

# Horizons

## SHTM Magazine

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

Vol 25 Issue 2, Sep 2025

### SHTM *Lifetime Achievement Award* cum Gala Dinner 5 May 2025



Lifetime Achievement Award Bestowed on Visionary Hotelier

Students Lead the Charge at the 21st Asia Pacific Forum

A New Branding Strategy for the Greater Bay Area

SHTM Researchers Shed New Light on Visitor Satisfaction  
in Hong Kong



# Explore Routledge Tourism Journals

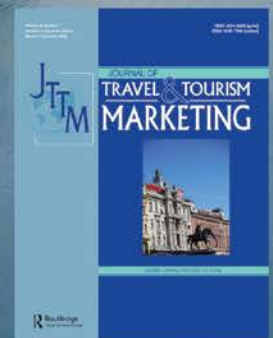
Asia Pacific Journal of  
Tourism Research



Journal of China  
Tourism Research



Journal of Travel &  
Tourism Marketing



**14 DAYS  
FREE  
ACCESS!**

In order to access the content, visit the page below and log in, or register for a free Taylor & Francis Online account.

Routledge is pleased to offer you 14 days free access\* to all content published from 2021 to 2023 in these journals.



[bit.ly/tourism\\_journals](https://bit.ly/tourism_journals)

Scan the QR code or visit the link to gain access

# CONTENTS

## 02 DEAN'S MESSAGE



## 03 HONOURING A TITAN OF HOSPITALITY

*The School honours the lifetime achievement of a visionary hospitality leader*



## 05 THE FUTURE OF TOURISM RESEARCH AND LEADERSHIP

*Students lead the charge at the 21st Asia Pacific Forum*

## 07 TRANSFORMING REGIONAL TOURISM

*Pioneering research spearheaded by the SHTM will help create a cohesive brand for the GBA*

## 09 A MILLION CITIZEN REVIEWERS

*The Research Centre for Digital Transformation of Tourism sheds light on visitor satisfaction in Hong Kong*



## 11 NURTURING INDUSTRY LEADERS

*SHTM+ICON Consultancy delivers a rich tailor-made training offering for the sector*

## 13 STUDENTS MEET SEASONED HOTELIERS

*The School joins hands with Rosewood Hong Kong to connect students with leading hoteliers*

## 14 FUTURE EMPLOYERS SHOWCASE OPPORTUNITIES

*Students meet potential employers in hospitality and tourism at the 2025 Career Expo*

## 15 GLOBAL VOICES, SHARED JOURNEYS

*Taught postgraduate students share their experiences at the SHTM*

## RESEARCH HORIZONS

*Highlights of recent SHTM research: Exploring the psychology of unplanned luxury consumption / The importance of country of origin in China's wine market / Blockchain technology in the food and beverage sector / What drives diners to post more photos with their online reviews of restaurants / The negative consequences of excessively high service quality / How ChatGPT is transforming trip planning*



## 17 ALUMNI MEET FUTURE TALENTS

*Fruitful forums held for alumni and prospective students of our Mainland China programmes*

## 19 IN BRIEF

*A glimpse of the SHTM's most impressive achievements and activities in the last year*

## 21 A "LUMINOUS" NEW ERA

*Inauguration of the 21st Session of the SHTM Students' Association*

## 22 STUDENTS SHINE ON GLOBAL STAGE

*An action-packed calendar of student activities*

## 24 A NEW FLAVOUR OF LEARNING

*Activities highlight the latest trends in the global food and beverage sector*

## 26 HONOURING STUDENT EXCELLENCE

*Outstanding students receive the annual Academic Achievement Award*



## 27 INDUSTRY LEADERS SHARE EXPERTISE

*Presentation of awards to student mentees and their industry mentors*

## 29 COMING TOGETHER AGAIN

*The Alumni Association organises another series of memorable events for alumni*

## 30 ALUM-NOTES

*News of SHTM alumni from the 2000s to today*

## 31 PROFESSOR-FOR-A-DAY PROGRAMME

*Industry leaders serve as professors for a day*

## 33 UPCOMING EVENTS

*What lies ahead for the School*

**PUBLISHER** Kaye Chon  
**DESIGN** Absolute Creative Limited

**MANAGING EDITOR** Tiffany Chan  
**PRINTER** Impact Printing & Graphics Co. Ltd.

**CONSULTING EDITOR** AsiaEdit

*Horizons* is published by the School of Hotel and Tourism Management for friends, alumni, staff and students of the School.

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 SAR.

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

**TELEPHONE** (852) 3400 2293

**EMAIL** tiffany-sm.chan@polyu.edu.hk

**WEBSITE** <https://www.polyu.edu.hk/shtm>

*Horizons* is issued by the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. © All rights reserved.



THE HONG KONG  
POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY  
香港理工大學

SCHOOL OF HOTEL AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT



# “ DEAN'S MESSAGE

This issue of *Horizons* celebrates some of the School's proudest moments from the past year, with milestones in research, student achievement and industry engagement.

The cover story pays tribute to one of the region's most visionary hospitality leaders, who was awarded this year's Lifetime Achievement Award. The awardee, Mr William Heinecke, is an entrepreneur whose business acumen and commitment to philanthropy align perfectly with the School's guiding values.

Another highlight of the issue is the entirely student-organised 21st Asia Pacific Forum for Graduate Students Research in Tourism, which served as a platform for graduate students and early-career researchers to showcase their insights and exchange ideas for advancing the industry.

Thanks to pioneering research spearheaded by the SHTM, policy makers now have strategies for creating a cohesive brand that capitalises on the strengths of all 11 cities in the Greater Bay Area. The findings of this innovative project, "Developing a Tourism Cluster in the Greater Bay Area: A Dual Branding Perspective", are commemorated in this issue of *Horizons*.

Focusing on Hong Kong, the industry will also benefit from the insights into visitor satisfaction recently gained by the Research Centre for Digital Transformation of Tourism within the School. Their findings will help local tourist authorities keep the city at the top of visitor rankings in the coming years.

Organising a leading graduate research forum was just one of the many ways in which SHTM students excelled in 2024/25 – as showcased in student activities ranging from winning global competitions to networking and hands-on experiences at conferences across Asia.

One such enriching activity comes under the spotlight in Rosewood Day 2025, in which the School came together with the world-leading hotel Rosewood Hong Kong to bring students face-to-face with expert hoteliers. To further illustrate the transformative impact of the learning experiences curated and delivered by the School, we invited a selection of students to share their recollections of the SHTM's taught postgraduate programmes.

Equally inspiring is the School's ever-evolving offering of food and beverage events and Mainland China programmes, as well as the industry-facing activities of SHTM+ICON Consultancy, which continue to translate academic insight into real-world impact. Those interested in how SHTM faculty are pushing the boundaries of hospitality and tourism research for the benefit of the industry should turn to our "Research Horizons" insert.

We close the issue with highlights from a dynamic year of extracurricular activities, as well as standout events and key updates from our staff community. I extend my thanks to all readers and contributors for their unfailing support for the School in 2024/2025 and beyond.

”

## 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






# HONOURING A TITAN OF HOSPITALITY

Hotel ICON played host to a gala dinner on 16 May, organised in tribute to the 2025 recipient of the SHTM Lifetime Achievement Award. This year, the School bestowed the award to honour one of the region's most visionary hospitality leaders. The awardee, Mr William Heinecke, is an entrepreneur who has left a lasting legacy in the industry he has served for six decades.

Mr Heinecke is known across the Asia-Pacific and the world as the founder and chairman of the hospitality group Minor International PCL. Operating in over 60 countries, the group's hotel division – Minor Hotels – includes a range of brands, such as Anantara, Avani, Oaks, Elewana Collection, NH Collection and Tivoli. Moreover, the group boasts a global presence in catering and fashion through its Minor Food and Minor Lifestyle divisions.

► Mr William Heinecke is inducted into the SHTM's Gallery of Honour



Welcoming guests at the gala dinner, Professor Miranda Lou, PolyU Executive Vice-President, remarked that “Mr Heinecke’s name has become synonymous with entrepreneurial success and hospitality leadership in the region and around the world. He is a stellar role model for future hospitality professionals and a source of inspiration for all”.

Mr Heinecke’s influence is not only felt in the hospitality and retail worlds. Moved by the greater aim of environmental stewardship, he has leveraged his professional triumphs to establish bodies like the Golden Triangle Asian Elephant Foundation and the Mai Khao Marine Turtle Foundation, while his Heinecke Foundation supports education for disadvantaged children.

Receiving the SHTM Lifetime Achievement Award implies that a hospitality leader has made an indelible mark on their industry, not just in Hong Kong but in the region and the wider world. “In awarding the distinction, the SHTM seeks to recognise true leadership who helps define the global hospitality landscape and advance the industry as a whole”, said Professor Lou, “and Mr Heinecke exemplifies these qualities in every way”.

## A Six-Decade Journey

Following Professor Lou’s welcome speech, further warm words were delivered in opening remarks by Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean, Chair Professor and Walter and Wendy Kwok Family Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management. “Mr Heinecke’s accolades speak volumes about his contributions”, said Dean Chon, “having been named Entrepreneur of the Year at the Asia Pacific Enterprise Awards, Corporate Hotelier of the World by HOTELS Magazine, and recipient of the Trailblazer Award at the Asian Business Leadership Forum Awards”.

Mr Heinecke is also a published author, known for *The Entrepreneur: 25 Golden Rules for the Global Business Manager*, in which, as Dean Chon noted, “he has shared his wisdom with aspiring leaders around the world”. Considering the mark that our recipient has made on the world, the award night was a fitting occasion to celebrate not just a man but, in Dean Chon’s words, “a legacy – an extraordinary leader whose ability to anticipate trends, embrace change, and lead with determination has revolutionised the way we experience hospitality”.

In a heartfelt acceptance speech, Mr Heinecke spoke movingly about the

long journey of his career. “Many people think of us as an overnight success”, he said in reference to his group, “but it took almost six decades”. Since its founding, Minor International has grown to encompass almost 600 hotels, 3,000 restaurants and 400 retail stores. “But growth has never been just about scale”, said Mr Heinecke. “It’s about creating long-term value and delivering excellence to all we serve”.

Fittingly for a brand dedicated to sustainability, Minor has gradually built a sustainable foundation over 60 years of steady expansion. Now the fruits of Mr Heinecke’s careful and dedicated life’s work are multiplying, exemplifying “the ripple effect that begins when you invest in people, which has been the most rewarding part of this journey”.

Following Mr Heinecke’s acceptance remarks came an enlightening roundtable discussion, in which he shared his wisdom with three entrepreneurial SHTM alumni: Dr Elton Sun, CEO and Managing Director, Yusu Hotel Management Co., Ltd; Ms Young Lee, Managing Director of Dosirak & JK Hong Kong; and Dr Simon Tian, CEO of Menduner.

► Mr Heinecke shares his wisdom with SHTM alumni



## Coming Together

Deservedly, Mr Heinecke has now been inducted into the SHTM Gallery of Honour. “As someone who shares in the School’s mission to shape the future of global hospitality”, he said, “I’ve always believed that our industry moves forward when passionate people come together to challenge convention and build with purpose”. The SHTM agrees, and we look forward to the next exciting chapter in the story of Mr William Heinecke and Minor International.



► "Meet the Editors" panel discussion

Organised by  HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY 

Sponsored by



# THE NEXT GENERATION OF TOURISM RESEARCH



As part of its commitment to fostering research collaboration to advance hospitality and tourism, the SHTM was honoured to host the 21st Asia Pacific Forum for Graduate Students Research in Tourism on 14–16 May this year. Since its founding by the School nearly 25 years ago, the Forum has gone from strength to strength as a platform for graduate students and early-career researchers to showcase their research and exchange ideas for the betterment of the industry.

This year, the event was sponsored by the prestigious *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research* and *Journal of China Tourism Research*, to which the participants were also encouraged to submit their papers post-conference.

On 14 May, a "Meet the Editor" pre-conference workshop saw attendees introduced to SHTM professors who spearhead the above journals: Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean, Chair Professor and Walter and Wendy Kwok Family Foundation Professor in International Hospitality

Management, who serves as Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing* and *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, as well as Chair Professor Cathy Hsu (Editor-in-Chief of *Tourism Management*); Professor Haiyan Song, Associate Dean and Chair Professor and Mr and Mrs Chan Chak Fu Professor in International Tourism (Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of China Tourism Research*); and Professor Honggen Xiao, Assistant Dean (Managing Editor of the *Journal of China Tourism Research*).

## FROM GRADUATE TO SCHOLAR

Dean Chon was the first to speak at the conference's opening on 15 May. "We have to invest in the future, in innovation and education", he said, describing the SHTM as a "dream factory" that helps young people realise their vision of contributing to the hospitality and tourism industry. He went on to urge the assembled graduate students to consider the unique purpose of their lives and studies.

Next came a panel discussion entitled "From Graduate to Scholar: Insights from Early-Career Academics," featuring SHTM Assistant Professors Dori Davari, Simone Bianco, Faye Hao and Wangoo Lee. They each shared memories of their own journeys at the SHTM from Ph.D. students to scholars and educators, as well as offering the audience invaluable advice on capitalising on their time at the School.

"Your experiences are really eye-opening for us", said Ph.D. student Jacky Yang, whose fellow Session Chair and Ph.D. student Daffne Qiu – as well as the attentive audience – was in full agreement.

The remainder of the day saw three Parallel Sessions in which graduate students delivered insightful paper presentations on topics ranging from the roles of robotics and artificial intelligence within the industry to the development of nature-based and eco-tourism.



## FROM GRADUATE TO INDUSTRY LEADER

Kicking off the third and final day of the Forum was a Panel Discussion entitled "From Graduate to Industry Leader: The Journey to Professional Success". Chaired by the SHTM's Assistant Professor Simone Bianco, the session featured insights from panellists Ms Sylvia Chung, Chief Business Impact Officer at Chinachem Group; Mr Pierandrea Falchi, Cost Controller at Swire Hotels; Ms Renee Kim, General Manager at Regala Skycity Hotel; Dr Robin Ning, General Manager at Hualuxe Kunming; and Mr Calvin Yuen, Senior Manager, Headquarters Food & Beverage, Shangri-La Group.

Ms Chung – who was formerly also a consultant for Hotel ICON and currently chairs the School's advisory committee – described her career-long efforts to "create impact for the environment and the community". "Throughout my career I have opened

eight hotels in five different countries", shared Ms Kim. She highlighted the particular challenges faced by women in the hospitality industry in realising their career goals. Attendees also learned from SHTM alumni Mr Falchi, Dr Ning and Mr Yuen about forging a successful early career within the industry and, in Mr Falchi's words, attending to a business's "bottom line".

After another two sets of paper presentations showcasing more cutting-edge research by graduate students, it was time for the Forum to draw to a close. Dean Chon took the stage again to deliver concluding remarks. "This conference has been entirely organised by our students", he pointed out. "This has been a wonderful journey of two and a half days".

► Attendees of the 21st Asia Pacific Forum for Graduate Students Research in Tourism



## FORUM RETURNS HOME

Indeed, the history of the Asia Pacific Forum has been a wonderful journey of nearly two and a half decades. Since its inception by the School in 2002, the Forum has been hosted in various locations across Asia, including Macau, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Thailand, mainland China and Singapore. In 2025, the School was delighted to welcome the event – and its participants – back to its birthplace in Hong Kong, as befits the city's reputation as an international hub for tourism and hospitality research and education.



# TRANSFORMING REGIONAL TOURISM



Encompassing nine cities and two special administrative regions and boasting rich natural, cultural and historical assets, the Greater Bay Area (GBA) has the potential to become a world-class tourism cluster. Effective, targeted branding is crucial to achieve this goal in an ever more competitive tourism market. Yet while cities within the GBA have established robust individual brand identities, the region's overall brand has thus far remained elusive.

However, this may be about to change. Thanks to pioneering research spearheaded by the SHTM, policy makers now have insights into creating a cohesive brand that capitalises on the strengths of all 11 cities in the GBA. The findings of the project, entitled "Developing a Tourism Cluster in the Greater Bay Area: A Dual Branding Perspective", were shared at a Public Seminar at the School on 26 March this year.

Led by the SHTM's Professor Kam Hung, the research team comprised Professor Tony Tse, SHTM Professor of Practice; Professor Rob Law, Chair Professor of Smart Tourism and Deputy Director of the Asia-Pacific Academy of Economics and Management of the University of Macau; and Professor Shina Li of the School of Tourism Management of Sun Yat-sen University. The project was supported by the Public Policy Research Funding Scheme of the Hong Kong SAR government.

## A DIVERSE TOURISM OFFERING

“The primary aim of this study was to unlock the GBA’s tourism potential by highlighting each city’s unique qualities via cluster branding while promoting regional collaboration”, the researchers noted. To this end, a robust mixed-methods approach was necessary. Site visits to the 11 GBA cities were complemented by big data analysis of 200,000 online reviews to understand tourist preferences. Further insights were gained through interviews with local residents, tourism officials and business owners, capturing a range of stakeholder perspectives.

The findings were instructive. “All GBA cities mix tradition with trends”, the researchers explained. “Yet brand values differ: locals tend to emphasise heritage and community, while travellers favour convenience and leisure”. They also found that the focus of tourism varied, with tourists prioritising entertainment and locals appreciating cultural and historical depth. How to reconcile these diverse preferences and capitalise on the unique strengths of each destination to form a GBA-wide brand?



