banquet of mouthwatering Chinese cuisine was served, followed by

some exciting table games. The evening culminated in a Grand Lucky Draw and Best Dressed Movie Star Award, with prizes for the guests wearing the most impressive costumes.

The Annual Dinner and Alumni Tour were truly unforgettable opportunities for our alumni to make new memories – and perhaps even forge new career connections – with their fellow former SHTM students. The SHTMAA is delighted to have organised such enriching and enjoyable activities in 2023 and looks forward to providing a platform for fruitful alumni activities into the future. **H**

SHTM Alumni Tour to Greater Bay Area



Alum-notes

2000s		
Mr Jacques Kagi	Master of Philosophy in Hotel and Tourism Management 2004	Founder at Jacques n Grill
Ms Jasmine Wong	BSc 2005	Senior Marketing Manager, Shun Tak Holdings Ltd
2010s		
Mr Gary Ho	MSc in Hotel and Tourism Management 2011, BA(Hons) in Hotel, Catering and Tourism Management 2006	Assistant Vice President, Procurement, Shangri-La International Hotel Management Limited
Ms Michelle Leung	BSc(Hons) in Tourism Management 2011	Customer Services Executive, The Hong Kong Electric Company Limited
Dr Erdogan Ekiz	Ph.D. in Hotel and Tourism Management 2012	Founding Dean of Hospitality Management & Tourism School, Central Asian University
Ms Pureanae Jang	BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2013	Manager, Real Estate Valuations at CPPIB Asia International Ltd
Dr Lawrence Fong	Ph.D. in Hotel and Tourism Management 2014	Associate Professor, University of Macau
Ms Sharon Lee	BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2015	Senior Guest Liasion Manager at The Upper House
Mr Thomas Kong	BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2017, HD in Hotel Management 2015	Office Experience Manager & Human Resources Coordinator, Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group
Dr Soey Lei	Ph.D. in Hotel and Tourism Management 2018	Assistant Professor, University of Macau
Mr Harry Ha	BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2019	Manager, Valuation & Advisory Services, Colliers International Hong Kong
2020s		
Dr Damien Marchenay	Doctor of Hotel and Tourism Management 2020	General Manager, Mondrian Seoul Itaewon
Dr Guy Llewellyn	Ph.D. in Hotel and Tourism Management 2021, MSc in International Hospitality Management 2017	Assistant Professor, EHL Hospitality Business School (Singapore campus)
Ms Susan Ng	BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2021	Senior Guest Services Officer, Hyatt Centric Victoria Harbour Hong Kong
Mr Clarence Chan	MSc in International Wine Management 2022	Club Manager, The China Club
Ms Leila Shina	MSc in International Hospitality Management 2022	F&B General Manager at Swan at the Globe
Ms Mei Ki Chan	BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2022	Event Coordinator, The Fullerton Ocean Park Hotel Hong Kong
Dr Minh Nguyen	Doctor of Hotel and Tourism Management 2023	Director of Graduate School, Duy Tan University
Dr Elton Sun	Doctor of Hotel and Tourism Management 2023, MSc in Hotel and Tourism Management 2004	CEO and Managing Director at Yusu Hotel Management Co., Ltd.
Ms Lena Bresean	MSc in International Hospitality Management 2023	Rooms Voyager at The Ritz-Carlton Vienna
Ms Jessica Dong	MSc in International Tourism and Convention Management 2023	Regional Assistant - Membership & Commercial Dept at World Travel & Tourism Council
Ms Tiana Jia	MSc in International Hospitality Management 2023	Public Relations Manager, OlaVM Technology Ltd
Ms Huishi Lyu	MSc in International Tourism and Convention Management 2023	Marketing and Communication Trainee, Artyzen Grand Lapa Macau
Ms Yuki Wang	MSc in International Hospitality Management 2023	Management Trainee of Rooms at Rosewood Hong Kong
Ms Heather Zhou	MSc in International Tourism and Convention Management 2023	Assistant Event Executive at Informa Markets in Asia
Ms Charlotte Au Yong	BSc(Hons) in Tourism & Events Management 2023	Sales Coordinator at The Peninsula Hong Kong
Ms Cheryl Chan	BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2023	Regent Experience Agent – Club at Regent Hong Kong
Ms Lian Chan	BSc(Hons) in Tourism & Events Management 2023	Project Executive at Pico International (HK) Ltd
Ms Carmen Cheng	BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2023	Customer Services Officer, CMplus Hotel and Serviced Apartments
Mr Allen He	BSc(Hons) in Tourism & Events Management 2023	Travel Technology Support at American Express Global Business Travel
Mr Tony Wong	BSc(Hons) in Tourism & Events Management 2023	Customer Services Officer at Cathay Pacific Airways Ltd