► Prof Kam Hung explains how strategically positioning the GBA as a unified yet diverse destination can leverage its collective strengths, fostering innovation and creating new opportunities for sustainable growth in the region

## SYNERGISING DESTINATION STRENGTHS

The team’s solution was to construct a “brand architecture” for the GBA tourism cluster that balances each city’s identity with the region’s overall promise. They recommend diversifying itineraries to enable tourists to enjoy the wealth of experiences the region has to offer. A heritage itinerary, for instance, might take in historic landmarks such as Hong Kong’s Clock Tower, while a nature and adventure itinerary would highlight the region’s stunning natural features, such as Zhaoqing’s karst formations.

Another promising route would be to market the GBA as a retirement haven, taking advantage of the region’s advanced healthcare services, favourable climate, outstanding natural beauty and comprehensive leisure facilities. “Supported by government policies and the growing

silver economy”, the researchers noted, “the GBA represents an attractive destination for retirees seeking a peaceful yet active lifestyle”.

They also recommend creating a cross-regional body to lead GBA branding, supported by a dynamic marketing strategy that emphasises the rich tourism experiences and seamless travel connections afforded by the region. Digital tactics – such as social media and influencer partnerships to engage younger audiences – would complement offline efforts such as multi-city travel packages.

## THE GBA AND BEYOND

Such efforts could have a transformative impact on the region, according to the researchers, by attracting more visitors and investment while also encouraging cities to work more closely together.



A cohesive brand for the GBA would support cultural preservation, promote sustainable practices and raise the region’s profile on the global tourism stage.

“By strategically positioning GBA as a unified yet diverse destination,” said Professor Hung, “the region can better leverage its collective strength, foster innovation and create new opportunities for sustainable growth”. Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean, Chair Professor and Walter and Wendy Kwok Family Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management, was in full agreement. “The GBA’s success will not only benefit the region but also serve as a model for other destinations worldwide”, he said.

The SHTM could not be more proud of its talented researchers and their contribution to the development of the region’s tourism industry.





► Prof Kaye Chon (fourth from left) and Prof Haiyan Song (fourth from right), with members of the research team

# A MILLION CITIZEN REVIEWERS

Hong Kong is undoubtedly a premier tourist destination and global travel hub, but staying at the top requires unceasing effort. Recently, the Research Centre for Digital Transformation of Tourism (RCdTT) within the SHTM completed a grand project analysing visitor satisfaction in Hong Kong. The results are not only encouraging but will also help tourist authorities stay abreast of changes and keep the city at the top of visitor rankings.

Automated analysis of over 1 million online reviews by visitors to almost 14,000 Hong Kong locations revealed widespread positive perceptions and a steady improvement over time. The city has bounced back from the pandemic and is now in place to consolidate its strengths. The official report on the RCdTT's work, released in April 2025, provides a wealth of insights into areas ripe for further improvement.



► Prof Kaye Chon delivers welcoming remarks

## GOOD NEWS IN THE REVIEWS

The RCdTT's Tourist Satisfaction Index (TSI) is a unique framework for tourism research leveraging artificial intelligence. Piloted in 2009 under the leadership of Professor Haiyan Song, Principal Investigator and SHTM Associate Dean, RCdTT Director and Mr and Mrs Chan Chak Fu Professor in International Tourism, the TSI – originally based on survey data – has now been transformed into a highly adaptable tool powered by big data analytics.

As described in the official report, the TSI harnesses a large language model to extract sentiment-related words from TripAdvisor reviews and generate destination satisfaction scores. Based on rich web-crawled data and a cross-disciplinary theoretical approach, the TSI offers researchers, managers and policymakers insights into diverse aspects of service quality, both across time and at the individual business level. It even updates itself monthly.

Across five key tourism sectors (attractions, hotels, restaurants, retail shops and transportation), the report shows that TSI scores have remained high since 2012, generally approaching 80 out of 100, and now fully recovered from a pandemic dip. Testifying to the quality and coverage of Hong Kong's public transit network, the "transportation" topic was linked with particularly high scores.

## DATA MINING FOR DEEP INSIGHTS

Reassuringly, TSI scores are also high throughout the city. Nonetheless, analysis along the geographic dimension revealed a north-south divide, a key insight for practitioners to consider. This disparity could be addressed by strengthening tourist offerings in Kowloon City and other northern areas, bringing them up to the high scores of southern districts.

The 1.25 million reviews analysed in the latest update of the TSI were

written in 28 languages. A breakdown of these results provides further useful clues for tourism authorities. Speakers of European languages reported higher satisfaction than Japanese and Korean speakers, while Chinese speakers were less satisfied with retail attractions, suggesting areas of focus to strengthen Hong Kong's reputation within Asia.

The analysis also revealed that business travellers tend to be more satisfied with restaurants than solo or family travellers are. Solo travellers also reported the lowest satisfaction with their hotel experiences. Hong Kong is a global finance hub with a proud history of catering to business visitors; now, as a bustling multicultural destination, it should do more to capitalise on its city-break strengths for young people and families.

## ASSISTING POLICYMAKERS AND PRACTITIONERS

The overall news and outlook are highly positive. In the words of Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean, Chair Professor and Walter and Wendy Kwok Family Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management,

“**Hong Kong's competitiveness as a global tourism hub hinges on its delivering exceptional service quality that meets travellers' expectations.**”

The TSI project offers a highly practical means of consolidating these assets.

► Prof Haiyan Song highlights the significance of the TSI in facilitating decision-making and planning by policymakers and industry practitioners

Building on Dean Chon's remarks, the TSI's architect Professor Song pointed out that “to sustain ongoing recovery, accurate and timely assessment of the satisfaction level of inbound tourists is essential for policymakers and industry practitioners to develop sustainable tourism strategies that will further fortify Hong Kong's tourism advantages, propel its tourism industry and ultimately promote long-term economic growth in the city.”

## RESEARCH THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

The development, publication and updating of the TSI showcase the RCdTT's and SHTM's commitment to research with tangible benefits. It is exciting to consider how Hong Kong's government and businesses can utilise the TSI to drive real growth in tourism and improve visitors' experiences.

Moreover, as predicted by the report, the TSI “has the potential to become a universal performance benchmark within the tourism industry across different destinations”. Such widespread adoption would underline the global impact of the School's world-leading research, carried out by staff and students of the highest calibre.

- Long-term business sustaina
- Enhance market competitiv







# NURTURING INDUSTRY LEADERS

Since 2018, SHTM+ICON Consultancy has provided the hospitality and tourism sector with pioneering, research-backed solutions. The last year, an unprecedented one for the industry, with AI-powered tools transforming tourism offerings, has been no exception.

Committed to preparing professionals to thrive in this rapidly evolving landscape, the School and Hotel ICON's expert consultants have been hard at work on a new set of executive development and consultancy projects – this year, with a focus on students.

## ENRICHING EXPERIENCES FOR STUDENTS

The first was the Kyung Hee University Study Programme, delivered on 2–11 January. Students from South Korea's Kyung Hee University attended five lectures by SHTM faculty covering critical dimensions of modern-day hospitality.

The first, delivered by Associate Professor Lisa Gao, shed light on how to create a high-quality service

experience. Next was a lecture by Assistant Dean and Associate Professor, Deniz Kucukusta, on environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues in hospitality, followed by discussion of revenue management and marketing management by Assistant Professors Michael Lin and Sung In Kim, respectively. The final lecture, delivered by Assistant Professor Seunghun Shin, addressed information technologies in hospitality.

Further enriching their learning experience, the students visited Rosewood Hong Kong hotel for firsthand exposure to luxury

hospitality. Visits to Central Market and Tai Kwun enabled them to explore cultural tourism through the lenses of heritage conservation and revitalisation.

On the final day of the programme, the students presented the results of group projects on marketing strategies to bolster Hotel ICON's brand recognition in South Korea. They received invaluable feedback from Mr Ian Lee, Hotel ICON's General Manager, and Mr Vallois Choi, its Director of Marketing – who in turn learned much from the students' perspectives on operational and marketing decisions in Korea.

## HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

Our world-renowned teaching and research hotel was also at the heart of another student-focused programme delivered early in 2025. On 20–23 January, 11 high-school students from Harrow LiDe School Henqin studied and dined at Hotel ICON, gaining hands-on experience of the hospitality industry and learning from SHTM faculty.

After an introduction to the industry by Professor Tony Tse, Professor of Practice, they attended a social media and data analytics workshop run by Assistant Professor Huihui Zhang, gained insights into ESG practices from Professor Kucukusta, and learned about revenue management simulation from Professor Lin. The programme concluded with creative group projects and feedback from Hotel ICON's Ms Carol Cheung,

Director of Human Capital, and Mr Clarence Liu, Senior Marketing and Public Relations Manager.

Students were again treated to a tailor-made programme by the SHTM on 23 January, when Associate Professor Pearl Lin led a Dining Etiquette Workshop for 38 students and 2 teachers from Hong Kong's Korean International School. The attendees learned the essential "do"s and "don't"s of formal dining and observed professional serving techniques demonstrated by SHTM students.



► Students from Kyung Hee University present their group projects

## SUMMER OF LEARNING AND EXCHANGE

Summer 2025 saw the launch of another exciting programme custom-made for students, with a four-week Student Training Programme involving 10 students from Saudi Arabia's University of Tabuk in May and June. The students had the opportunity to immerse themselves in the culture of Asian hospitality through lectures and technical visits, as well as undertaking practical training at Hotel ICON.

May was a busy month for the team, beginning with the annual Certified Hospitality Educator (CHE®) workshop delivered to 27 candidates on 10–13 May. Designed by the SHTM in collaboration with the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute, the workshop was held at the School and led by Instructor Dr Fred Mayo. On 20–22 May, 14 students from Yew Chung Yew Wah Education Network schools in mainland China and Hong Kong came to the School to learn about research methods in hospitality and hotel revenue management.

On 15–21 June, 10 students from Mae Fah Luang University in Thailand visited for an enriching study programme. Highlights of their experience included an orientation and tour delivered by Professor Tse; insights into ESG in hospitality shared by Professor Kucukusta; a lecture on

marketing in hospitality and tourism delivered by Professor Kim; and a spotlight on gastronomy tourism by Instructor Ms Tak Kanchanawat.

The student training was followed by three days of continuing professional development for teachers from Mae Fah Luang University, who learned about the School and Hotel ICON's industry partnerships and international experience and were introduced to our pioneering Tourism Demand Forecasting System and Tourist Satisfaction Index.

Teachers again benefited from SHTM+ICON Consultancy's expertise later in summer, with a one-week teacher training programme custom-made for the Nanjing Institute of Tourism and Hospitality in July. Twelve teachers from the Institute learned much from lectures and gained real-world experience of the industry through field trips and hotel visits.

These are just some of this year's beneficiaries of the expertise and experience of SHTM+ICON Consultancy, whose initiatives are nurturing the next generation of talented industry professionals.



► CHE Workshop

► Prof Tony Tse introduces the School to students from the University of Tabuk



## ROSEWOOD DAY 2025

# STUDENTS MEET SEASONED HOTELIERS



In the spirit of community and collaboration, and building on the success of Rosewood Day in 2022 and 2023, the SHTM and Rosewood Hong Kong joined forces again on 21 February. Few achievements are more valued by the School than the partnerships it has built with trailblazers in hospitality and tourism, and Rosewood Day 2025 was the fruit of one such partnership – bringing students face-to-face with leaders from a hotel consistently ranked among the world's best.

Kicking off the day was a motivational speech by Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean, Chair Professor and Walter and Wendy Kwok Family Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management, who introduced attendees to the theme of the event: "Shaping the Digital Future: Marketing Strategies for Mainland China". Next to speak was Mr Hugo Montanari, Managing Director of Rosewood Hong Kong. "Through collaborations like these", he said, "we can ignite innovation, nurture tomorrow's leaders and propel meaningful change".

Next came a panel discussion moderated by SHTM Associate Professor YooHee Hwang and Assistant Professor Wangoo Lee, featuring senior executives from Rosewood Hong Kong: Mr Hugo Montanari, Managing Director; Ms Olena Pavlyshyn, Director of Rooms; and Mr Angus Pitkethley, Director of Sales and Marketing. Our students learned much from these experienced hoteliers and even had the opportunity to network with them during a breakout session.

Another highlight of the event was the Rosewood Day Challenge, which was won by a team of talented SHTM students. Kehan Wang and Shuwen Tan, BSc in Tourism and Events Management students, joined forces with Ph.D. in Hotel and Tourism Management student Regan Li to present innovative practical strategies for tourism marketing in the digital age. They received their well-deserved certificates and prizes from Dean Chon and Mr Montanari.

The School offers its sincere thanks to Rosewood Hong Kong for such a fruitful ongoing partnership, dedicated to nurturing the next generation of hospitality leaders. Roll on the next Rosewood Day!



# FUTURE EMPLOYERS SHOWCASE OPPORTUNITIES

On 28 March, the School hosted its 2025 Career Expo, providing opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students to meet potential employers in the hospitality and tourism industry. Nearly 50 employers set up exhibition booths this year, representing both local businesses and international chains in the hospitality, catering and tourism sectors. The School also offered Career Expo participants complimentary professional portraits.

Welcoming remarks were offered by Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean, Chair Professor and Walter and Wendy Kwok Family Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management. In the words of Stephanie Chan, a final-year student in the BSc in Hotel Management programme, "this year's Career Expo continues to serve as an exceptional platform for SHTM students to meet and network with industry experts and explore career opportunities with potential employers for their professional development".



**The SHTM is grateful to the following organisations for contributing to this successful event.**

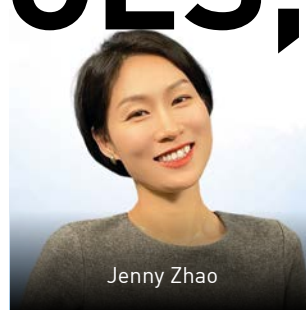
Accor Group Hong Kong	K11 ARTUS
Aqua Restaurant Group	Lanson Place Hospitality Management Limited
Black Sheep	Marco Polo Hotels – Hong Kong
Carlyle & Co. Hong Kong	Marriott International
Cathay Pacific Airways Limited	Mondrian Hong Kong
Cathay Subsidiary Services	New World Millennium Hong Kong Hotel
China Travel Service (Holdings) Hong Kong Limited	Nina Hospitality Company Limited
Conrad Hong Kong	Ocean Park Corporation
Cordis, Hong Kong	ONYX Hospitality Group
Eaton HK	Ovolo Hotels
EGL Tours Company Limited	Pirata Group Limited
Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong	Regal Hotels
Greater Bay Airlines	Rosewood Hong Kong
Harbour Plaza Hotels & Resorts	S&S Hospitality Limited
HK Express	Shangri-La Group
HKIA Services Holdings Limited	Sino Hotels & The Fullerton
Hong Kong Airlines	Ocean Park Hotel Hong Kong
Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (Management) Limited	Swire Hotels
Hong Kong Disneyland Resort	Travel Circle International Ltd
Hopewell Hotel	The Hong Kong Jockey Club
Hotel ICON Limited	The Langham, Hong Kong
Hyatt Hong Kong Hotels	The Mira Hong Kong   Mira Moon Hotel
IHG Hotels & Resorts	The Peninsula Hong Kong
Informa Markets	Travel Industry Authority



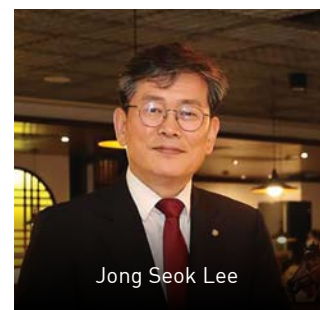


# GLOBAL VOICES, SHARED JOURNEYS

The SHTM is world renowned for its taught postgraduate programmes. The opportunity to receive high-quality teaching, forge professional connections and gain practical experience attracts students from near and far looking to launch or boost their careers. We invited a selection of postgraduate students to share their experiences of these diverse and enriching programmes.



Jenny Zhao



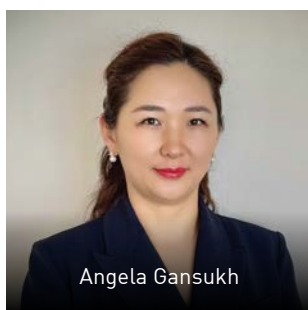
Jong Seok Lee



Gordon Kwong



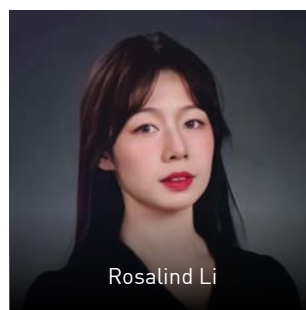
Katie Huang



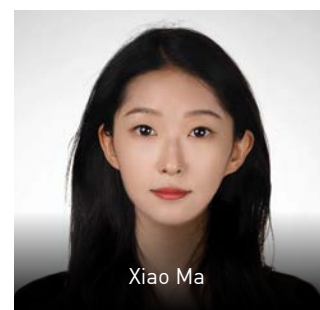
Angela Gansukh



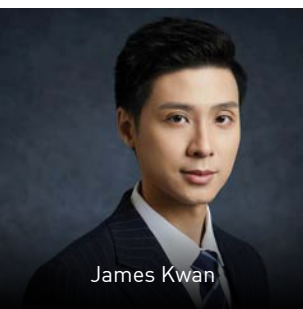
Jean-Rodolphe Roger Gonnon



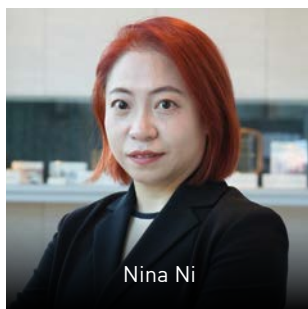
Rosalind Li



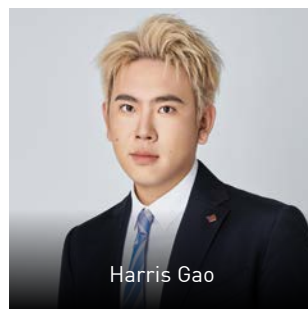
Xiao Ma



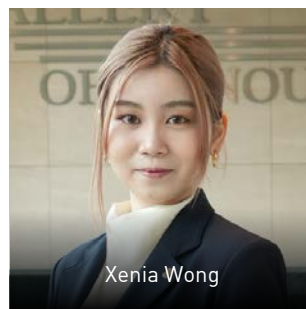
James Kwan



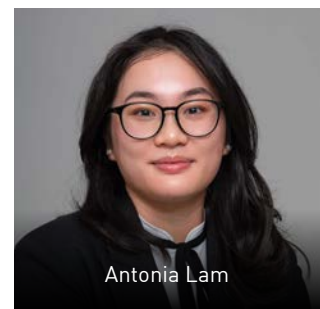
Nina Ni



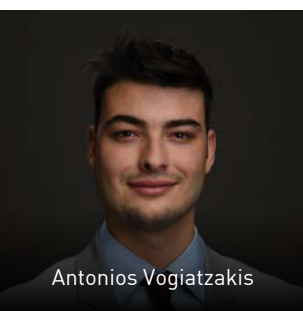
Harris Gao



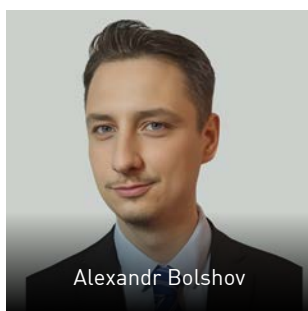
Xenia Wong



Antonia Lam



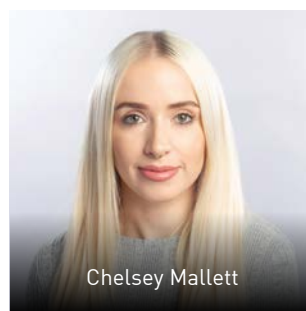
Antonios Vogiatzakis



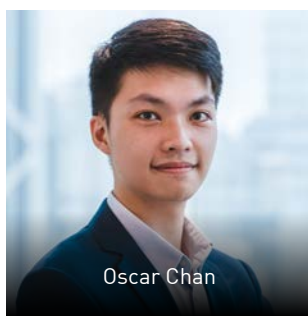
Alexandr Bolshov



Benite Ange Ilunga Kabamba



Chelsey Mallett



Oscar Chan



Respect Nyaradzo Matibe

Teaching is the cornerstone of our postgraduate prospectus, and many students highlighted how knowledgeable and engaged they found our instructors. Jong Seok Lee, a Doctor of Hotel and Tourism Management (D.HTM) student and experienced restaurateur from Korea, valued his teachers' efforts to stimulate curiosity. "They encourage us to proactively engage in discussions and presentations", he said.

Harris Gao from mainland China, who is studying for the MSc in Luxury Experiences Management (LEM), was struck by the expertise and openness of the School's teaching staff, whom he described as "very professional and exceptionally welcoming". This sentiment was shared by Chelsey Mallett from the UK, a MicroMasters in International Hospitality Management (MM) student. "The programme is delivered by knowledgeable experts", she said. "I highly recommend the course to anyone passionate about luxury management".

The MicroMasters programme – online courses with live chat sessions featuring top professors and managers – allows students to learn from hospitality leaders regardless of location. In the words of Oscar Chan, a Hong Kong native and MM student, "it's like having a group of professionals from around the world sharing their unique wisdom". Another MM student, Benite Ange Ilunga Kabamba from Belgium, described the online format as "flexible yet engaging, with expert instructors who make complex concepts easy to understand".

## STAYING AT THE LEADING EDGE

"Our curriculum provides students with the latest insights and most relevant skills in the field", said Xiao Ma from mainland China, who is studying for the MSc in International Tourism and Event Management (ITEM). Postgraduate students are often seasoned professionals whose journeys take them to the SHTM for continuing development. MM students Respect Nyaradzo Matibe of Zimbabwe and Alexandr Bolshov of Russia are both experienced managers. "The MicroMasters is the best decision I ever made", said Respect Nyaradzo. She was echoed by Alexandr: "This programme gave me a fresh perspective on the industry I love".

"After working in the industry for a while", said Hong Kong native James Kwan, an MSc in International Wine Management (IWM) student, "going back for my master's at SHTM feels like a great new beginning." His classmate Nina Ni, from mainland China, felt the same. "The IWM programme, recognised as the best wine programme in Asia, offered the perfect blend of business and viticulture, taught by experienced staff from around the world."

Our postgraduate courses offer unrivalled real-world experiences. "Meeting industry professionals in Hong Kong and mainland China has been incredible", stated Antonia Lam from Norway, who is studying for the MSc in Global Hospitality Business

(MGH). "The programme is never just about on-the-book curriculums, but much more than that", noted ITEM student Rosalind Li, from mainland China. "I particularly look forward to our field trip, which provides hands-on learning opportunities in sustainable tourism", said D.HTM student Jenny Zhao, also from mainland China.

Continuing the academia-industry theme, Gordon Kwong from Hong Kong praised the "exceptional opportunities to connect with like-minded individuals" provided by the MSc in Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Hospitality. His classmate Katie Huang from mainland China also benefited from the "variety of practical opportunities" offered by the course, which enhanced her industry insight and positioned her as a leader.

"I am enjoying the programme-related site visits and events, providing practical exposure", shared Angela Gansukh, an MSc in International Hospitality Management student. This was seconded by her classmate Jean-Rodolphe Roger Gonnou of France. "The involvement of industry professionals, site visits and school competitions provide invaluable insights and networking opportunities", he said.

Indeed, the SHTM offers a uniquely diverse outlook. "Collaborating with colleagues who bring different perspectives has greatly enhanced my learning experience", said Xenia Wong, a Hong Kong LEM student. The final word goes to Antonios Vogiatzakis, a MGH student from Greece, who will always remember "the rapid rhythm and vibes of the city, in combination with the unique skyline".

The SHTM is proud to remain a world leader in postgraduate hospitality education and to attract so many top talents to take our courses.





# Research Horizons

IMPULSE AND INDULGENCE:  
THE PSYCHOLOGY OF UNPLANNED LUXURY CONSUMPTION

Volume 19 | Issue 2 | September 2025



## Impulse and Indulgence: The Psychology of Unplanned Luxury Consumption

As novelty and exoticism become increasingly appealing to consumers, luxury purchases are taking on new psychological significance. High-end acquisitions, particularly when unplanned, offer more than status; they provide a temporary escape from everyday pressures. Yet despite their prevalence, spontaneous luxury purchases remain surprisingly underexplored. To address this gap and help hospitality and tourism practitioners capitalise on the behaviour of luxury consumers, the SHTM's YooHee Hwang and Seongseop (Sam) Kim, working with a co-author, explored the emotions driving unplanned luxury consumption among US and Asian consumers.

### SPONTANEOUS LUXURY CONSUMPTION

"In today's consumer-oriented world", the researchers begin, "tourists and shoppers seek value in products and services that are both novel and exotic". In particular, luxury experiences help to fulfil buyers' need for self-actualisation by conferring status and projecting a positive image to others. Luxury shoppers tend to prioritise quality and variety over price, giving them unique sociodemographic profiles and consumption patterns that are of keen interest to marketers.

Surprisingly, however, conspicuous gaps remain in understanding of this consumer segment. "There is scant research investigating unplanned luxury purchases", say the authors – even though such purchases have been shown to be relatively common. Another omission relates to the difference between purchases of luxury goods and luxury experiences. "Furthermore", the researchers add, "the underlying reasons for consumers' emotions about unplanned purchases are not well understood".

To fill these gaps, the researchers sought to combine the two streams of literature regarding unplanned purchases and luxury purchases. First, to demonstrate the prevalence of both trends, they asked 96 US adults to recall their most recent spontaneous luxury purchase. They found that "90% (vs. 10%) of unplanned luxury purchases were goods (vs. experiences)". There were various reasons for these purchases, including moving to a new place and taking advantage of a sale. "In summary", the researchers note, "unplanned purchases of luxury goods and experiences are common".

### A SENSE OF ESCAPE

The next step was to formulate theories regarding the emotions that drive consumers' unplanned luxury purchases, which to date have not been well understood. "Unplanned luxury purchases are in opposition to self-regulated behaviour", the researchers posit. This can generate a sense of escapism, as unplanned purchases play a pivotal role in temporarily relieving anxiety and daily pressure. "Consequently", the authors explain,

"individuals who make unplanned luxury purchases are likely to exhibit positive emotions as they temporarily deviate from daily regulations and pressures".

They proposed that the sense of escapism resulting from spontaneous luxury purchases depends on whether consumers are buying goods or experiences. "Experiences persist in our memories, whereas material goods typically dwell outside our memories", the authors note. "Converging evidence has shown that escapism is an integral part of luxury experiences but not of material goods". Therefore, they proposed that escapism is more closely related to unplanned purchases of luxury experiences rather than goods.

The authors also predicted that such escapism can lead to positive emotions, in turn increasing brand closeness. Immersive experiences – such as travel – can enhance both emotional value and perceived worth, leading to stronger positive emotions. These emotions, in turn, can increase a sense of closeness to the brand, especially for luxury purchases, which tend to "reflect the self".

They further hypothesised that the price of luxury experiences can increase the

# Research Horizons

**IMPULSE AND INDULGENCE:  
THE PSYCHOLOGY OF UNPLANNED LUXURY CONSUMPTION**

Volume 19 | Issue 2 | September 2025

perception of escapism gained through spontaneous luxury purchases. "Rarity and exclusiveness" – which are conferred by high price – "magnify perceptions of escapism", the authors explain. This is only true for luxury experiences, however, as buying material goods does not entail escapism. "We predict that the perception of escapism remains low regardless of the price of luxury goods", they explain.

## SURVEYING REAL CONSUMERS

To test these hypotheses, the authors conducted four studies surveying Asian and American luxury consumers. In the first, they collected data from 160 adults from Hong Kong to examine the relationship between unplanned purchase type (luxury goods vs. luxury experiences) and escapism. As hypothesised, "unplanned purchases of luxury experiences (vs. luxury goods) involved higher levels of perceived escapism".

Study 2, which involved respondents from the US, revealed that escapism mediates the relationship between unplanned luxury purchases and positive emotions, demonstrating that buyers often seek refuge in luxurious experiences to boost their mood. "The indirect effect of escapism on the influence of unplanned luxury purchase type on positive emotions was significant", the researchers report.

Studies 3 and 4 further examined the idea that unplanned luxury purchases create a powerful emotional journey. Study 3 showed that escapism and positive emotions work together in sequence to strengthen consumers' closeness to the brand, especially when they purchase luxury experiences rather than goods. In Study 4, consumers' sense of escapism was more intense when the luxury experiences came with a higher price tag, making them feel rarer and more exclusive. This ultimately strengthened consumers' positive feelings and deepened their brand attachment.

## INSIGHTS FOR RESEARCHERS AND MARKETERS

This study makes major theoretical contributions. It is not only the first to combine the two streams of literature on luxury purchases and unplanned purchases; it also distinguishes between unplanned purchases stemming from internal and external motivations. "Previous studies in luxury purchases have mainly focused on negative emotions, such as guilt, regret, or remorse", the researchers add, "because luxury purchases are often unnecessary and have limited utilitarian value". Their study goes beyond this negative view by demonstrating that unplanned luxury purchases can actually generate positive emotions.

Their findings also have valuable managerial implications for the hospitality and tourism industry. "Positive emotions and brand closeness can be attained through unplanned purchase marketing tactics centred around escapist experiences", the authors say. "Specifically, we suggest that destination marketers can capitalise on escapism by varying the temporal and spatial structure of experiences". For example, luxury marketers can use biophilic design to integrate greenery or natural elements into the servicescape and help tourists escape hectic city life.

Destination marketers should also develop strategies to encourage consumers to make unplanned purchases of luxury experiences – rather than luxury goods – at the tourism destination. "Destination marketers can collaborate with luxury goods marketers to design experiences at

travel destinations that simultaneously heighten positive emotions about the destination and enhance consumers' closeness with the brand", the researchers advise.

Although unplanned purchases of luxury goods often occur at tourism destinations, unplanned purchases of luxury experiences tend to be made before tourists arrive at the destination. "Hence, destination marketers should leverage various channels to promote unplanned purchases of luxury experiences before arrival", the researchers say. In particular, luxury shopping businesses at tourist destinations should target millennials, who are more likely to make unplanned purchases than members of Generation X or "baby boomers".

The authors also recommend that luxury marketers maintain the monetary exclusivity of luxury goods and services, as introducing too many accessible and intermediate products can dilute consumers' sense of escapism. "Additionally", the researchers say, "luxury shopping marketers should refrain from last-minute discounts and deals to stimulate unplanned purchases". Rather, they say, "marketers need to understand how unplanned shopping can temporarily assuage consumers' unpleasant emotions and provide an opportunity to momentarily escape from their everyday routine". This may be especially important at times when negative mood is high, such as during and after public health crises like the COVID-19 pandemic.

## POINTS TO NOTE

- Unplanned luxury purchases offer a sense of escape, helping consumers temporarily relieve pressure from their daily routine.
- Luxury experiences evoke stronger positive emotions than luxury goods, especially when they are high-priced.
- Destination marketers should promote the unplanned purchases of luxury experiences before arriving at the destination.
- Marketers should avoid discounts and focus on exclusivity to encourage emotion-driven, unplanned purchases.

YooHee Hwang, Minjung Shin and Seongseop (Sam) Kim (2025). Unplanned Purchases of Luxury Goods and Experiences. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, Vol. 49, No. 1, 45–56.



# Research Horizons

RAISING A GLASS TO CHINA'S WINE MARKET

Volume 19

| Issue 2

| September 2025



## Raising a Glass to China's Wine Market

As wine consumption in Europe declines, Asia is picking up the baton. In particular, Chinese consumers are importing a growing volume of wines from around the world, but little is known about how country of origin influences their decisions. This is the research gap recently addressed by the SHTM's Yichen Zhou and Lisa Gao. Their large-scale questionnaire study reveals how country-of-origin information interacts with Chinese consumers' perception of brand image and wine quality to influence purchase intention, providing invaluable insights for marketers.

### CHINA'S EVOLVING WINE MARKET

As a drink with a history dating back to antiquity, wine is freighted with various meanings and connotations in consumers' minds. All food and beverage products have social implications beyond their utilitarian function, but this is especially so for wine, the classic accompaniment to high living and an item that in China must necessarily be imported. "As wine is gradually becoming a symbol of sophistication and growing wealth," say the researchers, "it becomes increasingly appealing to [Chinese] consumers".

While China is a vast market, surprisingly little research has investigated the factors that influence Chinese consumers' decision making around imported wine purchases. "Chinese consumers have diverse backgrounds and segmentations", write the authors, "making their perceptions and preferences valuable in guiding product development and marketing

initiatives". As China is also one of the world's fastest-growing wine markets, there is an urgent industry need for an in-depth study of the considerations that shape individual consumers' eventual choices.

Traditionally, wine in China may have been best understood as a luxury good. "Chinese wine consumers tend to favour imported wines for gift-giving purposes", the researchers report, "as these wines symbolize premium quality and prestigious social status". However, this trend appears to be shifting, as consumers may be becoming more price-sensitive. Marketers should therefore be aware of both the prestige value of foreign wine as a wealth signal and the appeal of specific brands to consumers who assess a price-quality trade-off.

### COUNTRY STEREOTYPES

As wine evolves from status symbol into well-appreciated culinary product in

China, the marketing role of its country of origin (COO) becomes more complex. Yet "while COO plays a major role in Chinese consumers' wine purchases", the authors note, "there is little previous research into the marketing of COO images for wine in developing markets". We still know little about the specific importance of wine brands in China – in contrast with countries with a long-established dominance in the global wine trade, such as France.

Advertising the COO of a product activates a set of specific connotations in the consumer's mind, summarised by the researchers as "a psychological network of cognitive and affective connections associated with a particular country". These country-related attributes range from politics, culture and economy to language and even people. Collectively, the effect of learning a product's COO is to induce a set of expectations of the product's intrinsic attributes and overall quality, based on beliefs about that country's level of development.