Professors for a Day

The School extends its sincere gratitude to the industry experts who recently gave up their time to serve as professors for a day.

Speaker	Title and Company	Topic
Mr Tim ALPE	Managing Director, TriO Capital	Urban Land Institute Young Leaders Group Talk: Hotel Investment and Asset Management
Ms May AU YEUNG	Director of Sales & Marketing, The Royal Garden Hotel	How Does Technology Impact Marketing Strategies in the Hotel Industry?
Dr Tania BARDHAN	Senior Director of Spa, Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong	SPA Operations and Management in the Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong
Ms Regine BOENARDI	Waitress, Roganic & Aulis Hong Kong	Sharings from Roganic Hong Kong
Ms Marina BRACCIANI	Vice President, Hotels Research, JLL Hotels & Hospitality	Urban Land Institute Young Leaders Group Talk: Hotel Investment and Asset Management
Mr Lawrence CHAN	Director, International Hotel Group and Professor of Practice (Hospitality Asset Management), SHTM, PolyU	Financing Capital Expenditures in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry
Mr Patrick CHAN	Director of Human Resources, Sheraton & Four Points by Sheraton Hong Kong Tung Chung	Talent Acquisition and Employee Engagement
Mr Don CHAU	Information Officer, Tourism Authority of Thailand	Thai Cooking Workshop – Summer Snacks and Drinks
Mr Shaman CHELLARAM	Senior Director, Asia Valuation & Advisory Services, Colliers International	Hotel Investment, Ownership and Acquisition
Mr Guanqi CHEN	Group Vice President, Trip.com Group	Ctrip, Industry Innovation and Globalisation Strategy
Dr Philip CHEN	Professor of Practice, SHTM, PolyU	Leadership
Ms Irene CHEUNG	CEO, Rosy Sky First Employee Engagement Agency	Pursuing a Career in Event Management
Mr Oscar CHI	Senior Development Manager, InterContinental Hotels Group	Hotel Development and Investment
Ms Chloe CHIK	Human Resources Director, Asia Informa Markets	Application Letter and Resume Writing
Mr Steven CO	Senior Manager, San Miguel Brewery HK Ltd	Responsible Serving Training
Mr Jean-baptiste COPOT	Executive Head Sommelier, Black Sheep Restaurant Group	Wine Service Standards from the Industry Perspective
Ms Ana DOBREVA	Regional Talen & Development Director, Cartier	Hospitality and Luxury Retail Service
Ms Miriam DOHR	Weingut Dr. Loosen	Residential Study Trip
Mr Martin DONOVAN	Publisher & Editorial Director, MIX Meetings	Trends in MICE Events in GBA
Mr Christian EBERT	Owner & Winemaker, Weingut Schloss Saarstein	Residential Study Trip
Ms Wendy ELSINK	Weingut Markus Molitor	Residential Study Trip
Mr Sebastian ERBELDINGER	Owner, Weingut Bastianshauser Hof	Residential Study Trip
Mr Pierandrea FALCHI	Cost Controller, Swire Hotels	Hotel Professional Development
Dr Wei FANG	Teacher, Department of Tourism & Exhibition, School of Economics & Social Welfare, Zhejiang Shuren University	Red Tourism Experience and Value Identification
Ms Shengyi GAO	Former Editor, F&B magazine “Restaurant Review” and KOL, Specializes in Food & Beverage Review	Why Don’t We Catch Up at the Dining Table?
Ms Malique GOLDIN	Head of Partnerships, Black Sheep Restaurants	Innovative Business Strategies in the Restaurant Industry: Black Sheep Restaurants