# Research Horizons

RAISING A GLASS TO CHINA'S WINE MARKET

Volume 19 | Issue 2 | September 2025

These associations and their effects on purchase intention are summarised by the stereotype content model (SCM). Wine purchasing decisions have been described as “complex and difficult”, reflecting the numerous variables involved – style, year, terroir and so on. Hence, in the absence of other guidance, consumers may rely on positive stereotypes of a wine’s COO to reduce the risk of a poor decision. This is known as the “halo effect”. The researchers thus settled on the SCM as a suitable theoretical framework for investigating COO effects in China’s imported-wine market.

## KNOWING YOUR CUSTOMER

To analyse the influence of perceived COO on Chinese consumers’ wine purchase intentions, the researchers focused on two aspects of country-level stereotyping: warmth and competence. “Consumers’ perceptions of a country’s warmth”, they explain, “are defined as the degree to which a country is perceived as kind, warm, friendly and cooperative”. Stereotypes of competence, meanwhile, denote that a country is seen as capable and effective due to its technological, economic and political development, implying that its export products are of reliably high quality and safety.

The researchers thus hypothesised that the perceived warmth and competence of a COO would influence consumers’ perception of quality and, in turn, their purchase intention. To test this, based on the SCM, they selected Germany as a typical “high-competence, low-warmth” country and Greece as a country of low competence but high warmth. A sample of 298 Chinese consumers – with various levels of self-reported wine knowledge – then answered a survey exploring how their perceptions of the warmth and competence of a wine COO related to the wine brand’s perceived warmth and competence, and thence to its perceived quality and their willingness to purchase it.

## FROM PERCEPTIONS TO PURCHASES

Analysis of the survey results validated all the researchers’ hypotheses. Perceptions of high COO competence fed through to perceptions of high competence of wine brands from that COO. Brand competence was in turn associated with perceived quality, and higher quality led to greater purchase intention. Warmth played a similar role, with a significant sequential association from perceived COO warmth to brand warmth to brand quality to purchase intention. This is not merely an abstract finding, as the surveys also confirmed that Germany was perceived as more competent and Greece as warmer.

These findings represent a novel insight into the value of country image in marketing wine imports in China. To gain market share, wine importers need to optimise the segmentation and positioning of wine in the evolving and increasingly brand-driven Chinese market. The researchers argue that “foreign companies operating in new world wine countries such as China can achieve this by developing communication strategies that emphasize the positive image of their COO and the wine brand”.

Moreover, the implications of the study extend beyond wine retailers themselves. In countries and regions known for their wine production, tourism destination marketers could capitalise on their reputation for warmth and/or competence, setting up an association between these perceived qualities and local wine products to entice travellers. Winery tourism is an established trend, and it could be strengthened by marketing that emphasises the unique

landscapes and winemaking traditions of places as diverse as France, the US, Australia and Argentina.

At the individual firm level, the authors advise that “hospitality businesses such as restaurants, hotels and resorts can leverage the COO’s image to enhance their wine programs and culinary offerings”. The importance of COO image in wine appreciation also has implications for distributors’ online strategy. Social media, for example, offer an array of opportunities to not only market products directly but also educate Chinese consumers about wine through narratives that link positive COO stereotypes with engaging information about the people and processes behind winemaking.

## SMART POSITIONING OF WINE

Wine, a complex product steeped in tradition and prestige, is already big business in China, but it has considerable potential to grow further. With major producers around the world competing for a slice of the Chinese market, Zhou and Gao’s study will be invaluable for marketers. Based on their findings, we can expect to see Chinese consumers increasingly using COO information to help them navigate the complexities of choosing wine, while distributors may use messaging around the positive attributes of COOs as the core of their strategies to communicate with specific market segments.

## POINTS TO NOTE

- Consumers in China’s growing wine market often rely on country-of-origin information.
- Purchase intention is higher for wines from countries seen as competent or warm.
- Imported-wine marketers in China should emphasise positive associations with countries of origin.
- Hospitality firms and winemaking destinations can also benefit from positive country-of-origin stereotypes.

Yichen Zhou and Lisa Gao (2024). The Influence of Perceived Country of Origin Image on Chinese Consumers’ Purchase Intention of Imported Wine. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 36, No. 8, 2870–2886.



# Research Horizons

FROM FARM TO TABLE: HOW BLOCKCHAIN BOOSTS FOOD TRANSPARENCY

Volume 19

| Issue 2

| September 2025



## From Farm to Table: How Blockchain Boosts Food Transparency

Amidst rising doubts over safety and transparency in food supply chains, it is urgently necessary for the food and beverage (F&B) industry to rebuild consumer trust and confidence in food sourcing. Recognising the potential of emerging digital technologies, the SHTM's Fei Hao, Yueming Guo, Chen Zhang and Kaye Kye Sung Chon show how blockchain – known for its secure and transparent record-keeping – can serve as a powerful tool for showcasing the integrity of food supply chains. Examining consumer responses through experimental scenarios and collaborative workshops, the researchers provide detailed insights into how blockchain implementation influences perceptions of food safety, quality and naturalness, and how these perceptions translate into customer satisfaction.

### FOOD MEETS BLOCKCHAIN

For many consumers worldwide, food safety, quality and naturalness are paramount when deciding which groceries to buy, takeaway to order or restaurant to visit. "Consumers are seeking more information about the food products they purchase", say the authors, "such as the ingredients, the origin, the processing methods, the nutritional value and the environmental and social impact". Indeed, informed and conscious food choices are increasingly considered a must for a healthy lifestyle.

Regrettably, however, there is a major lack of transparency and control over information within food supply chains, which can engender trust issues among consumers. Traditional tracking methods, such as barcoding, often lack transparency and reliability, making it difficult for consumers to verify the origin and safety of their food.

A solution may lie with blockchain technology – originally developed as the infrastructure for cryptocurrencies

like Bitcoin but having since expanded to various industries. "Blockchain's decentralized and distributed nature creates a transparent, permanent record of transactions that is secure and resistant to tampering", the researchers tell us. It enables restaurants to trace the journey of their ingredients all the way from farm to table and verify their authenticity and quality – thus helping to prevent food fraud and increasing diners' trust.

Surprisingly, although more and more scholars are discussing the theoretical benefits of blockchain in the F&B industry, empirical research has yet to investigate how it can be used to improve transparency and trust in tracking food sources. The researchers resolved to fill this gap, in the hope of offering restaurant owners, technology companies and policymakers guidance on adopting blockchain to enhance customer satisfaction in the F&B industry.

### SURVEYING REAL CONSUMERS

The first step was to develop hypotheses. "Blockchain has the potential to enhance trust by providing a transparent and tamper-proof record of transactions and movements in the food supply chain", the authors note. It records each transaction and movement in a chain of blocks, creating an unalterable and interconnected record. They thus hypothesised that adopting blockchain increases both trust and traceability in food supply chains – which can in turn increase perceived food safety, quality and naturalness and thus customer satisfaction.

To test these hypotheses, they conducted four rigorous studies: a service design workshop (Study 1) and three between-subjects experiments (Studies 2–4). Study 1 was a 5-hour session in which 10 participants and 4 facilitators – including "restaurant owners, technology experts, coffee shop managers, banquet servers and recent customers" – imagined and discussed the use of blockchain technology in restaurants. They considered how blockchain could help track food ingredients, share information, and improve trust and transparency in food services.

# Research Horizons

FROM FARM TO TABLE: HOW BLOCKCHAIN BOOSTS FOOD TRANSPARENCY

Volume 19

| Issue 2

| September 2025

"During the service design workshop," the authors report, "participants across all five scenarios unanimously expressed their preference for using blockchain to track ingredient supply chains". Consistent with the hypotheses, they emphasised the technology's trustworthiness and transparency and potential to improve perceived food quality. "Additionally," note the researchers, "the participants believed that blockchain adoption could contribute to the perceived naturalness of food products by providing information on origin, harvest date and preservatives".

Interestingly, however, the participants also suggested that blockchain's performance might vary depending on restaurant type. "The relationship between blockchain adoption, traceability and trust may be stronger in casual dining restaurants than in fine dining establishments", say the researchers, "because of their larger customer base and higher volume of food production". Additionally, casual dining establishments are likely to benefit more from the traceability provided by blockchain, as customers already trust fine dining restaurants because of their luxury offering and perceived higher standards of safety and quality.

## FINDINGS BACK BLOCKCHAIN

In Study 2, 228 consumers from the U.S. described their perceptions of food safety, quality and naturalness in two different restaurant settings: ones that used blockchain and ones that did not. The researchers found support for their hypotheses, as blockchain adoption significantly strengthened the participants' trust and enhanced their perceptions of the food, ultimately increasing their satisfaction.

Going further, Study 3 was a survey of 453 U.S. consumers designed to determine how the type of restaurant – fine dining or casual dining – affects the relationship between blockchain technology and customers' trust and perceptions of traceability. The results supported the hypotheses. "The impact of blockchain adoption on traceability and trust was strengthened in the casual dining scenario", the authors report,

"whereas the impact of blockchain adoption on traceability and trust was weaker in fine dining".

Finally, Study 4 asked how restaurant location – whether in a tourist destination or residential area – might affect the observed relationships. According to 424 consumers, the impact of blockchain adoption on traceability and trust is stronger for restaurants in tourist destinations than in residential areas. "These findings align with the findings from Study 1, which indicates that tourists prefer restaurants providing traceable and trustworthy information about food safety to avoid foodborne illnesses", the researchers explain.

## A SIGNAL OF INTEGRITY

Amongst the important theoretical implications of the findings is that using blockchain can signal restaurants' commitment to food safety, quality and naturalness. "Signalling theory suggests that companies use signals to convey their commitment to certain values and goals", note the researchers, "and the adoption of blockchain can act as a signal of a restaurant's commitment to these values".

This benefits both restaurants and consumers, by enhancing customers' trust and ultimately their satisfaction with their dining experience. "The adoption of blockchain represents a significant technological advancement in

the F&B industry", say the researchers, "with the potential to revolutionise restaurant operations".

Indeed, the authors' findings have implications for the industry that go beyond the theoretical. First, they emphasise the importance of tracking and verifying the safety, quality and naturalness of food ingredients to increase traceability and build consumers' trust. "These efforts can foster improved business relationships and generate increased demand for products", the researchers point out, "as customers highly value transparency and reliability when making food choices".

Blockchain is a promising new route to achieving this goal. It can empower customers to make more informed decisions about their food choices, leading to better health outcomes and greater confidence in the food they consume. For restaurant managers, this technology offers a strategic tool to attract and retain customers, which in turn may raise the profile of tourist destinations. It may also help government regulators enforce high food quality and safety standards, "leading to improved public health outcomes and reduced economic costs related to foodborne illnesses".

To streamline blockchain implementation, it will be necessary to set appropriate standards, invest in infrastructure and address adoption barriers through education, partnerships and research and development.

## POINTS TO NOTE

- **Concerns about safety and transparency in food supply chains are increasing.**
- **Blockchain adoption enhances perceived food safety, quality and naturalness in restaurants.**
- **Implementing blockchain can increase customer trust and satisfaction by increasing perceived traceability.**
- **Blockchain's positive impact is more pronounced in casual (vs fine) dining and tourist destination (vs residential) settings.**

Fei Hao, Yueming Guo, Chen Zhang and Kaye Kye Sung Chon (2024). Blockchain = Better Food? The Adoption of Blockchain Technology in Food Supply Chain. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 36, No. 10, pp. 3340–3360.



# Research Horizons

PICTURE THIS: PRICE, PRESTIGE AND ONLINE PHOTO SHARING

Volume 19

| Issue 2

| September 2025



## Picture This: Price, Prestige and Online Photo Sharing

As online reviews proliferate and consumer engagement goes digital, it has never been more important for hospitality businesses to understand what motivates consumers to share visual content. The old adage that “a picture is worth a thousand words” is certainly true of the online review environment, in which a single compelling photo can attract thousands of viewers and make or break a restaurant’s reputation. Research by the SHTM’s Danting Cai, Hengyun Li, Haipeng Ji and Huicai Gao and a co-author offers unprecedented insights into what drives consumers to post more photos with their online reviews. These insights may help businesses tailor their strategies to encourage more visual content sharing, thereby enhancing customer engagement and strengthening their online reputations.

### THE POWER OF PICTURES

In today’s ever more saturated digital world, no online review feels complete without a photograph or video to showcase the experience – and businesses are profiting from this trend, with 62% of consumers more likely to make a purchase when visuals from other customers are available. “This visual impact is particularly pronounced in tourism and hospitality”, say the researchers, “where experiences are inherently experiential, making photos invaluable for conveying ambiance, decor and sensory richness”.

For example, user-generated photos of restaurants and the food they sell can significantly influence customers’ choice of venue and the meals they

order when they arrive. Surprisingly, however, we still know little about what leads customers to share more photos in online reviews. “While there is extensive research on user-generated textual content”, the authors tell us, “the motives behind photo sharing are less understood”. Furthermore, studies have often looked simply at whether photos are present or absent in reviews; they have not considered the factors influencing how many photos users post.

### TRIGGERS FOR SHARING

To find out what exactly drives diners to post photos in online reviews, the authors first drew on trait activation theory (TAT). This helped them to hypothesise about situational cues in online review environments that

trigger personal traits – such as the desire for social approval or a tendency for conspicuous display – that lead consumers to share visual content. “TAT examines how external situations interact with internal traits to drive behaviour”, the researchers explain. For example, review platforms might encourage users to include photos (a task-level cue), and having a large social network can also trigger consumers to add a visual touch to their reviews (a social-level cue).

Based on TAT, the authors hypothesised that the number of photos shared in an online restaurant review depends on several key situational cues. The first is restaurant price. “In hospitality, prices signal social status”, the researchers remind us. By sharing photos of luxurious restaurant experiences online, diners can highlight their status and thus boost

# Research Horizons

PICTURE THIS: PRICE, PRESTIGE AND ONLINE PHOTO SHARING

Volume 19 | Issue 2 | September 2025

their self-esteem. Therefore, users who have visited an expensive restaurant are likely to include more photos with their reviews.

Second, the authors expected users with larger social networks to share more photos of their restaurant experiences. "The need for approval drives users to post content, such as reviews and photos, seeking positive feedback", they explain. "Larger social networks amplify this effect, as a broader audience increases the chances of receiving approval". Third, users with the reputation of "influencers" are more likely to share photos. "High-status users may add photos to their reviews to provide a comprehensive view and uphold their reputation", the authors tell us.

The researchers also expected the positive effects of restaurant price, social network size and user reputation on photo sharing to be moderated by factors like the user's dining experience and how far they travelled to get there. "A good user experience may prompt conspicuous display", the authors tell us, "to showcase social status". Meanwhile, as "the effort and resources required for long-distance travel enhance the perceived value of experiences", tourists may share more photos than locals do.

## DECODING REAL REVIEWS

To uncover key triggers, the researchers first analysed a large dataset of restaurant reviews to pinpoint factors affecting photo-sharing. "Subsequent online experiments examined the motivations for this behaviour," they report. Specifically, they collected reviews of a diverse sample of Las Vegas restaurants – chosen for their culinary appeal – from Yelp.com and used rigorous statistical techniques to test how restaurant price, social network size and user reputation influenced the number of photos shared.

The findings largely supported the researchers' initial ideas. "More photos are shared for higher-priced restaurants", the researchers report. A clear link also emerged for user status: those with an "elite" reputation tended to share a larger number of photos.

"Similarly, users with larger social networks tend to share more photos", the researchers add. As expected, a satisfying dining experience played an important role. When diners were happy with their experience, factors like restaurant price, the size of their social network, or their online reputation had an even stronger influence on their likelihood of sharing more photos. Interestingly, one factor did not play out as expected: how far a diner had travelled to the restaurant did not seem to change photo-sharing habits in the way that the researchers had predicted.

Discovering what people do is only half of the picture. The researchers were keen to understand why. What psychological buttons are being pushed? This curiosity led them to conduct three carefully designed online experiments. They recruited real consumers, placing them in simulated scenarios: reviewing a high-priced (or moderately priced) restaurant, having a large (or small) social network, or holding "influencer" (or standard user) status. After writing a mock review, the participants indicated how likely they were to add photos.

These experiments powerfully echoed the Yelp findings: higher prices, bigger networks and elite status did indeed spur more photo sharing. Crucially, they also illuminated the underlying motivations. The results showed that the desire to make a conspicuous display (showcasing a high-status experience), the need for social approval from their peers, and the drive to uphold or enhance their reputation were the primary psychological drivers compelling diners to share more visual details.

## INCENTIVISING PHOTO SHARING

These findings offer more than just academic insights. Beyond advancing theories of consumer behaviour in the digital age, the study offers clear, actionable guidance for the industry. For instance, to tap into the status-signalling motive, high-end restaurants can "create a visually appealing presentation and ambiance that naturally encourage photo-taking". Furthermore, by reposting customers' photos on their official social media channels, these establishments can validate diners' efforts, fostering a cycle of more visual content sharing.

"For users with elite status and wide social networks", the researchers suggest, "businesses could implement tiered incentives, such as exclusive discounts or event invitations, to motivate photo sharing". Review platforms can also contribute by spotlighting content generated by these key users, granting them greater visibility. Another avenue is for businesses to launch online referral and brand ambassador programmes, specifically targeting users with large networks to further leverage their influential power.