Ms Catherina GRANS	General Manager, Weingut Grans-Fassian	Residential Study Trip
Ms Manuela GROEBE	Member of Groebe family, Weingut K.F Groebe	Residential Study Trip
Mr Wei GUO	Owner, Aining Brewery	The Survival of a Small Brewery in the Crisis
Mr Wei GUO	Senior Director, Kantar Hong Kong Limited	Data Collection Best Practice and Research Design Workshop
Mr Harry HA	Manager, Valuation & Advisory Services, Colliers	Urban Land Institute Young Leaders GroupTalk: Hotel Investment and Asset Management
Mr Marcus HAAG	Owner, Will Haag	Hotel Professional Development
Prof Jon HANF	Professor, Department of Wine and Beverage Business, Hochschule Geisenheim	Residential Study Trip
Ms Selina HO	Senior Manager (Enquiries & Complaints), Travel Industry Authority	Developments in the German Wine Market
Ms Wei HUANG	Vice General Manager, Hangzhou Suntiandy Yuanyi Business Management Co. Ltd	Introduction to the Travel Industry Authority
Ms Jin JEONG	Cyclist, universewithme.com	Strategy and Leadership Forum
Mr Jascha JIANG	Cluster Director of Revenue Management, South China, Marriott International Inc	Jin’s Cycling Journey around the World
Mr Anand JINDAL	Group Director of Revenue Management & Distribution, Wharf Hotels, Hong Kong	Demand Forecasting and Strategic Pricing Using Revenue Management Software
Mr Jonathan KEH	Brand Operations & Quality Manager, EDITION Hotels	Revenue Management
Mr Kyu Baek KIM	Head of Acquisitions & Development, Ovolo Hotels	Quality Service Management
Mr Eric KOO	Senior Director, Development, Hilton Worldwide	Urban Land Institute Young Leaders Group Talk: Hotel Investment and Asset Management
Ms Margaret KWOK	Director of Human Resources, Le Méridien Hong Kong, Cyberport	Urban Land Institute Young Leaders Group Talk: Hotel Investment and Asset Management
Mr Hins LAM	Chef, Roganic & Aulis Hong Kong	Application Letter and Resume Writing
Mr Zelotes LAM	Assistant Director of Operations and Efficiency, Swire Hotels	Sharings from Roganic Hong Kong
Ms Elise LAU	Director of Human Resources, The Ritz Carlton, Hong Kong	Getting the Most Out of an Internship
Ms Samantha LAU	Commercial Analyst, Air New Zealand	Employee Training and Development Opportunities
Mr Florian LAUER	Owner & Winemaker, Weingut Peter Lauer	Revenue Management
Mr Jonathan LAW	Vice President, Hotel Investment Sales, JLL Hotels & Hospitality	Residential Study Trip
Ms Donna LEE	Hotel Manager, The Peninsula Bangkok	Urban Land Institute Young Leaders Group Talk: Hotel Investment and Asset Management
Ms Fanny LEE	Community Engagement Director, Feeding Hong Kong	The Asian Paradigm in Hospitality Management
Mr Alvin LEUNG	Student Development Officer, UniY, Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong	Food Waste Issues in HK
Mr Jonathan LEUNG	Director of Operation, Black Sheep Restaurants	Recreation Policies and Development in Hong Kong
Ms Adriane LI	Senior Asset Manager, New World Development	Innovative Business Strategies in the Restaurant Industry: Black Sheep Restaurants
Ms Jossie LI	Associate Director, Head of Human Resources Business Partner, Chow Tak Fook Jewellery Group	Urban Land Institute Young Leaders Group Talk: Hotel Investment and Asset Management
		Building Organisational Culture: Challenges and Opportunities

Speaker	Title and Company	Topic
Ms Junie LI	Human Resources Manager, The Ritz-Carlton, Hong Kong	Interview Skills
Ms Linda LI	Director, Horwath HTL	Strategy and Leadership Forum
Ms Ni LI	Senior Account Manager, Shanghai Sunrise Market Research Limited	Data Collection Best Practice and Research Design Workshop
Dr Yvonne LI	Director of International Hotels Group, Alibaba Fliggy	Social Media Marketing in the Hotel Industry
Mr Gary LIN	Senior Talent Development Manager, Rosewood Hong Kong	Talent Development Strategy in Hospitality Industry
		Luxury Hotel Management
Mr Clarence LIU	Senior Marketing & Public Relations Manager, Hotel ICON	How Does Technology Impact Marketing Strategies in the Hotel Industry?
Mr Damon LIU	Senior Manager, Ronald McDonald House Charities Hong Kong	ESG and Marketing
Ms Flora LIU	General Manager of West Region, Delonix	Strategy and Leadership Forum
Mr Vincent LIU	Human Resources Manager, Conrad Hong Kong	The Success of Conrad
Mr Quinton LU	Hospitality Director, Gaw Capital Group	Hotel Project Leadership
Ms Julia LÜBCKE	Director of Wine Estates, Bischöfl. Weingüter Trier	Residential Study Trip
Ms Angel MA	Guest Relations & Club Floor Manager, Hotel ICON	Challenges, Strategies and Trends in Guest Relations and Club Floor Operations
Ms Liane MAK	Director of Sales & Marketing, Crowne Plaza Hong Kong Causeway Bay	How Does Technology Impact Marketing Strategies in the Hotel Industry?
Mr Simon MANNING	Managing Director, Nina Hospitality Group	Hotel Leadership
Mr Jeremy MCCARTHY	Group Director of Spa & Wellness, Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group	The SPA and Resort Development in the Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group
Mr Leo MEESE	Export Manager, Weingut Wittmann	Residential Study Trip
Ms Simone MERZ	Wine Sales Advisor, Weingut am Nil	Residential Study Trip
Ms Daphne MOK	In Charge-Principal Programme Secretary, Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong	Recreation Policies and Development in Hong Kong
Mr Hugo MONTANARI	Managing Director, Rosewood Hong Kong	Quality Service Management
Mr Guillaume NICOLAS	General Manager, Magistracy Dining Room & BELON, Black Sheep Restaurants	Quality Service in Fine Dining Restaurants
Mr Ludwig PASCH	Technical Director, Department of Oenology, Hochschule Geisenheim	Trends in Oenology
Mr Bertrand PETTON	General Manager, The Hong Kong Country Club	How to Lead a Club
Ms Josephine PNG	Director of Sales & Marketing, The Capella Hotel, Bangkok	The Asian Paradigm in Hospitality Management
Ms Khem RAI	Wines Educator, MyiCellar	Food and Wine Pairing
Mr Haizhu RAO	General Manager, Aining Brewery	The Survival of a Small Brewery in the Crisis
Ms Katharina RAUMLAND	Member of Raumland family, Sekthaus Raumland	Residential Study Trip
Ms Juliane SCHÄFER	German Wine Princess	German Wine Growing Regions and Typical Wines
Ms Janina SCHMITT	Founder, Weingut Van Volxern	Residential Study Trip
Ms Laura SCHNEIDER	Winemaker, Jakob Schneider	Residential Study Trip
Mr Sascha Johannes SCHÖMEL	Director of Sales, Weingut Dönnhoff	Residential Study Trip
Mr Frank SCHÖNLEBER	Owner & Winemaker, Weingut Emrich-Schönleber	Residential Study Trip
Mr Stanley SHEA	Marine Programme Director, ADM Capital Foundation & Bloom Association Hong Kong	Sustainable Seafood
Mr Kevin SHIH	CEO, Dream Team F&B Concepts	Leadership
Prof Manfred STOLL	Head, Department of Viticulture, Hochschule Geisenheim	Trends in Viticulture
Ms Tianxu SUN	Group Vice President, Trip.com Group	Ctrip, Industry Innovation and Globalisation Strategy
Ms Supawadee SURINKAS	Information Officer, Tourism Authority of Thailand	Thai Cooking Workshop – Summer Snacks and Drinks
Ms Sofia THANISCH	Owner, Weingut Wwe. Dr. H. Thanisch	Residential Study Trip
Ms Sonja THIELEMANN	Head of International Office, Hochschule Geisenheim	Residential Study Trip