The authors conclude with an important lesson for all hospitality businesses in the digital age. "Considering that user experience influences photo-sharing behaviour, businesses should strive for exceptional service", they say – as memorable experiences are far more likely to be captured and shared.

## POINTS TO NOTE

- Higher prices, larger networks and elite user status lead diners to share more photos in online reviews.
- Photo sharing is driven by the desire for status display, social approval and reputation building.
- Excellent customer experiences boost photo sharing, and travel distance can alter how key factors impact this relationship.
- Businesses can encourage diners to post more photos by using these insights and ensuring exceptional customer service.

Danting Cai, Hengyun Li, Rob Law, Haipeng Ji and Huicai Gao (2024). What Drives Consumers to Post More Photos in Online Reviews? A Trait Activation Theory Perspective. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 36, No. 12, pp. 3989–4010.



# Research Horizons

WHEN HOSPITALITY GOES OVERBOARD

Volume 19 | Issue 2 | September 2025



## When Hospitality Goes Overboard

Restaurants rely on satisfied customers for repeat visits, leading many to continuously raise their service standards to meet and exceed customers' expectations. However, service quality that is too high can backfire, with behaviours such as kneeling and excessive politeness arousing suspicion and discomfort in diners. Filling a research gap and providing practical guidance for restaurant managers and operators, Yuchen Xu and Catherine Cheung of the SHTM, working with two co-authors, offer a novel theoretical lens for examining how customers respond to such "over-service" in restaurants.

### A SERVICE BACKLASH

High-quality service is a cornerstone of hospitality. As satisfied customers are critical to commercial success in the industry, service providers often strive not just to match but to exceed guests' expectations. "Attentive, affable, and customised service has become a common standard within the contemporary service industry", the researchers note. However, the service paradigm of "going above and beyond" can have a sting in the tail. "Services exceeding expectations do not always bring about favourable outcomes", the researchers warn.

Although customers may be pleasantly surprised when service levels moderately exceed their expectations, over-attentiveness can be perceived as stressful and suspicion-arousing. "Behaviours such as offering overly caring services, providing excess information and reminders, and being overly polite may be perceived by restaurant consumers as over-service", note the authors. Examples include the

kneeling service provided at high-end Japanese restaurants and the famously frequent changing of plates at the Chinese hotpot restaurant Haidilao.

"As perceived service quality increases up to a certain threshold, consumer experiences improve; however, surpassing this threshold negatively impacts consumer experiences", the researchers explain. This can make customers reluctant to return and injure service providers' reputations, as well as unnecessarily increasing service cost. Given the potentially detrimental consequences of over-service, it is vital to theoretically and empirically clarify why these negative outcomes arise.

To date, however, research on this topic has shown several conspicuous gaps. "In the food service industry, empirical evidence for causal relationships between over-service and consumer satisfaction and loyalty remains limited", the researchers tell us. Second, although there is reason to expect consumers to perceive over-service as stressful, it remains unclear whether perceived service stress is indeed a psychological mechanism through which over-service affects consumer behaviour.

Finally, as consumers experiencing over-service may perceive themselves as lacking control over their environment, those with a stronger desire for control may be more sensitive to such service behaviours. "However", the researchers say, "despite the anticipated moderating role of the desire for control, no research has yet linked it to over-service".

### SERVICE, STRESS AND SATISFACTION

The authors' first step in filling these gaps was to develop hypotheses tailored to the restaurant industry. "Over-service normally pertains to the excessive or superfluous service behaviours displayed by restaurants that go beyond the actual needs of consumers", they summarise. "These behaviours tend to evoke consumer suspicion and psychological resistance, consequently diminishing the overall dining experience". It was thus intuitive to hypothesise that diners are less satisfied with and less likely to return to a restaurant if they experience over-service.



# Research Horizons

WHEN HOSPITALITY GOES OVERBOARD

Volume 19 | Issue 2 | September 2025

Service stress was also theorised to play an important role. When restaurant consumers encounter stressors such as service failure or the need to make a face-to-face complaint, they tend to adopt coping strategies such as avoiding visiting that restaurant in future. Over-service may prompt diners to experience service stress, which in turn leads to reduced customer satisfaction and revisit intention.

Another key factor is desire for control. Consumers who wish to control their environment are more likely to perceive over-service as stressful and intrusive, leading to reduced satisfaction and revisit intention, while those with a low desire for control are less affected by (or may even benefit from) over-service. Thus, the researchers hypothesised that the desire for control influences how stressful over-service feels and thus how it impacts satisfaction and loyalty.

## REAL CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

To test their predictions, the researchers first conducted a cross-sectional study (Study 1) in which they invited 171 participants to reflect on their dining experiences. The respondents were asked to describe instances of over-service they had encountered and to rate their perceptions of over-service, service stress, satisfaction and revisit intention on well-established 7-point scales. The researchers also controlled for variables such as social anxiety, frequency of dining out, gender, age, education and income to ensure that they could isolate the impact of over-service on customer perceptions.

Complementing the survey, the researchers designed two scenario-based experiments to more rigorously examine the causal relationships involved. In these experiments, the participants were randomly assigned to two conditions – experiencing either over-service or normal service – through detailed textual stimuli. Study 2 tested the main effects observed in Study 1 with perceived service stress as the underlying mechanism, while Study 3 focused on the role of customers' desire for control.

## RESPONSES TO OVER-SERVICE

The results of Study 1 confirmed the researchers' hypotheses. "That is", they say, "over-service adversely affected restaurant consumers' perceived service stress, thereby leading to diminished consumer satisfaction and revisit intention". Interestingly, Study 2 revealed that although consumer suspicion in response to over-service had less effect on their behaviour than perceived service stress, suspicion still partially explained the indirect effect of over-service. "This finding hints at the possibility that consumers may have multiple psychological response mechanisms to over-service", say the researchers.

As well as replicating the results of Studies 1 and 2, Study 3 showed that – as expected – desire for control exerted a moderating effect. "Specifically, for consumers with a high desire for control, the impact of over-service on perceived service stress was intensified," report the authors. "This may be due to the fact that over-service threatens one's sense of control over outcomes, thereby intensifying perceived service stress and ultimately resulting in negative service outcomes".

## PRACTICAL GUIDANCE FOR RESTAURANTS

As one of the first studies to empirically test the consequences of over-service in the context of the restaurant industry, this work not only contributes meaningfully to the literature but also offers novel insights for restaurant managers and operators. "First", say the researchers, "it is necessary to discern the specific service behaviours that manifest as instances of excessiveness". For example, restaurants could use customer questionnaires to create lists of behaviours to be avoided at all costs.

Second, as different customer segments have very different expectations of service quality, restaurant managers and operators should empower employees to tailor their interactions with diners based on diners' individual preferences, "rather than adhering to standardised restaurant service processes". This flexibility will help to cultivate a satisfied and loyal customer base.

The authors' third and final recommendation arose from their finding that a strong desire for control intensified customers' sensitivity to over-service, reducing their satisfaction and revisit intention. "Since desire for control may vary due to political orientation and cultural background", say the researchers, "restaurant managers and operators should tailor their service strategies accordingly". Training programmes may help service personnel to identify and understand consumers' authentic needs, while maintaining an appropriate service distance and frequency.

## POINTS TO NOTE

- Although restaurants strive for high-quality service, exceeding customer expectations ("over-service") can backfire.
- Over-service reduces diners' satisfaction and revisit intention through perceived service stress, especially when they have a strong desire for control.
- Restaurants should identify and avoid specific service behaviours perceived as excessive.
- Restaurants should tailor service levels according to customers' individual preferences and needs.

Wenjing Li, Yuchen Xu, Ting Jiang and Catherine Cheung (2024). The Effects of Over-service on Restaurant Consumers' Satisfaction and Revisit Intention. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 122, 103881.



# Research Horizons

HOW CHATGPT IS TRANSFORMING TRIP PLANNING

Volume 19

| Issue 2

| September 2025



## How ChatGPT is Transforming Trip Planning

Artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming the way we live, work – and vacation. With their rapid, sophisticated responses, AI chatbots like ChatGPT offer travellers an unprecedentedly powerful tool for trip planning. However, this tool is not without limitations, especially when it comes to narrowing down multiple options for destinations and activities.

Thanks to the SHTM's Seunghun Shin and four co-authors, online travel agencies now have novel insights into the impact of ChatGPT on travellers' trip planning behaviour, specifically the relative effectiveness of ChatGPT and humans as recommendation agents.

### A REVOLUTIONARY NEW TOOL

ChatGPT, a dialogue-based AI tool that can understand natural human language and generate human-like written text, has the potential to revolutionise trip planning. "Its remarkable ability to interact with users by providing sophisticated answers to their queries has led millions of people to adopt it", say the researchers.

Traditionally, travellers needed to comb multiple websites and other information sources – from search engines to maps, blogs and online review pages – to find the perfect destinations and activities. Today, the authors note, "they can bypass such complicated and disturbing processes through a simple conversation with ChatGPT". The chatbot can deliver customised itineraries within just a few seconds, providing "a valid initial reference for trip planning".

Despite these advantages, certain limitations of the tool may pose obstacles for prospective travellers. The first – at least at the time of this study – was ChatGPT's inability to provide real-time information. Second, the tool's focus on text rather than images or

videos is inimical to the visual nature of shopping for destinations and activities. "Last but not least", the researchers say, "ChatGPT is not always correct".

These limitations may make travellers unwilling to fully trust ChatGPT, especially its ability to narrow down multiple valid options at later stages of the trip planning process. Unfortunately, however, research to date has paid insufficient attention to how tourists perceive the role of ChatGPT in the trip planning process. The researchers set out to fill this important gap.

### TOO MANY CHOICES

Their first task was to consult the literature to develop hypotheses for testing. The most salient framework appeared to be that of the choice overload effect, or the negative consequences of a large assortment of choices. "The choice overload effect", say the researchers, "is generally understood to mean a situation in which the intricacy of the decision problem facing a person transcends his or her cognitive capacity".

First, having a multitude of choices can be overwhelming, due to the near-impossibility of comparing all available

options. "The regret stemming from the inability to select the best choice enhances the attractiveness of other options", the researchers warn, "potentially resulting in unfavourable outcomes such as switching decisions or opting for no decision at all". Second, the presence of so many options raises consumers' hope of finding the ideal choice – inevitably leading to disappointment when this becomes impossible.

In the hospitality and tourism field, researchers have sought to identify moderators capable of reducing the choice overload effect. For example, building travellers' self-confidence has been found to mitigate the negative effects of large numbers of options at multiple stages in the decision-making process. A frequently overlooked factor, however, is the information source (e.g., AI or human), which may increase the accuracy of decision-making and thus reduce the choice overload effect.

### AI VS. HUMAN CHOICE?

Expanding on choice overload theory, the researchers proposed their first hypothesis. "As ChatGPT streamlines a

# Research Horizons

HOW CHATGPT IS TRANSFORMING TRIP PLANNING

Volume 19

Issue 2

September 2025

multitude of options into a more concise selection", they say, "it may lead to a reduction in travellers' satisfaction with the recommendations and their intention to visit the recommended destination". Although choice overload theory generally assumes that narrowing down options helps people make better choices, this depends on whether appealing choices are retained and unattractive ones are excluded – tasks at which ChatGPT may not excel.

The authors also proposed that ChatGPT's perceived trustworthiness can mediate the impact of its option-reduction service on travellers' recommendation satisfaction and visit intention. AI is widely believed to lack efficacy in handling tasks requiring intuition and empathy. "Given that the process of trip planning is subjective, intuitive, and emotional", the researchers say, "travellers are inclined not to trust information that has been curated by ChatGPT".

Finally, the authors identified possible boundary conditions for how travellers perceive ChatGPT when narrowing down multiple travel options. "First, we anticipate that concerns about forfeiting the best options will be more pronounced when the initial number of choices is substantial", they say. Second, the choice overload effect varies depending on whether consumers narrow down options independently, which can minimise concerns about forfeiting the best possible alternatives. Therefore, they expected the negative effect of reducing options to decrease when this reduction is done by the human decision-maker rather than ChatGPT.

## REAL TRAVELLERS PLAN TRIPS

To test their hypotheses, the researchers crafted five experimental studies in which participants imagined planning trips to destinations, interacting with ChatGPT or friends to generate and narrow down travel options. Their aim was to use these studies to empirically "determine the negative effect of reducing options from the initial recommendations using ChatGPT".

Study 1 focused on Hong Kong as the target trip destination. As hypothesised,

"satisfaction with the recommendations was reduced significantly when ChatGPT suggested narrowed-down options from the initial large option", the researchers report. In Study 2, the participants imagined planning a trip to Key West, Florida. Option reduction by ChatGPT (compared with the participants themselves) negatively affected visit intention, mediated by perceived trustworthiness and satisfaction, especially when the initial set of options was large.

Strengthening these findings, Study 3 revealed that travellers were more satisfied when they narrowed down the options themselves than when they relied on ChatGPT. In Study 4, satisfaction and visit intention were higher when options were narrowed down by human experts than by ChatGPT. Finally, Study 5 demonstrated that the negative effects of ChatGPT's option reduction were mitigated when travellers actively engaged in the narrowing process, suggesting that user participation can buffer against the damage done to trust and satisfaction by AI-driven reduction.

## TOURISM, TECHNOLOGY AND TRUST

"Our research reveals the underlying psychological mechanisms behind why decision-makers do not prefer a reduction in recommendations by AI agents", the authors tell us. Their findings not only contribute to the

literature but may also help online travel agencies (OTAs) more effectively embed ChatGPT in their websites to help travellers create trip itineraries.

First, their findings indicated that ChatGPT may not be helpful in narrowing down options at a late stage of trip planning, because its options-reduction ability is not perceived as trustworthy. Therefore, "OTAs should emphasise ChatGPT's ability to generate the initial pool of destinations or activities and deemphasise its narrowing-down ability".

"Second", they say, "our findings showed that the benefits of using ChatGPT for trip planning can increase when its initial recommendations are narrowed down by travellers". OTAs could thus encourage travellers to be engaged in the creation process to maximise their satisfaction with the itineraries. "Businesses could instruct their chatbots to give multiple possible alternatives to customers' inquiries", the authors say, "to lead them to make their own choices".

Finally, they found that travellers perceived choice overload when more than 15 options were proposed by AI tools. This insight may be applicable beyond travel planning. "Based on our findings", the authors conclude, "hospitality businesses could adjust the default number of recommendations their AI tools provide, to enable customers to easily interact with them, and to have better experience with such tools".

## POINTS TO NOTE

- ChatGPT can accelerate and simplify online trip planning, but its ability to narrow down options may not be trusted.
- Online travel agencies (OTAs) should emphasise the advantages of ChatGPT in the initial stages of trip planning.
- As a hybrid mode of options reduction – human plus AI – is preferable, OTAs should encourage users to be involved in creating itineraries.
- Hospitality businesses should set an upper limit on the number of AI recommendations to avoid choice overload.

Seunghun Shin, Jungkeun Kim, Eunji Lee, Yerin Yhee and Chulmo Koo (2025).  
ChatGPT for Trip Planning: The Effect of Narrowing Down Options.  
*Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 64, No. 2, 247–266.



# ALUMNI MEET FUTURE TALENT



Nearly 30 years ago, PolyU and Zhejiang University came together to launch joint programmes in Mainland China. Since then, their innovative Master of Science in Hotel and Tourism Management (MSc in HTM) and Doctor of Hotel and Tourism Management (D.HTM) programmes have nurtured a generation of globally minded hospitality leaders.



Many of these leaders were reunited at three Information Seminar Cum Alumni Forums held in mainland China. The first was the Information Seminar cum Mainland Alumni Spring Forum, on 29 March. Held at the Westin Bund Center, Shanghai, the event addressed one of the most pressing topics of the day: artificial intelligence (AI) and its potential to redefine hospitality.

Highlights of the event, along with speeches by SHTM faculty, were four keynote speeches delivered by Professor Jialiang Wang, Executive Director of the Industrial Innovation Research Institute of Shanghai Jiao Tong University; Mr Tengfei Fang, Vice President of Tencent Cloud and President of Tencent Cultural Tourism; Mr Chilin Long, General Manager of Dingding Hotel; and Dr Pengrui Hui,

Co-founder and CTO of Visio Trip. The event concluded with a roundtable in which alumni representatives discussed AI with key thinkers in the field.

On 28 April, an Information Seminar for the MSc in HTM and D.HTM programmes was held at Tiananmen Yifei Hotel in Beijing. Hosted by Dr Simon Tian, a D.HTM alumnus and CEO of Menduner, the event began with a speech by Dr Elton Sun, CEO and Managing Director, Yusu Hotel Management Co., Ltd. and President of the SHTM Mainland Alumni Network. An alumnus of both Mainland China programmes, Dr Sun shared recollections of his valuable learning experience.

Next came speeches by SHTM

Associate Professor Denis Kucukusta, who briefly introduced PolyU, the School and the D.HTM, and Associate Professor Dan Wang, who familiarised her audience with the MSc in HTM. After their presentations, attendees had the chance to interact with the programme leaders, admissions staff and alumni, gaining further first-hand insights into the programmes.

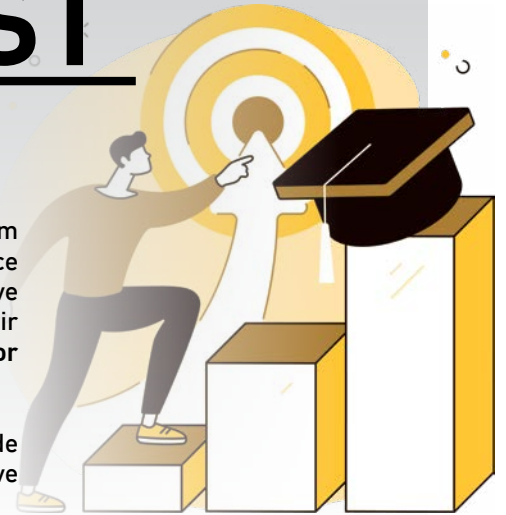
Another Information Seminar was held in Jinling Hotel, Nanjing on 14 May, welcoming hospitality leaders to discuss the latest trends, development opportunities and challenges in the industry. The success of these events and the programmes they represent is a testament to the legacy of collaboration between PolyU and Zhejiang University in providing world-leading postgraduate education.

# IN BRIEF

## SHTM RANKED AMONG THE BEST IN THE WORLD

Colleagues at the SHTM have been ranked amongst the world's top tourism scholars throughout their careers by ScholarGPS, a leading online source for the analysis of scholarly activity across regions and disciplines. Five faculty members were ranked among the top 100 scholars globally for their achievements, namely **Dean Kaye Chon**, **Professor Haiyan Song**, **Professor Cathy Hsu**, **Professor Sam Kim** and **Professor Honggen Xiao**.

At the institutional level, the School was also ranked number 1 worldwide for both "Academic Institution Lifetime" and "Academic Institution Prior Five Years" in the tourism specialty.



### LEADERSHIP OF APACCHRIE

The School is delighted to announce that **Professor Deniz Kucukusta** was elected **Vice President of APacCHRIE**, the Asia-Pacific region's leading hospitality and tourism education association, in June 2025. APacCHRIE is proud to serve members from more than 18 countries and regions. As Vice President of this impactful organisation, Professor Kucukusta will bring to bear the academic leadership, industry expertise and commitment to innovation in hospitality and tourism education that she has amply demonstrated at the SHTM.



### ELITE MANAGEMENT TRAINEES

Hotel ICON's latest group of **Elite Management Trainees** comprises Yuki Chen, Harmony Cheung, Dora Chow, Carrie Yeung and Bobo Yip, Year 2 students in the BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management programme. These talented new recruits signed up on 19 March 2025. As the brightest and most promising SHTM students, they will undergo intensive training for 11 months to gain the skills and experience needed to work as supervisors or managers upon graduation.





## FOOD ANGEL

On 5 March 2025, five postgraduate students and three faculty members contributed to Food Angel's community service, preparing meal boxes for the underprivileged in Hong Kong. The effort they put in to preparing ingredients and assembling 946 meal boxes made a significant difference to the lives of many individuals and families.

It was particularly inspiring to see these non-local postgraduate students embrace the opportunity to serve the local community. Their willingness to contribute their time, skills and effort exemplifies the School's spirit of hospitality, compassion and global citizenship.



## LEFT BANK BORDEAUX CUP

A team representing **The Bacchus: SHTM Wine Society** was awarded third place in the **Left Bank Bordeaux Cup (Asia Qualification)** in Hong Kong on 19 March 2025. Each year, this prestigious competition receives entries from wine-tasting clubs at universities across the world. In 2025, the SHTM team comprised Timothy Huh, a Year 3 student in the BSc Scheme in Hotel and Tourism Management (Smart Tourism and Hospitality) programme and a dual degree student from Kyung Hee University; and Lucas Cheung and Sam Chen, Year 1 students in the BSc Scheme in Hotel and Tourism Management programme.



## LONG SERVICE AWARDS

Eleven SHTM faculty and staff members, namely Professor Haiyan Song, Professor Catherine Cheung, Professor Kam Hung, Professor Ada Lo, Professor Vincent Tung, Professor Maxime Wang, Professor YooHee Hwang, Mr Katsuto Sandifer, Ms Anita Chan, Mr Willie Chan and Ms Ada Au, were honoured by PolyU with Long Service Awards in recognition of their many years of loyal and dedicated service to the institution.

## THREE MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING

On 4 April 2025, Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean, Chair Professor and Walter and Wendy Kwok Family Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management, and Mr Frédéric Beaumont-Debresie, Dean, Hospitality Management Programmes and International Development, Institut Lyfe, came together in France to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on a student exchange programme.



On 7 April 2025, Dean Chon signed an MoU on a student exchange programme with Professor Mojca Indihar Štemberger, Vice Dean for Academic Affairs, School of Economics and Business, University of Ljubljana, in Slovenia. A day later, Dean Chon signed another MoU with a Slovenian university, meeting with Professor Emil Juvan, Dean, Faculty of Tourism Studies – Turistica, University of Primorska.

## CLUB OF THE YEAR

The **Club Managers' Association (CMA) SHTM Student Chapter** received the **Student Club of the Year Award 2024/25**. This award is presented annually to a student club that is recognised by the SHTM and has demonstrated excellent performance. The CMA is committed to offering student members a well-rounded set of experiences to increase their interest in the private club industry, boost their industry awareness and prepare them for career success.

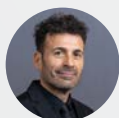


## REWARDING EXCEPTIONAL SCHOLARS

On 3 April 2025, Cathy Sun, a final-year student in the BSc in Hotel Management programme, received the **Outstanding Student Award of the SHTM 2024/2025** at the Presentation Ceremony for the Outstanding Student Award and Presidential Student Leadership Award 2024/2025. Outstanding Student Awards are granted annually to full-time final-year students who excel in both academic and non-academic pursuits during their studies.

At the same ceremony, Vatey Mean, a Year 3 student in the BSc in Hotel and Tourism Management (Event and Experience Management) programme, received the **Presidential Student Leadership Award of the SHTM 2024/2025**. Presidential Student Leadership Awards recognise students' excellent leadership performance and dedication to serving the community.

## STAFF UPDATES



**Prof Gianluca Goffi** joined the School as Assistant Professor on 3 March 2025.



**Prof Richard Qiu** was promoted to Associate Professor, with effect from 1 July 2025.



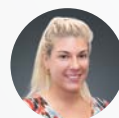
**Dr Jessie Wang** joined the School as Research Assistant Professor on 1 August 2025.



**Ms Tiffany Chan** joined the School as Marketing Manager on 3 March 2025.



**Prof Crystal Shi** was promoted to Associate Professor, with effect from 1 July 2025.



**Ms Jennifer Ducasse** joined the School as an Instructor on 4 August 2025.



**Prof Abbie-Gayle Johnson** left her Assistant Professor role at the SHTM on 17 April 2025. She has taken up the position of Assistant Professor of Marketing at the University of Nottingham.



**Prof Anyu Liu** left his Assistant Professor role at the SHTM on 11 July 2025. He has taken up the position of Assistant Professor in Department of Hospitality, Hotel Management and Tourism at Texas A&M University.



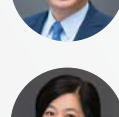
**Dr Jeff Wu** joined the School as Research Assistant Professor on 8 August 2025.



**Prof Dan Wang** was promoted to Professor, with effect from 1 July 2025.



**Prof Bob McKercher** joined the School as Adjunct Professor on 1 August 2025.



**Prof Billy Bai** joined the School as Professor and concurrently as an Associate Dean on 18 August 2025.



**Prof Yoohee Hwang** was promoted to Associate Professor, with effect from 1 July 2025.



**Prof Daisy Fan** joined the School as Associate Professor on 1 August 2025.



**Ms Pauline Ngan** retired from her role as Senior Marketing Manager at the SHTM on 30 August 2025.





# A “LUMINOUS” NEW ERA

Since its founding in 2005, the School’s Students’ Association (SHTMSA) has been dedicated to bringing together SHTM students from diverse backgrounds. Through a vibrant calendar of cultural, social and sports activities, the Association enriches student life and strengthens connections between the School, its student body, PolyU and the wider community.

On 14 April this year, the SHTMSA celebrated the inauguration of its 21st Session. Held in PolyU’s Chiang Chen Studio Theatre, the SHTMSA Inauguration Ceremony 2025 marked the accession of a new cabinet, named “Halcyon”. Building on the valuable work done by its predecessors, the 21st Session will serve this year’s 782 members with a focus on creating opportunities for connection and engagement.

Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean, Chair Professor and Walter and Wendy Kwok Family Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management, offered a message for the event: “The theme of the inauguration ceremony, ‘Luminoso’, beautifully captures the Association’s mission this year – to illuminate and inspire others to embrace their own brilliance”, he said.

Congratulating the 21st Session on its inauguration, Dean Chon described the Association as a “vital extension of the SHTM”, responsible for “fostering a sense of belonging, promoting mutual understanding and encouraging

collaboration among students”. This chimes perfectly with the new cabinet’s understanding of its mission. “Together, we illuminate the people around us, inspiring others to embrace their own intrinsic luminosity”, said the cabinet members.

This sentiment was echoed by both guest speakers at the ceremony, alumni Mr Leo Yip, Senior Leasing Manager at Weave Living, and Mr Harry Ha, Senior Manager at CBRE Hong Kong, who reflected proudly on their time at the SHTM. They urged the student leaders to remain passionate, sincere, adaptable and well-prepared to navigate their academic and professional trajectories. Together, these messages served as a powerful reminder that the values nurtured at the SHTM continue to illuminate the path to future success.

The School echoes Dean Chon in extending its congratulations and very best wishes to the Association for a successful and impactful year ahead.



# STUDENTS SHINE ON GLOBAL STAGE



► Winning team of SHTM MSc students at the 2024 Intercollegiate Wine Business Invitational Competition

**SHTM students have enjoyed a packed activity schedule over the past year. First was the Intercollegiate Wine Business Invitational, hosted by Wine Business Education, through late 2024. The School was represented by five MSc in International Wine Management (IWM) students, coached by Professor Crystal Shi, who were challenged to propose a new product. For their efforts, the team won First Place and was named Grand Prize Winner of the Byron Marlow Award.**

Their winning “Echospring” concept drew on the agricultural traditions of China’s Xinjiang province. Grapes grown in the sunny Xinjiang Basin are watered by a unique irrigation system, a wonder of ancient engineering. The sound of water flowing through these underground channels is termed “echo spring”, inspiring the name of the team’s red wine, crafted especially for Xiang Hai International Winery.

Xinjiang’s winemaking reputation is rising. As James Kwan, the student team’s General Manager, explained, “By highlighting the distinct character of Xinjiang wine, we deliver exceptional quality and value”.

## STRENGTHENING ASIAN TIES

On 16–18 October 2024, six Hospitality, Financial, Technology and Professionals (HFTP) HK SHTM Student Chapter members attended the Hotel Investment Conference Asia Pacific in Singapore. This offered a chance for Cathy Sun (BSc, Hotel Management and President of the HFTP Student Chapter), Wenjie Gai, Jiayi Li, Kexin Chen, Aijing Guan (all BSc in Hotel and Tourism Management [HTM] students) and Yuqing Chen (BSc, Tourism and Events Management) to connect with students from top hotel management schools worldwide.

They gained first-hand experience of running large-scale events through direct involvement in the conference’s organisation and execution. Furthermore, interactions with industry professionals sparked ideas for their own research. Our attendees greatly valued the experience, which reinforced their determination to excel professionally while strengthening their practical and teamworking skills.

Next, a group of students had the opportunity to take a field trip to South Korea on 3–7 November 2024. Based in Seoul, the visit covered numerous enriching educational visits to attractions such as Hyundai Motorstudio and the Samsung Innovation Museum.

“It was inspiring to see how Hyundai envisions the future of mobility”, enthused Fabian Bosnjakovic. Yeon Huh Su appreciated the relevance of the itinerary to the study of digital transformation, and the chance to “experience Korea from a tourist’s perspective”.

We gratefully acknowledge Ambassador Young-Shim Dho, SHTM Professor of Practice (Tourism Policy), for taking the time to meet our group in Seoul. As Chairperson of the UN Sustainable Development Goals Advocate Alumni and Ambassador of the World Travel and Tourism Council, Ambassador Dho has achieved significant poverty alleviation through tourism in developing countries while tirelessly advocating for South Korea as a destination.



▶ Student ambassadors at the Hotel Investment Conference Asia Pacific 2024 in Singapore

“Instead of increasing taxes and restricting access to Barcelona”, Nigel explained, his team’s solution was to promote other Spanish regions.

Meanwhile, Gillianne Fontanilla’s (BSc, HTM) team took Second Place in the Cruse-Lorenzetti Case Study challenge on engaging younger generations with Bordeaux viticulture. “I feel honoured to represent our School at such a prestigious conference”, said Gillianne.

Dongdaemun Design Plaza, a major urban development landmark.

Cultural activities were high on the agenda, featuring visits to the historic Gyeongbokgung Palace (with the students dressed in traditional Hanbok attire), Seoul’s iconic Lotte World Tower, and HiKR Ground, where they engaged with Korean pop culture. The students also attended a dynamic nanta performance, known for blending comedy with traditional Korean rhythms.

## SWISS SUCCESSES

On 17–19 March 2025, four SHTM students participated in the Young Hospitality Summit (YHS) at Switzerland’s EHL Hospitality Business School. Activities included a wine promotion video and app design, industry professional talks and challenge competitions.

In the main challenge, Nigel Lee (BSc, HTM) and his team won the Championship for their strategy to address overtourism in Barcelona.

## EXPLORING SOUTH KOREA

On 18–25 May 2025, students of the International Tourism Studies programme took part in their required overseas field trip for the semester. This time, the destination was South Korea. The action-packed trip included venue tours of the exhibition and convention centre Coex Magok, the hotel Mercure Ambassador Seoul Magok, the professional arts education institution SM Universe, and

The trip concluded with a guided tour of the Ambassador Seoul – A Pullman Hotel, where students were welcomed by high-ranking hotel staff. They also had the honour of meeting Mr Jung-Ho Suh, the esteemed Chairman of Korea’s Ambassador Hotel Group, who received the SHTM’s 2024 Lifetime Achievement Award.

The SHTM congratulates its exceptional student cohort on the year’s achievements and hopes to continue strengthening its ties in Asia and beyond through such empowering student activities.

▶ Students on a field trip to Dongdaemun Design Plaza in South Korea



▶ Students at the Young Hospitality Summit







# A NEW FLAVOUR OF LEARNING

**Every year, the School offers its students, faculty and staff, as well as industry partners, unrivalled opportunities to experience the latest trends in the global food and beverage (F&B) sector. 2024/2025 was no exception, with a host of enriching F&B activities organised by the SHTM and its Food and Wine Academy (FWA), run jointly with Hotel ICON.**

Kicking off this packed calendar in January was a timely workshop on food upcycling, along with the chance to learn about caviar and truffles for MSc in Luxury Experiences Management students. Spanish delicacies came under the spotlight in two February workshops on *Ibérico* ham and sparkling wine, followed by a journey through Spanish wines in March and a return to Spanish charcuterie in April.

Local beverages featured prominently in this year's F&B schedule. In a March seminar and wine-tasting session, students and staff learned about the rich history and unique terroir of Shandong's Qiushan Valley. April saw an introduction to *baijiu*, China's national alcoholic beverage, along with two workshops on French wines. This continent-straddling approach was also evident in the jump from a French pastry-making demonstration

in early March to a session on Korean fermented food late in the same month, followed by a workshop on US baking in early April. In partnership with the 2025 French GourMay Festival in May, three seminars were held at the School to celebrate France's culinary arts, featuring cognac, gin and crêpes Suzette.

At several of these events, students' learning was enriched by the involvement of valued industry partners. For example, a Valentine's Day cookie workshop (organised by the Hospitality Student Club) was delivered by the head pastry chef of Black Sheep restaurant; Banyan Tree and Hotel ICON provided a Thai cooking demonstration; and Mr Enrico Ho of the Hong Kong Bartenders Association introduced students to Italian spirits and cocktails.





## SHARING OUR EXPERTISE

The School is always eager to share its F&B experience and expertise with external institutions for the good of the wider industry. This commitment led to three meaningful collaborations in 2024/2025. A five-session workshop on coffee for students at Diocesan Girls' School in Hong Kong began in September 2024 and was completed in February this year. On 23 January, the SHTM held a workshop on dining etiquette for 38 students and two teachers from Hong Kong's Korean International School. Later in the year, on 15 May, students from Saudi Arabia's University of Tabuk learned much at a School-run workshop introducing Japanese cuisine.

## INDUSTRY APPRECIATION

Two Industry Appreciation Dinners held in the SHTM's training restaurant Bistro 1979 this spring gave the School the opportunity to warmly thank its external and internal partners. SHTM students fully managed the preparation and serving of food for their VIP guests at these memorable events.

On 20 March, sponsors of the final-year projects of students specialising in Hotel Management, along with valued partners who had delivered F&B guest lectures this year, were invited to attend a dinner on the theme of conscious dining. On 21 March, another Industry Appreciation Dinner enabled the School to thank Consulate Generals and representatives of Trade Offices that have supported FWA workshops and F&B guest lectures.

The menu, which incorporated the emerging dining trends of sustainability and local, plant-based eating, was supported by local partners that not only supplied

high-quality ingredients but also shared their insights in a lecture at the event. Indeed, sustainability is very close to the School's heart, as also demonstrated at the event by a lecture by Associate Professor YooHee Hwang. Professor Hwang introduced attendees to the innovative company Breer, which uses leftover bread to brew beer – and devised a brew especially for the occasion, made from the SHTM's homemade baguette.

The year was capped off by a visit from the President of the World Association of Chefs' Societies, underscoring our dedication to equipping students with the latest F&B skills and knowledge.

F&B activities are a cornerstone of hospitality and tourism education and practice, and the School is delighted to have once again organised a rich roster of culinary activities for students, faculty and staff in collaboration with our industry partners.

# HONOURING STUDENT EXCELLENCE

Committed to honouring its students' academic accomplishments, the School hosts an annual ceremony to reward undergraduates who achieved an outstanding grade point average in Semesters 1 and 2 of the academic year. This year, the Academic Achievement Award was bestowed on 51 students in a ceremony on 19 June. Also rewarded were three exceptional outbound exchange students, who received a Certificate of Achievement at the AAA ceremony.

The School could not be prouder of these students, whose passion and dedication are preparing them well for remarkable future careers in the hospitality and tourism industry. Congratulations to the following award recipients!



## **BSc(Hons) Scheme in Hotel and Tourism Management**

KU On Chi  
LAM Wing Sum  
SIN Wing Yu  
YEUNG Wing Yan  
ZHAO Xuezhu

## **BSc(Hons) in Hotel and Tourism Management (Hotel Management)**

LAI Wai Cheng Rachel  
LEE Nigel William  
LEE Yik Sum  
POON Sze Wing Tanja  
WONG Hoi Kiu

## **BSc(Hons) in Hotel and Tourism Management (Smart Tourism and Hospitality)**

CHU Pui Shan  
HUH Suyeon  
TSANG Wai Nam  
WANG Minghe

## **BSc(Hons) in Hotel and Tourism Management (Event and Experience Management)**

VELASCO Mark Jacob Melencio  
WANG Chengcheng  
WEI Chao  
WONG Hoi Ying  
WONG Wing Lam  
YAU Kong Ting  
YIN Qi  
ZHU Jinghan

## **BSc(Hons) in Tourism and Events Management**

BIBI Shmsa  
JONG Sin Yu  
LAM Cheuk Yu  
LAU Nga Man  
LEE Sze Lam  
LEUNG Shun Yan Gretl  
MOI Ching Fung  
SI Yip Yuon  
TAN Shuwen  
WANG Kehan  
YEUNG Yuen Ching  
ZHOU Guanyu

## **BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management**

CHAN Ying Stephanie  
CHEUNG Yuen Ching  
HAO Xinyue  
HO Wai Lam  
HUNG Yin Kiu  
LAI Kei Kwan  
LAU Choi Yee  
LEUNG Hoi Ki  
LEUNG Tsz Tung  
LIU Lizhu  
LU Mingxuan  
MOK Wing Ching  
NYGMET Akniyet  
PARK Sunwoo  
SUN Jiasui  
TO Tung Yin  
ZHANG Sabei

## **Outbound Exchange Students**

LEUNG Shun Yan Gretl  
YEUNG Yuen Ching  
WAI Hiu Nam Naomi





# INDUSTRY LEADERS SHARE EXPERTISE

Since 2002, the SHTM has paired hospitality and tourism students aspiring to build careers in the industry with seasoned industry professionals who provide tailored advice and guidance. The SHTM Mentorship Programme offers first-, second-, and third-year undergraduate students and full-time MSc students the invaluable opportunity to learn first-hand from alumni and other experienced professionals in the hotel, travel and other tourism sectors.

This year's iteration of the programme was fittingly celebrated at the 2025 SHTM Mentorship Programme Award Presentation cum Luncheon Meeting on 8 February.

After welcoming the participants, Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean, Chair Professor and Walter and Wendy Kwok Family Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management, presented the SHTM Outstanding Student Mentor of the Year Award 2024 to Ms Renee Kim, General Manager, Regala Skycity Hotel, and the Outstanding Student Mentee of the Year Award 2024 to Yilly Lin, 2024

graduate of the MSc in International Hospitality Management programme.

The 101 student mentors and 219 mentees involved in the 2025 Mentorship Programme will remain in close contact throughout the year to ensure that they achieve their agreed-upon learning objectives. Thanks go to the following generous industry mentors for helping to nurture the next generation of leaders in hospitality and tourism.

## 2025 MENTORS

AU Kirby	Club Wing Manager	Hong Kong Ocean Park Marriott Hotel
AU Michael	Executive Director	Realty Travel Service Ltd.
BRIDLE Symon	Director-Hotel Development and Asset Management	Hang Lung Properties
CHAN David	Senior Golf Operations Manager	The Clearwater Bay Golf & Country Club
CHAN Edward	Human Resources Manager	Bishop Lei International House
CHAN Ken	Restaurant Manager	Regent Hong Kong
CHAN Kenny	Founder and Director	Seayou Explorer Travel Limited
CHAN Lawrence	Founder/Chief Executive Officer	Park Lane Hotels International
CHAN Purple	Vice President – Hotel Audit	Great Eagle Holdings Limited
CHAN Patrick	Director of Human Resources	Sheraton & Four Points by Sheraton Hong Kong Tung Chung
CHAN Trasimene	Director of Human Resources	New World Millennium Hong Kong Hotel
CHAN Wilson	Learning & Development Manager	Hong Kong Ocean Park Marriott Hotel
CHAN Yu Fai	Head of Business Development – Greater China	Travelport
CHAU Carie	Account Director, Global Sales	Marriott International
CHAU Philip	Regional Director, Marketing Performance & Operations	Sun Life
CHENG Adam	Cluster General Manager	Sheraton & Four Points by Sheraton Hong Kong Tung Chung
CHENG Cindy	Vice President, People & Culture	COMO Hotels and Resorts
CHENG Paul	Senior Consultant	Hong Kong International Airport Consultancy/Hong Kong International Aviation Academy
CHEUNG Carol	Director of Human Capital	Hotel ICON
CHEUNG Kenneth	Director of Technology & Innovation	Hotel ICON
CHIN David	Head of Strategy and Business Intelligence	Café de Coral Group Companies



<b>CHOI Bernard</b>	School Principal	Star Chef Management School
<b>CHOI Vallois</b>	Director of Marketing	Hotel ICON
<b>CHONG Mabel</b>	Director of Engineering	Hong Kong Ocean Park Marriott Hotel
<b>CHOW Arthur</b>	Operations Director	Compass Group Hong Kong
<b>CHUNG Nixon</b>	Managing Director	Camloy International Ltd.
<b>CHUNG Noki</b>	Assistant Director of Sales	Hong Kong Ocean Park Marriott Hotel
<b>CHUNG Sylvia</b>	Chief Business Impact Officer	Chinachem Group
<b>DRUMMOND John</b>	General Manager	Intercontinental Grand Stanford Hong Kong
<b>FALCHI Pierandrea</b>	Comet Controller	Swire Hotels
<b>FAN Vivian</b>	Director of Human Resources	The Park Lane Hong Kong, Autograph Collection
<b>FONG Kathy</b>	Country Manager, China, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan	Sabre
<b>FONG Mike</b>	Director of Human Resources	The Langham Hong Kong
<b>FORK Susana</b>	Director of Rooms	Hotel ICON
<b>GIRARD John</b>	General Manager, Hong Kong Operations	Plaza Network
<b>HO Ronald</b>	Director of Finance	Nina Hotel Tsuen Wan West
<b>HOTCHAN Paul</b>	Head of Talent Acquisition	The Hong Kong Jockey Club
<b>JONES Andrew</b>	Guardian	Sanctuary Resorts
<b>JUNG Peter</b>	Co-Founder	Milton Exhibits Group
<b>KIM Renee</b>	General Manager	Regala Skycity Hotel
<b>KO Sean</b>	Director of Human Resources	Kowloon Shangri-La, Hong Kong
<b>KONG Maurice</b>	Chairman	Institute of Dining Professionals
<b>KONG Vinson</b>	Learning & Development Manager	Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong
<b>KWOK Philip</b>	Senior Human Resources Manager	Hong Kong Gold Coast Hotel
<b>KWONG Cherisa</b>	Director of Revenue Management	New World Millennium Hong Kong Hotel
<b>LAM April</b>	General Manager	Hong Kong and Kowloon Ferry Holdings Ltd.
<b>LAM Jonathan</b>	Director of Events	Hotel ICON
<b>LAU David</b>	Chief Executive Officer	Ocean Sky Hotel Management Limited
<b>LEE Cecilia</b>	Director of Talent Acquisition and Employer Branding	The Langham Hospitality Group
<b>LEE Hermans</b>	Executive Housekeeper	Hotel ICON
<b>LEE Ian</b>	General Manager	Hotel ICON
<b>LEE Rebecca</b>	Assistant Senior Vice President – Hospitality Development	Galaxy Entertainment Group
<b>LEE Sophie</b>	Cruise – Restaurant Manager	Hyatt Centric Victoria Harbour Hong Kong
<b>LEE Wilson</b>	General Manager	Hyatt Regency Hong Kong, Shatin
<b>LEUNG Ivy</b>	General Manager	Hong Kong Management Association
<b>LEUNG Larry</b>	Restaurant Manager	Hotel ICON
<b>LEUNG Maggie</b>	Director of Human Resources	Hong Kong Ocean Park Marriott Hotel
<b>LEUNG Winnie</b>	Human Resources Manager	Courtyard by Marriott Hong Kong Sha Tin
<b>LI David</b>	Senior Operations Manager	Maxim's Caterers Ltd.
<b>LI Ricky</b>	Senior Residential Operations Manager	The University of Hong Kong
<b>LI Wallace</b>	Director of Racecourse Management	The Hong Kong Jockey Club
<b>LO Abby</b>	Director	Tung Nam Lou Art Hotel
<b>LO Iris</b>	President	Tung Nam Lou Art Hotel
<b>LO Joanne</b>	Director of Finance	Tung Nam Lou Art Hotel
<b>LO Sharon</b>	Front Office Manager	Hotel ICON
<b>LOK Winnie</b>	Director of Sales	Hotel ICON
<b>NG Joseph</b>	Director of Talent & Culture	The Silveri Hong Kong – MGallery, Novotel Citygate Hong Kong
<b>NG Ringo</b>	Director of Operations	InterContinental Grand Stanford Hong Kong
<b>PARK Jane</b>	Asst. Manager – F&B Revenue Management & Operations	Hotel ICON
<b>PARK Patrick</b>	Director of Front Office	Marco Polo Hongkong Hotel   Gateway Hotel   Prince Hotel
<b>SHAM Signory</b>	Director of Human Resources	The Hong Kong Country Club
<b>SHEK Jason</b>	Director	Steam Discovery
<b>SHIH Louis</b>	Executive Director	Old Stone Hotels Company Ltd.
<b>SIU Winnie</b>	Assistant Director of Front Office	Marco Polo Hotels – Hong Kong
<b>SO Winnie</b>	Deputy Head – Executive Office Affairs	Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (Management) Ltd.
<b>TANG Hazen</b>	Executive Director	HS Travel Int'l Co., Ltd.
<b>TANG Tom</b>	Director of Operations	Nina Hospitality
<b>TSANG Angela</b>	Admin. & HR Manager	Park Hotel International Limited
<b>TSANG Matthew</b>	Learning and Development Manager	Conrad Hong Kong
<b>TSANG Porsche</b>	Senior Manager, Shangri-La Circle (Operations)	Shangri-La Group
<b>TSE Jason</b>	Manager, Talent Development	Hong Kong Airlines
<b>TSE Roni</b>	Director of Food & Beverage	Dorsett Kai Tak, Hong Kong
<b>WAI Kenneth</b>	Co-Founder and Director	People Solution Enablers Company Ltd.
<b>WANG Anvy</b>	Business Development Manager	Silvermine Beach Resort Ltd.
<b>WIPPER Julian</b>	General Manager	New World Millennium Hong Kong Hotel
<b>WONG Ada</b>	Director of Human Resources	Conrad Hong Kong
<b>WONG Catherine</b>	Digital Product Manager – eCommerce & Insurance	Cathay Pacific Airways
<b>WONG Celia</b>	Director	Brighten Coffee Social Enterprise
<b>WONG Dennis</b>	Director of Talent and Culture	Rosewood Hong Kong
<b>WONG Julian</b>	Vice President	Hong Kong City Martial Arts and Sports Association
<b>WONG Ken</b>	Director of Revenue	Hotel ICON
<b>WONG Mae</b>	Assistant Director of Finance & Administration	Hotel ICON
<b>WONG Mandy</b>	Director of Quality & Learning	Regent Hong Kong
<b>WONG Sue</b>	Learning & Development Manager	Hotel ICON
<b>YAU Alison</b>	Head of Corporate Training & Professional Programmes	CUSCS
<b>YAU Edmund</b>	Head of Front Office	United Services Recreation Club Limited
<b>YIP Carmen</b>	Director of Enterprise	Foodpanda
<b>YIP Lawrence</b>	SVP North Asia	Millennium & Copthorne Hotels (HK) Ltd.
<b>YU Philip</b>	Vice President-Operation, Greater China	Hyatt Hotels & Resorts
<b>YUEN Calvin</b>	Senior Manager, Headquarter Food & Beverage	Shangri-La Group
<b>YUEN Vincent</b>	Assistant Director of Food & Beverage	Hotel ICON

# COMING TOGETHER AGAIN



► Bartending workshop at SKYE Rooftop and Brasserie

**Since 1993, the SHTM Alumni Association (SHTMAA) has served as a bridge between the School and its alumni, who hail from across the world. By organising enriching events and activities, the Association provides networking opportunities that help alumni remain connected with both their alma mater and their peers.**

Such opportunities were in ample supply at the SHTMAA Alumni Tour 2025, during which alumni took in the sights of Jiangxi province, travelling to Ganzhou, Nanchang, Wuyuan and Jingdezhen from 19 to 22 June. Kicking off the tour was a Tea Garden Experience in Ganzhou, during which participants had fun picking and making tea.

Another traditional beverage was on the agenda on the second day, with an introduction to the craft of sake brewing at the picturesque Qingyun Winery and Guesthouse. This was followed by a trip to Wanshou Palace in Nanchang to marvel at its religious architecture. The day culminated in a night tour of Tengwang Pavilion, renowned for its night views and magnificent illumination.

Day 3 saw the alumni immerse themselves even more deeply in Jiangxi culture, with a ceramics tour in Jingdezhen followed by a thrilling “iron flower fireworks” display at Wunvzhou Resort. Before returning home on Day 4, they took a cable car over the terraced rice fields of Huangling Scenic Area.

Another highlight of the year’s packed calendar of alumni events was an exclusive opportunity to visit the Kai Tak Sports Centre, Hong Kong’s largest and most comprehensive sports complex, before its opening. On 22 February, alumni embarked on a tour of the various exciting facilities that the centre has to offer, from Kai Tak Youth Sports Ground to Central Square.

Later in the year, on 17 May, alumni came together again for a bartending workshop at SKYE Rooftop and Brasserie, The Park Lane Hong Kong. Talented mixologists demonstrated the art of cocktail making, and the participants had the chance to sip on their own creations while enjoying breathtaking views over the harbour.

All of these memorable events testify to the SHTMAA’s commitment and creativity in organising opportunities for alumni to strengthen their bonds and forge new ones.



► Visit to Kai Tak Sports Park

# ALUM-NOTES

## 2000s

<b>Mr Ricky Li</b>	HD in Hotel, Catering and Tourism Management 2003	Senior Residential Operations Manager at The University of Hong Kong
<b>Prof Joanne Yoo</b>	Ph.D. in Hotel and Tourism Management 2005	Professor and Associate Chair, Department of Hospitality & Sport Business Management, Alfred Lerner College of Business & Economics at University of Delaware
<b>Ms ArChan Chan</b>	HD in Hotel, Catering and Tourism Management 2007	Executive Chef at Black Sheep Restaurants
<b>Ms Esther Yeung</b>	BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2009	Events & Promotions Manager at Regal Kowloon Hotel

## 2010s

<b>Mr Jason Fong</b>	HD in Hotel Management 2008, BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2010	Human Resources Manager at Grand Hyatt Hong Kong
<b>Mr Sonic Yang</b>	BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2011	Lecturer, Department of Hospitality and Business Management at Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong
<b>Mr Kirk Yan</b>	MSc in Hotel and Tourism Management 2012	Senior Hospital Manager, Catering at Hospital Authority
<b>Ms Jannie Ma</b>	BSc(Hons) in Convention and Event Management 2012	Human Resources Manager at New World Millennium Hong Kong Hotel
<b>Mr Calvin Yuen</b>	BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2012	Assistant Vice President of Food & Beverage at Shangri-La Group
<b>Ms Elaine Wong</b>	HD in Tourism Management 2011, BSc(Hons) in Convention and Event Management 2013	Director at ConferencePro Limited
<b>Ms Nichole Siah</b>	BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2014	Senior Analytics Engineer at Forma.ai
<b>Ms Jamie Tam</b>	BSc(Hons) in Convention and Event Management 2014	Senior Manager, Business Development, MICE at Hong Kong Tourism Board
<b>Ms Calista Kim</b>	BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2015	Membership Manager at Soho House & Co
<b>Mr Vinson Kong</b>	MSc in International Hospitality Management 2016	Learning and Development Manager at Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong
<b>Ms Nikie Li</b>	BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2016	Assistant Marketing and Events Manager at Singular Concepts
<b>Mr Harry Ha</b>	BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2019	Senior Manager, Valuation & Advisory Services at CBRE

## 2020s

<b>Dr Fanny Manner-Baldeon</b>	MSc in International Tourism and Convention Management 2015, Ph.D. in Hotel and Tourism Management 2022	Lecturer at College of Professional and Continuing Education, PolyU
<b>Mr Iven Yuen</b>	MSc in International Hospitality Management 2023	Director of Business Development at eLong International Travel (HK) Ltd
<b>Ms Winny Japardy</b>	BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2023	Sales Executive at Regent Hong Kong
<b>Ms Yammi Koo</b>	BSc(Hons) in Tourism and Events Management 2023	Front Desk Agent at The Peninsula Hotels
<b>Mr Henry Li</b>	MSc in International Hospitality Management 2024	General Manager at Anten Group
<b>Ms Sum Yu Leung</b>	BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2024	Guest Experience Assistance at The Upper House
<b>Ms Sunwoo Ryu</b>	BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management 2024	Member Service Host at Carlyle & Co.



# PROFESSORS FOR A DAY

The School extends its warmest thanks to the industry experts who generously served as professors for a day this year.

SPEAKER	TITLE AND COMPANY	TOPIC
<b>Prof Giovanni ANGELINI</b>	Founder, Angelini Hospitality & Professor of Practice (Hotel Management), PolyU SHTM	Challenges of Hong Kong's Tourism
<b>Mr Peter CAPREZ</b>	Multi-property General Manager, JW Marriott Hotel Bangkok	Sustainable Behaviours @ Marriott
<b>Mr Jo CHAN</b>	Event Manager, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre	Trends and Current Practices in Business Events in Hong Kong
<b>Ms Marsha CHAN</b>	Director of Business Development – Corporate, New World Millennium Hong Kong Hotel	The Art of Closing a Deal
<b>Mr Patrick CHAN</b>	Director of Human Resources, Sheraton Hong Kong Tung Chung Hotel & Four Points by Sheraton Hong Kong Tung Chung	The Trend of Talent Acquisition and Employee Engagement
<b>Mr Derek CHANG</b>	General Manager (Hong Kong & Macau), Aspire Lifestyles	Loyalty Solutions and Lifestyle Concierge Services: The Rapidly Growing Sector in Asian Hospitality
<b>Ms Saranya CHAROENPHAK</b>	Community Manager, Dusit Thani Hua Hin	Sustainable Development and Wellness Tourism in Dusit Thani Hotel Hua Hin
<b>Mr Chi CHEN</b>	General Manager of Asset Division, Hangzhou Binjiang Real Estate Group Co. Ltd	Hotel and Tourism Financial Management
<b>Mr Rick CHEN</b>	Regional Manager – CRM Team, China, IDEaS Revenue Solutions	Demand Forecasting and Strategic Pricing: An Industry Perspective
<b>Ms Jodie CHENG</b>	Teaching Assistant, Department of History, The University of Hong Kong	History of Tourism in Hong Kong
<b>Ms Irene CHEUNG</b>	Project Director, Rosy Sky Employee Engagement Agency	Corporate Event Management
<b>Mr Richard CHEUNG</b>	Vice President (Membership), International Live Events Association – Asia Chapter	ILEA Event Management
<b>Mr Tim CHEUNG</b>	Director, TC Hospitality Consultancy Company	Hospitality and Tourism Financial Management
<b>Ms Chloe CHIK</b>	Director – HRBP, Talent Acquisition and Development, Informa Markets	Application Letter and Resume Writing
<b>Ms Hala Matar CHOUFANY</b>	President – Middle East, Africa and South Asia, HVS	Shifting Sands: Transformation and Undisputable Success
<b>Chef Grace CHOY</b>	The Chef and Recipe Developer, ChoyChoy Kitchen	Cooking Demonstration
<b>Mr Perry CHUNG</b>	Marketing and Events Manager, Hyatt Sales Force, Asia Pacific	Getting the Most Out of an Internship
<b>Mr Stuart DE BOURGOGNE</b>	General Manager, Hong Kong and Taiwan Markets, Club Med	Discover the Premium All-Inclusive Resort, Club Med
<b>Dr Lawrence FONG</b>	Associate Professor, Faculty of Business Administration, University of Macau	An Overview of the Gaming and Tourism Industry in Macau
<b>Mr Wayne FUNG</b>	Assistant Manager – Learning & Development, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre	Trends and Current Practices in Business Events in Hong Kong
<b>Mr Jonathan GLOVER</b>	Founder & Director, Steak King Market	Operating Profitable and Sustainable Multi Unit Restaurants – A Hong Kong Insight by Flat Iron
<b>Mr Wei GUO</b>	Business Development Director, Hong Kong, Kantar	Tourism Economics Research: Real-World Applications and Data Collection
<b>Ms Yona HE-PODA</b>	Head of Asset Management & Owner Relations, Japan & Asia Pacific, Oracle	Luxury/Hospitality Branding – Meaning of a “Brand” and Concept of Personal Branding with Purpose
<b>Ms Cherry HO</b>	Human Resources Manager, Cathay Pacific Airways	Integrating Luxury Hospitality into Aviation: Enhancing Customer Experience Through High-End Hospitality at Cathay Pacific
<b>Mr Marc HOFMANN</b>	Managing Director, Black Sheep Restaurants	Restaurant Theme Creation
<b>Ms Chantima HOMNEAM</b>	Total Quality Management Manager, Dusit Thani Hua Hin	Sustainable Development and Wellness Tourism in Dusit Thani Hotel Hua Hin
<b>Ms Caroline HUANG</b>	Revenue Manager, Sheraton & Four Points By Sheraton, Marriott	Luxury Hotel Communication and Pricing Strategy
<b>Dr Jason (Jian) HUANG</b>	CEO, GDCT Investment Holdings Co., Ltd	Development of Digital Marketing and Strategy in Hotel Industry (Hotel Digitalisation: Diagnosis and Solutions)
<b>Dr Yuzhou HUANG</b>	Co-Founder & CEO, WD Trip	Application of AI-Generated Content in MICE Industry
<b>Mr Sivamin Bom INDAMRA</b>	Director, Springfield Royal Golf Club	An Introduction of the Springfield Royal Golf Club Hua Hin
<b>Mr Shawn (Shiyang) JIA</b>	Founder, SJ Wine World	• Blind Tasting • Social Media in the Wine Business Running Good Revenue Meetings
<b>Mr Anand JINDAL</b>	Group Director, Revenue Management & Distribution, Wharf Hotels	
<b>Mr Bikal KHANAL</b>	Chief Purpose Officer, Royal Mountain Group	Community Tourism and Regenerative Practices
<b>Mr Jacco KLIP</b>	General Manager – Food and Beverage, Kai Tak Sports Park	Managing and Operating Kai Tak Sports Stadium
<b>Prof Martinette KRUGER</b>	Professor in Tourism, North-West University	Event Operations & Logistics – Cape Town International Jazz Festival
<b>Mr Tino KWAN</b>	Owner, Principal Consultant, TinoKwan Lighting Consultants Ltd	Lighting Design in Hospitality
<b>Ms Margaret KWOK</b>	Director of Human Resources, Le Meridien Hong Kong, Cyberport	Interview Skills
<b>Mr Jun LAI</b>	SVP Business Growth, DerbySoft	Hotel Revenue Management & Distribution Strategy
<b>Mr Jonathan LAM</b>	Director of Catering, Hotel ICON	Hotel ICON Catering and Events
<b>Ms Polly LAM</b>	Chef, Angliss Hong Kong Food Service Ltd	Plant-Based Seafood
<b>Mr David LAU</b>	Founder & CEO, Ocean Sky Hotel Management Ltd	Repositioning of Hotels/Al in Design
<b>Mr Freeman LAU</b>	Founder, KL&K Creative Strategies	Hotel ICON, Art Curation
<b>Mr Isaac LAU</b>	Assistant Student Development Officer, University & College YMCA Department, Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong	Recreation Policies and Development in Hong Kong
<b>Mr Jonathan LAW</b>	Vice President – Mainland China and Overseas Projects, Liu Chong Hing Investment Ltd	Investment in Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Hospitality
<b>Mr Perry LEE</b>	General Manager, The Henderson Hospitality Ltd	Idealisation and Opportunities

SPEAKER	TITLE AND COMPANY	TOPIC
<b>Mr Pierre LEGRANDIS</b>	Director, Vinosophy HK	Wines of the World
<b>Mr Fomen LEONG</b>	Head of Research and Planning Division, Macao Government Tourist Office	Macau Tourism
<b>Mr Harrison (Ho) LI</b>	Founder, Paige Luminous	Building Paige: Exploring Brand Development Strategies
<b>Ms Liza LI</b>	Business Development Manager, Auki Labs	Mapping the Virtual Space in Retail and Hospitality Industry
<b>Mr Roy LI</b>	Director of Dining, Visual Orient Limited	Fine Dining Services Management
<b>Dr Simon LI</b>	Assistant Professor, Faculty of International Tourism and Management, City University of Macau	Macau: From a Gambling Hub to a Diversified Tourist Destination
<b>Mr Xiaolong LI</b>	Founder, Xiaoli Wine & Service	What Makes Up the Luxury Experience of Fine Dining
<b>Mr Yang LI</b>	Programme Officer, Regional Department for Asia and the Pacific, UN Tourism	Tourism Planning as a Career
<b>Mr Yoganthiran MANIKAM</b>	Consul (Tourism), Consulate General of Malaysia in Hong Kong and Macao	Overview of Malaysia as a Tourism Destination
<b>Ms Daphne MOK</b>	In Charge, University & College YMCA Department, Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong	Recreation Policies and Development in Hong Kong
<b>Mr Hugo MONTANARI</b>	Managing Director, Rosewood Hong Kong	Understanding Contemporary Hotel Customers – Case of Rosewood Hong Kong
<b>Mr Luca MOTTAS</b>	Director of Operations, Black Sheep Restaurants	Introduction to Blacksheep Restaurant and Its Operations
<b>Mr Ringo NG</b>	Director of Operations, InterContinental Grand Stanford Hong Kong	Trends, Challenges and Strategies in the Operations of the Rooms Division
<b>Ms Yoyo NG</b>	Managing Director, Greater China, Superist	Digital Marketing for the Chinese Market
<b>Ms Serena PAN</b>	Director, Investment and Development, H World Group Ltd	Brand in Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Hospitality
<b>Ms Annika PARK</b>	Founder & Freelance Strategist, 3RD Intelligence	Reinventing Hospitality and Tourism in Hong Kong: A Presentation to Next-Gen Industry Leaders
<b>Mr Pipat PATTHANANUSORN</b>	General Manager, Dusit Thani Hua Hin	An Introduction to Dusit Thani Hotel Hua Hin and Sustainable Development
<b>Ms Aayusha PRASAIN</b>	Chief Executive Officer, Community Homestay Network	Community Tourism and Regenerative Practices
<b>Mr Michael (Weng Hon) SAM</b>	General Manager, Harbour Plaza Metropolitan Shanghai & Metropolitan Residence Shanghai	ESG and Sustainable Accommodation Choices
<b>Dr Hao SHI</b>	Lecturer, Suzhou Vocational University	Managing Gen Z Employees in the Hospitality Industry
<b>Mr Justin SO</b>	Event Manager in Kai Tak Sports Park, ASM Global	Kai Tak Sports Park
<b>Ms Catherine SONOLET</b>	Digital Training Solutions and Sustainability Awareness Consultant, My Sustainable Luxury	Sustainability in the Luxury Hospitality Industry
<b>Mr James SUTCLIFFE</b>	General Manager, Anantara Hua Hin Resort	Exploring the Anantara Hua Hin Resort
<b>Dr Jonathan Lockwood SUTTON</b>	Chief Operating Officer, Steak King Market	Operating Profitable and Sustainable Multi Unit Restaurants – A Hong Kong Insight by Flat Iron
<b>Ms Carina TAN</b>	Hotel Manager, Mandarin Oriental, Macau	Introduction to Mandarin Oriental and Strategy
<b>Ms Rebecca TAY</b>	Director of Operations, Black Sheep Restaurants	Restaurant Theme Creation
<b>Dr Simon (Sen) TIAN</b>	Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Menduner & Huomiaoer	The Future of Human Resource Management in the Hospitality Industry
<b>Dr Ranjana TIWARI</b>	Independent Researcher & Adjunct Professor, JAIN (Deemed-to-be University)	Beyond Aesthetics: Embedding Wellness into Sustainable Luxury Design
<b>Mr Hamson WAI</b>	Honorary President, International Live Events Association – Asia Chapter	ILEA Event Management
<b>Mr Anthony WANG</b>	Junior Sommelier, Ritz-Carlton, Hong Kong	Professional Wine and Cocktail Services
<b>Dr Kai WANG</b>	Vice President, Select Brands Growth Strategy & Development, Greater China, Marriott International	Hotel and Tourism Financial Management
<b>Ms Linda WANG</b>	Head of Lifestyle Marketing, Cathay Pacific Airways	Customer Relationship Management: Engaging Customers with a Lifestyle Programme
<b>Mr Shenjun WANG</b>	Lecturer, Hotel and Culinary College, Shanghai Institute of Tourism	Luxury Services in Hospitality
<b>Dr Alan WONG</b>	Founder & Consultant, Global Dragon Hospitality	Tourism as a Cultural Experience
<b>Mr Alex WONG</b>	Bartender, Ping Pong 129	Professional Wine and Cocktail Services
<b>Mr Ken WONG</b>	Director of Revenue Management, Hotel ICON	• Contemporary Topics in Revenue Management after COVID-19 • Contemporary Topics in Revenue Management • Strategic Revenue Management in Hospitality
<b>Ms Mandy WONG</b>	Director of Human Resources, Regent Hong Kong	The Trend of Talent Acquisition
<b>Mr Timothy WONG</b>	Senior Talent Development Manager, Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation	Exploring, Planning and Preparing Career Development
<b>Ms Rui YAN</b>	Brand Director, Xiamen Jinhongxin Exhibition Co., Ltd	Exhibition Management
<b>Ms Amy YANG</b>	Vice President Marketing, APAC & IMEA at VistaJet International Ltd	VistaJet x PolyU Luxury Management Workshop
<b>Mr Sonic YANG</b>	Lecturer, Department of Hospitality and Business Management, Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong	Effective Complaint Resolution Techniques
<b>Ms Wenjiao YANG</b>	Assistant Secretary-General & Director of the Division of Cooperation and Development, World Tourism Alliance	Conference Management
<b>Prof Patrick YEUNG</b>	CEO, Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce & Professor of Practice (Tourism Marketing), SHTM	Hong Kong Airline Industry Development
<b>Ms Linlin YONG</b>	Project Manager, Finance Shared Service Center for the Greater China and Mongolia Region, Hilton	Hotel and Tourism Financial Management
<b>Ms Maggie YU</b>	Corporate Communications Manager, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre	Trends and Current Practices in Business Events in Hong Kong
<b>Ms Gina YUE</b>	Vice President, Human Resources, Greater China, IHG Hotels & Resorts	Data and Rulemaking in Organisations
<b>Mr Brian YUEN</b>	Deputy Director, Museum Operations, Hong Kong Palace Museum	Customer Behaviour at the Hong Kong Palace Museum
<b>Mr Antoine ZARUBA</b>	Founder, The Cheese House	French Cheese
<b>Dr Alina ZHANG</b>	Senior Lecturer, Division of Business and Hospitality Management, PolyU SPEED	Tourism Supply Chain Management
<b>Ms Stephanie ZHAO</b>	Associate Director of Sustainability, Sands China Ltd	The Future of Marketing
<b>Mr Louis (Luyi) ZHENG</b>	Partner, Shanghai Conference and Exhibition Trading Co., Ltd.	Digitalisation of Chinese MICE
<b>Ms Melanie ZHOU</b>	Head of Client Success, MENA, Eternity X	Digital Marketing
<b>Dr Joerg ZOBEL</b>	Chief Operating Officer, Rosewood Hotel Group	Differentiating a Brand by Understanding Changes of Customer Behaviour and Translating Brand Value into Customer Experiences

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## 2025

**7-9  
DEC**

**Event  
Organiser  
Contact**

IMPACT2025, Hong Kong  
SHTM  
Professor Honggen Xiao  
Email: honggen.xiao@polyu.edu.hk

**7-9  
DEC**

**Event  
Organiser  
Contact**

Undergraduate Student Research  
Competition @ IMPACT2025 Conference  
SHTM  
Dr Ivanka Huang  
Email: ivanka.huang@polyu.edu.hk

## 2026

**11-13  
JUN**

**Event  
Organisers  
Contact**

15th Asia Tourism Forum, Ulaanbaatar,  
Mongolia  
SHTM and Mongolia Tourism Organisation  
Professor Tony Tse  
Email: tony.tse@polyu.edu.hk





Empower Your Future

# World's 1st Master's Degree in Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Hospitality

Designed to meet the global demand for **AI-savvy hospitality professionals**

THINK BEYOND • LEARN AHEAD

Scan and learn more



Applications are open now.