Mr Garrison TONG	Country Manager, Impossible Foods Hong Kong	Impossible Foods: A Brief Look into a Delicious and Sustainable Future
Mr Matthew TSANG	Human Resources Officer, Conrad Hong Kong	The Success of Conrad
Mr Terry TSUI	Project Manager, Ocean Park Hong Kong	Developing and Managing Theme Park Events
Mr Simon TYE	Executive Research Director, CSG INTAGE Worldwide	Renaissance of the New Chinese Consumers: Behavioral and Preferential Changes in Luxury Consumption Among Affluent Chinese Consumers in the Post-Pandemic Era
		The Asian Paradigm in Hospitality Management
Mr Anthony TYLER	General Manager, Mandarin Oriental Bangkok	Expansion and Operation Strategies in Rosewood Hotel Group
Mr Hoss VETRY	Vice President of Operation, Rosewood Hotel Group	Thai Cooking Workshop – Summer Snacks and Drinks
Ms Napatat VUDHIVAD	Director, Tourism Authority of Thailand	The Survival of a Small Brewery in the Crisis
Mr Bing WANG	Deputy General Manager, Aining Brewery	Wine Investment
Ms Jiyu WANG	Sales Manager, Acker Merrall & Condit (Asia)	Tourism Experience, Intergenerational Interaction and the Well-Being of the Elderly
Dr Qunlong WANG	Associate Dean, Institute of Modern Services, Zhejiang Shuren University	Managing Marketing in the Hotel and Tourism Industry
Dr Ray WANG	CEO, Haozhu Network Technology Co., Ltd	The Asian Paradigm in Hospitality Management
Ms Sandra WATERMANN	Managing Director, Rosewood Bangkok	The Asian Paradigm in Hospitality Management
Dr Dong WEI	President, Grand Hotels Group	Marketing of German Wines in Asia
Mr Peter WINTER	Lecturer, MP Asia and Owner, Georg-Müller-Stiftung	Gastro – Diplomacy and Gastronomy Tourism
Dr Jutamas WISANSING	Founder, Thailand Gastronomy Network	A Journey to Become a Professional Event Planner
Ms Elaine WONG	Senior Project Manager, Oppa System Limited	ESG and Marketing
Ms Iris WONG	Executive Director, Ronald McDonald House Charities Hong Kong	Key Aspects of Revenue Management after COVID-19
Mr Ken WONG	Director of Revenue Management, Hotel ICON	Revenue Management
		How to Make a Good Beer
Mr Haobin YE	Beermaker, Aining Brewery	Developing and Managing Theme Park Events
Ms Glenda YIM	Project Supervisor, Ocean Park Hong Kong	Leadership
Dr Lawrence YIP	Managing Director, Millennium Hotel Group	The Asian Paradigm in Hospitality Management
Mr Yasuhiro YONEYAMA	Director of Sales & Marketing, The Okura Prestige Bangkok	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Hospitality Organisation
Ms Gina YUE	Head of HR Operations, IHG Greater China	Wine Investment
Dr Xiaohai ZHAN	Postdoc Fellow, Shenzhen International Graduate School, Tsinghua University	Dream – Experience the Difference – The Way Out Is In
Ms Julia ZHANG	Internal Control General Manager, The Grand Bay Hotels Group	Global Strategy of Jin Jiang Group
Mr Qian ZHU	Director Strategic Development Department, Jin Jiang Holdings Co., Ltd.	

Upcoming Events

2024

22 March

Event: Career Expo 2024, Hong Kong
Organiser: SHTM
Contact: Ms Adelaide Lau
Email: adelaide.lau@polyu.edu.hk

6–8 May

Event: 14th Asia Tourism Forum, Indonesia
Organisers: SHTM and Palembang Tourism Polytechnic
Contact: Dr Tony Tse
Email: tong.tse@polyu.edu.hk

30 May

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

12–14 June

Event: 20th Asia Pacific Forum for Graduate Students Research in Tourism, Thailand
Organisers: SHTM and Prince of Songkla University, Phuket
Website: <https://fht.psu.ac.th/apf2024>

3–6 October

Event: 3rd “One Belt • One Road • One Tourism” International Conference, Uzbekistan
Organiser: SHTM and Silk Road International University of Tourism and Cultural Heritage
Contact: Dr Tony Tse
Email: tong.tse@polyu.edu.hk

14–16 October

Event: 43rd ISTTE Annual Conference, Hong Kong
Organiser: SHTM

LEADING HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM