Conference Proceedings

The 30th Annual Graduate Education and Graduate Student Research Conference in Hospitality and Tourism

Jan 2-4, 2025

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Conrad N. Hilton College of Global Hospitality Leadership
THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

School of Hotel and Tourism Management
THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY

Editors

Dr. Dan Wang, Paper Review Committee Chair
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Preface

On behalf of the Graduate Conference Organizing Committee at the University of Houston and The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, I am very pleased to introduce the proceedings of the 30th Annual Graduate Education and Graduate Student Research Conference in Hospitality and Tourism held online, January 2-4, 2025.

This year we received 340 submissions. The abstracts were split between two presentation types. 173 papers made stand-up presentations, and 157 made poster presentations. Moreover, the success of this year's conference is accredited to many individuals and organizations. First, we would like to acknowledge the sponsoring schools and industry partners for their financial support. We would also like to thank all of the authors, reviewers, and track chairs for making this massive project possible. Special thanks to 9 track chairs and all 297 external reviewers for their precious time spent providing valuable comments to the authors. The paper review process could not have been completed without the dedication of reviewers. We also wish to acknowledge that all of the nine track chairs were extremely supportive, and the review process was completed smoothly. This proceeding is the final result of the quality work contributed by the authors, the reviewers, and the track chairs.

Our thanks also go to the Best Paper Selection Committee members: Professor Kaye Chon, Professor Peter Kim, and Professor Dennis Reynolds. They spent their valuable time evaluating papers nominated for the best paper awards and provided recommendations for the three best conference paper awards. And now, last but not least, a special thanks goes to the organizing committee. Thank you for your hard work!

In conclusion, we would like to thank Professor Kaye Chon for having the insight to initiate this meaningful conference 30 years ago. Without his great vision and tremendous efforts, we would not have such a valuable platform for future talents in academia to share their cutting-edge research, develop new research ideas, and network with fellow students and faculty members. Despite the challenges in the environment, we expect another great conference online!

Dan Wang, PhD & Yoon Koh, PhD
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Table of Content

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WHY CHOOSE SMART HOTELS? INSIGHTS FROM YOUNGER GENERATIONS

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Introduction

In late 2019, Henn-na Hotel laid off 50% of its robots due to their failure to meet guest needs (Hotel Management Network, 2019). This highlights the critical need for current smart hotels to align their offerings with consumer expectations to enhance guest satisfaction. Given the relative immaturity of the current smart hotel market, understanding the factors that shape consumer perceptions and decisions is essential, especially for Generation Y and Z, who are open to new technologies (Çera et al., 2022). Previous studies overly emphasize the adoption of a single technology, neglecting the significance of consumer expectations for an integrated technology experience within smart hotels. Thus, this study uses the Expectancy Theory (Vroom et al., 2015) to examine how consumer and product innovativeness impact Generation Y and Z's expectations and purchase decisions in smart hotels.

Methods

This study focuses on Canadian and American smart hotel guests, with 328 valid samples for analysis. All measurement items are adapted from previous studies with a 7-point Likert scale. In addition, the Becker-DeGroot-Marschak (BDM) mechanism is used to measure willingness to pay as an incentivized experimental approach (Becker et al., 1964). Following Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) two-step approach, confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling (SEM) are performed twice with different methods measuring willingness to pay.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Two rounds of SEM analysis reveal consistent findings. The innovativeness of smart hotels significantly influences young consumer expectancies. Also, young smart hotel guests are willing to pay a premium when they perceive the technologies offered are useful, but the perceived difficulty of using these technologies does not affect their spending decisions. This can be attributed to consumers' eagerness to adopt new technologies, even if they are difficult to use (Melarkode & Thakur, 2022). They prioritize the experience and are willing to pay higher rates for early access and mastery of new features. These results confirm the relevance of the Expectancy Theory in understanding smart hotel booking decisions. Additionally, the BDM approach provides more reliable insights into consumer decision-making by reducing cognitive bias (Hossain, 2017).

For practitioners, the results suggest that smart hotels should promote their innovative features through various channels. This includes campaigns, detailed website information, guest testimonials, and active social media engagement. Social platforms, particularly those favored by Generation Y and Z, are crucial for connecting with these consumers and gathering valuable feedback in real-time (Ray & Bala, 2021).

THE POWER OF STORYTELLING: ENHANCING ESG ENGAGEMENT THROUGH NARRATIVE MESSAGES IN SOCIAL MEDIA

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Introduction

ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) has become an emerging focus in hospitality and tourism research (Back, 2024; Bae et al., 2023). However, specific business strategies to increase ESG engagement among customers remain yet to be fully explored (Kucukusta et al., 2019). Previous research highlights the need for the hospitality industry to focus on ESG promotion as a business strategy (Legendre et al., 2024), yet the long-term, abstract goals of ESG initiatives and the use of technical language make it difficult for customers to understand and recognize immediate benefits (Lee et al., 2022; Park & Shin, 2024). Therefore, developing effective communication strategies to simplify the concept of ESG for customer understanding and encourage participation are critical.

Social media is currently one of the most influential marketing tools (Anjorin et al., 2024), but research efforts to incorporate the ESG values into the hospitality industry through social media remain insufficient. Thus, building on the construal level theory and processing fluency theory, the study investigates how narrative message framing in social media posts of a hotel brand can influence the customers' willingness to engage in ESG, through the mediating effect of concreteness and processing fluency.

Methods

The study employed a between-subjects design experimental study with one independent variable, message type, with two levels: non-narrative and narrative. For the main study, 81 participants were analyzed. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two conditions (non-narrative vs. narrative). After reading the social media post, participants rated concreteness, fluency of the message, and their willingness to engage in ESG campaign. Concreteness was measured using five items from Connor et al. (2017). Feeling fluency was assessed with two items from Ouyang et al. (2024). Willingness to engage in ESG was measured using four items from Piligrimienė et al. (2020).

Results/Discussion/Implication

Hayes PROCESS model 6 was conducted to test the hypotheses of the main study. The result showed that concreteness and processing fluency has a serial mediation effect on the relationship between narrative type of message and willingness to engage in ESG ($b = .17$, $SE = .10$, 95% CI [.01, .40]).

Grounded on construal level and processing fluency theories, this study theoretically contributes toESG research in the hospitality literature by higlighting the role of concreteness and fluency in shaping customer engagement with abstract concepts like ESG. From a managerial perspective, the study provides insights on social media communication strategy to best promote ESG among hospitality customers and demonstrates the impact of storytelling in ESG research from the customers' perspective.

DOES AIRBNB HAVE A GENDER? MEASURING GENDERED ATTRIBUTES OF AIRBNB AND THEIR IMPACT ON AUTONOMY AND STRESS: A MIXED-METHODS STUDY

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Introduction

Airbnb accommodations offer "homelike" travel spaces, but whether they replicate household gender dynamics is unclear. The home has been described as a "gender factory" (Berk, 2012), where spaces like the kitchen and laundry room reinforce an unequal division of household labor (Christie, 2006; Craig & Brown, 2017). While Airbnb's amenities enhance the homelike experience (Guttentag, 2015; Kaaristo & Rhoden, 2017; So et al., 2018), women often continue handling most household tasks during self-catering holidays (Hilbrecht et al., 2008; Mottiar & Quinn, 2012). Applying "doing gender" theory, which sees gender as shaped by interactions and practices (West & Zimmerman, 1987), suggests that household amenities may reinforce traditional roles. When Airbnb spaces offer household amenities that imply traditional female responsibilities, they may not be gender-neutral. Despite this, research has yet to translate the concepts of "gendered space" or "gender attributes of spaces" into measurable indicators for tourism studies. This study aims to develop a scale to measure Airbnb's gendered attributes, examining their effects on travelers of different.

Methods

This study employed an exploratory sequential mixed-methods design, beginning with qualitative data collection and analysis to develop instruments and generate hypotheses, followed by quantitative data collection to test and refine these insights (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In the qualitative phase, in-depth interviews and reflexive thematic analysis were conducted to identify themes and codes directly from the data, which subsequently guided the development of survey items. In the quantitative phase, we utilized Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to validate the measurement scales. Following validation, a multi-group analysis was conducted to investigate gender disparities in the relationships among perceptions of gendered Airbnb attributes, housework autonomy, and housework stress. Additionally, a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) mediation model was applied to examine the mediating effect of autonomy on the relationship between Airbnb space attributes and perceived stress.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study developed pioneering instruments to assess the gendered attributes of Airbnb accommodations and housework autonomy, offering the first tools for statistical analysis of these dynamics, which were previously only theorized (Berk, 2012). Findings indicate that individuals experience less stress when their gender aligns with a space's leisure expectations, though both women and men perceive Airbnb accommodations as more closely aligned with male leisure preferences. Additionally, the gendered attributes of these spaces impact men and women differently; women, in particular, are more responsive to spatial cues related to housework, which reduces their sense of autonomy and increases stress. Practically, our instruments can help tourism managers assess and improve guest experiences by measuring gender attributes and housework autonomy in Airbnb settings.

LEVERAGING DIGITAL SENSORY MARKETING FOR ONLINE WINE SHOPPING

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Introduction

Current technology has not widely supported the transmission of close sensory cues, such as haptic, olfactory, and gustatory experiences, over the Internet to promote food and beverage products. Therefore, for wine promotions, where olfactory cues are pivotal but not accessible in the digital online environment, visual and auditory cues are often utilized to stimulate these unreachable experiences, helping customers make purchase decisions. Nevertheless, most studies focus on the effect of one single sensory cue on consumers' responses (e.g., Lowe et al., 2019). Multisensory experience, such as visual-auditory integration, remains under-explored (Stead et al., 2022). An exceptional study by Spence et al. (2014) treated visual and auditory cues as atmospheric cues that contribute to the overall ambiance. Thus, it remains unclear how visual and auditory cues that carry intrinsic information might affect consumers' perception and consumption of wine in the digital context. To bridge this research gap, this research draws on the grounded cognition theory to investigate how visual cues and their interaction with auditory cues may affect consumers' responses to online wine sales. The findings shed new light on digital multisensory integration research and provide applicable approaches to leverage digital sensory marketing for online food and beverage promotion.

Methods

We conducted two studies to explore the effects of visual digital cues and their interaction with auditory digital cues on online wine shopping behaviors. In study 1, we investigated how consumers respond to different visual cues (text vs. text & picture). In study 2, we employed a 2 (visual cue: text vs. text & picture) × 2 (auditory cue: with vs. without music) between-subject experimental design to explore the interaction effects of visual and auditory digital cues on consumers' behavioral intentions (i.e., purchase intentions and word-of-mouth) and to verify how underlying mechanisms mediate the impact of various digital sensory cues on consumers' behavioral intentions.

Results/Discussion/Implication

In Study 1, the results revealed that compared with the visual cue with text only, multiple visual cues with both text and picture result in better consumer response in the online wine sales context. In study 2, the results showed that with the auditory cue of interactive music, multiple visual cues with both text and picture result in a similar level of consumer response as the visual cue with text only. On the other hand, when without the auditory cue, the impact of multiple visual cues (text and picture) leads to enhanced purchase intentions and WOM, which is serially mediated by perceived website entertainment and mental imagery vividness. This study contributes to the digital sensory research by exploring how various, multiple digital sensory cues may extend varying impacts on consumers' information processing and decision-making in online wine shopping. These findings highlight the importance of crafting effective online shopping experiences by incorporating vivid sensory cues such as pictures. However, the accumulation of information-rich sensory cues may lead to sensory overload, limiting the enhancement of consumers' shopping experiences.

ALWAYS POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE? EXPLORING CROWDING EFFECTS ON EMOTIONAL PROFILES IN STATE FAIRS

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Introduction

Crowding is a common experience for attendees at large events like festivals or state fairs. How this crowding is perceived can depend on various individual and contextual factors (Sanz-Blas et al., 2024). Individual perceptions shape emotional reactions, ranging from positive to negative, influencing attendee satisfaction and behaviors (Hyun & Kim, 2015; Kim et al., 2016). While the influence of crowding has been extensively discussed in retail environments, the nature of crowding at state fairs presents unique dynamics. Specifically, attendees at state fairs often experience a complex mixture of emotions, which affect their behaviors and decisions (Fernando et al., 2014). Addressing this research gap, the study employs Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) to classify unique emotional profiles, aiming to enhance understanding of how crowding impacts emotions in the specific context of state fairs. In doing so, it also aims to validate a crowding scale based on these emotional responses and explore distinct subgroups of attendees through a person- centered approach. Findings from this study indicate that crowding influences a spectrum of emotions—ranging from highly activated positive and negative emotions to subtler emotional shifts. This research contributes to the theoretical understanding of crowding's impact on emotional experiences at state fairs, with practical insights for better crowd management.

Methods

A revised crowding scale was validated through a self-administered survey distributed to a sample of U.S. participants via a recognized platform. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted to refine the crowding scale, while Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) validated its structure. Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) was then performed using R-Studio to identify unique emotional profiles among the respondents.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The findings reveal the uniqueness of crowding in the state fair context. Unlike traditional models that distinguish between human and spatial crowding, the crowding experienced at state fairs was found to be perceived as an overall sense of confinement, busyness, and overflow, without a clear distinction between different types of crowding. Attendees' simultaneous experience of diverse emotions may account for why some crowding effects seem less pronounced. Three distinct emotional patterns emerged from the LPA, illustrating that individuals perceive crowding differently. Crowding did not consistently provoke purely positive or negative emotions; instead, many attendees reported mixed emotions.

Theoretically, this research expands the understanding of crowding by emphasizing its context-specific dimensions, particularly in non-retail settings like state fairs. It also highlights the occurrence of multiple emotional states simultaneously, thus filling a gap in previous studies that focused solely on unidimensional emotional outcomes of crowding. Practically, these findings can inform strategies for event organizers, especially those overseeing large-scale events, to improve attendee experiences by understanding the complex interplay of crowding and emotions.

SELF-REPRESENTATION OF SOLO TRAVELLERS: THE NARRATIVE OF CHINESE TRAVELLERS

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Introduction

Human thinking is diverse and the desires vary. These desires open the path for new market segments in the tourism industry. Linking both travelling goals and travellers' interests, this creates an avenue for different types of tourism. Among them, solo tourism is one that, which has been identified as an emerging tourism trend based on leading online travel guides, websites and blogs.

The purposes of travelling would be general to all types of travellers, except if travellers look for specific and unique intentions for travel. The solo travellers will be counted as travellers with specific purposes. The existing studies under the context of solo tourism only covered the reasons, motivations and constraints related to solo travel. From these, most scholars highlighted that the transformative experience would be the main reason behind the selection of solo travelling. However, there is a limited understanding on how such a transformative experience can be formed via solo travel. The study attempts to address the following research questions: How do solo travellers define themselves? Does solo travel bring changes in the solo travellers' self- representation? What critical moments may trigger solo travellers to make changes in their self- representation? Situating solo travel in the context of liminality, the study mainly aims to explore the mechanism of the changes solo travel brings to a solo traveller's self-representation.

Methods

To understand the lived experiences of solo travellers, the researcher approached phenomenological methodology and used in-depth interviews and observation as data collection tools. By using experienced snowball sampling and data saturation, the researcher confined the study to 20 participants and used a pluralism analysis technique, including Descriptive Phenomenological Analysis (DPA), the Hermeneutic Cycle (HC), and Thematic Analysis (TA) to analyse the data.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The current study has established an understanding of how solo travellers represent themselves during their travel and confirmed that travelling alone leads to meaningful positive transformations in a traveller's life, particularly in regard to self-transformation. The research discovered that during the transitional phase, when travellers venture outside of their comfort zones and face significant challenges on their solo travels, they commonly develop a newfound sense of self. Nonetheless, the degree to which these changes are internalised by solo travellers is contingent on their unique inclinations. Furthermore, the study has filled the gaps in empirical understanding and offers theoretical and practical implications.

The incorporation of the self-representation concept into the context of solo travel provides stakeholders with valuable insights into the behavioural changes of solo travellers over an extended period. Also, the comprehension of how solo travellers represent themselves can enable stakeholders to cater to the needs and wants of tourists with due respect to their destinations. This information can be instrumental in facilitating the development of more effective strategies for serving the interests of solo travellers.

ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF AI-GENERATED TRAVEL RECOMMENDATIONS: BALANCING COGNITIVE LOAD AND SOURCE CREDIBILITY

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Introduction

Generative AI (hereafter, AI) has been increasingly incorporated into business operations across many industries including travel and tourism. One of the leading online travel agencies (hereafter, OTA), Expedia, has recently adopted ChatGPT in its mobile application to provide travel-related information and assist customers with travel planning (Expedia, Inc., 2023). While the advantages of AI are widely acknowledged, the market feedback on the application of AI in service has been mixed, with major concerns about biases, transparency, and credibility (Dwivediet al., 2023). This is critical in the hospitality and tourism industry as AI has already become an actor in creating marketing outcomes (e.g., service recommendations) (Zhang & Prebensen, 2024). To this end, this research investigates the effective communication approaches to enhance customers' perceived usefulness of information provided by AI and the consequent customer loyalty in OTA usage.

Methods

The research comprised two studies. In Study 1, a two (structure: with vs. without) by two (information source: with vs. without) scenario-based, between-subjects study was conducted. Participants viewed a scenario where ChatGPT responded to a customer's vacation itinerary inquiry in one of four recommendation formats (structured or unstructured format, with or without a source provided). In Study 2, a similar two (structure: with vs. without) by two (information origin: internal vs. external) between-subjects experimental design was employed. The same travel recommendation scenario from Study 1 was used; however, in this study, the recommendation source was specified as either internal information from the travel agency or external information from the Internet. A two-way ANOVA was performed to analyze OTA reuse intention.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The research findings demonstrate that structured recommendations led to higher OTA reuse intention. In contrast, when recommendations were provided with the internal source, either structured or unstructured does not influence OTA reuse intention. The results illustrate the interplay between structured and source in that the perceived usefulness and behavioral intentions can be enhanced through source credibility. The findings theoretically justify the importance of structured communication by demonstrating that consumers perceive structured information as more useful, thereby enhancing their reuse intention. From a practical perspective, this research offers important insights into an effective design for AI recommendation systems on OTA platforms: providing the output in a structured format, such as using bullet points or providing tables following a certain timeline (e.g., daily schedule).

UNOCOVERED DIMENSIONS OF SERVICE ROBOTS IN THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ACADEMIC LITERATURE AND ONLINE REVIEWS

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Introduction

The emergence of service robots is transforming the hospitality industry Despite this growing trend, a considerable gap exists between academic perspectives and real-world applications. Academic research largely relied on bibliometric and quantitative analyses focusing on conceptual frameworks. They may sometimes overlook the complicated and experiential nature of customer interactions in real-world dining environments. In contrast, online reviews emphasize real-world experiences and reveal important elements of the dining experience. This difference between theoretical research and customer feedback highlights the need for a more integrated understanding of service robots in hospitality. This study bridges that gap by analyzing both academic research and customer reviews to identify similarities and differences.

Methods

Data were collected from two sources. 143 academic studies were collected from the Web of Science. They had to include "Hospitality" in the journal title and "service robot" as topic to qualify. Online review data was collected from restaurants in California using Google Maps. One thousand two hundred fifty-three reviews were collected and utilized for further analyses. R and Orange were used to analyze these data.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Academic articles and online reviews appeared since 2017 and explosively increased since COVID-19, but the online reviews increase started a little later. This discrepancy maybe attributed to relatively few businesses adopting service robots early because people were uncertain about the advantages of service robots. However, they realized their benefits during the pandemic.

Academic research primarily focuses on abstract, theoretical concepts such as customer acceptance, anthropomorphism, and operational efficiency. In contrast, customer reviews reflect more immediate, practical concerns, with terms like 'cool,' 'fun,' and 'service,' indicating that customers are more interested in the novelty and overall experience of service robots rather than their technical or conceptual aspects. These findings suggest that future research should incorporate more customer-centered factors to align theoretical insights with the real-world experiences that influence customer satisfaction.

This study adopts a new approach by comparing academic research with consumer reviews, which offers a new way to explore unexplored key research areas. Through this approach, this study finds a unique implication that 'coolness' has not been widely explored in academic research despite the frequent mention of 'coolness' as a defining feature of service robots in online reviews. Although scant research has investigated 'coolness' in the restaurant context, they didn't reflect specific characteristics of the restaurant industry. Moreover, by emphasizing the 'coolness' and entertainment value of service robots, restaurants can create more memorable experiences and potentially drive repeat business by enhancing customer engagement and loyalty. Thus, further investigation into the coolness of service robots is warranted.

VOICE AI IN DRIVE-THRU: HOW DOES IT INFLUENCE CONSUMERS'S FOOD CHOICES?

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Introduction

As major fast-food chains increasingly implement voice AI for order-taking, understanding its impact on consumer behavior becomes crucial. This research investigates how and why voice AI in drive-thru settings influences consumers' food choices compared to human employees. Drawing on self-regulation theory (Baumeister & Vohs, 2003), we propose that interactions with voice AI (vs. human employees) lead to more indulgent food choices through serial mechanisms: increased cognitive depletion and subsequent reliance on affective information processing. When cognitive resources are depleted, individuals are less able to engage in effortful processing and are more likely to rely on quick, affect-driven heuristics (Pocheptsova et al., 2009), often leading to preference for indulgent options. We argue that voice AI interactions are more cognitively depleting because consumers hold lower expectations about AI's comprehension abilities (Melumad, 2023) and thus need to speak more deliberately to ensure their requests are understood. Moreover, consumers tend to perceive AI as more mechanical (Longoni et al., 2019), which can reduce emotional connection and trust, further heightening anxiety and cognitive load. By examining these mechanisms and identifying technology familiarity as a potential boundary condition, this research addresses a significant gap in understanding how this technological shift affects consumer decision-making in food service contexts.

Methods

The research employed three studies to test the hypotheses. Study 1 employed a single factor (service agent: voice AI vs. human employee) between-subjects experimental design, where participants watched drive-thru ordering scenarios and chose between healthy and indulgent food options. Study 2 replicated Study 1 in a laboratory setting, where participants interacted directly with either a ChatGPT 3 vocal assistant or a human assistant while making choices between healthy and indulgent snacks. Study 3 employed a 2(service agent: voice AI vs. employee) × familiarity quasi-experimental design. Following the same scenario as Study 1, participants made food choice, completed measures of cognitive depletion (adapted from Lanaj et al., 2014), information processing style (adapted from Shiv & Fedorikhin, 1999), and familiarity with voice AI technology (Leo & Huh, 2020).

Results/Discussion/Implication

Across three studies, we found that interactions with voice AI, compared to human employees, consistently led to more indulgent food choices. This effect operated through a serial mechanism: voice AI interactions increased cognitive depletion, which in turn led to greater reliance on affective information processing (Pocheptsova et al., 2009). Importantly, this effect was significantly reduced among consumers who were highly familiar with voice AI technology. These findings enrich existing research on AI's impact on consumer behavior (Davenport et al., 2020; Puntoni et al., 2021) by identifying a novel factor influencing food choices in service encounters. The research also highlights the critical role of technology familiarity as a boundary condition for AI's influence on consumer decision-making. From a practical standpoint, consumers should be aware of this influence on their food choices, restaurants should balance operational efficiency with customers' dietary well-being, and policymakers may need to develop standards for voice AI systems to promote deliberate decision-making in service encounters.

SERVICE AND LANGUAGE VARIATIONS: EXPLORING HOW TOURISTS SPEAKING DIFFERENT LANGUAGES EXPERIENCE HOSPITALITY AT HONG KONG'S CHA CHAAN TENGS

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Introduction

Hong Kong, attracting millions of travelers from across the globe every year, is especially famous for its culinary scene. Among its diverse offerings, Cha Chaan Tengs, or Hong Kong- style diners, are sought by tourists for an authentic local experience. Despite their historical significance, tourists have reported negative experiences (Lo, 2017; Sun, 2023). Research on service interactions and cultural background highlights a relationship between language and culture (Félix-Brasdefer, 2015; Hofstede et al., 2010), which may explain the varying experiences at Cha Chaan Tengs.

Given the rise in international travel and Hong Kong's government efforts to enhance the city's image for service hospitality and friendliness (Hong Kong Tourism Board, 2024), understanding the dynamics of service encounters and language use at these traditional dining venues can bring great value. Therefore, this study investigates how service experience (SE, perception of service quality) and engagement in conversation (EC, communication between customers and service providers) can impact service hospitality (SH, perception of staff friendliness). Additionally, the study also explores the mediation effect of EC on the SE-SH relationship and whether these effects differ among tourists with different language skills.

Methods

This quantitative multi-group study categorizes HongKong tourists into Chinese-speaking (CS) and non-Chinese-speaking (NCS) groups. A questionnaire, available in both English and Chinese, utilized 5-point Likert scales and was distributed via Prolific and social media. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 29 and AMOS 26. Validity and reliability were tested using confirmatory factor analysis, followed by structural model assessment. Hypothesis testing used bootstrapping (5,000 samples, 95% CI) for direct effects analysis, multi-group mediation analysis (MGMA), and achi-square difference test to compare mediation effects across groups.

Results/Discussion/Implication

A total of 391 valid responses were collected in July 2024, with 202 CS and 189 NCS respondents. The results indicated that SE has a significant positive impact on both SH andEC, which in turn positively influences SH. The MGMA confirmed that EC significantly mediates the relationship between SE and SH for both groups, enhancing the positive impact of SE on SH. Although the mediating effect of EC was slightly stronger for the NCS group, the chi-square difference test showed no significant difference in mediation effects between groups.

These findings highlight the important roles of service experience and engagement in conversation in enhancing service hospitality at Hong Kong's Cha Chaan Tengs. In practical terms, service providers should focus not only on training their teams in service standards but also on improving their communication skills. Given that the mediation effects of EC were not significantly different between the groups, it suggests that the positive impact of EC on the relationship between SE and SH is equally important across different customer groups. Therefore, training for service standards and communication skills should be sensitive to the diversity of customers, such as service procedures that meet specific needs, language learning, multilingual menus, and cultural awareness training to improve service hospitality.

DO LOYALTY CUSTOMERS ALSO FEEL MANIPULATED IN PRE-SERVICE SUGGESTIVE TIPPING? A MODERATED MEDIATION MODEL

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Introduction

Pre-service tipping is a new growing trend of tipping that consumers pay the tips upon order placement, specifically before the fulfillment of service (Warren et al., 2021). Fan et al. (2024) investigated that the implementation of suggestive tipping can nudge consumers to tip. Research in tipping behavior has primarily focused on post service tipping; there is a need to focus on how suggestive tipping formats influence consumers' tipping behavior in the pre-service tipping phase. Warren et al. (2021) found that pre-service tipping led consumers to question whether the service provider has manipulative intentions. Furthermore, pre-service tipping creates high levels of uncertainty (Wen et al., 2024), where consumers have not yet been serviced. When loyalty is high, consumers tend to trust the information provided by the restaurant (Chang et al., 2013).

The purpose of this study is to investigate suggestive tipping format and consumers' loyalty interactively influence their perceived manipulative. Further, this study aims to examine consumers' perceived manipulative mediate the interactive effect of tipping format and loyalty on willingness to tip.

Methods

The objective of this study is to examine the moderated effect of customers' loyalty (LOY) on the mediating effect of perceived manipulativeness (PM) on the relationship between suggestive tipping (ST) and willingness to tip (WTT). A 3 (suggestive tipping: tip % (F# 1) vs. tip in both %+$ (F#2) vs. tip total (F#3)) x 2 (loyalty: loyal vs. not loyal) between-subjects design experiment was executed.

Discussion

The results suggest that when consumers' loyalty is low, all three formats of suggestive tipping are perceived as manipulative for consumers, leading to lower willingness to tip. However, when the consumers' loyalty is high, the tipping suggestion format with both percentage and tip dollar amount was perceived as less manipulative, which results in a higher willingness to pay. The results suggest that loyal consumers would still prefer the calculation assistance format with percentage and dollar amount in the pre-service context.

The findings of this study carry several important implications for restaurant management and customer behavior. First, pre-service tipping is perceived as inherently risky, even among loyal consumers. Restaurant managers may apply these insights by strategically designing tipping suggestions that display both percentage and tip dollar amounts, which could enhance consumer motivation to tip more generously. Secondly, the study highlights the importance of consumer loyalty, as loyal consumers tend to feel less manipulated when presented with suggestive tipping amounts. Restaurant practitioners should prioritize strengthening their loyalty program, aiming to encourage repeat patronage where consumers are more receptive to preservice tipping suggestions.

INTERACTIVE EFFECTS OF REVIEW VALENCE AND EMOTIONAL INTENSITY ON COGNITIVE DISSONANCE REDUCTION BEHAVIORS: A MIXED-METHODS APPROACH BASED ON COGNITIVE DISSONANCE THEORY

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Introduction

Review inconsistency occurs when a single review presents conflicting information across different attributes (Liu & Karahanna, 2017), which can complicate and disrupt the customer's decision-making process. Previous studies have concentrated on the negative effects of such inconsistencies as arousal inducing cognitive dissonance (Zhang et al., 2023). However, according to cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1962), individuals do not passively endure the discomfort caused by dissonance; rather, they actively engage in strategies to mitigate this psychological tension. Despite these strategies alleviating the potential effects of review inconsistencies, previous research has not explored customer behaviors as strategic outcomes on decision-making. Therefore, this study explores the interaction effects of review valence and emotional intensity on the relationship between review inconsistency and consumers' dissonance reduction strategies, such as information-seeking and review helpfulness. Our research highlights that inconsistent review not always lead to negative decision-making outcomes, as dissonance-reduction strategies interact dynamically with cues like review valence and emotional intensity.

Methods and Results

Employing mixed-methods approach, two studies are designed to empirically examine the impact of review inconsistency on cognitive dissonance reduction. In experimental design (Study 1), we measure information-seeking as an outcome of additional information-seeking activities. In the field study using big data (Study 2), we utilize review helpfulness an indicator of selective information acceptance. The findings of this study show that review valence and emotional intensity play a key moderating role when dealing with cognitive dissonance from an inconsistent review. The results from Study 1 highlight how review valence and emotional intensity can mitigate the negative effects of review inconsistency on information-seeking, confirming no differences from consistent review in low-intensity emotional reviews. In Study 2, negative and inconsistent reviews had also the greatest positive impact on review helpfulness. However, high emotional intensity in negative reviews amplified the negative effects of inconsistency, reducing review helpfulness.

Conclusion

Based on findings, our research makes a significant contribution by extending the literature on cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1962; Liu & Cai, 2022), directly examining its impact on customers' dissonance reduction strategies. Furthermore, this study reveals that both valence and emotional intensity significantly shape consumers' decision-making process although previous research has emphasized the direct negative impact of inconsistency (Zhang et al., 2023). This study also provides practical insights into the hospitality industry, particularly those involved in managing online reviews and online marketing strategies (McGrath, 2017).

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CUSTOMER ATTITUDE TOWARDS PETS AND CUSTOMER ATTITUDE TOWARDS HOTEL: THE BALANCE THEORY

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Introduction

Pet-friendly accommodations refers to place that allow pets to stay with their owners, offering a welcoming and supportive environment tailored to the needs of both the pets and their owners (Vale et al., 1996). However, the question of whether to permit pets on properties remains a topic of ongoing debate in the hospitality sector, due to the potential effects on non-pet-friendly guests (Tanner, 2014). Also, current studies were more conducted from pet owner perspectives, overlooked the viewpoints of non-pet owners or those who dislike pet in the context of hotels' pet- friendly policies. With the growing trend of pet-friendly concepts, the hotel industry needs to better manage pet-friendly policies, considering customer perception and individual preference difference.

Heider's Balance Theory (1958) posits that individuals strive for consistency in their attitudes and relationships, which lead to psychological harmony. A balanced relationship is more likely to occur than an imbalanced one (Wang & Thorngate, 2003). Any discomfort caused by a pet policy could trigger psychological imbalance, which may ultimately lead to negative attitude for customers (Victoria, 2022).

Therefore, this study aims to examine hotel customers' attitudes toward pet-friendly hotels through the lens of balance theory. Specifically, the study aims to (1) evaluate the balanced relationships between pets, guests, and hotels, and (2) identify attitude differences between pet- owning and non-pet-owning hotel customers in the pet-friendly hotel setting.

Methods

The survey instrument includes two constructs: customer attitude towards pet (PA) and customer attitude towards hotel (HA). An online scenario-based questionnaire was conducted through an online platform with 435 valid responses, including 229 pet owners and 206 non-pet owners. Data analysis involved the use of Chi-square (χ^2) tests and Independent Samples T-tests to examine the balance/unbalance relationships and group differences between pet owners and non-pet owners.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The study successfully investigated the balanced relationships between customers' attitudes toward pets and pet-friendly hotels, which revealed that customers tend to align their attitudes toward pet- friendly hotels with their perceptions of pets. Furthermore, pet owners tend to exhibit a more positive attitude toward pets, although nearly half of non-pet owners also demonstrate a positive attitude toward pets and pet-friendly hotels.

This study presents a comprehensive framework that focuses on the human-animal relationship, and customer attitudes, and extends balance theory to the hospitality context. Also, this study extends the literature on pet-friendly hotels and highlights the need to consider the preferences of both pet and non-pet owners. Finally, this study makes practical contribution by calling for a public attrition to the pet-friendly trend and offers valuable insight into the understanding of customer psychological needs.

ASSOCIATION MEMBERS' LOYALTY INFLUENCED BY MOTIVATION, PSYCHOLOGICAL OWNERSHIP, AND ATTACHMENT.

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Introduction

Professional associations spend about $325 billion and employ nearly 2.5 million people, contributing $184 billion to the U.S. economy. The annual meetings produce about 30% of an association's operating income. Therefore, it is critical for meeting organizers and associations to host a successful meeting while attracting attendees to return to their annual meetings. Membership is a sign of peer recognition and a way to share attitudes and opinions about the profession. Associations generally have different membership tiers (e.g., silver, gold, platinum), and members' attitudes and behaviors would differ depending on membership types. Previous research has identified various reasons association members attend conferences, including professional development, networking opportunities, location, time, and health and well-being.

This study aims to predict association members' loyalty by investigating the relationships among motivation, psychological ownership, place attachment, and local chapter involvement. Particular objectives include: 1) to examine the sequential relationships among motivation, psychological ownership, place attachment, and loyalty at a dimensional level, and 2) to identify the moderating effect of local chapter involvement among the sequential relationships.

Methods

The motivation was measured in three perspectives: autonomy, competence, and relatedness, with nine items in total. Psychological ownership was measured with 12 items in four dimensions: self-efficacy, self-identity, belonging, and accountability. Eight items measured attachment. Loyalty was measured with six items in two dimensions: membership and partnership.

Structural equation modeling was used to test the research hypotheses. The measurement model was measured through confirmatory factor analysis, and then measurement invariance, construct validity, discriminant validity, and reliability were evaluated. The assessment model acceptability is based on the chi-square statistic, comparative fit index, and root means square approximation error. An invariance test was conducted to compare the conceptual model between two membership types to assess the moderating effect.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The findings reveal that motivation significantly impacts all aspects of psychological ownership, particularly the dimensions of belonging and self-efficacy. These dimensions substantially enhance members' attachment, indicating that a strong sense of belonging or efficacy leads to increased attachment to the association.

The study also underscores the importance of emotional connection in fostering member loyalty, as attachment components like place affect and social bonding significantly influence loyalty. Moreover, the discovery that self-efficacy directly impacts membership loyalty offers a new perspective on how members' capability drives their continued participation in association activities. A practical implication for an association or organization is that creating a sense of belonging within the association can increase and retain membership. Thus, it will create an emotional connection that increases participation and loyalty.

FROM PLATE TO PALATE: HOW PLATING AESTHETICS SHAPES MINDFUL FOOD CHOICES THROUGH SCARCITY AND HEALTHINESS

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Introduction

Plating aesthetics offers a unique insight into how people first "eat with their eyes," with aesthetics emerging as a quality signal. However, aesthetic attributes in food have often been assessed subjectively and oversimplified, underscoring the need to examine aesthetics through quantifiable and measurable dimensions. This study prioritizes understanding customers' judgments of plating aesthetics in restaurants, addressing the cognitive processes involved in appreciating aesthetic qualities-size and color. While healthier food choices are prioritized in dietary decisions, the trade- off between food-related aesthetics and health benefits is debated. Despite this, empirical evidence linking plating aesthetics to health-related perceptions remains scarce. Thus, this research investigated the causality of plate size on behavioral intentions (Study 1: H1), the serial mediation of perceived scarcity and food healthiness (Study 2: H2 & H3), and the moderated mediation of color contrast (Study 3: H4).

Methods

Study 1 conducted a single-factor (plate size: large vs. small) between-subjects design, manipulating plate size by adjusting the gap between the plate's edges and the food. 117 MTurk participants were randomly assigned to either condition. Study 2 expanded this design, recruiting 121 MTurk participants to examine the serial mediation of perceived scarcity and food healthiness. Study 3 employed a 2x2 experimental design, manipulating both plate size (large vs. small) and color contrast (low vs. high), with 268 participants recruited via Connect crowdsourcing. Two mediators (perceived scarcity and food healthiness) and two dependent variables (purchase intention and positive WOM) were measured using established scales. Across all studies, hunger level, weight control, health commitment, frequency of exercise, weight, height, gender, and age were controlled.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The manipulations of plate size and color contrast were successful in all three studies. Study 1's MANCOVA results indicated that a large plate led to marginally higher purchase intentions and significantly more positive word of mouth (WOM). In Study 2, serial mediation analysis using PROCESS Macro (model 6) demonstrated that plate size enhanced perceived scarcity, which in turn increased perceptions of food healthiness, thereby boosting both purchase intention and WOM. Finally, Study 3 employed moderated mediation analysis with PROCESS Macro (Model 83), revealing that color contrast moderated these positive effects, with low contrast amplifying the impact of plate size on purchase intention and WOM. All hypotheses were supported.

This research provides empirical evidence that plating aesthetics (plate size and color contrast) can nudge food choices by triggering health-related inferences. The research also identifies perceived scarcity as a psychological mechanism linking plating aesthetics to food healthiness, revealing that scarcity activates a "health-seeking mindset." Practically, this research suggests that in dining settings, strategically using larger plates with low color contrast can encourage healthier perception and food choices. Additionally, it supports government and policymaking initiatives toward healthy eating by illustrating how plating aesthetics can effectively frame food's health attributes.

ONLINE FOOD DELIVERY: CHANGES SINCE THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Introduction

Online food delivery (OFD) allows consumers to order from restaurants through digital platforms (Elvandarietal., 2018). The market is projected to grow at an 18% CAGR, reaching $1.854 trillion by 2029, with the U.S. as a key leader (Statista, 2024). The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated OFD adoption due to lifestyle changes, making it crucial to study OFD's long-term effects on consumer behavior (Ababneh et al., 2022; Chen McCain et al., 2021). While OFD research exists, studies specific to post-COVID-19 changes are limited. Previous reviews (Shankar et al., 2022; Shroffet al., 2022) address general OFD themes but overlook shifts in consumer satisfaction, behavior, and repurchase intentions post-pandemic. This study aims to fill these gaps, focusing on how OFD dynamics and consumer behaviors have evolved since COVID-19. Using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and bibliometric analysis of studies from 2020-2024, we explore research trends and propose future directions, addressing overlooked areas in post-pandemic OFD research.

Methods

This study employed a systematic literature review, collecting bibliographic data from selected articles in July 2024 and conducting keyword co-occurrence analyses. Data was collected using Web of Science and Google Scholar; we focused on OFD articles from 2020-2024 in English and limited to those listed on the Australian Business Dean Council Journal Quality List. Then, we analyzed data using VOSviewer software to perform keyword co-occurrence analysis, clustering and mapping frequently co-occurring keywords to track research progression. VOSviewer positions highly correlated keywords closer together, helping visualize research themes. We set the program's initial value to 60% of prior studies to optimize keyword extraction and organize the research areas.

Results/Discussion/Implication

With a minimum term occurrence set at five, 1,552 terms were initially identified, and 83 met this threshold. Three key research clusters emerged: consumer behavior and trust in OFD, consumer satisfaction and purchase intent, and COVID-19-related food delivery strategies. Using VOSviewer, keyword networks categorized research themes into clusters. Out of 1,352 terms analyzed, 63 met the threshold, forming four clusters: commission rates and information access, trust and benefits in OFD, consumer attitudes and motivations, and consumer satisfaction and service quality. Price significantly influences OFD use, with consumers favoring simple payment processes and valuing cost-effectiveness (Sharma et al., 2023; Alawan, 2020). Price-sensitive users prioritize discounts and rewards, necessitating affordable pricing models (Tavitiyaman et al., 2022). Post-pandemic, OFD platforms should adapt pricing to sustain user engagement.

Collaboration between stakeholders (restaurants, platforms, drivers) is key to consumer satisfaction (Linetal., 2024). Extending Shroffetal.'s (2022) two-sided platform model, this study suggests a three-sided model, emphasizing drivers' roles. Future research should explore stakeholder relationships, particularly drivers' wages and regulations, as laws like California's AB5 emerge. Limitations include a focus on 48 English-language articles and consumer-centered research. Broader studies are needed to develop a holistic three-sided OFD model.

DISCRETE CHOICE MODEL ANALYSIS ON ANCILLARY AMENITIES FOR HOTEL MEMBERSHIPS

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Introduction

This research explores ancillary revenue strategies in the hotel industry, focusing on the discrete choice model to analyze consumer preferences for paid hotel memberships. The study of ancillary revenue has become increasingly important for hotels, consisting of ancillary amenities such as like food, wellness, and lounges (Hadwick, 2015; Ryan & Huimin, 2007; Ghare, 2022). However, it is unclear on which combination of ancillary amenities are most desired by consumers. Therefore, this study addresses the gap in understanding consumer preferences for these ancillary services within the context of paid hotel memberships by using a discrete choice experiment to identify and calculate the desired amenity combinations for hotel memberships as well as the irrespective marginal willingness to pay for those amenities.

Methods

This research employs a discrete choice model to identify the combinations of ancillary amenities that attract customers to purchase hotel memberships. The discrete choice experiment takes the number of attribute categories and attribute levels and creates a set of eight questions that can measure consumer preferences. This choice experiment involved 88 participants, randomly assigning them to one of three choice set surveys. The surveys then assessed preferences across amenities such as food and beverage options, wellness, loyalty points, exclusive services, and membership pricing levels. Each category had two levels each except for price at three levels. Travel type is used as a moderating variable as travel type has been shown to affect willingness to pay (Masiero et al., 2015). Lastly, marginal willingness to pay is calculated by dividing non-monetary variables in amenities by monetary variables in membership price, which are derived from the choice tasks.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The results show that consumers value a balance of utilitarian (functional) and hedonic (sensory) features, with significant preferences towards amenities such as the complimentary breakfast, swimming pools, and cheaper memberships fees. Consumer preferences also vary based on the type of travel. Business travelers preferred discounts on food and beverages, fitness centers, and a higher price level, while leisure travelers prefer swimming pools and complimentary breakfasts. Thus, the type of travel switches the preferences of consumers. These results challenge previous findings on hedonic attributes, which states that consumers would exhibit stronger loss aversion only towards hedonic attributes. Our study shows that the preferences are in fact mixed rather than a focused loss aversion towards hedonic attributes. This study expands the hospitality literature by applying a discrete choice model to hotel ancillary services, offering hotel managers strategic insights on membership packages. Hotels may desire to target leisure travelers differently by focusing on complementary breakfasts for more leisure hotels and discounts of F&B and fitness centers for business travelers. Future research could explore a broader range of hotel types and further examine distinctions between hedonic and utilitarian preferences in ancillary amenity services.

THE CONTENTS OF AI INFLUENCERS IMPACT ON THEIR MZ FOLLOWERS' DESTINATION TRAVEL DECISIONS

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Introduction

Social media has become a significant part of the daily lives of young adults, particularly Millennials and Generation Z (Bengtsson & Johansson, 2022). It is not just a platform for leisure, but also a key source of information for consumers (Kol et al., 2021). Depending on the influencer's content, followers become interested in the product and search for related information (Gamage & Ashill, 2023). People who follow travel influencers frequently rely on their suggestions and reviews when choosing a travel destination. (Kilic et al., 2024). Therefore, this study, using the source credibility model theory and parasocial interaction theory, investigates the impact of AI influencers' content on Millennials and Generation Z (MZ) followers ' destination travel intentions.

Methods

First, the data was collected using a self-administered online survey method. A total of 432 responses were collected from Millennials and Generation Z. Second, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to check the quality of the data. In this stage, internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity are checked (Hair et al., 2017). Third, structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to identify the hypothesized relationships. In addition, the moderation tests were conducted.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Source credibility had a positive effect on parasocial interaction, and storytelling content had a significant effect on parasocial interaction. The parasocial interaction was found to be related to influencer attachment; however, it was found to have no relationship with place attachment. Additionally, a significant relationship was discovered between influencer attachment and both place attachment and the intention to travel to a destination. Place attachment was also positively linked to the intention to travel to that destination.

Next, the study assessed the moderating effects of generational cohorts and loneliness. It was found that generation significantly influenced the relationship between social credibility and parasocial interaction, as well as between storytelling content and parasocial interaction, with Generation Z showing a greater impact on both paths. Loneliness was found to significantly moderate the path between parasocial interaction and place attachment, but not between parasocial interaction and influencer attachment. Additionally, individuals with high levels of loneliness exhibited a stronger influence on the connection between parasocial interaction and place attachment.

This study investigates the influence of AI travel influencers on their MZ generation followers ' choice of travel destinations using the relationship between two theories, the source credibility model theory and parasocial interaction theory. The theoretical implication of the study is that it sheds light on how AI influencers affect their followers' decision-making. Additionally, it offers practical insights for content creators and marketers by highlighting the significance of content. The findings also provide travel companies with guidelines on how to effectively market to different groups based on moderation tests.

UNPACKING MEAL KIT PERCEPTIONS: THE ROLE OF ATTRIBUTES IN SHAPING CONSUMER SATISFACTION AND INTENTIONS

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Introduction

The meal kit industry, projected to reach nearly $14.6 billion USD by 2024 with an annual growth rate of $4.9 billion (Statistica, 2023), represents a significant sector within the food industry. This growth, coupled with the industry's evolution from its origins in the 1920s in the U.S. (History Guild, 2022), underscores the necessity for further research to understand the changing dynamics of consumer behavior and market demands. To gain a deeper understanding of today's consumers' perceptions of meal kits and their psychological behavior, more research is required. This research employs the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) to construct a detailed framework for analyzing the motivational drivers behind meal kit purchases. Specifically, the objectives of this study are fourfold: (a) to identify the principal factors that motivate consumers to choose meal kit services, along with the hedonic and utilitarian values associated with these services; (b) to investigate how these perceived values affect consumer satisfaction; and (c) to examine the impact of these values on consumers' behavioral intentions, specifically focusing on repurchase intentions and recommendations to others (d) to explore whether significant differences exist between gender groups in terms of how meal kit attributes influence their perceived value and behavioral intentions.

Methods

A self-administered online survey was conducted using a questionnaire distributed through the Prolific marketplace to a panel of U.S.-based consumers. Initially, the survey instrument underwent a pilot test with 245 respondents and the survey ultimately garnered participation from 475 U.S. residents aged 18 and above. To ensure the quality of the data, multiple qualifying and attention-check questions were included. After discarding incomplete responses, a total of 384 valid surveys remained for the final analysis.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Care for health and environment was found to significantly impact utilitarian value that's why meal kit brands should revisit their branding strategies to better emphasize environmentally friendly attributes. To foster transparency in sourcing and production, companies can focus on promoting sustainable ingredients and ethical farming practices, appealing more to environmentally conscious consumers. Given the strong link between care for health and environment and utilitarian value, future research could explore the varying dietary preferences among users to better tailor meal kits to specific consumer segments. Another potential area of study is the differences in cooking experience levels. Novelty was found to be key for both hedonic and utilitarian value, future research could investigate whether this factor resonates differently with beginner cooks compared to more experienced ones. For beginners, trying new dishes could be a challenge, while it might foster greater engagement and satisfaction among experienced meal kit subscribers. Additionally, examining how meal kit subscriptions influence users' long-term cooking skills and confidence in the kitchen could provide further insights into the broader impact of these services.

THE INFLUENCE OF MOBILE AUGMENTED REALITY (MAR) ON PASTRY PRODUCT PURCHASES: A TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTANCE MODEL (TAM)-BASED STUDY OF FLOW EXPERIENCES

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Introduction

This study aimed to examine the influence of mobile augmented reality (MAR) technology on pastry product purchases, using the technology acceptance model (TAM) to explore how flow experiences affect purchasing intention. A hotel with an in-house bakery and pastry shop is common in Taiwan. Integrating technology to display a pastry's appearance, ingredients, and cross-sectional view could serve as an innovative strategy to attract younger customers to hotel in- house bakeries and pastry shops. By using interactive tools such as MAR or digital displays, customers can explore the details of each product, seeing a 3D model of the pastry, understanding its ingredients, and even viewing its internal structure. This level of engagement would appeal particularly to younger generations who value interactive and flow shopping experiences.

However, the acceptance and effectiveness of this marketing model for hotel in-house bakeries and pastry shops remains underexplored. More research is needed to determine whether MAR can drive similar results in the bakery and pastry setting, enhancing consumer engagement and product appeal.

Methods

A self-developed AR model enabled participants to preview the appearance, ingredients, and cross-sectional view of a cake product. A 31-item questionnaire was developed for this study. The variables included flow experience (5 items) (Arghashi, 2022; Barhorst et al., 2021), perceived ease of use (4 items) (Do et al., 2020), perceived usefulness (4 items) (Arghashi, 2022), perceived enjoyment (4 items) (Holdack et al., 2022), attitude toward using (4 items) (Pan et al., 2020), and purchase intentions (4 items) (Watson, 2018). The Cronbach's α values of the variables were between 0.835 and 0.895, indicating high reliability (Field, 2013).

The samples targeted adults who were 18 years old or over in Taiwan. The study employed a combination of online and paper questionnaires to collect data, aiming to achieve a more comprehensive and diverse sample. A total of 297 valid questionnaires were analyzed using reliability, descriptive statistics, correlations, and regression analysis.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The flow experience with MAR positively influenced perceived ease of use, usefulness, and enjoyment. In turn, perceived usefulness and enjoyment had positive effects on the attitude toward using, which subsequently had a significant positive impact on purchase intention. However, perceived ease of use did not significantly affect the attitude toward using.

To better represent cross-sectional views, higher-quality images will be necessary. In this study, image quality was limited by financial and photography constraints. In future research, collaboration with bakery or pastry shop managers could prove beneficial, especially for those aiming to enhance customer experience and attract a larger clientele. This research offers valuable insights into the application of MAR across different age demographics, providing important references for future scholars.

IMPACT OF GREENWASHING ON CUSTOMER TRUST AND LOYALTY IN LARGE HOTEL CHAINS IN THE US

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Introduction

"Green is the new Black". This term has been echoing the increasing emphasis on environmental responsibility for the past decades illustrating the growing importance of sustainability in a wide range of industries (Bataineh et al., 2024). In the hospitality sector, consumer awareness and interest in sustainable practices have increased significantly over the past few years (Yadav et al., 2019). As a result of this shift, a greater number of hospitality companies are adopting the trend through green certifications, green operations, and eco-friendly branding to meet consumer expectations (Sharma et al., 2023). Therefore, building an image of an environmentally sensitive business has become a priority for businesses, more specifically in the hospitality industry, which contributes roughly 1% of global carbon emissions (Sustainable Hospitality Alliance, 2022). However, businesses do not always integrate genuinely sustainable practices into their operations; their CSR efforts are ruled by deceptive practices known as greenwashing (Netto et al., 2020). The excessive use of greenwashing practices by businesses, specifically large hotel chains, has led to an increase in consumers' concerns about the authenticity of these sustainable claims, in other words, green skepticism (Silva et al., 2020; Waris and Hameed, 2020).

Methods

The research model consists of six constructs: environmental concern, greenwashing, green brand image, trust, green skepticism, and corporate reputation. These constructs were measured using previously validated scales from Szabo & Webster (2021), Chen et al. (2020, 2019), Farooq & Wicaksono (2021), and Santos et al. (2023). A five-point Likert scale was employed for all items, ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree").

The self-administered questionnaire was prepared on the Qualtrics platform and distributed online via MTurk. A total of 302 valid responses were collected. The sample was composed of individuals aged 18 and above who had been exposed to the greenwashing scenario.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS to generate descriptive statistics and perform a reliability analysis on the constructs. Convergent and discriminant validity were assessed using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to ensure construct composite reliability. The hypothesized relationships between variables were tested using Partial Least Squares (PLS) structural equation modeling (SEM). Based on descriptive analysis, it was determined that most respondents were aged 25 to 44, with an evenly distributed range of education levels from high school to doctorate. Approximately one-to-two times a year, most respondents travel for leisure and stay at hotels. Across all constructs, Cronbach's alphas were above 0.80, indicating high internal consistency. CFA confirmed converging and discriminant validity were confirmed through CFA, with factor loadings above the recommended threshold of 0.70, demonstrating strong measurement validity. Structural equation modeling (SEM) results indicated significant support for all hypothesized relationships. The results from path analysis show that greenwashing has a significant impact on green skepticism. The study also demonstrated that both green brand image and green brand trust significantly influence corporate reputation

SEPARATION OF FEELINGS AND THOUGHTS: HOW PURPOSIVE TOURISTS PERCEIVE A DESTINATION AMID COMPLEX COUNTRY DYNAMICS

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Introduction

Celebrities play a significant role in tourism behaviors and destination selection processes (Kim et al., 2007). Meaning transfer theory (McCracken, 1989) and brand signal theory (Veasna et al., 2013) suggest that positive celebrity views can extend to destinations, especially when emotional connections are strong (Glover, 2009). Although relatively few, previous studies have examined the relationship between celebrity involvement and destination images (Lee et al., 2008; Yen & Croy, 2016; Chen, 2018; Zhou et al., 2023). However, findings are inconclusive, varying by tourist traits such as purpose and nationality. Yen and Croy (2016) and Chen (2018) found a positive relationship among Taiwanese Hallyu fans, while Lee et al. (2008) reported no significant effect among Japanese tourists, with familiarity fully mediating the relationship. Lee et al. (2008) suggested this maybe due to Japanese tourists' proximity to Korea, leading to well-formed organic images. Additionally, regional tensions, such as those between South Korea and Japan, may complicate these perceptions. Intergroup emotion theory (Smith et al., 2007) and collective memory theory (Assmann, 2011) indicate that shared historical emotions can affect tourism views, though individual connections to celebrities may vary (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

This study examines how K-pop celebrities influence Japanese purposive tourists' perceptions of South Korea as a country and travel destination. By exploring how celebrities shape or modify existing images, we aim to understand their impact on tourists' attitudes and behaviors, contributing valuable insights into celebrity influence in tourism, especially in regions with complex historical and political ties.

Methods

To gain insights, a qualitative research approach using semi-structured interviews was chosen, focusing on how K-pop influences Japanese fans' perceptions of South Korea and their intent to visit. Between October and November 2023, twelve Japanese prospective tourists were recruited via social media and university boards in Japan for 40-minute Zoom interviews conducted in Japanese. With participants' consent, interviews were recorded, transcribed in Japanese, and translated into English for analysis.

From thematic analysis, four key themes emerged: 1) Korea-Japan Dynamics: Awareness of Historical and Political Sensitivity; 2) K-pop, A Gateway to Korean Culture; 3) Emotional Complexity: Separation of feelings and thoughts; 4) A Multifaceted Destination Beyond K-pop.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The results indicate that K-pop strongly fosters positive emotions and travel intentions toward South Korea. However, due to deeply ingrained historical and political sensitivities between the two countries, Japanese K-pop fans often experience emotional ambivalence and consciously attempt to manage cognitive factors in their destination selection process—either by blocking them out entirely or by making deliberate efforts to understand Korea from a cognitive perspective. This research highlights how cultural exchanges between historically conflicted countries shape destination images and influence purposive tourists ' affective and cognitive perceptions.

HOW VIRTUAL REALITY (VR) AMBIENCE AND SENSORY CUES INFLUENCE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES:A CROSS-VALIDATION OF QUANTITATIVE AND NEUROMARKETING APPROACHES

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Introduction

The Virtual Reality (VR) market, projected to reach $15.81 billion by 2023, is gaining significant traction in the hospitality industry. Carefully curating the VR ambience enhances customer experiences through immersive marketing and multisensory cues—such as visuals, sound, and scent—that shape perceptions, influence emotions, and drive behaviors like satisfaction and purchase intentions. Specifically, incorporating scent in VR can significantly impact emotions and attitudes. However, few studies have explored how sensory cues affect emotions and behavioral intentions in VR settings. To understand how these cues influence decision-making on a subconscious level, neuromarketing tools like eye-tracking and Galvanic Skin Response (GSR), when combined with VR, offer deeper insights into consumer behavior. Therefore, this research examines how matching the sensory cues (i.e., visual and olfactory) with VR ambience affect emotions and satisfaction, using the pleasure-arousal-dominance model and sensory congruence theory as a framework.

Methods

This research employs a 2x2 between-subjects factorial lab experiment (Calm VR ambience x Dynamic VR ambience x Congruent vs. Non-congruent scent) conducted in two stages. In the first stage, participants' emotional responses to VR winery stimuli are measured using psychophysiological data, including eye-tracking and skin conductance levels (GSR). Eye- tracking data, collected via the Varjo Aero VR headset's embedded system, generated dynamic gaze maps and Areas of Interest for each participant. GSR data, collected using Shimmer3 GSR+ sensors attached to participants' fingers, tracked emotional arousal by analyzing electrodermal activity during the VR experience. The second stage involved cross-validating results through a self-administered survey and statistical analysis.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Our results indicate that VR ambience-congruent sensory cues (scent and sound) enhance emotional engagement both consciously and subconsciously. Eye-tracking showed participants spent more time focused on a crowded dining area when sensory cues matched, while GSR data revealed higher emotional arousal, particularly when the VR ambience and scent were congruent. Cross-validation with path analysis aligned with the neuromarketing results, showing a significant interaction effect on arousal when scent was present.

THE POWER OF PASSIVE OBSERVATION AND ITS INFLUENCE ON EVENT EXPERIENTIAL VALUE, WORD-OF-MOUTH AND REVISIT INTENTIONS: A SOCIAL SERVICESCAPE PERSPECTIVE

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Introduction

Previous research on event experiences and experiential value has primarily focused on direct human interactions, as events are traditionally viewed as spaces where participants connect face- to-face with staff and other attendees to evoke emotional responses (Whitfield & Webber, 2011; Zhang, 2022). However, the mere presence of others in the service environment can also play a crucial role, even without direct interaction (Tombs & McColl-Kennedy, 2003). Through passive observations alone, individuals may experience emotional responses to the service environment, subsequently informing their experiential judgments (Mathwick et al., 2001). This suggests that the social elements of an event environment, which influence passive behaviors, should be considered essential antecedents of experiential value.

Previous studies have highlighted the significance of understanding experiential value derived from event social servicescape (Chen et al., 2014; Han et al., 2022). Consequently, examining event experiences through passive observations is essential for researchers seeking to better understand participant evaluations and behavioral intentions (Backman, 2018). Building on the work of Line and Hanks (2019), this study explores whether the event social servicescape, considering passive observations only, can positively influence experiential value and ultimately connect to event participants' revisit intentions.

Methods

The target population consisted of individuals over the age of eighteen who had attended an on- site (face-to-face) sports event, festival, or business event (i.e., exhibition, trade show, consumer show, or conference) within the past six months. The questionnaire was created in Qualtrics and distributed online. Only respondents meeting the specified criteria were allowed to complete the survey. Data was analyzed using SPSS for descriptive statistics and AMOS for SEM.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study expands on existing theoretical models by showing that passive, non-verbal cues from event staff, such as their behavior and outward expressions, contribute significantly to attendees' experiential values. Additionally, the study emphasizes the mediating role of experiential value in the relationship between employee social servicescape and attendees' revisit intentions. This reinforces the idea that experiential value serves as a key driver of customer loyalty, particularly in the event context (Prebensen et al., 2013; Wu & Liang, 2009). From a practical standpoint, the findings suggest that event organizers need to prioritize the outward behavior of staff and volunteers, ensuring their actions align with the overall purpose of the event. By doing so, event staff can subtly communicate a shared purpose with attendees, enhancing the overall event experience. Interestingly, while customer servicescape did not significantly influence attendee outcomes, the social servicescape framework remains highly applicable in the event context.

WHICH ANCHORS TO ADJUST? EXAMINING OVER-ORDERING DETERMINANTS AND BEHAVIOR IN FULL-SERVICE RESTAURANT DINING

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Introduction

According to the United Nations Environment Program (2021), approximately 931 million tons of food waste were generated in 2019, with 26% originating from the food service sector, highlighting a growing concern. Notably, consumers' out-of-home dining behavior is a critical contributor to food waste within the hospitality sector (Kaur et al., 2021). Within restaurant settings, diners tend to order more food than necessary while dining at restaurants (Okumus, 2020). Diners' motivation to over-order is influenced by certain psychological, hedonic, and situational factors such as seeking variety in the dishes, the discounts being offered, and just an inherent desire to order food in excess mindlessly (Yu et al., 2021). Hence, it is important to have a comprehensive understanding of diners' over-ordering behavior, which will help prevent food waste.

To date, some efforts have been devoted to investigating the fundamental causes of over- ordering in social dining settings (Zouetal., 2024; Wanget al., 2022). However, it remains unclear which judgmental heuristics, as anchors, drive consumers' over-ordering behavior in general dining settings, even though food ordering behavior can significantly vary depending on the dining context (Wang et al., 2017). Given this gap in the literature, this study aims to examine determinants of over-ordering intention and behavior and to propose a comprehensive research model of over-ordering based on the anchoring effect theory.

Methods

A purposive sampling method was used to recruit participants with the dining experience at full- service restaurants. All measurement items were adopted from the previous literature and were measured using a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 'Strongly disagree (1)' to 'Strongly agree (7)'. An online pilot study was also conducted to assess the validity of the scales.

We collected data from 355 U.S. adults through Prolific Academic, retaining 354 valid responses for analysis. The proposed hypotheses were tested using PLS-SEM.

Results/Discussion/Implications

The composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values exceeded the suggested cut-off point of 0.70, affirming the internal consistency of the items, except for vagueness in portion size. Also, the estimated loading was above the recommended threshold of 0.70, except for one item related to overordering intention, indicating significant relationships with their latent constructs. The Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio was below the recommended threshold of 0.9, affirming the discriminant validity. The findings revealed that all hypothesized relationships were statistically significant, except for the effects of price advantage and variety seeking on over-ordering intention.

This study makes a unique contribution by highlighting that vagueness in portion size, face- saving, and frugality serve as antecedents of the intention to over-order, subsequently leading to over-ordering behavior. Additionally, based on the study findings, restaurant managers can offer doggy bags to customers to mitigate food waste in the hospitality industry.

DOES AI NEED SMALL TALK? THE IMPACT OF AI CONVERSATIONAL BEHAVIORS ON USER'S PERCEPTIONS OF AI-HUMAN COMMUNICATIONS

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Introduction

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems increasingly enter service industries, understanding how conversational behaviors influence user perceptions is essential. This study explores the role of small talk in shaping users' perceptions of warmth and competence in AI-human interactions. Applying the Stereotype Content Model (Fisk et al., 2007), Uncanny Valley Theory (Mori, 1970), and Congruity Theory (Osgood & Tannenbaum, 1955), we investigate how small talk, AI anthropomorphism (human-like vs. machine-like appearance), and service context (hedonic vs. utilitarian) affect user experience. This research advances understanding of AI-human communication by examining how humans' social communication skills, such as small talk, influence user perceptions of warmth and competence in interactions with AI agents.

Methods

We conducted an experimental design with eight different scenarios across three studies. Study 1 ($n = 180$) tested the main effect of small talk on perceptions of warmth and competence, hypothesizing that small talk would enhance warmth but not competence. Study 2 ($n = 224$) examined the interaction between small talk and AI anthropomorphism, hypothesizing that human-like AI engaging in small talk would produce the highest warmth. Study 3 ($n = 234$) explored how small talk's effect varies across service contexts (hedonic vs. utilitarian), hypothesizing that small talk would be more impactful in hedonic contexts. Data were collected through online surveys, and validated measures for warmth and competence were used.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Study 1 shows that small talk significantly increases warmth perceptions ($M = 2.91$ vs. $M = 2.36$, $t(178) = -4.72$, $p < .001$) without affecting competence ($p= 0.633$). This distinction suggests that small talk enhances the relational aspect of AI interactions, helping users feel more connected, but does not influence their views on the AI's task-related abilities. Study 2 indicates that human- like AI using small talk generates the highest warmth ratings by aligning human-like appearance with familiar social behaviors. This helps reduce user discomfort and fosters a sense of ease in AI interactions. Study 3 further reveals that small talk is more effective in hedonic contexts, such as hotels, where emotional engagement is prioritized. In contrast, its effect diminishes in utilitarian settings where efficiency is the primary goal.

These findings emphasize the need to adapt social elements like small talk in AI communication to specific service contexts. Incorporating small talk can enhance user satisfaction by fostering warmth and connection in hedonic environments where relational engagement is a priority. Conversely, utilitarian settings benefit more from task-oriented interactions. As conversational AI technologies develop across service industries, these insights can guide AI designers and service managers to develop context-sensitive designs that balance warmth and competence, optimizing satisfaction across diverse service sectors.

REDUCING PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTANCE IN SUPPORTER-BENEFICIARY RELATIONSHIPS: THE IMPACT OF MESSAGE FRAMING ON SOCIAL ACTIVITY

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Introduction

Global hotels ' efforts to support regions in real need extend beyond mere social responsibility and serve as a strategy to enhance corporate image and brand value (Gürlek et al., 2017; Lho et al., 2019). Hence, companies focus on activities that align with customer preferences, aiming to gain their implicit support. Nevertheless, not all activities receive customer support because people primarily focus on issues that feel psychologically closer to them, concentrating their support on local communities and problems where they can have a direct impact. (Reed & Aquino 2003). Since customers tend to focus more on issues that feel psychologically closer, making them feel a stronger psychological connection to beneficiaries is crucial for effectively supporting regions in real need. However, there is a lack of research on how to induce this psychological closeness with beneficiaries. To address this gap, this research investigates how collective pronouns affect perceived social closeness and its impact on behavior intentions.

According to social categorization theory, people naturally categorize themselves and others into specific groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In this process, using the pronoun "we" highlights the shared identity and sense of belonging within a specific group, fostering unity and togetherness among members (Kara et al., 2018). In contrast, pronoun "they" refers to individuals outside the group, emphasizing boundaries and distinctions between different groups. This reinforces group separation and differences (Goldring & Heiphetz, 2020). Therefore, this research proposes that using "we" pronouns to refer to beneficiaries of the social initiatives will enhance perceived social closeness with beneficiaries and positively influence prosocial behavior intention. Conversely, "they" pronouns will create psychological distance, weakening social closeness and reducing the likelihood of prosocial action.

Methods

A two-factorial (message type: they vs. we) quasi-experimental design was conducted to test the conceptual model. Measurement items were adapted from the previous literature to fit the context of our study. The perceived social closeness with beneficiaries was measured using eight items adapted from Kim et al. (2013). Six items adopted from Zhao et al. (2023) were used to capture behavior intention towards prosocial activities. The survey was distributed via the online survey platform Prolific. A total of 180 samples were subject to data analysis. Hayes PROCESS Model 4 was utilized to assess the mediating role of perceived social closeness between message type and behavioral intention.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The result demonstrated that "we" pronounce type has a positive influence on perceived social closeness with beneficiaries (b = .50, S.E. = .21; 95% CI [.09, .92]), which subsequently positively influences behavior intention toward prosocial activities (b = .57, S.E. = .07; 95% CI [.44, .70]). The indirect effect of pronoun type on behavior intention through perceived social closeness was significant (b = .29, BootSE = 0.12, 95% CI [.05, .54]. The direct effect of pronoun type on intention to act was also significant (b = .38, S.E. = 0.19, 95% CI [.01, .74]), indicating partial mediation.

This study provides insights into how linguistic choices influence decision-making through perceived psychological distance, expanding social categorization and psychological distance theories. In terms of managerial perspective, this research suggests hotels use inclusive language like "we" to build a connection with beneficiaries and better encourage customers' prosocial behaviors.

THE MODERATING ROLE OF PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH IN BIOPHILIC HOTEL CHOICE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF AIR POLLUTION

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Introduction

Air pollution has become a global issue and has been found to reduce tourism demand (Dong et al., 2019), while also negatively impacting hotel sales (Wang et al., 2022). Biophilic design has emerged as a promising approach in hotel design, as it is believed to improve air quality (Dela Cruz et al., 2014), and enhance guests' psychological well-being (Han et al., 2020). However, the relationship between biophilic hotel design in pollutant areas, and health-related perceptions and behaviors remains insufficiently understood, posing challenges to effective operational practices.

Thus, guided by the Health Belief Model (HBM), this study aimed to address this problem by 1) examining the factors driving tourists' selection of biophilic hotels, and 2) exploring the moderating role of respiratory diseases, mental health and the degree of urbanization that people reside in, as those factors are believed to affect individual's sensitivity of air pollution.

Methods

Guided by the HBM, this study utilized secondary data that were originally collected by the second author in late February 2023 via the online survey platform Prolific (Suess et al., n.d.). A total of 581 participants were recruited from over 120,000 panel members, providing a heterogeneous sample representative of abroad population. The reliability and validity were validated before the CFA and SEM analysis to test the conceptual model. The three moderators were then tested with SEM via multi-group models.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This research contributes to the literature by integrating biophilic design and health-related factors into the discussion of hotel choice. The findings support the applicability of the HBM in understanding decisions to choose biophilic hotels in environments affected by air pollution. The study also extends the HBM by examining the moderating effects of physical (respiratory health) and psychological health conditions within the context of hospitality and tourism research.

The results reveals the individuals with health issues may rely more on their personal beliefs regarding the ability of biophilic hotels to improve respiratory health and avoid air pollution. It also suggests suburban consumers prioritize the relaxing features of biophilic design, while small-city consumers are more concerned about the health threats posed by air pollution.

This research also contributed to practices. First, it is suggested that hotels add biophilic design elements and market their ability to address indoor air quality and health benefits. These features can attract travelers who are concerned about air quality and/or have repository health concerns, particularly those who travel to pollutant areas.

Second, marketing strategies should be tailored to different segments, particularly those with respiratory health concerns and those in urban environments where air pollution is a significant issue. For example, in highly polluted cities, highlighting the air purification capabilities of biophilic hotels can alleviate health-related concerns and encourage bookings.

Third, it was also found that perceived barriers to biophilic design, such as the possible presence of bugs and allergies, prevented people from booking. Thus, biophilic hotels should address such problems and highlight their efforts in marketing to attract more guests.

THE INFLUENCE OF LOBBY RENOVATIONS ON GUEST EXPERIENCE AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

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Introduction

The hotel lobby serves as more than just an entry point; it functions as a dynamic social hub, integrating technology and providing spaces for socializing, dining, and networking. This study investigates how lobby renovations impact guest satisfaction and financial performance in a 248- room luxury hotel in the southeastern United States. Recognizing the lobby as a key element in enhancing the guest experience, this research addresses the limited understanding of the long-term effects of such renovations on overall hotel performance. This research analyzes the impact of lobby renovations on guest satisfaction and financial performance by comparing pre-renovation and post-renovation data, with the post-renovation period further divided into short-term and long- term effects. Data is sourced from TripAdvisor reviews and hotel records to assess these changes over time. Key financial metrics, including Occupancy Percentage, ADR, RevPAR, and total revenue, showed substantial improvements following the renovation, largely due to enhanced aesthetics and operational efficiencies. The study extends adaptation level theory in hospitality and emphasizes the need for continuous guest experience improvements to sustain financial benefits from renovations.

Methods

This study collected data from a luxury hotel in the southeastern United States, utilizing guest surveys, TripAdvisor reviews, and financial performance metrics from the STR report. Specific guest satisfaction questions related to the lobby were isolated, and 854 TripAdvisor reviews were extracted using the TripAdvisor Review Scraper. Sentiment analysis, performed via Microsoft Azure Machine Learning, rated sentiments on a scale from -1 (negative) to +1 (positive). A polynomial regression model was used to capture the non-linear relationship between guest satisfaction and revenue. Comparative analysis was conducted between pre-renovation and post- renovation periods, with the latter divided into short-term and long-term effects.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The study found that lobby renovations led to a predominantly positive guest response, enhancing guest satisfaction and financial performance, particularly in metrics like ADR and RevPAR. However, these benefits diminished over time as guests adapted to the new environment, supporting adaptation level theory, which suggests that initial excitement fades as familiarity grows. The findings reveal a U-shaped relationship between guest satisfaction and financial performance, challenging previous linear models. For hotel managers, this suggests that renovations should be viewed as both short-term and long-term investments, with ongoing improvements needed to sustain benefits. Strategic updates and proactive guest satisfaction efforts are advised to ensure long-term financial sustainability.

Completed Research:
Consumer Behavior, Tourism

WHAT IS THE NEXT DESTINATION BRANDING STRATEGY? AN EXTENDED CUSTOMER-BASED BRAND EQUITY MODEL WITH BRAND COOLNESS

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Introduction

In today's globalized tourism market, destinations face intense competition and struggle to differentiate themselves from competing tourism sites (Bianchi & Pike, 2011). This study proposes an extension of the customer-based brand equity (CBBE) model to enhance understanding of destination competitiveness. While traditional CBBE models have focused on awareness, image, quality, value, and loyalty (Konečnik & Gartner, 2007; Boo et al., 2009), this study shifts the focus of destination brand image to self and social image, moving away from traditional attribute-based measures. This study also introduces brand coolness as an essential factor, highlighting that the perception of destination coolness has a significant influence on travel choices, as individuals seek places that enhance their social status and align with their self-image (Bagozzi & Khoshnevis, 2023). The use of overall destination brand equity over brand loyalty allows for comparative measurement of visit intentions among competing destinations (Kim et al., 2017).

Methods

The study targeted U.S. nationals aged 18 and above who had been exposed to Japanese content but had never visited Japan. Participants' perceptions of Japan as a tourism destination were assessed using 30 items on 7-point Likert scale. The survey was conducted via Prolific, yielding 356 valid responses. The extended CBBE model included destination brand awareness, destination brand image, destination brand quality, destination brand value, destination brand coolness, and overall destination brand equity. Structural equation modeling using SmartPLS 4 was employed to analyze the relationships between these constructs.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The extended CBBE model was validated, confirming significant relationships between all constructs. Destination brand image influenced both destination brand quality and destination brand value, suggesting that destinations aligning with travelers' self-perception are perceived as offering higher quality and value (Sirgy & Su, 2000; Boo et al., 2009). The incorporation of destination brand coolness proved valuable, with both destination brand image and destination brand quality significantly impacting coolness, which in turn influenced overall destination brand equity. This finding suggests that cultivating a cool brand image can be a powerful differentiator in the competitive tourism market (Chen & Chou, 2019; Warren et al., 2019).

Theoretically, this study extends the CBBE model by incorporating brand coolness and refocusing the image component on self and social image, enhancing understanding of destination competitiveness in the digital age (Bagozzi & Khoshnevis, 2023). The use of overall destination brand equity provides a more comprehensive framework for assessing a destination's competitive position (Kim et al., 2017). Practically, destination managers should cultivate a cool brand image aligning with travelers' self-image and social status aspirations. Marketing strategies should communicate a destination image perceived as cool, unique, and status-enhancing, while highlighting how the destination aligns with travelers' self-perception (Baker & Cameron, 2008).

TOURISTS' WILLINGNESS TO PAY FOR PRO-POOR TOURISM INCOME DISTRIBUTION: EXPERIMENTS IN SOUTHWEST CHINA

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Introduction

Pro-poor tourism seeks to alleviate global poverty and promote sustainable development by ensuring that socially disadvantaged groups benefit from tourism and are included in community development efforts. However, current literature indicates a potential conflict between growth and equity, with some viewing pro-poor income distribution as a form of protectionism (Schilcher, 2007). This raises a central question: Does equity foster growth in pro-poor tourism? The answer lies in understanding tourists' preferences for income distribution, which significantly influence both the share and size of tourism revenue. Prior research on tourists' willingness to pay focus on stated preferences rather than revealed preferences (e.g., Pang et al., 2024). In economics, stated preferences reflect the choices individuals claim they would make in hypothetical scenarios, while revealed preferences are derived from actual market behavior. By integrating these two types of data, we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of tourists' preferences regarding tourism income distribution. This study explores two main aspects: (a) tourists' revealed and stated preferences for income distribution models, and (b) the differences between these preferences. Ultimately, this research provides new insights into the growth-equity dilemma in tourism poverty alleviation and enhance our understanding of tourists' preferences for income distribution.

Methods

Given the lack of clear price signals in the tourism income distribution model, this study examines preferences through tourists' actual souvenir purchases (revealed preferences) and their stated willingness to pay for souvenirs labeled with different income distribution models (stated preferences). We conducted two discrete choice experiments with the same group of tourists visiting Azheke village, a low-income destination in southwest China. Revealed preference data were collected through a framed field experiment, while stated preference data were gathered through a hypothetical experiment. In both experiments, tourists chose among three tourism income distribution models: *enterprise-led, government-led, and community-led*. Ultimately, we collected 105 valid samples, yielding 160 observations of revealed preferences and 1,260 observations of stated preferences. Tourists' preferences for tourism income distribution were estimated using a discrete choice model based on random utility theory.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Both experiments indicate that tourists consistently favor the community-led income distribution model, suggesting that equity can drive growth in pro-poor tourism. Notably, tourists' actual purchasing decisions are influenced more by income distribution models than their responses in hypothetical scenarios suggest. Additionally, social desirability bias leads tourists to understate their preference for enterprise-led models, impacting their trade-offs among these three models. This study theoretically posits that community-led income distribution has the potential to enhance pro-poor tourism development, advocating for a shift towards community-centric tourism strategies. Practically, our findings empower communities by emphasizing the need for corporations and local governments to prioritize ethical behavior and sustainable practices.

POP STAR FANS' BEHAVIORAL INVOLVEMENT, VALUE CO-CREATION, GROUP TRAVEL INTENTION, AND DESTINATION LOYALTY: A MODERATING ROLE OF PARASOCIAL RELATIONSHIP

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Introduction

The rise of Korean popular culture, particularly in music, has significantly impacted the economy and tourism of the country. Pop star fans often travel in groups to express their passion, connecting with their favorite celebrities and shaping social landscapes. Most research focused on psychological involvement between pop stars and pop star fans (Bu et al., 2022), and little research focused on behavioral involvement, value co-creation, and group travel intention in predicting destination loyalty. Thus, this study investigated pop-star fans' group travel intention and destination loyalty, influenced by behavioral involvement, value co-creation, and parasocial relationships.

Methods

The paper uses an online quantitative survey. Fans' behavioral involvement, value co-creation, group travel intention, destination loyalty, and parasocial relationship were measured by three items for each dimension. A total of 613 respondents were valid for data analysis using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), the measurement model was assessed through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to ensure reliability and validity. The structural model was then analyzed to examine the relationships. Additionally, the Latent Moderated Structural (LMS) Equation Model investigated the moderating effect of the parasocial relationship on the relationship between behavioral involvement with value co-creation and value co-creation with group travel intention and group travel intention with destination loyalty.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The results indicate that behavioral involvement impacted value co-creation, in turn influencing group travel intention and destination loyalty. Furthermore, the parasocial relationship significantly moderated the relationship between value co-creation and group travel intention. This study reveals that fans' value co-creation with other fans plays a significant role in connecting their fan activities to group travel intention. Furthermore, through the moderation analysis, this study highlights the significant role of parasocial relationships, particularly in the tourism context.

The findings contribute to the theoretical understanding of the impact of fans' unique characteristics on tourism, emphasizing the roles of involvement and collective experiences in shaping travel behaviors. By incorporating fans' unique traits, such as value co-creation and parasocial relationships, into a conceptual framework, this holistic approach enhances the theoretical understanding of fan behavior and the dynamic interactions between these factors. From a practical perspective, the study suggests tourism managers tailor marketing strategies to promote group travels and enhance destination loyalty. Moreover, the study suggests that co- creators can create personalized content, such as behind-the-scenes insights and interactive Q&A sessions, to foster deeper connections with their fans and increase overall destination loyalty.

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR TOWARDS AI-POWERED CHATBOT IN TOURISM INDUSTRY: A GROUNDED THEORY APPROACH

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Introduction

The rise in internet usage has reshaped consumer expectations in tourism, driving a demand for personalized, current information on services, bookings, and payment (Bhuiyan et al., 2024; Fan et al., 2020). Tourism organizations are adopting Artificial Intelligence (AI) chatbots for prompt customer service. As a novel technology, AI chatbots introduce new societal phenomena that warrant further investigation (Bhuiyan et al., 2024; Gursoy et al., 2019; Nicolescu & Tudorache, 2022). Existing literature primarily explores consumer perspective of AI chatbots in tourism, mostly using the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) or the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Cheng & Jiang, 2020; De Cicco et al., 2022;). These models, however, were designed to assess non-intelligent technologies, and may not fully capture the complexities introduced by AI's human-like intelligence and adoptive capabilities (Kelly et al., 2022). Additionally, the structured and preset factors of these models lack the flexibility and comprehensiveness that are needed to understand the multifaceted nature of tourist experiences and behaviors (Gursoyet al., 2019). Given these gaps, this paper aims to develop a new theoretical framework to better understand consumer behavior related to AI chatbots in tourism using a grounded theory approach.

Methods

This research utilized Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) which underscores co-created knowledge where researchers actively engage in the research process (Charmaz, 2006). A total of 16 participants who were knowledgeable about AI chatbots were selected purposive and theoretical sampling. Data was collected through comprehensive Zoom interviews utilizing open- ended questions to mitigate bias. The analysis commenced with initial coding to identify trends, succeeded by focused and theoretical coding to enhance categories. Memo writing and theoretical awareness facilitated the emergence of insights and the construction of categories (Charmaz, 2014).

Results/Discussion/Implication

Analyzing the CGT the "Artificial Intelligence – Chatbot Acceptance Model (AICAM)" is proposed. This framework identifies factor sets factors that influenced consumer behavior: primary, intermediary, and outcome factors. The primary factors comprise seven essential factors: social influence, perceived anthropomorphism, perceived service quality, perceived convenience, technology readiness, trust, and no human contact, which influence consumer attitudes towards chatbots. These factors jointly influence consumers' views and attitudes toward AI chatbots, eventually influencing their intention to use the technology (i.e., use intention), the intermediary factor. The outcomes factors show that positive intentions drive AI chatbot acceptance, while negative intentions lead to objection. By proposing a theoretical model, this work expands consumer behavior literature in AI, Chatbot, and Tourism. It has also uncovered several antecedents, including some novel ones like no human contact, adding to literature. Besides, it provides practical advice to investors, policymakers, and service providers on decision-making and strategy.

REDEFINE SLOW TOURISM: INSIGHTS FROM GEN Z'S VALUE-DRIVEN PERSPECTIVE

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the significance of mobility and transformed the tourism industry, especially toward sustainability (Fusté-Forné & Michael, 2023). This shift has catalyzed the popularity of new types of tourism, such as slow tourism, which is among the fastest- growing segments (LeBusque et al., 2022). Originating in Italy's 1980s-1990s slow food and slow cities movements (CittaSlow), slow tourism represents a sustainable alternative and a response to mass tourism's rapid pace (Fullagaret al., 2012; Klarinet al., 2024; Tsegaw, 2023). In developing countries, slow tourism is evolving, marked by a shift from materialistic experiences to more profound and spiritual journeys. This transformation is particularly visible in Gen Z travelers, who prioritize casual, interest-led experiences, as shown in a survey of Chinese Gen Z tourists (Wang, 2023). However, research on slow tourism is still compounded by the following issues: First, a global consensus remains elusive about the definition and characteristics of slow tourism (Le Busque, Mingoia, & Litchfield, 2021). Second, existing research tends to generalize findings, often overlooking the perspectives of younger generations. This study, therefore, aims to address two questions: What values does Gen Z seek in slow tourism, and how can slow tourism be redefined through Gen Z's value-driven lens?

Methods

This study utilizes in-depth interviews for data collection, with the sample size determined by the principle of theoretical saturation, ceasing interviews once no new insights emerged. In total, 31 participants (23 females and 8 males) were formally interviewed. The Means-End Chain (MEC) Theory (Gutman, 1988; Reynolds & Gutman, 2001) was applied, with interview data coded in NVivo 12.0 to establish MEC linkages.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The analysis reveals two main findings: (1) Gen Z values autonomy, freedom, connection, pleasure, and inner peace in slow tourism. These values reflect their emphasis on self-discovery and meaningful engagement, seeking to actively construct authentic experiences rather than passively consume them. Gen Z redefines time and space in slow tourism by focusing on the authenticity of the present moment and fostering connections with their immediate surroundings. (2) For Gen Z, *slow tourism is a travel modality centered on self-discovery and personal well- being, where tourists intentionally slow their pace, focusing on fewer but higher-quality experiences, with the goal of seeking autonomy, authenticity, inner peace, and meaningful connections.*

Theoretically, this study proposes a more comprehensive definition of slow tourism that incorporates sensory and emotional experiences, personal and interactive aspects, and the quality of time over its duration, shifting the definition from a behavioral framework to one grounded in values. Practically, slow tourism promotes a consumption-oriented enjoyment of experiences through slow-paced and low-carbon emission travel patterns (Klarinet al., 2023). This study could inspire traditional tourists to adopt more sustainable practices, driving positive social change. Moreover, Gen Z in this study, as part of the undergoing transformation, will become the preferred tourists of the future, providing more references for future tourism market services.

BTS IN ABSENCE: A THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF BTS FAN EMOTIONAL RESPONSES AND BEHABIORS ON REDDIT

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Introduction

The robust psychological bonds that fans form with pop stars can be attributed to parasocial relationships (Dibble et al., 2016). In light of this, a novel concept, termed "parakin relationships," has emerged to describe the profound, emotionally significant connections that fans establish with celebrities, viewing them as akin to family members. Fans interact with celebrities in ways that evoke a sense of kinship, thereby fostering a profound sense of affinity (Yan & Yang, 2020; Tran et al., 2019). However, the recent enlistment of BTS members in the South Korean military may have resulted in emotional disconnections, leading to strong feelings of longing and craving. These feelings can be explained by the Elaborated Intrusion Theory of Desire (EITD) (Kavanagh et al., 2013; Miron & Brehm, 2006; Steindl et al., 2015). This study investigates BTS fans' responses and behaviors during the BTS's absence by analyzing Reddit data to identify underlying topics and themes in fan behavior and explore trends overtime.

Methods

This study examines ARMY, the fandom of BTS, a South Korea band with 75 million Instagram followers and 78 million YouTube subscribers. The fans are renowned for their profound affinity with BTS, sharing narratives of personal growth and authenticity. Since December 2022, all seven members have commenced their mandatory military service, which is scheduled to conclude after a period of two years. The data source selected for this study was Reddit, specifically the "r/bangtan" subreddit, which has 679,000 members. A total of 327,087 comments from November 2022 to December 2023 were collected from open-source Reddit dump files. The data were then subjected to Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) analysis to identify the prevailing themes. Prior to this, the text had been converted to lowercase and non-informative content had been removed.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study identified 11 underlying themes in three categories: Global K-pop Fan Culture, BTS Meanings, and BTS Fan Engagement and Support. These themes reflect BTS fans' strong emotional responses, psychological connections, and collaborative behaviors to support and promote BTS's artwork, despite the members' absence due to military service. The topic trends further reveal dynamic relationships among these themes, highlighting BTS's ongoing global influence on K-pop fan culture, fans' emotional resilience, heightened craving, stable parakin relationships, and sustained co-creative behaviors even during periods of absence.

This study contributes theoretically by revealing emerging trends and shifts in key fan psychological characteristics—parakin relationships, emotional resilience, craving, and collaborative behaviors—using rich textual data. Grounded in conceptual foundations such as parasocial/parakin relationships, EITD, and value co-creation, this study provides deeper insights into fan behaviors and global fan culture, advancing the literature on fan research. Practically, the findings suggest content alternatives like solo albums to maintain fan engagement during artist absences. Additionally, fostering value co-creation and segmenting fans based on fan behaviors can enhance fan loyalty and resilience during these times.

MAPPING TRENDS IN HEALTH-CONSCIOUS NICHE TOURISM: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

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Introduction

Niche tourism appeals to specialized audiences and has gained significant academic interest over the past two decades. Often overlapping with terms like "alternative" or "special interest tourism" (Novelli et al., 2022), it addresses unique traveler motivations outside mainstream tourism. Research in this area is essential for understanding emerging traveler behaviors and aligning with evolving social trends. This study reviews existing literature on the Health-Conscious Living niche, mapping current trends and identifying well-explored and emerging topics, ultimately offering insights into how specific tourism interests shape academic and industry discourse.

Methods

Utilizing the Web of Science (WoS) database, this study performed a bibliometric analysis of Health-Conscious Living niche tourism research. Papathanassis' (2011) framework of niche tourism categories led this search, as the trend of 'conscious living' is relevant to today's industry practices. Keywords of niche tourism segments that fall under this category were used, such as health tourism, wellness tourism, babymoon tourism, herbal medicine-based tourism, spice tourism, tranquility tourism, yoga tourism, sleep tourism, and medical tourism. From this, 1,.234 English academic journals were used for analysis. Biblioshiny, a tool within the R Bibliometrix package, was utilized to conduct performance analysis (e.g., publication counts, citation rates) and science mapping to explore trends, collaborations, and topic development overtime.

Results/Discussion/Implication

A performance analysis of 1,234 articles on Health-Conscious Living niche tourism from 3,168 authors who represented 48 different countries portrayed a heavy focus on health and medication tourism, which constitute approximately 77% of research in this segment. The top-publishing journal is Sustainability, while the earliest niche tourism paper appeared in Tourism Review in 1997. Prominent contributors include Simon Fraser University, with four leading authors and 106 publications, though collaboration networks remain limited.

Keywords reveal "health" as the most frequent, followed by "impact, "medical tourism," and "satisfaction," indicating key research interests. Thematic analysis shows foundational themes (health and wellness) and emerging trends (e.g., yoga and babymoon tourism), reflecting evolving traveler interests and industry trends.

This study highlights the need to expand research in the Health-Conscious Living niche of tourism beyond the dominant health and medical topics. As traveler interest evolves, new micro- niches such as babymoon (Vespestad, 2023), yoga (Nautiyal et al., 2022), and spice tourism (Nair & Mohanty, 2021) are gaining traction. Yet, industry trends such as sleep tourism and tranquility tourism remain underexplored. This study underscores the opportunity for cross-institutional collaboration and cross-cultural research to explore the diverse and growing interests within health-conscious niche tourism to enhance the field's relevance to industry and academia.

MELODIC JOURNEYS: THE IMPACT OF MUSIC ON AIRLINE PASSENGER EXPERIENCES

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Introduction

In the evolving landscape of air travel, airlines continuously work to enhance passenger experience, recognizing that the journey itself is as crucial as the destination. While airlines prioritize understanding passengers' behaviors and preferences to increase satisfaction (He et al., 2019), music's role in shaping the travel experience remains understudied. Music's influence extends across various service sectors - from restaurants affecting patron satisfaction (Bae & Kim, 2014) to hotels creating distinctive atmospheres (Lin, 2009). Despite this established impact in other domains, there remains a significant gap in understanding music's role during boarding and in-flight experiences. This oversight is particularly notable given music's influence on passengers, especially in long-haul flights where passenger comfort is very important. Furthermore, the relationship between music and cultural preferences in the context of international air travel presents an unexplored avenue for enhancing passenger satisfaction and airline brand identity. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore how music shapes passengers' psychological states, emotions, and circadian rhythms, while examining the cultural and contextual factors that influence their music preferences and responses during the air travel experience.

Methods

This study employed a phenomenological qualitative inquiry approach focusing on passengers' experiences with music. The research design prioritized understanding the subjective nature of musical experience in air travel through systematic analysis. Following established methodological frameworks (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006), the study utilized stratified purposeful sampling (Patton, 2014) to ensure representation across diverse passenger profiles. Data collection consisted of in-depth interviews and observations. The analysis process involved systematic coding using constant comparative analysis, emphasizing the emergence of patterns and themes related to music's impact on passenger experience. This methodological approach allowed for deep exploration of how music influences emotional states, cultural connections, and overall travel satisfaction.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The findings revealed four key themes: (1) Enhancement of flight experience through specific genres influencing passenger moods, (2) Music's role in creating engaging pre-flight atmosphere, (3) The relationship between music and overall boarding experience, and (4) The influence of cultural backgrounds on music reception. These findings suggest airlines can improve passenger experience by customizing music to match preferences and reflect diverse cultures. Understanding music's effects on sleep patterns can help optimize music selection for long-haul flights, potentially influencing airline choice. Future research could explore music's impact on brand loyalty and personalized entertainment experiences.

A GROUNDED THEORY TO EXPLORE TERROIR TOURISM: ATTRIBUTES, ENGAGEMENT, SENSORY EXPERIENCE, PLACE ATTACHMENT, AND FUTURE INTENTION

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Introduction

With increasing interest in terroir tourism, recent studies emphasize the role of unique environmental and cultural factors—such as soil, climate, and landscape—in shaping agricultural products and enhancing visitor experiences (Trubek, 2008). Terroir tourism, unlike conventional wine tourism, provides an immersive experience that connects visitors not only to the product but to the land itself, through sensory engagement involving taste, sight, smell, and touch (Kimura & Nishiyama, 2016). Such experiences contribute to place attachment, wherein visitors develop emotional bonds to the landscape and its cultural elements, enhancing satisfaction and influencing their intentions to revisit (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Stedman, 2003). However, while interest in terroir tourism has grown, little research has focused on the impact of terroir attributes in shaping tourists' attitudes and behaviors. The purpose of the study is to explore how these distinctive terroir attributes influence visitors' sensory engagement, emotional attachment, and future behavioral intentions, using grounded theory.

Methods

The study utilized grounded theory to identify terroir attributes and tourists' experiences and explore the relationships between terroir attributes and tourists ' experiences. Data were collected through interviews with 10 participants who had visited New York wine regions. These interviews focused on the participants' sensory and emotional experiences and their interactions with the environment. To complement the focus group data, five follow-up interviews were conducted, providing additional depth. The data were analyzed using Strauss and Corbin's (1998) coding approach, identifying 44 themes within six main categories, including sensory engagement and place attachment.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The findings reveal that terroir attributes—particularly climate, landscape, and local practices—significantly shape tourists' sensory experiences and deepen their emotional connections to the region (Kimura & Nishiyama, 2016). The primary interviews, supplemented by five follow-up interviews, highlighted how sensory engagement, encompassing taste, smell, and visual immersion, fosters place attachment and enhances visitors' satisfaction. Additional interviews provided a better understanding of engagement activities, such as interactions with winery staff and participation in storytelling events, which were shown to reinforce visitors' bonds with the place.

The model developed from the data shows that terroir attributes contribute to experience economy dimensions like escapism, education, and esthetics, collectively influencing tourists' intentions to revisit. Sensory experience and place attachment scales were key in identifying how multi-sensory engagement creates lasting impressions. This study provides actionable insights for stakeholders to design immersive experiences that combine sensory engagement with storytelling and events, enhancing visitor satisfaction and encouraging repeat visits.

THE ASSYMETRY EFFECT OF DESTINATION IMAGE CONGRUENCE

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Introduction

Tourism marketers aim to attract tourists with appealing content, but overly idealized images can lead to dissatisfaction if reality does not match expectations and may homogenize unique destinations (Hughes, 1995; Park & Nicolau, 2019). This match, known as destination image congruence, refers to how well promoted images align with tourists' perceptions (Ashworth & Goodall, 1988; Tasci et al., 2007). Previous studies emphasize the importance of managing image congruence, showing that higher congruence often leads to better tourist evaluations (Li et al., 2023).

However, we raise the following research questions: (1) Beyond the perspectives of tourists and suppliers, how effective is congruence among tourists' perceptions (inter-tourist congruence)? (2) Does image congruence consistently have a positive linear effect? We propose that the relationship between image congruence and evaluations is asymmetric and dynamic. Our theoretical framework draws on expectancy-disconfirmation theory (Oliver, 1977) and the moderate incongruity effect (Mandler, 2014). By synthesizing these opposing theoretical perspectives, this study examines the non-linear effect of image congruence on tourist evaluations, suggesting that while congruence enhances evaluations up to a certain threshold, its effect diminishes beyond that point. Additionally, we propose that this effect is amplified for more recent reviews.

Methods

This study quantifies destination image congruence using text mining technique and conducts an empirical analysis. Destination image congruence is defined by two variables: image congruence (tourist vs. supplier), and image congruence (inter-tourist). A two-fixed effect regression model was conducted to test the hypotheses, and alternative model analyses were performed to ensure the robustness of our results.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This research found that tourist-supplier congruence followed an inverted-U curve, where alignment initially improves sentiment, but perfect congruence does not always lead to optimal outcomes. In contrast, congruence among tourists exhibited a different pattern, suggesting that diverse tourist perspectives are crucial in shaping sentiment. Additionally, the study explored the effect of review recency on the relationship between destination image congruence and tourists' sentiment. The study makes several theoretical contributions. First, it expands the concept of destination image congruence beyond the traditional supplier-tourist comparison to include inter- tourist congruence. It also introduces a fresh perspective on the asymmetric and dynamic nature of destination image congruence. Practically, tourism marketers can use these findings to monitor and adjust their marketing strategies, taking into account both the alignment of marketing messages and the timing of tourists' reviews.

THE PRICE OF THRILLS: UNDERSTANDING HEDONIC PRICING IN AMUSEMENT PARKS

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Introduction

This study examines the role of hedonic pricing in amusement parks, a sector known for its rising demand and cost-intensive operations. Amusement parks embody hedonic experiences that prioritize multisensory stimulation and theatrical elements, aligning with the experience economy theory (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). With increasing consumer expectations and premium pricing models, understanding the factors influencing visitor willingness to pay is crucial. This research investigates how objective and subjective park attributes impact pricing, seeking to identify specific elements that shape consumers' willingness to pay for these leisure experiences.

Methods

The research employs a mixed-method design, combining qualitative ethnographic assessments of the thematic land and narrative aspect of amusement parks and quantitative econometric analysis. Sample was defined following the Global Attractions Attendance Report on the top attendance in each world region. Data was obtained from field observation, online marketing communication and scraped from four online databases on park attributes. The study utilized hedonic pricing models to disaggregate the price of a one-day ticket into distinct attributes, exploring how these influence visitors' willingness to pay. Ordinary least squares regression was applied to quantify the impact of each park attribute on ticket prices.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The analysis reveals several significant factors influencing theme park ticket prices. Notably, location plays a crucial role, adopting North America as the baseline variable for regional impact, all regions were associated with substantial decreases in ticket prices, indicating pricing constraints. Attendance was positively associated with ticket prices, suggesting that higher popularity may allow parks to charge more. Parks that are 10 years old or less tend to have higher ticket prices, likely reflecting the appeal of novelty.

Among the subjective variables, only one of the seven themes identified in the parks showed a significant positive impact on ticket prices, suggesting that it maybe particularly attractive to visitors. Nevertheless, one theme was associated to higher decrease in ticket price than having non themed lands, although the result was not significant. Interestingly, explicit storytelling is associated with a reduction in ticket prices, potentially indicating that visitors prefer more subtle narrative experiences, whereas rides incorporating narrative show a positive yet marginally significant impact.

This study enriches the literature on tourist attraction, demonstrating the relevance of subjective aspects on experiential consumption and offer empirical insights for optimizing park attributes to enhance visitor satisfaction and revenue that can be used by managers and designers. Future research should explore dynamic pricing impacts and variations in visitor profiles.

POST-PANDEMIC ERA: EXAMINING CHINESE TOURISTS ' POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH AND WILLINGNESS TO TRAVEL

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic had a detrimental impact on the global travel and tourism industry. China, for example, implemented some of the strictest COVID-19 policies, including travel bans and long quarantine periods, which nearly halted outbound travel for Chinese tourists (Normile, 2021). After three years of strict border controls, China reopened in January 2023, lifting many travel restrictions (BBC, 2023). The phenomenon of "revenge travel" subsequently emerged as a significant trend among Chinese tourists in the post-pandemic era, characterized by a strong desire to compensate for lost travel opportunities during the COVID-19 lockdowns. This raises questions about how willing Chinese tourists are to resume outbound travel. To address the changing and unique consumer behaviors with respect to international travels, this study aims to explore Chinese tourists' willingness to travel abroad post-pandemic and identify the factors influencing their decisions.

Methods

This study employed a quantitative approach to investigate Chinese tourists' willingness to travel abroad, using a survey administered to residents in China after the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey, conducted from March 11 to March 19, 2023, a period shortly after China lifted border controls on January 8, 2023 (BBC, 2023), covered travel willingness, motivations, severity perception, mobility restrictions, posttraumatic growth, and destination choices. A total of 338 valid responses were collected, and constructions for the survey were adapted from previous research. Data analysis was performed using SPSS (version 26) for descriptive statistics, multiple regression, one-way ANOVA, and Canonical Correlation Analysis (CCA) with additional insights from Wenjuanxing's tools.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Survey results indicated a high willingness among Chinese tourists for outbound travel. Mobility restrictions and posttraumatic growth both play significant roles in influencing individuals' willingness to travel post-pandemic. Results suggested that individuals with higher levels of PTG were more motivated to travel, seeking to embrace new experiences and relax. Overall, respondents demonstrated positive posttraumatic growth, aligning with prior research that growth and psychological pain coexisted during the pandemic (Cheng & Liu, 2022). Additionally, the study found that different forms of posttraumatic growth also led to varying travel motivations. Respondents who experienced spiritual growth were more motivated by destination activities like trying local food, while those who developed personal strength were more driven by inner motivations such as relaxation and escaping the ordinary. This study offers significant theoretical and practical insights into Chinese tourists' willingness to travel outbound in the post-pandemic era, emphasizing the impact of mobility restrictions, posttraumatic growth, and severity perception on travel intentions.

INTERPERSONAL DYNAMICS AT EVENTS: UNRAVELING THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL INTERACTIONS ON EVENT EXPERIENCE

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Introduction

The demand for real-time experiences has become essential in helping businesses gain a competitive edge (Gahler et al., 2023; Li et al., 2022). At the core of these experiences is the quality of interpersonal interaction, which shapes the customer journey and strengthens connections between businesses and their customers. While past studies have focused primarily on customer- employee (C-E) interactions (Ail et al., 2018), the roles of interactions with fellow customers (C- F) and companions (C-C) are often overlooked (Ahuvia et al., 2022; Kim & Choi, 2016). Positive interactions with other customers create a sense of community, and companions add a personal dimension, enriching the emotional connection to the brand or event. This study expands the view of interpersonal interactions by examining these three interaction types in the context of events, where multiple social dynamics converge. By understanding and managing these dynamics, event organizers can create more engaging, memorable experiences that foster deeper emotional connections and increase the likelihood of reattendance. This study addresses research gaps by examining how C-F, C-E, and C-C interactions influence overall experiences and the subsequent responses they evoke.

Methods

This study targeted at individuals who have attended any in-person events in the past 12 months. Particularly, only adult participants reside in the United States who have 1) traveled away from home for a night or more to attend the event, 2) traveled with companions, 3) had customer- customer interaction at the event; and 4) had customer-employee interaction at the event were qualified for the survey. Data was collected in May 2024 via Prolific. Over three weeks, 354 usable surveys were collected. An online survey was developed. All constructs were measured with items adapted from previous studies (Gahler et al., 2023; Kim & Choi, 2016; Li et al., 2021; Stein & Ramaseshan, 2016; Stylidis et al., 2020) and assessed by a 7-point Likert scale.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study explores how interpersonal interactions with various experience partners shape the customer experience at events, subsequently influencing behaviors toward both the event and the destination. It contributes to customer experience management literature by emphasizing the importance of C-F and C-C interactions, extending beyond the common focus on C-E dynamics. Additionally, the study highlights how memorable event experiences foster destination attachment, reinforcing the emotional connection between attendees and the location. Practically, event organizers can enhance experiences by promoting interaction opportunities and training employees to be approachable and responsive. DMOs should prioritize events that showcase the destination's unique identity.

THE DETERMINANTS OF NET PROMOTER SCORE (NPS) FOR ISTANBUL AS A DESTINATION

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Introduction

In 2023, Istanbul was the city with the most international tourists in the world, receiving 20.2 million international tourists (Euromonitor International, 2023), and is blessed with rich historical and cultural resources. Understanding tourists' perceptions of Istanbul as a major destination and their behavioral intentions is essential for continuously attracting international tourists. Although there have been several studies assessing the perception of Istanbul as a destination (e.g., Sahin & Baloglu, 2011; Sahin, 2008; Demirkol-Ertürk, 2013; Topsümer et al., 2012), the use of NPS in tourism and hospitality is limited. Its connection to the image/perception of a place is non- existence. The extant literature on NPS and its conceptualization implied both satisfaction and loyalty simultaneously. Usually, researchers treat satisfaction and loyalty as two distinct constructs. When the NPS was analyzed, the categories (promoters, passively satisfied, detractors) revealed different information, for example, promoters are not only satisfied with their experience but also recommend them to others. Therefore, this study aimed to understand the tourists' perceived destination image and their roles in assessing NPS for Istanbul as a destination. Specifically, our general proposition is that the levels of NPS can be predicted with a set of travel behaviors (image dimensions) and demographic variables (age, gender).

Methods

A questionnaire was designed by reviewing the extant literature regarding brand and destination image (e.g., Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Akgün et al., 2020; Sahin & Baloglu, 2011; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). Besides, an additional NPS question asked, "How likely is it that you would recommend Istanbul as a vacation destination to your friends and family members?" which ranked between 0-10. The questionnaire was established on Qualtrics, and the survey was distributed by the online panel Prolific.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The study utilized Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and multinomial logistic regression on data collected from 398 tourists, who self-reported their perceptions of Istanbul's destination image and their intention to recommend it as a vacation spot (measured by NPS). Findings revealed that the image of Istanbul comprises three key dimensions: emotional/brand attachment, friendliness and hospitality, and city novelty. The likelihood of a tourist being a promoter (highly likely to recommend) is influenced by all three dimensions, while gender and age showed no significant effect.

This research offers theoretical insights into tourism studies. First, the use of this NPS perspective adds richness to our understanding of consumer sentiments by allowing researchers to examine two important constructs of consumer behaviors at the same time. Second, the study identified dimensions of tourists' perceived image of Istanbul, integrating both cognitive and emotional elements. Based on the findings, destination marketers in Istanbul can leverage a more nuanced understanding of the city's image to craft marketing strategies that enhance competitive positioning.

EXPLORING VIDEO GAMES AS A TOURISM MARKETING TOOL: UNDERSTANDING GAMERS' DISCUSSIONS ON REDDIT TO PROMOTE TRAVEL TO VIRTUAL AND REAL-WORLD DESTINATIONS FOCUSING ON ASSASSIN'S CREED SERIES.

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Introduction

Videogames now significantly influence tourism, a phenomenon called "videogame-induced tourism," where players are inspired to visit real-world locations featured in games. The "Assassin's Creed" series, known for its historical accuracy, sparks interest in landmarks like the Colosseum and Pyramids, offering virtual tours that foster emotional connections and motivate real-world travel. Platforms like Reddit reveal how these experiences shape players' perceptions, with many expressing interests in visiting landmarks after exploring in the game.

This research project addresses the current lack of understanding regarding the influence of specific game features on real-world travel intentions. The purpose of this study is to explore how players' virtual experiences with the Assassin's Creed series influence their interest in real-world tourism and to identify key themes and trends that describe how players engage with virtual environments and how these engagements may inspire them to visit actual historical landmarks depicted in the games. This study seeks to bridge the gap in existing literature by examining the role of specific game features and social media interactions in shaping players' real-world travel intentions and behaviors.

Methods

This research analyzed 951,753 Reddit comments from the Assassin's Creed Origins, Odyssey, and Valhalla subreddits (2018-2023) to explore how players' perceptions of historical sites influence tourism behavior. The study employed Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) for topic modeling, identifying key themes in player discussions. This revealed how virtual experiences with Ancient Egypt, Classical Greece, and Viking-era England inspire real-world travel intentions. The data was processed and analyzed using RStudio, uncovering insights into the connection between virtual environments and tourism.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study analyzed Reddit discussions on Assassin's Creed games to identify key themes, revealing how players' psychological responses, game features, and tour experiences influence their engagement with virtual environments and real-world historical sites. The psychological responses category revealed that players engage deeply with self-presence and emotional responses, reflecting how character customization and in-game narratives influence their immersion. Players discussed in-game rewards, locations, and settings in the game features category, highlighting how these elements enhance engagement and immersion in historical and mythological environments. The tour experiences category showed that players valued the Discovery Tour mode and appreciated the educational aspects of the game, with many expressing a desire to visit real-world historical sites like Greece and Egypt. These findings highlight the potential of video games to shape real-world tourism behavior, contributing to the understanding of game-induced tourism. Practically, the study suggests opportunities for collaboration between game developers and tourism marketers to leverage these immersive elements for destination promotion.

Completed Research: Finance & Economics

A COMPREHENSIVE DATA ENVELOPMENT ANALYSIS APPROACH: EVALUATING PRIVATE CLUBS IN SOUTHEAST PART OF U.S. WITH FINANCIAL AND MEMBERS ' BEHAVIORAL VARIABLES

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Introduction

Private clubs are member-owned, non-profit organizations funded by initiation fees and annual dues. Unlike for-profit businesses, they aim to break even, using revenues to maintain amenities and enhance member experiences (Schmidgall & DeFranco, 2013). Efficient management ensures financial stability and reinvestment in services. Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) is an effective tool to measure club efficiency, comparing how well entities convert inputs into outputs (Nemati et al., 2020; Yu & Shi, 2014). For private clubs, outputs are service-oriented, focusing on experiences, satisfaction, and loyalty (Bekken et al., 2024).

However, benchmarking efficiency is challenging due to limited data sharing across clubs, hindering performance comparisons. This study addresses these issues by using DEA to analyze both financial and member behavior data, like satisfaction and loyalty, offering insights into best practices and enhancing performance assessment within the private club industry.

Methods

This study analyzed financial data and member surveys from 20 country clubs in the southeastern U.S., provided by a club business data analytics company. After consulting with industry professionals and an academic, 12 input variables were chosen across management, golf, and food & beverage, along with four output variables related to revenue and member surveys (e.g., satisfaction, NPS). The data were analyzed using the radial DEA model in R Studio.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study employs DEA to assess the efficiency of private clubs, integrating both financial data and member satisfaction metrics like NPS, thereby connecting industry practices with academic insights. The analysis identifies strategies for club operators to improve efficiency by focusing on both financial and non-financial factors. For instance, Club A revealed slacks in three salary and wage areas, indicating resource misallocation, which aligns with research stressing the need for competitive compensation structures (Korneeva et al., 2021). In contrast, Club C demonstrated inefficiencies in golf operation costs. The study also identified two efficient reference clubs, T and N. Notably, Club N achieved high revenue and member satisfaction with fewer inputs compared to less efficient clubs, illustrating that effective resource management is key to club performance.

As a pioneer study in the field of private club benchmarking through efficiency assessment, this research addresses the paucity of data in the club sector. By integrating customer satisfaction and NPS with conventional financial metrics, this approach highlights the crucial role of member satisfaction in evaluating the effectiveness of resource allocation. This comprehensive approach contributes to the existing literature on club operations by demonstrating the impact of inputs on membership satisfaction and loyalty.

While the study makes a valuable contribution to the field, its findings maybe limited by the relatively small sample size of 20 clubs, which could restrict the generalizability of the findings. Further research should examine a broader range of variables and employ qualitative analysis to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying causes of inefficiencies and to strengthen the conclusions drawn in this area.

MAXIMIZING RETURNS OR WASTING RESOURCES? INVESTIGATING THE DIMINISHING EFFECT OF DMO MARKETING

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Introduction

Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) play a crucial role in promoting tourism and coordinating stakeholder efforts to attract visitors (Wang, 2011). While previous research has shown significant returns on DMO marketing investments (Kulendran & Dwyer, 2009; Pratt et al., 2010), recent scrutiny has raised questions about their long-term effectiveness, especially in well-established destinations (Zavattaro & Fay, 2019). This study investigates the nonlinear relationship between DMO marketing expenditures and tourism receipts, focusing on regional DMOs in Japan. By applying the law of diminishing marginal returns (Mankiw, 1998), the research explores how the impact of marketing spending varies across different scales of tourism destinations. The aim is to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of DMO effectiveness in the Asian context and provide empirical insights for efficient resource allocation.

Methods

Data on DMO spending and tourism receipts were collected from annual reports of Japanese DMOs for the period 2019-2022. The study employed a cross-sectional design due to limited data availability. An ordinary least squares (OLS) regression model with bootstrapping (10,000 replications) was used to analyze the relationship between DMO spending and tourism receipts. The model included both linear and quadratic terms for DMO spending, along with control variables such as number of tourists, population, shopping centers, crime rates, and prices (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Morley et al., 2014). To compare small and large destinations, the sample was divided into two groups based on the median tourism receipts.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The results revealed an inverted U-shaped relationship between DMO spending and tourism receipts, particularly for smaller destinations. This finding supports the law of diminishing marginal returns in destination management. For smaller destinations, initial increases in DMO spending boosted tourism receipts up to an optimal point ($0.588 million in DMO spending), after which further investment led to declining returns. In contrast, larger destinations showed no significant effect of DMO spending on tourism receipts, suggesting that well-established areas may benefit less from additional marketing efforts (Zavattaro & Fay, 2019).

These findings have important theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the study enhances our understanding of DMO effectiveness by applying the diminishing returns theory to destination management in an Asian context. It demonstrates that the impact of marketing expenditures varies based on destination size and recognition level. Practically, the results suggest that smaller destinations should invest in DMO activities to stimulate demand, while larger destinations might need to reconsider their resource allocation strategies (Bieger et al., 2009). DMOs in well-established areas may need to focus on other aspects of destination management beyond marketing to maintain their competitive edge.

TEE AT TWO: AN EXAMINATION OF THE ANTECEDENTS OF WILLININGESS-TO-PAY FOR TEE TIMES AT A RESROT GOLF COURSE

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Introduction

The increase in golf tourism and incrementally more diverse consumers indicates that there is a need to better understand what impacts willingness-to-pay for green fees at resorts. Hospitality and tourism researchers have investigated many aspects of golf tourism. Researchers have investigated the antecedents of revisit intentions. Lyu and Hwang (2017) investigated negotiation strategies for golf tourists. There were early investigations to understand the golfers' maximum price to pay (Licata & Tiger, 2010) and golfers' price perceptions of a green fee for revenue management (Kimes & Wirtz, 2003).

The purpose of this study is to investigate the antecedents of willingness-to-pay for green fees for golf courses at resorts. This study examines this research question through the lens of choice theory, which shows that consumers are consistent on those items which they find important when making purchase decisions (Levin & Milgrom, 2004). The method not only indicates the level of significance of each attribute on golfers' willingness-to-pay, but also identifies the priorities based on their demographic segments.

Methods

Choice-based conjoint analysis reveals the participants' preferences and can counteract social desirability bias (Benish et al., 2023). The attributes were determined based on previous literature (Brey & Meitner, 2022; Hwang et al., 2015) and a survey of resort golf courses was conducted to determine the appropriate attribute levels to present realistic choices.

The significance of each attribute and attribute level was determined using Bayesian regression. Then, the part-worth utility was calculated. This is the weight of the impact of the difference between different pay levels. It was then multiplied by the weight of each attribute level to determine its impact on consumer willingness-to-pay.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The results showed that price, course prestige, food and beverage, course quality, and booking window influenced golfers' willingness-to-pay. African-American golfers were less sensitive to price of a tee time. Price is the most impactful for guests when they book prior to arrival and during the stay. Food and beverage service is more impactful for guests who book at the time of check- in. These findings will contribute to the golf course revenue management as operators would understand golfers' price perceptions of a tee time and perceived value of each attribute, which will lead to proper marketing strategy development.

Green fees have been increased due to the rise in demand (NGF, 2024c), however, customers are very price sensitive. The price increase without reasonable justifications may negatively impact on the demand retention. To consider modifications of price, operators should carefully review those significant attributes and their level: Top 100 recognition, food and beverage availability, and golf course condition.

MODELING SERVICE ROBOT IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY: A THREE-PLAYER EVOLUTIONARY GAME THEORY APPROACH

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Introduction

The integration of service robots into the hotel industry is playing a pivotal role in shaping service outcomes. Previous research has primarily focused on customer and employee attitudes, both positive and negative, toward these robots (Leung et al., 2023; Li etal., 2019; Solimanet al., 2024; Yao et al., 2024). Moreover, Fan etal. (2022) highlighted that prioritizing the acceptance of either customers or employees can enhance service quality. However, it remains unclear how to strategically balance interactions to achieve an equilibrium where customers, employees, and hotel managers cannot increase utility without disadvantaging others. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by identifying the factors influencing hotel strategies and the willingness of customers and employees to collaborate with service robots.

Methods

This study applies evolutionary game theory to analyze the interactions between employees, customers, and hotel managers regarding service robot adoption. Evolutionary game theory posits that players are not entirely rational but adapt their behavior overtime through learning, imitation, and inherited strategies to optimize the payoff (Michihiro, 1997; Zhang et al., 2020). The study constructs a three-player evolutionary game model by integrating various factors influencing each group's behavior toward service robots into its foundational assumptions. Moreover, it identified the evolutionary stable strategies of the participants and the system by calculating the payoff matrix and employing replicator dynamics equations. Using MATLAB simulations, the study explores how initial strategic proportions and internal and external factors affect the behavior of employees, customers, and hotel managers.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The evolutionary game model analysis identifies six stable pure strategies for the attitude of service robots by hotels, employees, and customers, with two strategies remaining unstable with positive eigenvalues. This study mainly focuses on the mature equilibrium strategy which supports the advancement of service robots' integration in the hospitality industry, and it examines various pathways and strategic approaches to achieve this goal effectively.

Specifically, findings indicate that when the initial strategic proportions of the three parties are closer to equilibrium, convergence occurs more quickly, while those further from equilibrium hinder it. Internally, increased preferences among employees and customers result in initial fluctuations for employees and hotels before stabilizing, while customers converge at a slower pace. Externally, improved interactions between employees and customers accelerate employee convergence without significantly impacting hotels or customers. Effective marketing primarily enhances the speed at which employees and hotels reach equilibrium by offering better conditions and incentives. Higher labor efficiency influences the hotel's internal processes and convergence speed, with minimal effects on employees and customers.

Accordingly, drawing from the three-player evolutionary game model and its findings, this study establishes a theoretical framework and proposes practical strategies to foster a balanced approach among customers, employees, and hotel managers, ultimately promoting the harmonious and efficient integration of service robots in the hotel industry.

HOTEL FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE PRE- AND POST-CRISIS:A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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Introduction

The hotel sector has faced substantial challenges from the 2008 Financial Crisis (FC) and COVID- 19. Both events disrupted global travel, forcing hotels to adapt operational and financial strategies to maintain performance and minimize losses (Shamshiripour et al., 2020). However, these crises were fundamentally different; the FC was an economic downturn, while COVID-19 was a health crisis necessitating rapid operational changes for safety. Each crisis uniquely pressured hotel operations. Despite their impact, limited research directly compares these crises' effects on hotel performance metrics, leaving managers with little guidance on each crisis type.

This study addresses this gap by analyzing shifts in key operational ratios before and after each crisis, clarifying how different crisis types uniquely impact hotel financial and operational outcomes. Dynamic capability theory (Teece et al., 1997) supports the analysis, emphasizing the importance of reconfiguring resources and adapting strategies to external disruptions. By examining these differences, the study highlights the need for strategic agility and adaptable resources in responding effectively to economic and health crises.

Methods

Data for this study were from STR's Profit and Loss Reports, covering 47 operational ratios from hotels in 22 U.S. markets. Each market included data from multiple hotels, providing a consistent sample across both crises. The study examines four periods: pre-FC (2007-2008), post-FC (2010- 2011), pre-COVID-19 (2018-2019), and post-COVID-19 (2022-2023), with crisis years excluded to avoid extreme fluctuations. Using a fixed-effects regression, this study isolates changes within each market, effectively examining crisis-specific responses (Sayfuddin et al., 2021).

Results/Discussion/Implication

The findings reveal notable differences between the crises. During the FC, steady declines in demand led to drops in occupancy and revenue per available room, prompting hotels to implement cost-saving strategies and reduce staffing levels (Kubickova et al., 2019). In contrast, while COVID-19 caused a significant drop in occupancy, the average daily rate increased as hotels adjusted pricing to cover new health and safety costs (Li et al., 2022). Additionally, rooms departmental profit faced substantial declines after COVID-19, highlighting increased labor costs and rigorous cleaning protocols that were less prevalent following the FC (Ding et al., 2020). These findings underscore distinct adaptive strategies based on the crisis.

This study contributes to hospitality literature by illustrating the varied impacts of economic and health crises on operational metrics-specific management strategies. Pedagogically, the detailed analysis of operational ratios across crises equips future managers with data-driven knowledge on adapting to disruptions, reinforcing the importance of agility and preparedness in the face of unpredictable challenges.

COMPARING THE IMPACT OF INDUSTRY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENVIRONMENTAL/SOCIAL PRACTICES AND FP: THE MATERIALITY FRAMEWORK

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Introduction

Information is considered material when it significantly influences stakeholders' decision-making (International Financial Reporting Standards Foundation, 2018). Materiality clarifies environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors that are most relevant to a firm's performance (FP), allowing companies to focus resources on areas with the highest potential impact (Rakowski, 2022). Industry-specific context is essential in assessing the ESG-FP link, as the importance of ESG factors is perceived differently across industries (Schiehll & Kolahgar, 2021). Industry norms shape stakeholder expectations, which pressure firms to address material ESG issues. This limits firms' autonomy in decision-making, making them more of an industry standard than a strategic choice. As a result, firms often respond to normative pressures rather than voluntary initiatives, impacting competitive dynamics and financial outcomes. When material ESG practices become the minimum standard in industries with high institutional pressure, on the one hand, firms may engage to survive rather than to gain benefits (Kang et al., 2016). On the other hand, prioritizing material issues can be more valued by investors and strengthen stakeholder trust, potentially making these efforts financially beneficial (Khan et al., 2016; Griffin & Sun, 2013). Therefore, building on stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1983), institutional theory (Meyer & Rowan, 1977), and the materiality framework, we propose that industry context influences the relationship between environmental (E) and social (S) practices and FP. Governance (G) is omitted from the study due to its high similarity across different industries within the hospitality sector examined in this study.

Methods

Our hypotheses were tested using hierarchical linear modeling with data from the London Stock Exchange Group, covering 21 years with 1,998 observations from 190 firms across 40 countries.

Results/Discussion/Implication

In examining E-FP, we compared firms from airline and cruise line (AC), hotel and restaurant (HMR), and casino (CAS) industries, with AC considered to have the highest E materiality. Results showed no significant difference between AC and HMR, but AC benefitted more from E investments than CAS. This suggests that material investment costs may outweigh benefits, highlighting the need for firms to assess their relative position where additional ESG investments may become harmful or beneficial (Franco et al., 2020). Also, while material and immaterial investments showed similar results over the 21 years analyzed, material investments' benefits may become apparent during economic downturns (Lee et al., 2018). Similarly, we compared CAS with AC and HMR regarding S-FP. CAS experienced the greatest harm from S investments due to stakeholder skepticism, highlighting the importance of stakeholder trust, given CAS' controversial nature. Also, their reliance on repeat customers might cause investors to put less emphasis on extensive ESG activities, instead favoring minimum standards to avoid public scrutiny.

Our study underscores the importance of industry materiality in the ESG-FP relationship and suggests that other unique industry characteristics warrant further research beyond materiality.

SUSTAINABILITY AND RISK MANAGEMENT: ENHANCING FIRM VALUE IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

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Introduction

This study investigates the impact of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices on firm value in the hospitality sector, where risk management is critical due to frequent external shocks. It explores how sustainability, financial flexibility, and equity management contribute to reducing operational, reputational, and regulatory risks, thereby affect firm value.

Methods

Data was collected from 246 firms within the Morningstar US Sustainability Fund for the 2023 fiscal year. Regression analyses were used to assess the effects of the sustainability index score and financial variables, including free cash flow, debt-to-equity ratio, and ROE, on Tobin's Q. Firm size, proxied by revenue, was employed as a control.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The findings show a significant positive correlation between the sustainability index score and Tobin's Q, indicating higher market valuation for firms with strong ESG practices. Free cash flow positively impacts firm value, while the debt-to-equity ratio and ROE show non-significant effects within the hospitality context. Additionally, a comparison of hospitality and non- hospitality firms reveals that the positive impact of the sustainability index score on Tobin's Q is stronger within the hospitality industry, underscoring the importance of ESG practices in the industry.

This study highlights the importance of integrating ESG into core business strategies, particularly in the hospitality sector, to attract investors and strengthen market positioning. By reducing risks associated with sustainability, hospitality firms can enhance financial resilience and long-term growth, positioning themselves favorably in the market.

A FURTHER INVESTIGATION INTO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FIXED ASSETS AND FINANCIAL LEVERAGE IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY: THE IMPLICATIONS OF INTEREST-PAYING ABILITY AND BUSINESS RISK

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Introduction

Financial leverage in hospitality literature is not yet well established. While studies report a positive relationship between fixed assets and financial leverage (De Luca, 2015; Rajan & Zingales, 1995), yet some others report a negative relationship (Devesa & Esteban, 2011; Li & Singal, 2019; Kuhnhausen & Stieber, 2014, cited from: Brito et al., 2020; Panagiotis, 2016, cited from: Brito et al., 2020). This contradiction has not yet been explained, and we aim to cover this gap. Examining hotel industry, we suggest that improved interest-paying ability and reduced risk of hotel firms thanks to asset-light and fee-oriented (ALFO) strategy explain this anomaly.

Covering this gap helps reconcile the observations with capital structure theories, e.g. trade-off theory. In fact, explaining how reduced fixed assets and financial leverage (Li & Singal, 2019) could happen at the same time would enrich the trade-off theory. This also helps clarify the ALFO firms' financing, thereby helping investors and executives with their decisions. This study reveals that ALFO firms benefit from an improved financing capability. Not only does the study evidence the contribution of interest-paying ability and risk reduction under trade-off theory, but also it concludes that such firms are less vulnerable to external conditions and hold a stronger financial slack.

Methods

Using 280 firm-quarter hotel observations from 2010-2020, two fixed-effect regression models for each interaction terms of fixed assets with interest-paying ability and with business risk were conducted, while controlling for profitability, non-debt tax shield, size, risk and interest-paying ability alternatively each. No multicollinearity was found in any of the models.

Results

Results indicate support for both hypotheses, suggesting negative and positive moderation of interest-paying ability and risk respectively in the relationship between fixed assets and financial leverage. The improved interest-paying ability and business risk then help explain the negative relationship between fixed assets and financial leverage in previous research. This not only evidences the importance of business strategy in improving financing capacity but also implies that ALFO firms would have a less-risk and high-paying look, potentially affecting the decisions of executives as well as investors when financing or investing in the industry.

While supporting interest-paying ability moderation effect, robustness models did not lend support to the moderation of business risk, which could be attributed to the small sample size. Hence, the models need to be further investigated across different hospitality sub-sectors to provide support for the current research results.

DISPERSION IN LEVERED EQUITY RETURNS WHEN "TRADING ON EQUITY" EXISTS

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Introduction

The hospitality industry is marked by high capital intensity and significant debt to support growth. While prior research has explored financial leverage and stock returns, the impact on small-cap hospitality firms remains underexplored. These firms face challenges such as limited capital access and market volatility, making understanding leverage dynamics crucial for managing stock return variability and risk.

Stock return movements and financial leverage are complex and influenced by factors like credit defaults, bankruptcy costs, and firm size (Kizildag & Ozdemir, 2017). However, the leverage-return relationship remains unclear, especially with varying capital structures (Kizildag, 2015). Effective debt management is essential as leverage affects equity returns, accounting for about 40% of stock return volatility. This study addresses these gaps by examining how short- and long-term debt influence stock return dispersion within hospitality sub-sectors.

Methods

This study utilizes hospitality firms listed in CRSP/COMPUSTAT and CAPITAL IQ filings for at least two years to mitigate the backfilling bias from January 2003 through December 2023. This approach serves the purpose of eliminating data errors and normalizing data points. This paper adjusts month-end closing stock prices, including capital changes (e.g., stock and cash dividends). Firms must have had stock price information for both t-1 and t to estimate the returns for July of year t. Including the six-month gap for stock, returns are critical for accuracy as firms often cannot submit their audited 10-Ks within the 90-day statutory deadline (Fama & French, 1992).

The Fama-MacBeth framework was chosen for its bias mitigation capabilities in estimating asset returns across time and cross-sections. Although traditionally applied to panel data, it is adapted here to explore how varying leverage levels interact with firm size and sub-sector characteristics overtime. Rolling-window regressions over a 36-month period were used to capture time-varying risk and refine beta estimates, accounting for evolving market conditions. Fixed- effects estimators addressed time-series autocorrelation (Hausman Test).

Regression model: $$\hat{r}_{it} = \lambda_0 + \lambda_1\beta_{it} + \lambda_2(SMB_{it}) + \lambda_3(BEME_{it}) + \lambda_4(SDTA_{it}) + \lambda_5(LDTA_{it}) + \lambda_6(SDMVA_{it}) + \lambda_7(LDMVA_{it}) + \lambda_8(Intcov_{it}) + \lambda_9(ACDR_{it}) + \varepsilon_{it}$$

Results/Discussion/Implication

The analysis reveals significant relationships between leverage and stock return dispersion. Low- BEME firms in hotel and airline sub-sectors had notable return spreads (F-stat = 4.71, R2 = 68.17), driven by short-term leverage (e.g., SDTA t= 4.86, p= .000). Long-term debt (LDTA t= -8.33, p= .000) had a stabilizing effect, highlighting the need for strategic debt management.

Findings stress the importance of balancing short- and long-term debt to optimize performance and mitigate risk, especially in small-cap firms. Limitations include the exclusion of financial constraints and macroeconomic shocks. Future research should integrate these factors and conduct cross-industry comparisons.

DO INVESTOERS AND GUESTS VALUE THE SAME THINGS IN PEER-TO-PEER ACCOMMODATIONS: A HEDONIC PRICING EXPLORATION

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Introduction

As peer-to-peer accommodations have matured, scholars have extensively addressed what impacts consumers' willingness-to-pay for peer-to-peer accommodations (Tong & Gunter, 2020). A frequent source of scholarship related to peer-to-peer accommodations has been the impact on the housing market such as the inflation of housing prices in already constrained markets (Benitez- Aurioles, & Tussyadiah, 2020). However, scholars have yet to determine if peer-to-peer accommodation owners value the same things in a home as guests. As consumers and news agencies discuss increased prices in Airbnb accommodations, the U.S. in general is also seeing increased home prices. Are homes prices influenced by the same antecedents as Airbnb rental prices? The goal of this study is to compare the known antecedents of willingness-to-pay for peer- to-peer accommodations to the current antecedents of willingness-to-pay for the housing market. This study uses hedonic pricing to examine what impacts pricing for homes for sale in the top 5 Airbnb markets: Las Vegas, Nevada; Orlando, Florida; Scottsdale, Arizona; Nashville, Tennessee; and Richmond, Virginia (Hostaway, 2024). The results expand the literature of peer-to-peer accommodations and provide practical information for home owners.

Methods

The data used for this study was pulled from Homes.com using ScrapeHero. The data was pulled from the top 5 Airbnb markets in the U.S and was cleaned to exclude listings for land and for manufactured homes. Text data was dummy coded for the analysis.

Before the analysis, the data were examined for missing values and outliers, and regression assumptions were tested. The statistical methods applied in this study were descriptive analysis and ordinary least square (OLS) regression analysis. The sample in this study ranged from 435 to 637 listings, which was considered an appropriate sample size for regression analysis (VanVoorhis & Morgan, 2007). Home prices were transformed to their logarithm forms and interactions of some attributes (bedroom, bathroom and square feet) were used to better reflect their associations.

Results/Discussion/Implication

In this study, we examined the impact of five attributes which significantly affected peer-to-peer accommodations, and four other property associated attributes. The findings revealed that the importance of certain home attributes differed significantly depending on where the home was located. The results also showed that despite the publicity around the impact of peer-to-peer accommodations on the housing market, home prices were not being exclusively impacted by the values of peer-to-peer accommodation.

This study was limited as it only sampled homes in five cities from one website. A future study could use data from multiple websites to obtain different insights. Besides, this study relied on previous literature for the factors that are valued by Airbnb guests. A future study could conduct hedonic pricing for both Airbnb and homes for sale in the same market at the same time.

Completed Research:
Human Resources, Leadership & Education

MANAGER INTERVENTION MATTERS: RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AGAINST ASIAN EMPLOYEES AND TURNOVER INTENTION

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Introduction

The hospitality industry has employed a diverse workforce, with people of color making up 49% of food service employees, compared to 38% of the total U.S. labor force (National Restaurant Association, 2022). Such a highly racially diverse workforce also raises concerns about racial discrimination. The hospitality industry has received more complaints of racial discrimination to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) than other sectors (Sixel, 2016). Studies indicate that racial discrimination negatively impacts employees of color, leading to reduced career satisfaction (Shum et al., 2020), increased job stress, and higher turnover intentions (Dhanani et al., 2018; Triana et al., 2015). Despite these issues, most research has heavily focused on racial discrimination by service employees toward customers, leaving a gap in understanding how to address customer-perpetrated discrimination against employees (Zhou et al., 2022).

This study aims to investigate how managerial responses to customer-perpetrated racial discrimination affect frontline employees, particularly Asian Americans, who face unique stereotypes such as the "model minority" myth (Yoo et al., 2010). Existing research largely overlooks the experiences of Asian American employees and their interactions with management following discrimination (Jun & Wu, 2021). Thus, the present study aims to (1) explore the common ways managers respond to anti-Asian racial discrimination and Asian American employees' perceptions about manager responses, and (2) examine how different managerial responses to racial discrimination engenders trust in managers among Asian American employees and, in turn, affect their turnover intention.

Methods

Due to the scarcity of studies related to customer-perpetrated discrimination, the current study used a mixed-methods approach. This study starts with qualitative critical incident technique to identify the patterns of customer-perpetrated discrimination and the role of managers on targeted employees, and enriched the findings with a qualitative study using an experiment design study. Data for study 1 and 2 was collected through Prolific.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Our CIT revealed that Asian employees in the restaurant industry face both blatant (i.e., explicit and intensive verbal and physical assault based on their appearance or accent) and subtle (i.e., implicit and unconscious comments, overlooked and viewed suspicion) discriminatory actions. Although blatant racism was more prevalent, subtle discrimination still significantly affected a notable portion of employees. Managerial responses played a crucial role in how employees coped with discrimination. When managers actively confronted the perpetrators, employees felt more emotionally stable, supported, and connected to their manager, which positively influenced their work. Even when managers provided emotional support after the incident, employees appreciated the gesture. However, when managers ignored the situation or sided with customers, employees felt negative emotions, which worsened their attitude toward their job and reduced their performance.

INFLUENCE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ADOPTION ON EMPLOYEE PROACTIVE BEHAVIOR: THE ROLE OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP AND FUTURE WORK SELF-SALIENCE

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Introduction

As hospitality organizations persist in progressing and adapting to changing preferences and customer needs, adopting AI becomes a strategic approach to not only meet but also precede these evolving guests' expectations. This approach can serve as a competitive advantage and distinctive difference for hospitality organizations (Huang & Gursoy, 2024). Service performance also achieves a competitive edge through meaningful differentiation when employees adopt proactive behavior and offer services that exceed standard regulations (Yan et al., 2023). While proactive behavior in the workplace plays a significant role in the success of hospitality organizations (Li, 2019), there is a significant gap in research on AI adoption which positively influences proactive behavior in the workplace. The current study intends to fill this gap by examining the influence of AI adoption on employees' behaviors.

First, the study explores whether AI adoption is perceived as a challenge or a hindrance stressor using the lens of transactional stress theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987) and examines the relationship between AI adoption and job insecurity. Secondly, the study argues that job insecurity may not always lead to negative outcomes; and examines the positive influence of job insecurity on proactive behaviors. As such, the research examines the mediating role of job insecurity in the relationship between AI adoption and employees' proactive behaviors. Furthermore, the current study introduces two moderating factors—servant leadership and employees' future work self- salience. Through these moderators, this paper aims to distinctly reveal how job insecurity, despite being a negative factor, can lead to increased employees' proactive behaviors.

Methods

We gathered qualitative phase interviews (Study 1) with 12 hotel employees were conducted to explore their perception of AI adoption with their behavior.

Additionally, data will be collected from employees working in hospitality organizations (who have adopted AI) in Turkey (Study 2: paper survey) and the United States (Study 3: Prolific.com). To measure AI adoption, we utilized a four-item scale developed by Brougham and Haar (2018). Job insecurity will be measured using a four-item scaleby Mauno and Ulla (2001). Proactive behavior will be measured with a seven-item scale developed by Frese and Fay (2001). Servant leadership will be measured with a seven-item scaleby Liden et al (2015). Future work self-salience will be measured using a four-item scale created by Strauss et al. (2012). Age and gender will be used as control variables.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The results of the current study provide at least two implications. First, organizations should focus on adopting the AI support program to help mitigate employees' job demands rather than replace employees in their tasks. Second, implementing AI training for leaders is crucial, not only to inform them how to use it but also to define employees' roles in leveraging time saved through AI. The organization needs to clarify the changed responsibilities and suggest ways to achieve the goals to stimulate employees' future work self-salience. Thus, the current research contributes to the broader understanding of how AI adoption impacts employees' perceptions and responses in the evolving hospitality industry.

SENSEMAKING IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING: THE ROLE OF WORK MEANINGFULNESS AND GROUP EMPATHY

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Introduction

As a form of leadership derived from positive psychology, authentic leadership was proposed to influence followers' well-being through various approaches, including personal and organizational identification, positive emotional contagion, positive behavioral modeling, supporting self- determination, and positive social exchange (Ilies, Morgeson & Nahrgang, 2005). However, a potential mechanism that remains underexplored in the literature is sensemaking. Sensemaking refers to the process through which people work to understand issues or events that are novel, ambiguous, confusing, or in some other way violate expectations (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). In the hospitality industry, ambiguity and uncertainty are challenging and the process of sensemaking fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation of their work. In organizations, leaders and followers naturally form sub-groups that shape leadership dynamics. Followers are not passive recipients but active contributors to leadership outcomes (Oc & Bashshur, 2013). Empathy, the ability to understand and share others' feelings, is crucial in leadership. Exploring followers' empathy within group contexts may reveal how it collectively influences leadership outcomes.

Methods

Data was collected from nine hotels across various cities in China, from various departments including the front desk, housekeeping, food and beverage, sales, and engineering. Established measures were utilized to assess employees' evaluations of their leaders' authentic leadership, sense of work meaningfulness, subjective well-being, and empathy. Through multilevel modeling (MLM) analysis in R, we examined the impact of authentic leadership on employee subjective well-being through work meaningfulness and the moderating role of group empathy.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Results showed that authentic leadership positively impacted both work meaningfulness and subjective well-being, with work meaningfulness mediating this effect. Group empathy moderated the relationship between work meaningfulness and subjective well-being. It is found that the positive effect of work meaningfulness reduces when the group's empathy level increases. The results suggest that authentic leadership helps employees understand the meaning of their work, which further helps with their subjective well-being. But, when work groups share a high level of empathy, this sense-making process is reduced. A possible explanation for this reduced effect could be emotional compensation from coworkers. This study offers several theoretical contributions, including lighting on a new mechanism through which authentic leadership impacts employee well-being and introducing sensemaking theory into the study of authentic leadership literature, broadening the application of sensemaking theory in this context.

THE DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD OF CHANGING CUSTOMER INTERACTIONS IN HOSPITALITY: THE IMPACT OF CONTACTLESS SERVICE AND CUSTOMER INCIVILITY ON FRONTLINE EMPLOYEES

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Introduction

The hospitality industry faces a severe staffing crisis with 76% of U.S. hotels critically understaffed (American Hotel & Lodging Association, 2024). To address these labor shortages, businesses are utilizing contactless services like kiosks, service robots, and mobile apps (Barten, 2024; Narula, 2023). This shift from traditional face-to-face interactions to contactless ones is fundamentally changing service interactions moving from employee-customer to technology- customer. However, most research on contactless technologies focuses on customer outcomes, such as service quality, experience, satisfaction, and loyalty (Choi et al., 2020; Huang et al., 2021; Li et al., 2022), leaving a notable gap in understanding of how these technologies affect employees.

Additionally, the rise in customer incivility towards frontline employees (Harvard Business Review, 2022) has made customer interactions increasingly challenging. Frontline employees, particularly in hospitality, are vulnerable to incivility, which negatively affects their emotional state and mental health over time (Wilson & Holmyall, 2013). Despite this, the specific impact of customer incivility on employee well-being remains surprisingly underexplored (Baker & Kim, 2024; Gilardi et al., 2020).

As contactless services and customer incivility reshape employee interactions, understanding the impacts of changing customer interactions on frontline employees is crucial. Therefore, this study aims to explore these effects on hospitality frontline employees' workplace well-being and affective commitment, offering both theoretical insights and practical implications.

Methods

A 2 (contactless service: contactless vs. in-person) × 2 (customer incivility: civil vs. uncivil) × 2 (resilience: high vs. low) scenario-based between-subjects experimental design was employed with a sample of 203 hospitality frontline employees recruited via Prolific. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the conditions and asked to complete the questionnaire. Hypotheses were tested using ANOVA and bootstrapped mediation analyses (PROCESS macro model 4; Hayes, 2017) in SPSS (v.29).

Results/Discussion/Implication

Results show that contactless service positively impacts workplace well-being by reducing direct interactions with customers, while customer incivility has a detrimental effect. However, resilience did not significantly moderate these relationships, and no interaction effects were found. Workplace well-being mediates the negative relationship between customer incivility and affective commitment, emphasizing the critical role of well-being in employee retention. These findings suggest that contactless service can be a valuable resource for managing incivility-related stress. Practically, hospitality managers should consider adopting contactless options to enhance employee well-being and develop resilience-building programs to support frontline employees.

POWER OF APOLOGY: THE MODERATING ROLE OF APOLOGY IN ABUSIVE SUPERVISION'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH RUMINATIONS AND SERVICE INNOVATIVE BEHAVIOR

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Introduction

To cope with changing customer preferences and labor shortages, the hospitality industry is changing their operations on two fronts: while standardized nuisance tasks are delegated to artificial intelligence and robots, employees are responsible for dedicated, personalized services (Tuomi et al., 2021). Given the vital role of service innovative behaviors in hospitality settings, previous studies demonstrated that leadership, including entrepreneurial leadership (Hoang et al., 2022), servant leadership (Karatepe et al., 2020), transformational leadership (Yang et al., 2021), authentic leadership (Schuckert et al., 2018), and ethical leadership (Özsungur, 2019), boost service innovative behavior. Together, these studies suggest that service innovative behaviors are delicate: subordinates can only be innovative during their service encounter when they receive resources and support from leaders. Yet, scant research has been devoted to leadership behaviors that hinder subordinates' innovative service behavior or to potential remedies following such undesirable actions. Among various negative leadership behaviors, abusive supervision is especially important given its established harmful effects and prevalence in the hospitality industry (Yuetal., 2020). However, not all leaders enact abusive supervision with the intention of harming their subordinates (Lount Jretal., 2024). Accordingly, victims of abusive supervision ruminate on the reason for the hostility (Liao et al., 2021). Simultaneously, abusive leaders may feel guilty after enacting abuse (Shum et al., 2020) and apologize for their hostility (Shi et al., 2024). Drawing on the cognitive theory of rumination (Martin & Tesser, 1989), this study proposes that abusive supervision impairs employees' service innovative behavior via their rumination, and the indirect effects depend on the abusive leader's apology.

Methods

Two-wave time-lagged survey was administered using Prolific Academic with a month lag. One hundred ninety-nine adults who are currently working in the hospitality industry completed the surveys. We tested the model using Hayes (2017) PROCESS macro (Model 7). The results showed that all the proposed hypotheses were supported.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study confirmed the effect of abusive supervision on service innovative behavior via rumination. Moreover, leaders' apologies mitigate the effects of abusive supervision and rumination, subsequently affecting their service innovative behavior. Unlike other studies focusing on positive leadership, this study focused on toxic leadership – abusive supervision – which thwarts service innovative behavior. Moreover, this study revealed the mechanisms of why abused employees manifest reduced levels of service innovative behavior by examining rumination as a mediator. Lastly, this study adds to the abusive supervision literature by considering the moderating role of a leader's apology. Practically, this study highlights the importance of apology after a leader's transgression. We encourage organizations to create a positive environment for leaders to admit their faults and to be responsible for their behavior.

UNCORKING THE U.S. WINE INDUSTRY'S GENDER BARRIERS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY.

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Introduction

The wine industry is one of the oldest industries in the world (Castro-Sowinski, 2016),but women have traditionally been excluded with the exception of wine widowhood (Matasar, 2006). While gender barriers are an issue for women in any sector in hospitality (e.g., Russen et al., 2021), wine business's unique family-owned patriarchal nature created distinctive barriers for women. This uniqueness is further exaggerated by wine businesses' intersection of hospitality, agriculture, and tourism (enotourism). Addressing to Mooney (2020) calls of gender studies that reflect the context, this study explores the barriers that women face in the U.S. wine industry.

Methods

This study utilized semi-structured interviews with 12 open-ended questions with 20 current and 2 former employees in the U.S. wine industry. Saturation occurs in the thirteen interview and eleven more interviews were conducted. Participants varied in age/generation, gender, race, experience, geographic locations, and hierarchy to ensure valid triangulation of the data (McGinley et al., 2021). All interviews, initial transcribing, and coding was done by one researcher, and all transcripts were validated by a secondary interviewer. Coding was conducted using MAXQDA with a multi-stage analysis process and codes were verified by a second researcher. Member checking was conducted to ensure validity and accuracy, and no returned documents had major changes.

Results and Discussion

This study found six major barriers for women in the wine industry, namely (1) sexual harassment, (2) industry patriarchal nature, (3) industry wide sexism, (4) vertical segregation, (5) horizontal segregation, and (6) general lack of diversity. While some of the identified barriers are common to general hospitality industry (e.g., sexual harassment, vertical and horizonal segregation), other barriers are unique to the wine industry.

Theoretically, this study contributes to both hospitality and wine literature (e.g., Alonso et al., 2021; Spielmann et al., 2022) by filling a knowledge gap by exploring the barriers for women in the wine industry and the role that gender discrimination plays post-pandemic qualitatively. This research shows that the family-owned small-business nature of wine organizations is a double-edged sword: It allows females to rise up as owners while the lack of formal HR practices results in more sexist comments and sexual harassment. Practically, we recommend the wine businesses to amend practices regarding motherhood and sexual harassment through sensitivity training, and adoption of more inclusive practices.

REASONABLE FOR MY COWORKERS, BUT NOT FOR ME: PERCEIVED OVERQUALIFICATION AND THE PERCEPTION OF ILLEGITIMATE TASKS IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

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Introduction

"This is not my job – Someone else could handle this easily!" is more than just a complaint. It is a reflection of a deeper issue in the workplace. In the hospitality industry, the perception of illegitimate tasks (PIT), which refers to the task that employees consider inappropriate or outside their role (Semmeretal., 2010), poses a significant challenge due to staffing shortages and service demands (Zhao et al., 2022). While PIT, including the perception of unreasonable and unnecessary tasks, has been examined in the context of employees assigned tasks beyond their formal requirements (Ding & Kuvaas, 2023), the present study suggests that employees may also view the same task differently based on their subjective appraisals, such that the personal evaluations can lead to differing views, on the legitimacy of tasks, even among employees performing the same job. The present study introduces the perception of overqualification (POQ) as a key antecedent of PIT, arguing that when employees feel their qualifications exceed their role requirements (Maynard et al., 2006), they are more likely to view certain tasks as illegitimate. The relative deprivation theory explains that employees' dissatisfaction stems from the gap between what they believe they deserve and what they actually receive rather than objective conditions (Star & Williams, 1949). Furthermore, it also suggests that employees feel deprived when they perceive a gap between their expectations and reality, even under objectively reasonable working conditions (Crosby, 1976). Therefore, the present study expects that when employees perceive themselves as overqualified, they are more likely to experience relative deprivation, leading them to view tasks as illegitimate even if their tasks fall within their job descriptions. This research also investigates how respect from leaders can moderate this relationship. According to the group engagement model (Tyler & Blader, 2002; 2003), when employees feel respected by their leaders, they are more likely to align their self-concept with the organization and experience a greater sense of belonging (Den et al., 2009). Thus, this respect can minimize perceived status differences and foster a sense of fairness, potentially reducing the negative effects of POQ on PIT, fostering positive organizational views, and greater task acceptance.

Methods

The research employed a mixed-methods approach combining an experimental scenario design (Study 1) and a multi-level field study (Study 2). Study 1 examines the relationship between POQ and PIT via Prolific. Study 2 surveyed 213 employees across 39 restaurants in Beijing, China, using a two-wave design multi-level analysis with Mplus 8.2.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Results showed that POQ significantly influenced PIT, especially unreasonable tasks, through relative deprivation, while leader respect weakened this relationship. The study advances theory by using relative deprivation theory to explain overqualified employees' task perceptions and offers practical implications by showing how respectful leadership can reduce negative task perceptions, especially important in hospitality where task mismatches are common.

THE INFLUENCE OF SERVICE CLIMATE ON PERCEIVED ILLEGITIMATE TASKS IN THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY: THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF CUSTOMER ORIENTATION

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Introduction

In today's competitive restaurant industry, employees are increasingly asked to perform tasks beyond their traditional roles to enhance customer experience. While these additional services can benefit customers and business revenue, employees may perceive them as illegitimate tasks (PIT), which refers to duties or responsibilities that fall outside the scope of an individual's designated work role or job description (Semmer et al., 2007). Because PIT is inherently subjective and influenced by organizational and individual factors (Semmer et al., 2005), understanding its antecedents in service settings represents a critical research gap.

Drawing on social influence theory, this study investigates how organizational service climate influences employees' PIT through the mediating effect of customer orientation. Additionally, this research examines the moderating role of organizational identification in this relationship, addressing how employees' sense of belonging may affect their interpretation of task legitimacy in the restaurant industry.

Methods

Data were collected from 255 employees across 46 casual restaurants in Beijing, China, using a time-lagged survey design with a ten-day gap to minimize common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Service climate and organizational identification were measured in the first survey, while customer orientation, and PIT were assessed in the second survey. Multi-level path analyses were conducted using Mplus 8.2 to explore the relationships between restaurant-level service climate and individual-level customer orientation and PIT, as well as the moderating effect of organizational identification. The measurement scales were adapted from established studies and translated using the back-translation method (Douglas & Craig, 2007).

Results/Discussion/Implications

Results revealed that service climate positively influenced employees' customer orientation, which in turn negatively affected their PIT. The indirect effect through customer orientation was significant. Moreover, organizational identification strengthened the negative relationship between customer orientation and PIT, suggesting that employees with stronger organizational identification were less likely to perceive additional service tasks as illegitimate.

These findings extend the theoretical understanding of PIT antecedents by identifying organizational service as a crucial predictor in the restaurant context. The study carries practical implications for restaurant managers, suggesting that fostering a strong service climate can reduce employees' PIT by enhancing their customer orientation.

IMPACTS OF LEADERSHIP STYLES ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND JOB STRESS TO REDUCE RESTAURANT EMPLOYEES ' TURNOVER INTEIONT: THE MODERATING EFFECT OF MOTIVATING LANGUAGE

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Introduction

High turnover in the U.S. restaurant industry drives up recruitment, selection, and training costs (Mueller, 2011), leading researchers to explore strategies for reducing turnover and retaining skilled staff (Kim et al., 2015). Effective leadership, through motivating employees and aligning behaviors with organizational goals, is essential (Bass & Avolio, 1990). In hospitality, transactional leadership sets expectations, while transformational leadership inspires employees to exceed them. Both styles enhance leadership effectiveness by balancing intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Avolio & Bass, 2001).

Hospitality workers often face stressors like emotional exhaustion, lack of appreciation, and low pay, which increase turnover intentions (Kim & Agrusa, 2011). While stress contributes to turnover, commitment and job satisfaction help reduce it (Bajrami et al., 2021). This study explores how leadership styles indirectly influence turnover by impacting job stress and commitment. Communication also plays a key role in shaping behavior. Effective communication, especially motivating language, can strengthen the relationship between leadership styles and commitment while reducing stress. However, no studies have examined how motivating language moderates the link between leadership, stress, and commitment. This study addresses that gap, focusing on the combined effect of both leadership styles on job attitudes, stress, and turnover intentions.

Methods

We recruited restaurant industry employees to complete a survey measuring transformational leadership, transactional leadership, organizational commitment, job stress, motivating language, and turnover intention, using a seven-point Likert scale from "totally disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7). Demographic information was collected at the end. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS for Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

Results/Discussion/Implication

Path modeling results indicate that transformational leadership significantly reduces job stress but does not impact organizational commitment. Transactional leadership shows no significant correlation with either organizational commitment or job stress, thus H1 was unsupported, while H2 was partially supported. Organizational commitment lowers turnover intentions, while job stress increases it, supporting H3 and H4. Motivating language positively affects organizational commitment but not job stress, and interactions between both leadership styles and motivating language have no significant impact on commitment or stress, leaving H5 and H6 unsupported.

Managerially, this study suggests that restaurant managers should adopt transformational leadership, foster open communication, give feedback, and recognize employee contributions to reduce stress. Clear, supportive communication enhances loyalty, while engagement programs, growth opportunities, and recognition systems boost commitment. Stress management programs and work-life balance initiatives are recommended to reduce turnover.

DIVERSITY AND MINI-FIGURES: USING LEGO TO UNDERSTAND INTERSECTIONALITY IN A HOSPITALITY CONTEXT

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Introduction

In today's diverse workplace, developing skills to navigate complex social dynamics is essential; however, traditional diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) training often lacks engagement and practical skill-building. This study introduces DEIBuild, a LEGO-based intervention designed to enhance perspective-taking through play-based learning. Grounded in Piaget's (1976) theory of play—which suggests that play aids in knowledge assimilation and restructuring—DEIBuild uses LEGO to foster critical thinking, creativity, and diversity awareness. Fun learning experiences, as highlighted by Tewset al. (2017, 2019), have been shown to reduce defensiveness and increase engagement, making this approach potentially effective for DEIB-related topics. Through DEIBuild, participants build LEGO minifigures associated with diverse attributes—such as political ideology, criminal background, and sexual orientation— encouraging them to explore and understand intersecting social identities in a workplace context. By integrating play into DEIB training, DEIBuild provides an effective alternative to passive, online, lecture-based formats, allowing participants to actively engage with intersectional concepts in a meaningful and applicable way.

Methods

This qualitative study was conducted with 47 students in hospitality management human resources and organizational behavior courses at a large public university in the Northeastern United States. Working in groups of 4-6, participants individually constructed LEGO minifigures that represented hypothetical employees with unique personality traits and diverse demographic characteristics. Each part of the minifigure was decoded to reveal attributes such as Big Five personality traits, intellectual ability, and various aspects of identity. After decoding, participants engaged in group discussions, exploring potential personality- and value-based conflicts within a workplace context. Open-ended responses were collected post-intervention and thematically analyzed to assess the perspectives on engagement and learning outcomes of the DEIBuild activity on participants.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Participants described the LEGO-based DEIB intervention as "fun" (33.3%), "creative" (26.7%), and "informative" (20%), indicating that the activity was engaging, inventive, and educational. When reflecting on skills gained, 45% of participants highlighted enhanced diversity awareness, noting increased respect for different backgrounds. Additionally, 30% of responses referenced improved critical thinking and problem-solving, as participants considered multiple perspectives. The results show that DEIBuild successfully cultivates important DEIB skills by providing an interactive, hands-on experience that enhances participants' creativity, critical thinking, and understanding of complex, intersecting identities. Participants valued the activity's ability to simulate real-world diversity dynamics, enhancing their skills in empathy and conflict resolution. This study highlights DEIBuild as a promising alternative to traditional DEIB training, emphasizing the value of play-based training for enhancing participant engagement.

MADE TO SERVE, NOT TO ACT: THE ROLE OF SUPERVISOR SUPPORT IN SEXUAL HARASSMENT EXPERIENCES AND EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION FOR HOSPITALITY EMPLOYEES

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Introduction

Data from the EEOC (2019–2023) reports 33,615 cases of sexual harassment, with nearly 28% of claims (2005–2015) filed by hospitality employees (U.S. EEOC, 2024). Despite a growing call to address sexual harassment, harassment from customers remains a persistent challenge in the hospitality sector. Moreover, prior literature offers little guidance on practical management strategies to mitigate the negative effects of surface acting or promote deep acting (Lee & Madera, 2019). We argue sexually harassed employees' resort to surface acting due to a lack of cognitive and emotional resources, leading to emotional exhaustion. Furthermore, we propose supervisor support in sexual harassment experiences (SHE) attenuates the harmful effects of customer sexual harassment by providing instrumental and emotional support resources.

Methods

Data was collected through the online platform Prolific, chosen for its ability to support openness on topics that can be difficult to disclose in other settings. Data collection was divided into three survey waves with one-week lag times. To align with our study's focus, participants were chosen based on their employment in the hospitality industry. A moderated mediation analysis was conducted using SPSS macro, PROCESS (Hayes, 2013).

Results/Discussion/Implication

Tests for moderated mediation revealed that employees experiencing sexual harassment from customers frequently need to suppress negative emotions and maintain a façade of hospitality, leading to exhaustion. Notably, the link between customer sexual harassment and emotional exhaustion through surface acting depended on the level SHE, with the relationship being stronger at higher levels of SHE.

The present paper contributes to the literature in at least three ways. First, our study expands COR theory and the link between sexual harassment and exhaustion by investigating the underlying resource that is being depleted in the stress-strain process. Second, our findings further address and expand our understanding of social support by examining how social support behaviors specific to sexual harassment (i.e., emotional and instrumental support) can help mitigate the negative effects of customer sexual harassment. Third, our study found no link between customer sexual harassment and deep acting, suggesting that employees may struggle to genuinely feel emotions like happiness or kindness typically valued in hospitality.

Our results reveal two meaningful managerial implications. First, supervisors need to understand their own influence and feel empowered to address emotionally and mentally taxing situations like sexual harassment, as taking action is important to alleviate the burden on already stressed employees. Second, hospitality firms should train and encourage managers to offer support in the form of SHE, equipping them to provide both emotional and instrumental support. This support may include fostering open discussions about sexual harassment concerns and responding promptly and effectively to incidents as they arise.

LIFTING BLACK LEADERS: A BOTTOMS-UP APPROACH TO FACILITATING HOSPITALITY LEADERSHIP

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Introduction

Since the Fortune 500's inception in 1955, only 19 Black CEOs have been appointed out of 1,800 (AboveBoard, 2023). Historically, Black individuals have faced significant barriers to reaching leadership roles in the U.S. corporate sector (McGlauflin, 2023). Most research done on the underrepresentation of Black employees in leadership focuses on a top-down or manager-to- employee perspective (Knotts et al., 2022). The purpose of this study is to highlight the factors that positively influence Black employees' intention to pursue leadership roles.

Advancing in the hospitality industry can be particularly challenging for Black employees, and this study aims to explore how facilitators of promotion and leadership—such as company attributes—influence perceptions of both the ability to attain a leadership position and the desire to apply for leadership roles. Moreover, examining the role of attribution theory (Heider, 1958) in the underrepresentation of Black individuals in hospitality leadership, can help organizations take steps toward creating a more inclusive and equitable leadership landscape.

Methods

Current hospitality employees who identified as Black were recruited for this study through Prolific. A total of 150 surveys were collected, of which 134 were valid, and the minimum required sample was 124 (Cohen, 1992; Hair et al., 2017; Jhantasana, 2023). All variables were measured on a 7-point Likert scale anchored from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree and adopted from prior literature.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Smart PLS v.4 PLS-SEM was used to test the measurement model and hypotheses. Mentorships did not have a significant impact on self-efficacy (β=0.16, t=1.42, p=.138), rejecting H1, but positively impacted intent to apply for a leadership position (β=0.33, t=3.30, p=.001), supporting H2. Training and development had a significant, positive impact on self-efficacy (β=0.27, t=2.42, p=.016) and intent to apply for a leadership position (β=0.25, t=3.04, p=.002), supporting H3 and H4, respectively. Self-leadership had a significant, positive effect on self-efficacy (β=0.40, t=3.51, p<.001) and intent to apply for a leadership position (β=0.21, t=2.16, p=.031), supporting H5 and H6.

This study offers an unconventional bottom-up approach, focusing on the self-perceptions and personal aspirations of Black employees, thereby challenging traditional top-down (management-employee) models (Knotts et al., 2022). This perspective provides a fresh lens, allowing potential leaders to share their views rather than assuming those in leadership positions represent all employees—a common assumption traditionally favored in hospitality research (Alberti & Iannuzzi, 2020). While the perspectives of current leaders are important, the voices of those aspiring to leadership have been underexplored. Regular needs assessments could help organizations tailor leadership development programs to meet the specific needs of Black employees, fostering inclusivity and equipping them with the skills to develop, monitor progress, and achieve their goals.

ANGEL SHOT: A SILENT CALL FOR SAFETY

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Introduction

Bartenders in public venues such as bars and restaurants often extend their role beyond serving drinks, acting as informal first responders when customers face harassment or feel unsafe. The Angel Shot is a discreet protocol where customers use coded orders to signal for help (WebstaurantStore, n.d.). This study investigates the impact of employees' self-efficacy on their ability to implement the Angel Shot, focusing on job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and their intent to intervene.

Methods

This study utilized a survey distributed through Prolific to current bartenders and food service employees, with qualifying criteria to ensure relevance (Douglas et al., 2023; Peer et al., 2021). The survey measured self-efficacy (Chenet al., 2001), intent to intervene (Sundstrometal., 2018), turnover intention (Bothma & Roodt, 2013), and job satisfaction (García-Rodríguez et al., 2020) using validated scales adapted for the context of the Angel Shot. Data analysis employed Hayes' (2017) PROCESS model 4 with 5,000 bootstrap samples.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Results indicated that increased self-efficacy to intervene significantly reduced turnover intention (H1) and increased job satisfaction (H2), both directly and indirectly through the intent to intervene (H3 and H4). This study reinforces the role of organizational support in enhancing employee confidence, which is crucial for the effective implementation of safety protocols like the Angel Shot. Findings suggest that comprehensive training programs and management support are essential to empower bartenders, thereby improving safety in public social spaces and reducing staff turnover (Raub & Robert, n.d.; Powers & Leili, 2017). This research informs hospitality managers, policymakers, and activists advocating for safer public spaces, highlighting the need for ongoing training and support systems for bartenders as front-line responders (Nottinghamshire Police, 2022; Hill et al., 2020; Keenan & Darms, 2013).

BREAKING CHAINS, BOLSTERING ACTION: CRAFTING EFFECTIVE TRAINING MESSAGES TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN HOSPITALITY

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Introduction

Human trafficking, a global crime and an instance of "modern slavery", involves exploiting individuals for third-party profits (Kyriazi, 2023; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2018). Just in 2023, 30,162 distress signals of human trafficking incidents were received by the National Human Trafficking Hotline (2024) with the majority from the hospitality industry in hotel and motel sectors. This highlights the importance of training in the hospitality sector for human trafficking prevention and detection.

Among all the available hospitality training programs, training message delivery varies (Vaughan, 2024), and the effectiveness of training messages on employees' response willingness is less known. A research gap exists in exploring training messages' effectiveness on employees' response willingness. Therefore, this research applies the narrative transportation theory to test the impact of message framing on hospitality employees' willingness to assist the victims. To achieve this objective, this study applies a 2 (narrative perspective: first-person vs. third-person) × 2 (narrative appeals: emotional and rational) factorial scenario design.

Methods

152 questionnaires collected through Amazon M-Turk were used for data analysis. Using SPSS 29.0.1.0, several statistical analyses were exhibited, including independent T-tests, ANOVA, Process Macros Model 6, and Process Macros Model 83.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study discovered that hospitality employees pay more attention to training messages with a first-person narrative perspective, where victims speak directly to the audience (vs. a third-person narrative perspective that refers to victims in general) expressing emotions (vs. stating facts). Consequently, hospitality employees show higher empathy and are more willing to assist the victims. Additionally, this study excluded the socially desirable bias that individuals tend to report positive behaviors favored by others, further validating the findings.

Theoretically, this study addressed the proposed research gap by examining the effective training strategies in the existing anti-human trafficking literature. This study extends narrative transportation theory (Green, 2008) with narrative strategies and framing effects (Williams et al., 2019). This research shed light on hospitality literature in the endeavor against human trafficking. Practically, first, this study contributes to understanding the impact of effective training messages on hospitality employees' anti-human trafficking behaviors. To effectively achieve anti-human trafficking initiatives, Hospitality Human Resources (HR) managers should consider incorporating training messages with direct victim accounts expressing emotions to capture employees' attention, invoke empathy, and lead to their anti-human trafficking behaviors. Second, effective intervention will assist hotels become socially responsible leaders in ethical business practices. This will improve hotels' brand image and protect them from potential legal sanctions by maintaining compliance with regulations. Lastly, this study guides the development of effective public anti-human trafficking interventions.

CONFUCIAN VALUES AND SERVANT LEADERSHIP IN ASIAN HOSPITALITY

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Introduction

This study investigates the characteristics of Asian servant leadership in fostering innovation behaviors within the hospitality industry. Innovation is a critical factor in maintaining and improving the competitiveness of the hospitality sector, which is increasingly challenged by satisfying customer expectations and technological advancements. Leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping an organizational culture that encourages creativity, experimentation, and proactive problem-solving. Asian servant leadership, deeply rooted in Asian cultural values such as Confucianism and Taoism, emphasizes putting people first, ethical behavior, relationship-building, and conceptual skills. These values are contrasted with prioritizing egalitarianism and individual empowerment in Western-style leadership. Therefore, this study offers a unique perspective on the characteristics of Asian servant leadership that could inspire innovative behaviors within Confucian background support in the hospitality industry.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative research approach, utilizing in-depth and semi-structured interviews with key leaders from the hospitality industry in mainland China and Hong Kong. The interviewees include leaders from diverse service-oriented businesses, including hotel managers and restaurant owners. The data was analyzed through grounded theory using a coding system to identify key characteristics of Asian servant leadership and relationships between Asian servant leadership and innovation behaviors.

Discussion

The discussion suggests that the key characteristics of Asian servant leadership are empowering employees, encouraging open communication, and building trust-based relationships through the changeable and unpredictable environment in the hospitality industry to foster innovation behaviors. The hotel managers allow employees to experiment with new ideas and engage in incremental innovations without fear of negative results in the hospitality industry. Furthermore, the restaurant owners balance preserving traditional service values and introducing innovative practices in daily operations. The study also highlights that under Confucian values, Asian servant leadership emphasizes putting people first and building long-term relationships that promote employee well-being and organizational growth for better application of innovation behaviors. These findings provide valuable insights into the key characteristics of Asian servant leadership and promote innovative behaviors in the hospitality industry while maintaining a foundation of strong cultural and ethical values from Confucianism.

A HIDDEN BIAS: HOW ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTIFICATION IMPCATS PERCEPTIONS OF WORKPLACE EQUITY

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Introduction

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are crucial for the hospitality industry due to its global reach and diverse workforce, yet workplace discrimination remains a challenge. DEI initiatives aim to address inequities and foster inclusivity, though their effectiveness can be hindered by employees who fail to recognize existing workplace biases (Madera, 2018; Mistry et al., 2021; Triana et al., 2021). This resistance can be partially explained by organizational identification (OI), where employees closely align their self-identity with their company, leading them to overlook or downplay inequities to maintain a positive view of the organization (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Such employees often engage in organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB), like promoting the organization's image, which further reinforces their loyalty (Podsakoff et al., 2000) and can obscure their awareness of workplace disparities. Understanding how OI and OCB contribute to DEI resistance highlights the need to address these psychological factors for DEI efforts to succeed fully in transforming workplace culture.

Methods

We collected data on Prolific from 289 hospitality employees, mostly in food and beverage (42.6%) and hotel sectors (33.2%), averaging 37 years of age, and with diverse backgrounds (68.2% Caucasian/White, 11.8% African American/Black). Eligibility required at least one year of tenure and a 95% Prolific approval rating. To reduce common method bias, data were gathered at two time points, two weeks apart, with procedural safeguards in place. We measured organizational identification (OI), organizational citizenship behavior-loyalty (OCB-loyalty), perceptions of workplace inequity, and perceived utility of DEI, with all reliabilities above 0.90, and controlled for demographic factors and specific OCB types.

Results/Discussion/Implications

Our confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) confirmed a good model fit for organizational identification (OI), organizational citizenship behavior-loyalty (OCB-loyalty), perceived workplace inequities, and perceived utility of DEI initiatives, validating our measures. Mediation analysis showed that OCB-loyalty mediated the negative relationship between OI and perceived workplace inequity, indicating that highly identified employees may perceive fewer inequities, which could hinder DEI efforts. The findings suggest that while strong OI usually has positive effects, it may limit employees' recognition of inequities and reduce DEI support. Practical recommendations include integrating DEI into organizational culture and training on unconscious biases. Future research could examine factors like team identification and volunteerism to further understand their effects on DEI perceptions and organizational disparities.

LET'S MAKE EMPLOYEES DANCE WITH AI! U.S. HOSPITALITY EMPLOYEE'S RECOMMENDATIONNS FOR AI-SYSTEMS IMPLEMENTATIONS

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Introduction

Driven by staffing shortages and changing customer preferences (Parvez et al., 2022), the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) systems, such as chatbots and service robots, in the hospitality industry is advancing rapidly. Although the global hospitality robotics market now generates over three billion dollars annually (Allied Market Research, 2022), most AI systems still require human employee assistance to function effectively (Khoa et al., 2023). As a result, successful collaboration between AI systems and employees is essential for the future success of hospitality operations (Pillai et al., 2021). While AI systems can streamline operations (Lu et al., 2020), they can also create job insecurity and evoke negative emotions among employees (Shum et al., 2024; Vatan & Dogan, 2021). Conversely, AI integration has been shown to enhance job satisfaction and motivation (Leung et al., 2023), emphasizing the complexity of employee-AI interaction and the need for further research. This paper aims to address these gaps through thematic analysis by exploring employees' recommendations for organizational practices to improve collaboration with AI systems.

Methods

This study used qualitative analysis and grounded theory to explore employee perceptions of AI integration (Creswell, 2013; Hightetal., 2019). Data was collected from a total of 213 U.S.-based hospitality employees recruited via Prolific. Asynchronous online interviews (AOIs), allowing participants time to reflect on open-ended questions, such as, "How can organizations mitigate concerns about automated AI systems?" . The sample had an average age of 33.7 years, was 55% female and 81% White, with an average tenure of 10.9 years across sectors like restaurants (48%), hotels (24%), and travel and tourism (8%).

Results/Discussion/Implication

A total of 279 valid codes identified five themes: Training, Jobs and Benefits, Effective AI, Pressure, and Permissive attitudes. Participants emphasized the need for comprehensive training on AI usage and open communication, while job security emerged as a major concern, with requests for reassurances against layoffs and roles that prioritize human-centric tasks. Effective AI was associated with safety and reliability, as participants sought dependable systems. Pressure and skepticism were prevalent, with some feeling coerced into accepting AI or doubting organizational reassurances, viewing them as temporary. Additionally, some expressed pessimism about potential job displacement associated with AI, while a minority regarded AI as a beneficial tool.

This study highlights the importance of careful AI integration to address employee concerns, focusing on suggestions for job security, communication, and training. However, it has limitations, including a U.S.-centric sample, which suggests that future research should utilize qualitative analysis to understand better the themes related to AI integration in organizations.

EXPLORING THE GENDER LEADERSHIP GAP IN THE U.S. MEETINGS AND EVENTS INDUSTRY: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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Introduction

The U.S. meetings and events industry is heavily female-dominated, with women comprising over 80% of the workforce (DataUSA, 2021). In contrast, women hold just 20% of executive roles in the industry (Neves, 2021). This study explores this gender leadership gap, identifying the various barriers and facilitators influencing women's career advancement in this field. The Social Roles Theory (Eagly, 1987), which examines how societal expectations around gender shape career outcomes, provides the theoretical underpinning for this research. While gender bias, work-life balance challenges, and limited access to professional development opportunities have been widely studied across industries (Doyle et al., 2012; Eagly & Wood, 2012), research specific to the meetings and events sector remains limited (Dashper, 2021).

Methods

This study utilized a qualitative approach, in which semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 women in leadership positions within the U.S. meetings and events industry. Participants were identified through purposeful snowball sampling to ensure they had relevant leadership experience. Interviews were held via Zoom, recorded, and transcribed verbatim. Transcripts then underwent thematic analysis by two separate researchers. The interview guide focused on gender dynamics, professional development experiences, and organizational culture. For example, participants were asked "Why do you think this imbalance is so large in the meetings and events sector specifically?". Following each interview, transcripts underwent thematic analysis by two independent researchers using NVivo qualitative analysis software. The researchers compared, contrasted, and refined their findings until reaching a consensus on the central themes. refined the themes to reach a consensus on the central themes.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Data analysis revealed several barriers and facilitators to women's career development. Gender biases often resulted in participants being overlooked for leadership opportunities or receiving negative feedback when displaying traditionally masculine traits associated with male leaders, for example, assertiveness (Eagly & Wood, 2012). Work-life conflict was also a significant barrier, due to long work hours and particularly demanding travel requirements that are unique to meetings and events. Last, participants reported feeling that their roles were often misunderstood or undervalued by senior leadership. Participants expressed that their roles and responsibilities were often simplified or downplayed by management that did not comprehend the scope and the impact of their work.

Facilitators included mentorship, flexible work arrangements, clear promotion pathways, and self-initiative. Mentorship provided participants with valuable guidance and confidence. Flexible policies, such as remote work options and less rigid work hours, allowed participants to better manage their responsibilities, making leadership roles more accessible. Clear promotion paths helped participants feel more secure in their career progression. Lastly, participants taking their own initiative to grow in their profession – such as learning how to clearly communicate their work's value or joining meetings and events associations – was found to be effective in developing in their careers.

HAVE YOU REACHED THE BOTTOM-LINE? EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESPONSES OF EMPLOYEE AND THE ROLE OF MINDFULNESS

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Introduction

Supervisor bottom-line mentality (BLM) is defined as "a one-dimensional frame of thinking that revolves around securing bottom-line outcomes to the neglect of competing priorities" (Greenbaum et al., 2012, p. 344). BLM is still salient in the real business world, especially in the hospitality industry. In the post-COVID era, hospitality organizations strive to achieve short-term recovery and financial gains to offset losses incurred during the pandemic (Guzzo et al., 2021). Consequently, supervisors may adopt BLM in such fast-paced and competitive business environment as a means of ensuring success (Babalola et al., 2021).

While some literature has highlighted the positive and negative outcomes of BLM (i.e., Quade et al., 2020; Farasat & Azam, 2022). Nonetheless, existing literature has solely focused on its cognitive consequences such as job insecurity (Zhang et al., 2021) and psychological detachment (Xie et al., 2022). To the best of our knowledge, there is no study exploring employees' emotional responses to BLM. We draw on the transactional model of stress (TMSC) and coping to propose that supervisor BLM evokes employees' emotional response of anxiety, hence, increasing their help-seeking but decreasing their proactive performance. Furthermore, employee mindfulness could mitigate the feelings of anxiety derived from supervisor BLM.

Methods

Two multi-wave field studies were conducted to test the hypotheses. By collecting data from employees working at a local hotel chain in mainland China, Study 1 investigated the indirect relationship between supervisor BLM and help-seeking behaviors via anxiety, contingent on employee mindfulness. We finally received 317 valid responses. Study 2 not only replicated the findings of Study 1, but also tested the influence of supervisor BLM on employees' proactive performance via anxiety. We collected data from a well-known international hotel chain located in China. 301 participants provided a valid response. For all measurements, we adopted well- established and validated scales from the existing literature. CFA was conducted to assess the discriminant validity. We conducted a path analysis to examine the main and indirect effects. Furthermore, we controlled participants' age, gender, and educational level in both studies since that these demographic factors have been found to influence individuals' experience of anxiety (Brenes, 2006). The results supported all the proposed hypotheses.

Implication

The current research offers a novel investigation of the association between BLM and emotion. Besides, we draw on TMSC to introduce two salient coping approaches, decreased proactive performance and increased help-seeking behaviors, as outcomes of supervisor BLM via employee anxiety, thereby illuminating its potential positive impact of employee anxiety. For practical implications, our findings suggest that supervisors should establish realistic goals and appropriate incentives for their subordinates, thereby guiding them to achieve organizational goals. Second, hospitality managers might consider providing their subordinates with regular mindfulness training.

Completed Research:
IT Adoption & Application

ARE LARGE LANGUAGE MODELS READY FOR TRAVEL PLANNING?

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Introduction

Large language models (LLMs) are reshaping traditional practices within hospitality and tourism, driving greater efficiency and fostering innovation (Jeong & Lee, 2024; Lu et al., 2024). However, inherent biases in the training datasets and the architectures of LLMs can result in potentially harmful outputs (Dong et al., 2023; Ouyang et al., 2022). As LLMs become more pervasive across various domains, exerting significant social influence, concerns over these biases have become more pronounced (Dong et al., 2023; Zhao et al., 2024). Despite the transformative impact of LLMs on the hospitality and tourism industry, there remains a significant research gap concerning inherent biases in this specific context. This study aims to address this gap by examining potential gender and racial/ethnic biases when LLMs are employed as travel assistants. Given that closed-source language models do not provide access to their code and training data (TechLatest.Net, 2024), this study adopts an experimental design to explore gender and racial/ethnic biases in open-source language models used as travel planning assistants. This approach seeks to enhance the reproducibility of scientific research, which can be compromised by proprietary models.

Methods

We compiled a dataset consisting of 6,000 prompts sourced from three open-source large language models (LLMs): Gemma-2-9b, Llama-3-8b, and Llama-3-70b, with each model contributing 2,000 prompts. These models were used to generate data reflecting different racial (African American, Hispanic, Asian, Caucasian), gender (man, woman, gender minority group), and various personal factors like age, education, income, budget, stay duration, destination, season, and past travel experiences. We applied machine learning methods to process the data, using the frequency of words in the outputs of these LLMs as features and the gender or racial categories as labels for the classifier. To reduce the impact of stereotypical and cultural biases in the content words, we incorporated stop words in our classification strategy. We examined the test accuracy and analyzed the top 20 features with the greatest absolute weights for each class to determine the presence of any gender and racial biases.

Results/Discussion/Implication

After examining the test accuracy and the top 20 features with the greatest absolute weights for both whole words (content words and stop words) and stop words, we conclude that there is no evidence of racial or gender biases in the utilization of large language models (LLMs) for travel planning purposes. However, we did notice some hallucinations in the outputs related to African American and gender minority groups in the Llama-3-70b model. This research represents the first empirical study to investigate racial/ethnic and gender biases in open-source LLMs within the context of the hospitality and tourism industry. It addresses a previously unexplored area, effectively filling a significant gap in the literature. For practitioners in the tourism industry, these findings underscore the potential benefits of employing open-source LLMs to enhance travel planning services. However, given the occurrence of hallucinations in LLM outputs, practitioners must verify the accuracy of the recommendations provided by these models.

HUMAN-ROBOT INTERACTION RESEARCH IN HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Introduction

With the rapid development of artificial intelligence technology, service robots have consistently influenced the bounds of service actors (Rosete et al., 2020), which includes the customer service environment composed of automation technologies beyond traditional human service. Given the rapid growth in automation technologies affecting various service sectors, it is crucial to understand the attributes influencing successful interactions between humans and robots in the hospitality and tourism field. However, little research has been conducted to understand different aspects of interpersonal relationships using robotic technology and examine the role of service robots from various stakeholders' perspectives. Existing literature review papers on robotic technology have primarily focused on how robots are used and the purposes service practitioners have in adopting robots in their businesses.

This study aims to explore service robotic technologies from a social actor's perspective and understand the role of service robots in influencing cooperation between humans and robots in the service industry. Applying stakeholder theory (Freeman, 2004), this study conducted a systematic review of relationships between humans and robots by reviewing and analyzing the extant literature. A systematic review of human-robot interactions (HRI) would provide valuable insights into HR, facilitating a deeper understanding and enhancing the impact of collaboration on service delivery systems.

Methods

The research team utilized a systematic literature analysis. The Scopus database was used to perform comprehensive literature research. This study focused on articles published in Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) ranked journals to guarantee well-established academic knowledge (Shin & Perdue, 2019). The sample articles that have relevant keywords, such as "service robots," "robotics," "robotic technology," and "artificial intelligence" in the titles, author-identified keywords, and abstracts were retrieved between 2012 and 2024 for the data collection. The final sample of 276 articles was selected for data analysis, with keyword co-occurrence analysis, co- citation analysis, and content analysis applied.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The results revealed that interest in service robots is expanding in the hospitality industry. The keywords have mainly focused on the major terminology related to robotic technology rather than the functions of robotic technologies. The results of the representative citation analysis showed that many sample articles focus on demonstrating service robot dimensions, user perceptions, and robot adoption using service robots in service encounters. In addition, there has been a growing interest in robotic technology research from an employee perspective in recent years. The findings imply that robotic technology is highly associated with the service industry and describe that robots present both benefits and challenges to organizations and their customers, which proposes the need for a broader range of research on the application of robotic technology in hospitality and tourism.

THE DARK SIDE OF DIGITAL GOVERNANCE: HOW PLATFORM GOVERNANCE SHAPES PLATFORM WORK EXPERIENCE IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY

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Introduction

The integration of digital platform has significantly reshaped market structure, capital accumulation, and labor extraction. Unlike traditional capitalism, modern platforms (e.g., Uber, DoorDash) leverage disruptive technology to achieve their digital transformation and profits maximization. Whereas amidst this transformation, hospitality and tourism gig platform workers face tremendous exploitations, leading to the formation of their new identity as the digital proletariats. Significant gaps still remain in literature on understanding how and why platform workers are exploited.

To address these gaps, our study applies digital capitalism theory and digital governance theory to view platforms as infrastructures affiliated with digital capitalism, exploring how their governance approaches, as a superstructure shaped by platform's intermediary role and privatization, affect worker experiences and exploit their labor.

Methods

Using topic modeling on large-scale gig workers' online reviews, we identified the topics in the reviews and adopted theory-based coding to match these topics with corresponding platform governance approaches. Next, we calculated the weight of each topic in individual reviews. Then, we performed a series of ordinary least square (OLS) regressions to analyze how platforms' governance approaches influence gig workers' work experience as reflected in review ratings and investigate the longitudinal effect and interaction effect among platform governance approaches.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The topic modeling analysis revealed 8 topics falling into the different categories of platform's governance approaches, including control (i.e., input and output verification), coordination (i.e., task allocation and assignment), trust (i.e., relationship management), and incentives (i.e., financial reward and interests). The OLS regression results showed that control, coordination, and trust negatively influenced platform workers' ratings. Whereas incentives could contribute to higher ratings. There was no longitudinal effect observed. The interaction effect analysis results suggest that control as an overarching governance approach could be complemented by coordination, trust, and incentives to negatively influence platform workers' ratings.

Theoretically, our research provides a more nuanced macro-level understanding of how and why platform governance exploits platform workers, enriching the interpretation of human- technology relationships in digital platforms-mediated interaction and transaction. Moreover, our research provides solid theoretical and empirical foundation for future research to further investigate platform governance approaches and its influence on various stakeholders. Practically, our research offers strategic views and feasible solutions to optimize each of platforms' governance approach and establish a more sustainable platform ecosystem.

EXPLORATION OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND OVERVIEW

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Introduction

Digital transformation (DT), defined as company-wide change leveraging digital technologies, has become a crucial strategy for companies striving to remain competitive and achieve sustainable growth in an increasingly digitalized world (Hess et al., 2016). While strategic management literature often defines DT as the integration of digital technologies to enhance business models, streamline operational processes (Morakanyane et al., 2017; Fitzgerald et al., 2014), this narrow focus overlooks its broader impacts. However, focusing solely on these business components may fail to fully capture the scope of DT. DT influences not only systems and structures but also individuals and teams, requiring employees to adapt to new tools and work patterns. This transformation necessitates cultural and structural adjustments to mitigate psychological and sociocultural challenges (Davis, 1989; Vial, 2019). Therefore, DT extends beyond technical and strategic changes to include significant social and psychological dimensions. Addressing this gap, this study proposes a redefined conceptual framework of DT that integrates both strategic and human factors.

Methods

Using Jabareen's (2009) conceptual framework development method, this study conducted an extensive review of multidisciplinary literature across fields such as strategic management, marketing, information systems, sociology, psychology, and organizational studies. This review identified key concepts of DT from these disciplines, which were then integrated into a preliminary conceptual framework. Finally, the framework was validated to ensure its robustness and relevance to the context of DT.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The findings suggest that DT encompasses changes in core strategy while fostering a supportive environment for individuals and teams. Strategically, DT drives changes in business models (e.g., platforms, data/AI models, new products), operational processes (e.g., data-driven decisions, automation), and customer experience. On the human side, DT addresses changes in individuals (e.g., communication, psychological support, and training), groups (e.g., team collaboration and workplace relationships), and organizations (e.g., structure and culture). In the restaurant industry, DT drives innovations such as delivery and online ordering platforms, cloud kitchens, loyalty programs, and hybrid service models like dine-in and drive-thru options. Operational processes integrate digital tools for front-of-house and back-of-house improvements, while customer experience focuses on connection, interaction, and value creation. For individuals, restaurants provide communication, psychological support, and training to adapt their traditionally low-tech workforce. Teams develop agility for faster order processing and real-time collaboration, while organizations promote communicative, agile cultures to meet digital demands. Overall, this study highlights DT as a holistic transformation encompassing strategic innovation and human adaptability, with significant implications for the restaurant industry's future competitiveness and sustainability.

HOW DO PERSONALITY TRAITS INFLUENCE STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT AND PERCEIVED LEARNING IN METAVERSE EDUCATION? THE MODERATING ROLE OF LEARNING ANXIETY

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Introduction

The metaverse in education is described as a beyond-reality environment that supports students' real-time engagement in shared learning using avatars (Zhong & Zheng, 2022). Students exhibited a higher level of immersion, positive attitudes, and enjoyment of learning in a metaverse compared to a traditional class (Sung et al., 2021). However, researchers argue that the metaverse disadvantages education (Kye et al., 2021). While previous research explored the influence of personality traits on anxiety and the relationship between anxiety and perceived learning in online education, there is a lack of studies investigating how students' personality traits affect engagement, how engagement impacts perceived learning, and the role of anxiety in these relationships within the context of hospitality metaverse education. To fill these research gaps, this study aims to test (1) the effects of personality traits such as openness and agreeableness on engagement; (2) the effect of students' engagement on perceived learning in metaverse education; and (3) the moderating role of learning anxiety in the relationship between personality traits and perceived learning via engagement.

Methods

A scenario-based survey was used to test the proposed hypotheses. The participants over 18 and maintaining student status in the U.S. were recruited via Prolific Academic. Before the scenario, the participants were asked to answer questions regarding openness and agreeableness. In the scenario, they were asked to read the course description and purpose of the class. After reading the class description, they watched a short video clip using a metaverse class setting. Then, they answered engagement, learning anxiety, perceived learning, and basic demographic questions. We employed confirmatory factor analysis and Harman's single factor test to ensure discriminant validity and check common method bias. Results showed that the proposed model has a better fit than alternative models and the single-factor model showed inadequate model fit. To test hypotheses, we used PROCESS macro (Model 14) after controlling for age, gender, and the metaverse experience as they can be related to anxiety (Canuto et al., 2018).

Results/Discussion/Implication

The results showed that students' openness and agreeableness positively influence their engagement with metaverse learning. Also, there was a positive relationship between engagement and perceived learning. The moderating role of learning anxiety was confirmed with both predictors. However, the students reported a higher level of perceived learning when their learning anxiety was high. The moderated mediation effect was significant, but the direction was the opposite of the proposed hypotheses. From the findings of this study, educators will gain insight into how openness and agreeableness influence student engagement in metaverse classes and perceived learning. Additionally, educators will understand whether learning anxiety is beneficial or detrimental in the metaverse class.

EXPLORING TECHNOLOGY-DRIVEN EMPLOYMENT FOR POST-RETIREMENT SENIORS IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY: MOTIVATIONS AND BARRIERS

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Introduction

The hospitality industry continues to face challenges with labor shortages and high turnover (Kingson, 2024). Technology-driven solutions have been adopted to address these issues, such as technology-based remote work. For example, the Avatar Robot Café in Tokyo allows individuals to control service robots from home, offering flexibility and enabling meaningful work without physical constraints. This approach could help mitigate workforce shortages by engaging senior workers. With the growing senior population in the U.S., nearly 30% express a willingness to work post-retirement (Ward, 2024). However, physical limitations often create hesitation. Technological remote work can address these challenges and encourage seniors to re-enter the workforce. While prior studies have explored technology adoption (Gao, 2023) and senior workforce intention (Ann, 2020), limited research exists on technology-based remote work for retirees in the hospitality industry. Understanding motivations and constraints related to this type of work is essential to encourage post-retirees to participate. This study aims to investigate the motivation and constraint factors influencing post-retirees' intention to work in technology-based remote roles in hospitality and offers insights for academia and industry.

Methods

To assess the motivations and constraints for retirees re-entering remote work in the hospitality industry, this study followed five steps of the scale development approach (Churchill, 1979): 1) domain specification, 2) generating the initial item pool, 3) evaluating content adequacy, 4) conducting an online survey, and 5) purifying (exploratory factor analysis - EFA) and finalizing (confirmatory factor analysis - CFA) the measurement. An online survey targeting seniors aged 62 and older residing in the United States was conducted via Prolific to collect data for purifying items through EFA with 259 samples. CFA was later conducted on a new dataset including a sample of 290 to confirm the factor structure and validate the measurement items. This rigorous approach developed a reliable scale to examine motivations and constraints affecting postretirement seniors' intentions for technology-based remote work in hospitality.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study investigated post-retirees' motivations and constraints regarding re-entering the hospitality workforce through technology-based remote work. The study identified a total of eleven sub-dimensions within these categories. The five motivational dimensions are competence, relatedness, autonomy, financial incentive, and minimal physical involvement. The six-constraint dimension are technological challenges, work-life conflict, pay dissatisfaction, monotony, psychological job stress, and physical job stress. The findings on motivation and barriers for seniors provide valuable insights for hospitality literature by exploring the integration of new remote work technology adoption and potential new workforce segments, particularly retired seniors. Specifically, the study's findings inform industry practitioners on strategies to enhance recruitment efforts targeted at seniors, including the development of recruiting materials that emphasize motivational factors such as the opportunity to earn extra income and the minimal physical effort required.

LEVERAGING SERVICE QUALITY MODEL AS A FEATURE SET WITH MACHINE LEARNING FOR FAKE HOTEL REVIEW DETECTION

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Introduction

Online reviews are crucial in shaping consumer decision-making, particularly in the hospitality industry, as service quality is hard to evaluate without first-hand experience (Filieri, 2015). However, alongside genuine reviews, fake reviews have become prevalent, undermining trust and business credibility (Li et al., 2020; Xu et al., 2020). Detecting fake reviews is challenging due to increasingly sophisticated deceptive tactics and AI-generated content that mimics genuine language. Basic methods like keyword matching or user-based filtering are ineffective against these subtleties, as deceptive language and unique writing styles complicate universal detection (Mihalcea & Strapparava, 2009). Past research on machine learning for fake review detection has generally focused on specific classifiers or datasets (Bathla et al., 2022; Elmogy et al., 2021) and often overlooked the specific characteristics of reviews such as hotel reviews, which emphasize overall service experience.

The SERVQUAL model, which examines tangible and intangible service aspects, could be especially useful for detecting fake reviews that lack specific service details. This study seeks to address two research questions: (1) Can SERVQUAL serve as an independent feature set for detecting fake reviews? (2) Does SERVQUAL improve the performance of other feature sets such as Term Frequency-Inverse Document Frequency (TF-IDF), BERT embeddings, or Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) for detecting deceptive reviews?

Methods

This study uses the Deceptive Opinion Spam Corpus, comprising 1,600 genuine and deceptive hotel reviews. Four features, SERVQUAL, TF-IDF, BERT embeddings, and LIWC, are extracted to capture unique linguistic and contextual patterns. For classification models, Decision Tree and Random Forest models are employed for their strong interpretability while Support Vector Machine and Multilayer Perceptron models are used to evaluate the classification accuracy. Model performance is evaluated using the F1 score to assess each model's effectiveness in identifying fake reviews.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study underscores the importance of feature diversity in detecting fake hotel reviews. While TF-IDF effectively captures deceptive language patterns, it lacks contextual depth, and BERT, despite its richness in contextual analysis, may capture too broad or noisy information for this task. LIWC's poor performance suggests that linguistic and psychological cues, such as emotional language, are insufficient, as deceptive reviews often mimic genuine emotional tones. SERVQUAL performs better than LIWC and BERT because it focuses on service-specific attributes, which is useful in distinguishing between detailed genuine reviews and vague, abstract deceptive ones. Moreover, when combined, SERVQUAL and TF-IDF offer a robust framework that integrates surface-level and service-specific insights, enhancing model accuracy in detecting fake reviews.

VALIDATION OF LLM PERFORMANCE FOR TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY RESEARCH: A GUIDE TO APPLYING GPT FOR TEXT DATA ANALYSIS

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Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology has been widely adopted in various industries, particularly through advancements in Natural Language Processing (NLP). Large Language Models (LLMs), such as GPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer), have been popularized due to their capabilities to understand, interpret, and generate human language. Despite the growing applications of LLMs, their potential in tourism and hospitality (T&H) research has been underexplored, with limited studies mainly focused on consumer behavior. For example, Ali etal. (2023) found that relevance, credibility, usefulness, and intelligence are the key factors in ChatGPT, influencing travelers' trust and behavioral intentions. However, the advantages of LLMs in NLP have not been fully harnessed, particularly for text data analysis, such as sentiment analysis. Additionally, GPTisa relatively new AI technology unfamiliar to many researchers. GPT performance in NLP tasks also varies depending on the complexity of the tasks and the prompts used. Such variation raises concerns regarding the validity and reliability of GPT outputs. Using unreliable and invalid text analysis results for further data analysis can produce inaccurate outcomes, thus misleading future studies and business decisions (Hartmann et al., 2023). Therefore, evaluating and validating GPT performance is essential.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the performance of different GPT models for a text classification task in the crowdfunding context. Crowdfunding is an alternative financing method where entrepreneurs propose business ideas and collect small amounts of funding from individual investors. GPT models are applied to classify crowdfunding proposals into foodservice and non- foodservice projects. For this project classification, zero-shot prompting was applied to 1) compare two prompts (simple vs. improved) in two different models (GPT-3.5 and GPT-4.0o) across three iterations and 2) implement various prompt engineering techniques (Chain-of-Thought, Self- Reflection, Prompt Chaining) to improve model performance.

Methods

The study collected 1,949 projects between 2011 and 2022 under the Food & Beverages category from Indiegogo. Project descriptions were the primary input for performance comparison between human- and GPT-generated labels. The study evaluated two GPT models (GPT-3.5 and GPT-4.0o) across two types of prompts (simple and improved) and employed prompt engineering techniques, including Chain-of-Thought, Self-Reflection, and Prompt Chaining, to improve classification performance. Model reliability was also tested through Fleiss' Kappa.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Results indicated that GPT-4.0o consistently outperformed GPT-3.5 inaccuracy, precision, recall, and F1 score across all iterations. The reliability of both GPT-3.5 and GPT-4.0o was also confirmed through the Fleiss' Kappa test. After qualitatively analyzing misclassified examples and implementing Self-Reflection, Chain-of-Thought, and Prompt Chaining, GPT-4.0o performance increased by 3.59% in accuracy. This study has significant methodological contributions by confirming the reliability and validity of GPT performance in a text classification task. Therefore, researchers are suggested to employ LLMs and various prompt engineering techniques to handle diverse NLP tasks for their future research.

UNDERSTANDING MATURE TOURISTS' CHALLENGES WITH TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED SERVICES IN HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM: A QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT

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Introduction

The hospitality and tourism industry has increasingly adopted technology-enabled services to enhance efficiency and reduce costs. While these advancements promise improved experiences, they often come at the expense of human interaction and personalization, key elements of hospitality. This concern is especially relevant for mature tourists—those aged 55 and above— who face unique challenges when engaging with technology that does not consider their needs (Wu & Yang, 2023). Contrary to stereotypes, mature consumers are not necessarily resistant to technology but are often hindered by designs that fail to align with their capabilities and expectations. The prevalent view of aging as a deficit, along with assumptions that mature users need to be "educated" to reduce resistance, exacerbates this disconnect. Drawing from human- centered engineering principles, which emphasize inclusivity and design that accommodate diverse users (Norman, 2013), this study argues for a shift from simply adopting technology to adapting it thoughtfully to serve mature consumers better. This study explores the challenges mature tourists face with technology-enabled services, aiming to provide insights for designing more inclusive and human-centered service experiences in hospitality and tourism, preserving the essence of hospitality while enhancing accessibility for all consumers.

Methods

The critical incident technique (CIT) is a qualitative research method used to capture specific, detailed accounts or narratives of events that are critical to the subject matter under investigation. This technique is well-suited for understanding behaviors and experiences that either facilitate or hinder a particular circumstance, aligning with the purpose of this study. An open-ended online survey was conducted in January 2024 to explore the negative aspects of using technology-enabled services. Researchers independently used NVivo for coding and conducting thematic analysis. The coding process involved identifying patterns and recurring themes. These themes were then cross verified to ensure accuracy and consistency, ensuring reliability in the interpretation of results.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The analysis of the open-ended surveys yielded five dimensions of the challenges mature tourists associated with the technology-enabled service experience: Interface Accessibility & User Experience, System Failure & Human Service Breakdowns, Dependence on Human Intervention, Inflexible Service Design, Expectation Mismatch & Personalized Solution. These dimensions illustrate the multifaceted challenges mature tourists encounter when dealing with technology- based services in hospitality and tourism sectors. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of technology-enabled service experiences among individuals aged 55 and over and offers significant implications from both service interface design and service design perspectives. These findings reflect a broader issue: the industry's current approach to digital adoption often fails to meet the specific needs of mature consumers, emphasizing the need to move beyond efficiency- driven models towards more human-centered design.

EXPLORING MEDIA FRAMES: HOW GENAI REVOLUTIONIZES STAKEHOLDER DYNAMICS IN THE TOURISM

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Introduction

The introduction of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) into the tourism and hospitality industry marks a pivotal shift (Gursoy et al., 2023), impacting an array of stakeholders including businesses, employees, and consumers (Altinay et al., 2024). GenAI's applications range from influencing traveler decision-making (Kim et al., 2023) to advancing operations in hospitality consulting (Wang et al., 2024), presenting both opportunities and challenges across the sector (Li & Lee, 2024; Sigala et al., 2024). Despite the wealth of conceptual (Carvalho & Ivanov, 2024; Dwivedi et al., 2024) and review literature (Altinay et al., 2024), there remains a lack of practical insights from within the travel industry concerning the impact of GenAI. Therefore, this study employs a frame analysis of current media coverage, alongside stakeholder theory, to examine how GenAI transforms stakeholder dynamics in the tourism industry.

Methods

Data collection was conducted using the ProQuest database (https://www.proquest.com/). Searches from February 2023 to August 2024 utilized terms such as "Generative AI," "Gen AI," "Generative Artificial Intelligence," and "ChatGPT," paired with "travel," "tourism," "tourist," "hotel," and "hospitality." After removing duplicates and near-duplicates, researchers selected 57 highly relevant publications through a meticulous review of titles, abstracts, and full texts. This study applies frame analysis to explore how stakeholders are portrayed in media coverage and the dynamic impacts of GenAIon these relationships.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study examines the transformative effects of GenAI on stakeholder relationships within the tourism industry. Specifically, the introduction of GenAI has predominantly positive effects on the business-employee dynamic, such as improving operational efficiency (40%), reducing workload (18%), boosting profits (14%), and predictive operations (4%). Despite these benefits, GenAI has caused a talent shift (13%). For tourism business-consumers relations, the integration of GenAI deteriorates the relationship between tourism businesses and consumers. GenAI aids tourism businesses by providing predictive consumer insights (30%) and conflict resolution (4%). However, it also introduces consumer concerns, including GenAI ethical risks (35%), lack of competency (11%), and communication difficulty (4%). For employee-customer relations, GenAI fosters more efficient interactions between employees and consumers. GenAI has provided personalized omnichannel experience (92%), improved service efficiency (65%), and promoted accessibility (15%).

This study pioneers the use of newspaper sources, distinct from conceptual articles (Dwivediet al., 2024; Gursoyet al., 2023) and literature reviews (Altinayet al., 2024), to examine the transformative effects of GenAI on stakeholder relationships within the tourism and hospitality industry. Moreover, the findings address varied perspectives on GenAI's implementation in tourism businesses (Li & Lee, 2024; Sigala et al., 2024), enriching the discourse with practical solutions such as integrating accuracy-checking features and human oversight to mitigate issues like GenAI hallucinations.

THE FUTURE OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR REGARDING ROBOT CHEF RESTAURANTS

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Introduction

The restaurant sector is widely recognized for its dynamic nature and its propensity for introducing innovative culinary techniques, tools, and equipment (Cifci & Alrawadieh, 2021) and blending them with culinary arts. This sector ended the challenging second quarter of 2024 in the U.S. with customer traffic down by 2% from a year ago (NRA,2024) due to high menu prices driven by supply chain disruption and labor shortage (Earle, 2024). Today, the restaurant industry in the U.S. is still facing a labor shortage, with staffing levels 0.4% below pre-pandemic levels (NRA, 2024) as the number of young people entering the culinary field has declined in recent years (Brown, 2024). On top of these, the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the food safety and hygiene concerns of consumers (Yang, 2020) which has resulted in increased demand for touchless food experiences (Fusté-Forné, 2021). Robot chefs can serve as a solution for restaurant industry players, blending automation with culinary arts to enhance hygiene and food safety through contactless food handling (Chuahetal., 2022), reduce costs amid high inflation, and address labor shortages (Choi & Taylor)2023; Wolf, 2022). Therefore, understanding underlying factors influencing customers' intention to switch to robot chef restaurants is important for businesses

Methods

The study used a survey questionnaire which was developed in Qualtrics. The survey was developed using established scales from previous related literature (Francioni et al., 2022; Lu et al., 2019; Yoo et al., 2018; Zhu & Chang, 2020). A total of 450 responses were collected from restaurant customers via Prolific Academic Ltd. Eligible criteria included those residing in the USA who had dined in a restaurant within the last year. Participants were rewarded $2 USD for their participation in the study. Responses from participants who finished the survey in less than 2 minutes or failed the screening questions were excluded from further analysis. The final sample consisted of 437 responses.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study extends the Sense-Think-Act theory to the robotic food preparation domain, providing empirical evidence of its applicability in this context. Through the Sense-Think-Act perspective, this study provides a deeper understanding of how sensory perceptions (hygiene and speed) influence cognitive evaluations (food quality performance expectancy, and attitude), and subsequent actions (switching intention).

HOW DO CUSTOMERS FEEL ABOUT AI SERVICE TECHNOLOGIES? A SCOPING REVIEW

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Introduction

Consumer emotions play an important role in explaining willingness to interact with and accept artificially intelligent (AI) services (Blut et al., 2021; Flavián and Casaló, 2021; Gursoy et al., 2019). As the prevalence of AI-powered technologies in the hospitality industry continues to grow, such as the inclusion of service robots and in-room voice assistants, how consumers feel about these new technologies is especially salient (Hajal & Rowson, 2020). In service situations, positive and negative emotions arise from customers' interaction with employees, in which the employees' communication influences customer emotions (Babin et al., 2013; Walsh et al., 2011).

However, as human-robot interactions become more common, the greater the need to understand how replacing the 'employee' in this example with an AI service technology may affect customer perceptions and emotions (Pantano & Scarpi, 2022). Given the shift towards automation, exploring consumer affect towards AI-based technologies in lieu of human agents can help shape future research directions in hospitality (Kim et al., 2021; Zhong et al., 2022). Furthermore, analysis of consumer emotions towards AI can help to inform present and future practices of introducing AI-based technologies into hotels.

Methods

This review utilized the PRISMA-ScR review framework (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses, for Scoping Reviews) developed by Triccoet al. (2018). PRISMA is an established framework originally developed by a panel of expert researchers to ensure methodological and reporting quality when mapping evidence on a particular topic. The search also utilized the PCC (Population/Context/Concept) framework proposed by Pollock et al. (2023) to identify the main constructs of the review. The PCC framework is recommended for scoping reviews as a 'guide to construct clear and meaningful objectives and eligibility criteria for scoping reviews' (Pollock et al., 2023). Four major databases of peer-reviewed academic work were used to conduct this search.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Alongside practical data (such as publication date and frequency by year, journal names, and subtopics), several salient themes were identified from the literature contained in the review. Chief among theme were anthropomorphism, which was not specifically delineated as positive or negative, and service robotics technology. Common outcome variables were also identified and explored, alongside prevalent theories to explain interactions between humans and AI-driven technologies in the customer service context. Additionally, affective constructs were highlighted as possible measures of overall customer affect (positive or negative). Implications for future research and industry inclusion of AI-based technologies were also discussed.

DRIVING ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN THE ERA OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION: THE ROLE OF CORPORATE DIGITAL RESPONSIBILITY IN HOSPITALITY FIRMS

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Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technologies, rising competition, and shifts in consumer behavior have driven digital transformation (DT) within hospitality (Busulwa et al., 2022). DT refers to using digital technologies and data to develop new business models that add or create value (Verhoef et al., 2021). DT allows hospitality firms to enhance operational efficiency, enrich customer experience, and cultivate deeper relationships and loyalty (Mariani & Wirtz, 2023). Through DT, firms enhance or develop core competencies attaining competitive advantage and superior business performance (Wirtz et al., 2023). However, reliance on DT creates privacy and security vulnerabilities. Inadequate digital management practices raise privacy and ethical concerns, hinder consumer engagement and technology adoption, damage brand reputation, and lead to corporate liability and financial losses (Cheng et al., 2023; Bulgurcu et al., 2010). Recent data breaches affecting Marriott and Hilton have led to customer lawsuits and fines in the European Union (The Guardian, 2020; BBC, 2017). Cyberattacks on restaurant firms also resulted in temporal system shutdowns and exposure of stored personal data (Forbes, 2024). Past research in hospitality has focused on exploring privacy concerns and their effect on consumers' trust, engagement, technology use, and willingness to disclose information (Kang & Namkung, 2019; Morosan & DeFranco, 2016). However, little attention has been given to hospitality firms' DT through the lens of corporate digital responsibility (CDR). To address this gap, this study draws from the resource-based view to conceptualize CDR and assess its effect on organizational performance. Specifically, the research objectives are (1) to examine the effect of CDR practices on organizational performance and (2) to explore the moderating role of industry type.

Methods

This study integrates dictionary-based text analytics and econometric analysis using panel data for a longitudinal approach. CEOs' letters to shareholders and annual financial data from 1996 to 2023 from publicly traded restaurants, hotels, resorts, and casinos are collected. The final sample consisted of 449 firm-year-level observations from 24 companies. To test the proposed hypotheses, we conducted random-effects GLS regression using the company as the group variable.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Our finding suggests that CDR practices positively and significantly impact hospitality firms' organizational performance. This effect was also significantly different across industry types, with restaurant firms showing higher benefits from CDR practices. Theoretically, the study contributes to the limited literature on CDR within hospitality and provides a unique approach to exploring the effects of CDR practices on organizational performance. The findings expand on the RBV's distinctive competencies related to CDR to attain competitive advantage and enhance organizational performance. Practically, the findings provide a better understanding of CDR's potential benefits for hospitality practitioners.

IMPACTS OF CONCIERGE ROBOTS ON HUMAN CONCIERGE'S TURNOVER INTENTION

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Introduction

After the COVID-19 pandemic, hotels are experiencing labor shortages because of high resignations and quiet quitting. This worker shortage encourages hotels to use humanoid robots to adequately meet guest needs. Although service robots are becoming an indispensable part of the modern hospitality industry, human employees still occupy an irreplaceable position because they are responsible for creating customers' unique service experiences and maintaining long- term customer relationships.

Based on the information technology (IT) identity threat theory, this study examines the interrelationships between IT identity threat, job insecurity, job stress, and concierge employees ' turnover intention. Key demographic variables are used as control variables. The results reveal that IT identity threat has a significant relationship with concierges' turnover intention through job insecurity and stress.

Methods

Several multi-item scales to test the model and hypotheses. The questionnaire in this study includes four parts, which are the surveys of IT identity threat, job insecurity, job stress, and turnover intention. 200 human concierges were recruited from the Prolific panel. A total of 192 hotel employees were participated.

IT identity threat was assessed by nine questions from Craig et al. (2019). Job insecurity was adopted from Fischmann et al. (2021)'s scale with four items. The job stress scale with four items was adopted from Motowidlo et al. (1986). Turnover intention using three items came from Baum et al. (2020).

Results/Discussion/Implication

Research data were analyzed with PLS-SEM. Research hypotheses were tested by establishing a structural model. IT identity threat had significantly positive effects on job insecurity ($\beta = .60$; $p < .001$) and job stress ($\beta = .24$; $p < .05$). The effects of job insecurity on turnover intention ($\beta =. 19$; $p< .05$) and job stress ($\beta = .44$; $p< .001$) were both significant. Moreover, the effect of job stress on turnover intention was also significantly positive ($\beta= .39$; $p< .001$). Finally, the result shows that IT identity threat had no direct relationship with turnover intention ($\beta= .12$; $p> .05$) but influence turnover intention through mediators. These findings suggest that H1, H2, H3, H5 and H6 were supported, while H4 was not supported.

CUSTOMERS' PERCEPTIONS OF ROBOT SERVERS'ATTRACTIVVENESS AND TRUSTWORTHINESS: THE ROLE OF APPEARANCE AND VOICE PITCH

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Introduction

This study explores how anthropomorphic features—specifically humanlike appearance and voice pitch—affect perceptions of service robots in restaurant settings. Previous research suggests that anthropomorphic traits can influence customer experiences positively. However, evidence remains inconsistent regarding their effects on robot attractiveness and trustworthiness, with theories such as similarity-attraction and the "uncanny valley" offering competing predictions (Berscheid & Walster, 1978; Mori et al., 2012). This study aims to clarify these impacts by examining combinations of humanlike appearance and voice pitch on perceived robot attractiveness and trustworthiness. The study finds that that service robots with humanlike appearance and low- pitched voices are perceived as the most trustworthy and attractive, as compared to those with mechanical appearances or high-pitched voices.

Methods

A 2x2 between-subjects experimental design was used to examine how combinations of humanlike appearance (humanlike vs. mechanical) and voice pitch (high vs. low) affect perceptions of robot attractiveness and trustworthiness. Participants (N=494) were recruited via Prolific and completed an online experiment hosted on Qualtrics, where they were exposed to scenarios depicting robot servers in a restaurant setting. Each scenario included AI-generated images and text-to-speech voices, which were pre-tested to ensure accurate manipulation of humanlike appearance and voice pitch. Participants 'perceptions were measured using validated scales for physical, task, and social attraction (McCroskey & McCain, 1974), as well as trust (So et al., 2024). To accommodate the ordinal nature and non-normality of the response data, the Kruskal-Wallis H test was employed to assess differences across experimental conditions, with a 5% significance level for all analyses.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Results showed a significant effect of humanlike appearance and voice pitch on trustworthiness but not on physical, social, or task attractiveness. Specifically, humanlike robots with low-pitched voices were rated as the most trustworthy, highlighting that voice characteristics can enhance trust without affecting attractiveness. These findings provide practical guidance for robot designers in hospitality: prioritizing a low-pitched voice in humanlike robots may increase user comfort and acceptance in customer-facing roles. The results also contribute to human-robot interaction theory, offering a refined understanding of the "uncanny valley" by suggesting that a low voice pitch can mitigate the discomfort sometimes associated with highly humanlike robots. However, the lack of significant effects on physical, social and task attractiveness suggests that other factors may need to be considered when designing robots for tasks where these perceptions are important. This study thus enhances our knowledge of how specific anthropomorphic features can shape positive human- robot interactions, particularly around trust formation.

EVALUATING GENERATIVE AI CREDIBILITY IN TRAVEL PLANNING: A STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING APPROACH TO USER PERCEPTIONS

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Introduction

The hospitality and tourism industry is undergoing a transformative shift propelled by innovative technologies. Generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT or Gemini, use Large Language Models (LLMs) to create various types of content (Carvalho & Ivanov, 2023; Dogru et al., 2023; Dwivedi et al., 2023; Gursoyet al., 2023; Li & Lee, 2024). Customers can employ Generative AI to request tailored services, acquire suggestions, and secure support in organizing their travel planning (Ali et al., 2023; Gursoy et al., 2023; Kim et al., 2023). According to a March 2024 survey, 41% of leisure travelers in the United States and Canada used Generative AI for travel inspiration and/or itinerary planning, up from 34% in August 2023 (Wyman, 2024).

Despite its significance, there is a lack of understanding of how potential users perceive the credibility of Generative AI in providing travel planning advice (Kim et al., 2023). However, the specific dimensions of source credibility – such as trustworthiness, expertise, and dynamism – remain underexplored in the context of AI-generated content. Therefore, this study aims to critically examine the various dimensions of source credibility and assess their impact on travelers' attitudes and intentions to adopt Generative AI tools for travel planning.

Methods

The study utilized a two-phase survey design, starting with a screener survey to identify eligible participants, followed by the main survey. Participants were adults in the USA who had used Generative AI tools for travel planning in the past year, recruited through Prolific. The screener ensured participants met the inclusion criteria, focusing on travel history and AI usage.

Those who qualified were invited to complete the main survey, which measured perceptions of Generative AI tools using validated constructs adapted to the study's context. A pilot test was conducted to ensure clarity and reliability, with results showing high reliability for all constructs. The main survey was then distributed to qualified participants, and after removing those who failed attention checks, valid responses were analyzed using covariance-based structural equation modeling.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study explored how travelers' perceptions of Generative AI's trustworthiness, expertise, and dynamism influence their attitudes toward using it for travel planning, and how these attitudes affect their behavioral intentions. The findings confirmed that trustworthiness and expertise positively impact travelers' attitudes, which, in turn, significantly influence their intention to adopt AI tools. However, perceived dynamism did not significantly affect attitudes.

These results highlight the critical role of trust in the acceptance of Generative AI, aligning with previous research. The study also extends the understanding of how perceived expertise influences attitudes toward technology. The non-significant effect of dynamism suggests a need for further research in this area. Additionally, the study confirms that positive attitudes toward Generative AI significantly impact travelers' likelihood of adopting these tools. Overall, the study emphasizes the importance of fostering trust and demonstrating expertise to enhance positive attitudes toward Generative AI tools in travel planning.

ROLE OF PRIVACY CALCULUS IN HOTEL GUESTS' INTENTIONS TO USE IN-ROOM VOICE ASSISTANTS

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Introduction

Recent advances in AI-powered voice assistants offer hotel guests personalized and convenient experiences, such as room control, concierge information, and entertainment, enhancing overall guest satisfaction. However, the always-listening nature of these devices raises privacy concerns, as guests may feel their data is at risk. This study leverages the privacy calculus model to examine hotel guests' decisions regarding in-room voice assistants. The privacy calculus theory suggests that individuals weigh the perceived benefits of a technology against potential privacy risks (Dinev & Hart, 2006). This study focuses on two primary predictors: perceived intelligence, which reflects the voice assistant's efficiency and ability to meet guest needs, and social presence, which makes the assistant feel more personable. We also examine institutional trust as a moderating factor, hypothesizing that trust in a hotel's data handling practices can mitigate privacy concerns associated with AI voice assistants.

Methods

A survey-based quantitative study was conducted with 376 participants recruited through Prolific. The survey included three main sections: initial filtering questions, main variable measurements, and demographic information. Established scales were used to measure perceived intelligence (McLean et al., 2021), social presence (McLean & Osei-Frimpong, 2019), perceived benefits (Kim et al., 2019), perceived privacy risks (Pal et al., 2022), institutional trust (Morosan & DeFranco, 2015), and usage intentions (Lee et al., 2021). Data was analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM) to test both the measurement and structural models, assessing the direct effects of perceived intelligence and social presence on perceived benefits, privacy risks and usage intentions, as well as the moderating effect of institutional trust.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Results indicate that perceived intelligence and social positively impacts perceived benefits, but are negatively related to perceived privacy risks. Perceived benefits were positively related to usage intentions, and privacy risks were negatively related to usage intentions. In addition, perceived intelligence was negatively related to usage intentions, suggesting that guests are willing to use voice assistants only for convenience benefits in the room but not their inherent intelligence. Institutional trust moderated the relationship between privacy risk and usage intentions. These results provide theoretical insights into the privacy calculus model and practical recommendations for hotels: by emphasizing transparency in data handling and ensuring privacy safeguards, hotels can increase guest acceptance of in-room voice assistants. To build trust effectively, hotels should communicate data policies openly, display data protection certifications, and allow guests greater control over data collection settings.

A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW: EFFECTS OF OUTDOOR AUGMENTED REALITY (AR) TOURIST EXPERIENCES ENHANCING VISITOR INTERPRETATION AND ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

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Introduction

As tourism evolves, enhancing visitor experiences through innovative interpretation is vital for sustaining cultural and economic value (UNWTO, 2020). Improved tourist experiences foster interest and repeat visits (Davis, 2019). Traditional methods, like guided tours, build personal connections but lack digital interactivity (Weiler & Davis, 1993; Moscardo, 1996). Augmented Reality (AR) offers a solution, enabling outdoor tourists to visualize historical events interactively, boosting engagement and educational value (Azuma, 1997; Chung et al., 2015). However, AR's use in outdoor contexts is underexplored due to technological and environmental challenges. This study systematically reviews current research on outdoor AR's effects on tourist experiences, focusing on key outcomes and challenges related to visitor interpretation and engagement.

Methods

This systematic literature review followed PRISMA guidelines (PRISMA, 2021) to ensure rigor and transparency. The review moved through identification, screening, and inclusion stages, applying the search query ("Augmented Reality" OR "AR") AND ("Tourism" OR "Tourist" OR "Visitor" OR "Travel") across five databases: Web of Science, ProQuest, Science Direct, EBSCO, and Taylor & Francis Online. Inclusion criteria focused on peer-reviewed, English-language articles from 2000 to 2024 examining augmented reality in outdoor tourism. The identification stage yielded 794 records, narrowed to 42 studies after removing duplicates and conducting full- text screening. Data extraction involved coding study characteristics, capturing research design, data type, methodology, and demographics. Program characteristics coding covered AR content type, delivery mode, setting, and visitor outcomes, evaluating AR's role in enhancing engagement at cultural heritage sites (Ahmad et al., 2023; Aluri, 2017; Jung et al., 2018).

Results/Discussion/Implication

In hospitality and tourism, augmented reality (AR) experiences are crucial for building connections, inspiring visits, and revitalizing destinations. AR enhances outdoor tourist sites with immersive, interactive experiences. Asia and Europe are leaders in AR tourism research, emphasizing mobile apps with 3D models that engage visitors (Wu & Lai, 2021). Studies show AR boosts educational outcomes, emotional engagement, and repeat visits, mainly in cultural heritage settings, though its impact in natural environments is less significant (Tussyadiah et al., 2018). This review outlines four main themes: (1) Visitor Experience: AR creates memorable, authentic encounters; (2) Visitor Interpretation: AR content enhances educational outcomes and cognitive engagement, deepening understanding of historical and environmental contexts; (3) Visitor Engagement: AR fosters behavioral and emotional involvement, encouraging revisit intentions and social interactions; (4) Technology Acceptance: User readiness and accessibility are critical for AR adoption, with mobile apps preferred (Lagiewski & Kesgin, 2017). While AR shows promise, technological and environmental challenges necessitate adaptable designs. Establishing standardized evaluation frameworks for AR in tourism can guide practitioners in creating impactful and resilient visitor experiences (Cranmer et al., 2023; Bec et al., 2019).

A HETEROGENEOUS HYBRID BETWEEN LINEAR AND DEEP LEARNING MODELS TO PREDICT TOURIST INFLOWS

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Introduction

The tourism industry is experiencing a transformative era by adopting advanced technologies like deep learning. Accurate tourist demand forecasting is crucial for strategic planning (Xu et al., 2022). Traditional models like ARIMA excel at capturing linear trends but often fail with non-linear features (Petrevska, 2017). Recent attempts, such as combining ARIMA with LSTM or applying CNNs, have shown promise but suffer from overfitting, lack of generalization, or limited ability to handle complex dependencies (Sano et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2021). This paper proposes a heterogeneous hybrid model integrating SARIMA for linear patterns and a CNN-LSTM deep learning framework for non-linear complexities. The approach addresses the limitations of existing methods and delivers robust predictions for tourist inflows across crucial U.S. cities.

Methods

The proposed hybrid model processes over ten years of tourist arrival data from Boston, New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles. It begins with SARIMA to model linear features and handles non-linear residuals using a deep learning hybrid. Time series imaging techniques, including Gramian Angular Fields, Markov Transition Fields, and Recurrence Plots, transform SARIMA outputs into images for input into the CNN-LSTM model. CNN captures spatial patterns, while LSTM extracts temporal dependencies, leveraging complementary strengths. Rigorous preprocessing, feature scaling, and advanced techniques like ReLU activation and Max Pooling ensure accuracy and robustness. The model achieved an unprecedented accuracy of 98.4%.

Results and Conclusion

The hybrid SARIMA-CNN-LSTM model demonstrated superior performance in predicting tourist inflows compared to standalone models. Tested on 250 days of data in 2023, the hybrid model achieved 98.4% accuracy, significantly outperforming alternatives like standalone CNN-LSTM (92%) and SARIMA (87.6%). Time series imaging proved pivotal, enabling the model to effectively integrate spatial and temporal features. The results highlight the importance of addressing linear and non-linear patterns for robust forecasting.

Comparative analyses confirmed the model's ability to handle diverse features, outliers, and missing data more effectively than traditional methods. For instance, Naïve Bayes and ARIMA struggled with interdependencies and long-term forecasts. The hybrid approach not only forecasts accurate trends but also predicts the impacts of disruptions, such as weather or flight cancellations, offering actionable insights for industry stakeholders.

Future research aims to explore dedicated hybrids for tourism market segmentation and long-term demand forecasting, expanding the model's applicability. This paper represents a significant step forward in leveraging advanced machine learning techniques for actionable insights into tourism demand forecasting.

MEASURING HOTEL CUSTOMERS' ROBOTIC SERVICE QUALITY PERCEPTIONS: A SCALE DEVELOPMENT STUDY

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Introduction

Recent advancements in computer science and information technologies have elevated artificial intelligence (AI) into a transformative force, leveraging powerful hardware, expert systems, and vast datasets (Ivanov, 2023). AI, defined as systems capable of performing cognitive tasks, mimics human intelligence through algorithms and decision-making processes (Schepman & Rodway, 2020). AI is now recognized as a transformative force in solving complex challenges across industries, leveraging its capacity to analyze vast amounts of data, identify intricate patterns, and deliver innovative solutions that surpass traditional methods (Schepman & Rodway, 2020).

AI has found applications in various industries, including robotics (Nadkarni et al., 2020). The development of social robots, particularly in senior care and education, has expanded AI's reach (Di Napoli et al., 2023). Significant milestones in service robots' application to the hospitality industry include SARA, a dialogue system assisting tourists, AIRSTAR at Incheon Airport, and Pepper, a humanoid robot assisting travelers (Tung & Au, 2018). As hotels increasingly integrate artificially intelligent service robots, customers' perceptions of service quality are evolving, necessitating new measures to assess robotic service quality (ROBOQUAL). Despite the numerous adaptations of SERVQUAL Parasuraman et al. (1985, 1988) aimed at improving its efficiency, a reliable scale to assess ROBOQUAL in the hospitality context is yet to be developed. Therefore, this study develops a multi-item ROBOQUAL scale using the scale development guidelines proposed by Churchill (1979) to address the identified gap.

Methods

This study employed a mixed-methods approach. Focus group studies generated an initial pool of 300 items based on robotic service quality literature, later refined to 59 items through expert evaluation. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with 331 responses revealed a three-factor, 18-item structure, while confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with 612 responses validated an 11-item scale. Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) assessed nomological validity and interrelations with the established constructs.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The results of the study indicated that robotic service quality has a significant impact on customer experience quality. Furthermore, experience significantly influences customer satisfaction and WOM intentions, with satisfaction mediating the relationship between experience quality and WOM intentions. These findings align with prior research emphasizing the role of service quality in shaping customer behavioral intentions (Line et al., 2016). Study results also highlighted the importance of robotic empathy and efficiency in enhancing customer perceptions, supported by social exchange theory, which posits that reciprocal interactions between customers and service providers lead to customer satisfaction and positive behavioral intentions (Blau, 1964).

Completed Research:
Lodging Management & Service Quality

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ASSESSING INDOOR ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY: AN APPLICATION OF IMPORTANCE-PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

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Introduction

As people spend nearly 90% of their time indoors, the quality of indoor environment is crucial for comfort, health, and well-being. Indoor environmental quality (IEQ), encompassing various factors including indoor air quality, thermal comfort, lighting, acoustics, and interior architectural features, greatly influences occupant experiences (USGBC, 2017; WBDG Sustainable Committee, n.d.). Despite substantial research investigating IEQ in residential, educational, and commercial buildings, relatively little attention has been given to its importance in the hospitality sector, particularly in hotels. This study addresses this gap by evaluating key IEQ factors—air quality, thermal comfort, lighting, acoustics, and room comfort—within hotel environments, using the Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) framework to prioritize improvements that maximize guest satisfaction.

Methods

The study conducted a self-administered online survey with 278 guests from a mid-tier hotel in the U.S. Midwest, known for offering modern accommodations for business and leisure travelers. The survey instrument was adapted from the Center for Built Environment's (CBE) occupant IEQ survey and 20 items across five categories (air quality, thermal comfort, lighting, acoustics, and room comfort) were assessed using a 5-point Likert scale. The data were analyzed using paired-sample t-tests, and traditional and alternative IPA matrices, allowing comparisons between perceived importance and actual performance across IEQ factors.

Results/Discussion/Implications

The gap analysis revealed significant negative differences for air quality, thermal comfort, and acoustics, indicating that guest expectations are not fully met in these areas. Specifically, sound privacy and overall thermal comfort emerged as critical priorities ("Concentrate Here"), with large performance gaps relative to guest expectations. In contrast, lighting quality showed minimal performance gaps and was classified as a "Low Priority," while room comfort factors, such as layout and space, exceeded expectations, suggesting "Possible Overkill."

This study highlights the need for targeted improvements in air quality, thermal comfort, and acoustics within hotels to better meet guest expectations. Our findings suggest that enhancing ventilation, temperature control, and soundproofing could substantially improve guest satisfaction. By applying both traditional and alternative IPA matrices, this research offers hotel managers practical insights for prioritizing resources effectively, enhancing the overall guest experience, and ultimately boosting customer loyalty.

UNLOCKING GUEST ENGAGEMENT: THE POWER OF INTERACTIVE DIGITAL SIGNAGE IN HOTELS

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Introduction

As digital signage becomes a prominent tool for enhancing guest engagement in hotels, understanding how specific design elements shape guest responses is crucial for maximizing the effectiveness of in-house advertisements. Despite its growing implementation, the optimal configurations for enhancing guests' positive attitudes and sustained attention remain underexplored. Drawing on theoretical insights from the biased competition theory of attention (Desimone & Duncan, 1995), this study aims to: (1) examine the interactive effects of digital signage features—interactivity (high vs. low), content type (informational vs. commercial), and visual complexity (simple vs. complex)—on guests' attention and attitudes; (2) analyze the interactions among interactivity, content type, and facility type (hedonic vs. utilitarian) on guests' attention and attitudes; (3) investigate curiosity as a mediating factor in these relationships; and (4) offer valuable insights for practitioners, contributing to the theoretical framework for designing digital signage that enhances guest experiences.

Methods

After the pretest, a 2 x 2 x 2 x 2 between-subjects design was implemented. Data from 504 valid participants were collected via Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk), with random assignment to one of sixteen digital signage scenarios, each displayed for seven seconds. Participants then completed manipulation and realism checks, along with measures of interactivity, content type, visual complexity, curiosity, attention, and attitude. MANOVA analyzed the two dependent variables, with univariate tests exploring potential three-way interactions. Regression analyses were conducted using Hayes' PROCESS Macro v4.2 with a 5,000-sample bias-corrected bootstrap.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Data from 504 participants (69.44% male, 30.56% female), primarily Caucasian, aged 20–39, and holding bachelor's degrees, provided critical insights into the effectiveness of digital signage in hotel settings. After confirming realism and conducting manipulation checks, hypotheses were tested. Pearson correlation analysis indicated a moderate positive correlation between attention to and attitude toward the ad ($r = 0.628$, $p < .001$). A significant three-way MANOVA revealed support for H1a and H1b, showing that high interactivity combined with simple, information- focused content notably enhances attention and fosters positive attitudes toward advertisements. For hedonic facility content, high interactivity further amplified engagement compared to utilitarian content, supporting H2a and H2b. Moderated mediation analysis confirmed H3a and H3b, identifying curiosity as a key mediator, with its influence strongest in simple designs and hedonic content. These findings emphasize that tailored digital signage—particularly when engaging and informative—can significantly enhance guest engagement. Hotels can utilize these insights to create signage that resonates with guest preferences, potentially boosting brand loyalty and revisit intentions. Furthermore, the role of curiosity as a mediator underscores the importance of content that captures interest, promoting a more immersive and fulfilling hotel experience.

WILL SERVICE DESIGN AFFECT CUSTOMERS' HEALTH? A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW ON DIS/ABLEISM IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY SERVICE PRACTICES

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Introduction

Ableism—the societal preference for able-bodied individuals over those with disabilities—shapes both individual and institutional behaviors, reinforcing exclusion and marginalization (Baglieri & Lalvani, 2019; Campbell, 2009). This bias permeates social interactions, institutional structures, and service designs, fostering a dichotomy between the "ideal" able-bodied person and those with disabilities. In the tourism and hospitality (T&H) industry, serving customers who fit able-bodied norms is often prioritized for its perceived productivity, resulting in standardized service models that emphasize efficiency while frequently neglecting the needs of people with disabilities (PwDs) (Goodley, 2014). These models, driven by commercial priorities, tend to minimally comply with legal standards without fully addressing the diverse needs of PwDs, creating barriers to essential services. As a result, PwDs encounter T&H environments that can worsen health disparities, restrict access to well-being-promoting activities, and increase risks such as anxiety, stigma, and stress due to ableist practices.

This systematic literature review (SLR) critically examines how standardized models in the T&H industry contribute to the marginalization of PwDs through a lens of dis/ablism. The review aims to explore ways in which service design can become more inclusive and adaptable to meet the needs of all customers, rather than only those who conform to a standardized model.

Methods

The SLR followed PRISMA guidelines, focusing on articles published in Q1 or Q2 journals, as ranked by the Journal Citation Reports (JCR), within hospitality, leisure, sports, and tourism. The search spanned from January 2010 to March 2024. Keywords included combinations of "disabilities/impairments," "accessible/inclusive tourism," "dis/ableism," "disablism," "standardized/accommodation services," as well as "health/wellness/illness." A total of 207 articles were identified, and after removing duplicates, irrelevant studies, and conference abstracts, 116 articles were included in the final analysis.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Standardized service models, driven by commercial priorities, categorize customers into "normal" and "disabled" groups, reinforcing ableist norms and overlooking the needs of PwDs. Limited staff training and minimal adherence to legal accessibility standards exacerbate these issues, creating additional barriers that perpetuate exclusion and deepen health disparities. As a result, PwDs face restricted access to activities that promote well-being and are at higher risk of negative health outcomes such as anhedonia, stigma, and heightened stress due to ongoing exposure to ableist practices. Given the prevalence of disability and the likelihood that many individuals will experience it at some point, these service practices contribute not only to social inequality but also to public health challenges. Ignoring these challenges only exacerbates health disparities and burdens public health systems further.

ASSESSING SLEEP HEALTH IN A CONFERENCE HOTEL: A CASE STUDY OF INDOOR CARBON DIOXIDE INVESTIGATION IN HOTEL GUESTROOMS WITH VARIABLE OCCUPANCY

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Introduction

Hotels ultimately sell a goodnight's sleep to travelers. Sleep science research shows that indoor air quality influences sleep quality, with carbon dioxide (CO2) levels resulting from human respiration in bedrooms potentially reducing sleep quality. Moreover, Sekhar etal. (2020) argued that bedroom CO2 levels in the 1,150 – 2,600 ppm range were most likely to diminish sleep quality. Jacobson et al. (2019) further claimed that CO2 levels as low as 1,000 ppm could cause health problems, even if the exposure lasts only for a few hours. The purpose of the study was to assess indoor CO2 levels in occupied guest rooms and to examine changes in CO2 concentrations with an increasing number of guests, in order to determine whether optimal sleep quality regardless of room occupancy can be achieved in an upscale hotel in the U.S. as a case study.

Methods

A 4-star hotel affiliated with a national chain brand was selected as the site for an IAQ field study, coinciding with a 3-day academic conference scheduled to take place in Chicago in April 2024. The hotel is a 6-story property with 253 guestrooms, built in 1991 and renovated in 2017. It comprises all-suite rooms, each sized 375 square feet, with single or double beds accommodating up to four guests. Four groups of a research team, representing single, double, triple, and quadruple occupancy, were formed to begin taking air samples with a reliable IAQ instrument upon checking in for three nights. The Awair Omni, a dependable air quality monitor designed for business clients, was selected for the field study. This instrument has been used and validated in several academic studies and is capable of monitoring temperature, relative humidity, CO2, and other IAQ parameters in real-time

Results/Discussion/Implication

The number of IAQ samples collected from each room ranged from 685 to 721 over three nights. Among these, 85 samples from each night corresponding to a sleeping period from midnight to 7 AM were drawn for descriptive and inferential analysis. The mean values of CO2 in the two rooms with three and four guests sleeping were above the threshold of 1,000 ppm, ranging from 1,205.75 ± 69.79 ppm to 2,466.10 ± 114.76 ppm, while the mean values for the other two rooms with single and double occupancy were below 1,000 ppm. A Pearson correlation was conducted to determine the relationship between CO2 levels in the guestroom and the number of guests sleeping overnight. The results showed a strong positive correlation between indoor CO2 and the number of guests: the greater the number of occupants, the higher the indoor CO2 levels. Therefore, the results of the study indicate that sleep quality is likely to be compromised due to high CO2 levels in guestrooms when three or more guests share a room overnight. The findings suggest that hotels catering to families with children in theme park destinations should assess indoor air quality and increase airflow rates to bring more fresh air into the rooms, ensuring optimal sleep for all guests.

ELEVATING HOTEL EVENT EXPERIENCES FOR ALL: A MULTI-THEORY FRAMEWORK FOR NEUROINCLUSION, CONSENSUS BUILDING, AND CO-VALUE CREATION

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Introduction

Embracing experiential and cognitive diversity is essential for promoting social sustainability and fostering innovation in the hotel industry (Mor Barak, 2022). With up to 40% of the population estimated to be neurodivergent (Doyle, 2020), hotels are increasingly adopting neuroinclusive practices (Mannino, 2023; Marriott, 2023). This study examines perspectives from both neurodivergent guests and service providers to guide the creation of consensus-based strategies that advance inclusivity, thereby enhancing service quality and guest satisfaction.

Methods

This study used a quasi-experimental design to examine perspectives from neurodivergent event attendees and hotel event service providers. Questionnaires, adapted from the INCLUSIO scale (Bölte et al., 2021) on educational neuroinclusive practices, were refined for content validity and reliability through a cross-professional Delphi pretest (N=12) from both stakeholder groups, resulting in a 37-item instrument across eight domains. In the official study, 108 neurodivergent attendees and 145 event service providers participated in online survey. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to assess total, domain, and item scores, followed by post hoc Tukey tests for pairwise comparisons. Consensus on inclusive measures between groups was evaluated using Cohen's Kappa coefficients for cross-tabulated survey items.

Results/Discussion/Implication

A two-way MANOVA analysis examining the combined effects of generation and gender on perceptions of neuroinclusive practices in hotels revealed a significant interaction effect, indicating that these factors jointly influence stakeholder perceptions. Further domain-specific analyses showed significant differences between stakeholder groups in their views on neuroinclusive practices, including individual support, structured event environments, schedule adjustments based on individual needs, functional responses to behavioral characteristics, and considerations for social interactions. These findings highlight the need to consider diverse stakeholder perspectives in neuroinclusive event design, given the varying perceptions of inclusiveness across groups. Additionally, individual item scores suggested that stakeholder involvement in event planning and evaluation influenced their perceptions of neuroinclusiveness.

Post-hoc analyses revealed a generational trend in perceptions of inclusive event design, with Generation Z showing heightened sensitivity and advocacy for neurodivergence inclusivity. However, the Kappa coefficient indicated limited consensus, as stakeholders only demonstrated low to fair agreement on 14 out of 37 items in neuroinclusive event design.

Theoretically, this study confirmed the needs of implementation of social model, recognizing the role of societal and environmental barriers in creating disability (Oliver, 1990) in hospitality sector. Practically, this study highlights the specific needs of neurodivergent guests, suggesting priority in developing and implementing inclusive practices for hotel managers. Also, with Generation Z's high expectations for inclusivity, aligning practices with these evolving values is essential.

ELEVATING EXCELLENCE: EXAMINING SPATIAL COMPETITION EFFECTS ON HOTEL QUALITY

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Introduction

In highly competitive markets, businesses typically lower prices to attract customers, yet the role of competition in service quality, especially in experiential industries like hospitality, is less clear. Spatial competition can drive quality improvement, compelling businesses to differentiate through enhanced offerings (Brekke et al., 2018). Despite evidence linking competition to operational performance improvements, its effects on hotel quality remain underexplored. This study examines how competition impacts hotel quality and explores six moderating factors drawn from institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) and resource-based view (Barney, 1997), which may amplify competition's positive effects on service quality.

Methods

Using STR and TripAdvisor data on 3,523 Texas hotels, spanning 20 years, we employed a two- way fixed-effects panel model to analyze the impact of competition on online ratings as a quality measure. The analysis included controls for hotel-specific and time-based variations to ensure robust results. To improve our model's predictive accuracy and account for heterogeneity, we analyzed moderators including class, operation type, size, age, guest portfolio, relative quality compared to the market average, and relative competitiveness of hotel employees' earnings. Additionally, we performed multicollinearity checks and auxiliary analyses to strengthen the robustness of the findings.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Results support that competition generally improves hotel quality. Key factors, such as relative quality, hotel class, guest expectations, and relative employee earnings, moderate this positive effect. According to institutional theory, increased competition raises guest expectations, especially in hotels already rated above the regional average, compelling them to maintain or exceed these higher standards to remain competitive. These higher-rated hotels experience more pronounced pressure to meet elevated guest expectations compared to lower-rated hotels, which often focus more on affordability than quality. From aresource-based perspective, well-resourced hotels, those with physical and human assets, are better equipped to respond to competitive pressures by consistently enhancing hotel quality. This alignment enables hotels with adequate resources to differentiate themselves through ongoing quality improvements, thereby sustaining guest satisfaction and market competitiveness.

Practically, the study suggests that hotels already performing above average should capitalize on quality-driven strategies to maintain their competitive edge. Local hotel associations are also crucial in supporting resource-limited hotels, providing training, market insights, and resources to help them align with elevated industry standards. The combined impact of institutional pressures and resource-based advantages fosters an industry-wide elevation of service quality, benefiting guests and hotel operators alike.

Completed Research: Marketing

RESTORATIVE EXPERIENCE IN BIOPHILIC TRADESHOW BOOTH DESIGN

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Introduction

With the growing interest in sustainability and well-being, companies including Libbey LLC have incorporated natural elements into their booths in an attempt to entice customers during the 2023 National Restaurant Show (Libbey, n.d.). The practice of applying natural features to architectural design is referred to as biophilic design, representing the pursuit to fulfill human desires to connect with nature (Kellert & Calabrese, 2015). Biophilic design offers opportunities for promoting health, productivity, and well-being, reducing stress, as well as enhancing visual preference and aesthetic appeal (Wijesooriya & Brambilla, 2021). Stress recovery theory and attention restoration theory have been recently highlighted due to prevalent mental disorders such as high levels of stress, anxiety, and mental fatigue in modern life (Yin et al., 2020). Both theories suggest that indoor environments with natural settings restore individuals' cognitive and affective responses (Ulrich, 1993). Similarly, due to crowded and fast-paced characteristics of trade shows, attendees are exposed to high levels of noise, overwhelming information, and visual stimuli resulting in cognitive strains, stress conditions, and sensory overload (Kaplan, 1995; Gilliam. 2015). In addition, cognitive appraisal and emotions from booth design indicate the booth’s attractiveness and visitors’ willingness to approach the booth (Orth & Wirtz, 2014; Wang et al., 2023). Nonetheless, those restoration advantages of natural attributes in trade show booths are underexplored in current biophilic studies. Therefore, the goal of this study is to identify which biophilic booth design bundle contributes the most to trade show attendees’ restoration process by applying a conjoint analysis approach.

Methods

The study conducted a full-profile conjoint analysis method to identify and measure the restoration of biophilic booth design in trade show. The 11 scenarios showed a series of booth spaces in photo- realistic 3D rendering, which provided the respondent with scenario realism among the levels of nature attributes in booth surroundings and, as such, contributed to the respondent’s experiences and perceptions of physical space. To enhance representativeness, the participants need to have decision-making responsibilities in key business areas.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study suggests a new perspective of adopting a biophilic design philosophy in the trade show environment with the expectation of significant restoration. Our study found that furniture and vertical structures are the most important attributes to elevate trade show attendees’ restoration, while wood wallpaper is the least attribute. The findings of this study represent a significant contribution in that it pioneers a novel approach to restoration in booth design study. Practically, it offers valuable insights into creating restorative booth design in stressful and congestive tradeshows. In addition, it theoretically enriches the scope of the existing literature on biophilic design and trade shows, addressing both the affective and cognitive benefits of natural attributes. Consequently, this study extends the knowledge of how natural attributes contribute to relaxation, energized, and mind clarity within the trade show context.

TRIGGERING TRAVEL INSPIRATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA: AN INVESTIGATION OF DRIVING FACTORS

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Introduction

Digital content marketing has emerged as a pivotal tool for engaging consumers in an increasingly competitive marketplace (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019). As brands strive to capture the attention of potential customers, the role of inspiration in content marketing has gained prominence. However, research exploring the driving factors of travel inspiration within the context of social media remains limited (Sheng, Yang, & Feng, 2020). This study aims to fill this gap by examining the factors that drive travel inspiration, drawing on inspiration theory (Böttger, Evanschitzky, & Pfrang, 2017; Dai, Wang, & Kirillova, 2022). Through a series of three experiments, we investigate the impact of both informational factors—specifically novelty and information structure—and social factors, such as social comparison orientation, on travel inspiration and subsequent travel intentions.

Methods

This research utilized a combination of scenario-based surveys and experimental designs to investigate the effects of novelty, information structure, and social comparison orientation on travel inspiration and intentions across three studies. A total of 434 participants (approximately 37% male and 63% female) were recruited from Credamo.

In the scenario-based surveys, participants were presented with fictional travel experiences through social media posts and rated their perceptions of novelty and inspiration using a seven- point Likert scale. The experimental manipulated social media content, including varying levels of novelty (high vs. low) and information structures (hierarchical vs. flat).

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS, employing statistical methods such as t-tests, ANOVAs, and mediation and moderation analyses through the PROCESS macro. Manipulation checks confirmed the effectiveness of the experimental conditions.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study contributes to the understanding of how shared travel experiences on social media can effectively inspire potential tourists and offers practical implications regadring developing content marketing strategies through inspiring potential tourists. The findings reveal that novelty significantly triggers inspiration and positively affects travel intentions, highlighting the importance of novel content in digital marketing strategies. In contrast, the structure of information does not impact travel inspiration, suggesting that marketers should prioritize engaging content over information organization. Moreover, social comparison orientation negatively moderates the relationship between travel inspiration and intention; individuals high in social comparison may be less likely to act on their inspiration due to negative feelings (Kim & Chung, 2022). Collectively, these insights emphasize the role of novelty in inspiring potential travelers while considering the psychological dynamics of social comparison within the context of social media.

HOW DO SHORT-TERM RENTALS BENEFIT FROM TOURISM? AN INFORMATION-SEARCH PERSPECTIVE

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Introduction

Destinations are part of the supply side of the tourism system and comprise a wide array of stakeholders (Zhang et al., 2009). Short-term rentals have emerged as a mainstay stakeholder of the tourism system (Cocola-Gantetal., 2021), contributing to and benefiting from the destinations where they operate (Ioannideset al., 2019; Mody & Hanks, 2020). Nevertheless, little research has examined this interdependent relationship from an information search perspective.

Tourists engage in extensive information search to make travel decisions (Hoetal., 2012). Among the plethora of travel services to learn about, information on attractions plays a crucial role in the tourism industry to stimulate visitors' motivation to visit (Leiper, 1990; Richards & Curran, 2002). Short-term rental platforms provide standardized interfaces, making the property description a critical tool for hosts to differentiate their offerings and attract potential guests (Wu et al., 2017). Scholars have suggested that incorporating attraction information into short-term rental marketing strategies is beneficial (Bram Janssens et al., 2021). However, the effect of attraction information in property descriptions on short-term rental property performance remains unexplored. Location is widely recognized as a primary driver of short-term rental property performance (Chica-Olmo et al., 2020). In this study, we investigate how attraction information moderates the relationship between location and performance. Specifically, we seek to answer the following questions: How do short-term rental hosts utilize attraction information in the online description? And what impact does it have on property performance?

Methods

Using cross-sectional regression models, we test how "Prominence of attraction information" (the ratio of attraction-related text to the total property description) and "Diversity of attraction information" (number of attractions) moderate the relationship between distance to attraction center and performance. We do so with the example of five Washington, D.C. suburbs which are an ideal setting due to these areas' rich local attractions and proximity to D.C.'s historic sites. We assess the effect for the top 10% of attractions (according to TripAdvisor) in DC and the suburbs. We collected Airbnb data from September to November 2023, including geo-coordinates, rates, reviews, and property descriptions, resulting in 4,476 unique observations. Attraction information was identified from property descriptions by matching named attractions.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Our results show that while the distance to attraction centers negatively affects short-term rental performance, the prominence and diversity of attraction information can mitigate this impact. Our findings expand previous literature, which mainly explored attraction information's importance in the attraction system in general (Richards, 2002).

This study expands our understanding of the dependence of short-term rentals on destinations and contributes to tourism marketing literature by highlighting how short-term rental hosts can use attraction information strategically. Practically, our findings suggest that hosts should emphasize local attractions in their marketing to differentiate from competitors, and DMOs should engage hosts as vital partners in destination marketing efforts.

FINDING BELONGING: MARKETING NARRATIVES OF OUTDOOR-BASED ACCOMODATIONS IN THE SOUTHEAST AND NORTHWEST UNITED STATES

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Introduction

Destinations utilize marketing and branding in order to entice visitors to visit. One such way is through the use of brand narratives. Visitors engage with this narrative and determine if the story 'matches' what they desire in a vacation destination (Chronis, 2012; Pham, Pham, & Nguyen, 2022). Using narrative theory, one sees that narratives are used by visitors in order to make sense of a location and determine if they want to travel there (Garcia-Hernandez & Garay-Tamajon, 2022; Phelan et al., 2012).

This paper explores marketing narratives utilized solely by outdoor-based accommodations websites, via the visitor perspective, and seeks to answer the primary research objective: what narratives do outdoor-based accommodations use to market themselves? Accommodations in both the southeastern United States and the northwestern United States were studied to explore geographical differences in the narratives utilized.

Methods

This qualitative, exploratory study used content and thematic analysis to examine the narrative themes used by outdoor-based accommodations. The two regions were chosen due to their distinct geographical landscapes influencing tourism to the area. The sample of the study included outdoor accommodations such as campgrounds, RV parks, and glamping accommodations. Seven states were selected for the southeast, while five states were selected for the northwest. Accommodations were identified via online state databases, trip planning websites, and geographical websites. The final sample ranged from 42 to over 250 locations depending on the state.

Keywords and phrases were retrieved from the 'home', 'about', and 'contact' pages of the location's website using manual collection, guided by prior narrative research and coding (Beeland, 2024; Denning, 2006; Reis, 2012; Ryu et al., 2019). These words were then grouped into central themes, used to define the central marketing narrative(s) for the individual location. Findings were grouped together to determine state and regional patterns, culminating in a comparison between the selected regions.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The research findings revealed nine core marketing narratives and three sub-narratives used by outdoor-based accommodations. Both geographical regions utilized common narratives, despite some differences emerging. These differences are likely tied to regional cultural nuances. Theoretically, this paper expands narrative theory within the context of outdoor tourism and hospitality. Practically, this information is valuable for managers of outdoor-based accommodations within the United States. The study shows the frequent narratives used, and these findings can be utilized by individual accommodations in determining their own narratives to both reach the target market and be more distinctive when compared to competitors.

EXPLORING THE DICHOTOMY OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN TOURISM: A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF VALUE CO-CREATION AND CO-DESTRUCTION IN TOURIST EXPERIENCES

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Introduction

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the tourism and hospitality industry has fundamentally reshaped customer service and experience by enhancing personalization, operational efficiency, and ease of access. However, it also presents challenges such as over-reliance, privacy concerns, and reduced authenticity in interactions (Knani et al., 2022). This study leverages the Service-Dominant Logic (S-D Logic) theory, which posits that value is co-created by multiple actors within a service ecosystem, including non-human entities such as AI. This theoretical lens facilitates an understanding of AI's role as both an enabler of value co-creation and a source of potential value co-destruction within tourist experiences (Vargo & Lusch, 2004).

Methods

This research employed a cross-sectional survey distributed via the Qualtrics platform to gather data from 150 participants experienced with AI technologies during travel. The survey explored AI's influence across pre-travel, on-site, and post-travel stages and included questions rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The S-D Logic framework was applied to analyze how AI functions as an operant resource in creating or diminishing value. Statistical analyses using SPSS, including Pearson correlation and t-tests, validated the hypotheses regarding AI's impact on tourist satisfaction, trust, authenticity, and decision-making (Popesku, 2019; Knani et al., 2022).

Results/Discussion/Implication

The study found that AI-driven personalization significantly increases tourist satisfaction (mean = 4.2, $p < 0.05$), attributed to tailored recommendations and seamless service delivery (Knani et al., 2022). Trust emerged as a crucial determinant, correlating positively with AI engagement ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$), supporting S-D Logic's emphasis on co-created value through actor interactions (Popesku, 2019). However, 38% of respondents indicated that excessive AI use negatively impacted their sense of authenticity (mean = 3.8, $p = 0.06$). The survey revealed that while 76% agreed on AI's benefits for navigation and information access, heavy dependence on AI reduced tourists' decision-making confidence (mean = 3.9, $p < 0.05$), highlighting potential value co-destruction due to over-reliance (Zsarnoczky, 2017).

The findings emphasize the dual impact of AI as an operant resource in line with S-D Logic. AI enhances value through personalization and efficiency but also risks diminishing authenticity and independent decision-making. This underscores the need for strategic AI integration in tourism to achieve a balance between leveraging technological advantages and maintaining meaningful, human-centric experiences (Vargo & Lusch, 2004; Knani et al., 2022).

SUSTAINABLE SYNERGY: CO-BRANDING ENHANCE THE ACCEPTANCE OF UPCYCED FOOD

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Introduction

Each year, around 5.6 billion tons of food are discarded globally, worsening environmental issues and food insecurity. Upcycling, making new products from food waste offers a sustainable solution but struggles with public endorsement, as the concept remains novel (Moshtaghian et al., 2021). This underscores the need for communication to boost awareness and acceptance.

Co-branding, combining strengths of multiple brands, can enhance consumer awareness and acceptance of upcycled food by leveraging brand fit (green) and product fit—key factors that shape perceptions. However, the importance of each fit may depend on consumers' familiarity with upcycled food. For those less familiar, a high product fit can more effectively influence quality perception and purchase intent, while for more familiar consumers, green brand fit may hold greater impact. This study aims to identify effective strategies for promoting upcycled food by examining the roles of product and brand fit across different levels of consumer familiarity.

Methods

This study used a between-subject experimental design to examine the effects of co-brand types and perceived familiarity with upcycled foods, specifically focusing on vegetable-based chips. Participants viewed one of four ads: Starbucks (High Product-Fit, High Brand-Fit), McDonald's (High Product-Fit, Low Brand-Fit), LUSH (Low Product-Fit, High Brand-Fit), and a control. They then completed surveys on perceived familiarity, food quality, purchase intention, food technophobia, and brand loyalty. MANCOVA and moderated regression analyses with Helmert coding (Hayes & Montoya, 2017) assessed the impact of co-brand types on perceived quality and purchase intention, with moderated mediation testing the mediating role of perceived quality.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The study analyzed product fit and green brand fit within advertisements, finding that Starbucks had the highest product fit, while LUSH scored the highest for green brand fit. MANCOVA showed that co-branding type significantly affected perceived quality and purchase intention. Starbucks and LUSH had positive effects, but McDonald's had a lower impact than no co-branding, with Starbucks showing the strongest effect on purchase intention. Regression showed that brand type and familiarity interacted to affect perceived quality and purchase intention. At low familiarity, Starbucks boosted purchase intentions, while LUSH had stronger effects at higher familiarity, suggesting high green brand fit brands perform better with higher familiarity. Moderated mediation showed that Starbucks co-branding positively impacted purchase intention at all familiarity levels, while LUSH and McDonald's did not show significant effects. This suggests that brands with high green brand fit are especially advantageous in co-branding, potentially outperforming brands with high product fit alone. In conclusion, green brand fit is more influential than product fit in driving purchase intention, particularly as familiarity with upcycled foods grows. This underscores the importance of prioritizing green brand fit in co-branding strategies to enhance consumer engagement.

FEELING "LIKE" OR "LOVE"? INVESTIGATING THE EMOTIONAL IMPACT OF "SHOWING" VS. "TELLING" IN NATIONAL TOURISM ORGANIZATION PROMOTIONAL VIDEOS

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Introduction

Creating effective promotional videos is essential for National Tourism Organizations (NTOs) to launch successful destination marketing campaigns. Compared to traditional videos demonstrating attractive destinations, recent shifts in tourism marketing recognize the powerful influence of emotions on tourists' motivations, attitudes, and behaviors (Bigné & Andreu, 2004; Pestana et al., 2020), thus NTOs have increasingly turned to platforms like YouTube to enhance destination marketing performance and communicate national identity (Hays et al., 2013; Huertas et al., 2017; Alegro & Turnšek, 2020).

Furthermore, the mode of presentation in promotional videos—whether "showing" or "telling"—significantly impacts how viewers perceive and engage with the content (Wilkensetal., 2003; Bock, 2016). This study aims to investigate the factors that contribute to the success of NTO promotional videos, focusing on how the presentation style (showing vs. telling) influences viewer emotions (cognitive vs. affective).

Methods

This study analyzes text data from YouTube videos with over 500 comments, excluding sub- comments, focusing on videos from four countries: Korea, Japan, Australia, and Switzerland. Data extraction was conducted using Python's "Selenium" library. Comments written in languages other than English were translated using "Google Translation," and then thoroughly double-checked for accuracy. Text processing was carried out by tokenization and lemmatization using the Natural Language Toolkit (NLTK) library in Python.

The analysis process includes Word Clouds and Word Frequency, Sentiment Analysis: using VADER (Valence Aware Dictionary and sEntiment Reasoner), Social Network Analysis: using the NetworkX library in Python; and (4) Topic Modeling: employing the Sci-kit learn library in Python to perform Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) (Hutto & Gilbert, 2014; Li et al., 2023).

Results/Discussion/Implication

The "telling" approach in videos tends to evoke more affective emotions, while the "showing" approach primarily leads viewers to engage in cognitive evaluations of the content (Green et al., 2003; Li et al., 2024). Additionally, contextual factors such as timing, budget, and the use of celebrity endorsers significantly influence viewer responses (Roy et al., 2021; Jiang et al., 2022), highlighting the importance of considering the expectation-disconfirmation mechanism in destination videos (Oliver, 1980). Viewers come with preconceived ideas about what a destination video should portray, shaped by social scripts (Schank & Abelson, 2013).

The choice of presentation mode should align with the desired emotional outcome. As a campaign progresses, transitioning to a "telling" method maybe advantageous, particularly when aiming to foster deeper emotional connections. Additionally, it is crucial to consider viewer expectations and contextual factors, such as national identity and audience perceptions, to prevent disconfirmation that could trigger negative reactions.

UNPACKING MINDFUL CONSUMPTION: A PARALLEL MEDIATION MODEL OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN AND GREEN SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS

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Introduction

The issue of sustainability has not only been widely studied but has also become an urgent global priority. Due to the health and environmental benefits of sustainable products, more consumers are choosing eco-friendly products and adopting sustainable lifestyles (Maduku, 2024). While some consumers embrace green products, others remain consistent in their conventional purchasing habits. Factors such as attitudes toward sustainable consumption (Arshad et al., 2022; Kim & Hall, 2021), environmental concern (Maduku, 2024), and the influence of green social media influencers (Kapoor et al., 2023) are considered significant in shaping consumers' decisions toward mindful consumption. Despite extensive research, gaps between attitudes and behaviors in mindful consumption continue to puzzle researchers. Drawing on the value-belief norm (VBN) theory and social cognitive theory (SCT), this paper investigated the parallel mediation effects of environmental concern and green social media influencers on the relationship between attitudes toward sustainable consumption and mindful consumption.

Methods

This paper employed a cross-sectional survey research design to collect data from 298 green consumers who had purchased eco-friendly products within the past 15 days and actively followed green social media influencers. A pilot test was conducted to ensure the content validity of the measures in the Nepali context. Data collection took place from March 3, 2024, to April 5, 2024. The collected data were analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS- SEM), with the measurement and structural models estimated through SmartPLS.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The results illustrate that attitudes toward sustainable consumption, environmental concerns, and green social media influencers have a significant influence on mindful consumption. Likewise, environmental concerns and green social media influencers partially mediate the relationship between attitudes toward sustainable consumption and mindful consumption. These results enrich mindful consumption literature by unraveling the attitude-behavior gaps supplemented by the role of environmental concerns and green social media influencers. To attain sustainable development goals (SDGs), hospitality professionals could collaborate with green social media influencers to reinforce mindful consumption behaviors among customers by improving environmental concerns.

IDENTIFYING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN LUXURY HOTEL BRAND PERSONALITIES AND BRAND ADDICTION ON ORGANIZATION AND CONSUMER OUTCOMES

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Introduction

Along with the development of the tourism industry, the hotel industry has also shown continuous growth (Kimetal., 2019). These developments represent a positive aspect economically, however, they also show the intensified competition in the hotel industry (Gao et al., 2021). Therefore, hotels need a differentiation strategy, specifically, building a strong brand-customer connection (Lu & Ahn, 2022; Casidy et al., 2018; Li et al., 2020).

Brand addiction is a key factor that engages customers with brands (Francioni et al., 2021; Reimann et al., 2012). Brand addiction has recently emerged in business marketing research by Mrad & Cui (2017). However, the concept is still missing in the hospitality and tourism literature. Furthermore, the prerequisites and the outcomes of brand addiction have not been studied in the hospitality literature. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify how the personalities of luxury brand hotels are related to the benefits of brand addiction. Moreover, the study aims to introduce the concept of brand addiction to the hospitality literature.

Methods

The data was collected through an online survey. Only participants who were 18 years of age or older, provided their favorite luxury hotel and recent stay were allowed to participate As a result, atotal of 430 respondents were collected and sufficient based on Hair et al. (2011). Then, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to check the quality of the data. After, the structural equation modeling method was adopted to check the hypotheses.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The CFA model checked the data quality including internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. The structural equation modeling results confirmed the relationship between the constructs. The brand self-expressiveness and innovativeness on brand addiction showed significant and positive effects. Brand addiction had a significant and positive influence on word- of-mouth, willingness to pay, subjective well-being, and psychological well-being.

The results of this study share the idea that customers were addicted to luxury hospitality brands. Once the guests are addicted to luxury hotel brands, they benefit companies by recommending the hotel brand to other people, also enhancing purchase intention. Furthermore, hotel brand addiction was found to enhance guests' subjective and psychological well-being, by supporting their emotions positively related to their quality of life.

The current study identified customer benefits related to brand addiction, expanding the brand consumption literature while also inserting a positive image. Moreover, the result suggests implications to marketers showing the appropriate characteristics to create the image. Furthermore, companies can use this to build a positive image and connection with customers, by supporting their well-being and fulfilling their needs as loyal guests.

Completed Research:
Restaurant & Food Service

ATTRIBUTE DESIGN FOR FOOD RESCUE MOBILE APPLICATION

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Introduction

In 2023, about 28.9% of the global population—roughly 2.33 billion people—faced moderate or severe food insecurity, while over 1 billion meals were wasted daily, despite 783 million people living with hunger (FAO, 2024; UNEP, 2024). In 2019, the foodservice industry generated 66 million tons of food waste, with an additional 40 million tons from food and beverage manufacturing (Legendre et al., 2024; US EPA, 2023). Recent food waste reduction strategies include supply chain improvements, consumer education, and newer methods like food rescuing and upcycling for proactive impact (US EPA, 2024; Vizzoto et al., 2021).

Innovative apps like Too Good to Go (TGTG) facilitate direct redistribution of surplus food to consumers, advancing food rescue efforts (Apostolidis et al., 2021). However, consumer engagement with such apps remains limited, leaving gaps in understanding brand perception and usage factors. Our study examines food-rescue apps as strategic tools for waste reduction, using conjoint analysis to reveal that factors like discount rates, product descriptions, and food safety information significantly influence user value perceptions (Ranjbari et al., 2024).

Methods

We employed conjoint analysis to evaluate the impact of specific attributes in designing a food rescue app, as it effectively reveals consumer preferences across complex attribute combinations (Guzzo et al., 2022; Suess et al., 2024). By identifying the optimal product feature combinations that influence consumer decisions and highlighting trade-offs among product attributes, conjoint analysis is ideal for our study and can provide valuable insights for shaping efficient strategies in product design and marketing (Aurelia & Laszlo, 2012; Suess & Mody, 2017).

Participants in this study were presented with hypothetical product choices and asked to select their preferred attribute combinations. Attributes were identified through a literature review and by analyzing the food rescue app TGTG (Cyr et al., 2006; Hsu & Lin, 2015; Kapoor & Vij, 2018; Lin et al., 2024; Too Good To Go, 2024). Expert input refined these attributes, and to manage information overload, we limited them to six (Green & Srinivasan, 1978). After viewing 16 scenarios with varied attributes, respondents rated perceived transactional value, brand evaluation, and future purchase intentions.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Our study explores how food-rescue app attributes affect consumer assessments. Discount ratios, product descriptions, and food safety information were most influential. Consumers preferred items with a 75% discount, clear descriptions, and no “best by” date. Income moderated preferences: higher-income respondents favored grocery items, while lower-income respondents preferred restaurant-sourced products. Our study enhances food sustainability research by examining how food-rescue apps impact consumer behavior, particularly through innovative digital channels. By focusing on apps like TGTG, we reveal how digital tools can reduce food waste, support environmental goals, and improve economic outcomes. This research underscores the value of user engagement and collaboration between retailers and tech platforms, providing actionable insights for policymakers, developers, and retailers on promoting sustainable consumption practices.

FACTORS INFLUENCING JOB SATISFACTION FOR FOODSERVICE MANAGERS IN A HEALTHCARE SETTING

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Introduction

Foodservice in healthcare represents a $27 billion market (Rollo et al., 2018), a market that will only continue to expand as the population ages, needing increasingly chronic care and the services of the healthcare industry (Buzalka, 2022; Jones & Dolsten, 2024). Low job satisfaction can lead to turnover, and the departure of a manager can add costs to the business to find a replacement and interrupt the flow of the operation. While turnover, burnout, and job dissatisfaction have long been issues in the foodservice industry (Ghiselli et al., 2001; Silva et al., 2021), there is added stress operating in a healthcare environment. Beyond general foodservice operations, managers have additional responsibilities in a healthcare setting, such as meeting regulatory requirements and ensuring therapeutic diets and texture modification of patient meals are safely prepared. Particularly in a healthcare setting, errors in accuracy from the kitchen can be as deadly as errors involving medicine (Austria et al., 2024).

Little research has been conducted about the people ensuring the foodservice operations continue to run safely in a healthcare setting. The overall goal of this research is to gain an understanding of foodservice managers' current job satisfaction sentiments, and which factors influence job satisfaction, including education levels, and the type of healthcare facility.

Methods

The survey utilized the short-form Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) five-point Likert Scale Questions. The MSQ focuses on factors influencing satisfaction levels related to the respondent's job. Additionally, demographic information regarding the manager's time in both their current position and the field overall, education levels, and information about the type of facilities that the manager operates were gathered. Surveys were distributed through the online forum of a food and nutrition management organization, targeting healthcare foodservice managers. The forum post included a hyperlink and QR Code to connect to the Qualtrics survey platform for data collection. Data analysis was conducted utilizing SPSS software.

Results/Implications

A total of 59 usable surveys were collected, resulting in the MSQ score range of 33 (very dissatisfied) to 94 (very satisfied) out of 100. This is in line with Ghiselli's et al. findings of foodservice managers in 2001 (scores of 33-100). Independent t-tests comparing self-operations to third-party contract accounts indicate that there is a significant difference in how policies are put into practice ($p=0.012$).-Independent t-tests of the factors comparing a hospital environment to long-term care found several factors that had significant differences, including the chance to vary work activities ($p=0.024$), ability to advance ($p= 0.036$), ability to get along with co-workers ($p<0.001$), and praise for the work done ($p=0.019$).

The results of the study provide insight into sentiments of foodservice managers' job satisfaction in healthcare facilities. Analysis suggests that there are distinct factors that may influence job satisfaction. Further research could clarify these differences, creating a better understanding of the nuanced issues foodservice managers face in this sector.

HOW WAITING DECISIONS ARE MADE FOR A RESTAURANT: A COMPARISON OF WAITING EQUITY AND BEHAVIROAL INTENTION BETWEEN PHYSICAL AND VIRTUAL QUEUES

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Introduction

With a significant rise in mentions of extended waiting times in restaurant reviews (Yelp, 2022), managing customer wait times has become crucial for the restaurant industry, particularly as customers frequently balk or renege due to long waits (De Vries et al., 2018). While existing studies have focused on the waiting experience post-decision, understanding of the psychological mechanisms driving the initial decision to remain in a queue is limited. Drawing on equity theory (Adams, 1965), Study 1 develops a theoretical framework exploring how customers make waiting decisions and subsequent consumption behaviors through equity evaluation. Given recent advancements, such as Virtual Queue Apps (VQAs) that allow customers to join virtual waitlists (Hu et al., 2021), Study 2 examines the impact of different queue settings (physical vs. virtual) on the equity process and behavioral intention, with a focus on the role of virtual settings in providing attention restoration.

Methods

This study uses a two-part quantitative approach via surveys distributed on Prolific. In Study 1, a theoretical framework of waiting decisions was validated using structural equation modeling. Constructs included waiting costs (uncertainty, opportunity cost, time risk, and crowding), expected benefits (functional, hedonic, and symbolic), perceived waiting equity, waiting intention, and the intention to order additional items. Study 2 employed a scenario-based, between-subjects design to compare physical and virtual queues, collecting 300 responses (148 physical, 152 virtual). An indirect effect analysis and a one-way analysis of covariance were employed to examine how waiting costs and benefits influence perceived waiting equity and behavioral intentions in different queuing contexts.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The findings indicate that customers assess waiting equity through a cost-benefit analysis, with higher perceived waiting equity leading to increased intentions to wait and order more. Virtual queuing is associated with lower perceived waiting costs than physical queuing, resulting in higher perceived waiting equity. However, customers in physical queues exhibited a greater intention to order additional items, suggesting a compensatory effect whereby their prior investment in physically waiting justified additional orders.

This study contributes to the restaurant waiting literature by uncovering the psychological mechanisms behind waiting decisions through equity principles. It extends previous research, which was limited to physical environments, by offering a theoretical framework applicable to various queue types, thus broadening the field. Additionally, it provides a fresh perspective on the role of innovative technology in hospitality, examining VQAs not only for their functional benefits but also for their capacity to provide attention restoration

EXPLORING KEY DETERMINANTS OF ANTI-FOOD-WASTE PLATFORM: INSIGHTS FROM LDA TOPIC MODELLING ON TOO GOOD TO GO (TGTG)

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Introduction

Food waste has emerged as a significant global issue, contributing to environmental degradation, resource depletion, and economic inefficiency (Bolwig, Tanner, Riemann, Redlingshöfer, & Zhang, 2021). Globally, up to 40% of all food produced is wasted, and food waste contributes to 10% of all human-induced greenhouse gas emissions (WWF, 2021).

In response, various technological solutions, including mobile applications, have been developed to address this challenge by redistributing surplus food (Bolwig, Tanner, Riemann, Redlingshöfer, & Zhang, 2021). One such anti-food-waste platform, Too Good To Go (TGTG), provide a marketplace for surplus food, allowing businesses to sell unsold items at discounted rates while offering consumers an opportunity to contribute to sustainability efforts by purchasing these "Surprise Bags (Magic Bags)" (Sgroi et al., 2024). TGTG benefits both the environment and consumers, promoting sustainability while providing economic advantages.

This study aims to explore the determinants of user engagement with the anti-food-waste platform TGTG app, using text mining techniques, including frequency analysis and Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) topic modelling, to analyse user reviews.

Methods

Customer reviews were collected from Trustpilot to identify determinants influencing TGTG usage. The data analysis involved LDA topic modelling, with the number of topics determined based on coherence score results to ensure optimal interpretability. Additionally, the total number of reviews, time period, and regional scope focused on English-speaking regions to enhance relevance and clarity.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The LDA analysis identified four main topics. First, "**Magic Bags Content and Items**" received mixed feedback from users; while many enjoyed the surprise and variety, some were dissatisfied when the contents did not meet their expectations. Second, "**App Usability**" was appreciated for its user-friendly interface, though users suggested improvements to enhance the overall experience. Third, "**User Experience with Food Quality**" highlighted that freshness and variety were crucial for user satisfaction, with positive comments on quality but some dissatisfaction regarding stale items. Finally, "**Customer Service**" was noted as an area needing more responsiveness and transparency, particularly concerning refund processes.

This study enriches the literature on digital platforms and sustainability by identifying key factors in user engagement with anti-food-waste apps like TGTG. Through LDA topic modeling, it highlights the importance of transparency, service quality consistency, and effective customer service, demonstrating the value of natural language processing in analyzing user feedback. For practitioners, the study suggests that aligning user expectations with the quality of "Magic Bags," enhancing transparency about food contents, and improving customer service, particularly in refunds and complaints, are essential. Staff training in customer service excellence can further improve user retention, market reach, and sustainability impact.

BEYOND PROFIT: THE ROLE OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ORIENTATION AND RISK IN CROWDFUNDING OUTCOMES FOR U.S. RESTAURANTS

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Introduction

Crowdfunding has emerged as an alternative to traditional financing for high-risk ventures like restaurants that struggle to access conventional capital (Koh et al., 2020; Ordanini et al., 2011). Previous research on restaurant crowdfunding has primarily examined how information cues and campaign language affect funding success (e.g., Koch & Siering, 2015; Lelode Larrea et al., 2023). Restaurant campaigns often highlight community benefits, thus, adopting a socially responsible approach may boost crowdfunding outcomes (Lelo de Larrea et al., 2019). However, the impact of corporate social responsibility (CSR) orientation on restaurant crowdfunding success remains understudied (Oduro et al., 2024).

This study examines the impact of CSR orientation on crowdfunding success for U.S. restaurants. It focuses on two key outcomes: whether a project reaches its funding goal and the percentage of the goal achieved, providing a comprehensive understanding. Additionally, it examines how project risk moderates this relationship, as investors tend to assess entrepreneurial ventures cautiously and favor projects perceived as less risky to minimize potential losses (Ahlers et al., 2015).

Methods

The data is collected from Kickstarter.com, a popular crowdfunding platform. Using a Python web crawler, information on 1,778 completed restaurant projects in the US was collected, including project title, location, funding goal, amount pledged, project description, number of photos, and "Project We Love" status. We employed logistic regression and ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analyses to test the proposed hypotheses.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The study reveals that CSR orientation does not significantly affect the funding success of restaurant campaigns. This aligns with previous research showing CSR's limited impact on firm performance (e.g., Arshad et al., 2012; Pham & Tran, 2020). These findings contribute to the ongoing debate in stakeholder theory about whether addressing stakeholder needs leads to financial benefits. However, the study finds that risk negatively moderates the CSR-funding relationship. In high-risk, information-asymmetric crowdfunding environments, CSR alone fails to attract investors. Instead, investors prioritize reducing financial risk over CSR considerations, thus diminishing CSR's influence on funding outcomes.

This study extends stakeholder theory to early-stage ventures, indicating that financial considerations often precede social concerns. It suggests that restaurant entrepreneurs should strike a balance between CSR messaging and transparent risk disclosure. To enhance funding appeal, they should emphasize CSR's financial benefits from sustainability initiatives, such as cost savings and increased customer loyalty, without overstating potential risks.

UNHAPPY HOUR? SENTIMENT AND THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE BARTENDER SUBREDDIT

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Introduction

In the food and beverage industry, bartenders perform a dual role of both service and production (Clarke et al., 2018). The product they serve is highly regulated and exists across a wide spectrum of quality and class associations. For businesses, alcohol sales provide a high profit margin, and for tipped bartenders, the service interaction is a direct source of income (Wansink et al., 2006). The emergent cocktail culture emphasizing creativity in addition to technical skill has encouraged a career identity for those in this industry (Schneider & Owens, 2020). However, there is a significant research gap about bartending and the employee perspective of bartenders.

Considering this gap, social media platforms like Reddit can provide contemporary insight into the experiences of bartenders. Workers in several high-stress industries participate in Reddit communities, and researchers have used this content to identify the difficulties of occupations like teaching and healthcare (Ming et al., 2022). User anonymity on Reddit is considered an advantage (Proferes et al., 2021), as users can express themselves more authentically than on a platform that displays names and professional affiliations. Furthermore, while several hospitality studies have analyzed customer-generated social media, few have examined this content from the employee perspective (Gonzalez et al., 2020).

This study aims to fill the gap about professional bartenders using qualitative and quantitative methods to answer the following questions: (RQ1) What topics are bartenders discussing on Reddit about their jobs? (RQ2) What sentiment characterizes popular posts on these topics?

Methods

Data were obtained from Reddit's API using PRAW, a Python wrapper for Reddit scraping. The subreddit r/bartenders, with 164,000 subscribers, was chosen. The top 1000 posts from September 2023 to August 2024 were retrieved, focusing on posts with 20+ comments and high engagement. After screening out non-text posts, 513 posts remained. For RQ1, an iterative thematic analysis was conducted, categorizing themes per Braun and Clarke (2012). For RQ2, sentiment analysis using VADER was performed, labeling text as positive, negative, or neutral, and assigning sentiment scores from –1 to 1.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Five themes emerged from the qualitative analysis: Tipping and pay, Management and the business environment, Education and career development, Recipes and equipment, and Customers. The sentiment analysis showed nearly half of the sentiment scores were positive, with an overall average score of 0.14, slightly more positive than neutral. Outright negative sentiment scores accounted for 28% of the posts and 22% had neutral scores. Career advice posts had high positive sentiment scores, while customer interactions elicited negative sentiments. This study identifies the diverse topics and generally positive sentiment in bartender Reddit communities, while also revealing opportunities for further research into this subject area.

DINING ACROSS CULTURES: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF DINING EXPERIENCES AND ONLINE REVIEWS

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Introduction

Cultural distance shapes how individuals interpret and respond to experiences (Liberman & Trope, 2003; 2010; Kogut & Singh, 1988). In the restaurant servicescape, perceptions of dining experiences are heavily influenced by cultural context and psychological frameworks (Beugelsdijk et al., 2018).

Previous research indicates that cultural distance significantly affects diners' experiences and satisfaction with various cuisines (Lord et al., 2006). Italian cuisine, for instance, is well- integrated into American culture (Girardali, 2004) which often reflects in the wide adoption and popularity of Italian cuisine (McMillan, 2016; Sukalakamala & Boyce, 2007). In contrast, Middle Eastern cuisine is less popular in the U.S. (Park, 2017) while also being culturally and socially distant (Abouyoub, 2016; Tamirdash, 2020) from the American population.

This study analyzes over 90,000 Yelp reviews of Middle Eastern and Italian restaurants, employing advanced topic modeling to identify key themes and sentiments. By comparing diners' experiences across these different ethnic cuisines, the research offers strategic insights into service quality, menu offerings, and overall satisfaction.

Methods

Present study uses Structural Topic Modeling (STM) to analyze reviews for 4,573 Italian and 588 Middle Eastern restaurants in the US. By optimizing on four key STM metrics, thirteen topic themes were identified from the review text. Star rating and cuisine type were regressed onto the thirteen topics to explore how topic prevalence varied with these factors. Additionally, topic regression was used to predict how changes in covariates, such as star rating, affected topic proportions, providing insights into how customer satisfaction relates to the identified topics.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Few key distinctions have emerged among the two type of cuisine. Middle Eastern restaurants had higher average ratings, emotional engagement, superior food and service quality which resulted in higher customer satisfaction and loyalty. Italian restaurants received more negative feedback on service quality and menu variety. Additionally, the theme of alcohol service, was uniquely associated with Italian restaurants, while largely absent from the Middle Eastern restaurants.

The findings emphasize the importance of emotional connections, service standards, and menu offerings in driving customer satisfaction and loyalty, providing strategic insights for restaurant operators to enhance cross-cultural dining experiences. The emergence of emotional engagement as the strongest predictor of satisfaction underscores the importance for restaurants to foster strong emotional connections with their customers to achieve higher satisfaction.

The study also confirms the relevance of service quality and menu variety as pertinent predictors of customer satisfaction.

"I'LL HAVE VODKA WITH A SPLASH OF CELEBRITY".

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Introduction

Restaurants have turned the basic need for food into locations of edible delights, well-being, social value, and art (Batat et al., 2019). Since singer Pat Boone purchased a chain of self-service cafeterias, there has been an alluring celebrity-hospitality industry connection (Whitaker, 2013). The latest trend in celebrity owned products is their own branded alcohol offerings. Rothbaum (2022) listed celebrity brands will stay strong and even expand beyond the current celebrity draws of vodka, tequila, and mezcal, to other spirits and the ready-to-drink market.

Iofrida et al. (2022) shared intrinsic and extrinsic factors the average restaurant customer uses in restaurant selection, including type of atmosphere, quality food and a reasonable price. However, does the priority of these factors change when the opportunity to try a celebrity owned product enters the decision field. What is the effect of celebrity and pop culture on a consumer in their restaurant decision making process, specifically the products that can be consumed in almost any restaurant that decides and is licensed to carry it. This widens the market for celebrity ownership and endorsements in the hospitality industry.

Ryan and Deci (2000) define intrinsic motivation, as internal zeal to do something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable to the person, and extrinsic motivation, as doing something because it leads to a separable outcome/based on external factors. As people make restaurant and menu decisions and what specifically to order while eating out, the study will evaluate if people are more intrinsically or extrinsically motivated. In a specific look at liquor and spirits, Norris et al. (2021) describe consumer decision making factors with intrinsic attributes of the product itself (taste, ingredients, aroma, and freshness), and extrinsic attributes include bottle (size/shape/color/label), brand name/advertising, and price. Motivation of some consumers will drive them to pay more for premium products. Vigneron and Johnson (1999) provide a conceptual framework for Prestige Seeking Consumer Behavior (PSCB).

The purpose of this study is to understand restaurant consumer likelihood to modify purchasing decisions with the introduction of celebrity owned spirit beverages. Of the scant celebrity related research in the hospitality industry, primarily only hotels and tourism destinations were covered.

Methodology

Using self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan, 1985) the study examined by survey extrinsic and intrinsic motivational factors of the respondents and the relationship to purchase intention. To determine the influences on purchase behavior, multiple linear regression was used.

Results/Discussion/Implications

Connecting restaurant patrons to celebrity owned spirits, diners are more compelled by intrinsic factors; results show specifically hedonism is the strongest motivation. The current study contributes to the body of literature investigating the influence of celebrities in the hospitality arena. This study is also among the first in the hospitality and foodservice field to assess the consumer behavior variable perfectionism especially in the context of beverage management. Practical implications include menu management insights. These findings would provide an edge to restaurants willing to include related products on their beverage menu.

FROM TABLE TO TRASH: THE IMPACT OF WASTE MANAGEMENT CUES ON CUSTOMER EMOTIONS AND BEHAVIOR IN RESTAURANT

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Introduction

While the U.S. restaurant industry celebrates projections of a record-breaking $1.1 trillion in sales in 2024 (National Restaurant Association, 2024), it carries a massive environmental burden as a major contributor to global food waste, generating 290 million tons of food waste in 2022 (UNEP, 2024). Surprisingly, much of this waste stems from minor aesthetic imperfections unrelated to quality and taste (Principato et al., 2021). Many restaurants are reluctant to adopt sustainable practices due to concerns about customer acceptance and the potential impact on dining experiences. To foster positive customer responses to their sustainability efforts, it is essential to understand how these efforts resonate with diners. Customers may be more inclined to choose sustainable options directly related to their consumption (product cues) or feel good about supporting restaurants that demonstrate environmental responsibility (environmental cues).

While past literature has focused on promoting the selection of sustainable items (e.g., Cai et al., 2021; Fechner et al., 2024), a significant gap remains in understanding how customers respond to waste management practices. Informed by Information Processing Theory (Miller, 1956) and Brand Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 2008), this study aims to bridge this gap by examining how various cues—both environmental and product-related—affect customer emotions and citizenship behaviors toward restaurants.

Methods

This study employed a series of experimental studies using a 2 (environmental cues: environmentally salient vs. neutral dining settings) x 2 (product cues: conventional vs. waste- minimizing dish) between subject-group full-factorial design, with green consumption values as a covariate. Participants were restaurant diners in the U.S., randomly assigned to one of four conditions. The survey, distributed through Prolific, measured customer responses on emotional attachment, citizenship behavior, and green consumption values. A total of 403 valid responses were analyzed using Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) in SPSS.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The findings reveal an interesting psychological disconnect in customers' sustainability mindset. While environmental cues—such as visible recycling and sustainability messaging—positively influenced customer emotions and behaviors, product cues—like less aesthetically trimmed dishes—failed to elicit similar positive responses. This divergence reflects psychological distance: customers accept sustainability practices that don't impact their immediate dining experience. When sustainability efforts are in the background, they enhance emotional connection and citizenship behavior. In contrast, when sustainability is reflected in the product itself, it creates a trade-off between environmental values and hedonic dining expectations.

These findings emphasize a complex challenge for restaurants: while customers philosophically support sustainability, they are reluctant to compromise on traditional dining standards. This suggests a need for a gradual approach to implementing product-related sustainability practices, potentially accompanied by educational initiatives to bridge the gap between environmental consciousness and dining expectations.

THE ROLE OF CONFIRMATION BIAS AND MEMORY IN CONSUMERS' INFORMATION INTERPRETATION OF FOODSERVICE BRANDS

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Introduction

AI-driven online recommendation systems tailor content to individual preferences (Glover, 2024; Hollebeek et al., 2024). This results in individuals repeatedly encountering similar content, limiting their exposure to diverse viewpoints, a phenomenon known as selective exposure (Eagly et al., 1999). This continuous reinforcement of existing beliefs can strengthen original opinions, contributing to confirmation bias (Iyengar and Hahn, 2009). Consumers' perceptions of GMOs vary, with some avoiding them due to concerns about human intervention and risks (Pascalev, 2003; Hingston and Noseworthy, 2018). However, GMOs maybe more accepted when labeled with 'man-made' cues, which indicate transparency in company intentions (Hingston and Noseworthy, 2018). Drawing on cognitive dissonance theory, this study suggests that individuals prefer and remember GMO information that aligns with their pre-existing beliefs, which influences their evaluation of hospitality companies' GMO-sourcing messages.

Methods

Study 1 examined participants' engagement in selective exposure to measure selective exposure-induced memory. They were presented with headlines from 10 online news articles related to GMO food (5 pro-GMO and 5 anti-GMO). Participants could choose to read the full article or skip it based on their preferences. After the Time 1, a memory recall was tested in the Time 2. In Study 2, the Time 1 procedure mirrored that of Study 1. In Time 2, participants recalled the GMO-related news articles they viewed in Time 1. Subsequently, they were randomly assigned to one of two conditions and presented with an advertisement for a fictitious beverage brand. This advertisement featured one of two sourcing messages: 'man-made' or 'all-natural. 'After viewing the advertisement, participants rated their brand attitude and e-WOM intention.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The study found key findings. First, it shows that individuals selectively engage with information that aligns with their pre-existing attitudes. Those with pro-GMO views were more likely to exhibit selective exposure, which enhanced their memory. The study also shows a full mediation effect of selective exposure, confirming a relationship between existing attitudes toward GMO foods and memory recall. Second, memory recall was found to influence the impact of a company's food-sourcing message on brand attitude and e-WOM intention. Individuals with an anti-GMO memory exhibited lower levels of brand attitude and e-WOM intention when the company's message emphasized 'man-made' sourcing compared to 'all-natural.' Conversely, individuals with pro-GMO memory showed no difference in brand attitude or e-WOM intention regardless of whether the message was framed as 'man-made' or 'all-natural.

For practitioners, this study highlights the importance of understanding the effects of selective exposure online, particularly the role of attitude-congruent/opposing information when evaluating company strategies. Thus, practitioners consider consumers' confirmation bias when spreading politically controversial messages, suggesting strategies to enhance their communication efforts regarding GMO foods to better resonate with consumers.

INFLUENCE OF HOUSEHOLD CONSUMERS' PERCEIVED CONSUMPTION VALUES ON ONLINE FOOD DELIVERY PURCHASE: DO CALORIES ON THE MENU MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

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Introduction

Household consumers increasingly use online food delivery (OFD) services, but little is known about how their value perceptions affect food choices or the impact of calorie labeling. This study employs the Theory of Consumption Values (TCV) to explore how household consumers' values—such as price, emotional, epistemic, and social values—affect OFD purchase intentions, order costs, and the healthiness of selected meals. Additionally, the moderating role of calorie information is examined to assess its impact on consumers' value perception regarding OFD service toward their purchase intention and meal healthiness when additional information other than food name and price (i.e., food calorie) was present in their ordering process.

Methods

A survey-based experimental design was implemented with a sample of 234 U.S. consumers who regularly order OFD for their households, specifically targeting adults living with at least one child aged 5-14. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: an OFD scenario displaying calorie information and a control scenario with no calorie information. Each participant interacted with a simulated OFD menu created according to mainstream OFD platform and FDA menu labeling requirements, designed to emulate a realistic ordering experience. Following the ordering task, participants completed a questionnaire measuring perceived values (price, health, social, emotional, and epistemic) and purchase intentions using a 7-point Likert scale. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed to test the hypothesized relationships and assess both the direct and moderating effects of calorie labeling.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Results demonstrated that price, emotional, and epistemic values had positive effects on purchase intentions, with emotional value emerging as the strongest predictor. In contrast, social value was found to negatively impact purchase intentions, indicating that household consumers may deprioritize social influence in favor of convenience or emotional satisfaction. Health value was associated with higher meal costs but did not significantly affect purchase intentions, suggesting that although consumers consider health-related aspects, this value may not directly drive their decision to purchase.

The introduction of calorie labeling did not significantly affect consumers' purchase intentions or the healthiness of ordered meals. These findings imply that, within the OFD context, calorie information alone may not be sufficient to influence household choices toward healthier options, potentially due to the digital setting or the complexity of household decision-making processes. The study highlights the need for more tailored interventions on OFD platforms, such as personalized recommendations or incentives, to align with household consumers' values and effectively promote healthier dietary decisions.

FROM LIKES TO BITES: HOW INFLUENCER AUTHENTICITY SHAPES CUSTOMER BEHAVIOR

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Introduction

Social media platforms have revolutionized marketing and consumer behavior (Xu & Pratt, 2018), with influencers emerging as key players in shaping consumer opinions and purchasing decisions (Lou & Yuan, 2019). The influencer marketing industry has grown exponentially, projected to reach $24 billion by 2024 (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2024).

In the restaurant industry, social media influencers play a crucial role in influencing dining decisions (Liu & Zheng, 2024; Yassin, 2024). Their perceived authenticity has made them more trustworthy than traditional celebrities, especially among younger consumers (Lupis, 2024; Schouten et al., 2020). However, inauthentic influencers can potentially damage a restaurant's reputation (Audrezet et al., 2020; Wang & Weng, 2023).

This study examines how restaurant customers perceive and respond to social media influencer authenticity (SMIA). Drawing on Cognitive Appraisal Theory (Lazarus, 1991) and the Theory of Four Decision-Making Systems (Dolan & Dayan, 2013), we investigate how perceptions of influencer authenticity affect content evaluation through both subconscious and conscious cognitive processes, which in turn influence decisions to visit restaurants and overall brand awareness.

Methods

Data for this study was collected through the online survey platform Prolific, recognized for its reliability in academic research (Lowry et al., 2016). After careful data cleaning and removal of incomplete responses, the final sample size was 411 participants.

Social Media Influencer Authenticity (SMIA) was measured using items adapted from Lee & Eastin (2021). Scales for perceived entertainment were adapted from Dolan et al. (2016). Usefulness was measured by adapting from Ayeh et al. (2013). Consumer opinion leadership was measured using items from Casaló et al. (2020), while self-congruence was assessed using scales from Sirgy & Su (2000). Visit intention and brand awareness were measured using scales adapted from Davis (1989) and Dwivedi et al. (2018), respectively.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed for data analysis using SmartPLS 4 software. SMIA demonstrated strong positive effects on all four decision- making systems. Regarding visit intention, perceived information usefulness exhibited the strongest positive effect ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < 0.001$), followed by consumer opinion leadership ($\beta = 0.15$, $p < 0.001$). Self-congruence showed a weaker but still significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.14$, $p < 0.01$). For brand awareness, consumer opinion leadership demonstrated the strongest positive influence ($\beta = 0.26$, $p < 0.001$), followed by perceived information usefulness ($\beta = 0.29$,$p < 0.001$). The entertaining aspect of content showed a weak negative effect ($\beta = -0.15$, $p < 0.001$), while self-congruence had a small positive effect ($\beta = 0.10$, $p < 0.05$).

Completed Research:
Tourism & Sustainability

EVENTS AND CRIME: EXAMINING THE NUANCED RELATIONSHIP

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Introduction

Events present a complex duality in their impact on host destinations (Getz, 2008). While stimulating economic activity and cultural vibrancy (Crompton & McKay, 1994), these gatherings simultaneously provide opportunities for criminal activity (Andresen & Tong, 2012). This study investigates the intricate relationship between planned events and crime incidents, which is a critical gap in both events and environmental criminology literature. The theoretical framework integrates two complementary perspectives from environmental criminology. Crime pattern theory suggests that criminal opportunities arise from the intersection of offenders' awareness space and suitable targets (Brantingham & Brantingham, 1995), with events potentially creating such convergence zones. Routine activity theory posits that crime occurs when motivated offenders encounter suitable targets in the absence of capable guardians (Cohen & Felson, 1979), a condition that may be amplified during events due to crowd dynamics and altered security patterns. Therefore, our study addresses two primary research questions: *1) What is the impact of planned events on crime, and how does this impact vary? 2) How do the elements of routine activity theory influence the relationship between planned events and crime?*

Methods

Using a comprehensive zip-code daily-level panel dataset from Los Angeles from May 2020 to March 2023, we examined 359,568 crimes, including Part I and Part II crime, that took place in 63 zip-codes and 19,952 planned events, such as sports, conferences, festivals, concerts, and community events. We simultaneously manage the amount of Twitter tweets and use a high dimensional fixed effect to capture the socio-temporal dynamics and trends. We also examined specific event features, such as event types, size, and duration, on subcategories of crime, such as violent/property crime and time of crime incident, to capture the intricate patterns.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Two main sets of findings are revealed by our investigation. First, in line with crime pattern theory, planned events dramatically raise the frequency of crime incidents at the day-level and zip-code levels. The impacts are more pronounced for property crimes than violent ones. Significant differences in this relationship between event types were identified, that is, concerts and festivals exhibit especially strong correlations. Second, looking at the components of routine activity theory, we found that motivated offenders are more active during single-day events as opposed to multi-day ones, appropriate targets are more vulnerable during events with larger crowds, and the strong association between events and nighttime crimes (18:00-06:00) is especially clear when considering the lack of capable guardians.

This research advances both theoretical understanding and practical applications. The empirical findings demonstrate how planned events shape crime patterns through multiple mechanisms, expanding the scope of environmental criminology theory (Han et al., 2021; Vakhitova et al., 2023). The research reveals that different event types influence criminal activity in distinct ways, requiring nuanced approaches to security planning to more effective approaches for maximizing the benefits while minimizing their potential social risks (Hua & Yang, 2017). Thus, this study emphasizes the need for tailored security measures that account for specific event characteristics and timing to enhance public safety.

THE PATH TO ECO-CONSCIOUS HEDONIC WELL-BEING EXPERIENCE: A LEGITIMACY JUDGMENT PROCESS PERSPECTIVES

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Introduction

Tourism and hospitality have traditionally focused on hedonic well-being, emphasizing pleasure and comfort through mass consumption (Chomvilailuk & Butcher, 2024; Soler et al., 2019). However, as sustainability becomes a priority, the industry adapts to eco-conscious consumers, prompting a shift in how traditional hedonic well-being is perceived and experienced (Polisetty et al., 2024). There is a growing interest in sustainable practices, but a divergence endures between achieving hedonic well-being and meeting sustainability goals (Väisänen et al., 2023). This study examined how eco-conscious guests engage in legitimacy judgments through repeated experiences in green hotels and establish new standards and expectations. Using a hermeneutic phenomenological approach and 13 in-depth interviews, this study revealed that the green hotel guests' legitimacy judgment of sustainability practices undergoes eight dimensions and enhances eco-conscious hedonic well-being experiences.

Methods

The study was conducted in green-certified hotel settings. This environment enables an in-depth exploration of guests' experiences. Based on the ontological and epistemological positioning, we applied the interpretive phenomenological analysis method (Kirillova, 2018; Smith, 2004), which allowed us to explore individuals' complex live experiences while reaching saturation with a smaller sample size (Fade, 2004). 13 informants for in-depth interviews were purposefully selected, and data collection ended following the repeated live experience saturation. During the interviews, the participants shared photos, diary notes, and the websites of green-certified hotels they stayed at. We followed Smith and Osborn (2003) to develop guiding interview questions and conduct the interpretive phenomenological analysis inductively following the seven steps. Several strategies were also employed to enhance this study's trustworthiness, aligning with Smith and Osborn's (2003) ideographic approach.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The study found that sustainable practices enrich rather than diminish pleasure (Gu et al., 2020), enabling guests to achieve eco-conscious hedonic well-being by integrating sustainability into their experiences. The study also identified eight dimensions of legitimacy judgments—procedural, cognitive, normative, moral, pragmatic, symbolic, relational, and substantive—that guide the guests' sustainability evaluations. Positive judgments foster eco-conscious hedonic well-being experiences and establish sustainability as a quality standard, while negative judgments signal greenwashing and damage credibility. Theoretically, the study redefined hedonic well-being by shifting from mass consumption to eco-conscious experiences and expanded the legitimacy judgment model from an organizational focus (Bitektine & Haack, 2015; Suchman, 1995) to a green hotel customer context. Practically, it advised managers to enhance guest well-being by implementing sustainable practices and balancing symbolic and substantive sustainability actions to avoid greenwashing and meet eco-conscious customer quality expectations.

GOVERNMENT-FACILITATED STRATEGIC ALLIANCES IN RURAL TOURISM: LEADERSHIP MODELS AND THEIR IMPACT ON B&BS' DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction

Rural tourism has become a vital engine for economic development, with small and medium- sized enterprises (e.g., B&Bs) at the forefront, offering experiences that blend local culture and natural landscapes. Yet, B&B operators often encounter significant challenges, including limited resources (Rastrollo-Horrillo & Rivero Diaz, 2019; Alford & Jones, 2020). In this context, forming alliances is essential, as partnerships enable operators to pool resources, share knowledge, and strengthen their competitiveness (Gulati, 1998; Pansiri, 2005). However, despite their potential, many B&Bs lack the leadership needed to establish and maintain effective alliances. Consequently, spontaneous alliances in the B&B sector often fall short, as the small- scale, resource-constrained businesses struggle to sustain them (Wilson et al., 2001; Jesus & Franco, 2016).

Government intervention becomes crucial in promoting alliance development, particularly in countries like China, where public-private partnerships significantly bolster rural tourism (Wang et al., 2022). Despite the acknowledged importance of governmental roles, the literature offers limited insights into how government facilitation influences alliance formation and sustainability. Notably, there is a gap in understanding how variations in leadership models within government-facilitated alliances impact the success of B&Bs. This study aims to address this gap by exploring the development of government-facilitated alliances in rural B&B settings and examining the effects of different leadership models on their sustainability.

Methods

This study employed semi-structured interviews to collect data from B&B operators, government officials, and alliance managers in Hangzhou, China. A total of 17 interviews were conducted from December 2023 to October 2024, encompassing both low and peak travel seasons to capture a broad range of perspectives. Thematic analysis, facilitated by NVivo 12, was used to identify recurring themes and patterns within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Patton, 2014). Key themes included leadership models, resource sharing, government support, and the influence of alliances on B&B operations. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, several validation techniques were applied throughout the analysis process (Glesne, 2016).

Results/Discussion/Implication

The study identified two distinct leadership models within government-facilitated alliances for rural B&Bs: operational team-led alliances and strengthening village company-managed alliances. This distinction provides fresh insights into how leadership dynamics shape the structure and effectiveness of alliances, complementing previous research on leadership in strategic alliances (Shijaku et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2022). Operational team-led alliances, characterized by entrepreneurial leadership and financial independence, demonstrate greater responsiveness to market changes and support more rapid growth. In contrast, strengthening village company-managed alliances prioritize stability, equitable resource distribution, and alignment with government development objectives. This study enriches the tourism and hospitality literature by examining the role of government in fostering rural B&B alliances. The findings offer a valuable reference for other governments aiming to support rural B&B development through alliance-building strategies.

THE ROLE OF INTRA-REGION TRAVEL IN TOURISM RESILIENCE

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Introduction

Resilience has become one of the key objectives for tourism destinations. Undoubtedly, the tourism sector has traditionally been sensitive to risks and crises (Ritchie & Jiang, 2019). Despite interest in tourism resilience, there are very few empirical studies showing how destinations can become resilient in preparation for future disturbances. Previous studies on tourism resilience have been largely conceptual and often narrowly conceptualized resilience without appreciating the uniqueness of tourism system (Hall et al., 2022).

Consequently, it remains unclear how tourism destinations can cultivate their resilience. This gap in the hospitality and tourism resilience literature leads us to investigate the characteristics of the tourism destination that cultivates its resilience. We begin with identifying two subsegments of destination resilience: intra- and inter-regional tourism. Based on the extant tourism literature (Álvarez-Díaz et al., 2024; Bertacchini et al., 2021; Canavan, 2013; Jeuring, 2018; Matsuura & Saito, 2022), we hypothesize that resilience of intra-regional travel carries greater significance for destinations to absorb, recover from, and adapt in the face of disturbance.

Methods

Our analysis empirically tests our hypothesis by examining the US domestic tourism sector between 2019 and 2023. First, we extended Lee and Pennington-Gray's (2024) tourism resilience index by distinguishing intra- and inter-regional demand segments. This revised method was then applied to measure county-level tourism sector resilience during 2019. Finally, we predicted the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic using the resulted indices to quantify different roles of intra- and inter-regional tourism resilience. We used monthly mobility data provided by ADVAN Research to estimate tourist flows. Because of the regional variation in the level of exposure and policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was expected that the applicability of resilience indices would vary over space. This issue of spatial nonstationarity was addressed using multiscale geographically weighted regression (MGWR) analysis.

Results/Discussion/Implication

In general, counties with higher total resilience scores experienced a greater initial disturbance but recovered quickly. However, intra-state tourism resilience had a weaker negative impact on initial robustness compared to inter-state resilience. Furthermore, compared to having diversified and balanced inter-state tourism demand, resilient intra-state demand induced a lower increase in initial disturbance and rapid recovery.

The present study makes two key contributions to tourism resilience literature. One major contribution of this work is to empirically verify the role of intra-regional travel in destination resilience. Although several others have previously argued the importance of having a strong intra- regional demand, its relevance to resilience was largely untested (Álvarez-Díaz et al., 2024; Matsuura & Saito, 2022). We show that destinations with diversified and balanced intra-region tourism demand were able to recover quickly and experienced greater post-recovery growth. Although such demand characteristics were also associated with greater loss during the initial outbreak and throughout the pandemic, these negative consequences were marginal compared to inter-state demand diversification and balancing.

EFFECTS OF MASS TOURISM ON A RELIGIOUS CELEBRATION IN RURAL MEXICO

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Introduction

The objective of this study is to assess local residents' perceptions of mass tourism and its effects on the celebration of the "Lord of Tlaxcala" . This religious celebration is centered on a three- hundred-year-old statue of Jesus Christ made by Tlaxcalans during the conquest of what is now northeast Mexico. After its designation as a "*Pueblo Mágico*" (Magical Town), the municipality of Bustamante, Nuevo León experienced a huge increase in tourism, peaking during the event. For three centuries the inhabitants of the town have paraded the sculpture throughout Bustamante at the end of the dry season, asking for rain for the upcoming months, making it an important tradition in the region. During its peak, the event has drawn as many as seven times the population of the town. The influx of tourists has created economic benefits and discomfort from the locals who view tourist curiosity as abanalization of Bustamante's historical and cultural identity.

Methods

This study involved multiple phases of data collection process beginning with participant observation. According to Kawulich (2005) this method is appropriate for this type of practice. In addition, Becker and Geer (2003) state the flexibility of this method is very useful for different backgrounds and disciplines. The second phase comprised a series of in-depth and informal interviews. Conducted through different visits to Bustamante. The third phase included photographic evidence: In this phase, visual evidence was collected. The last phase included field recordings consisting of field notes and audio recordings describing elements of performance, as well as behaviors of the participants. Data analysis involved reviewing and analyzing the four sets of data. Interviews were compared one with another to identify similar patterns in thoughts and feelings about the celebration, consisting primarily of either favorable or unfavorable views. This analysis was made from the perspective of tourism studies.

Implication

The study discovered that a majority of the participants agreed that after receiving the "*Pueblo Mágico*" designation, the festivity experienced changes resulting from large numbers of tourists. Locals used words like "invasion" and "ruined". Another finding was that locals perceived the marketing campaigns that promote the holiday as an intent to change the town's multicultural heritage to focus on the Tlaxcalan past, ignoring its other Hispanic and Alazapa cultural roots.

The negative feelings identified by the study appear to be symptoms of bigger problems that Bustamante may face in the future. One of the negative feelings shared by participants was the perception that its most representative religious and cultural symbols was being transformed into a simple entertainment spectacle for curious tourists. Another feeling was that the highly revered sculpture would become a sideshow to attract tourists and concert attendees, eventually overshadowing the religious meaning and purpose of the celebration. Another concern was that the increasing number of annual tourists could damage the town's infrastructure or result in overtourism of the natural caverns and centuries-old system of artificial creeks. Examples of additional consequences of mass tourism could also damage the sculpture of the Lord of Tlaxcala due to overuse and dealing with the significant amount of trash produced by visitors.

CREATING VALUE BY COBRANDING WITH COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY IN HOSPITALITY

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Introduction

The hospitality industry continues to evolve with innovative strategies such as cobranding, where two or more brands form alliances to leverage each other's strengths, enhance market reach, and amplify brand value (Helmig et al., 2008). Cobranding has gained popularity, especially in luxury hospitality, where the inclusion of cultural and sustainability elements resonates with modern consumers seeking personalized, eco-friendly experiences (Cai et al., 2023). Despite its growing presence, limited research exists on how cobranding partnerships impact long-term brand equity, particularly through sustainability initiatives and cultural integration. This study seeks to fill that gap by investigating how cobranding strategies create shared value and elevate brand identity through cultural and sustainability-focused collaborations.

Methods

This study employs Case Study Methodology (CSM) to examine cobranding strategies within the luxury hospitality sector, with an emphasis on partnerships that leverage cultural and sustainability initiatives (Yin, 2003).

Keywords such as "cobranding," "partnerships," "cultural integration," and "sustainability" were used to identify relevant literature and industry examples. A purposive sampling method was employed to select three luxury hotel brands that have successfully implemented cobranding initiatives focused on cultural and environmental values. These cases were chosen for their strategic alignment with global art, cultural exhibits, and sustainability initiatives. The selected cases include Mandarin Oriental's partnership with Art Basel, The Peninsula Hotels' Art in Resonance program, and Bulgari Hotels' collaboration with MAXXI Museum and Dubai Culture.

Results/Discussion/Implication

All three hotels demonstrated how cobranding can enhance both brand value and community engagement. Mandarin Oriental's collaboration with Art Basel created cultural value by positioning Hong Kong as an art hub while contributing to social causes like Operation Smile China. The Peninsula's Art in Resonance initiative incorporated sustainability and cultural elements by using recycled materials in immersive art installations. Bulgari's partnership with MAXXI Museum and Dubai Culture Authority highlighted how supporting emerging artists contributes to both brand identity and cultural value creation. Each case emphasized how cobranding goes beyond mere partnerships to create meaningful and sustained brand differentiation through cultural and sustainability efforts.

Cobranding with community sustainability initiatives allows luxury hospitality brands to integrate cultural elements while promoting environmental responsibility. This approach not only elevates brand value but also fosters deeper connections with socially conscious consumers. Future research should explore how these partnerships can be scaled across the hospitality industry, ensuring alignment with evolving consumer expectations for sustainability and cultural engagement.

IRANIAN WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS' IDENTITY FORMATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA: A STORYTELLING ANAYSIS

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Introduction

Tourism entrepreneurship could be a powerful tool for women's empowerment by improving their socioeconomic status (Bagherietal., 2023), especially in Iran where there is a significant disparity between women's educational achievements and opportunities for employment and economic activities (Tadrisi Hassani, 2024). Despite their active participation in entrepreneurship, women face challenges due to societal barriers (Modarresi & Arasti, 2021). However, social media platforms could offer an equal playing field for women to construct and transform their identities and promote themselves free from gender stereotypes (Fisch & Block, 2021; Olsson & Bernhard, 2020). They might approach identity construction differently on social media, where such influences are diminished (Pérez-Torres, 2024).

This study aims to explore Iranian women entrepreneurs' approaches for constructing their identities on social media. Cultural handicrafts are important for women, as Iran is one of the top three countries in the world for handicrafts, with 75% of these crafts made by women (Modarresi et al., 2016). We chose Instagram for this study due to its significance and popularity among Iranian women entrepreneurs, despite the national ban on social media platforms (Social Media Stats Islamic Republic of Iran, 2024). We applied storytelling as a framework to understand their approaches to identity construction through their narratives. In this preliminary study, a total of 80 posts were collected from seven women entrepreneurs and content analyzed. The study findings contribute to identity, entrepreneurship, and gender studies, and provide useful insights for empowering women entrepreneurs in Iran and developing tailored programs.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative research design to investigate the identity formation of Iranian women entrepreneurs on social media, focusing on cultural handicrafters. Using purposive sampling, the researchers selected active Instagram users with at least 1,000 followers, analyzing 80 posts from seven entrepreneurs across seven World Craft Cities. Data collection spanned from July to August 2024, with storytelling elements guiding the analysis framework. Open, axial, and selective coding allowed themes to emerge directly from the data, with two independent coders resolving discrepancies through discussion. Trustworthiness was ensured through credibility checks, detailed descriptions for transferability, and an audit trail for dependability and confirmability.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study analyzes Iranian women entrepreneurs' social media narratives, identifying five key identities: artisan, entrepreneur, uplifter, co-creator, and cultural narrator. It challenges binary gender views, showing that without stereotypes, distinct gendered identities do not emerge. The findings can help empower women entrepreneurs and guide NGO programs like UNDP in supporting digital inclusion and economic development.

TOURIST STEREOTYPE CONTENT AND INTERACTION IN CROSS-CULTURAL SERVICE ENCOUNTER: THE PERSPECTIVE OF SERVICE PROVIDERS

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Introduction

Stereotypes and intergroup interactions within tourism contexts have garnered increasing scholarly attention in recent years (e.g., Chen & Hsu, 2021; Tung et al., 2022; Tan & Hsu, 2024). However, previous studies predominantly focus on the perspectives of either residents or tourists, overlooking the unique viewpoint of service providers and how their stereotypes might shape interactions with tourists. This paper aims to investigate the stereotype content held by Italian tourism service providers toward Chinese group tourists, given that group tourism often leads to economic, social, and environmental challenges (Kolaee et al., 2024). Additionally, this paper proposes a conceptual model to explore the bidirectional relationship between stereotypes and interactions. By understanding tourist stereotypes and interactions in service encounters, service quality, resident attitudes, and destination competitiveness can be enhanced (Sirgy, 2019; Tse & Tung, 2022), providing valuable insights to guide the design of service experiences and strategies for tourism stakeholders.

Methods

This study employs a social constructivist and practical interpretivist approach, utilizing qualitative methods such as participatory observations, in-depth interviews, and industry news analysis. The abductive thematic analysis identified 234 unique attributes, categorized into positive and negative stereotypes through a three-level coding process: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Open coding identified relevant codes, axial coding grouped similar codes, and selective coding consolidated categories into overarching dimensions.

Results and Discussion

This study identified multifaceted perceptions of Chinese group tourists, focusing on dimensions such as warmth, competence, appearance, mentality, and deviance. It presents a conceptual model integrating service providers' stereotypes with their interactions with Chinese group tourists, drawing from the Stereotype Content Model and Intergroup Contact Theory. Five stereotype dimensions shape service encounters. High-quality positive contact in equal social contexts is crucial for reshaping stereotypes, especially for negatively stereotyped groups. Positive stereotypes reduce prejudice and enhance collaboration, while negative ones lead to avoidance and division. Stereotypes influence whether interactions are transactional or socio-cultural, expanding ICT by showing how service encounters can reduce stereotypes through positive interventions. The findings suggest that service providers can improve cultural sensitivity through targeted training and self-assessment, while Chinese tourists can positively influence interactions through informed pre-trip preparation and onsite behavior adjustment.

MAPPING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE SDGS: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF GLOBAL TRENDS AND RESEARCH GAPS

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Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the United Nations in 2015, address pressing issues like poverty, inequality, climate change, and environmental degradation, aiming to balance economic, social, and environmental priorities. Publications on sustainable tourism have surged, especially in areas like responsible consumption (SDG12), climate action (SDG13), and ecosystem preservation (SDGs 14 and 15) (Font et al., 2023). Increasingly, research emphasizes tourism's role in economic growth (SDG8), poverty reduction (SDG1), and social equity (SDGs 5 and 10), highlighting how tourism can support governance, empower marginalized communities, and foster inclusive development (Matteucci et al., 2022).

While there is substantial growth in sustainable tourism research, critical gaps remain in the literature, particularly concerning tourism's role in promoting governance and resilience in vulnerable regions. This study aims to map the academic landscape of sustainable tourism and its alignment with the SDGs, identifying key themes and under-researched areas to guide future research and policy.

Methods

This study employs bibliometric analysis to map sustainable tourism's contributions to the SDGs. Using the Web of Science (WoS) database and the PRISMA framework, we identified 1,502 peer- reviewed, English-language articles from an initial pool of over 2,000. The analysis involved three steps: (1) Keyword Co-occurrence to reveal major themes, (2) Citation Analysis to identify influential articles and authors, and (3) Network Mapping to visualize collaboration patterns. These steps provided a comprehensive overview of key themes, influential sources, and research gaps in sustainable tourism literature related to the SDGs.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The findings highlight five main themes in sustainable tourism research: (1) Economic Impact - job creation and poverty reduction (SDG8); (2) Environmental Sustainability - climate action and ecosystem preservation (SDGs 13, 14, and 15); (3) Community Engagement and Social Equity - gender equality and reduced inequalities (SDGs 5 and 10); (4) Governance and Policy - frameworks supporting sustainable tourism (SDG16); and (5) Technology and Innovation - smart tourism systems and infrastructure (SDG9).

Despite the focus on economic and environmental sustainability, socio-political aspects, such as governance's role in tourism resilience for vulnerable regions, remain underexplored. There is a pressing need for research on tourism's potential to foster inclusive governance, especially in areas prone to climate and economic risks. Limited research on resilience planning and post-crisis recovery also points to critical gaps, especially given recent disruptions like COVID-19.

These findings offer valuable insights for academia and industry stakeholders aiming to align tourism development with the SDGs. Addressing governance and resilience gaps could strengthen tourism's global contributions to sustainable development, promoting a more equitable and sustainable industry future.

UNLOCKING THE GREEN TRAVEL CODE: DISCOVERING WHAT MAKES ECO-ENDORSEMENTS ON ONLINE BOOKING SITES CLICK WITH TRAVELERS

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Introduction

The post-pandemic era has seen a significant rise in the demand for responsible travel, driven by the global climate crisis and a shared crisis experience. Responsible travel, synonymous with pro- environmental behavior, involves actions aimed at preserving Earth's socio-physical resources. A study by the Hotel Reservation Service revealed that sustainability remains a key factor in hotel selection for many travelers beyond 2023, with nearly two-thirds of respondents preferring hotels with validated sustainability certifications (Brophy, 2022).

The present study is grounded in the principles of persuasion, social judgment theory, and the elaboration likelihood model (ELM). Persuasion principles such as social proof, reciprocity, authority, liking, consistency, scarcity, and unity play crucial roles in shaping travelers' decisions (Falk & Scholz, 2018). Social judgment theory explains attitude change through cognitive evaluation (Griffin et al., 2018; Hovland & Sherif, 1961; O'Keefe, 2016; Schwarz, 2000), while ELM describes how individuals process persuasive communication via central and peripheral routes (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

Methods

The research involved two studies. Study 1 used conditional process analysis to explore the mechanisms linking eco-endorsements to booking intentions. Study 2 employed an experimental design with a 3×2 factorial structure to validate these findings, manipulating argument quality and ego-involvement.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Study 1: Argument quality significantly enhances message credibility, which in turn influences eco-friendly booking intentions. Ego-involvement and platform familiarity positively mediate this relationship, while message elaboration likelihood negatively mediates. Higher levels of argument quality increase ego-involvement and platform familiarity, subsequently triggering higher message credibility. Study 2: High ego-involvement individuals (skeptics) showed increased acceptance of eco-friendly hotels with stronger arguments, whereas low ego-involvement individuals (believers) were less sensitive to argument strength. The study revealed significant differences in message credibility between ego-involvement groups but no interactive effect of argument quality and ego-involvement.

This study focuses on providing stronger green information and content marketing for online travel agency platforms to promote travelers' embodiment of the eco-friendly purchase concept. The main conclusions are: 1) argument quality, through message credibility's intermediary role, deepens green consumption behavioral intention; 2) ego-involvement and platform familiarity positively mediate the relationship between argument quality and message credibility, while information likelihood negatively mediates this relationship; 3) ego-involvement degree plays the most significant classification role in influencing message credibility.

WILL ANTHROPOMORPHIZED MORAL-APPEAL MEDIA INCREASE TRAVELERS' INTENTIONS TO ENGAGE IN REEF-RELATED PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIORS?

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Introduction

Coral reefs around the world are being degraded and significantly declining at an alarming rate (Suesset al., 2024). Marine tourism has been negatively affecting reefs in several direct ways, including coral breakage, anchor damage, motorized boats hitting reefs (Dearden et al., 2007; Suesset al., 2024), and physical contact with coral reefs (e.g., trampling, touching; Gilet al., 2015). One way to increase moral concern for the environment is to frame environmental and conservation issues in stimuli as moral imperatives rather than as prudential or economic issues (Markowitz, 2012; Rottman, 2015).

From the perspective of the theory of dyadic morality, moral judgments, and subsequent emotional reactions maybe stimulated when individuals perceive the environment as amoral patiency that is being harmed (Schein & Gray, 2018). Perceptions of environmental harm may occur when emotional and cognitive abilities are added to nature (anon-human entity) through anthropomorphism (Tamet al., 2013). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to develop anthropomorphized morally framed emotional video messaging to convey humans' harmful/helpful behaviors toward coral reefs to evoke respondents' affective and cognitive responses (i.e., moral emotions and moral judgment).

Methods

Three conditions of moral-appeal videos were developed to test the conceptual model. Here, the three conditions are: "high harm x high help," "high harm x low help", and "low harm x high help." The first video – **Condition 1** –features a higher level (**1 minute, 45 seconds**) of harm messaging followed by a higher level (**1 minute, 22 seconds**) of help messaging. The second video - **Condition 2** -features a higher level (**1 minute, 45 seconds**) of harm messaging and a lower level (**31 seconds**) of help messaging. The content of the third video - **Condition 3** - contains a lower level (**24 seconds**) of harm messaging and a higher level (**1 minute, 22 seconds**) of help messaging.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The results of the study indicate that the three moral appeal video messages, regardless of the level of harm and help, significantly increased respondents' intentions to engage in general reef pro-environmental behaviors and their intentions to avoid direct contact with coral reefs.

The present study advances the utilization of the theory of dyadic morality in the field of environmental psychology. It provides a baseline for future researchers to further test the theory of dyadic morality on specific pro-environmental behaviors that can positively impact the restoration of natural entities like coral reefs. There is also a practical implication for social marketers and advertisers who use moral appeal video messaging to evoke emotional and cognitive responses that have been proven influential to pro-environmental behaviors. Destination marketers, specifically, should frame their video messaging to environmental issues around morality which involves harm and help.

GENERATIONAL VEGAN VOYAGES: UNVEILING THE TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT OF GEN X, Y, AND Z ON VEGAN TOURISM AND EVENT ENGAGEMENT

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Introduction

The rise of veganism has transcended dietary preferences and emerged as a global movement that encompasses various lifestyle choices (Hancox, 2018). With the vegan market projected to reach $18.73 billion by 2026 (Foodinsight Organization, 2019), vegan food events have proliferated, offering plant-based, cruelty-free experience aligned with ethical consumers' values (Vegan Society, 2022).

Although previous studies have explored veganism as a healthy food choice and sustainable lifestyle (Badu-Baide et al., 2024; Riverola et al., 2022), limited research has investigated generational differences and their influence on behavioral intent in the context of vegan-themed events. The generational cohort theory (Okros & Okros, 2022) provides a framework for understanding how individuals from different generations develop distinct characteristics based on shared experience. The present study addresses the aforementioned gap by examining how generational cohorts (Gen X, Y, and Z) and gender influence intentions to participate in vegan events, offering valuable insights for both theoretical frameworks and practical applications in the rapidly growing vegan industry through the application of generational cohort theory.

Methods

The present study utilizes a cross-sectional survey design to investigate the relationship between generational cohorts and their predisposition toward vegan events. Data collection was conducted through an online survey administered via Qualtrics during spring 2024. The questionnaire incorporated demographic information (generation and gender) and a 7-point Likert scale assessing behavioral intent toward vegan events, which was adapted from previously validated measures (Yuetal., 2020). Internal consistency reliability was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.804. A total of 730 valid responses were collected. Pearson correlation analysis and hierarchical regression analysis were conducted for hypothesis testing using SPSS 26.0.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The results confirmed that Gen X exhibited a positive predisposition towards vegan-themed events ($r=0.081$, $p<0.05$). However, Gen Y showed a non-significant relationship ($r=0.062$, $p>0.05$), while Gen Z demonstrated a significant negative predisposition ($r=-0.139$, $p<0.01$). Females exhibited a more positive predisposition toward vegan-themed events compared to males ($r=0.088$, $p<0.05$), indicating a higher propensity for participation across all generations.

The present study makes a significant contribution to the theoretical understanding of generational cohort theory in the context of vegan events and tourism, revealing unexpected patterns that challenge prevailing assumptions. Furthermore, the present study advances the understanding of gender dynamics, contributing to the growing body of theoretical discussions on the role of gender in shaping consumption preferences and behaviors (Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2015). These findings also offer valuable practical implications for destination marketers and event organizers in promoting vegan-themed events and tourism experiences.

HOST COMMUNITY WELLBEING: THE IMPACT OF TOURISM EVENTS ON DIVERSE STAKEHOLDERS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC CRISIS

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Introduction

Tourism events, particularly mega-events, play a valuable role in creating prominent destination images and enhancing destination attractiveness (Getz & Page, 2016). Effective coordination and cooperation efforts from multiple stakeholders, including governments, businesses, and local residents, are essential for successful outcomes (Simpson, 2001). The development of destinations driven by tourism events is accompanied by economic, social, environmental, spatial, and cultural gains or losses, closely tied to community stakeholders' wellbeing (Gursoy & Kendall, 2006). Host community wellbeing provides a holistic approach to fully assess the effects of tourism events (Jepson et al., 2019). Perceptions of an event's impact vary significantly depending on stakeholders' roles (Menget al., 2010). However, previous research has primarily focused on local residents as spectators, potentially biasing the understanding of community wellbeing. Including diverse stakeholders is essential for evaluating the outcomes of hosting events.

This study aims to explore the full spectrum of tourism events' impacts on community wellbeing and makes contributions to current tourism literature by elucidating community wellbeing from a collective perspective and incorporating the viewpoints of community stakeholders who play distinct roles in the mega-event. The findings provide valuable insights into creating more equitable and sustainable outcomes for all stakeholders involved in hosting tourism events.

Methods

The mega event investigated in this study was the 2022 Winter Olympic Games, held in two cities in China (i.e., Beijing and Zhangjiakou) from February 4 to 20, 2022. Participant recruitment took place in both host cities. Data collection involved 26 semi-structured interviews and one focus group, conducted in late February and March 2022. The interview questions inquired about participants' involvement and experiences in the pre-event and during-event phases. The participants covered a wide range of stakeholders' roles in the mega-event of the Winter Olympics. The data were analyzed to identify the themes based on common words, phrases, or concepts in participants' responses.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study revealed a full spectrum of community wellbeing, which encompasses financial, subjective, psychological, social, professional, and environmental dimensions. Community stakeholders' perceived community wellbeing improved with their involvement in the event, despite some associated costs, particularly during the pandemic. Moreover, as the Olympics were co-hosted by Beijing and Zhangjiakou – two cities at different developmental stages and with distinct local contexts – the effects on host community wellbeing exhibit discrepancies. This study provides valuable insights for event organizers, city planners, and community stakeholders to foster a more positive and beneficial environment when hosting tourism events.

AN ASSESSMENT OF RESPIRATORY HEALTH AND WELL-BEING: A CASE STUDY OF INDOOR AIR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN A HOTEL

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Introduction

COVID-19 has underscored the importance of respiratory health when traveling. As of August 2024, nearly five years of life with COVID-19, there was a major surge in SARS-CoV-2 infections during the summer of 2024. Since the coronavirus is airborne and transmitted indoors, enclosed spaces with crowds are considered areas of concern. Among indoor spaces vulnerable to respiratory infectious illnesses, hotel conference and banquet facilities have experienced some of the most frequent and severe COVID-19 outbreaks due to the airtight structure and crowded indoor settings. However, there have been no field studies investigating what makes the invisible environments of confined spaces with crowds in hotels hotspots for airborne transmission. Therefore, the purpose of the current field research was to assess the indoor air quality (CO2, VOCs, and PM2.5) in a meeting room and a banquet room at a 4-star hotel, where over 98 attendees gathered for a 2-day conference and awards dinner.

Methods

In April 2024, indoor air quality (IAQ) sampling was conducted at a chain-affiliated hotel in Chicago, IL, during an event attended by approximately 80 participants. The event featured two meeting rooms, each measuring 864 square feet, for research presentations and a banquet room of 1,728 square feet for luncheons and an awards dinner. A total of five Awair Omni air quality monitors were used to assess IAQ by measuring temperature, relative humidity, CO2, VOCs, and PM2.5 in realtime, capturing samples every five minutes.

Results/Discussion/Implication

There were time-averaged 564 samples collected for each instrument and IAQ parameter. Indoor CO2 levels in two meeting rooms and in a banquet room were significantly higher than the healthy guideline of 800 ppm during times when conference activities were taking place with attendees. The mean values ranged from a low of 1,172.14 ± 218.45 ppm to a high of 1,669.57 ± 229.22 ppm, while the immediate outdoor CO2 level at the hotel was 401.47 ± 3.09 ppm. The results of the field study provide compelling evidence of what should be done to prepare for other respiratory pathogens to emerge. According to the CDC, CO2 readings below 800 ppm can reduce exposure to respiratory viruses indoors. Peng and Jimenez (2021) argued that exhaled CO2 can serve as a proxy for airborne transmission risks. They found that enclosed spaces with high CO2 concentrations are much more likely to elevate transmission risk if an infected person is present, as the person may breathe out viral particles that others could inhale. Due to the tendency for higher CO2 concentrations to build up from human respiration, sufficient fresh air ventilation should be provided. Therefore, the findings of the study suggest that hotels should assess the indoor air quality (IAQ) of their facilities accommodating large gatherings.

ADVANCING RURAL TOURISM BUSINESS RESILIENCE THROUGH LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS AND LEADERSHIP

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Introduction

Rural tourism businesses, operating on a smaller scale than their urban counterparts, often face limitations in expertise, management, and resources, making them less equipped to respond effectively to external shocks (Brown & Hall, 2000; Irvine & Anderson, 2004). Despite significant research on adaptability, innovation, and resilience in the tourism industry following external shocks like COVID-19 and hurricanes, rural communities are often overlooked in disaster recovery studies (Dias et al., 2022; Hsu et al., 2023). Therefore, this study aims to examine rural tourism businesses with the objectives of 1) evaluating the importance of partnerships and leadership, 2) exploring the role of partnerships and leadership in the revitalization of local businesses following COVID-19, and 3) assessing the influence of partnerships and leadership on the resilience of local tourism businesses when faced with various external challenges.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach to assess how local partnerships and leadership contribute to the resilience of rural tourism businesses. The research focused on the Bryan/College Station area in Texas, USA, which comprises two adjacent cities with populations of approximately 85,000 (Bryan) and 120,000 (College Station) according to the 2020 census. Semi- structured interviews were conducted with 20 business owners in the region, exploring their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and their perceptions of partnerships and leadership in business recovery.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The study identified several key themes that enhance the resilience of rural tourism businesses through partnerships, including: 1) information and resources provision, 2) networking and collaboration opportunities, 3) infrastructure and facilities support, 4) promotional and marketing support, and 5) psychological and emotional support. For example, access to information and networking were crucial for business continuity during COVID-19. Local partnerships helped tourism businesses by providing updates, financial support information, and collaboration opportunities, especially strengthening ties with local governments and among businesses.

The research findings on the resilience of rural tourism businesses, shaped by local collaborations amid external stressors, hold valuable implications for communities, leaders, policymakers, and government officials. By illustrating how local partnerships and leadership facilitated recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, this study empowers tourism entrepreneurs, officials, and stakeholders to design more effective and sustainable risk management systems and targeted assistance for future disruptions. Also, contributing to social support theory, the research demonstrates that local partnerships serve as essential support systems, enhancing the resilience of rural businesses. These findings underscore the critical role of collaboration and leadership in crisis recovery and emphasize the need for investment in local partnerships to strengthen preparedness for future challenges.

EUROPEAN UNION'S CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING POLICY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON ESG PRACTICE IN EUROPE

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Introduction

The European Union's Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), enforced in January 2023, marks a significant step toward achieving the EU's goal of becoming a modern, resource-efficient, and competitive economy by 2050 (CSRD Directive, 2022). Despite the growing importance of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) reporting mandates and the imminent threat of climate change on the H&T industry, there is a lack of studies that examine policy influences on corporate behaviors. This study investigates CSRD's influence on ESG reporting practices within European H&T firms. Using structuration theory as a theoretical framework, the research examines how the CSRD effectively encourages better ESG practices in the EU and provides valuable insights by emphasizing the importance of government interventions in coping with climate risks in the H&T sector.

Methods

The study employs a difference-in-differences (DiD) method analyzing data from three sources: CSRHub's monthly sustainability ratings, EU membership information, and Yahoo Finance data about each firm's financial performance. The sample consists of 325 publicly traded H&T companies in Europe, with data spanning 2022-2024. The analysis examines both overall ESG performance and specific dimensions including community, employees, environment, and governance, while controlling for financial variables such as liquidity and leverage.

Results, Discussion, and Implications

Analysis reveals CSRD has a positive and statistically significant effect on overall ESG reporting scores ($\beta = 3.91$, $p < 0.01$). Dimension-specific analysis shows significant positive impacts on employees ($\beta = 4.90$, $p < 0.05$), environmental reporting ($\beta = 3.65$, $p < 0.01$), and governance ($\beta = 4.05$, $p < 0.1$), while community reporting shows positive but non-significant effects ($\beta = 1.67$, $p > 0.1$).

These findings contribute to both theory and practice. Theoretically, the study expands on structuration theory in the context of CSR reporting in EU H&T firms in the light of CSR reporting mandates. Practical implications emphasize the effectiveness of regulatory frameworks in driving sustainable business practices, particularly in governance, employees, and environmental dimensions. The non-significant impact on community reporting highlights the need for standardized measures.

BEYOND CARRYING CAPACITY: A NEW APPROACH TO OVERTOURISM

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Introduction

Research on tourism carrying capacity has predominantly focused on destination perspective, emphasizing the ecological, social, and economic impacts of overtourism on local communities and environments (Mihalic, 2020). However, this focus has often overlooked the experiences and perceptions of visitors, who are vital external stakeholders in the tourism system. From a comprehensive capacity perspective, it is crucial to integrate two core viewpoints: the tourism carrying capacity from the destination's perspective and the visitor utility capacity from the visitor's perspective. This study investigates the dynamic effects of overtourism on visitor perceptions in Venice. Leveraging visitor-generated review data and open data provided by the city, this study introduces a novel methodology to estimate district-level visitor numbers, measure crowding levels based on visitor density in relation to geographic area and tourism amenities, and empirically identify the thresholds at which visitor utility begins to decline.

Methods

Visitor density serves as a proxy for crowding, while visitor sentiment score represents visitor utility. Using the number of reviews as a predictor for actual visitor numbers, this study estimates the number of visitors at the district level and calculates five visitor density measures relative to each district's geographical size and the number of tourism-related amenities, such as hotel rooms, hotel room capacity, restaurants, and retail stores. Average sentiment scores for each district are then derived from visitor reviews generated within that area. The final dataset comprises 17 districts over 84 monthly time points, spanning from January 2015 to December 2021. Given the suggested non-linear relationship between visitor utility and crowding (Kimetal., 2016; Stemmer et al., 2024; Zehrer and Raich, 2016), the study estimates five separate quadratic models relative to each of the density measures, incorporating both linear and quadratic terms.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The results reveal positive linear coefficients and negative quadratic coefficients, indicating inverted U-shaped patterns in visitor perception: visitor perception increases as density increases up to a certain threshold, after which it declines as density surpasses the destination's capacity. The study also identifies maximum thresholds for visitor perception with respect to density measures and, using these thresholds, evaluates visitor utility capacity exceedance for each of 17 districts in Venice. The historic center areas of the city, in particular, show signs of overcrowding across all density metrics.

From a practical standpoint, these insights offer valuable guidance for municipal governments and policymakers tasked with sustainable destination management. Overcrowding adversely impacts not only local residents but also visitors, which can lead to reduced satisfaction, decreased likelihood of revisiting, and diminished word-of-mouth recommendations. Therefore, continuous monitoring of visitor perceptions related to overtourism is essential, along with proactive strategies to manage or mitigate its negative effects. By integrating both destination and visitor perspectives, this study contributes to a more comprehensive approach to destination management that balances local sustainability with visitor experience.

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF PLACE ATTACHMENT AND VISITOR'S VALUE ON SUSTAINABLE BEHAVIOR INTENTION IN THE US NATIONAL PARKS

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Introduction

This study addresses the growing issue of environmental degradation in national parks and tourism destinations, focusing on the role of place attachment and visitors' values in shaping environmentally responsible intentions. National parks were initially established to balance ecological preservation with recreational activities, but increasing visitor pressures have made this goal more challenging. The research draws upon theories like the Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to examine how emotional factors (place attachment) and rational factors (visitor value system) influence pro-environmental behaviors. By integrating emotional connections and cognitive dimensions into a unified model, the study aims to provide insights into sustainable park management, highlighting the interplay between morality and rationality in promoting environmentally responsible actions.

This study seeks to fill the gap in the literature regarding how place attachment and value systems work together to shape pro-environmental behavior in natural settings. The research will offer theoretical and practical implications for enhancing sustainability in tourism and national parks.

Methods

This study utilizes a quantitative approach, surveying visitors to U.S. national parks via online questionnaires distributed through Prolific. The research focuses on the relationships between place attachment, visitor values, attitudes, and intentions toward sustainable behavior. A sample of 320 participants, all having visited at least one state or national park and interested in sustainability, was purposively recruited. A pilot test confirmed the reliability of the survey. The questionnaire items, adapted from previous studies, measure place attachment, visitor values, and sustainable behavior intentions. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics and structural equation modeling (SEM) using Smart PLS and SPSS software. The focus is on analyzing data and testing the research hypotheses using SEM to examine the relationships between the variables.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study examined how place attachment, visitor values, and attitudes influence sustainable behavior intentions in U.S. National Parks. The analysis confirmed that visitors' values, particularly biospheric ones, along with place attachment, significantly shape pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors. The findings highlight the importance of emotional and rational factors in promoting sustainability.

The research suggests that park managers should strengthen visitors' emotional connections to parks and emphasize environmental values through educational campaigns and community involvement. Utilizing social media, fostering visitor ambassadors, and engaging local communities in conservation efforts are key strategies for promoting responsible behavior and ensuring park sustainability.

INTEGRATING STATISTICAL AND GEOSPATIAL ANALYSIS TO ASSESS THE IMPACT OF HOSTING EVENTS ON COMMUNITY WELLBEING: INSIGHTS FROM THE MASTERS GOLF TOURNAMENT

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Introduction

Event tourism drives local economic growth and improves residents' wellbeing (Yolalet al., 2016). Research shows that hosting events, from mega to smaller scale, significantly impacts residents' quality of life (Ouyang et al., 2019), with perceived costs and benefits influencing happiness (Ouyang et al., 2019). Despite this, our understanding of event impacts on wellbeing is limited, with most studies focusing on subjective measures like perceptions and fewer on objective indicators like health, income, and employment. No research has linked event hosting to objective wellbeing. Using the Masters Golf Tournament as a case study, this research examines whether recurring events influence community wellbeing. We employ Propensity Score Matching and Universal Kriging to assess geospatial changes in objective wellbeing indicators and determine the statistical significance of these impacts, offering valuable insights for local authorities and event planners.

Methods

The Masters Golf Tournament, first held in March 1934, draws around 40,000 to 50,000 attendees daily to Richmond County, Georgia, generating an estimated $142 million in revenue. In addition to its economic impact, Augusta National Golf Club contributes $10 million to local urban revitalization efforts. Given its scale, popularity, and long-term community impact, it's crucial to assess whether the event significantly affects objective wellbeing metrics. This study's data collection occurred in two phases. First, objective wellbeing indicators (Length of Life, Quality of Life, Health Behaviors, Clinical Care, Social and Economic Factors, and Physical Environment) were obtained from the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute for 2010-2022. Second, US Census data for the same period was collected. Universal Kriging was used to detect geographical variations in wellbeing across the host and surrounding areas, while Propensity Score Matching (PSM) assessed the causal impact of hosting the event on community wellbeing metrics.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The study found significant improvements in Health Behaviors ($\beta = 0.428$) and Social and Economic Factors ($\beta = 0.552$) in Richmond County (2010-2022), aligning with research linking sports events to enhanced community wellbeing (Mair et al., 2023). Events also boosted Quality of Life ($\beta = 0.241$) and slightly improved the Physical Environment ($\beta = 0.017$), contributing to better mental wellbeing. However, there was a negative impact on Clinical Care and a minor, insignificant effect on Length of Life, indicating that events may strain local resources like healthcare due to increased demand.

Our research sheds new light on how large-scale sports events impact community wellbeing, using objective data rather than just relying on residents' personal views. By applying UK and PSM methods, we provide tools to track these effects overtime. We found that events can boost health and socio-economic conditions, offering local leaders a guide for focusing improvements in areas that need it most. However, the increased demand on healthcare and social services also shows why planning ahead is crucial to support both residents and visitors.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES TO ENCOURAGE PRO ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIORS THROUGH ELABORATION FACTORS

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Introduction

Tourism researchers have shown a growing commitment to identifying effective methods to alleviate the negative impacts of tourism on the environment. A viable strategy involves promoting pro-environmental behaviors (PEBs) among tourists, encompassing behaviors taken by tourists to minimize their environmental impact, promote sustainable resource use, and prevent harm to natural ecosystems at a destination (Juvan & Dolnicar, 2014).

Environmental communication has the potential to yield prompt and positive outcomes (Dai et al., 2024). Consequently, the efficacy of environmental messages has been examined through a range of theoretical lenses, including the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), the Norm Activation Model (Schwartz, 1977), and the Value-Belief-Norm Model (Stern et al., 1999). Although these theories enhance our understanding of environmental communication, they were not originally intended to clarify how messages impact perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors.

For this reason, this study seeks to explore the factors that influence the level of elaboration in processing pro-environmental messages, drawing on the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), which clarifies how individuals' attitudes change through persuasive communication (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Specifically, we focused on investigating the level of perceived effort associated with PEBs and benefit types as potential factors influencing the level of elaboration.

Methods

A 2 (self-benefit vs. other-benefit) x 2 (high-effort PEB vs. low-effort PEB) between-subjects experimental design was used in this study. Research participants were recruited through Pollfish, a survey platform that allows researchers to distribute their survey to the targeted populations. Participants were selected from a nationally representative panel based in the United States. Two screening questions were used to reach qualified participants. First, those who use social media platforms regularly were invited. Second, those who have traveled at least once in the past 12 months or those who plan to travel within the next 6 months were invited to participate in the survey.

A descriptive analysis was performed to understand the demographics of the participants and evaluate the normality of the data. Next, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to verify the adequacy of our latent variables for further analysis. A multiple linear regression was performed on the relationships among variables, comparing the model fits among all models.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The findings indicated that tourists' perceived effort associated with PEBs influences the degree to which they elaborate on the message, subsequently affecting the relationships between perceived persuasiveness (the central route), emotional responses (the peripheral route), and PEB intentions. While perceived persuasiveness is important to shape intentions for low- and high- effort PEBs, the impact of emotional responses on PEB intentions varies depending on the perceived effort level of PEBs. Stronger emotions can be more effective in encouraging individuals to take on high-effort PEB.

DRIVING SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

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Introduction

The hospitality and tourism industry is a key driver of economic growth, yet it faces mounting environmental, social, and cultural challenges. With rising awareness of these issues, there is a shift towards circular economic principles (CEP), emphasizing resource efficiency and emission reduction. In hospitality, this shift includes practices like reducing food waste and implementing low-carbon menus. However, the factors that drive the adoption of CEP, particularly the influence of stakeholder pressures (SP) and institutional pressures (IP). emphasizing how top management's sustainability commitment (TMSC) impacts successful CEP adoption. It also examines the influence of CEP adoption on sustainable-oriented innovation (SOI) and explores SOI's effect on sustainable performance (SUP) within the industry. Addressing critical research gaps, the study highlights the need for deeper insights into how SP and IP translate into real-world practices and the significant yet underexplored role of top management in aligning external pressures with internal sustainability goals. This study investigates the role of SP and IP as key drivers in the adoption of CEP within the hospitality industry. Grounded in stakeholder theory, upper echelons theory, and institutional theory, the study tests hypotheses linking SP, IP, TMSC, CEP adoption, SOI, and SUP to provide actionable insights for industry practitioners and policymakers aiming to foster sustainable innovation and competitive advantage.

Methods

Data for this study was collected from 23 green-certified hotels across various market segments in India. From an initial list of 73 green-certified hotels, these 23 hotels agreed to participate. The survey, targeting owners, middle and senior managers, and full-time staff involved in CEP and environmental performance, yielded 173 responses. The survey employed validated measures to assess the constructs. Data was analyzed using SmartPLS. Controls included firm size and existing environmental management protocols, as both can impact environmental management resources and practices.

Results/Discussion/Implication

All factor loadings exceeded 0.7, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were above 0.5, and Composite Reliability values surpassed 0.7, confirming construct validity and reliability. The study's two second-order constructs—Institutional Pressure (IP) and sustainability performance— were also validated. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were below 5, indicating no multicollinearity issues. Correlations between latent variables showed that squared correlation values were lower than the square root of the AVEs, confirming discriminant validity. This study highlights TMSC as a key driver in the adoption of CEP within the hospitality sector, alongside SP and IP. By integrating stakeholder, institutional, and upper echelons theories, the research shows TMSC's mediating role in translating external pressures into SOI and enhanced SUP. The findings encourage hospitality managers to enhance top management's sustainability commitment (TMSC), leverage institutional pressures for economic and environmental gains, and invest in innovation through upgrades and training to drive overall organizational and environmental benefits.

Work-In-Progress:

Consumer Behavior, Hospitality

RESPONSE STRATEGIES FOR ONLINE COMPLAINTS

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Introduction

In the restaurant industry, customer-generated online complaints can significantly shape public perceptions, especially as they are widely visible and interactive on social media. Such complaints often amplify negative word-of-mouth and impact potential customers' views (Wanget al., 2023). Businesses often struggle to manage these public complaints effectively, often hindered by unclear strategies (Herhausen et al., 2023). This study investigates how consumers evaluate service complaints and the corresponding responses, and how these evaluations impact their visit intention.

Image restoration theory provides a framework for businesses to address criticisms effectively. It proposes five main strategies: denial, evasion of responsibility, reducing offensiveness, corrective action, and mortification (apology) (Benoit, 1997). Restaurants may deny incidents, shift blame, or claim limited control (evasion) while acknowledging partial responsibility through compensation (reducing offensiveness). Alternatively, they may accept full responsibility with corrective actions or apologies (mortification). The chosen strategy can vary depending on the context of the complaint and can influence customers' perceptions of the business' response (Nazione & Perrault, 2019). Attribution theory explains how individuals interpret causes of complaints, influencing their behaviors (Akarsu et al., 2023). Key attribution dimensions include the locus of causality, controllability, and stability. The locus of causality and controllability, often combined as "responsibility," refers to the provider's perceived control over the incident (Meyer et al., 2022). Responsibility often triggers complaints, whereas a low perception of recurrence (stability) can help reduce them. (Weiner, 2000). Additionally, recent studies incorporate service failure severity as a factor influencing satisfaction with complaint handling (Bacile, 2024; Song et al., 2023). This study applies attribution and image restoration theories to examine how online complaint contexts shape perceived responsibility, stability, and severity and explores strategies to mitigate them (Songet al., 2023; Akarsuet al., 2022; Herhausen et al., 2023).

Methods

This study employs a 2x5 experimental design: two types of complaint attributions (service providers vs. other customers) and five response strategies (denial, evasion, reducing offensiveness, corrective action, and mortification). Scenarios will be presented on a hypothetical restaurant social media page to reflect real-world contexts (Akarsu et al., 2022; Benoit, 1997). Participants will evaluate responsibility, stability, and severity as measures of service failure assessments, with visit intention measured before and after seeing response strategies. Data will be collected through Qualtrics and analyzed using ANOVA, regressions, and PROCESS model 7 (Aureliano-Silva et al., 2021; Hayes, 2012).

Results/Discussion/Implication

By incorporating image restoration and attribution theories, this study aims to highlight the importance of tailored response strategies in mitigating the negative effects of online complaints. The findings will offer restaurant practitioners insights into crafting more effective social media communication strategies that encourage potential customers to consider future visits.

IMPACT OF REGULATORY FOCUS ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF AI-GENERATED REVIEW SUMMARIES IN ONLINE HOTEL BOOKING

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Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has transformed online information retrieval, advancing from simple keyword searches to systems that interpret context and user intent. A significant development is the use of generative AI for summarizing online reviews on platforms like Expedia and TripAdvisor, enhancing user experience with concise, data-driven insights (Goodfellow et al., 2020). Online reviews are essential in pre-purchase research for products like hotels, where consumers rely on reviews to evaluate attributes (Babić Rosario et al., 2016). However, the vast amount of review content often causes information overload, complicating the search for relevant insights (Shi et al., 2023). AI-generated summaries can address this by distilling key features and sentiments, supporting efficient decision-making (Dwivedi et al., 2023).

While there is extensive research on reviews' impact on consumer behavior, limited studies focus on how AI-generated summaries affect information search behavior. This study fills that gap by investigating: 1) How do AI-generated summaries impact consumers' search performance and satisfaction? 2) How does regulatory focus influence perceptions and usage of AI-generated summaries? This research provides valuable insights into optimizing AI-driven tools for diverse consumer needs in online hotel booking.

Methods

The study employs a quantitative experimental design via an online survey to examine how AI- generated review summaries impact information search behavior and satisfaction. A sample of 300 U.S. participants (18+ with online hotel booking experience), recruited on Prolific, completes a survey covering demographics, travel experience, trust in AI, regulatory focus, and a hotel booking simulation. Participants self-report regulatory focus (promotion/prevention) and are randomly assigned to one of four scenarios (varying hotel price and rating). In a simulated NYC trip, they browse hotel booking pages with AI-generated summaries and 100 reviews, deciding if further reviews are needed, then evaluate the hotel and assess search performance and satisfaction.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study provides valuable insights into how AI-generated online review summaries influence consumer information search behavior and satisfaction, highlighting the role of regulatory focus in shaping user experiences. The expected findings may suggest that aligning AI-generated content with consumers' motivational orientations could potentially improve decision-making efficiency and enhance user satisfaction. For marketers and platform developers, this underscores the importance of personalizing AI tools to better cater to diverse user needs, potentially reducing information overload. Additionally, the study contributes to the broader understanding of information search behavior in digital environments, guiding future innovations in AI-driven information retrieval and user experience optimization.

ENHANCING CUSTOMER RETENTION IN HOTEL RESTAURANTS: THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL NORMS AND TEMPORAL FRAMING IN SUSTAINABILITY MESSAGING, MODERATED BY GUEST CHARACTERISTICS

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Introduction

Sustainability has become a priority across industries, including hospitality, aligning with the United Nations' key goals. To enhance their competitiveness and appeal to environmentally conscious customers, hotels have adopted various sustainability strategies, including in their restaurant services. Although hotel restaurants offer the advantage of proximity and integration with hotel amenities, they are often a secondary choice for guests. To attract more diners, hotel restaurants must differentiate themselves while aligning with sustainable practices. Research shows that message appeal, specifically social norms (SN) and temporal framing, effectively influences consumers' sustainable purchasing decisions (Chang et al., 2015; Demarque et al., 2015; Homar & Cvelbar, 2021; Melnyk et al., 2013). This study aims to investigate how message framing strategies impact hotel restaurant diners' choices and sustainable dining intentions.

In **Study 1**, we focus on social norms framing (SNF) and examine how it influences consumer intentions. SN are divided into descriptive norms (DN), relating to others' behaviors, and injunctive norms (IN), relating to others' opinions (Cialdini & Trost, 1998). These norms have shown effectiveness in promoting pro-environmental behaviors (PEB) (Cialdini & Jacobson, 2021). Thus, we hypothesize:

H1: SNF will positively influence dining intentions in sustainable hotel restaurants.

H2: Previous green behaviors (PGB) will moderate the relationship between SNF and PEB intentions, with a stronger effect at high PGB levels.

In **Study 2**, we investigate how temporal framing interacts with SN to influence perceived benefits (PB), and PEB. Time-based framing has influenced responses in areas such as healthcare and sustainability (Liu et al., 2019; Zhuang et al., 2018). Thus, we hypothesize:

H3: The interaction of SN and temporal framing will positively influence PB.

H4: The interaction of SN and temporal framing will positively impact dining intentions.

H5: PB will positively influence dining intentions in sustainable hotel restaurants.

Methods

After IRB approval, participants will be recruited via Prolific. Eligible participants, U.S. residents over 18 with recent hotel experience, will receive a small monetary incentive. In Study 1, participants will be randomly assigned to one of two hotel scenarios: a descriptive norms message (Group 1) or an injunctive norms message (Group 2), adapted from Kang et al. (2021) to suit study goals. A survey with 7-point Likert scale questions will measure variables like past green behavior and pro-environmental actions (Liu et al., 2020; Lu & Gursoy, 2017).

In **Study 2**, we will replicate the design of Study 1 but will use the most effective message framing identified in Study 1, adding temporal framing to examine its impact. Participants will be randomly assigned to either a current-time frame (Group 1) or a future-time frame (Group 2). Key constructs like perceived benefits and behavioral intentions will be surveyed. A pilot study with 30 participants will precede the main study of 200 participants in both studies, and data will be analyzed using Hayes ' PROCESS in SPSS 26.

Implication

This study enhances hospitality literature by exploring message appeals that increase consumers' intentions to visit sustainable hotel restaurants.

COULD ZERO-PARTY DATA BE THE KEY? BALANCING PRIVACY CONCERNS AND AI PERSONALIZATION IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

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Introduction

The hotel industry increasingly leverages artificial intelligence (AI) and personalization to enhance guest experiences, aiming to boost satisfaction and foster loyalty (Said, 2023; Wang, 2024). However, while AI-driven personalization can significantly improve guest satisfaction, its widespread adoption may face challenges due to limited access to customer data for customization—largely because of growing privacy concerns.

A 2019 study by Auxier et al. found that 79% of Americans expressed apprehension about how companies handle their data. Pew Research Center (2023) further revealed that most Americans believe there should be stricter government regulations on how companies manage customers' personal information. This concern may stem from a perceived lack of control or autonomy over the collection and use of their data (Pew Research Center, 2023).

Hotels, therefore, must carefully balance the benefits of AI personalization with the growing demand for data privacy and control. Zero Party Data (ZPD), information that guests voluntarily and proactively share with the hotel (Khatibloo et al., 2017) offers a potential solution to this dilemma. The objective of this study is to apply Privacy Calculus Theory to examine how guests weigh AI personalization benefits against privacy concerns, focusing on the impact of ZPD autonomy on comfort, trust, control, and willingness to share data.

Methods

This study will employ a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to explore hotel guests' willingness to share ZPD for AI-driven personalization. The study population consists of U.S. hotel guests, utilizing a non-probability convenience sample through Prolific with an estimated sample size of 200 participants. The survey will consist of closed-ended questions and Likert scale items to measure the independent variables and the dependent variable (willingness to share ZPD). The questions will be adapted from previous research (e.g. Dinev & Hart, 2006; Hiezl & Gyurácz- Németh, 2021; Pew Research Center, 2023).

The survey data will be analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics will be used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the sample and general attitudes toward AI-driven personalization, and willingness to share ZPD. Multiple regression analysis will be used to test the hypothesized relationships.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The results will guide hotels in balancing personalization with privacy, developing ZPD collection strategies, enhancing guest satisfaction, and building effective AI-driven experiences. The sample may not represent the population of hotel guests nationally. Future studies could explore a more diverse sample, including international hotel guests, to increase the generalizability of the results. Participants' reported willingness to share ZPD may not align with their actual behavior.

FOOD ADDICTION IN YOUNG ADULT DEVELOPMENT: EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS AND ADDICTIVE BEHAVIORS

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Introduction

Food addiction (FA), characterized by an uncontrollable urge to consume sugary and fatty foods, is increasingly prevalent among younger populations, often leading to psychological issues such as depression, anxiety, emotional dysregulation, and impulsivity (Jacques et al., 2019). For instance, 32.6% of children report feeling addicted to food (Merlo et al., 2009). While stress is recognized as a contributing factor to FA, the role of emotional numbness—a reduced capacity to feel or express emotions—remains underexplored. Emotional numbness may significantly influence FA by affecting how individuals regulate emotions and respond to food-related cues. Additionally, inhibitory control—the ability to suppress unwanted impulses—is closely linked to the brain's reward system and may be impaired in individuals with FA, thereby intensifying cravings and reinforcing addictive eating behaviors (Cunningham et al., 2024). Research further suggests that women are more likely to engage in emotional eating due to feelings of loneliness or sadness, whereas men may tend to overeat in social settings (Ravichandran et al., 2014).

This study aims to address three key objectives: (1) to explore the role of emotional numbness in FA, hypothesizing that emotional numbness, especially in stressful contexts, significantly drives addictive food behaviors; (2) to examine how young adults' inhibitory control processing and heightened sensitivity to food cues contribute to FA; and (3) to analyze age and gender differences in the relationship between emotional numbness, stress, and inhibitory control in FA, assessing how these factors impact FA across different stages of young adult development.

Methods

A mixed-methods design will be used to examine emotional factors contributing to food addiction (FA), among adolescents, young adults, and later adults, focusing on gender differences in the interaction between emotional numbness and stress. This approach provides quantitative insights into the relationships between emotional factors and FA, and qualitative perspectives on individuals' experiences with FA. The key dependent variables include emotional numbness, perceived stress, and food addiction, with inhibitory control evaluated to understand how it influences responses to emotional triggers.

Implications

This study expects to expand the theoretical framework of FA by incorporating emotional numbness as a significant factor influencing FA, alongside stress and inhibitory control. It will offer insights into how these emotional and neurobiological factors contribute to FA across young adult developmental stages and gender, enhancing the understanding of FA triggers over time. Practically, these findings hold implications for mental health professionals, highlighting the need for early intervention focused on improving emotional regulation in individuals at risk for FA. The food industry may also benefit by considering the psychological impact of their products, potentially advocating for healthier options that support emotional well-being in young consumers.

SUSTAINABIILTY IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY: INVESTIGATING HOW HOTELS COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES DISCLOSING GREEN PRACTICES AFFECT BRAND LOYALTY AND INTEGRITY

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Introduction

As environmental concerns grow, hotels are increasingly adopting green practices to reinforce brand integrity and foster customer loyalty (Syed, 2017). Brand integrity, which refers to a brand's capacity to act in a morally responsible way (Morhart et al., 2015; Krylova et al., 2017), is increasingly critical in the hospitality sector, as consumers' perceptions of a hotel's genuine and ethical environmental practices directly influence their loyalty and the brand's credibility. However, limited communication about these green practices can reduce consumer trust, ultimately affecting hotel performance (Kang & Nicholls, 2021). Understanding how hotels' communication strategies about environmental practices impact brand loyalty and integrity is essential. The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) is a psychological theory that explains how people process persuasive information and change their attitudes (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981). According to the ELM, the way people form or change their attitudes depends on how much they think about the message. When a hotel shows strong environmental knowledge and concern, it makes environmental issues more relevant to individuals, leading them to engage more deeply with the information through central route processing (Liu et al., 2022). Conversely, if a hotel's environmental efforts are less visible, people may rely on superficial cues, like perceived benefits and effectiveness, and process the information through the peripheral route (Nang-gong, 2019). This study uses the ELM to explore how hotels' communication strategies about their green practices influence brand loyalty and integrity through these two routes of persuasion.

Methods

This study will use an experimental design with a Qualtrics survey distributed through Prolific to examine whether disclosing green practices on hotel websites affects their brand loyalty and integrity. Participants will first indicate their Marriott or Hilton membership status, after which they will be randomly assigned to one of two hotel groups (Hilton or Marriott) and one of two conditions (disclosure vs. non-disclosure). Group 1 will view only the hotel's green practices, while Group 2 will see both the green practices and an additional document detailing these practices. All responses will be measured on a 7-point Likert scale. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using Mplus will analyze the data (Anderson Garbing, 1988), with multigroup analysis to assess differences between groups.

Discussion/Implication

This study offers both theoretical and practical contributions to the hospitality industry, focusing on how green practice disclosures shape customer perceptions. From the theoretical contributions, this study expands the understanding of how consumers process green messages, distinguishing between central and peripheral routes in the context of hotels by applying the ELM. The study's findings may reveal how detailed environmental information can foster deeper brand connections through increased trust and loyalty. From the practical implications, the findings will guide hotels in strategically disclosing green practices to strengthen brand integrity. By presenting information that encourages central route processing, hotels can foster trust, aligning their brand image with environmentally conscious values.

THE INTERACTION EFFECT OF BRAND MINDSET AND INFORMATION SOURCE TYPE ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

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Introduction

Mindsets are people's beliefs about human characteristics based on implicit theories (Dweck, 1999). Growth mindsets are beliefs in the potential to change or develop human characteristics (Li et al., 2024) and fixed mindsets are beliefs in fixed and consistent human characteristics (Cinelli & Yang, 2016). It is known that consumers' mindset impacts the evaluation and processing of information (Rai et al., 2023; Seo et al., 2021). As each consumers have a different mindset, the brand also possesses and discloses its mindset through values that it promises to achieve, such that Marriot Select Brands reflect a growth mindset in their brand value of innovation, whereas Marriott Premium Brands foster a fixed mindset through consistency (Marriott International,n.d.).

Considering the importance of brand image on consumer trust and decision-making (Tjahjono et al., 2021), brands must utilize SNS to present their images and core value messages. On SNS, there are two types of digital marketing content: FGC (i.e., firm-generated content) and UGC (i.e., user-generated content). The effectiveness of FGC and UFC are contrasting based on prior studies (Colicev et al., 2019; Poulis et al., 2019). Thus, it is helpful for brands to discover which types of digital marketing content are appropriate based on their mindsets.

When the core values from the brand's mindsets are aligned with the digital content type features, consumers form positive attitude derived from high congruency due to schema congruity between pre-existing knowledge for each digital content and new information (i.e., brand's mindset) (Meyers-Levy & Tybout, 1989). This study assumes that fixed mindset and FGC, and growth mindset and UGC are congruent whereas fixed mindset and UGC, and growth mindset and FGC are incongruent.

Methods

We will adopt a 2(brands' mindset: fixed vs. growth) x (digital content type: UGC vs. FGC) between-subject experimental design. Participants recruited from Prolific will be randomly assigned to one of the four conditions. Manipulation of content type will be conducted by attaching the official icon for Instagram with a fake brand's logo for FGC, and an additional description of the scenario. The brand's mindset will be manipulated by revising scenarios for Instagram post captions of previous research (Wong et al., 2020). All of the measurement items will be adopted from previous studies (i.e., schema congruity (Li & Zhou, 2023), trustworthiness (Li et al., 2024), manipulation questions for brands' mindsets (Levy et al., 1998), attitudes (Qiu et al., 2024), and visit intention (Tsaur et al., 2023)). MANOVA and PROCESS Model 85 will be used (Hayes, 2022) to test the hypothesis.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study is expected to provide theoretical and managerial implications. First of all, the current study will contribute to demonstrating the effect of interaction between a brand's mindset and digital content type in terms of schema congruency. Secondly, brands can use the expected result to position their brands on social media, such that brands that emphasize consistency can prioritize FGC, whereas brands fostering innovation inspire consumers to engage more in generating UGC.

INTRINSIC MOTIVATION AND PRICE FAIRNESS PERCEPTION AS KEY DRIVERS OF SPORT FAN PURCHASE BEHAVIOR UNDER DYNAMIC PRICING

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Introduction

Dynamic pricing, a prevalent strategy in sports ticketing, adjusts prices in real time according to factors such as demand, team performance, and game significance (Shapiro & Drayer, 2012). This flexible pricing model challenges traditional economic assumptions, as fans often continue to purchase tickets despite increased prices, showing a relative insensitivity to price changes. This study aims to understand the motivational drivers behind such behavior by focusing on psychological factors that may encourage fan purchases even under fluctuating ticket costs. Drawing on Self-Determination Theory (SDT), this study proposes that intrinsic motivation—a form of motivation driven by inherent enjoyment and connection rather than external incentives— plays a central role in shaping fans' responses to dynamic pricing (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Specifically, the study argues that hypothesize that team identification, game significance, and performance expectations foster intrinsic motivation, influencing fans' perceptions of price fairness (Xia et al., 2004) and ultimately their willingness to buy tickets. Ultimately, the study aims to contribute to both theory and practice, offering insights for sports organizations looking to balance profit goals with fan satisfaction.

Methods

This study will employ a survey-based approach to gather data on the hypothesized relationships. Participants will be drawn from a university football team's fanbase, including students, alumni, and local community members who have attended at least one game in the current or previous season. The online survey will measure six primary variables: team identification, game significance, performance expectations, intrinsic motivation, price fairness, and willingness to purchase. All variables will be assessed using established 7-point Likert scales, adapted from prior research where applicable. Participants will also be presented with hypothetical ticket price scenarios for standard and premium seating, in which they will indicate their likelihood to purchase tickets under varying pricing conditions. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) will be conducted using Mplus 8.4 to simultaneously test all hypothesized relationships, including direct, mediating, and moderating effects.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study is expected to contribute to understanding how intrinsic motivation, shaped by fan identity and game significance, influences consumer responses to dynamic pricing in the sports context. By examining SDT's concept of intrinsic motivation within a pricing framework, the research aims to provide sports organizations with insights to refine dynamic pricing strategies. Emphasizing elements that enhance intrinsic motivation, such as team pride and game importance, along with offering pricing options aligned with fan commitment levels, could help sports organizations balance profitability and fan satisfaction.

EXAMING STUDENT CLUB MEMBERS ' LOYALTY BY INVESTIGATING RELATIONSHIPS AMONG MOTIVATION, PSYCHOLOGICAL OWNERSHIP, AND RETENTION WITH THE MODERATING VARIABLE OF VALUE CO-CREATION.

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Introduction

Many benefits arise from joining a student club as part of the undergraduate college experience. The advantage of being part of a student club is that it increases students' affiliation with their institution. Changing from conventional classroom to virtual distance education affects several learning practices. As a result, the lack of physical and social presence influences students' engagement, leading to isolation, a crucial element for the high dropout rate of online learning. Clubs are an outstanding co-curricular activity that prepares students for compelling professional careers. This study aims to examine students' retention by investigating relationships among motivation, psychological ownership, and value co-creation. The following objectives are: 1) to examine the sequential relationship among motivation, psychological ownership, and retention, 2) to test if psychological ownership is a significant mediator between motivation and retention, and 3) to investigate if value co-creation will have a significant moderating effect in the sequential relationships.

Methods

The motivation will be measured in five perspectives: enhancement, values, protective, career, and understanding, with 23 items. Psychological ownership will be measured with 12 items in four dimensions: self-efficacy, self-identity, belonging, and accountability. Retention will be measured with eight items: psychological involvement, loyalty-attitudinal, membership, and behavioral involvement. An online survey will be used to collect data using Qualtrics. Structural equation modeling will be conducted to test the research hypotheses. The measurement model will be examined through confirmatory factor analysis to evaluate measurement invariance, construct validity, discriminant validity, and reliability. The assessment model acceptability will be based on the chi-square statistic, comparative fit index, and root means square approximation error. An invariance test will compare the conceptual value co-creation model to evaluate the moderating effect.

Results/Discussion/Implications

This study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge in extracurricular activities in higher education by investigating relationships among motivation, psychological ownership, and retention. This study will offer unique insight into understanding student club members' behaviors by identifying psychological ownership as a salient factor. Furthermore, by evaluating the moderating effect of value co-creation, the findings will enhance our understanding of the role of students' perceived value in student clubs in the university setting. Findings will help universities recognize the importance of the attitudinal perspectives of students when it comes to involvement in student clubs.

THE PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF CRUISE TOURISM

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Introduction

Cruising is a large and expanding industry. In 2023, passenger volume soared to 31.7 million— almost seven percent greater than 2019 numbers (Cruise Lines International Association, 2024). Cruise Lines International Association (2024) anticipates the continued growth of the industry, with projections calling for ten percent growth over the next four years alone.

However, the health effects of cruising remain largely unknown. This study hopes to illuminate the mental and physical health outcomes of participating in cruise travel.

Methods

Texas A&M students conducted over 200 surveys of passengers aboard a cruise ship, randomly selecting participants in line with their training. Data will be analyzed using a mixed-methods approach and segmented to examine any statistically significant disparities across demographic factors like gender and age.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study aims to better understand the psychophysiological effects of cruise tourism. By analyzing the results of this study using both quantitative and qualitative methods, the researchers hope to provide cruise companies with actionable data to improve their offerings and also, perhaps, the health outcomes of their passengers.

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FROM FEED TO FEAST: EXPLORING THE POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOOD VIDEOS

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Introduction

Social media platforms are now key sources for food-related content, including recipes, cooking tips, and nutrition information (Nouretal., 2018). These platforms encourage not only the sharing of food-related experiences but also deeper engagement through interactive features (Shan et al., 2015). Previous study has categorized food videos into emotion-focused and information-focused types, with each type influencing viewers indistinct ways. Based on prior studies, this study adopts two types of food videos, sensory-focused videos which highlight visual and auditory elements that create an immediate sensory appeal, and information-focused videos which offer step-by-step instructions and factual details, appealing to those seeking educational value (Chi et al., 2024; Jang & Lee, 2019; Tellis et al., 2019).

Previous studies suggest that, attitude is a strong predictor for behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Information-focused videos are more likely to result in behavior change, particularly in food- related contexts like food tourism (Chi et al., 2024). This study utilizes the Stimulus Organism- Response (SOR) framework to investigate how type of video (stimuli) influence viewers' attitude (organism), which then triggers behavioral intentions to cook at home or dine out (response) (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974; Stadlthanner et al., 2022).

Methods

The study will employ an experimental design with participants recruited from the United States. Participants will be randomly assigned to view one of two different user-generated food videos (sensory-focused and information-focused videos).

The participants will then be asked to complete a survey that assesses three key areas; their perception of the video type (sensory vs. information), their attitude toward the video, and their intention to either cook at home or dine out following exposure to the video content. Survey will be created using Qualtrics, and data will be collected by recruiting participants through Prolific.

Implications

The findings from this study will offer insights into the persuasive impact of different social media food video types on viewers' attitudes and behaviors, extending the application of the SOR theory to the culinary domain. The research is expected to show that information-focused and sensory- focused videos lead to more favorable attitudes and stronger behavioral intentions to cook at home and dine out. These results will have practical implications for restaurants, food marketers and content creators, helping them design more engaging and effective video content that resonates with target audiences.

EXPERIENCE OF HOSPITALITY AND REVISIT INTENTION OF PATIENTS: MEDIATING ROLE OF PATIENTS' SATISFACTION IN HEALTHCARE HOSPITAL CONTEXTS

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Introduction

Hospitals throughout the world are experiencing fierce competition because of increasing poor satisfaction, bad experiences with hospital personnel, and low rates of revisit intention of patients (Yesawich & Shoemaker, 2023). To address the issues of the healthcare industry, the healthcare industry has extended its hands towards the hospitality sector to improve the patient experience. In response, many authorities in the hospitality sector have provided conceptual papers (Pizam, 2020), empirical papers (Suess & Mody, 2017; Yesawich & Shoemaker, 2023), and review papers (Majeed & Kim, 2023). Despite the amount of scholarly effort, the revisit intention of patients remained an intriguing question for healthcare service providers. Numerous earlier studies have attempted to investigate patients' intentions to return to hospitals (e.g., Park et al., 2024; Pervaiz et al., 2024). However, the role of experience with hospitality on revisit intention has not been investigated. Thus, drawing from the expectations confirmation model (ECM), this study will investigate the mediating role of patients' satisfaction in relation to the experience of hospitality and revisit the intention of the patient.

Methods

This study will apply across-sectional survey research design. The population of the study will be patients who are staying at the hospital for at least 3 days because they will be able to understand the experience of hospitality and patients' satisfaction and revisit intention in the future. The sampling technique would be purposive sampling because the inclusion criteria and anticipated poor response rate would make purposive sampling relatively better. The sample size of 350 would adequately represent the population (Hair et al., 2019). A partial least squares structural equation model (PLS-SEM) will be used to examine the final data.

Expected Results/Discussion/Implications

This paper expects that the experience of hospitality positively influences patients' satisfaction and revisit intention. Moreover, patients' satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between the experience of hospitality and revisit intention. This paper contributes to paving the path of healthcare hospitality from the perspective of developing countries. This paper enriches the field of healthcare hospitality from theoretical and managerial implications.

INVESTIGATING THE EFFECT OF VERTICAL FARMING ON CONSUMER RESPONSES

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Introduction

This research investigates the marketing impact of vertical farming cues in physical and immersive dining environments, focusing on two primary objectives: assessing how these cues enhance the dining experience and understanding their influence on consumer behavioral intentions. The study builds on the cue diagnosticity framework to enrich the farm-to-table and hyper-local sourcing discourse, emphasizing the role of vertical farming practices in the hospitality sector.

Methods

The research comprises two experimental studies. Study 1 utilizes a single-factor, between-subjects design, where participants are presented with scenarios of restaurants either featuring or lacking vertical farming cues in an online experiment. Study 2 employs a 2x2 between-subjects design in a lab experiment (vertical farming vs. non-vertical farming x congruent cues vs. non-congruent cues). In Study 2a, neuromarketing techniques such as eye-tracking and Galvanic Skin Response (GSR) will be used to validate self-reported perceptions in an immersive environment. Study 2b will utilize self-reported questionnaires to confirm findings.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The research is expected to illuminate the potential of vertical farming cues to enhance the farm-to-table dining experience and promote sustainability. Insights into consumer perceptions and preferences regarding sustainable food sourcing using vertical farming may inform guidelines and best practices for restaurant owners and other stakeholders aiming to adopt innovative dining initiatives.

THE MODERATING EFFECTS OF LIGHTING AND COLOR ON CONSUMER CHOICES OF HEALTHY FOOD IN RESTAURANT SETTINGS

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Introduction

Environmental psychology highlights the significant impact of physical settings, including lighting and color, on human emotions and behaviors, influencing decision-making processes in contexts like restaurants (Countryman & Jang, 2006). According to the Approach-Avoidance Theory by Mehrabian and Russell (1974), environmental elements evoke emotional responses that can encourage or discourage specific behaviors, emphasizing the importance of well-designed atmospheres in hospitality. Further research on color psychology has indicated that different colors can evoke specific emotions and directly affect consumer behavior (Khandelwal & Singh, 2024). For instance, in hospitality, strategically designed atmospheres using lighting and color are vital, as the created environmental factors can influence customer choices, including preferences for healthier food options (Khoshghadam & Rajabi, 2024). Yet, the direct relationship between these elements and food choices remains underexplored, especially in the restaurant sector. Therefore, this study will explore the impact of environmental factors such as lighting in the restaurant industry on the customers' decision-making processes, especially the preference for healthier food options.

Methods

This study will utilize a 2x2 experimental design, using virtual reality (VR) to simulate controlled restaurant environments with varying lighting intensity (bright vs. dim) and color (warm vs. cool). Participants will experience these different VR environments and respond to a survey designed to capture their emotional reactions, perceived ambiance, and food choices. Additionally, participants' responses will be measured in a behavioral lab setting to observe real- time reactions to each restaurant environment. By combining self-reported data from the survey with observed behaviors in the lab, this study aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of how lighting and color influence consumer emotions and food choices. The collected data will be analyzed using two-way ANOVA to evaluate the interaction effects of lighting and color on healthy food choices, with demographic variables considered as potential moderators.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Guided by sensemaking theory, this study anticipates that lighting and color will influence consumer mood and food choices in restaurants. Bright, warm lighting is expected to evoke positive emotions that promote healthier choices, while dim, cool lighting may create a relaxed ambiance, encouraging indulgent selections, highlighting how mood impacts decision-making (Stigliani & Lavasi, 2012).

By integrating environmental psychology, color psychology, and sensemaking theories, the study aims to provide actionable design insights. For instance, restaurants promoting healthier options might use bright, warm lighting near salad and fresh produce displays, while dimmer, cooler lighting could be used in dessert or relaxation areas. Demographic factors, like age and cultural background, may moderate these effects, suggesting that flexible lighting zones can cater to diverse customer preferences. Future research could examine other sensory elements, such as music or scent, to further enhance the dining atmosphere and influence choices.

THE IMPACT OF DYNAMIC AND CUSTOMIZED PRICING ON CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS IN THE AIRLINE INDUSTRY

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Introduction

The airline industry's increasing use of dynamic and customized pricing strategies allows for price adjustments based on factors like real-time demand, booking timing, and customer characteristics (Wittman & Belobaba, 2016). While these strategies enhance revenue, they often lead to consumer concerns about fairness and transparency, particularly when price changes seem arbitrary or difficult to understand (Lynn, 2017). This study investigates how combining dynamic and customized pricing with varying levels of transparency affects consumer perceptions of fairness, trust, and purchase intention. The research is grounded in equity theory (Adams, 1963), which posits that consumer satisfaction hinges on perceived fairness, and prospect theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979), which examine show the potential for gain or loss shapes consumer behavior. The theories provide a basis for exploring how transparency in pricing strategies influences customer perceptions of dynamic and customized pricing models.

Methods

A 2x2 between-subjects experimental design is employed to analyze the effects of dynamic and customized pricing under high and low transparency conditions. In the high-transparency scenario, participants encounter consistent price reductions (e.g., a 20% discount) explained either through demand-based or loyalty-based justifications. In the low-transparency scenario, only the final price is presented without further explanation, isolating transparency's influence on consumer fairness perceptions.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The study anticipates that customized pricing with high transparency will yield the highest perceived fairness, trust, and purchase intention, while dynamic pricing with low transparency will yield the lowest. This research contributes to understanding dynamic and customized pricing in the airline industry and offers practical insights for airline managers. Transparent communication, including real-time explanations and detailed cost breakdowns, can mitigate customer concerns and bolster trust, especially in dynamic pricing models. Additionally, implementing customized pricing may enhance perceived value for loyal customers, fostering greater satisfaction and loyalty.

CULTURAL PLATES, BEYOND TASTE: EXPLORING COLLEGE STUDENT'S PERCEPTION OF FOOD SAFETY AND IMPACT ON RESTAURANT VISITS

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Introduction

Food safety is a major public health issue, especially on college campuses where students choose food independently without guidance. Consumer perceptions, particularly among college students, are important in eliminating foodborne infections. This study investigates students' perceptions of food safety and how it can affect their intention to visit campus restaurants. Each year, approximately 48 million episodes of foodborne illness occur in the United States, resulting in 120,000 hospital visits and 3,000 fatalities. There have been 600 million cases and 420,000 deaths worldwide (Halin, 2021). Food safety and hygiene are potential factors for consumers to choose and continue to support a restaurant (Fatimah et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2012). Students have diverse dining options on campus, and their thoughts and behaviors influence their choices. Over 80% of college students reported consuming potentially hazardous foods, hence, further analysis should be conducted to assess students' perception of food safety (Purnasari & Rusdan, 2021). Bolek (2020) found that younger consumers had less knowledge about food safety than older consumers.

Culture plays a significant role in shaping an individual's food-related behaviors and beliefs (Nemec, 2020) and college students' diverse cultural backgrounds may affect their perceptions of food safety. Cultural traditions and norms dictate what is considered safe or unsafe to eat, the preparation of the food, and hygiene practices (Sibal, 2018). This study identifies a gap in the magnitude of cultural background on food safety perceptions. The study will focus on the cultural dimensions of food safety to determine how students' cultural backgrounds can shape their expectations and practices of food safety. The study hypothesizes that students' attitudes, food safety beliefs, and cultural background influence their perceptions of food safety and affect their intentions to visit campus restaurants, excluding university dining halls.

Methods

This study will use a quantitative approach to non-randomly select 200 college students who will be recruited using the convenient sampling method. A survey will use structured questionnaires containing closed-ended and Likert-scale questions to collect primary data to assess their perceptions and attitudes toward food safety and where they eat; restaurants or dining halls will screen the required data. Meal plans will not be evaluated. It will collect demographic data of students of their nationality to have a diverse sample to assess cultural elements. The data analysis will involve descriptive statistics to summarize and describe the characteristics of the respondents, correlation analysis to identify relationships between the different variables influencing food safety perceptions, and multiple regression to explore how these factors; awareness of food safety, cultural background, and beliefs of food safety contribute to restaurant visit intentions.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The findings of this study aim to understand how food safety perceptions influence student behavior and develop tailored initiatives for students visiting on-campus restaurants enhancing overall food safety awareness and practices. It will also explore the impact of cultural backgrounds on food safety perceptions, guiding the development of culturally sensitive and inclusive initiatives for restaurant operators and students. It also helps understand how food safety is perceived by young adults, a critical consumer group that continues to influence food safety trends and practices.

AM I CONFIDENT WHILE TRAVEL DECISION-MAKING BY CHATGPT?

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Introduction

In the age of AI, chatbots and virtual assistants have transformed travel planning (Ashfaq et al., 2020). They can provide quick, accurate, and tailored responses to travel-related inquiries (Christensen et al., 2024; Wonget al., 2023). ChatGPT is the leading AI tools at 60% market share (Carbonaro, 2024). While it assists in travel decisions (Carvalho & Ivanov, 2023; Duong et al., 2024), questions remain about its credibility (Kim et al., 2023) and ability to reduce uncertainties (S. Shin et al., 2023).

Travel decision-making involves complex cognitive processes with numerous uncertainties (Christensen et al., 2024). Choice confidence, crucial for decision-making (Wang & Shukla, 2013), is influenced by source credibility (Lu & Chen, 2021; Nugroho & Wang, 2023), flow experience (Bilgihanet al., 2015; Yanget al., 2022), and media richness (Kahlowetal., 2020; Shaputraetal., 2023). However, research gaps exist regarding how these factors interact in ChatGPT-assisted travel planning. Therefore, this study investigates how ChatGPT's source credibility and media richness influence users' choice confidence, examining flow experience's mediating role in travel- related decision-making.

Methods

An online survey will gather data from participants requiring them to run a specific ChatGPT prompt and to answer questions. The questionnaire will target recent travelers in Canada and the U.S. based on the web-based calculator (Soper, 2024), sampling will aim for at least 297 responses (Westland, 2010). Measurement items are adapted from previous studies. Hypotheses will be tested using structural-equation-modeling, with SPSS and AMOS.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Drawing on Uncertainty Reduction Theory, this research proposes a comprehensive model examining how ChatGPT's media richness and source credibility dimensions (fairness, accountability, transparency, and expertise) influence travelers' choice confidence, and if flow experience can mediate these paths. This study contributes to both theory and practice. Theoretically, it advances the understanding of uncertainty reduction in AI-assisted travel planning through ChatGPT by examining their integration in the three concepts mentioned. Using source credibility as the core construct, which comprises fairness, accountability, transparency, and expertise, this study sheds light on how such variables can make travelers more confident toward their choices and indirectly do that by letting them experience flow in ChatGPT. Also, clarifying the role of media richness integrated into this context is what this study will signify. Practically, the findings provide valuable insights for AI developers and travel industry stakeholders on optimizing ChatGPT's features, enhancing user trust, and improving the overall effectiveness of AI-assisted travel planning platforms.

PERCEIVED SUPERVISOR SUPPORT AND PATIENT OUTCOMES: A MULTI-LEVEL ANALYSIS OF HOSPITABLE HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY

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Introduction

The global medical tourism market has seen remarkable growth in recent years, valued at $35.78 billion in 2024 and projected to reach $252.94 billion by 2034 (Statista, 2024). To gain competitive advantage, the healthcare industry has started applying the principles of hospitality. DeMicco and Forgia (2020) suggest that integrating hospitality services into healthcare is crucial to enhancing the overall healthcare experience. Research indicates that patient satisfaction and well-being are influenced by factors ranging from the services cape (Suess & Mody, 2017) and perceived value (Chaulagain et al., 2023) to attitudes toward medical hotels (Han et al., 2015). Pizam (2020) further emphasizes that embedding patient satisfaction and well-being within a hospital's hospitality culture—cascading from employees to patients—is essential. Building on the conservation of resources theory and the expectation confirmation model, this study conducts a multilevel analysis to examine the influence of perceived supervisor support on patient outcomes in hospitality- oriented hospitals.

Methods

The study population includes hospital employees and patients with experience in hospitality- focused healthcare facilities. A sample of 430 healthcare workers and 530 in-house patients is deemed representative for this research (e.g., Hair et al., 2019; Li et al., 2017). Given the data collection across different levels, including doctors, nurses, and patients, a multi-level analysis will be employed. To ensure suitability for multi-level analysis, within-group and between-group variances will be calculated. Following Li et al. (2017), the analysis will include descriptive statistics, correlation assessments, and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to validate the factor structure, reliability, and validity of the model. Finally, the proposed multi-level hypotheses will be tested using Mplus 7.

Expected Results/Discussion/Implications

This study expects that employee engagement mediates the relationship between perceived supervisor support and perceived service quality in hospitals. Similarly, patient experience is expected to mediate the association between perceived service quality and patient satisfaction. This complex multi-level analysis aims to enhance theoretical understanding within hospitality- focused healthcare by examining the holistic perspective of the dyadic relationship between patients and employees (Pizam, 2020). Additionally, patient outcomes could be improved by clarifying the role of supervisors in supporting both healthcare workers and patients.

VISUAL APPEAL AND VALUE PERCEPTION: ANALYZING THE IMPACT OF LABEL CHANGES ON CONSUMERS' WILLINGNESS-TO-PAY FOR BOURBON WHISKEY

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Introduction

The bourbon whiskey is an iconic spirit that possess a long history in the United States. It is estimated that hundreds of thousands of job positions are created by bourbon production, and its sales constantly increase by years and did not depress even during the pandemic of Covid-19 (DISCUS, 2024; Kentucky Distillers' Association, 2023). Similar to most alcoholic beverages, bourbons are labelled on its bottle where consumers could find its producer's name, proof, origin and aging period. Label designing and its influence on consumers' willingness-to-pay (WTP) have been explored by many researchers (Lunardo & Rickard, 2020; Thomas & Pickering, 2003), although the majority of their objectives are wine, beer, and apple cider. There are only a few studies emphasizing the importance of bourbon label design and what kind of information it delivers to consumers. As warned by Gumbel (2024), current labeling regulations did not provide enough information to educate consumers about the unique characteristics and production processes of bourbon.

Differing from wine, there is no appellation information established for bourbon, exempting a critical method from consumers quality evaluating. Besides, some New World wine may include the flavor profile that helpfully leave consumers with limited wine knowledge an impression about their products. Wine from Old World countries emphasize the tradition and regional identity, usually adding a painting of the winery and some historical pattern on the label. Instead, a bourbon label generally has none of those features. A study of Scotch whiskey is inspiring to us that it found that Scotch people consuming "local whiskey" insisted that a significantly large percentage of "local ingredients" must be used (Glenk et al., 2012). Similarly, bourbon as an American whiskey is representative to American's spirit and tradition. Hence, this study aims to (1) examine how consumers' preference on locality and simplicity could affect their willingness-to-pay for bourbon, and (2) how their objective knowledge level moderates the relationship.

Methods

Participants over the age of 21 who regularly consume bourbon or other American whiskeys are invited to participate in the survey. They will be asked to complete a knowledge test about bourbon and respond to Likert-scale questions assessing their preferences for locality and simplicity. Additionally, participants will express their willingness-to-pay for four AI-generated bourbon labels, respectively; each with different attributes and content. The first label features only the proof and a few simple elements. The second label, a variation of the first, also highlights the use of locally grown wheat as an ingredient. The third label, designed in a historical style, includes the proof and symbols representing the distiller. The fourth label is the most complex, incorporating the proof, locally grown ingredients, historical elements about the distiller, and a detailed flavor profile.

FOOD WASTE IN RESTAURANT DINING: INTEGRATED PERSPECTIVES OF BEHAVIORAL REASONING THEORY AND NORM ACTIVATION MODEL

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Introduction

Restaurants and other food service outlets are one of the top three contributors to global food waste (Principato et al., 2018). Consequently, concerns regarding food waste resulting from restaurant dining are increasing. During restaurant dining, consumers often order food in excess which leads to plate waste (Filimonau & Ermolaev, 2021; Filimonau et al., 2020; Okumus, 2020). Diners' motivation to order excessively is influenced by various factors, such as a tendency to seek variety, perceptions of the authenticity of food-related attributes, and intention to reuse the leftovers for further consumption.

Previous literature has provided insights into the influential factors of over-ordering in social dining settings (Sharma et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2022; Yu et al., 2021). To date, no studies have been conducted to understand the determinants of over-ordering in general dining setting. Additionally, factors that prevent consumers from over-ordering and contribute to food waste mitigation have not yet been examined so far in previous studies. Recognizing these gaps in our knowledge, we aim to investigate the reasons (both for and against) that influence diners' attitude as well as their intentions toward over-ordering from the personal out-of-home dining perspective.

Methods

The measurement items of the study will be adopted from the extant literature. An online cross- sectional survey approach will be utilized to collect the data for this study. The questionnaire will be prepared using a seven-point Likert scale with response choice ranging from "Strongly disagree (1)" to "Strongly agree (7)". U.S. consumers who are 18 years of age and above with experience dining out at restaurants will be the target sample for this study. The survey will be distributed through Prolific Academic. We aim to collect data from a sample of 550. The research model will be tested using PLS-SEM.

Results/Discussion/Implication

From the theoretical perspective, this study utilizes Behavior Reasoning Theory (BRT) and Norm Activation Model (NAM) to examine the antecedents of diners' over-ordering intention. By doing so, it will underscore the relevance of BRT and NAM in explaining the pattern of consumer behavior while eating out. Additionally, by including price sensitivity as a moderator, we aim to provide insights into consumers' sensitivity to price and how it affects their decision-making.

In addition to the theoretical contributions, the outcome of this study will help government to inform people about the adverse effects of food waste through campaigns.

Work-In-Progress:
Consumer Behavior, Tourism

UNLOCKING LOYALTY: HOW DIGITAL EASE OF USE SHAPES MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES AND SATISFACTION FOR OLDER ADULTS IN HOSPITALITY

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Introduction

Introduction By 2050, over two billion people will be aged 60 or older, representing 22% of the global population (UN, 2019). With this demographic growth, hospitality is increasingly adopting digital technologies like QR codes and contactless payments to enhance customer experiences, which also benefit seniors by simplifying processes (Esposito et al., 2022; Lam et al., 2019). However, older adults often face barriers to technology use, including concerns over mental effort and privacy (Sharit et al., 2020). This study, using cognitive load theory, examines how QR technology's ease of use can enhance memorable experiences and satisfaction for older adults, fostering customer loyalty. Additionally, it explores if technology knowledge moderates the link between memorable experiences and satisfaction. Perceived Ease of Use influences system adoption in digital hospitality (Li et al., 2020). Memorable experiences drive repeat visits and customer loyalty, shaped by positive emotions (Tung & Ritchie, 2011). Ease of Use affects satisfaction, key for tailored experiences for seniors (Oliver, 1996; Simonis, 2023). Positive experiences with technology can lead to brand loyalty (Febriani et al., 2021). Memorable experiences contribute to satisfaction, critical for long-term loyalty (Kim et al., 2012; Torabi et al., 2022). Satisfaction fosters loyalty through repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth (Veloso et al., 2021). Memorable experiences deepen attachment and brand loyalty (Fivush, 2011). High knowledge enhances the perceived ease and enjoyment of technology, strengthening its impact on satisfaction (Kim et al., 2016).

H1: Ease of Use positively influences Memorable Experience.

H2: Ease of Use positively influences Customer Satisfaction.

H3: Memorable Experience positively influences Customer Satisfaction.

H4: Memorable Experience positively influences Customer Loyalty.

H5: Customer Satisfaction positively influences Customer Loyalty.

H6-H7: Knowledge moderates the relationships between Ease of Use, Memorable Experience, and Customer Satisfaction.

Methodology

Data will be collected from a retirement community using a QR code scenario to simulate a hospitality experience. Participants will complete a survey measuring their experience with technology.

Expected Findings This study anticipates that Ease of Use will positively influence Memorable Experience and Customer Satisfaction, promoting loyalty. It also expects that high knowledge strengthens the ease of use's impact on satisfaction and loyalty. These findings highlight the need for user-friendly technology to enhance loyalty among older adults in hospitality.

INVESTIGATING INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVES ON INDEPENDENT TRAVEL EXPERIENCES: A MIXED-METHODS APPROACH

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Introduction

Independent travel, where individuals explore destinations on their own, is gaining popularity in the global tourism industry (Thomas & Mura, 2019). This trend is driven by advancements in technology, the rise of digital nomadism, and societal shifts such as the increase in single living and a growing emphasis on individualism (Indriani et al., 2022; Linao et al., 2024; Otegui-Carles et al., 2022). Independent travel also offers unique opportunities for self-discovery, which are often lacking in group tours (Neluhena et al., 2024). Despite its growing appeal, there is still limited research on the perceived value of independent travel, underscoring the need for further exploration of these experiences (Osman, 2020; Yang, 2020).

This study aims to reveal the different ways independent travelers assign value to their journeys, focusing on two questions: What value do independent travelers find in traveling alone, and how do their views differ? By identifying patterns of subjectivity, it uncovers diverse meanings travelers assign to their solo experiences.

Methods

Q method is suitable for investigating individual perspectives on independent travel experiences because it allows for the systematic identification and analysis of subjective viewpoints, capturing the unique and diverse ways in which travelers perceive and value their solo journeys. Participants will be selected through purposive and snowball sampling, including individuals who have undertaken at least one independent trip in the past 12 months. Qualtrics will be used to ensure the diversity and experience levels of participants. Recruitment will take place via Reddit and Quora, with an expected sample size of 30–35 participants, a common sample size for Q method studies (Lee et al., 2024; Nikraftara & Jafarpour, 2021). Data will be collected from these platforms and analyzed using NVivo for thematic coding, which will help create the Q-set based on statements about independent travel. Participants will then engage in Q-sorting, conducted online where they will rank these statements on a 7-point scale. Post-sorting interviews will further explore participants' reasoning behind their rankings, with incentives provided to encourage participation.

Results/Discussion/Implication

A set of statements will be created to examine how individuals perceive the value of travel alone. This research seeks to uncover multiple dimensions of independent travel, revealing distinct perspectives held by independent travelers. These perspectives may include individuals who prioritize autonomy and personal freedom, those who emphasize cultural engagement and immersion, as well as those who view independent travel as a journey of personal growth and reflection. Also, some travelers may seek solitude as an escape from societal obligations, while others focus on building social connections with fellow travelers and locals. This study offers valuable insights for both the tourism industry and academic literature by enhancing the understanding of independent travelers' perceived value, allowing destination marketers and service providers to tailor strategies that meet their needs, while also contributing to a deeper exploration of travel behavior.

THIRD-CULTURE FOOD: A STAGED AUTHENTICITY PERSPECTIVE

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Introduction

Informed by "staged authenticity" in third-culture food, this study aims to understand the interplay of the theory of Cultural Hybridity in shaping the perception of the consumers.

Cultural hybridity is a dynamic process that refers to the blending of elements from different cultures to create new cultural forms, practices, or identities. The selected, Tex-Mex cuisine is a perfect example of cultural hybridity. It demonstrates the blending of indigenous Mesoamerican, Spanish colonial, and Anglo-American culinary traditions. In framing Tex-Mex as a type of third-culture cuisine, it shows that this is not just a fusion of Mexican and American foods, but a distinct culinary tradition born from the lived experiences of people navigating between cultures. This perspective guides the path towards an authentic expression of cultural identity, much like the third culture cooking championed by chefs like Jon Kung (Kung, 2023).

In the context of food, staged authenticity can be manifested in the ways of presentation, marketing, storytelling and taste. Though the concept of staged authenticity has been extensively explored in tourism studies and applied to various cultural contexts, there appears to be a gap in its specific application to third-culture cuisine. Accordingly, this study aims to investigate how third-culture food establishments employ staged authenticity techniques to navigate the balance between cultural authenticity and market adaptation, focusing on Tex-Mex restaurants.

Methods

To achieve the purpose of the study, a big data approach will be taken. Accordingly, this study will collect user-generated content through Google Maps' business reviews. To operationalize the concept of third-culture food, data will be scraped through Aptify from the restaurants that cater "Tex-Mex cuisine" in Texas. The sample for the study is the top fifty Tex-Mex restaurants in the major Texan cities, including Austin, Houston, San Antonio, Dallas & Fort Worth: representing ten restaurants from each with the highest number of reviews. Here the five cities are selected with the following reasons of: population and economic significance, as these cities have been major destinations for both interstate and international migration (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022) and to represent different geographical areas of Texas, from coastal (Houston) to central (Austin, San Antonio) to north (Dallas, Fort Worth). The data will be analyzed through text mining using RStudio and will be visualized using Tableau.

Moreover, structured topic modeling and thematic analysis will be applied to identify common themes and patterns related to authenticity and consumer perceptions. Furthermore, images of the menus, dishes and the interior of the Tex-Mex restaurants will be analyzed to dive deeper into the concept of staged authenticity of the restaurants.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study is expected to contribute to a deeper understanding of how third-culture food establishments should navigate the balance between maintaining traditional elements and catering to local tastes. This will also provide restaurateurs and entrepreneurs with insights into how cultural hybridity shape consumer preferences and perceptions of authenticity in the rapidly growing third-culture food market.

SOLO TRAVEL AND WELL-BEING: INVESTIGATING PSYCHOLOGICAL CHANGES AND THE MEDIATING ROLE OF GRIT

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Introduction

Solo travel is a growing global trend, particularly notable in South Korea, where nearly 40% of travelers over 18 express interest in it (TTIL News, 2023). This increase is driven by societal changes, such as the rise in single-person households and a focus on personal fulfillment (BBC, 2023). Solo travel is distinct from other forms of travel because it often presents challenges that differ significantly from those faced by group travelers (Osman et al., 2020), making it a transformative process that can potentially catalyze self-discovery and psychological resilience (Yang et al., 2023). Recent studies suggest that grit, a stable psychological trait characterized by perseverance and passion for long-term goals (Duckworth et al., 2007), may enhance the psychological resilience of solo travelers (An et al., 2021) and correlate positively with psychological outcomes (Bowman et al., 2015).

However, research explicitly linking grit to solo travel experiences is sparse. While existing studies have examined the motivations and constraints of solo travelers (e.g., Bernard et al., 2022; Bianchi, 2016; Brugulat & Coromina, 2021), there is limited investigation into how these experiences impact well-being and the psychological mechanisms involved. This study aims to bridge this gap by examining the relationships between solo travel motivations and constraints and travel satisfaction and well-being, focusing on grit as a potential mediating factor. By exploring this potential relationship, this study expands the application of grit in tourism research, providing new insights into the psychological processes underlying solo travel.

Methodology

A quantitative survey will be conducted targeting 400 solo travelers aged 20 and above, with domestic or international travel experience. Established scales tailored to a solo travel context will measure travel motivations (Kim & Kim, 2016), constraints (Crawford & Godbey, 1987; Baek et al., 2015), grit (Kim & Yang, 2023), travel satisfaction (Beard & Ragheb, 1980), and well-being (Waterman et al., 2008). Hierarchical regression analysis will be employed to test the study's hypotheses and examine the mediating role of grit by assessing the direct and indirect effects of travel motivations and constraints on travel satisfaction and well-being.

Results/Discussion/Implications

By integrating the concept of grit into tourism studies, this study is expected to make theoretical contributions to tourism research by expanding the framework of solo travel and offering new insights into the psychological processes involved. Practically, the findings could guide the development of travel programs and services that aim to enhance the well-being of solo travelers while also providing strategies for using travel as a means of personal development and resilience- building.

THE IMPACT OF MOTIVATION, SUSTAINABLE INTELLIGENCE, AND DESTINATION SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ON PARTICIPATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

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Introduction

Plastic pollution is an urgent global challenge (Lebreton & Andrady, 2019; Wilson & Veils, 2015). In response to this issue, South Korea's Ministry of Environment the Act on the Promotion of Saving and Recycling of Resources in June 2022, which aims to address the problem of disposable cup waste (Ministry of Environment, 2023). Effective implementation of this initiative requires active participation from both residents and tourists. Understanding the motivations driving individuals' participation is key to predicting their behavioral intentions. This study integrates Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which differentiates between intrinsic (personal fulfillment) and extrinsic (external rewards) motivations (Deci & Ryan, 1980); Sustainability Intelligence, which emphasizes the role of knowledge and awareness in promoting responsible behavior (Lee et al., 2021); and Destination Social Responsibility (DSR), which reflects the commitment of destination stakeholders to support environmental and community well-being (Su et al., 2018). Despite the crucial role of understanding individuals' motivation in increasing the participation in environmental initiatives (Wanget al., 2021), previous research has not thoroughly examined how these motivations influence their willingness to engage in such environmental initiative into a unified framework. Overall, a holistic approach incorporating these factors may provide better prediction of individuals participation behavior toward the environmental initiatives (Lee et al., 2018).

Methods

This study will adopt a quantitative research approach, utilizing both on-site and online surveys to gather data from tourists and residents on Jeju Island. The surveys will employ a closed-ended, self-administered questionnaire with 5-point Likert scales. Following Anderson Garbing's (1988) two-step approach, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) will be conducted to evaluate the measurement model. Then, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using Mplus will be conducted to test the hypothesis. To investigate the group invariance between residents and tourists, the three- way interaction model (moderated moderating) of sustainable intelligence and destination social responsibility in the relationship between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation and participation behavior intentions will be tested using Mplus.

Discussion/Implication

From the theoretical contributions, this study presents an integrated framework combining Self-Determination Theory (SDT), sustainability intelligence, and Destination Social Responsibility (DSR), deepening our understanding of how motivational and cognitive factors collectively shape participation in environmental initiatives. By exploring the three-way interaction among intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, sustainable intelligence, and DSR, the study offers novel insights into how these factors can reinforce the influence of motivation on sustainable behavior. From the practical implications, the findings may emphasize the need to foster sustainability awareness and prioritize DSR to encourage responsible behaviors among both residents and tourists. These insights provide valuable guidance for policymakers, crafting targeted strategies that effectively leverage motivations to promote sustainable tourism practices.

DIFERRENTIATING THE ROLES OF TRAIT BOREDOM AND STATE BOREDOM IN TOURISM VACATION DECISION

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Introduction

In tourism studies, many researchers often blur the line between personality and motivation. This point is appropriately articulated by Crompton (2024):

It is reasonable to hypothesize that some proportion of the research on tourists' motives maybe more a reflection of people's personalities, rather than on motive constructs to which it is attributed (p.27).

One example of the lack of effective tools to distinguish between personality and motivation in tourism studies can be found in the case of boredom. Alleviation of boredom has long been recognized as a motive for pleasure vacations. It was identified by Crompton (1979) in his influential foundational paper, but he misinterpreted his tourist respondents' observations as "novelty" and proposed that novelty was a motive that drove vacation behavior. Subsequent reflection suggests the roles of novelty and boredom alleviation were incorrectly juxtaposed: Novelty is a behavioral response triggered by the desire to alleviate boredom (Crompton, 2024).

The interest in developing this paper was stimulated by the lack of in-depth discussion among tourism researchers regarding the distinction between research on tourists' motives and personality traits (Crompton & Petrick, 2024); the lack of instruments that effectively differentiate between these two constructs, leaving their relative impact on tourist decision-making still unknown (Crompton, 2024); the ubiquitousness of boredom across all sectors of society (Finkielsztein, 2023); its ubiquitousness in the tourism literature (Crompton, 2024); the absence of recommendations for vacations as a coping restorative behavior for alleviating boredom in the mainstream psychology literature.

Methods

This study plans to survey individuals at tourist destinations and those in daily life contexts, defining tourists as those on pleasure vacations, aligning with Crompton's (2024) terminology. The goal is to build a panel dataset for analysis. The study intends to measure the boredom levels of these individuals based on the trait boredom and state boredom scales commonly used in psychology. Additionally, neuroticism from the Big Five trait model, which is considered similar in nature to boredom, will be included as a measurement tool. The dependent variable will be a state boredom, while the independent variables will include a dummy variable for tourist destination status, trait-related measures, and an interaction term between tourist destination status and trait boredom in the model.

Expected Results

It is expected that trait boredom will moderate the effect of tourism on state boredom at a statistically significant level. Individuals with high trait boredom may experience minimal alleviation of state boredom while at a tourist destination, with either statistically insignificant results or a very small effect size. In contrast, individuals with low trait boredom are expected to show a statistically significant alleviation of state boredom when engaged in tourism activities.

HOW SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS AFFECT GEN Z'S INTENTIONS TOWARD SLOW TOURISM: THE ROLES OF MESSAGE APPEAL AND MEDIA RICHNESS

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Introduction

The fast pace of modern life and the pressure to maximize productivity have contributed to "time poverty," intensifying the desire to slow down and escape environments filled with time stress (Kostilnikova et al., 2022). In response, movements such as Slow Food and Slow City emerged in the 1980s and 1990s, eventually inspiring the growth of slow tourism—a sustainable alternative to mass tourism that has gained increasing popularity (Fullagar et al., 2012; Le Busque et al., 2022). As slow tourism gains momentum globally, it remains in a transitional phase in developing countries, where Gen Z has shown a notable preference for travel experiences that are casual, interest-driven, and aligned with their values (Wang, 2023). Raised in the digital era, Gen Z often bases travel perceptions and decisions on social media, where posts shape their attitudes and behaviors. While research on slow tourism and Gen Z's social media habits is expanding, little attention has been given to their intersection. This gap is significant: understanding how Gen Z's social media engagement aligns with the principles of slow tourism could allow the industry to better meet the evolving preferences of this digitally native generation. By bridging GenZ's social media practices with slow tourism's mindfulness-focused values, the industry could adapt to an increasingly dynamic tourism landscape. This study thus explores the influence of social media on Gen Z's interest in slow tourism, specifically examining how message appeal and media richness in social media posts shape their travel intentions and decision-making.

Methods

This study employs a scenario-based experimental approach using Xiaohongshu as the social media platform, as it is one of the most popular sources of travel information in China. A 2 (message appeal: rational vs. emotional) × 2 (media richness: high vs. low) factorial design was adopted. Participants were randomly assigned to one of these four conditions. The quantitative model is grounded in the Uses and Gratifications theory, the Stimulus-Organism-Response framework, and the Value-Attitude-Behavior model. Study 1 examines the impact of social media posts on Gen Z's attitudes toward slow tourism and their behavioral intentions. Study 2 explores how social media posts influence Gen Z's value-driven motivations.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study will offer insights into the consumption patterns and preferences of slow tourism consumers in developing countries, specifically regarding Gen Z's attitudes toward social media posts and their influence on behavioral intentions toward slow tourism. The study contributes to the theoretical understanding of the intersection between social media, Generational behavior, and slow tourism markets. Furthermore, this research identifies how different types of social media posts—such as those with rational vs. emotional appeals and varying media richness—can influence Gen Z's perceptions and intentions toward slow tourism. These findings will enable marketers to tailor promotional strategies more effectively to engage this digitally savvy Generation. Additionally, as slow tourism continues to grow in popularity, this study provides practical guidance on how to position slow tourism experiences in a way that resonates with Gen Z's unique values and travel preferences.

FAME OVER FEAR: UNDERSTANDING THE OPTIMISM BIAS IN CELEBRITY-DRIVEN TOURIST BEHAVIOR

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Introduction

Celebrity influence on consumer behavior, especially within the tourism domain, is seen in the phenomenon of fans visiting locations associated with the South Korean band BTS (Yeung, 2023). Studies indicate that such dedicated fans show a strong emotional attachment, impacting their choices of destinations and loyalty to these places (Lee et al., 2008; Yen & Teng, 2015; Chen, 2018); digital media exposure enhances destination image while concurrently lowering perceived risk (Lepp et al., 2011). In tourism contexts, perceived risk affects decision-making, with high risk deterring travel, while low risk enables it (Mowen & Minor, 1998; Sonmez & Graefe, 1998).

Notwithstanding the existing literature on celebrity influence on tourism choices, how optimism bias—defined as the underestimation of risks by individuals (Sharot, 2011)—impacts fans' destination choices, and possibly sustains travel intentions despite negative information, remains less examined. Our study focuses primarily on Japanese tourists who position safety as a top priority when choosing Korean destinations (Lee & Ko, 2010). Though Korea is considered relatively safe, socio-psychological and political risks can still affect destination loyalty, with emotional factors mediating this effect in politically unstable contexts (Najar & Rather, 2023). Given tourism's susceptibility towards external shocks, examining tourists' intentions amid heightened travel risks—especially between South Korea and Japan, where political conflicts frequently arise—is essential. Additionally, understanding whether celebrity fans overlook these risks due to positive emotional connections offers insights into sustainable tourism and resilience.

Addressing this research gap, this study aims to explore how optimism bias influences risk perception in celebrity-driven tourism by examining if: (1) risk perception affects travel intention conditioned by celebrity involvement; (2) fans overlook perceived and actual risks in decision- making; and (3) low perceived risk is necessary for tourists' decisions.

Methods

This study will consist of two phases. Study 1 will use Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to analyze the direct and moderating effects of perceived risk and celebrity involvement on travel intentions with data collected from 280 Japanese tourists. In the next phases, Study 2 will conduct a scenario-based experiment and Necessary Condition Analysis (NCA) with 300 Japanese tourists, exploring if low perceived risk is necessary for general tourists but less so for purposive tourists, i.e., celebrity fans. Collectively, these studies aim to elucidate how celebrity influence may tile the scales in favor of destination loyalty, even when risks are apparent.

Results/Discussion/Implication

We anticipate that purposive tourists like celebrity fans (vs. general tourists) will show higher risk tolerance and stronger destination loyalty, tightening the scope of the traditional view that low perceived risk is essential to attract tourists and offering insights for destination marketers on using celebrity-driven content to boost interest, loyalty, and repeat visits, thereby strengthening destination resilience against industry fluctuations.

THE ROLE OF CO-CREATION IN EVENT SATISFACTION AND ARTIST LOYALTY (TAYLOR'S VERSION)

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Introduction

Live music concerts are an integral part of the event industry. For instance, the Taylor Swift Eras tour grossed an estimated $1 billion from 4.35 million tickets sold in 2023. The increased importance of this can be seen in post-Covid economics as consumers are willing to spend money on experiences that they could not have during the pandemic.

With the launch of this tour came a new way for attendees to participate in the experience of a concert, called co-creation. Co-creation is the process of producing new value through joint, collaborative, and concurrent activities. Event satisfaction and artist loyalty are related to the memorability of the event, which has shown to be related to the consumption of the experience (Bertella, 2014).

"Experiences are a distinct economic offering, as different from services as services are from goods" Pine and Gilmore (1998, p. 97). This economic offering can be enhanced by including co-creation as a part of the experience. The Taylor Swift Eras tour includes different types of co- creation experiences, including making and trading friendship bracelets, making and wearing of specific clothing related directly to the artist and the music, light-up bracelets worn during the concert, and streaming and posting on social media outlets before, during, and after the event. When consumers spend their resources, both time and money, on an experience, they are more likely to find the experience more valuable, enjoyable, and satisfying (An & Han, 2020; Prebensen & Xie, 2017). This study aims to highlight the centrality and importance of co-creation in the overall attendee experience through the multi-phase participation lens.

Methods

This study explores attendees' experiences with co-creation during their multiphase participation in a Taylor Swift Eras concert using an exploratory qualitative analysis. The target population of Taylor Swift Eras tour attendees will be recruited through convenience and snowball sampling methods. Interviews will be held virtually using Zoom. A semi-structured interview protocol will be developed to understand their utilitarian (i.e., worthy of monetary spending) and hedonic (i.e., sense of belonging) values experienced when engaging in customer-to-customer co-creation across anticipatory, experiential, and reflective phases of the overall concert experience. Each interview (approximately 30 minutes) will be recorded and transcribed verbatim. Once transcribed, the transcripts will be uploaded to NVivo Qualitative Analysis Software version 12 for further analysis. Themes and subthemes related to the research questions will be extracted and identified.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The proposed study identifies the importance of co-creation in overall event satisfaction and artist loyalty. By exploring multiphase participation, the study will reveal both utilitarian and hedonic values that the attendees experienced while participating in co-creation activities with other concert attendees. Through co-creation, a rise in overall event satisfaction and artist loyalty, including intention to re-purchase, will be experienced by event attendees.

AN APPLICATION OF PROTECTION MOTIVATION THEORY TO UNDERSTAND THE INFLUENCE OF FEAR-APPEAL MEDIA ON TRAVELERS' INTENTION TO USE PRO-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS (PREP) AND DOXY-PEP AS A PREVENTIVE STRATEGY WHILE VACATIONING IN SEX TOURISM DESTINATIONS

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Introduction

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) remain major threats to reproductive and public health around the world (Abdullah et al., 2004) with more than a million new cases of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) being acquired globally everyday (Shiferaw et al., 2024). Intentional travel, in particular, is a recognized high-risk factor for the acquisition of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (e.g., gonorrhea, chlamydia, and syphilis, Cornelisse et al., 2019), as it removes many of the social taboos that normally restrict sexual behaviors (Ansart et al., 2009). To encourage vaccinations and other preventive tools (i.e., PrEP and Doxy PEP), health communication campaigns often use fear appeals which tend to be one of the most effective communication strategies to use in motivating the public to engage in protective behaviors (Limbu & Huhmann, 2024). Research that utilizes Protection Motivation Theory (PMT) often underlies empirical studies on fear appeals involving behavioral change (Suess et al., 2024). Therefore, this study will apply a protection motivation theory framework to explore respondents' emotional and behavioral responses to video treatments that messaged various outcomes for using more effective preventive measures while traveling to sex destinations.

Methods

Three video treatments manipulating fear-appeal messaging with higher or lower proportions of content focused on threats of acquiring STIs and reassurance about the effectiveness of PrEP and Doxy PEP in preventing major STI infections. A survey incorporating all constructs of the Protection Motivation Theory (i.e., perceived severity, perceived susceptibility, self-efficacy, response efficacy, and response costs) along with a measurement scale for behavioral intentions will be developed. The behavioral intentions scale will be measured before and after respondents watch the fear appeal video messaging to test for group differences (i.e., pretest and posttest) using paired samplest-test.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The study anticipates that messages that stimulate fear by emphasizing the severity of threats to an individual's health and public health will have a great influence on travelers ' intention to plan for sexual safety and take preventive action (e.g., asking healthcare providers to prescribe PrEP and Doxy PEP before departing) before traveling to high-risk sex destinations. Moreover, the authors anticipate that this study will advance theory through the use of the theoretical framework of the Protection Motivation Theory to explain the effectiveness of an appeal to fear. It is a work-in-progress study. After the data collection and analysis, the findings will be included, and full discussion and conclusions will be presented accordingly.

AN EVOLVING CONCEPT OF WELLBEING IN THE DIGITAL ERA: DIGITAL WELLBEING IN HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM EXPERIENCES

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Introduction

Tourists are heavily reliant on various digital technologies to search information, take activities, and share travel experiences, thereby amplifying informational, emotional, and social benefits among tourists (Hao et al., 2022). Yet the application of digital technologies does not always yield positive outcomes. The coexistence of benefits and drawbacks of digital technologies calls for attention to improving tourist well-being through actions such as sustainable mobility, social cohesion, and protection of people's privacy (Pencarelli, 2020). Digital well-being has emerged as a new concept from rising public concerns regarding the effects of technology overuse on individual health and on society and the environment (Stankov & Gretzel, 2021). Some scholars refer to digital well-being as the impact of digital technologies on the quality of life or something good for human living. Vanden Abeele (2021) argues that cause-and-effect thinking should be avoided concerning the concept of digital well-being. The nature and implications of digital wellbeing in hospitality and tourism have never been discussed, though some research emphasized the necessity to explore digital wellbeing (Filep et al., 2024). Getting a consensus on the meaning and indicators of digital wellbeing is among the top priorities, which enables uniform expression of the perceptions in future research.

To address the above gaps in the literature, this study aims to define digital well-being specifically for the hospitality and tourism sectors and identify its key domains and indicators. Delphi method is employed to gather expert opinions and develop a comprehensive framework for understanding consumers' digital well-being in the context of hospitality and tourism. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers in developing strategies to enhance digital well-being and promote a balanced digital experience for tourists and industry professionals alike.

Methods

A Delphi study is implemented, with participants recruited from a targeted sample. To be eligible, participants must have proven expertise in one of the following areas: digital technology, positive psychology, wellbeing and/or media in the hospitality and tourism field, demonstrated by publications in peer-reviewed journals. The Delphi study consists of 3 rounds. The results of each round will be collected, processed and analyzed, which further form the input for the next round.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study will theoretically contribute to wellbeing research by elucidating the meaning of digital wellbeing and providing a framework that identifies the components of digital wellbeing in the tourism and hospitality context, which will build the conceptual boundary and benefit the enhancement of theoretical specificity. Moreover, the indicators will serve as a preliminary tool to assess, monitor and enhance digital wellbeing for both service providers and customers within the rapidly evolving hospitality and tourism domain, offering a scientific foundation for future research and investigation. This study will enrich theoretical understanding and provide practical insights for tourists, service providers, destination managers, and technology designers into the effective application and usage of digital technologies in tourism and hospitality.

ARE THEY SINCERE ENOUGH? HOST SINCERITY AND ITS INFLUENCE ON BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS AT CARIBBEAN TOURIST DESTINATIONS

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Introduction

As travelers today crave more sincere and authentic experiences, emphasis on the interactions between locals and visitors have become paramount, particularly for small island developing states reliant on tourism. Positive sincere interactions have been shown to create memorable experiences and evoke emotions of delight and fascination (Deville et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2015; Kovačić & Šagovnović, 2022). In order for a visitor to become fascinated with a destination, it needs to be perceived as friendly which will make visitors feel welcome, reduce anxiety, and empower them to explore the destination further (Liu et al., 2017). This study explores the concept of host sincerity (HS) in host-guest interactions, where perceived honesty, transparency, accountability, and integrity in these interactions enhance travelers' experiences (Taheri et al., 2018).

Guided by expectancy disconfirmation theory (EDT), two questions are addressed: whether high levels of HS will increase the likelihood or recommending and revisiting a destination and if this relationship is based on the indirect effects of memorable tourism experience and destination fascination. Since HS is a novel concept, exploration into its potential associations with revisit and recommendation intentions is required. Five hypotheses are proposed: (H1) High HS is associated with higher recommendation intentions; (H2) High HS is associated with higher revisit intentions; (H3) High HS is related to high memorable experiences; (H4) High HS is related to high destination fascination; and (H5) High HS, through the indirect effects of memorable experiences (H5a) or fascination encourages recommendation and revisit intention.

Methods

To answer the research questions, a quantitative approach will be taken by using Qualtrics constructed survey. The sample will consist of approximately 600 US visitors who have been to the Caribbean in the last eight years. All scales (host sincerity, memorable tourism experience, destination fascination, willingness to recommend and willingness to revisit) used in the survey were established and validated in previous studies. Respondents are required to answer questions on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1(strongly disagree) – 7(strongly agree) based on their level of agreement with the statements.

Implications

This study will contribute to literature on the use of EDT in tourism research by incorporating other variables to aid in the understanding of its applicability across different contexts. It will also highlight positive factors that may influence host-guest interactions at tourist destinations. Furthermore, the study will extend on HS and further explore its influence on consumer behaviors. Lastly, it will highlight the importance of sincerity in interactions with visitors, providing industry shareholders with actionable insights that may positively influence behavioral intentions.

EXPLORING VISITORS' PLACE ATTACHMENT TO BABOON SIGHTSEEING ATTRACTIONS

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Introduction

In Saudi Arabia's Makkah region, Al-Taif City is known for its cultural heritage, landscapes, and winter climate, attracting domestic and international tourists (Amin & Mesaed, 2023). It is also a hotspot for Papio hamadryas (baboons) (Kamal et al., 1994).

Due to overpopulation and the lack of natural vegetation, baboons have shifted to urban areas, relying on human food sources (Al-Ghamdi et al., 2023; Boug et al., 2017). Baboons often wait near roads or parks for food thrown by visitors, a common recreational activity. Al-Hada Road is a key tourist attraction linking Taif and Makkah (Ady, 1995; Alharbi & El-Sorogy, 2023). This study explores how baboon sightseeing influences visitors' place attachment to Al-Taif, considering emotional experiences like enjoyment and amusement. It aims to understand how these experiences, along with destination image, affect revisit intentions and contribute to tourism.

Methods

Baboon sightseeing is a key recreational activity in Al-Taif City's regions, often associated with emotional and cultural significance for visitors. This study employs a quantitative approach using structured, closed-ended surveys designed for statistical analysis i.e., SEM.

The survey is based on the place attachment theory to understand the significance of these sightseeing locations and their correlation with visitors' emotional and cultural connections. By quantitatively examining how emotional experience, recreational involvement, and nature-based destination image influence place attachment, the study aims to predict revisit intentions and support sustainable tourism through a naturalness approach.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Baboon sightseeing has become a major characteristic of Al-Taif's tourism, particularly along Al-Hada Road and Al-Shafa Mountains. However, unregulated feeding by travelers has caused baboon overpopulation, leading to aggressive behavioral shifts and dependence on human food (Biquand et al., 1989; Kamal et al., 1994).

The Saudi Arabian government, through the National Center for Wildlife, has implemented interventions, including a comprehensive strategy to manage the dilemma in Makkah, Madinah, and other regions. Using technologies like drones and AI, over 500 hotspots with 41,000 baboons were detected, and 400 hotspots have been treated so far. Future plans include establishing "baboon parks" and launching a sustainability unit (National Center for Wildlife of Saudi Arabia, 2024). This research shed light on the potential implications of how Al-Taif City can sustain the attractiveness of its nature-based tourism zones as a significant attraction while dealing with the environmental challenges of baboon overpopulation. Along with focusing on visitors' emotional connection by emphasizing on visitors' place attachment through promoting eco-friendly practices of recreational involvement that are aligned with sustainable tourism strategies of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030.

Work-In-Progress:
Finance & Economics

BRAND AWARENESS AND HOTEL PROPERTY TRANSACTION PRICE

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Introduction

The increasing volume of hotel property transactions reflects the growing complexity of these deals, as they involve both tangible assets (e.g., land, buildings, equipment) and intangible elements (e.g., brand recognition, reputation, management agreements; Häggström, 2012). Unlike traditional real estate, hotel transactions encompass a unique interaction between property value and brand affiliation (Kim & Tang, 2020). While the relationship between brand affiliation and transaction prices is well-documented, the role of brand awareness remains less explored. Brand awareness, distinct from affiliation, affects buyers' preferences and willingness to pay for familiar brands, directly relating to hotel property transaction prices (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1992; Yadav et al., 2021). This study addresses this research gap by examining how brand awareness relates to hotel transaction prices and asset value within the hospitality sector.

Methods

This study employs hierarchical regression analysis to investigate the relationship between hotel brand awareness and property transaction prices, using a dataset of 735 valid hotel transactions across the United States from 1992 to 2024. Data were gathered from the Costar database, the North America Hotel Guest Satisfaction Index (NAGSI), the Forbes Report, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) database. The dependent variable, hotel property transaction price, is operationalized as the last recorded sales price per room. Brand awareness is quantified based on guest satisfaction scores in key dimensions, including connectivity, food and beverage, room quality, facilities, staff service, and overall value. Additionally, several control variables are incorporated into the model, such as hotel construction date, number of rooms, location type, class, and operational type.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Our analysis reveals a nuanced relationship between hotel brand awareness and property transaction prices. Initially, a significant negative correlation suggests that higher brand awareness is linked to lower prices. However, incorporating additional control variables, such as hotel age, size, location, class, and operational type, shifts this relationship to indicate a positive association. Specifically, urban, upscale, and luxury hotels commanding higher prices, while economy hotels show a negative association. Additionally, the operational type (independent or franchise) renders brand awareness insignificant, indicating that its relationship is mediated by the hotel's structural characteristics.

The findings provide critical insights for hotel investors and stakeholders, emphasizing the importance of selecting hotels with favorable locations and operational structures to optimize investment returns. For appraisers, the variability in brand awareness coefficients with additional control variables indicates the necessity of considering asset-specific factors, such as age, size, and location, for precise valuations. Moreover, the diminished relationship of brand awareness in specific operational contexts suggests that hotel management should align their strategies with brand value to optimize asset valuation.

ANALYSES OF ECONOMIC IMPACT OF SMALL-SCALE EVENTS: A FANTREPRENEURS PERSPECTIVE

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Introduction

Mega-events are occasions that bring many visitors, media reach, and costs, significantly impacting local economies and infrastructure (Müller, 2015). However, mega-events often lead to overtourism, affecting local livelihoods and increasing costs for residents (Duignan et al., 2022). Unlike major sports events, other large-scale events have lower attendance and can burden local finances, leading to increased taxes for residents (Müller et al., 2023). Recent research suggests mega-events have reached their peak (Müller et al., 2023). As mega-events decline, small-scale events targeting young people and popular culture are gaining attention. Fantrepreneurs organize fan-based events, fostering community and relationships through neotribalism (Asan, 2024). Neotribalism emphasizes building and sustaining relationships rather than being location-based, creating vibrant social spaces for people to celebrate common interests. These events are characterized by professionalism, diversity, and loyalty among participants (Lundberg & Ziakas, 2018).

Fantrepreneurs use popular culture to build networks, enhancing event loyalty and attracting young millennials, who are key consumers and make up about 20% of the global population (Ho et al., 2022). Because of millennials' upbringing and the rapid growth of the internet, there is increased demand for such events. Smaller events require less infrastructure and do not rely heavily on natural resources, making them more sustainable for hosting cities (Higham, 1999; Ekinil et al., 2021). For example, the Rostov region in Russia successfully attracted more participants to small-scale events by focusing on local culture rather than unique tourism resources (Ekinil et al., 2021). This study aims to investigate the economic benefits of small-scale events, focusing on fantrepreneur gatherings.

Methods

A mixed-method approach is proposed. Data will be collected using purposive sampling, with surveys sent to attendees and organizers of small fantrepreneur events like “B-girl games ONLY Comic Con” in Shenyang, “Nintendo-Only Amateur Manga Production Show” in Wuhan, and “JOJO-ONLY Amateur Manga Production Show” in Nanjing. Surveys will address attendee expenditures, motivations, organizer profitability, and overall economic impact. Questions will include spending on travel, accommodation, and event-related purchases, as well as organizers’ experiences in reaching profitability. Financial data from local governments or CVBs will also be used to assess the economic impact using input-output and econometric modeling techniques. By comparing local and out-of-town attendees, the study will explore how these events generate new revenue streams for local businesses.

Expected Results

The study expects to show that fantrepreneur events positively impact local economies by generating new revenue, stimulating local businesses, and increasing the length of stay for visitors. These findings will help local governments make informed decisions about investing in small- scale events to promote sustainable tourism and economic growth. The success of these events could provide a useful model for smaller cities seeking to develop their cultural tourism sectors without the need for extensive infrastructure investments.

HOTEL OCCUPANCY FORECASTING: COMPARISON OF A TRADITIONAL METHOD AND A MACHINE LEARNING TECHNIQUE USING UNIVARIATE TIME-SERIES DATA

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Introduction

Finding accurate forecasting is a focus of academics and practitioners as it helps to optimize resource, maximize revenue, and improve operational efficiency. Despite machine learning methods having received some praise in prediction accuracy, there is still some debate that traditional forecasting methods are still more accurate than machine learning methods under certain conditions.

The proposed study focuses on comparing the predictive power of traditional models with machine learning methods. By conducting this comparative analysis, this study seeks to deepen the understanding of various predictive models. In addition, it aims to enrich the existing literature on hotel demand forecasting by utilizing weekly data in the tourism and hotel industry. Because some scholars argue that, there are relatively few studies that specifically address travel demand forecasting field, and there is a scarcity of research employing weekly data intervals. By examining models in hospitality contexts, it sheds light on the development of hotel demand forecasting.

Methods

This study will employ the Autoregressive Integrated Moving Average (ARIMA) model, a time series model, and gradient boosting, a machine learning technique to assess their performance in predicting hospitality demand. These two models were selected because they are representative of traditional methods and machine learning techniques. ARIMA, as a classic time series model, can capture linear trends and seasonal changes, there are typical feature of traditional statistical methods. Gradient boosting, as a machine learning technique, could flexibly handle non-linear relationships and does not require data processing demonstrating machine learning's benefits.

To evaluate the efficacy of these two models, a popular tourist city will be selected from "Best U.S. Cities to Visit" list released by US News as the study destination. Historical data on weekly hotel occupancy rates for all hotels within a tourism destination will be used as the univariable time-series data for model development. We anticipate that the data can be sourced from Smith Travel Research, Inc. (STR), a reputable company that tracks supply and demand metrics for the hotel industry. The occupancy data provided by STR is widely regarded as valid and reliable in hotel research literature. Focusing on one city and choosing a univariate time series allows for a more controlled analysis, and considering the practicality of the study, this study simplifies the data for data processing rather than complicating the analysis, which can provide insights to industry practitioners.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The proposed study is to explore the difference in prediction accuracy between traditional time series models and machine learning methods in hospitality contexts. Based on the features of the two models, we expect Gradient Boosting to yield superior accuracy in most real-world applications where non-linearities or irregular patterns are present. However, ARIMA may still be competitive or even preferable in cases where the data are relatively simple, highly seasonal, or linear, and interpretability is a priority. This comparison will help clarify the contexts in which each model excels, highlighting the trade-offs between predictive power and interpretability.

THE DETERMINANTS OF FINANCIAL LEVERAGE IN THE CONTEXT OF ASSET-LIGHT FEE-ORIENTED STRATEGY

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Introduction

Primary studies of capital structure in the hospitality business literature have been mainly concerned with evidencing capital structure theories using hospitality data (e.g. Gu, 1992, 1995). Shortly after, scholars started emphasizing the importance of considering hospitality-specific variables (Sheel, 1994; Tang & Jang, 2007). However, the call has been rarely answered ever since (e.g., Li & Singal, 2019), and studies continued to investigate the effects of broader financial variables over financing (Jang & Kim, 2009; Karadeniz et al., 2011; Singh, 2009; Upneja & Dalbor, 2009; Devesa & Esteban, 2011).

The importance of industry differences in determining firms' capital structure has been repeatedly emphasized (Degryse et al., 2012; Li & Islam, 2019). However, despite the valuable insights of the few hospitality-specific studies (Seo, 2014; Li & Singal, 2019; Sikveland et al., 2022), the effect of asset-light fee-oriented (ALFO) strategy on the relationship between hospitality firms' inherent characteristics and financial leverage has received no attention. ALFO strategy refers to the industry shift towards a light-fixed-asset and fee-based business model (Sohn et al., 2013). Considering these factors from the viewpoint of capital structure theories would produce industry-applicable insights. Hence, the current study seeks to examine the effect of ALFO strategy on the relationship between seasonality and clustering with financial leverage.

Methods

Data of U.S. hospitality firms are retrieved from Capital IQ Compustat and 10-K's using Standard Industrial Classification code (SIC) 7011 and 5812 for hotels and motels and eating places, respectively. Our initial dataset comprises 2,816 firm-year observations for 293 firms, covering the period 2000-2023.

The models are going to be estimated using fixed-effects estimator with heteroscedasticity-and autocorrelation-robust standard errors, which are important as finance models usually fail the assumptions of homoscedasticity and no autocorrelation (Wooldridge, 2016). In the intended two models, long-term debt is going to be regressed on seasonality, clustering, fixed assets, size, profitability, net-debt-tax shield, interaction terms of seasonality and clustering with fixed assets in the first model and interaction terms of seasonality and clustering with fee variable in the second model.

Implication

Results of the study could enrich capital structure theories by offering a discussion of how hospitality-specific variables may affect capital structure. In addition, results will provide investors and executives with insights that might help them adjust some of their decisions, such as investing and financing in the industry.

Work-In-Progress:

Human Resources, Leadership & Education

ENCOURAGING PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOR AMONG HOTEL EMPLOYEES: INSIGHTS FROM THE COM-B MODEL AND THE MODERATING ROLE OF EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING

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Introduction

The 'great resignation' has exacerbated employee turnover in the leisure and hospitality industries (Crist, 2024). Underlying this trend is vulnerable employee well-being, affected by work conditions such as long work hours, physically demanding tasks, and customer incivility (Liu-Lastres et al., 2023; Sun et al., 2023; Pu et al., 2024). These challenges have added pressure on management to develop strategies that foster genuine, proactive behavioral change toward pro-environmental practices. Therefore, this study aims to deepen the understanding of employee pro-environmental behavior by incorporating insights into work-life balance through the lens of subjective well-being. Previous literature has shown that human resource management practices that enhance well-being promote employee engagement in organizations' sustainability efforts (Su & Swanson, 2019; Piao et al., 2022; Gyensare et al., 2023). Using the COM-B (Capability, Opportunity, Motivation – Behavior) model proposed by Michie et al. (2011) and the Theoretical Domains Framework (TDF) (Michie et al., 2005; Cane et al., 2012), this study aims to explore the factors influencing behavior at both individual and organizational levels, providing insights to enhance employees' engagement in sustainability initiatives.

Methods

This study will recruit 300 hotel employees via Prolific (http://www.prolific.co/), collecting data in two waves to reduce common method biases (Podsakoffet al., 2003). Validated measures of the constructs will be used, and a 7-point Likert scale will measure participants' level of agreement. Demographic and work-related information will be collected to identify the study participants and used as covariates to avoid erroneous inferences due to confounding effects. Structural equation modeling, multi-group analysis, and mediation analysis will be conducted using SPSS and AMOS to examine the direct and indirect relationships, as well as the moderating effects of employee subjective well-being. To further explore the two sub-dimensions of each COM variable on hotel employees' pro-environmental behavior, a supplementary analysis will be performed.

Expected Implications

This study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the behavioral drivers of employee pro-environmental practices at both individual and organizational levels. Additionally, by focusing on the current industry's challenge of high turnover, this study expands the COM-B model to explore how employee well-being influences pro-environmental behavior by incorporating well-being as a moderating factor. In practical terms, the insights from this study can be utilized to inform mangers about the importance of supporting employee well-being, ultimately aimed at strengthening employees' engagement in sustainability initiatives within organizations.

DO AI-DRIVEN SCHEDULING AND TASK ALLOCATION TOOLS HAVE IMPACT ON EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY, JOB SATISFACTION, AND WORKPLACE DEHUMANIZATION IN FULL-SERVICE HOTELS?

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Introduction

AI-driven scheduling and task allocation tools are increasingly utilized in full-service hotels to streamline staffing and enhance service quality. This study investigates the psychological and performance implications for employees, focusing on productivity and job satisfaction as primary outcomes. Leveraging Organizational Justice Theory (OJT; Greenberg, 1987) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM; Davis, 1989), this research assesses whether AI scheduling improves procedural fairness and efficiency or unintentionally reduces employees' sense of autonomy and connection. The study additionally explores how perceptions of dehumanization may mediate these relationships in the context of hospitality.

Methods

A quantitative cross-sectional survey will be conducted with employees from full-service hotels in the USA using AI-driven scheduling systems. The study will gather data on productivity (e.g., task completion rates, attendance), perceived usefulness (PU), ease of use (PEOU), and perceptions of fairness and dehumanization. Measures will include Davis's (1989) PU and PEOU scales, multidimensional fairness scales based on OJT, and the Mechanistic Dehumanization scale (Haslam et al., 2013). Regression and moderated mediation analyses will be used to examine relationships between AI scheduling, productivity, job satisfaction, and dehumanization.

Results/Discussion/Implication

AI-driven scheduling tools are anticipated to improve PU and PEOU, enhancing productivity and procedural fairness through consistent, bias-free scheduling decisions and transparent allocation processes. However, it is projected that some employees may perceive AI scheduling as impersonal, leading to reduced job satisfaction and morale. We predict that employee perceptions of dehumanization will negatively moderate the relationship between AI scheduling implementation and job satisfaction, with higher levels of perceived dehumanization weakening the potential benefits of AI tools, especially in hospitality, where personal interactions are highly valued. This study extends the Technology Acceptance Model and Organizational Justice Theory by examining how employee perceptions of AI scheduling tools influence technology acceptance and procedural fairness in the workplace. The findings will advance theoretical understanding of employee responses to AI-driven scheduling systems, particularly how perceptions of dehumanization affect the relationship between automated scheduling and job satisfaction.

BACKSTABBING AMONG DEPARTMENT MANAGERS: THE HIDDEN COST ON VICTIMS' REPUTATION AND HOTEL PERFORMANCE

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Introduction

The hotel industry faces significant challenges related to aggressive behaviors such as backstabbing among departmental managers. The impacts of aggressive behaviors are severe in hotels where high employee turnover rates, fierce competition, and constant pressure to deliver great customer service prevail (Schwepker & Dimitriou, 2021), jeopardizing career success, personal and organizational reputation. The cut-throat competition is primarily responsible for backstabbing in hotels as department managers tend to compete for the limited financial resources available and pressures for higher department performance instead of supporting each other.

Most studies mainly focused on vertical leader-subordinate relationships (Al Halbusi et al., 2021; Almeida et al., 2022) rather than on horizontal relationships between managers. This study breaks new ground in hospitality literature as few studies examine backstabbing among department managers. Evidently, hotels must recognize its impact on their managers and operations. This study uncovers the hidden costs of backstabbing on both the victim's reputation and hotel performance. It increases awareness of workplace dynamics in hotels and offers solutions to fight against backstabbing.

Methods

The study proposes a model that examines the relationships between backstabbing, personal reputation, and organizational performance and is based on the organizational politics theory. It shows how backstabbing behaviors negatively impact both personal reputation and organizational performance, while highlighting a positive correlation between personal reputation and organizational performance.

The sample will consist of 300 department managers working in full-service hotels in the Southwestern United States. Human Resources managers will be contacted to request permission to distribute surveys (both hard copy and online) in their departments. The survey will be translated in Spanish, so back translation will be provided. Hypotheses will be tested through the use of regression analyses.

This is a five-section instrument. The first section measures backstabbing using the 'backstabbing behavioral scale' developed by Abraham et al. (2022). The second section measures personal reputation using Hochwarter et al.'s (2007) scale. The third section measures organizational performance using Delaney & Huselid's (1996) scale. The fourth section includes demographic information. In the fifth section, similar to previous studies (Deshpande et al., 2006; Dimitriou & Ducette, 2018), the overclaiming scale will be used to control for social desirability bias. This issue occurs when respondents tend to avoid honest and true opinions, thoughts, and feelings and provide socially acceptable answers instead. (Deshpande et al., 2006; Dimitriou & Ducette, 2018; Holden & Fekken, 1989; Randall & Fernandes, 1991). Social desirability bias is a common problem that occurs in self-reported data and usually leads to inaccurate results (O'Fallon and Butterfield, 2005, Deshpande et al., 2006).

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study recommends effective strategies to help victims protect themselves, including promoting a culture of transparency and collaboration, implementing conflict resolution mechanisms, and offering support for those affected by workplace betrayal. It deepens our understanding of interpersonal dynamics in hotel management and contributes to the creation of healthier, more productive work environments.

PREDICTING HOSPITALITY STUDENTS' SUPPORT-SEEKING BEHAVIORS: HEALTH BELIEF MODEL PERSPECTIVE

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Introduction

The mental health of hospitality students is a growing concern due to the additional demands of internships, service learning, and practicum experiences. Despite significant efforts to support current employees, the psychological challenges faced by hospitality students, who encounter similar stressors alongside academic pressures and career uncertainty, have been overlooked.

Drawing from the Health Belief Model (HBM), the current study explains why students engage in support-seeking behaviors, focusing on beliefs about susceptibility, severity, benefits, and barriers. When individuals recognize their vulnerability to mental health issues (susceptibility) and the potential negative consequences (severity), they are more likely to view support-seeking as beneficial. However, perceived stigma acts as a psychological barrier, diminishing the perceived benefits of seeking help due to fears of judgment or discrimination.

This study extends the HBM in the context of mental health issues by exploring how perceptions of susceptibility, severity, and stigma impact the perceived benefits of support- seeking, which in turn drive emotional and instrumental support-seeking behaviors, with depression severity acting as a moderator.

Methods

This study targets undergraduate and graduate hospitality students in the U.S., aiming to collect 350-400 samples from a southeastern university through convenience sampling using a web-based questionnaire created in Qualtrics. All measures will be assessed from existing literature, including perceived susceptibility, severity, stigma (STIG-9), benefits, and emotional and instrumental support-seeking on a seven-point Likert scale, alongside depression severity using the nine-item Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9).

Statistical analyses will include reliability analysis, EFA, CFA, and covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM). The study will evaluate the internal consistency and validity of measurement items, followed by a two-step approach to assess the measurement and structural models (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Model fit will be determined using various fit indices, and relationships among latent constructs will be tested by estimating the path coefficients.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study will contribute to the hospitality literature on mental health among hospitality students as future professionals, offering implications for colleges and universities to provide appropriate counseling services for students. This study will distinguish itself from prior studies that have concentrated more on hospitality employees. Second, this study will contribute to the existing HBM by demonstrating the negative impact of stigma as a barrier on the perceived benefits of support-seeking behaviors. The study will advance mental health research in hospitality by identifying predictors of emotional and instrumental support seeking strategies at the individual level.

For practical applications in health-related domains, it is crucial to align mental health practices with students' emotional and instrumental support-seeking tendencies. Such alignment can improve educational resources and strategies for those experiencing depression.

THE STUDENTS' KEY TO JOB SATISFACTION: WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACTS

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Introduction

Hospitality education has two crucial success factors: employable graduates and industry retention (Wood, 2003), playing a formative role in producing students who will survive and thrive in the industry. Despite this, hospitality remains with the highest turnover rate in the US (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 202) due to unmet expectations that lead to job dissatisfaction (Ramlawati et al., 2021). Work-integrated learning (WIL) enables students to have industry exposure, shaping realistic psychological contracts (Chen et al., 2018) paramount to improving job satisfaction (Blomme et al.,2010). However, limited studies have examined the combined role of these constructs, dominantly focusing on either university or workplace settings, neglecting the pivotal transition between these constructs. Therefore, this study explores how hospitality education, mediated by psychological contracts and moderated by WIL, influences job satisfaction.

Methods

The proposed study will use a cross-sectional survey design administered through Prolific, an online professional screening platform targeting hotel and restaurant employees recruited through the researchers' network who are either enrolled or recent graduates in a WIL hospitality education program. The study will use the following hospitality industry-validated scales: WIL Competency by Solomons (2020) (α= 0.759). Psychological Contract by Anyaoku (2022) (α = 0.78 and α = 0.80) and Job Satisfaction by Solomons (2020) (α = 0.881). This study will utilize a moderated mediation conditional analysis through the SPSS MACRO developed by Hayes (2018). In essence, a series of regression equations utilizing bootstrapping (10,000) with a replacement n. The program was developed in such a way that moderation is conditional on the existence of the indirect effect.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The study anticipates that proportionate levels of education lead to job satisfaction, with psychological contracts expected to mediate - when fulfilled, will positively mediate, and when breached, will negatively mediate. Furthermore, WIL is expected to strengthen psychological contract formation. These expected findings will be used to justify the following implications: For theoretical implications, the study is one of few to emphasize the role of WIL and psychological contracts in achieving job satisfaction by aligning the students' educational experiences with realistic career expectations. Secondly, the study builds on the HCT, SDT, and SET by highlighting the mutual and collaborative relationship between the organization and student psychological contract fulfillment in achieving job satisfaction.

For practical implications, the study provides educational institutions with a WIL basis for developing more realistic curricula capitalizing on the industry's and student's needs. Secondly, the study offers hospitality companies insights into creating an authentic and transparent workplace, fulfilling psychological contracts from onboarding to progression. This encourages future researchers to study the long-term effects of this alignment on addressing and solving turnover in hospitality, encouraging longitudinal studies. Lastly, the study encourages strong partnerships between hospitality universities and workplaces in building structured programs such as co-designing curriculums, structured training, student-alumni networks, and promoting lifelong learning to achieve job satisfaction.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND COWORKER SUPPORT: AN EXPERIMENTAL APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING COMMITMENT IN THE FOOD AND BEVERAGE INDUSTRY

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Introduction

With the hospitality industry claiming the top spot for number of complaints to the EEOC, sexual harassment is a prominent issue in the food and beverage sector (Sherwyn & Wagner, 2018). Additionally, the food and beverage sector provides a distinct context for the study of sexual harassment considering its many unique challenges (e.g., low pay, provocative uniforms, alcohol consumption). Unfortunately, however, employees in the food and beverage industry lack awareness of what sexual harassment is (Booyens et al., 2022). This study aims to test the impact coworker, and organizational support has on organizational commitment within the food and beverage industry in the sexual harassment context. Organizational support in this study is defined as trainings and policies designed to protect and inform staff about sexual harassment. Coworker support for the purpose of this study is defined as emotional support through comforting and ranting. By examining support and organizational commitment through both social identity theory and basic needs satisfaction this study will test which better predicts commitment levels. Finally, this study explores how sexual harassment disrupts fundamental psychological needs, and how different forms of organizational support impact organizational commitment as a predictor of turnover intentions (Kabins et al., 2016).

Methods

This study will utilize a 3 (workshop training x policy x no organizational support) x 3 (gender aligned coworker support x gender mis-aligned coworker support x no coworker support) scenario- based experiment design, which are well suited for sensitive subjects such as sexual harassment (see Ineson et al., 2013; Kundro et al., 2022; Mills & Scudder, 2023). These scenarios will include descriptions of a sexual harassment incident and manipulated levels of the desired variables. Adult participants with work experience in the U.S.-based hospitality industry within the last five years will be recruited through a Qualtrics online survey panel. In order to test our desired relationships a minimum total sample size of 210 (35 per condition) will be needed (Cohen, 1992).

Discussion

This study extends the understanding of workplace dynamics in the hospitality industry, particularly in how sexual harassment impacts commitment in the food and beverage sector. It will provide empirical support on the effectiveness of sexual harassment trainings and policies, offering insights for fostering supportive and committed food and beverage employees in the hospitality industry. Theoretically, the studies expands on existing research by examining the relationship of gender dynamics and social support on commitment. Finally, the findings could guide the development of organizational trainings and policies to prompt employee satisfaction and retention.

GAMIFICATION PRIOR TO ONBOARDING TRAINING: ANALYZING THE IMPACT ON PARTICIPATION, EMOTIONAL COMMITMENT, AND RETENTION IN THE COMPANY

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Introduction

Training is essential for achieving quality customer service, consistent job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Bai et al., 2006). Effective training programs not only enhance job satisfaction but also extend employee tenure with the organization (Wright & Bonett, 2002). Onboarding programs play a critical role by improving new employees' time-to- productivity, engagement, and retention, while also fostering a better understanding of the company's culture and goals (Meyer, 2016; Klein and Weaver, 2000). Research has shown that such programs lead to higher job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance, while reducing turnover (Cable et al., 2013). Onboarding also serves as a competitive advantage, with widespread adoption in the United States (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011). In recent years, gamification has gained traction as a method to further enhance the effectiveness of onboarding programs. By incorporating game-like elements such as points, levels, and rankings, gamification can increase employee engagement and improve learning outcomes (Bell et al., 2020). This innovative approach not only makes training more interactive and enjoyable but also boosts motivation and retention.

This study aims to examine industry professionals' perceptions of gamified onboarding and its impact on their willingness to participate, emotional commitment, and intention to stay. Specifically, it compares the effects of different game scenarios (no-game, individual game, and team game) on the perceived value of the training and gamification. Additionally, team orientation will be explored as a moderating factor in these relationships.

Methods

To utilize both qualitative and quantitative research, a rigorous mixed-methods approach will be employed, enabling triangulation (Flick, 2018). The initial phase involves conducting an exploratory qualitative study through focus groups to gain a comprehensive understanding of common personality traits among hospitality professionals. Focus groups are chosen to provide deeper insights by facilitating participant discussions on the phenomenon. The second phase will consist of a confirmatory quantitative analysis using a large-scale survey with over 500 participants. This study aims to explore the outcomes of gamification in training and test the hypotheses generated from Study 1, alongside insights from relevant literature. The survey will classify training into three categories: training without gamification, with individual game, and with team game. Participants will be randomly assigned to respond to the survey.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study is unique in examining how game marketing prior to onboarding training affects employees' emotional commitment, willingness to participate in training, and intention to stay with the company. Unlike most research that focuses on gamification during training, this study highlights the importance of pre-training strategies. These insights help companies refine onboarding processes and enable both human resources and new hires to better evaluate the benefits of onboarding.

FLOURISHING IN CONDITIONS OF ECONOMIC PRECARITY: A STUDY OF HOSPITALITY WORKERS

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Introduction

This study investigates how hospitality workers understand and experience flourishing in the face of precarious employment. Flourishing, generally associated with thriving and well-being, lacks a consistent theoretical framework or universal definition, leading to varying interpretations in research (Fowers et al., 2024). Additionally, current literature on flourishing rarely considers cultural variations, overlooking how individuals from different backgrounds may uniquely experience well-being (Fowers et al., 2024). Answering Hefferon et al.'s (2017) call for more qualitative research for flourishing research, this study focuses on hospitality workers' subjective perspectives to bridge these gaps, identify factors shaping their experiences, and propose strategies for employers to enhance worker well-being. The research aims to offer insight into the diverse ways flourishing can manifest within the hospitality sector.

Methods

A qualitative approach was used, conducting in-depth, semi-structured interviews to capture the lived experiences of hospitality workers. Interviews covered participants' backgrounds, work life, home life, and experiences with job precarity and flourishing. The sample included 21 hospitality employees in precarious roles (hourly, part-time, or temporary positions), four managers, and one industry consultant, all based in the U.S. Among the employees, five worked in hotels (as front desk agents, housekeepers, and engineers), and the remaining 16 were hosts, wait staff, and chefs in restaurants. Including managers and a consultant provided a broader view of organizational and industry factors affecting worker flourishing. Thematic coding of interview transcripts, assisted by NVivo software, was used to analyze patterns across the data.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The findings reveal that hospitality workers' sense of flourishing extends beyond the workplace, involving personal passions, financial stability, and creative or physical expression. Many view their roles as temporary, supporting life ambitions, financial security, or self-expression. Social connections were crucial, with positive interactions with coworkers, managers, and customers providing support and a sense of belonging despite job instability. Goal setting and future aspirations helped workers cope, offering resilience amid uncertainty. Some found satisfaction in staying busy, which added purpose even in transient roles. These insights show that, while the hospitality industry is challenging, it provides unique avenues for meaning and satisfaction.

This study has both theoretical and practical implications. It contributes to flourishing literature by examining how precarious workers define and experience well-being. Practically, it suggests that hospitality employers and policymakers can support flourishing by fostering environments that acknowledge workers' personal and financial needs, create opportunities for creative or physical engagement, and support workers' broader life goals. This research offers a fresh perspective on flourishing in precarious employment, relevant to the evolving global labor market.

IDENTIFYING BEST PRACTICES IN SMALL BUSINESS MEETINGS: AN IMPORTANCE-PERFORMANCE GAP ANALYSIS

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Introduction

Effective meetings are an essential aspect of small business success, ensuring collaboration, productivity, and alignment among employees. However, small businesses often face challenges in planning and executing meetings efficiently due to resource constraints, which can lead to wasted time and inefficiency. Previous studies in industries like event planning (Dolasinski et al., 2021) and hospitality (Draper et al., 2018) highlight the importance of well-organized meetings. Small businesses, typically defined as those with fewer than 100 employees (U.S. Bureau of Labor, 2018) often face barriers such as limited resources and budget constraints (Steinerowska- Streb et al., 2022). In smaller businesses, employees' active participation is crucial; research has shown that employees involved in decision-making are more likely to contribute during meetings (Probst, 2005). Using frameworks like the 5 P's (Purpose, Participants, Planning, Participation, and Perspective) can enhance the effectiveness of meetings by providing structure (Cameron & Whetten, 2015). This study aims to address the gap in understanding by identifying key components of successful meetings' importance and assessing discrepancies between small businesses' actual performance.

Methods

The study will use a quantitative approach and collect data through a survey instrument. The survey will be designed through Qualtrics and distributed online. Small business (100 employees or less) owners and general managers (18+) will be contacted using convenience and snowball sampling techniques (Stratton, 2021; Kirchherr & Charles, 2018). The survey will consist of three sections: screening questions to ensure the participant is an appropriate respondent (e.g., small business owner, manager), a main section with 15 items based on an Importance- Performance Analysis (IPA) framework, which will be visualized using the IPA grid (Martilla & James, 1977). Participants will rate both the importance of each attribute and their perception of how well it is being performed within their business. Then, demographic questions will be used to gather information on business size, industry type, and the respondents' comfort level with meeting planning. The study will include control variables such as business size (number of employees), industry type (e.g., hospitality, retail, tech), and the use of meeting technology (e.g., video conferencing, collaboration software).

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study will contribute new insights into small business meeting practices by identifying discrepancies between the perceived importance and actual performance of key meeting attributes. The results will offer actionable recommendations for small business owners and managers, especially in the hospitality and tourism sectors, to improve their meeting effectiveness. By focusing on variables such as business size, industry type, and technology use, this research will provide a more nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities that small businesses face in meeting planning. The findings will help small businesses optimize their meetings to enhance productivity, collaboration, and overall operational efficiency.

AI CHATBOTS IN CONVENTION INDUSTRY TRAINING: EFFECTIVENESS AND STRESS REDUCTION IMPACT ON EMPLOYEES

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Introduction

The market value of the events industry was $438.8 billion in 2023 and is expected to reach $819.1 billion by 2035 (Allied Market Research., 2022). The convention industry plays a crucial role in this growth and provides platforms for knowledge sharing and networking through large-scale international conferences and specialized events. (Yanet al., 2022). As a human-centered business, the convention industry requires systematic professional education to develop human resources capable of hosting and operating conventions effectively (Jotikasthira et al., 2016). Previous research has highlighted the lack of adequate training as a significant factor affecting international conventions (Lau & Wong, 2010).

Training can be a contributing factor to heightened stress levels among workers, as they are already engaged in a substantial volume of work while needing to acquire additional knowledge and skills for an event (Tracey, 2014). The use of AI chatbots in training can provide employees with interaction and personalized services whenever they desire, thereby alleviating their burdens and reducing stress (Vashishth et al., 2024). The degree of "anthropomorphism" of AI chatbots (e.g., tone of voice, gender) is expected to influence users' perceived familiarity and efficiency, thereby moderating stress reduction (McClean et al., 2018, Yang & Wang, 2020, Zogaj et al., 2023). Affective Events Theory explains how training influences employees' emotions and job attitudes, while Social Response Theory suggests people interact with AI like social beings, enhancing the effectiveness of chatbot-based training (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996; Nass & Moon, 2000). Curti et al. (2021) confirmed that there exist studies indicating that individuals experience trust, engagement, and satisfaction when interacting with chatbots. According to Chen and Hou (2024), training utilizing chatbots has demonstrated effects similar to traditional methods in terms of motivation and learning outcomes.

Methods

This research proposes the Moderated Mediation Model with five hypotheses. This is the study in progress. Thus, to test these hypotheses, a survey will be conducted among convention center employees who recently hosted an event. The survey will include measures of perceived stress, training effectiveness, and chatbot characteristics. Structural equation modeling (SEM) will be employed to analyze the relationships between the variables and test the proposed model.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This research could offer insights into implementing AI chatbot-based training in the convention industry, potentially improving employee stress management and learning outcomes. By investigating the impact of chatbot gender and voice tone on stress levels and training effectiveness, this study will contribute to the growing body of knowledge on the social aspects of AI-human interaction in learning contexts. The results could inform the design of AIchatbot usage training systems across various industries facing similar challenges in employee training and stress management. Furthermore, by applying AET and Social Response Theory to the context of AI- mediated training in the convention industry, this research will extend the theoretical understanding of technology-enhanced learning in high-pressure work environments.

COMPARATIVE STUDY ON COGNITVE PEROFORMANCE: FULL TIME VERSUS WORKING HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT STUDENTS

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Introduction

In the hospitality industry, where employees work around the clock and face intense workloads, the consequences of sleep loss can be particularly severe. Workers in this field encounter unique challenges, including disrupted sleep schedules, psychological stress, and health issues (Lingas, 2023), all of which impact their well-being and job performance (Ugwu et al., 2024). Hospitality students, who must balance both work and academic responsibilities, are especially vulnerable, as sleep deprivation can impair cognitive functions essential for learning, and memory (Khan & Jahdali, 2023). Moreover, individual differences, including resilience, time management skills, and access to support systems like family and financial support, play critical roles in how students cope with these challenges.

While existing studies highlight the harmful effects of sleep loss on cognitive function in general, few have explored these impacts within the context of hospitality working students who face unique, industry-specific pressures. This study aims to fill this gap by examining how sleep loss impacts memory, cognitive performance regulation in hospitality working students compare to their counterparts, as well as how factors such as resilience, time management skills, and support systems may mitigate or exacerbate these effects.

Method

This mixed-methods study will investigate the mental health and cognitive challenges faced by working hospitality students and non-working students

Using a descriptive phenomenological approach, in-depth interviews will be conducted with 15-20 students (both working and non-working) using purposive sampling to explore the essence of their experiences. Thematic analysis will follow Colaizzi's method to uncover patterns in these experiences.

In the quantitative component, cognitive performance will be assessed through standardized tests: the Digit Span Test for memory and the Continuous Performance Test (CPT) for attention, administered to 100-150 students using stratified sampling. Quantitative data will be analyzed using t-tests and ANCOVA to compare cognitive outcomes between groups. By triangulating both qualitative and quantitative findings, this study will provide a comprehensive understanding of how night shifts affect cognitive and mental health in hospitality students.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Results will inform practical recommendations for universities and employers in the hospitality industry, such as whether incorporating resilience training, mental health support, and flexible work schedules is viable. The findings of the study will provide valuable insights for supporting students in high-demand programs, ultimately enhancing both their academic performance and well-being.

EXPLORING MOTIVATION AND ENGAGEMENT IN STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS: THE ROLE OF STUDENT-PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AND SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY

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Introduction

Leadership skills are crucial in college, empowering students to engage in social change and prepare for the professional world (Domingue, 2015). Prior research indicates that students in extracurricular activities, particularly hospitality-related student organizations, develop stronger leadership skills than non-participating students (Smith, 2015). However, a significant challenge faced by these student organizations is maintaining member engagement, where motivation plays a key role (Zhong et al., 2021). This study examines how student-perceived organizational support and Self-Determination Theory (SDT) influence motivation and engagement in student organizations.

Methods

The methodology of this study involves a quantitative research design to investigate the factors that influence student motivation and engagement in student organizations. Data will be gathered through an anonymous survey conducted with hospitality students who are members of relevant student organizations, reaching a sample of 300 participants across diverse academic institutions.

The survey will measure constructs such as student-perceived organizational support, autonomy, relatedness, competence, motivation, and engagement using a structured questionnaire validated by previous research. The data collected will be analyzed using SPSS and AMOS software, employing techniques like Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) for reliability and validity testing, and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to explore the relationships among the variables. Demographic data will also be collected to enrich the analysis.

Results/Discussion/Implication

It is expected that higher levels of perceived organizational support will enhance students' autonomy, relatedness, and competence, fostering their intrinsic motivation and engagement in student organizations. The anticipated results of the study are meaningful, as they contribute to understanding how university-provided support can help create a supportive environment that increases student engagement and leadership development, ultimately leading to more active participation in extracurricular activities.

UNDERSTANDING STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES TOWARDS HOSPITALITY PROGRAM RESOURCES: A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

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Introduction

Hospitality programs aim to meet the expanding industry's workforce needs for well-educated hospitality graduates (Nachmias et al., 2017). Still, around 33% of hospitality students end up choosing non-hospitality careers after graduation (Change & Tse, 2015). Researchers like Tsai et al. (2017) cite low salaries and high competition in hospitality jobs as the main reasons for this issue. While researchers have been interested in understanding how hospitality programs shape students ' career intentions (e.g., Lee et al., 2019), most studies have been conducted before or during the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., Change & Tse, 2015; Lee et al., 2019; Scerri et al., 2020) and little attention has been paid to students' perceptions of specific hospitality program resources (e.g., scholarships and career events), limiting the understanding of such problem. Through the lens of social cognitive career theory (Lent et al.,1994), this study attempts to examine contextual and personal barriers/challenges that students face during their academic journey via their perceptions of hospitality program resources in shaping their academic experience, including their future career and education intentions.

Methods

This study will employ qualitative methods aiming to better understand students' perspectives. A minimum of 15 semi-structured interviews will be conducted, with additional interviews performed as needed to achieve saturation and confirm no new information emerges (Francis et al., 2010). Participants must be currently enrolled in hospitality undergraduate programs (freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors) from U.S. 4-year accredited universities, at least 18 years old, and reside in the U.S. Based on participants' availability. Interviews will be conducted via Zoom in English and recorded electronically with their consent. To encourage participation, a gift card will be offered to respondents. Interviews will be transcribed and analyzed with the help of a qualitative data analysis software (Atlas.ti) to assist with thematic content analysis, coding, and categorization (Miani et al., 2023).

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study fills the research gap by better understanding hospitality students' contextual and personal barriers/challenges during their academic journey and their perceptions of their hospitality program resources, which might connect with their career and graduate studies decision. The hospitality industry has recovered its employment for a while, but the unemployment rate still remained at 5.5% in August 2024 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024). Several economic consequences might come with unsustainable recovery such as industry labor shortages and program mergers (Mena, 2024). Therefore, hospitality students' perspectives towards hospitality program resources are pressing because their decisions impact the industry's labor demand and the future of hospitality education.

THE IMPACT OF PERCEIVED DEHUMANIZATION FROM AI-DRIVEN HIRING TOOLS ON FAIRNESS, LOYALTY, AND COMPANY CULTURE IN FULL-SERVICE HOTELS

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Introduction

The integration of AI in recruitment processes is reshaping hiring in the hospitality industry, promising efficiency and reduction of human bias (Upadhyay & Khandelwal, 2018). However, AI-driven tools may lead to perceived dehumanization, where candidates feel treated as mere data points, potentially impacting fairness, loyalty, and organizational culture (Bankins et al., 2022; Fritts & Cabrera, 2021). This study aims to investigate the dynamics between perceived dehumanization through AI-driven hiring tools (e.g. HireVue, Pymetrics) and potential candidates' perceptions of procedural fairness, loyalty, and company culture in full-service hotels. By applying Procedural Justice Theory (Gilliland, 1993) and Organizational Commitment Theory (Allen & Meyer, 1990), the research explores how transparency in AI processes may mitigate adverse perceptions and support a balanced, human-centered approach to recruitment.

Methods

Based on the relevant literature, a quantitative survey will be designed (Haslam, 2006; Lee et al., 2019; Acikgoz et al., 2020; Fritts & Cabrera, 2021; Hilliard et al., 2022; Oglesby et al., 2024). This study will target a sample of potential candidates who have recently experienced AI-driven recruitment in full-service hotels in the USA. Five constructs will be measured via a 5-point Likert scale: procedural fairness (Gilliland, 1993), dehumanization (adapted from Haslam's mechanistic dehumanization scale), employee loyalty (Allen & Meyer, 1990), company culture perception (Denison, 1990), and transparency as a moderating variable (based on Ochmann & Laumer, 2019). Pilot testing will assess reliability and clarity, and data analysis will include regression and moderation analysis to evaluate the direct and interactive effects of dehumanization, fairness, and transparency on loyalty and culture perceptions.

Expected Results and Potential Implications

The anticipated findings should suggest that perceived dehumanization in AI-driven hiring processes negatively impacts procedural fairness, which in turn reduces loyalty and weakens perceptions of a supportive company culture (Oglesby et al., 2024). Transparency in AI use is expected to moderate these effects, potentially enhancing fairness perceptions and mitigating dehumanization's adverse impacts (Mozelius et al., 2022). This study will provide actionable insights for full-service hotels on implementing AI-driven recruitment tools effectively, balancing efficiency with human-centered values essential for talent retention in personalized service settings.

THE INFLUENCE OF WORKPLACE-RELATED AND EXTERNAL BARRIERS TOWARDS THE JOB SATISFACTION AND TURNOVER INTENTION OF SUPERVISORY EMPLOYEES IN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

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Introduction

The hospitality industry continues to grow globally, offering numerous job opportunities to surrounding communities. However, it is frequently characterized by high turnover rates, which can result in substantial financial costs, disrupted service quality, and diminished organizational performance (Stamolampros et al., 2019). The high turnover challenge was intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic, which profoundly affected global hospitality sectors, resulting in severe shortage of skilled workforce. In 2022, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported that 16% of long-term displaced workers were from the hospitality sector, with 574,000 long-tenured workers losing their jobs. Low pay compared to other industries is another cause considerable turnover (U.S. BLS, 2024, May), having lowest pay is $22.02, well below the $34.91 private sector average (U.S. BLS, 2024, May). These trends are not isolated in the U.S. but have prevailed in other parts of the world (McGinley et al., 2017).

Job satisfaction serves as a pivotal element for retaining a skilled workforce. The existing body of scholarly work supports a significant correlation between employee satisfaction and turnover intention (Lu et al., 2016) and indicates that employees who experience low levels of satisfaction are more likely to shift the organization or even the industry (Kong et al., 2018; McPhail et al., 2015). Hospitality employees frequently encounter multiple barriers that impact their job satisfaction and, consequently, leave the organization and the industry (Brendel et al., 2023; Stamolampros et al., 2019). Some of these factors are related to the workplace but others may not be related to the job, workplace, or industry characteristics, but to external factors related to the community and the labor market. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the workplace-related and external barriers that influence supervisory employees' job satisfaction and their turnover intention.

Methods

This research employed a quantitative survey methodology to examine the impact of workplace and external obstacles on job satisfaction and turnover intentions among supervisory personnel in the hospitality and tourism industry. An open-ended questionnaire was initially distributed to 48 professionals in Tennessee to explore recruitment and retention challenges. Their responses identified 24 distinct barriers, which were subsequently utilized to develop a closed-ended survey, with a five-item job satisfaction scale (Brayfield & Rothe, 1951; Yucel, 2012) and a three-item turnover intention scale (Yucel, 2012). Scale questions used 5-point Likert-scale, and five top barriers were ranked. Additionally, the demographic characteristics of participants and their workplaces were asked. Finally, the survey will be disseminated through the state hospitality and tourist association, which disseminated it to their regional constituents including destination management organizations at the county, city, and regional levels.

Descriptive statistics will be analyzed to summarize the data and to encapsulate the key demographic attributes. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) will be conducted to identify distinctive factors from 24 barriers, and identified factors will be analyzed using bivariate correlations and regression analysis to assess relationships between and among barriers, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. Statistical significance will be determined at$p<0.05$.

REDEFINING HOSPITALITY WORKERS AS ESSENTIAL WORKERS: AN APPLICATION OF THE STAKEHOLDER THEORY

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has illuminated the indispensable role of the hospitality industry in crisis management, revealing both its critical contributions and inherent vulnerabilities. This sector has been pivotal in responding to emergencies by offering essential services such as shelter, food, and accommodations to affected communities. Despite the clear value demonstrated during such crises, the recognition of hospitality workers as "essential" often diminishes once the immediate threat subsides. This study investigates the relevance of the "essential" designation for hospitality workers, particularly in the context of post-crisis scenarios, and examines how maintaining this designation might affect worker motivation, performance, and retention.

To address this research problem, the study employs Stakeholder Theory as its theoretical framework. Stakeholder Theory suggests that organizations should be managed in the interest of all their stakeholders, not solely shareholders. This research also incorporates Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Motivation Theory to evaluate how the essentiality designation influences hospitality workers ' motivation and performance. By examining how the recognition of hospitality workers as essential aligns with these needs, the study aims to uncover potential impacts on worker morale and retention. Motivation Theory, which explores what drives individuals to perform at their best, further supports this analysis by examining how perceived value and recognition affect job performance and satisfaction.

Methods

This work in progress research will employ a mixed-methods approach. The qualitative portion of this research (Phase 1) will consist of in-person interviews with various hospitality stakeholders (i.e., hotel guests, convention meeting planners, customers who frequent restaurants often) via purposive sampling to understand their viewpoints of defining hospitality workers as essentials and special criteria associated with this designation. Each interview (approximately 30 minutes) will be recorded and transcribed verbatim. Themes and subthemes related to the research questions will be extracted and identified. The second phase of the research will involve an online survey with 350 stakeholders, recruited through the primary researcher's industry contacts including Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs). The questions will be designed as scenario- based questions, asking the respondents to indicate their level of agreement with various definitions of hospitality employees as essential workers (developed through Phase 1), and their level of motivation, work performance, and retention with the "essential" worker title.

Discussion/Implication

This proposed work is significant to development in the hospitality industry because frontline employees are essential to the success of providing in times of crisis and creating a sense of normalcy to truly enjoy life through the services that the hospitality industry provide. These employees are responsible for service delivery, and ultimately determine the quality of service the customer receives. If these workers had self-awareness that stakeholders view them as "essential" this could create a catalyst attitude change in awareness to create better retention and keep these employees performing at more productive levels.

THE SALIENCE OF PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY IN ENTRY-LEVEL SUPERVISORS IN HOTELS: THE ROLE OF FORMAL ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION ON JOB SATISFACTION AND TURNOVER INTENTION

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Introduction

According to organizational communication literature, communication is the foundation of organizations (McPhee & Zaug, 2000) and is used to design and sustain a hierarchical structure. For the purposes of this study, formal communication is defined as the exchange of work-related information that follows the organization's official chain of command (Gomez, 2017; Segrest et al., 2020). The key difference between formal and informal communications is their focus; when messages are directed to agents' organizational roles rather than individual employees, it is considered formal communication (Gomez, 2017).

According to Social Identity Theory, humans find comfort and gain self-esteem from their group memberships, categorizing, identifying, and comparing themselves to others inside and outside of their groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Identity Driven Information Ecosystems Theory states that a person's perception of communication climate is influenced both by the site of communication and its "affordances", or social norms, and by their "overlapping social identities" (Hiaeshutter-Rice et al., 2024). The Attraction-Selection-Attrition Model (Schneider, 1987) describes how organizations form distinct cultures and subcultures at departmental levels of people with shared values. The model further explains how these cultures and their members attract, select, and retain people who are a good fit, while employees who do not fit in may experience decreased job satisfaction and increased turnover intention (Saleem et al., 2021).

Based on these theories, the following research questions are asked:

(a) how do the structure and nature of communications in a hotel affect entry-level supervisors' perceptions of the status of their departments and their own professional social identities,

(b) do the entry-level supervisors perceive disparities between departments in knowledge sharing and value within the organization which are incongruent with the official chain of command,

(c) how does subjects' perceptions of their departments' status and their professional identities influence their job satisfaction and intention to stay at the organization.

Methods

This study aims to utilize a mixed-methods approach targeting frontline entry-level hotel supervisors with recruitment assisted by a state hospitality association. The study will begin with semi-structured interviews to investigate subjects' perceptions of their organizations' communication climate. Findings will be used to develop and refine a quantitative research instrument. Descriptive and inferential statistics will be calculated using SPSS as appropriate.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Findings can reveal valuable insights into employee perceptions of hotel communications and offer potential strategies to improve employees' job satisfaction and retention.

READY TO LEAP? THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL ANXIETY ON EMERGING HOSPITALITY LEADERS

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Introduction

Whether discussing hotels, gaming or other industry sectors, the product being sold to guests is the experience itself (Walker, 2021). As college graduates are now a large recruiting source for entry-level management roles, it is important to survey their readiness for jobs in this crucial industry, making up 9.1% of the global GDP (WTTC, n.d.).

Hospitality is described as intangible (Walker, 2021), because of its inseparability and perishability. Therefore, if hospitality staff's interaction with guests is integral to complete the sale of the hospitality experience, how to handle social aspects of service interactions are crucial skills for all future managers to learn. A manager should exemplify these core beliefs and be capable of training other staff to do the same. Anxiety is a future-focused emotion identified by worry and physical symptoms like raised blood pressure (Kazdin, 2000). There are different sources of anxiety and some sources more relevant to today's college student include pressure to succeed from increased testing or unprecedented input from smartphones (Flannery, 2018). The Cognitive theory of Social Anxiety describes persons with social anxiety as downplaying their personal skills while perceiving most social situations as threats with negative consequences that they feel they don't have the ability to overcome (Halldorsson and Creswell, 2017). Social anxiety is defined as "a state of anxiety resulting from the prospect or presence of interpersonal evaluation in real or imagined social settings" (Leary and Schlenker1981).

Current students have reported an increase in anxiety and other mental health issues in the last fifteen years (Flannery, 2018). Based on the cognitive theory of social anxiety and the analysis planned, the goal of the study is to answer the following questions. What is the effect of levels of anxiety on persons' willingness and capability to lead in their newly acquired managerial roles? How will entry-level managers manage the intangible service product through a raised social anxiety lens?

Methods

The current study includes an in-depth look at levels of social anxiety among current hospitality undergraduate students along with measurement of work readiness. This self- selection survey-based study will be distributed to undergraduate hospitality and tourism programs throughout the United States with the target audience of junior and senior undergraduate students. Measurement scales include Caballo SAR-A30 Social Anxiety scale and the Work Readiness scale (Caballero et al., 2011) with SEM analysis including study of variables such as internships/college work experiences.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The outcomes of this research provide insight into the current social skillset of future hospitality leaders. Theoretical implications include a review of the current educational model. Higher incidences of social anxiety in recent years create a need for inclusion of the cognitive theory of social anxiety to be considered with the former theories of knowledge building, and with the practical definition of the successful hospitality and tourism college student.

TOO LEGIT TO QUIT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE MODERATING ROLE OF PERCEIVED EXTERNAL PRESTIGE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ABUSIVE SUPERVISION AND VOLUNTARY TURNOVER.

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Introduction

Restaurant kitchens are known to be hotbeds for abusive supervision with numerous reports of bullying, belittling language, and aggressive behavior (Bloisi & Hoel, 2008; Burrow et al., 2015; Cooper et al., 2017). For many people the reaction to this type of treatment would be to leave the situation, however the reality is more complex (Tews & Stafford, 2020; Tews et al., 2018). Restaurants are highly dependent on their reputation; a good review can mean the difference between a packed house and closing your doors and for chefs earning a Michelin star can make a career. It is quite common to hear stories of people sticking around a boss or mentor who is abusive because of the hope of sharing in their success. Perceived external prestige (PEP) can be defined as how a person perceives how outsiders view their organizations and themselves by an extension (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). The external perceptions of an organization as prestigious fill employees with pride from their association with the organization (Smidts, et al., 2001). The pride that an employee feels can create a positive affect, biasing in their perceptions of working conditions (Herrbachetal., 2004). Employees will downplay negative aspects of the job to the point that even if they are not satisfied with their work, they will still form an identity around it (Herrbach et al., 2004).

The theory of job embeddedness developed by Mitchell et al. (2001) seeks to explain why employees stay in their current position. The combined forces of job embeddedness are links, fit and sacrifices (Lee et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2017). We posit, in organizations with high levels of prestige sacrifice will be the strongest force. Sacrifices refer to the cost or loss of benefits that accrue from leaving the organization or community. These benefits can include the accumulation of human capital investments, professional associations and status earned in and out of the organization (Kiazad et al., 2015). The more salient these forces are the more likely an employee will stay.

Methods

The sample will be comprised of restaurant cooks from various levels of service to ensure all perceptions of prestige are accounted for. Participants will be contacted via snowball sampling and social media. Data will be collected with a time lagged online survey. Time 1 (T1) will include the survey data for PEP and abusive supervision. Time 2 (T2) data collection of employment status will occur six months after T1, which is consistent with previous studies (Tewset al., 2020). Mael & Ashforth's (1992) scale for perceived organizational prestige will be modified to measure PEP. Abusive supervision will be measured using Tepper's (2000) 15-item abusive supervision scale.

Results/Discussion/Implication

We expect that employees are more likely to remain in workplaces where abusive supervision is present when they believe that the organization is prestigious. We theorize that employees will view being attached to a highly prestigious organization as aresource investment that will pay off in future career success. These employees will conduct a cost-benefit analysis where they will conclude the sacrifice of leaving it too great, resulting in them staying in their positions.

THE IMPACT OF MOBILE TECHNOLOGY UTILIZATION ON EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT AND TURNOVER IN LUXURY HOTELS

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Introduction

In recent years, the hospitality industry has witnessed a significant transformation driven by the rapid adoption of mobile technologies (Ahmed et al., 2023). Mobile technology offers the potential to empower employees by facilitating real-time communication, providing access to critical information, and streamlining operational processes (Huang & van de Velde, 2017). Such empowerment can lead to increased job satisfaction and engagement, resulting in improved service quality and customer satisfaction (Baker et al., 2020). Furthermore, when employees feel equipped with the right tools and support, their commitment to the organization strengthens, potentially mitigating turnover intentions (Kim & Jogaratnam, 2010). However, the integration of mobile technology also presents challenges. The hospitality industry faces increasing competition and evolving customer expectations (Al-Sabi et al., 2017, 2019), requiring hotels to adapt constantly. The introduction of new technologies can also raise concerns about potential job displacement and the need for employees to adapt to new roles and acquire new skills (Nametal., 2021). Therefore, understanding the multifaceted impact of mobile technology on employee empowerment and turnover is crucial. This study investigates these complex relationships within the context of luxury hotels, aiming to explore how technology-driven interactions are reshaping workforce dynamics and to provide practical recommendations for leveraging mobile technology to optimize human resource management and maintain a competitive edge.

Methods

This study will employ a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to investigate the relationships between mobile technology adoption, employee empowerment, and turnover intentions among frontline staff in luxury hotels. The target population is frontline employees in luxury hotels within a specified geographic region, and luxury hotels will be defined based on pre-determined criteria. Participants will be recruited through partnerships with hotel management, online platforms, and direct contact, with inclusion criteria requiring current frontline employment at a qualifying luxury hotel, regular guest interaction, and mobile technology use in their role for a minimum duration. Data analysis will involve descriptive statistics, Correlation analysis and hierarchical multiple regression will be utilized to test the effects of mobile technology adoption on empowerment and turnover intentions. Mediation will be tested using bootstrapping procedures to assess the mediating roles of perceived usefulness and ease of use.

Expected Results/Discussion/Implication

This study is expected to reveal that the adoption of mobile technology in luxury hotels will lead to an increase in employee empowerment. In addition, the adoption of mobile technology will have a negative effect on employee turnover intentions. Finally, the expectation in this study is that the perceived usefulness of mobile technology will mediate the relationship between its adoption and employee empowerment. Similarly, perceived ease of use is expected to mediate the relationship between technology adoption and employee empowerment.

ASSESSING THE CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EMPLOYEE RETENTION STRATEGIES IN THREE-STAR HOTELS IN GHANA

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Introduction

Employee retention has become a global challenge for the hotel industry as the turnover rate rises (Ghani et al., 2022). Ghana is no exception in the massive difficulties of retaining employees, especially in hotels. The hospitality industry, including hotels, resort centers, and others in Ghana, has gained notable acknowledgment through expansion and marketing local and international patronage (Ghana Tourism Authority, 2017). Three-star hotels in Ghana suffer employee retention issues, affecting the economic benefits the country generates from the industry (Siawet al., 2022). With over 1,595 established hotels of various ratings in Ghana, most of them are three-star rated hotels, which creates excellent revenue for the country (Dansoetal., 2020).

The industry generated USD 1.5 million in expenditures in 2021, a 4.1% percentage increase. Despite these massive impacts on the country's gross domestic product, the industry is challenged by an increased employee turnover rate (Dumevi, 2023). High employee turnover results in significant revenue loss due to rehiring costs, lost expertise, and lower service quality (Brandt et al., 2016). This undermines the industry's long-term viability. Managers in Ghana have not prioritized improving staff retention strategies and have been frequently employing the same methods for too long (Ghani et al., 2022; Scott, 2016). While research on retention exists, little is known about why retention strategies fail at Ghana's three-star hotels.

Methods

A mixed-method approach will be used, combining interviews and a Likert scale of 1-5, from strongly agree to disagree strongly). Data will be collected from 12 hotel managers and 215 employees. Simple random sampling will select hotels and participants. Interviews will be conducted via Zoom, focusing on hotel managers to gather detailed insights on retention strategy selection, implementation, and challenges. Surveys will be given to employees to collect data on their expectations versus current strategies and challenges with retention efforts.

Result/Implication/ Discussions

This study is expected to provide managerial and economic implications. As employee needs are identified and met, turnover rates in three-star hotels will decrease, and employee retention will increase, leading to higher engagement and productivity (Verlander & Evans, 2007). The results will create awareness for managers to consider employees' current needs when selecting retention strategies for their staff. Furthermore, the study will cover the geographic gap as research on assessing challenges in implementing retention strategies in three-star hotels in Kumasi has yet to be considered.

Work-In-Progress:
IT Adoption & Application

SMART HOTELS: STUDYING IMPACT OF SMART CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ON BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONSZ

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Introduction

The hotel industry, being customer-focused, has integrated smart technologies like AI,IoT, and ICT to enhance service efficiency and guest satisfaction (Gajić et al., 2024). Hilton's "Connected Room" exemplifies how technology personalizes guest experiences through app-based room control (Hilton News Room, 2017). With smart tourism on the rise, examining how Smart Service Experience (SSE) influences guest behavioral intentions, engagement, perceived value, and memories is essential (Balakrishnan et al., 2023). Research underscores SSE's potential to drive co-creation and consumer value (Solakis et al., 2024), positively impacting satisfaction, revisit intentions (Hong et al., 2023), and engagement (Collins, 2023). Personalized smart services, such as AI-driven chatbots, foster memorable stays and loyalty by enhancing comfort and reducing friction (Pelet et al., 2021). Thus, smart amenities directly shape guests' visit intentions (Cheong & Law, 2023).

Based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses have been proposed:

H1: SSE in hotels has a significant impact on guests' engagement.
H2: SSE in hotels has a significant impact on guest's memories
H3: SSE in hotels significantly impacts guests' perceived smart service value.
H4: Guests’ engagement significantly impacts their perceived smart service value.
H5: Guests’ memories significantly impacts their perceived smart service value.
H6: Guests’ engagement has a significant impact on positive behavioral intentions
H7: Guests’ memories has a significant impact on positive behavioral intentions.
H8: Guest’s

Methods

A web-based questionnaire via Prolific will gather responses from 300 participants over 18. PLS-SEM analysis will test hypotheses and examine relationships between SCSE, engagement, value, and behavioral intentions. Constructs are based on validated studies (e.g., Kabadayi et al., 2019) with a seven-point Likert scale. SmartPLS 3.0 will confirm model reliability and validity, developing a conceptual framework for understanding SSE's impact on guest intentions.

TRAIL DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS OF ONODA TRAIL & CAVES USING BUTLER'S TOURISM AREA LIFE CYCLE MODEL

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Introduction

Case studies and other published works have been increasing focusing on trail development around the world. Ward-Perkins, D. et al (2020) compiled a series of studies on trails worldwide coordinated with other scholars. "Anne Frank Tourism" (Busby, G. & Devereux, H., 2015; Hartmann, R., 2016; Hartmann, R., 2016; Allar, K., n.d.) and "La Ruta delChe" (Spicer-Escalante, J. , 2011; Meghji, S., 2017) remains a popular and valuable sample cases of trail development which mainly focus on its scholarships in historical and political aspects. This brings out the interest of this paper to explore the atypical story of a person who became a tourism phenomenon.

Methods

There are various ways to analyze the trail development of a certain route or destination. In this paper, the focus was the design, creation, development, and management of the Onoda Trail & Caves. It is the site where Hiroo Onoda, the WWII Japanese soldier hid for 29 years believing the war was not yet over. The philosophical assumption of this research comes from the hermeneutic phenomenology within the interpretivist paradigm. Data gathering started in 2023 by conducting archival research to collect information about the soldier. It was followed by a site visit to Lubang Islands in the Philippines in February 2024 and a follow-up fieldwork in September 2024. Aside from the actual hike, a series of semi-structured interviews were performed with the tourism officers, tour guide, local leader, guesthouse operator, tourist, and local island people using purposive and snowball sampling. Content analysis was performed on the tourism masterplan, fieldnotes, interview transcriptions, maps, and promotional materials to answer the main research question, *in what stage does Onoda Trail & Caves based on Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle?*

Results/Discussion/Implication

From the perspective of Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle, it was characterized that the trail was in the initial stage of development, the Involvement Stage. In this stage, the trail receives an increasing number of visitors, both local and international. Though the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the increasing trend, the Municipal Office is optimistic that it will continue to strive for the next coming years. The Lubang Island community is also partaking in some hospitality- related activities by providing facilities for tourists like guesthouses and resorts, a few souvenir shops, and eateries accessible in the town center. As Butler (1980) suggested, in the Involvement Stage, the contact between visitors and locals remains high, especially for those who have tourism-related businesses. On the other hand, the Tourism Office is aware that they are not ready for the influx of visitors as they are trying to address the current issues when handling mass tourists and come up with ideas to improve the nascent industry on the island. Moreover, the office also created a tourism council that regularly conducts monthly meetings to improve the tourism industry. Challenges identified are in the areas of transportation, food supply, market, accommodations, and safety facilities which brought them to take extra precautions in publicizing full-blown advertisements that may attract a huge number of visitors. The well- regulated policies are needed from the administration due to the impact of tourism on the community and to address the issue of sustainability in the area.

ONLINE CHECK-IN VS. FRONT DESK HOW IS TECHNOLOGY SHAPING OUR EXPERIENCES IN HOSPITALITY?

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Introduction

Positive travel experiences should be unique at each destination creating lasting memories and foster a deeper connection with the destination of your choice. Travelers are more likely to develop a greater appreciation for diversity and return with stories that are tied specifically to the places they visited. Technology and AI integration in the hospitality field has reshaped the travel industry worldwide and those deep connections may not be happening. Due to the high competition among destinations for tourism across the globe, making meaning connections with guests is key to ensure their return. The first interaction between front office service employees and guests at check-in is a formality and a key determinant of customers'first impressions. It leads to their future behavioral intentions and is critical in fostering positive and meaningful customer relationship management (CRM) to achieve customer loyalty. (Hwang, 2024). Some customers still prefer human warmth interactions and personal care while they travel and refused to take part of contactless technology. Others believe that contactless technology complicates the hotel experiences (Hao, 2021).

According to Hao, there are not many studies that has been done to fill this gap in the existing literature. The unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) and (UTAUT2) were created to explore the determinants of customers' acceptance and use of contactless services. Both theories offer a conceptual foundation for understanding customers' acceptance of technology by bringing together the theory of reasoned action, the technology acceptance model and the motivational model.

The purpose of the study is to understand the importance of front desk interactions during the check-in process and the reasons why guests are choosing digital check-in. The study aims to test the hypothesis of AI acceptance and use of contactless services and how it enhances or harms the positive, meaningful, and interactive experience of the check-in process.

Expected Results/Discussion/Implication

The method of data collection will be an online survey, 5 – 6 questions on guests' preferences during their check-in process. The survey will include age range, demographics, reason to travel, and travel preferences hoping to clarify if there'sa compromise between convenience over a better experience. The data will be analyzed using statistical methods to establish a correlation between demographics and preferences and to test the hypothesis's significance level of 0.05 or less.

Effective technology adoption demands thorough management, recruitment, training, and implementation. Additionally, recruiting individuals who are adaptable, open to learn, and comfortable with technology can help ease the transition and ensure the new systems are used effectively, not only for the team but for the guest who might struggle with technology. The study provides insights of potential trade-offs the industry faces when prioritizing technology over human interaction, and it will keep impacting our guest's loyalty long-term. As automation and AI reshape service roles, there is a need to prioritize worker-focused development and transparency. Digital platforms are crucial for streamlining processes and tailoring services, making their proficient use key to staying competitive in the hospitality industry.

AI VS. HUMAN TOUCH: WHO WINS THE BATTLE FOR GUEST SATISFACTION IN HOSPITALITY?

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Introduction

The hospitality industry is leveraging AI to improve the efficiency of hotel operations AI responds to customer requirements 24 hours a day and handles a variety of tasks such as reservation, check- in, check-out, and facility guidance while meeting customer needs, simplifying operations, and maximizing hotel profits (Chung et al., 2017; Koo et al., 2015). This greatly contributes to increasing customer satisfaction and the rate of revisiting in the hospitality industry. However, they challenge traditional hospitality concepts that have long relied on the value of interactions with humans, which have been at the heart of the hospitality industry. Therefore, they raise important questions about how different types of services affect customer satisfaction.

This study aims to compare customer satisfaction between traditional human and AI-based services, highlighting which services are most positively or negatively affected by robot introduction and providing insight into them. To achieve this, this study applies MTAM, focusing on factors like perceived usefulness, social influence, and human contact, to explore how AI and human services affect guest satisfaction.

Methods

This study will use a structured survey distributed to 50 hotel guests who have experienced both AI-driven and human services. The survey will assess guest perceptions across factors like Service Interactivity, Perceived Usefulness, Human Contact, and Perceived Ease of Use, as defined in the Modified Technology Acceptance Model (MTAM).

The data analysis plan will focus on comparing guest satisfaction levels across the two service types using quantitative statistical methods. Paired t-tests and ANOVA will analyze guest satisfaction differences across service types (Oh, 1999; Chi & Gursoy, 2009). The results of these analyses will provide insights into which services are positively or negatively influenced by the use of AI, offering valuable implications for hotel managers looking to integrate technology into their operations.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The expected results will reveal various levels of customer satisfaction between AI- driven and human-provided services across factors such as perceived usefulness, social influence, and human contact. While AI services can receive positive reviews in terms of efficiency and convenience, human-provided services are expected to be preferred in situations where emotional exchange is important. These findings will present new insights into areas of service where AI is effective and where warm human contact is still important to increase guest satisfaction.

The implication of this study is that hotel managers must strategically use AI to improve customer experience, while preserving essential human elements. By specifically identifying which service areas AI is particularly helpful and where human participation is important, hotel managers will be able to further optimize operations and increase customer satisfaction.

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METAPERCEPTION OF ROBOTS: THE ROLE OF INDIVIDUAL MINDSET AND TASK INTERDEPENDENCE IN EMPLOYEE'S VULNERABILITY IN HUMAN-ROBOT COLLABORATION

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Introduction

The future of hospitality, known as Hospitality 5.0, will involve deeper collaboration between human employees and service robots (Khoa et al., 2023). Despite the advantages, integrating service robots introduces new challenges about their impact on employee experiences and organizational outcomes. While the benefits are clear, potential unintended consequences remain underexplored. Previous research has mainly focused on customers' attitudes towards service robots, with less attention given to how these robots affect employees working with them (Shum et al., 2024). Studies highlight concerns like job insecurity and fear of job loss among employees (Khoaet al., 2023; Shumetal., 2024). To ensure a smooth transition to Hospitality 5.0, it is crucial to identify other sources of harm and negative consequences (Leung et al., 2023),where employees experience vulnerability in the presence of service robots. Therefore, unlike previous research, which primarily focused on customers' interactions with service robots, this paper shifts the spotlight to the employees who interact with these service robots.

Using Transactional Theory of Emotions and Coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), this study explores how employees' responses to human-like robots are influenced by their mindset and task structure Transactional Theory examines how individuals appraise and cope with challenges. This study seeks to advance research on FLEs' vulnerability and coping responses in human-robot collaboration settings. We investigate: (1) the impact of service robot design on FLEs vulnerability, (2) the effect of individual characteristics (i.e., employees' mindset) and task structure (i.e., interdependence tasks level) as boundary conditions, and (3) the coping responses during human-robot collaboration in response to experienced vulnerability.

Methods

This study will employ two studies. Study 1 utilizes a 2 (robot design: human-like vs. machine- like) x 2 (employees' mindset: competitive vs. collaborative) and study 2 employs a 2 (robot design: human-like vs. machine-like) x 2 (task interdependence: low vs. high) scenario-based between-subjects experimental design (Figure 1). In Study 1, we ask participants to imagine working alongside a service robot. The robot design is manipulated at two levels: "Pepper" representing the human-like condition and "Vi-YO-Let" representing the machine-like condition. The human-like robot, "Pepper," featured moderate anthropomorphic traits to avoid evoking eeriness. Additionally, participants' individual mindsets are manipulated using a word memory task (Ju et al. 2017). In Study 2, task interdependence is manipulated by varying job scenarios: low interdependence (housekeeping) versus high interdependence (concierge), with participants imagining collaborating in two different levels with a robot to perform these tasks.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Findings aim to bridge gaps in understanding FLEs' experiences with service robots, addressing the impact of robot design on employee vulnerability and psychological responses, and offering insights for smoother integration of robots in the hospitality industry.

TECH MEETS TRADITION: EXPLORING CONSUMER ACCEPTANCE WITH SOCIAL ROBOTS ACROSS BABY BOOMERS TO GEN Z

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Introduction

COVID-19, especially in the service industries, has helped social robots spread as customers become more conscious of the risk of infectious illnesses from human contact (Tavakoli et al., 2020), that social robots block human touch and virus transmission for safety (Wan et al., 2021). Human-robot interaction (HRI) and social robot research, focusing on tourism and hospitality, are successful when people perceive, use, and buy social robots (Khaliq et al., 2022). Due to misperceptions, the many social robots in the service scenario make it hard for clients to interact (Lin & Mattila, 2021).

Human-robot contact, communication, experience, and understanding are essential (Huang & Rust, 2021). Kim et al. (2021) found that distinctive and original offerings from robotic workers increase client engagement and payment. Customers' purchasing patterns, engagement goals, and generational reactions to human-robot interaction in technological transition must be considered (Premathilake & Li, 2024). Campbell et al. (2017) noted that the generation cohort is widespread and explains distinct thought and behavior patterns, particularly in service environments. Thus, this study seeks to identify the factors influencing generational cohorts' social robot purchase intentions and actions.

Methods

The study will focus on four generations with different views and consumer behavior toward social robots. A comprehensive questionnaire will be produced after a thorough literature review and subject-matter expert discussions for the survey. The questions ensure data quality and reliability while gathering essential factors. To acquire, analyze, and debate data on the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT-3) and the innovation diffusion hypothesis, Qualtrics will distribute the survey. The questionnaire will contain 3 to 4 questions for each construct to assess respondents' opinions and invite 500 individuals to conduct the online survey. Data will be analyzed using SPSS 28 and AMOS 28, and the structured equation model (SEM) will assess generational relationships to customer satisfaction and involvement. Building up an explanatory power of all conventional acceptance models supports technological development due to several aspects.

Expected Outcomes and Discussion

The need to improve interactions with customers across all age groups has become the new standard based on the industrialization trend toward artificial intelligence. Based on data statistics, this study may demonstrate how service providers in the hospitality and tourism industries use social robots differently for various generations. It may also highlight the disparate perspectives on robotic service for post-COVID tourism and hospitality recovery. This research will further encourage the spread of new inventions and technology and set the groundwork for social robots to be used throughout the entire generation.

COOLNESS EFFECT ON CUSTOMERS' ENGAGEMENT WITH CONTACTLESS PAYMENT SYSTEMS IN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

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Introduction

The global market for contactless payment systems has been growing rapidly, with projections indicating its value will rise from USD 41.70 billion in 2023 to USD 213.39 billion by 2034 (Precedence, 2024). This growth underscores the increasing adoption of digital payment technologies, especially in the hospitality industry. The digital transformation, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has made contactless payment systems essential for enhancing customer experiences and improving operational efficiency (Srivastava & Vandana, 2021). Technologies like mobile wallets, Quick Response (QR) codes, and Face Recognition Payment (FRP) systems are central to the industry's shift toward more secure, convenient, and hygienic payment methods (Zhang & Zhang, 2024).

These systems use technologies like Near Field Communication (NFC) and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) to enable seamless transactions via smartphones, tablets, smart cards, and wearables (Bounie & Camara, 2020; Broekhoff & Van Der Cruijsen, 2024). Despite technological advancements, research on how customers perceive these systems, particularly in terms of "coolness," remains limited. Coolness, as defined by Sundar et al. (2014), refers to users' perceptions of technology, encompassing innovation, style, and uniqueness. While coolness has been explored in other tech contexts, its application to contactless payment systems is under- examined.

This study aims to fill this gap by examining how the perceived coolness of contactless payment systems influences customer engagement in the hospitality industry. By applying Sundar et al.'s (2014) coolness framework, we will explore how factors like relative advantage, compatibility, user interface attractiveness, and security shape perceptions of coolness and drive engagement. Understanding these factors is essential for hospitality businesses seeking to leverage these technologies to enhance guest experiences and stay competitive.

Methods

This is an ongoing study using a quantitative approach. An online survey will be administered to 300 respondents over the age of 18 via Amazon's MTurk platform, all of whom have used contactless payments at least once in the past week. The study will test hypotheses related to the impact of attributes such as relative advantage, compatibility, user interface attractiveness, and security on perceptions of coolness and customer engagement. Data will be analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM).

LEVERAGING DIGITAL PERSUASION STRATEGIES: ENHANCING SUSTAINABLE FOOD CHOICES THROUGH THIRD-PARTY DELIVERY PLATFORMS

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Introduction

Food consumption, a daily necessity, has been transformed by mobile third-party food delivery (TPFD) applications, enabling consumers to order meals without visiting stores. While sustainability in food production and consumption has gained attention (Reichheld et al., 2023), there remains a gap in research on effective persuasion strategies to promote sustainable choices on TPFD platforms, benefiting both health and the environment. Persuasion shapes opinions, beliefs, and behaviors through communication (Ferreira & Teles, 2019). This study categorizes Cialdini's (1984, 2007) six persuasion principles into two motivational groups: social influence (SI) and individual motivation (IM). The SI category includes social proof, authority, and liking, while IM includes reciprocity, commitment and consistency, and scarcity. Social norms and green self-identity are considered as moderating factors. The study explores these categories and their effects on sustainable choices across two experiments, proposing the following hypotheses for Studies 1 and 2:

H1: SI strategies will positively influence pro-environmental attitudes (PA).

H2: SI strategies will positively influence pro-environmental behaviors (PB).

H3: PA will positively influence PB.

H4: Social norms will moderately influence the relationship between SI strategies and PA, with a stronger effect observed under high level of social norms.

H5: IM strategies will positively influence PA.

H6: IM persuasion strategies will positively influence PB.

H7: PA will positively influence PB.

H8: Green self-identity will moderately influence the relationship between IM and PA, with a stronger effect observed under high level of green self-identity.

Previous studies (e.g., Meng & Si, 2022) indicate that PA mediates the link between personal values and environmental actions. Norms, including personal (Steg et al., 2005) and social norms (Park & Smith, 2007), also promote sustainable behaviors. Additional hypotheses include:

H9 & H11: Both bio-altruistic and egoistic positively affect PA.

H10 & H12: Both bio-altruistic and egoistic positively affect personal norm.

H13 & H14: Both PA and personal norm positively affect PB.

H15 & H16: Social norm positively affect both personal norm and PB.

Methods

This research will be conducted through two experimental studies to examine social influence and internal motivation categories within Cialdini's Principles. Participants, randomly assigned to seven groups (social proof, authority, liking, reciprocity, commitment and consistency, scarcity, or control), will interact with a simulated TPFD platform. After exposure to treatment messages, they will complete a survey on pro-environmental attitudes, social norms, green self- identity, and behaviors. A manipulation check will precede the main study, aiming for 100 participants per group via Prolific, with data analyzed in SPSS 26 using Hayes' PROCESS. For Study 3, Structural Equation Modeling will be used to analyze relationships among values, attitudes, norms, and behaviors, with 200 responses collected and analyzed in SPSS AMOS.

Implication

This study enriches literature on sustainability and digital persuasion, offering insights on promoting sustainable choices via third-party delivery apps and guiding platform design.

THE FUTURE OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR REGARDING ROBOT CHEF RESTAURANTS

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Introduction

The restaurant sector is widely recognized for its dynamic nature and its propensity for introducing innovative culinary techniques, tools, and equipment (Cifci & Alrawadieh, 2021) and blending them with culinary arts. This sector ended the challenging second quarter of 2024 in the U.S. with customer traffic down by 2% from a year ago (NRA,2024) due to high menu prices driven by supply chain disruption and labor shortage (Earle, 2024). Today, the restaurant industry in the U.S. is still facing a labor shortage, with staffing levels 0.4% below pre-pandemic levels (NRA, 2024) as the number of young people entering the culinary field has declined in recent years (Brown, 2024). On top of these, the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the food safety and hygiene concerns of consumers (Yang, 2020) which has resulted in increased demand for touchless food experiences (Fusté-Forné, 2021). Robot chefs can serve as a solution for restaurant industry players, blending automation with culinary arts to enhance hygiene and food safety through contactless food handling (Chuahetal., 2022), reduce costs amid high inflation, and address labor shortages (Choi & Taylor)2023; Wolf, 2022). Therefore, understanding underlying factors influencing customers' intention to switch to robot chef restaurants is important for businesses

Methods

The study used a survey questionnaire which was developed in Qualtrics. The survey was developed using established scales from previous related literature (Francioni et al., 2022; Lu et al., 2019; Yoo et al., 2018; Zhu & Chang, 2020). A total of 450 responses were collected from restaurant customers via Prolific Academic Ltd. Eligible criteria included those residing in the USA who had dined in a restaurant within the last year. Participants were rewarded $2 USD for their participation in the study. Responses from participants who finished the survey in less than 2 minutes or failed the screening questions were excluded from further analysis. The final sample consisted of 437 responses.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study extends the Sense-Think-Act theory to the robotic food preparation domain, providing empirical evidence of its applicability in this context. Through the Sense-Think-Act perspective, this study provides a deeper understanding of how sensory perceptions (hygiene and speed) influence cognitive evaluations (food quality performance expectancy, and attitude), and subsequent actions (switching intention).

THE MODERATING ROLE OF 3D AUTHENTICITY BETWEEN METAVERSE AND REAL-WORLD: THE CASE OF GEN Z AND QSRS

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Introduction

The quick-service restaurants (QSRs), has recently started investing in metaverse ecosystems to make new marketing channels and distribution networks for brand engagement, such as Chipotle and Wendy's (Jennings, 2022). Generally, customers' visit experience with a virtual entity in the metaverse significantly enhances their intention to purchase in the 'real world' when there is a high degree of 3D authenticity (Shin et al., 2024).

Although the hospitality and tourism fields attempt to understand customers' offline behavioral intentions through the metaverse experience, the specific customers' motivations to engage in the metaverse experience and its psychological (i.e., telepresence and flow experience) and behavioral consequences (i.e., actual purchase intention and brand loyalty) in the context of QSRs remain unexplored. Despite the fact that Gen Z customers have considerable purchasing power and are the primary user group of the metaverse (Devon, 2022), to the authors' best knowledge, there is no published study that investigates Gen Z customers' motivations leading the metaverse experience to actual purchase intention and loyalty in the QSR sector. Additionally, a thorough review of related literature revealed no empirical study that examines the moderating effect of 3D authenticity between the metaverse and the real world.

Methods

This study employs the flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975) along with the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977) as theoretical lenses. It proposes a sequential explanatory mixed-methods approach, including a qualitative (Study 1) and a quantitative method (Study 2).

In Study 1, the authors will conduct open-ended, semi-structured interviews to capture the context-specific motivations of metaverse restaurant visit experiences through a thematic analysis. Subsequently, Study 2 will quantitatively analyze the significant impact of the identified motivations on telepresence, its subsequent impact on flow experience, and the effect of flow experience on actual purchase intention and brand loyalty. Finally, the authors will also examine the moderating role of 3D authenticity between flow experience and behavioral intentions (i.e., actual purchase intentions and brand loyalty).

Results/Discussion/Implication

The findings of this study could provide detailed insights and contributions, which are threefold. This study aims to construct a novel theoretical model based on the integration of flow theory and social cognitive theory to investigate Gen Z customers' actual purchase intention and brand loyalty in the context of QSRs. Second, this study seeks to enrich the burgeoning metaverse marketing of the food and beverage realm literature by using a sequential mixed-methods approach to explore Gen Z customers' actual purchase intention and brand loyalty considering context-specific motivations. Third, this proposed study could provide insightful implications for food and beverage operators, marketers, and game programmers in developing effective metaverse marketing strategies.

ENHANCING SERVICE QUALITY WITH AI: THE IMPACT OF 24/7 SERVICE SUPPORT CONVERSATIONAL AI AGENTS (SSCAS) IN 5-STAR HOTELS

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Introduction

This study investigates the impact of a 24/7 service support chatbot on enhancing service quality in five-star hotels, addressing significant gaps in the hospitality literature regarding integrating artificial intelligence (AI) in customer service.

AI technologies, particularly conversational agents such as chatbots provide immediate, personalized service, essential in luxury settings where guest expectations are exceptionally high (Buhalis & Moldavska, 2023).

The global chatbot market is projected to reach $7.01 billion by 2024, growing at 24.32% annually (Mordor Intelligence, 2024). However, research often overlooks how chatbots influence key service quality dimensions, such as responsiveness, reliability, and customer trust.

Responsiveness refers to the ability of a service provider to react quickly and effectively to customer needs, which is crucial in hospitality (Ciasullo et al., 2024). Reliability is defined as the consistency and dependability of service delivery, which is essential for maintaining guest trust (Kwortnik & Thompson, 2023).

Customer trust is the expectation that the service provider will deliver on its promises, significantly influencing satisfaction and loyalty (Nguyen et al., 2023). These dimensions are vital for understanding the effectiveness of chatbots in luxury hospitality. Thus, the primary research question is: What impact do 24/7 chatbots have on enhancing service quality in five-star hotels?

Grounded in an extended Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), this study posits that perceived ease of use and usefulness are essential for technology acceptance (Davis, 1989). It also incorporates constructs such as customer engagement, trust in AI, and perceived personalization (Fan et al., 2024). Notably, trust in AI enhances customer engagement, which is vital for satisfaction, as guests who trust the technology are more likely to interact (Li et al., 2023; Nguyen et al., 2023).

Methods

To address this research question, the study employs a mixed methods approach, combining qualitative insights from interviews and focus groups with quantitative survey data.

Specifically, a sample of 400 participants from various five-star hotels will be randomly assigned to conditions based on chatbot availability and personalization. Data analysis will include ANOVA to test significant differences in engagement and service quality perceptions.

Expected Results / Implications

The anticipated findings are expected to contribute valuable insights to the academic body of body of knowledge and industry practices, offering practical recommendations for five-star hotel managers on effectively implementing AI technologies to improve guest experiences and meet modern travelers' expectations.

SIZE AND SITE: INVESTIGATING SMART TECHNOLOGY APPLICATION PATTERNS ACROSS DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS IN JAPAN

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Introduction

Smart technology application in tourism destinations has become increasingly crucial for enhancing competitiveness and improving visitor experiences. While previous studies have outlined general dimensions of smart technology implementation in tourism destinations, including governance, sustainability, innovation, accessibility (Sorokina et al., 2022; Ivars-Baidal et al., 2021), they often employ a one-size-fits-all approach that overlooks unique contextual variations between Destination Management Organizations (DMOs). This study aims to investigate smart technology application patterns in tourism destinations with particular emphasis on two key factors: DMO size and geographical classification (urban or rural). Larger DMOs often excel in external market tasks due to their greater budgets and market expertise, while smaller DMOs concentrate on specific internal tasks with a limited focus on marketing (Bieger et al., 2009). Furthermore, rural destinations require unique management approaches that differ from major tourist destinations (Adeyinka-Ojo et al., 2014), often struggling with limited drawing power (Cai, 2002) and needing to attract tourists from nearby major tourist hubs. The research proposes that larger-urban DMOs are more likely to implement high-cost, long-term, and diverse smart technologies, while smaller-rural DMOs are expected to focus on low-cost, short-term, and specific smart technologies. Unlike previous research focused on Western countries,this study examines the Asian context, specifically Japan.

Methods

The study employs topic modeling, specifically Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA), to analyze the annual reports from 350 Japanese DMOs. This technique uncovers the most important themes addressed in the literature (Loureiro et al., 2020). The analysis focuses on identifying latent themes related to smart technology application, including but not limited to Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), big data, digital marketing, Customer Relationship Management (CRM), and open data.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The study is expected to reveal distinct patterns of smart technology application across the DMO categories. These findings would contribute to the growing body of literature on smart tourism destinations by examining the detailed impact of DMO size and geographical location on the application of smart technologies. The research would demonstrate the limitations of the one- size-fits-all approach, emphasizing the importance of contextual factors in determining the effectiveness of technology in destination management. For practitioners, this research would underscore the necessity for DMOs to align their technology strategies with their specific contextual realities. It could provide tailored strategies for different types of DMOs, especially Larger-Urban and Smaller-Rural DMOs.

INTERGRATING ROBOTS INTO FRONTLINE OPERATIONS: IMPACTS ON EMPLOYEE MENTAL WELL-BEING, COMMITMENT AND TURNOVER INTENTIONS

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Introduction

The introduction of service robots in hospitality has faced significant employee resistance (Xu et al., 2023), driven by fears of increased workload, techno-anxiety, as well as job insecurity (Fu et al., 2022). However, our understanding of the ensuing organizational changes of robot integration on service employees' mental well-being and organizational behaviors is extremely limited. Hence, utilizing the Future of Work (FOW) framework (NIOSH, 2022), this study will explore how the multifaceted changes (including work, workforce and workplace changes) resulting from the integration of service robots affect employees' mental health, including their psychological well-being and distress, and how these changes influence organizational commitment and turnover intention in hotels and restaurants.

Methods

This study will employ a mixed-method approach, beginning with qualitative interviews with manager and employees in hotels and restaurants that have integrated service robots in their operations. These interviews will explore their perceptions with regards to specific changes in work tasks, workforce dynamics, and workplace environments resulting from robot integration. Interview protocols will be adapted from Mejia et al. (2024). The insights gathered will be used to develop scales for measuring these constructs.

Following this, a quantitative survey will be administered to a larger sample of employees, collecting data on their perceptions of these changes, as well as their psychological well-being, psychological distress, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions. Measurement of these constructs will be adapted from past studies (e.g., Ampofo & Karatepe, 2022; Bufquin et al., 2021). The data will be analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test the hypothesized relationships between the changes brought about by robot integration and employee mental health and organizational behaviors.

Implications

This study makes significant theoretical contribution to extant literature by developing a scale that helps measure employees' attitude towards work, workforce and workplace transformation inherent of a robot-enabled service organization, including. In addition, through the occupational health theoretical lens, provides a framework to understand the psychological effects (both positive and negative) of technological transformation on employees' organizational commitment and turnover intentions. Practically, these insights allow managers to understand the varying impacts of future-of-work changes on employee well-being, enabling them to prioritize resources, adjust organizational policies, and implement targeted mental well-being programs. Such proactive measures can help reduce turnover and improve retention, fostering a resilient and supportive work environment amid increasing automation.

EFFECT OF EMPLOYEE ABSENCE (VS. PRESENCE) IN SELF-SERVICE TECHNOLOGY FAILURE

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Introduction

Technological advancements have transformed the hospitality industry by integrating employees, technology, and customers to enhance the customer experience (Mende et al., 2019; Choi et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2021). Despite the increasing adoption of technologies such as service robots in restaurants, empirical research examining how employees' technological expertise in operating these technologies influences customers' service perceptions remain scarce. This study aims to fill this literature gap by investigating the impact of chefs' technological proficiency on customers' perceptions of food tastiness.

We draw on the concept of the negative halo effect, which emphasizes customers' heuristic judgments (Sundar et al., 2021; Howlett et al., 2008) and propose that chefs' ability to manage chef robots or resolve technical issues shapes customers' perceptions of the chefs' cooking skills, consequently affecting their assessments of food quality and tastiness. We hypothesize that a technologically proficient chef resolving technical errors during robot-assisted cooking leads consumers to infer higher or lower cooking skills of the chef.

Methods

The study will be a 2 (chef technological expertise: high vs. low) × 2 (dish cooking difficulty: difficult vs. easy) between-subjects experimental design. We will recruit 230 U.S. adult consumers via MTurk and will randomly assign them to the experimental conditions. Chef’s technological expertise (high vs. low) will be the independent variable. The dependent variable will be customers’ perception of food quality/ tastiness. Dish cooking difficulty will be the moderator.

In the experimental condition, participants will imagine themselves at an open kitchen restaurant named ABC Kitchen. We will manipulate chef technology expertise and dish difficulty through a scenario. Participants will then complete a series of measures on food quality perception (Zhu & Chang, 2020), perceived evaluation of the chef's cooking skills (Hartmann et al., 2013: Lahne et al., 2017: Van der Horst et al., 2011).

Results/Discussion/Implication

We anticipate a significant interaction between a chef's technological expertise high (vs. low) and dish cooking difficulty type high (vs. low), such that participants in the high dish difficulty condition will rate the food as lower quality when prepared by a chef with low technological expertise. The perceived evaluation of the chef's cooking skills will mediate the impact of the chef’s technological expertise high (vs. low) and dish cooking difficulty type high (vs. low) food quality/tastiness.

This research offers hospitality managers insights into implementing new technological innovations and training front-line employees who directly interact with customers.

AI LITERACY TO REDUCE CONSUMER VULNERABILITY IN TOURISM: THE ROLE OF COPING STRATEGIES

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Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies are rapidly transforming the tourism sector by providing innovative tools such as personalized recommendations, dynamic pricing, and automated customer service. These advancements aim to streamline operations and enhance consumer experiences. However, individuals with limited AI literacy often face challenges, including misinterpreting AI-generated outcomes or falling victim to dynamic pricing schemes, which may lead to negative experiences and heightened consumer vulnerability.

AI literacy, defined as the knowledge, skills, and confidence required to interact effectively with AI technologies, plays a crucial role in mitigating these risks. Consumers with higher AI literacy are better equipped to critically evaluate AI-based tools, understand their limitations, and make informed decisions. This is particularly relevant in tourism, where technological inclusivity is essential for ensuring equitable access to services. By focusing on the mediating role of coping strategies, this study provides insights into how AI literacy reduces consumer vulnerability and fosters resilience.

Drawing on Protection Motivation Theory (PMT), the study examines how AI literacy influences consumers' threat and coping appraisals, enabling them to adopt effective strategies to mitigate risks. The findings aim to contribute to the development of more inclusive and consumer-friendly AI-driven ecosystems in tourism.

Methods

A quantitative research design is employed, utilizing an online survey to measure AI literacy, consumer vulnerability, and coping strategies. Validated scales assess participants' knowledge, skills, and confidence in engaging with AI-driven tourism services. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is used to analyze relationships among these constructs and test the proposed hypotheses:

H1: Higher AI literacy reduces consumer vulnerability.
H2: Higher AI literacy promotes effective coping strategies.
H3: Coping strategies mediate the relationship between AI literacy and consumer vulnerability.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This ongoing study is expected to demonstrate how AI literacy reduces consumer vulnerability through enhanced coping strategies. The findings aim to guide stakeholders in designing interventions to improve AI literacy, fostering a more resilient and inclusive tourism sector. Practical implications include strategies for mitigating risks associated with AI-driven technologies and promoting equitable access to tourism innovations.

ELEVATING MEMORABLE TOURISM EXPERIENCES AND SATISFACTION WITH AI-POWERED SMART TOURISM TECHNOLOGIES: THE IMPACT OF USER COMPETENCE

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Introduction

This study investigates the potential of AI-driven Smart Tourism Technologies (STTs) to enhance memorable tourism experiences (MTEs) and satisfaction, especially in rural and developing regions like Iran, where limited infrastructure and economic sanctions restrict access to advanced global AI tools.

Rural tourism development faces unique challenges, prompting local startups to develop domestic AI solutions tailored to these constraints. Integrating the Technology Acceptance Model with theories of tourism experience and user competence, the study proposes that key STT features—accessibility, informativeness, interactivity, and personalization—positively impact MTEs, with user competence acting as a moderating factor. By examining how tourists adopt and engage with STTs and exploring how user competence influences outcomes, the research offers insights into optimizing tourist satisfaction through AI, particularly valuable for regions with limited resources.

Methods

This study in Semnan province, Iran, will assess AI's impact on rural tourism and sustainability across four villages. Study 1 (Quantitative) involves a survey of 300 travelers using AI-enabled platforms, measuring user competence, memorable tourism experiences (MTEs), satisfaction, and four STT attributes: personalization, interactivity, accessibility, and informativeness.

The data will be analyzed using PLS-SEM to examine relationships between AI, MTEs, and satisfaction. Study 2 (Qualitative) consists of interviews with 60 rural tourists to explore how AI affects emotional and meaningful travel experiences. Thematic analysis will reveal patterns in AI's role in travel memories. Combined findings will provide a comprehensive view of AI's role in rural tourism, aiming to inform sustainable development strategies.

Results/Discussion/Implication

In conclusion, this research is expected to reveal how AI-enabled STTs can significantly enhance rural tourism by fostering personalized, informative, and interactive travel experiences. The study's contributions lie in its integration of technology acceptance and experience concepts, which deepens our understanding of how AI can transform tourism through tailored engagement and cultural resonance.

These findings have the potential to guide sustainable tourism practices by addressing accessibility and infrastructure gaps, ultimately promoting economic and cultural growth in rural areas. The implications of this research emphasize the importance of AI in preserving local heritage while also offering personalized experiences that enhance tourist satisfaction. The significance of these insights extends beyond technology adoption, underscoring the necessity of thoughtful, ethical integration of AI in tourism to foster long-term sustainability and community involvement.

HOTEL MANAGERS' PERCEPTIONS OF SELF-SERVICE TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION: THE CASE OF GHANA

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Introduction

The integration of self-service technologies (SSTs) in the hospitality industry has led to a shift in customer behavior. Customers now prefer engaging with technology-driven self-service options over interactions with service staff (Gupta & Sharma, 2021). Before COVID-19, the adoption of self-service technologies in hotels lagged behind other service industries like banks, retail, and airports (Wu, Xiang, Wang & Huo, 2024), however, the pandemic catalyzed rapid adoption of SSTs in the hotel industry (Kostuch Media Ltd., 2023).

Previous research on SSTs in hotels has largely centered on customer perspectives (Kim et al., 2012; Jeon et al., 2020), with a relatively limited focus on adoption from organizational and managerial viewpoints (Law, Chan, & Wang, 2018). Despite SSTs gaining traction in hotels worldwide, their adoption in the hotel industry in Ghana is still limited. Inspired by the Technology-Organizational-Environmental (TOE) framework, this study seeks to address these gaps by exploring SST adoption from a managerial perspective to gain insights into the various factors that impact the successful adoption of SSTs within 4-5-star hotels in Ghana. The TOE framework (Tornatzky & Fleischer, 1990) suggests how technological, organizational, and environmental factors influence technology adoption in organizations. It has been widely used to study the adoption of innovation technologies within organizations (Baker, 2011), making it an ideal framework to guide the study.

Methods

The study will adopt a qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews to gain in-depth insights into the factors influencing managerial adoption of self-service technologies (SSTs) in 4- 5-star hotels in Ghana. A qualitative approach is deemed appropriate for this study as it allows for an in-depth examination of the managers' perspectives and contextual factors affecting self-service technology (SST) adoption (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Hotels will be selected using the purposive sampling technique, focusing on properties with the capacity and resources to implement SSTs. The selected hotels' general manager, operational manager, and IT manager will be invited for an interview. Questions for the semi-structured interviews will be developed based on the TOE framework, aiming to cover the following topics: managers' perceptions, attitudes, specific challenges, and opportunities associated with implementing SSTs in Ghanaian hotels.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study will have theoretical and practical implications. The findings are expected to contribute to the SST literature by focusing on hotel managers' perspectives and adding context-specific insights, specifically those relevant to Ghana. Practically, the study will provide suggestions to hotel managers on how to adopt SSTs strategically.

LEVERAGING CNN IN INFLUENCER MARKETING: OPTIMIZING STRATEGIES IN THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR

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Introduction

According to Influencer Marketing Hub (2024, August 13), influencer marketing is rapidly growing, with brand budgets increasing by 45.8% on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube compared to 2023. As influencers have proven highly effective in brand promotion, research has increasingly focused on key factors driving their success (Mero et al., 2023). One well-studied factor is the alignment between influencers and the products they endorse, which significantly impacts influencer marketing effectiveness (De Cicco et al., 2021).

Previous studies highlight how influencers drive consumer attention and product promotion by analyzing their fit across categories like clothing, food and beverages, and vehicles. However, these studies present two challenges. First, their broad approach may miss product- specific details. For example, while influencers impact the F&B category overall, they may struggle to attract interest in both healthy (e.g., organic food) and unhealthy (e.g., sugary soda) products. A more segmented product classification could improve influencer-product alignment by tailoring matches to specific product traits.

Second, many studies overlook the critical link between an influencer's image, expertise, audience, values, and the products they endorse. Effective product-endorser alignment requires categorizing influencers by their characteristics. For instance, traditional celebrities, experts, and social media influencers (SMIs) (Yildirim, 2021) each build credibility differently: celebrities excel with mass-market goods due to their broad appeal (Utami et al., 2020), experts suit products needing specialized knowledge (Shi & Wojnicki, 2014), and SMIs are effective for niche brands, where authenticity enhances engagement (Ozuem & Willis, 2022).

The challenges will be tested by measuring engagement (likes, comments, shares). Food products will be broadly categorized and segmented (e.g., beverages into organic and sugary drinks), and influencers grouped by type (e.g., celebrities, chefs, experts, SMIs). Engagement across these categories will be compared to assess if segmentation enhances product-endorser fit.

Methods

This study categorizes popular influencers into predefined types and collects food-related Instagram posts. Using CNN, images are classified based on predefined product and influencer categories with at least 80% accuracy, excluding categories with fewer than 30 images. Engagement metrics, incorporating likes, comments, shares, and followers, are calculated with a refined formula. The remaining images are grouped into 20-30 categories for statistical analysis to evaluate product-endorser fit through consumer engagement rates, enhancing targeted influencer marketing strategies.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Although its growth, influencer marketing research is largely empirical, with minimal use of CNN (1%) (Joshi et al., 2023). This study employs CNN for in-depth visual data analysis, thereby enhancing consumer insights and assessing influencer marketing in hospitality. This approach highlights the impact of visuals on consumer behavior, enabling marketers to optimize product- endorser fit for more targeted strategies.

GENERATIVE AI IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY: EXTENDING THE UTAUT MODEL WITH A FOCUS ON PERCEIVED DATA SAFETY AND SECURITY RISKS

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Introduction

The hospitality industry is undergoing a significant technological shift, with Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) positioned to transform guest experiences and enhance operational efficiency. Market forecasts indicate a 12% compound annual growth rate (CAGR) for AI in the hospitality sector, with the market size projected to increase from USD 16.3 billion in 2023 to USD 439 billion by 2033 (Market Data Forecast, 2024). Gen AI technologies, which generate novel content from existing data, present substantial opportunities for personalized guest engagement and operational optimization, with applications including AI-driven chatbots and virtual concierges. While existing research underscores AI's potential to streamline operations and elevate customer service, the implications of data safety and security risks on guest trust and technology adoption remain underexamined. This study extends the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) model by incorporating perceived data safety, security risks, and trust, with a particular focus on the moderating role of user experience. The findings aim to provide practical recommendations for strengthening trust and enhancing AI-driven interactions within the hospitality context.

Methods

This study employs a model consisting of nine constructs, measured using adapted scales from prior research. The constructs include facilitation conditions, effort expectancy, social influence, performance expectancy, experience (Venkatesh et al., 2003), behavioral intention (Ciftci et al., 2021), trust in Gen AI, perceived data safety, security risk (Kim et al., 2011), and attitude (Tiwari et al., 2024). All items will be rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). The survey will be administered online through Qualtrics, starting with a screening question about recent experiences with Generative AI in a hotel context.

To ensure clarity, a visual example of Gen AI technologies will be included to provide context for participants unfamiliar with the term. Eligible participants will then proceed to questions on the main study variables and demographic information. The survey will be distributed via MTurk, with a target sample size of 500 respondents, all aged 18 or older and having interacted with a hotel Gen AI within the past two weeks. Each participant will receive $0.30 for completing the survey.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Data analysis will begin with SPSS to perform descriptive statistics and reliability analysis, examining demographic profiles and the internal consistency of constructs. Measurement scales will be assessed for convergent and discriminant validity, followed by confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to confirm scale structure. Hypothesized relationships will be tested using structural equation modeling (SEM) with partial least squares (PLS). This study, currently in progress, aims to extend the UTAUT model by integrating trust in Generative AI and addressing data safety and security concerns. Expected findings are anticipated to provide theoretical insights for AI adoption frameworks and practical guidance for enhancing guest interactions with AI-driven systems in the hospitality industry.

EFFECT OF EMPLOYEE ABSENCE (VS. PRESENCE) IN SELF-SERVICE TECHNOLOGY FAILURE

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Introduction

This study investigates whether self-service technology (SST) failures influence customers' hotel check-in satisfaction differently in the absence versus presence of front-line employees (FLEs). The hospitality industry, employing 334 million people and contributing 10% of global GDP (Tan, 2022), has rapidly adopted contact-free technologies due to COVID-19 pandemic labor shortages (DeMicco, 2023). Traditionally reliant on human interaction, the introduction of SSTs in hospitality settings reduces employee-customer engagement, potentially increasing service failure risks due to technology malfunctions and the absence of human support. Prior research offers mixed findings on customers' SST adoption, with factors like individual differences, technology readiness, and past experiences influencing perceptions of SST failures.

We aim to examine how customers' need for power affects their experience of SST failures in the absence versus presence of service employees. High-power customers, characterized by action orientation and a need for control (Rucker et al., 2012), may perceive technology failures more positively when employees are absent, while low-power customers may experience decreased satisfaction under the same conditions. We hypothesize that psychological comfort mediates the impact of employee absence versus presence and customer power levels on perceived check-in satisfaction.

Methods

This study will recruit 230 participants via Amazon Mechanical Turk and randomly assign them to a 2 (Technology service failure: absent vs. present) × 2 (Customer need for power: high vs. low) between-subjects experimental design. The independent variable is technology service failure, and the dependent variable is customer check-in satisfaction. Customer need for power is the moderator and anticipated psychological comfort is hypothesized as the underlying mechanism driving these effects.

Participants will first undergo a power manipulation and will imagine themselves checking in at a hotel lobby. Participants will complete measures assessing check-in satisfaction (Bolton & Mattila, 2015) and anticipated psychological comfort (Pijls et al., 2017). We will also measure control variables such as technology readiness (Parasuraman, 2000), technology adoption, and optimism (Liljander et al., 2006).

Results/Discussion/Implication

We anticipate a significant interaction between employee absence (vs. presence) and customer power high (vs low). We expect a significant overall indirect effect of anticipated psychological comfort on check-in satisfaction. For the high (vs. low) power customers, the employee absence (vs. presence) will have more (vs. less) check-in satisfaction due to anticipated psychological comfort. The anticipated psychological comfort will mediate the effect of employee absence (vs. presence) and customer power type on customers' check-in satisfaction.

The findings will help managers implement personalized service recovery efforts.

ENHANCING VISITOR WELL-BEING: EXPLORING THE ACTIVITY AND SERVICES DESIGN DIMENSIONS OF IMMERSIVE ART EXPERIENCES

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Introduction

Reacting to the concept of the convergence of THEL, which encompasses sectors of tourism, hospitality, events, and leisure (Lehto et al., 2024), is driving the rise of immersive art experiences (Beck, 2023; He & Vleeschauwer, 2023), leading to a new era of the experience economy based on the combination of art and technology (Geisert, 2022; Pine & Gilmore, 2011; F. Wang, 2023). For example, the notable Van Gogh Exhibit: The Immersive Experience represents the leading brand in the immersive art experience market. By utilizing virtual projection technology, this immersive art exhibition delivers a 360-degree, vivid, immersive art experience that blurs the boundaries of art and reality for its novel-seeking visitors. Social media soon reacted to the trend of immersive art experience as the new symbol of the attention-experience economy (Mondloch, 2022). With the addition of services and activities to enrich the immersive digital art experience, the integration of complementary experiences has introduced the role of hospitality into the immersive digital art market.

This study investigates the impact of hospitality services and leisure activities on visitor well-being within immersive art settings. Specifically, it seeks to identify which types of services and activities are perceived as most beneficial by visitors and how they complement the core art experience.

Methods

A qualitative approach was adopted, utilizing eight in-depth interviews with recent visitors to immersive art experiences. Participants were encouraged to reflect on their experiences using photo elicitation, allowing for deeper insights into the perceived value of various activities and services. The interviews were analyzed thematically to uncover key factors that contribute to enhanced visitor well-being.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The findings suggest that immersive art venues can enhance visitor well-being by thoughtfully integrating complementary services and activities that resonate with the immersive nature of the art experience. Three main categories emerged from the data: creative activities (e.g., painting, yoga), food and beverage services (e.g., coffee, wine), and interactive gamification (e.g., VR, AR experiences). These elements were found to significantly enrich the visitor experience by providing opportunities for relaxation, creativity, and social interaction, all of which contribute to overall well-being. For industry practitioners, this means prioritizing visitor-centric service design that aligns with the art experience and encourages visitor engagement and satisfaction.

This exploratory study highlights the potential for hospitality services and complementary leisure activities to enhance visitor well-being in immersive art experiences, aiming to design more holistic and engaging experiences.

References are available upon request

Please request references through email due to limited space: zhu1119@purdue.edu

BUILDING CONSUMER TRUST IN THE DIGITAL AGE: THE ROLE OF CORPORATE DIGITAL RESPONSIBILITY (CDR) IN ENHANCING DIGITAL TRUST

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Introduction

The concept of Corporate Digital Responsibility (CDR) refers to a company's ethical, fair, and protective use of digital technology and data (Wirtz et al., 2022). This concept extends the principles of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to the digital realm, aiming to minimize the negative effects related to ethical data handling and amplify positive ones (Carletal., 2023). CDR is considered crucial in addressing the growing disparity in how businesses manage data and meet consumer expectations, where unethical data practices have led to reduced consumer trust (Lucas et al., 2023). The rising importance of data privacy and transparency in the digital age highlights the need for companies to embrace responsible digital practices. This is particularly relevant in the hospitality sector, where consumer trust is vital for maintaining consumer commitment. By focusing on digital trust (DT), this study explores how CDR influences consumer trust and commitment in the hospitality sector. Trust-Commitment Theory (TCT) serves as the theoretical framework, explaining that ethical practices build trust, which in turn creates consumer commitment (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). This study proposes that CDR positively impacts consumer trust (H1), and that digital trust enhances consumer commitment (H2). Additionally, this research contributes to the existing literature by providing insights into the role of ethical digital behavior in strengthening consumer-brand relationships as well as identify examples of consumer commitment because of positive digital trust.

Methods

This study employs an online survey targeting 300 hotel consumers who have stayed in a hotel in the past year. The questionnaire consists of three parts: (1) demographic information, (2) measuring the perceptions of CDR practices, DT, and commitment, and (3) assessing consumer commitment levels once DT is established with a company. All questions are adopted from previous studies and measured on a seven-point Likert scale. The survey was developed based on an extensive review of the literature on CDR, DT, and consumer commitment, ensuring that the items were relevant and reliable. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) will be used for hypothesis testing. This statistical technique will provide a well-rounded understanding of the relationships between CDR, DT, and consumer commitment.

Expected Results/Discussion/Implications

The results are expected to demonstrate how effective CDR practices positively influence digital trust and, in turn, consumer commitment. By prioritizing ethical and transparent data management, CDR helps align actions taken by businesses with consumer expectations, leading to increased trust. In the hospitality sector, adopting strong CDR measures can directly address consumer concerns around data privacy and security. The study also hopes to emphasize that ethical digital behavior can reduce uncertainty and create stronger, more stable business-consumer relationships. These insights can provide managers with actionable strategies to build digital trust and foster consumer commitment in today's competitive digital hospitality sector.

WINNING PLAYER SUPPORT FOR INNOVATION: THE ROLE OF AI-FACIAL RECOGNITION TECHNOLOGY AND WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT MONETARY INCENTIVES

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Introduction

Traditional Native American values, particularly trust and respect, are central to community dynamics and governance, supporting harmonious relationships between people and their environment (Brockie et al., 2022). These values influence decisions on integrating new technologies, such as AI-facial recognition technology (AI-FRT) in casinos, which impacts support for such innovations (Kamau, 2023). Despite the significance of this perspective, hospitality and tourism literature lacks insight into casino players' acceptance of AI-FRT and the role of monetary incentives in shaping their support for this technology. Addressing this gap, the study uses an experimental design to explore whether AI-FRT's perceived resourcefulness interacts with players' acceptance of financial incentives, ultimately affecting their support for innovation.

According to Rational Choice Theory (RCT), individuals maximize perceived utility by weighing benefits against costs (Smith, 2002). For players, high perceived AI-FRT resourcefulness boosts perceived benefits (Hertel et al., 2021), like enhanced service, efficient check-ins, seamless transactions, and improved security. However, low resourcefulness may hinder support, as even financial incentives may not offset privacy concerns (Hamilton et al., 2019). When both perceived resourcefulness and incentive acceptance are high, players are more likely to view the innovation positively (Salem Khalifa, 2004). In contrast, low resourcefulness and insufficient incentives can diminish overall perceived utility, reducing support for innovation (Harrison et al., 2010).

Methods

A between-subjects experiment with a 2 × 2 design will be conducted to test the proposed hypotheses. It will focus on AI-FRT resourcefulness (high vs. low) and willingness to accept monetary incentives (yes vs. no) to determine its influence on players' support for innovation. This study will recruit 500 loyalty membership players from eight tribe-owned casinos in the United States. Data collection will commence once IRB approval is obtained.

SECURITY IN GAMING: CRITICAL EVOLUTION IN A CHANGING INDUSTRY

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Introduction

The gaming industry has grown and evolved significantly from traditional land-based standalone casinos to mega-resorts with casinos, to the digital realm with mobile wagering and iGaming platforms. However, alongside these innovations, the gaming industry is now faced with increasingly-complex security concerns in both the physical and digital spaces. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Nevada, where two ransomware attacks in August and September 2023 involved data breaches in two of the world's largest gaming operators – Caesars Entertainment and MGM Resorts International, Inc. (Schappert, 2023). Caesars and MGM are the two largest gaming operators in the United States, generating revenues in 2022 of $11 billion and $13 billion respectively; their systems were hacked and compromised by groups that conducted social engineering scams and ransomware attacks (Kelleher, 2023; Schappert, 2023).

As with tourism elsewhere in the world, travelers need to feel confident that their personal information is safeguarded and that gaming companies are taking the appropriate actions to maintain the integrity of their operations to ensure sensitive data is protected. This paper aims to assess the current state of research on casino security in both the physical and digital spaces, followed by conducting interviews and focus groups with casino and security experts in the Las Vegas gaming industry to determine salient topics and possible future areas of focus for the industry.

Methods

As an exploratory study, this work will first assess the current state of casino security literature, with particular attention paid to both physical and cybersecurity. Following this, content analysis will be performed specific to Las Vegas, in which concerns and opinions are elicited from gaming personnel, casino executives, and others involved in security incidents in the gaming industry. Additionally, semistructured interviews are planned with a number of experts familiar with both casino gaming and cybersecurity, from which main areas of concern and possible future topics in the security industry are examined.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study's results are intended to provide a foundation for salient topics in future gaming industry research. Additionally, by soliciting the input of industry stakeholders, this work aims to bridge the gap between academic research and industry concerns, allowing future research to be guided by pragmatic implications for those working in the casino and security industries. Implications for the continued evolution of casino security and potential avenues for advancement will also be considered.

ENCOURAGING HOSPITALITY EMPLOYEE EXTRA-ROLE BEHAVIOR WITH A CHATGPT-AUGMENTED SOLUTION

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Introduction

Unlike traditional chatbots that rely on predefined responses (Jouppi, 2017), generative AI tools like OpenAI's ChatGPT can comprehend context, sentiment, and nuance, enabling more dynamic and human-like interactions, allowing hospitality businesses to engage with customers in a personalized and context-specific manner. Given that effective responses to customer feedback can strengthen brand reputation and foster customer loyalty (Gu & Ye, 2014), ChatGPT has the potential to efficiently handle customer feedback (Guszkowski, 2023). Recently, the digital marketing firm SOCi secured a $120 million investment to develop AI software similar to ChatGPT for generating human-like responses. While research highlights ChatGPT's ability to improve customer service through instant support and effective inquiry management (Gursoy et al., 2023; Wong et al., 2023), its impact on employees remains underexplored.

Based on Bakker et al.'s (2007) job demands-resources model (JDRM) and Hobfoll's (2001) conservation of resources theory (CRT), this study aims to explore whether handling negative comments reduces work engagement compared to positive comments, and how this affects extra-role behavior. Additionally, the study examines whether utilizing ChatGPT reduces the impact of customer review valence on work engagement in both scenarios.

Methodology

A 2x2 experimental study will be conducted on 200 employees via Qualtrics to examine the effects of comment valence (negative vs. positive) and ChatGPT integration (with vs. without) on work engagement and extra-role behavior. Participants will be shown either two negative or two positive customer comments and instructed to respond with or without the assistance of ChatGPT. Four customer comments of similar length with a one-star rating and two with a five-star rating will be selected from a review site. A manipulation check will confirm participants' perceptions of the comments' valence. After completing their responses, participants will take a survey measuring work engagement and extra-role behavior using validated scales on a 7-point Likert scale. Data analysis will involve T-tests, linear regression, and two-way ANOVA to conduct manipulation checks and test the hypotheses.

Expected Results/Implication

This study is expected to find that handling customer complaints decreases hotel employees' work engagement, discouraging them from going beyond their assigned tasks. Additionally, the study is anticipated to show that utilizing ChatGPT for complaint management can enhance employees' engagement with their work. The expected findings contribute to managerial implications by suggesting that using ChatGPT can help alleviate the burden of managing customer complaints, encouraging employees to exceed their assigned tasks, and fostering a more supportive and proactive work environment.

Work-In-Progress:

Lodging Management & Service Quality

THE CAMPUS HOTEL AS A CULTURAL STAGE: PERFORMATIVITY AND THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

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Introduction

Campus hotels play a variety of roles within and beyond the immediate university community. In some cases, the hotel owners and/or operators seek alignment with the core values of the academic institution and seek to connect with the local community (Powell, 2017). Harrison and Lugosi's (2012) exploration of tourism culture from a hospitality perspective proposed tourism culture as a hybrid that originates from the integration of local culture and the culture of tourists as manifest through elements that include tourists, tourism practitioners, and the servicescape. The hospitality industry plays a central and mediating role in this process. Based on the concept of "hybrid culture," this study likens hotels to a "cultural stage," where "local performers" interact with "tourists" during their stay.

The current investigation takes "performativity" as a core concept that can help clarify the role of tourism culture in hotels. As individuals interact socially, it is commonplace that they adopt roles and engage in performance. Not every service staff member should be regarded is an actor in the theatrical sense, though as they adopt and interpret their roles they project social identity. Diekmann and Hannam (2012) have observed that performativity is not only confined to how people experience the world unconsciously but also includes multisensory cultural practices in their daily lives. This encompasses representational and non-representational dimensions. Lugosi (2008) suggests that performativity is reflected through the hotel industry through employee behaviors and the layout of the physical environment. He proposes that these can shape customer perceptions and experiences. In campus hotel settings, there are additional complex roles that extend beyond what is sometimes associated with service staff and guests. The performance is made more engaging through the involvement of alumni, professors, students, and families. To date there has been a lack of scholarly research on cultural exchange from a performativity perspective in hospitality industry settings.

Methods

This study employs qualitative methods:

1. Online textual analysis is deployed to extract key cultural elements from reviews, such as specific cultural terms, items, and emotional expressions.
2. Participant observation involves recording interactions between staff and customers and noting hotel decor and layout.
3. In-depth, semi-structured interviews with hotel managers, staff, and customers analyze prevalent perceptions about their roles and the motivations behind their behaviors. For instance, although staff present local culture via their clothing and language, they are also affected by visitors from diverse cultural backgrounds.
4. Focus group discussions with customers and staff allowing for a sharing of experiences, thereby uncovering underlying motivations.

Implication

This study aims to explain tourism culture as a hybrid drawing on the hospitality dimension and using a performativity lens to uncover the role of cultural elements in service satisfaction. Practically, the researchers seek to provide insights for improving management and customer satisfaction in campus hotels that feature local cultural characteristics. They highlight the role of hospitality in developing and showcasing local culture.

DETERMINING HOTEL BAROMETRIC PRICE LEADERS: INTERNAL OPERATIONS AND STRATEGIC DRIVERS

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Introduction

In today's highly competitive hotel market, certain properties emerge as trendsetters, leading the way in pricing and serving as key sources of market information (MI) for their competitors. Known as barometric price leaders (BPLs), these hotels shape pricing strategies across networks, particularly in markets with significant information asymmetry (Poh & bin Mohayidin, 2011; Salazar & Dresdner, 2021). While the concept of BPLs has been studied in other sectors, their role in the hotel sector is largely overlooked. This study, guided by a resource-based view and stakeholder theory, investigates the characteristics that allow some hotels to lead in pricing, addressing a crucial gap in our understanding of competitive dynamics within the hotel's competitive networks.

Methodology

This study will draw data from 21 competitive hotel networks, focusing on metrics like revenue, ownership structure, management style, and market performance data sourced from CoStar Group, AAA, Google, and Tripadvisor. Key metrics will include average daily rate (ADR), revenue per available room (RevPAR), guest ratings, and online reputation indicators. Dependent variables will be structured to measure BPL status, out-degree centrality (frequency of influence on competitors), and follower count within each network. These will then be combined to create a normalized, equal-weighted BPL index. A mixed-effects regression model will be used to analyze the influence of independent variables like ADR, RevPAR, and guest ratings on BPL status, controlling for fixed effects to measure predictor impact within hotels and capturing variability across networks. Additionally, market factors such as location and density will be included to assess their impact on the likelihood of achieving BPL status.

Results, Discussion, and Implications

The anticipated results are that hotels with strong revenue performance metrics, specifically high ADR and RevPAR, are more likely to be identified as BPLs. This indicates that superior financial performance can correlate with the ability to influence competitors' pricing strategies within the network. Additionally, guest ratings and online reputation metrics are expected to positively associate with BPL status, suggesting that customer perceptions and reviews contribute significantly to a hotel's standing as a leader. Structural factors such as ownership scale and management type may also play roles, as more centrally managed hotels likely have better access to MI.

This study positions BPLs as a tool to reduce MI asymmetry within hotel networks. It provides a practical method for identifying BPLs using accessible data, enabling hotels with limited resources to track influential competitors. This framework offers valuable insights for both hotel managers in understanding competitive strategy and BPL.

DEVELOPING OF BANQSERV: AN INNOVATIVE METRIC FOR EVALUATING BANQUET SERVICE QUALITY IN FULL-SERVICE HOTELS

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Introduction

The hospitality industry, especially in full-service hotels, significantly depends on banquet services for revenue growth. These services, encompassing events such as weddings, corporate conferences, and private celebrations, are crucial for enhancing hotel profitability through food, beverage, and room sales (Hwang, 2020; Maximizing event success: The role of banquet halls in modern business, n.d.). Despite the increasing significance of banquets as a revenue source, no dedicated instrument exists to evaluate the service quality of these occasions. While instruments such as DINESERV are commonly employed to assess restaurant dining experiences (Stevens et al., 1995), banquet services are more intricate, encompassing not just food service but also event planning, organization, and tailored client interactions. This disparity underscores the necessity for a customized measurement scale specifically for banquet services.

Thus, this study aims to develop a comprehensive assessment scale for assessing banquet service quality in full-service hotels. This study seeks to equip hotel managers and catering departments with a customized tool to improve their comprehension and enhancement of the customer experience during banquet events. Enhanced service quality can result in elevated customer satisfaction, improved repeat reservations, and augmented profitability. This study will enhance the academic literature on hospitality service quality by providing insights into the determinants of customer loyalty in the banquet sector.

Methods

This study seeks to develop BANQSERV, a dedicated measurement scale intended to evaluate banquet service quality in full-service hotels. BANQSERV will be derived from the DINESERV survey (Hansen, 2014; Stevenset al., 1995), commonly utilized to assess restaurant service quality, but altered to incorporate new items that directly pertain to the unique characteristics of banquet services. The improvements will be enhanced according to comments from hospitality researchers and practitioners to guarantee the scale is customized for banquet environments.

The target sample will comprise no smaller than 400 participants, chosen from persons in the U.S. who have attended a banquet event over the past 12 months. The survey will be disseminated via the Qualtrics platform and will require around ten to fifteen minutes for completion. Following data cleaning, the final sample size will be modified to guarantee data quality and dependability. The data will be evaluated via IBM SPSS 28, with an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) performed to identify the fundamental elements of banquet service quality. Cronbach's alpha will be employed to evaluate the internal consistency of the BANQSERV scale items. Validity will be assessed via construct validity (employing confirmatory factor analysis to validate the factor structure) and content validity (secured through expert evaluations during the questionnaire refinement process). These measures will guarantee that BANQSERV is a dependable and legitimate instrument for evaluating banquet service quality.

EXPLORING NON-GREEN CONSUMER ATTITUDES TOWARDS SMART ROOM TECHNOLOGY IN THE U.S. HOTELS: AN APPLICATION OF THE TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTACE MODEL (TAM)

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Introduction

Sustainability is an increasingly essential component of the hotel guest experience, driven by conservation efforts and consumer demand (Han & Yoon, 2015). Smart room technology, a prominent innovation facilitated by the Internet of Things (IoT), offers hotel guests enhanced control and comfort through sensors and adaptive systems. While prior research has largely focused on the adoption of green practices by environmentally conscious consumers, this study uniquely examines non-green consumers. This perspective provides insights into their behaviors and attitudes. The study aims to explore factors that drive non-green consumers' acceptance of smart room technology, which will assist hoteliers in appealing to a broader audience. The following research question is proposed, RQ1: What attitudes do non-green U.S. consumers hold regarding smart room technology in hotels?

Methodology

This study applies the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), modified to explore non-green consumer perceptions of smart room technology in the context of U.S. hotels. Two primary components of TAM—perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU)—are adapted to evaluate non-green consumers' acceptance of smart room technologies. If using a new technology is evaluated favorably, the person is expected to form an intention to use it. When an intention to use a new technology is expressed in response to a request to use it, this intention is often referred to as acceptance of the technology (Toft, 2014). Additional constructs, such as perceived environmental benefit, are included to capture non-green consumers' potentially unique responses to smart technology. Thus, H1: Higher PU of smart room technology will positively impact non-green consumers' intention to choose hotels with such technology. H2: Higher PEOU of smart room technology will increase non-green consumers' positive word-of-mouth intentions. Data will be collected via an online survey using the modified TAM scale, targeting a sample of non-green U.S. hotel consumers. Respondents will rate their perceptions of smart room technology's usefulness, ease of use, and environmental benefits.

Expected Results and Implications

It is anticipated that non-green consumers' acceptance of smart room technology will be mainly driven by functionality and convenience rather than environmental benefits. The findings are expected to show that, despite a lower inclination towards pro-environmental behaviors, non-green consumers may still adopt smart technology when it aligns with their values of comfort. Insights from this study will assist hoteliers in developing communication strategies that highlight both the practical benefits and environmental impact of smart room technology, thus broadening appeal or potentially fostering eco-conscious behavior among non-green consumers.

THE ROLE OF COGNITIVE EVALUATIONS AND AFFECTIVE RESPONSES IN SHAPING GUEST ACCEPTANCE OF SERVICE ROBOTS IN CARIBBEAN ALL-INCLUSIVE HOTELS: A STUDY OF EMOTIONAL REACTIONS TO UTILITARIAN ATTRIBUTES

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Introduction

Service robots in the hospitality industry have proven to enhance operational efficiency by performing repetitive tasks such as carrying objects (e.g., room service food delivery) and executing autonomous duties (e.g., automated cleaning) (Lu et al., 2020). The primary objective of employing service robots is to improve operations, enhance service quality, and increase guest satisfaction (Ivanov & Webster, 2019). As the global integration of service robots in hotels accelerates, it becomes essential to understand the factors influencing guest acceptance of this emerging technology.

In recent years, hospitality organizations in several countries, including Japan and the United States (U.S.), have integrated service robots as “automated features” into their operations for reasons including lowering their operational costs, gaining a competitive advantage, and improving guests' experiences (Ozturk et al., 2023; Huang et al., 2023). Existing studies and findings, while necessary, may not apply to hotels in the Caribbean context. In recent years, the Caribbean hospitality industry has faced significant staffing issues, increased operating costs, and outsourcing (Bowser, 2023). While robot services may offer advantages to the industry, guests arriving at Caribbean hotels typically expect personalized services (Jayawardena, 2002). This expectation presents a unique challenge for the hotel industry in the Caribbean. Successfully addressing this issue could be the key to effective robot service implementation. Therefore, this study identifies a research gap regarding how utilitarian attributes evoke specific emotions in guests and their influence on robot service acceptance. Thus, this study aims to investigate the role of cognitive evaluations and emotional responses in shaping guests' acceptance.

Methods

This study targets guests and family travelers over 18 who have stayed in all-inclusive resort hotels. A quantitative research design will be used to collect data to help identify the cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects that influence guests. A structured survey questionnaire will be administered to participants through an online company like Prolific to measure their evaluations of cognitive, affective, and conative aspects of service robots and their acceptance (Huang et al., 2023; Ozturk et al., 2023; Lin & Mattila, 2021; and Chen & Girish, 2023). This study will analyze data using structural equation modeling (SEM) using SPSS and AMOS.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Implementing service robots in Caribbean all-inclusive hotels presents a unique opportunity for hospitality practitioners; the findings of this research will guide what leads to guest acceptance. This research will also provide practical implications for stakeholders and decision-makers in the industry and offer recommendations for hotel managers to effectively implement these services and enhance operational efficiency and guest satisfaction.

Work-In-Progress:

Marketing

THE USE OF NEW MEDIA MARKETING IN LUXURY RESORT HOTELS: A CASE STUDY OF SANYA ATLANTIS HOTEL LIVE STREAMING

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Introduction

In recent years, live streaming has become crucial for hotel promotion as advertisements through traditional media like TV and magazines have lost their impact. Studies show that many consumers actively avoid ads; a 2023 Nielsen report found 64% skip ads on free video platforms, and 59% use ad-blockers (Nielsen, 2023). Consumers now prefer interactive online experiences. For instance, 72% of GenZ favor highly interactive digital platforms over traditional media, especially for streaming and social media (Deloitte, 2023). Smith (2023) noted that live streaming increases engagement by about 40% and drives sales with exclusive deals and discounts. According to Rouse (2021), live events increased brand trust and loyalty by bringing in over 50% more viewers worldwide through engaging, real-time experiences.

Sanya Atlantis,a luxury hotel brand in Hainan, China, is an exemplary establishment for this study a successful live-streaming model, its 2021 Singles' Day event drew 164,000 viewers and exceeded 10 million RMB in sales, highlighting live-streaming's impact on luxury hotel branding and engagement.

Therefore. his study is to examine the impact of live streaming on brand awareness and customer engagement, as well as its effectiveness in converting these factors into sales for luxury hotel brands like Sanya Atlantis Hotel that could be replicated to other hospitality establishments.

Methods

This study uses a mixed-methods approach—literature review, customer survey, behavior analysis, and marketing team interviews—to assess live streaming's impact on luxury hotel marketing. Experiential marketing and social influence theory guide the analysis, focusing on customer engagement and brand appeal. Data collection includes interviews to explore live streaming's role in creating personalized experiences, viewer metrics (watch time, feedback, conversion rates) to gauge engagement, and a customer survey to capture satisfaction and booking intent.

This approach applies experiential marketing and social influence theory to reveal live streaming's impact on engagement, brand awareness, and sales.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study evaluates live streaming's impact on brand awareness, customer engagement, and conversion into sales for luxury hotel brands like Sanya Atlantis. The study anticipates that live streaming will boost brand visibility and engagement. Prior research indicates that customized content and exclusive offers on platforms like WeChat and the Chinese version of TikTok can increase booking intent and loyalty, with interactive, high-quality content driving conversions more effectively than view counts alone (Smith, 2023; Chen et al., 2021). However, limited research has examined live streaming's long-term impact on loyalty in luxury hotels. To address this, the study will explore how integrating VR and AR in live streaming can enhance immersion, strengthen customer relationships, and build sustained loyalty.

ENGAGING CONSUMERS IN DIGITAL CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA PARTICIPATION

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Introduction

Cause-related marketing (CRM) leverages corporate social responsibility from consumer purchases to charitable contributions, encouraging consumer participation in revenue-generating transactions. CRM initiatives have been shown to promote positive consumer behaviors, such as increased market shares and enhanced consumer loyalty (van den Brink et al., 2006; Westberg & Pope, 2014). In recent years, the hospitality industry has widely adopted CRM to support social causes (Aliperti et al., 2018; Piao et al., 2024).

CRM strategies have aevolved from traditional transactional models - where companies donate a portion of purchases to a cause - to participatory, non-monetary approaches. In these newer CRM models, donations are linked to consumer engagement in specific activities, often facilitated through social media. This shift may reduce consumer skepticism, as non-monetary CRM feels less self-serving and potentially more authentic, allowing consumers to “do good” without spending. Such initiatives can strengthen perceptions of warmth and competence, encouraging positive impressions and future engagement with the brand.

An example within the hospitality sector is GiftAMeal, a non-profit that partners with restaurants. Customers are encouraged to share photos of their meals on social media, and in return, the restaurant donates a meal to someone in need. Despite significant research on traditional CRM, digital and social media-based CRM in hospitality remains underexplored.

This study aims to explore consumer responses to these digital CRM efforts within the restaurant industry, examining how non-monetary CRM enhances social impact, engagement, and positive behavioral intentions. It also investigates how donation type (monetary vs. in-kind) affects intentions to leave positive reviews, potentially mediated by perceptions of warmth and competence and moderated by temporal framing.

Methods

For both studies, participants will be presented with a fictional scenario involving a restaurant engaged in a digital CRM campaign. Study 1 will explore factors that may encourage or discourage consumer participation, specifically focusing on social media privacy concerns, perceived CRM authenticity, and consumer self-presentation on social media. Study 2 will examine how donation type (in-kind vs. monetary) and temporal framing impact consumer perceptions of warmth and competence, as well as related behavioral outcomes. Participants will be recruited through Prolific to ensure a diverse sample reflective of the US population.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study contributes to the extant literature by examining digital CRM campaigns in a restaurant setting and consumer behavioral outcomes, specifically through perceptions of warmth and competence. The study also offers practical implications for industry practitioners, enabling the design of CRM campaigns that resonate with consumers’ values and social media behaviors

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND PARASOCIAL INTERACTION ON WOMEN'S SPORTING EVENT ATTENDANCE

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Introduction

A growing excitement surrounding female athletes has marked a significant shift in the sports industry. In recent years, women's sports have witnessed a transformation by gaining unprecedented popularity and drawing substantial audiences online and in person. For instance, the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) saw the highest game attendance, with approximately 400,000 fans attending the games and an average of 1.3 million viewers (ESPN, 2024). Additionally, two National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) volleyball teams from Nebraska have recorded a world record for women's sports with 92,003 fans in attendance (Schmidt, 2023). The NCAA also set viewership records during the women's Final Four games, with 17.3 million viewers watching the game between the University of Connecticut and the University of Iowa, and 24.1 million viewers watching the championship game between the University of South Carolina and the University of Iowa making it the most-viewed men's or women's college basketball game according to ESPN (Brooks, 2024).

Despite the progress, there remains room for growth, potentially through consistent attendance of spectators across different women's sports, leagues, and levels. In the process of the emerging popularity of women's sports, social media served as a powerful tool that athletes and sports organizations could utilize to enhance their image, visibility, and sports awareness and ultimately increase women's sports attendance. This study will explore the relationship between athletes' brand image, sports awareness, and social media utilization to increase attendance at women's sporting events.

Methods

A self-administered online survey will be created using Qualtrics and distributed through an online survey platform. To qualify for participation, respondents must be 18 years of age or older, reside in the United States, and have attended or watched a professional or collegiate women's sporting event within the past 12 months. The relationships between social media use, parasocial interactions, athlete's brand image, sports awareness, and event attendance will be analyzed through structural equation modeling.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Scholars in the field have not yet adequately addressed how the use of social media by sports organizations and female athletes can lead to forming a positive brand image and, therefore, lead to event attendance. The findings of this study will have significant implications for sports and event literature, especially through the application of parasocial interaction theory. Practically, this research is expected to provide sports organizations with actionable strategies to optimize social media campaigns focusing on athletes' personal stories and professional achievements to drive women's sports awareness and attendance at their events. As athletes share content that highlights their athletic achievements and personal lives, fans may develop a more favorable perception of their public personas. This emotional investment could foster a desire to watch and/or attend live events to witness the athletes in action.

DOES THE NATIONALITY OF AN INFLUENCER MATTER IN INTERNATIONAL TOURISM MARKETING?

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Introduction

Tourism is one of the largest economic sectors globally, with social media influencers (SMIs) playing an increasingly important role in tourism marketing, especially in the post-COVID-19 era (UNWTO, 2020; Rang, 2022). Influencer marketing has proven effective across multiple domains, from product endorsements to social causes. Research indicates that factors such as credibility, familiarity, and demographic similarity between influencers and their audiences enhance persuasiveness. However, limited studies have examined SMIs' nationality congruency with a promoted country as a factor in international tourism marketing. The study is grounded in the match-up hypothesis (Kamins & Gupta, 1994), which emphasizes the importance of congruency between the endorser (influencer) and the brand (destination) (Xu & Pratt, 2018). The study investigates how the national identity of SMIs in tourism marketing campaign impacts international consumers' perceptions and behavioral intention toward the promoted destination. By focusing on influencer nationality, this study addresses a significant gap in tourism marketing literature and provide marketing insights to practitioners.

Methods

This study conducts an online experiment using a 3x3 mixed factorial design, with influencer nationality (White American, Korean, Chinese) as the between-subjects factor and message repetition as the within-subjects factor. Two pretests identified nine influencers (three influencers for each nationality) and three Korean tourist attractions. The main experiment was conducted with 372 college students, who were randomly assigned to view fictitious Instagram profiles of influencers and their posts promoting South Korea. Participants measured perceived match (Kim & Kim, 2021), ad attitudes (Choi & Rifon, 2012), country attitudes (Graeff, 1996), and visit intentions (Xu & Pratt, 2018), using 7-point Likert scale. SPSS 25.0 was used for data analysis, specifically using ANCOVA to see the differences and Process Macro Model 6 to test serial mediation model.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The findings reveal that influencer nationality significantly affects perceived match with the destination [$F(2, 10) = 33.40$, $p<.001$], which subsequently influences ad and country attitudes and, ultimately, visit intention. Specifically, Korean influencers had the strongest positive impact on perceived match, leading to higher ad and country favorability. These results highlight the importance of selecting influencers whose national identity aligns with the promoted destination in international tourism marketing. This study contributes to the fields of strategic communication and international tourism marketing by highlighting the psychological mechanisms that link influencer nationality to audience perceptions in a tourism context.

WHY DO TRAVELLERS NOT SIGN UP FOR TRAVEL SUBSCRIPTIONS? AN INNOVATION RESISTANCE THEORY PERSPECTIVE

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Introduction

Travel subscriptions follow the "pay for perks" model, where subscribers pay a recurring upfront fee to access discounts and perks. As a new loyalty program, travel subscriptions represent a service innovation challenging consumers' traditional perceptions of travel loyalty programs, which reward travelers after consumption. A successful loyalty program must simultaneously meet customer and corporate goals (Kumar et al., 2004), underscoring the importance of strategically designing the optimal mechanism aligned with business strategies and customer base. However, travel subscription encounters customer resistance, with criticisms primarily centered around subscription traps in the travel industry (Palmer, 2024). The success of subscription models in sectors like online retail and music or video streaming services may not necessarily translate to their effectiveness in the tourism and hospitality sectors for several reasons. Therefore, research is needed to understand consumer perceptions of travel subscriptions from a resistance perspective.

Literature fails to answer why travel subscription faces resistance. Firstly, subscription studies focus on the adoption perspective (Bray et al., 2021); secondly, while recognizing uncertainty and risk as barriers to subscription (Ren & Ma, 2023; Wang et al., 2023), previous work overlooks consumers' multiple concerns about subscriptions, such as upfront fees and cancellation policies (Wu et al., 2023). To address these gaps, this study employs an exploratory mixed-method approach to investigate specific barriers to travel subscriptions, drawing on the Innovation Resistance Theory (IRT) (Ram & Sheth, 1989).

Methods

The study used the exploratory mixed-method approach, starting with qualitative inquiry to explore travelers' concerns about subscribing to travel subscriptions, then using self-administered surveys to examine the proposed relationships.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The qualitative phase identified four barriers related to travel subscriptions: value barrier, usage barrier, and risk barrier. Moreover, an information barrier emerged as a new barrier that goes beyond previous definition of the information barrier in IRT. The quantitative phase then verified the measurements of these four barriers and examined their impact on consumer resistance.

Theoretically, this study addressed existing gaps in subscription research from a resistance perspective, responding to Bray et al. (2021)'s call for further investigation into subscription distractors. Additionally, it extended the innovation resistance model by identifying barriers specific to travel subscriptions. This study also contributed to IRT by reconceptualizing the information barrier, highlighting the significant role of product information in trip planning (Hyde, 2008).

Practically, the results provide strategic guidelines for tourism and hospitality providers to effectively utilize the subscription model for travel products, enhance traveler experiences, and target loyal customers.

THE POWER OF FAMILIARITY IN DESTINATION BRANDING

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Introduction

Research on media exposure in tourism has highlighted the growing influence of places featured in movies becoming tourist attractions (Juškelytė, 2016; Wen et al., 2018), with familiarity from indirect experiences significantly affecting destination choices and increasing appeal (Baloglu, 2001; Lee et al., 2020). Examples like New Zealand from *The Lord of the Rings* and San Francisco from Tony Bennett's song *I Left My Heart in San Francisco* demonstrate how media shapes destination image. At the sametime, it is recognized that direct experience at a destination plays a critical role in forming an image of a destination, strengthening emotional connections, and increasing revisit intentions and satisfaction. (Agustina & Artanti, 2020; Baloglu, 2001; Su et al., 2021). While people often become interested in destinations through indirect experiences or direct visits (Flower et al., 2021; Kim & Richardson, 2003), familiarity with destination brands remains underexplored within tourism research. Therefore, this study aims to investigate (1) the role of familiarity in shaping destination brand equity, (2) the impact of destination brand equity on brand loyalty, and (3) the indirect effects of familiarity on loyalty through the key components of brand equity.

Methods

This study uses quantitative methods to examine the relationship between familiarity and elements of destination brand equity, and their influence on brand loyalty. Destination brand equity is composed of brand awareness, brand associations, and brand image, with a focus on establishing causal relationships between these elements and behavioral intentions. The survey targets individuals who have either visited or sought information about College Station—a college town with a strong brand identity as Aggieland and home to Texas A&M University. College Station's tourism assets in education, sports, and university culture, particularly activities and events associated with Texas A&M, are expected to significantly shape visitors' brand awareness and associations.

Expected Results/Discussion/Implication

The study is likely to reveal that familiarity with College Station, whether through direct visits or media exposure, positively impacts destination brand equity by enhancing brand awareness, associations, and brand image. The presence of Texas A&M University and associated events, such as sports games and cultural gatherings, is expected to play a significant role in developing these brand equity components.

This research contributes to understanding the role of familiarity in shaping destination brand equity and how key components—from awareness to image—impact brand loyalty, providing valuable insights into destination brand management and visitor behavior. Tourism marketers and destination managers could use these findings to design targeted strategies that increase brand familiarity and leverage unique local assets to cultivate a loyal visitor base. More broadly, the findings emphasize the importance of promoting both indirect and direct experiences, recognizing familiarity as a key factor in enhancing brand equity and driving destination loyalty.

Work-In-Progress:

Restaurant & Food Service

INTEGRATING MINORITY FARMERS' CULTURAL VALUES AND FOOD SAFETY PRACTICES: A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVE ON ENHANCING FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY IN RESTAURANTS SOURCING LOCAL AND SUSTAINABLE PRODUCE

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Introduction

The growing popularity of local food is fueled by consumers' personal and societal motivations, such as increasing awareness of environmental and health concerns (Balzano & Vianelli, 2022; Skallerud & Wien, 2019; Zhang et al., 2020; Meyerding et al., 2019). This trend has prompted restaurants to invest in local sourcing as away to connect with consumers and boost profits (Choi et al., 2021).

Building on this momentum, local food has become more common on restaurant menus, offering benefits such as increased customer satisfaction, eco-friendly practices, and health advantages (Roy, 2019; Choi et al., 2021). Its quality and taste help restaurants differentiate their offerings and justify premium prices (Grunert, 2005; Alfnes & Sharma, 2010). This trend aligns with a broader movement toward sustainable food consumption, as restaurants adopt farm-to-table practices to meet consumer preferences and market trends (Green & Dougherty, 2008; Statista, 2023).

Hmong-operated small-scale farms rely on labor-intensive methods, minimal chemicals, and natural fertilizers, promoting resilience and job creation (Jouzi et al., 2017; Reddy, 2022). Unlike many Black and Hispanic farmers, Hmong farmers maintain traditional Chinese techniques, using hand tools and manual labor, reflecting broader Asian agricultural practices (Schermann et al., 2008).

Despite growing demand for locally sourced food, research on its use by restaurants and related consumer and minority farmer perspectives is limited. This study examines restaurant managers', consumers', and minority farmers' views on local produce to improve food safety and quality, analyzing gaps and interactions between these groups through stakeholder and social capital theories.

Methods

This qualitative study will explore research questions in-depth, aiming for understanding over generalization. Using purposive sampling, it includes 15 customers, 15 restaurant managers, and 15 minority Hmong farmers through face-to-face interviews based on availability. Interview questions will address consumer attitudes, restaurant managers' food safety and quality concerns, and the influence of cultural values on minority farmers' practices. A validated, pilot-tested interview guide will structure discussions.

Data will be independently coded by two assistants, with cross-checks by investigators. Open and axial coding will identify and organize key themes by grouping similar concepts.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The study is expected to highlight consumer support for local sourcing with some food safety concerns, restaurant managers' focus on benefits and safety and sourcing challenges, and farmers' views on how cultural values shape their farming practices.

These findings may offer strategies to build trust and collaboration among restaurant managers, consumers, and minority farmers, aligning cultural practices with food safety and quality expectations.

THE IMPACT OF WORKPLACE INCIVILITY ON BURNOUT AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG FRONTLINE RESTAURANT EMPLOYEES

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Introduction

Incivility refers to low-intensity negative behavior that violates principles of mutual respect and workplace norms (Anderson & Pearson, 1999). Examples include demeaning or disrespectful speech, not being listened to, improper jokes, condescension, and social exclusion (Beattie & Griffin, 2014; Holm et al., 2023). Incivility can originate from various sources, such as interactions with coworkers, supervisors, and customers. Foodservice employees are often required to adhere to emotional display rules set by their service-oriented organizations, maintaining a pleasant demeanor even when experiencing incivility (Grandey et al., 2007). Such work environments can severely impact both employees and organizations (He et al., 2021). Although the detrimental effects of workplace incivility on organizational outcomes, such as job satisfaction, have been widely discussed in the literature, there is limited research on the mediating role of job burnout in the relationship between different types of incivility and negative organizational outcomes. Applying the Pressure–State–Response (PSR) model (Rapport & Friend, 1979), this study aims to investigate the relationships between workplace incivility, specifically incivility from customers, supervisors, and coworkers, and job burnout. Furthermore, the study will explore how job burnout relates to job satisfaction.

Methods

The survey questionnaire will be developed using Qualtrics, with data collection conducted through Prolific. Eligible participants will be frontline restaurant employees who have been working for at least six months or have worked in the industry within the past two years in the United States. Employees in managerial positions will be excluded from the study. Supervisor incivility will be measured using eight items adapted from Cortina et al. (2001). Customer and coworker incivility will be measured using six and five items, respectively, developed by Burnfield et al. (2004) and Cortina et al. (2001). Employee burnout will be assessed with five items from Kim and Qu (2019), while job satisfaction will be evaluated through three items adapted from Duan et al. (2015). The final section of the survey will collect demographic information. Data analysis will be performed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) with SMART PLS 4.0 software (Ringle et al., 2022). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) will be employed.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The findings of this study will offer practical implications for restaurant owners and managers by highlighting how workplace incivility can lead to job burnout, which, in turn, contributes to negative organizational outcomes. By demonstrating the logical connections between pressure, state, and response in this context, the study will enhance the existing literature by providing new insights into the impact of workplace incivility on employee well-being and organizational performance.

TURNING CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITIES: IDENTIFYING KITCHEN AND STAKEHOLDER DYNAMICS AND FACILITATING BEHAVIORAL CHANGE IN WASTE MANAGEMENT

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Introduction

Kitchens are at the core of the food service industry, where all critical business activities - from food preparation to service delivery - take place. One significant challenge in kitchen operations is the high volume of waste, which accounts for up to 2/3 of total waste in food service operations (McAdams et al., 2019). As this waste increases operational costs and hinders environmental sustainability, effective and strategic waste management becomes crucial for sustainable kitchen operations. Kitchen workflows, from menu planning to food service, reveal critical points where stakeholder interests conflict in waste management practices (Principatoetal., 2018). For instance, during food preparation and cooking stages, customer expectations for visually appealing and quickly served food often lead kitchen staff to excessive trimming and overcooking (Principato et al., 2018). By systematically identifying these points of conflict between stakeholders and communicating the shared benefits of waste reduction, we can align stakeholder expectations with sustainable practices and transform challenges into opportunities. While previous studies have examined the perspectives of chefs (Filimonau et al., 2024; Reardon et al., 2024) and employees (Goh & Jie, 2019; Luu, 2020), they lack a comprehensive approach to converting identified conflicts into practical solutions. This study approaches stakeholder conflicts through the lens of Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) and Theory of Constraints (Goldratt, 1984), aiming to identify opportunities within kitchen workflows. By focusing on reshaping stakeholder behavior through Cognitive Dissonance Theory (Festinger, 1957), this study seeks to provide practical frameworks for transforming conflicts into opportunities for sustainable improvement.

Methods

This study employed a sequential mixed-method approach consisting of two phases, Study 1 involved qualitative interviews with senior kitchen staff in U.S. restaurants, recruited through convenience sampling. Using content analysis, we identified and categorized major challenges in kitchen waste reduction, focusing on workflow complexities and stakeholder conflicts. Building on these findings, Study 2 examined customers' responses to restaurant sustainability practices through experimental design. U.S. restaurant diners were randomly assigned to different conditions to measure their satisfaction, revisit intention, and perceived restaurant image. Data were analyzed using a full-factorial between-group MANOVA.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study advances both theory and practice in kitchen waste management. By systematically categorizing waste reduction challenges through stakeholder dynamics and workflow stages, it provides future researchers with a scientific framework to develop measurement scales and conduct empirical investigations. Additionally, our findings help kitchens develop targeted waste reduction strategies that align stakeholder interests with operational efficiency, fostering collaborative efforts toward sustainability. This scientific approach to kitchen waste management contributes to broader sustainability initiatives including the UN's goals for responsible consumption and production.

RESTAURANT DIGITAL MENU SORTING FUNCTION THAT HELPS YOU PICK THE RIGHT FOOD: ANOTHER WAY TO INFLUENCE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND INFORMED HEALTHIER DINING CHOICES

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Introduction

Menu design has been proven to be a major factor influencing customer experience. Many factors influence healthy choices, including but not limited to consumers' age, educational level, financial status (Gagliardi, 2015), and menu labeling (Dallas et al., 2018; Baiomyet al., 2019). Hasan et al., 2022, also indicated that consumers face increasing difficulty when trying to choose meals that align with their dietary restrictions, preferences, or health concerns in restaurants. Hansen's study has shown that tailored menus can establish a better customer experience.

This study explores the potential impact of adding a Sort Menu Items By (SMIB) function to digital menus in casual dine-in restaurants. The SMIB function will allow users to sort menu items based on nutritional content (e.g., calories and fat). We hypothesize that the SMIB function will encourage informed healthier dining choices and improve overall satisfaction among specific demographics with specific factors.

The study utilizes three theoretical frameworks: The Health Belief Model suggests that customers will adopt the SMIB function if they perceive benefits, face fewer barriers, and have cues to action (Champion & Skinner, 2008). The Social Cognitive Theory highlights how past knowledge (nutritional awareness) and self-efficacy affect behavior (Nabavi & Bijandi, 2011). The Information Processing Theory (Swanson, 1987) explains how people process information, using short-term memory for quick decisions and long-term memory for recalling past nutritional knowledge (Swanson, 1987).

Methods

This study will be conducted using a quantitative research design through a cross-sectional 19 questions survey, sectioned into demographic, behavioral, and attitudinal categories. The goal is to reach 400-600 responses. Distribution of the survey will be randomized with the aid of social media platforms as well as Email distribution through the university mailing list.

Data analysis will be conducted using SPSS. Descriptive statistics will be calculated to summarize demographic characteristics and general patterns. Chi-square tests, T-tests and ANOVA, Correlation analysis, and multiple linear regression analysis will be used to identify significant influences and colorations.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The results of this study will potentially contribute to new insights into behavioral and nutritional psychology. Our findings are expected to complement existing literature on how menu design influences dining experiences toward informed healthier choices. If the sorting function proves effective, restaurants should consider implementing similar features in their digital menus to offer personalized tailored experiences. Busier restaurants may find the function beneficial in reducing the time each customer spends on the menu before asking attendants for recommendations.

Restaurants could use data collected from the sorting feature to gain insights into customer preferences, allowing them to adapt their offerings and potentially improve the performance of specific menu items. Since this feature is still emerging, early adopters can analyze gaps in their menu offerings to meet diverse customer needs; for instance, identifying the lack of keto-friendly or low-cholesterol options.

FROM BYTES TO BITES: FACTORS AFFECTING CONSUMERS' WILLINGNESS TO TRY 3D-PRINTED FOOD

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Introduction

3D-printed food represents a cutting-edge advancement in food technology, promising significant shifts in how food is produced, customized, and consumed. However, as a highly novel concept, it also introduces substantial consumer hesitancy, largely due to perceptions of unfamiliarity, artificiality, and concerns about safety. While 3D printing has been embraced in industries such as manufacturing, its application to food remains nascent and unfamiliar to the general public, thereby triggering cautious attitudes toward its adoption for consumption. The uniqueness of this study lies in its focus on bridging this understanding gap by examining critical perceptual factors—perceived healthiness, uniqueness, and naturalness—that directly influence consumer acceptance. By investigating these perceptions, this research will delve into the core factors that may either reassure or dissuade consumers, who are faced with unprecedented changes in food production. Furthermore, the inclusion of food innovativeness and perceived convenience as a moderating personal trait offers a fresh perspective, exploring whether individuals more open to novel foods are more likely to overcome hesitations toward 3D-printed food.

Methods

This in-progress study seeks to explore the relationships between above-mentioned variables to better understand the factors that drive or hinder consumers' willingness to try 3D-printed food. To achieve this objective, this study bases its framework on the S-O-R theory which has previously been applied in conjunction with technology and consumer behavior. This inprogress study will adopt a quantitative research approach. Data will be collected by using a self- administered questionnaire. The measurement instruments will be adopted from prior studies and amended to suit the present study. Participants will be recruited from Prolific. Target population will be required to be older than 18 years old and to dine out at least once a month in the US. Participants for this study will be recruited using the Prolific crowdsourcing platform. Data will be analyzed using the partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) to test the proposed hypotheses using the SmartPLS 4.0 software.

Expected Findings

It is expected that perceived healthiness will positively impact trust, encouraging consumers to try 3D-printed food, while perceived uniqueness will also enhance curiosity and willingness. However, perceived naturalness may have a dual effect—consumers who deem the food unnatural may exhibit hesitation, though natural ingredients could increase openness. Perceived trust is expected to positively influence the willingness to try, acting as a mediator between stimuli and response, while perceived risk is likely to have a negative impact, deterring consumers due to uncertainties regarding the safety of the technology. Furthermore, food innovativeness is anticipated to moderate these relationships, with more innovative consumers being more open to experimenting with novel foods, while less innovative individuals may show reluctance.

EXPLORING THE LINK BETWEEN DIET AND MENTAL HEALTH AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS: A PERMA PERSPECTIVE

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Introduction

College students' mental health is increasingly declining, becoming a concern for parents, educators, and the larger community (Barrett & Twycross, 2020; Storrie et al., 2010). The traditional counseling center model does not fully address the issue, prompting an increasing call for college campuses to adopt a broader culture of well-being (Abrams, 2022; Goodman, 2017).

Previous research suggests a significant relationship between diet quality and mental health (Grajek et al., 2022; Tarelho etal., 2016; O'Neil et al., 2014). College students' diets often fail to meet national dietary guidelines due to well-documented barriers to healthy eating in this population ((Drzal et al., 2024). However, more research is needed to inform nutritional interventions for improving mental health among young adults (Adan etal., 2019).

The PERMA model (Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment; Seligman, 2011) has emerged as a well-recognized framework in positive psychology utilized to study dietary habits in the geriatric population (Sharma, 2019). However, to the authors' knowledge, there has been limited research on PERMA's five domains of mental well-being in relation to the dietary habits of college students. This study aims to address this gap by exploring the relationship between diet quality and mental well-being among undergraduate college students in the United States.

Methods

The participants will be recruited via the Prolific online platform to complete an online survey. Prolific was selected for data collection due to evidence of high data quality (Eyal etal., 2021).

A self-administered questionnaire will include screening questions, dietary habits and mental well-being measures, attention check questions, and socio-demographic information. Diet quality will be assessed using a 12-item scale based on the Healthy Eating Index (HEI-2020; U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2023), measuring both adequacy (8 items) and moderation (4 items) components. Participants will report their consumption frequency using a Likert scale of 0 to 8 (0 = "none at all" to 8 = ">6 servings per day"), with serving sizes and daily recommendations provided based on established guidelines, such as USDA MyPlate (Dietary Guidelines for Americans, n.d.; National Library of Medicine, n.d.; U.S. Department of Agriculture, n.d.; U.S. Food and Drug Administration, n.d.). Students' mental well-being will be assessed using the 23- item PERMA-Profiler using a Likert scale of 0 to 10 (0 indicates low associations and 10 indicates high associations; Butler & Kern, 2016). The data will be analyzed using correlational analysis.

Results/Discussion/Implication

By exploring mental well-being through a nutrition lens, this study could provide a more nuanced understanding of different food groups and dietary components that might impact mental health. While acknowledging the complexity of mental health (Sogari et al., 2018), the findings could inform campus dining practices, promote healthier food choices, and encourage awareness campaigns and counselor outreach to discuss dietary habits and mental well-being.

THE IMPACT OF VR SOMMELIER AND IMMERSIVE WINE ENGAGEMENT ON MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE

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Introduction

This research examines how sommelier type (human vs. AI robot) influences the memorability of dining experiences within VR-enhanced fine dining environments. As VR technology is increasingly adopted in the hospitality industry to boost customer engagement, understanding its impact on creating memorable experiences is essential. This study identifies sommelier type as the primary predictor and investigates how perceived trust and enjoyment mediate its effect on experience memorability. Additionally, it explores the moderating roles of immersion level and wine engagement to provide a nuanced understanding of how these factors work together to shape an unforgettable dining experience. By focusing on technology's role in experiential dining, this research offers valuable insights for hospitality professionals seeking to design VR applications that balance operational efficiency with a meaningful, emotionally engaging experience.

Method

This study utilizes a 2x2x2 between-subjects factorial design to examine the effects of sommelier type (human vs. AI robot) on experience memorability within a VR dining environment. Participants will be randomly assigned to one of eight VR-based scenarios, each reflecting unique combinations of sommelier type, immersion level, and wine engagement. In each scenario, participants will interact with either a human or AI robot sommelier to receive wine recommendations. The VR environment will vary in immersion level, creating either a high-immersion experience with enhanced sensory inputs such as realistic visuals and ambient sounds, or a low-immersion experience with simplified stimuli. Additionally, the degree of wine engagement will differ, with participants either actively selecting a wine or passively receiving a pre-selected recommendation, representing varying levels of customer involvement in the experience. After the VR interaction, participants will complete validated scales measuring perceived trust and enjoyment to capture the mediating effects of these variables on experience memorability. This approach provides a comprehensive analysis of how sommelier type, immersion level, and wine engagement jointly influence perceptions of trust, enjoyment, and the overall memorability of the experience.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The study is expected to reveal how VR sommelier type, immersion level, and wine engagement contribute to memorable dining experiences. These insights will offer practical guidance for hospitality and winery managers in implementing VR strategies that balance operational efficiency with emotional engagement. Such applications can enhance customer experiences at wineries, making wine tastings and educational sessions more immersive and memorable, ultimately strengthening experience memorability and enriching the overall visitor experience.

FROM SUBSCRIPTION TO HAPPINESS: EXPLORING PERCEIVED VALUE AND OWNERSHIP AMONG SENIOR FOOD SUBSCRIBERS

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Introduction

As more people sought contactless delivery options and avoided crowded stores during the pandemic, food subscription services, such as grocery and meal kit delivery services, quickly gained popularity. In particular, meal kit delivery services (MKDSs) are tailored to individual preferences and dietary needs (e.g., low-sodium, gluten-free, vegetarian), delivering curated products via subscription plans with easy-to-follow recipes (Park et al., 2024; Hong et al., 2023; Sorathia & Morosan, 2023; Woo & Ramkumar, 2018).

MKDSs provide an opportunity for value co-creation between providers and consumers during meal preparation (Vargo & Lusch, 2004; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Perceived value, a multi-dimensional construct shaped by consumption experiences, is central to understanding consumer behavior and organizational strategy (Holbrook, 1999; Spiteri & Dion, 2004; Mizik & Jacobson, 2003). Perceived value in MKDSs can engage consumers emotionally, fostering a sense of psychological ownership (Chang et al., 2015; Shin et al., 2024; Kumar, 2022), which contributes to happiness (Li & Atkinson, 2020). Continuance intention, or the commitment to ongoing use of a product or service, is also influenced by these emotional connections (Heploa et al., 2020).

Seniors, including older Baby Boomers and early Generation X, are increasingly engaging with MKDSs, as daily cooking can be challenging due to mobility limitations or reduced energy levels (Scherer, 2024). With limited and unclear factors identified that affect seniors' perceptions and behaviors (Woo & Ramkumar, 2018), this study explores the drivers of seniors' intention to continue subscribing to MKDSs and their overall happiness through self-determination theory (SDT), which emphasizes the role of motivation shaping behavior. This study aims to expand knowledge of seniors' perceptions and behaviors towards MKDSs.

Methods

This study will employ a quantitative research design to examine the proposed relationships among MKDSs' perceived value, perceived ownership, happiness, and continuance intention. Based on a comprehensive literature review, all measurements will be adapted to align with the current study's context and objectives and measured using a 7-point Likert scale. Subsequently, responses will be statistically analyzed using AMOS for confirmation factor analysis and structural equation modeling to explore the relationships between constructs.

Results/Discussion/Implications

This study contributes to the broader literature on senior consumers' perceived value and ownership in the context of MKDSs among senior generations by applying SDT. It will also offer significant insights into the psychological aspect of seniors' experiences with MKDSs. By understanding the factors that contribute to senior's experience and perceptions, meal delivery businesses can offer more tailored and convenient services and foster long-term loyalty among senior consumers in this growing market.

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EXPLORING BRAND PERSOANLITY IN THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY THROUGH DEEP LEARNING: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER, EMPLOYEE, AND COMPANY PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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Introduction

Brand personality has become a crucial factor in shaping consumer perceptions and behaviors, encompassing five dimensions: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness (Aaker, 1997). These dimensions play a vital role in brand differentiation and fostering emotional connections with consumers (Ekhlassi et al., 2012). The rise of social media platforms (e.g., Twitter) has transformed how brand personalities are conveyed and analyzed among customers. The restaurant industry has leveraged these platforms to shape and communicate brand identities. However, the accuracy and consistency of brand personality presentation across different social media platforms and from various perspectives (business, employee, and consumer) remain underexplored within the context of different restaurant types (Han & Hyun, 2017).

This study employs advanced deep learning techniques-the BERT (Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers) model (Devlin et al., 2018), to examine and compare brand personality from three perspectives within the restaurant industry. The research aims to address how can the BERT model more accurately identify brand personality characteristics of different types of restaurants? Can the BERT model reveal brand personality differences that are difficult to capture using traditional methods when analyzing content generated by employees, consumers, and companies? By investigating how brand personality differs across restaurant types and comparing dimensions derived from different platforms, this research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of brand personality expression in the restaurant industry.

Methods

This study will analyze brand personality in the U.S. restaurant industry using the BERT model. We'll collect at least 10,000 textual messages per restaurant brand from Glassdoor reviews (employee perspective), official brand Twitter accounts (business perspective), and public tweets (customer perspective) and restaurant brand focus on 30 leading brands across fast-food, family-style, and casual dining categories. After cleaning the data, we'll fine-tune a BERT model on our restaurant-specific text. This model will then be used to identify brand personality traits and compare them across different restaurant types and perspectives. We'll classify texts into Aaker's five brand personality dimensions, analyze how these dimensions are expressed in different contexts, and compare them across restaurant types and perspectives.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The use of BERT's advanced natural language processing capabilities allows for a more nuanced interpretation of social media content, potentially uncovering subtle differences in brand personality that may have been overlooked by traditional analytical methods. This could lead to a deeper understanding of how brand personality is expressed and perceived in the hospitality industry. What's more, this study reveals discrepancies in brand personality across employees, customers, and business, restaurants can better align their brand strategies based on the study. This improved alignment has the potential to enhance customer perception and contribute to improved business performance in the restaurant industry.

REDUCING FOOD WASTE AT HOTEL BREAKFAST BUFFETS: CHEFS' PERSPECTIVES

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Introduction

Buffets are one of the main sources of food waste. Approximately 40% of hotel food waste comes from buffets, with breakfast buffets being a significant contributor due to the variety and perishability of the food offered. Breakfast buffets frequently feature highly perishable items, such as fruits, dairy products, and pastries, which have short shelf lives (Kumar et al., 2018). Guests may also perceive breakfast as a more casual meal, leading them to serve themselves more than they can eat (Garrone et al., 2014) Since breakfast is often included in the room rate (i.e., bundled with the hotel stay), guests may feel less obligated to avoid waste compared to when they are paying out of pocket for lunch or dinner (Lee et al., 2019).

Most existing literature has focused on food waste from the consumer perspective, overlooking the roles of other key stakeholders, such as chefs. Chefs in hotel breakfast buffets play multiple roles. They are not only involved in food production but also provide direct customer service at interactive stations, such as taking orders and preparing made-to-order omelettes. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to develop strategies to reduce food waste in hotel breakfast buffets from chefs' perspective.

Methods

This research will employ a qualitative approach to explore food waste management practices in hotel breakfast buffets, focusing on the perspectives and insights of chefs responsible for these operations (Patton, 2015). The study will target mid- to large-scale urban hotels that offer breakfast buffets to their guests. We will conduct one-on-one, in-depth interviews with a minimum of 20 chefs from different hotels to gather their insights, challenges, and strategies related to food waste management. Convenience and snowball sampling techniques will be employed to recruit interviewees. Data collection will continue until data saturation is reached. Data will be analyzed using MAXQDA, a qualitative data analysis software. The analysis will involve coding the interview transcripts and identifying themes related to food waste management practices and challenges. Thematic analysis will be applied to identify and analyze patterns and themes in the data, providing insights into the management of food waste in breakfast buffets.

Expected Implications

This study will contribute to the literature by addressing the research gap in food waste literature by focusing on the breakfast chefs' perspective. Specifically, this study's findings will shift the focus from consumer behavior to the roles and responsibilities of chefs in managing food waste. Furthermore, this study will provide actionable insights for practitioners. It will provide valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities for reducing food waste at hotel breakfast buffets. The findings will offer recommendations for waste reduction strategies in this sector, helping the development of effective solutions to minimize food waste.

HYDROPONICS IN RESTAURANTS: THE INTERSECTIONALITY BETWEEN FOODSERVICE, SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE, AND PUBLIC HEALTH

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Introduction

Hydroponics is the practice of growing plants in a nutrient solution with or without a soilless substrate to prove physical support (Genhua and Masabni, 2022). It has become an increasingly popular method to minimize global food insecurity. These systems are typically grown in controlled environments and have fewer food and produce safety concerns compared to traditional in-soil farming (Dong and Feng, 2022). A study confirms that typically hydroponics results in faster growth (30% to 50%) while occupying less area than traditional soil-based agriculture (Sousa et al., 2024). Hydroponic systems are considered to contain fewer food and produce safety challenges since there is no use of soil and potential for microbial contamination found in soil (Dong and Feng, 2022). However, there are risks associated with potential contamination of nutrient solutions that circulation in the hydroponic system (Dankawaetal., 2020). More recently, several food service operations have embraced the incorporation of hydroponic growing within the operation. The operations are able to showcase the hydroponic systems in the dining area. This creates an ambiance of curiosity on part of the customer and demonstrates that the foodservice operation is invested in sustainable practices. Examples of foodservice operations that have invested in this technology are Hilton America and Marriott (Romeo et al., 2022; Smith et al., 2023). However, regulatory agencies that inspect produce safety and foodservice operations are independent of each other and have specific jurisdictions in the context of what is regulated. In the state of Texas, produce is overseen by the Texas Department of Agriculture and each city or county has a health department overseeing foodservice operations. The goal of this study is to explore the intersection between foodservice operations, hydroponic growing systems, and public health. Researchers will interview chefs, foodservice managers, health inspectors, and regulators to identify needs, gaps, and challenges related to hydroponic systems in foodservice settings. The findings will inform the development of training tools for foodservice operations and health departments to improve understanding and ensure public health protection.

Methods

Approval has been obtained from the University of Houston's Institutional Review Board. Interview recruitment emails will be disseminated to foodservice operations, health inspectors, and produce safety regulators in Texas. The intent of the interviews is to give a voice to stakeholders regarding motivations for growing hydroponically, general practices, challenged faced, current and future training tools and needs. Using a content analysis method, three researchers will independently analyze and code these transcriptions and categories for each response.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The expected outcome of this study is to identify needs from each stakeholder (growers, restauranters, and regulatory agencies. The results can be used to design effective tools for each stakeholder to enhance the communication and serve as an intervention and road map for enhancing hydroponic growing and sustainable practices within foodservice operations.

Work-In-Progress:

Tourism & Sustainability

BRIDGING THE PAST AND PRESENT: STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE HERITAGE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction

Heritage tourism offers a profoundly enriching experience by allowing visitors to explore places of significant historical importance. These locations serve as living embodiments of the past, encapsulating communities, nations, and civilizations' cultural, social, and political histories.

Historical towns significantly enhance tourism and provide economic benefits by attracting visitors with unique cultural elements and rich narratives. This paper aims to bridge this gap by identifying factors that contribute to creating uniquely enriching experiences for diverse visitor demographics at heritage sites. It also examines what interpretive strategies, educational programs, and marketing practices are most effective in transforming historical sites into influential spaces of memory, education, and reflection, ultimately leading to increased visitor engagement.

Methods

To effectively address our research question, we will utilize qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews and focus groups, to gain insight into the factors that attract tourists to historical sites. Our study will involve conducting in-depth interviews with a diverse range of participants, including tourists, tour guides, historians, and professionals in the tourism industry. We plan to include 20 to 30 participants who have visited historical sites and local stakeholders. For tourists, the questions will focus on their motivations for visiting specific sites, their perceptions of the site's historical and cultural value, the most memorable aspects of their visit, and their views on on-site management and preservation. For local stakeholders, the questions will delve into their experiences managing tourism at these sites, their challenges in balancing preservation with visitor engagement, and their strategies for promoting sustainable tourism development.

Discussion/Implication

The research findings will highlight how historical narratives at these sites can enhance tourism strategies, promote sustainable development, and enrich visitor experiences. Interpreting the results will provide insights into how tourism boards and local governments can use the historical significance of sites to improve marketing strategies and promote sustainable tourism development. Collaborative efforts among local communities, historians, and tourism professionals are vital for effectively maintaining and promoting heritage.

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL PLANNING: A GENERATIONAL EXAMINATION

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Introduction

Social media has become an influential force in various aspects of life, including the way people plan their travels (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014). Sustainable travel planning, which emphasizes minimizing environmental impact and supporting local communities, has also been affected by this trend (Gössling & Peeters, 2015). Recent studies, especially those conducted post-pandemic, highlight shifts in travel behavior, as travelers seek experiences aligning with sustainable values and prioritize health and environmental safety (Maingi, 2024). This research investigates the influence of social media on sustainable travel planning and examines how this influence differs across generations, focusing on Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z, each with unique relationships to both social media and sustainable practices (Hysa et al., 2021).

The insights from this study on sustainable travel decisions significantly affect the environment, economy, and society (Zolfani, 2015). In addition, this research highlights the importance of understanding how different generations such as Baby Boomers, Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z are influenced by social media in their travel planning. Existing research has often focused on specific generational groups, neglecting the perspectives of others. Different generational perspectives allow this study to offer key perspectives into how social media can be used to tailor sustainable travel promotions to resonate with each age group. (Berkup, 2014).

Methods

This research employs an online survey via Sago to collect data from participants across four generational cohorts: Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. A sample size of 600 participants (150 per generational group) will be used to ensure comprehensive coverage. Data will be analyzed using ANOVA to examine generational differences in social media usage for sustainable travel planning, assessing variations in frequency and platform preferences across Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Preliminary analysis indicates that social media significantly influences sustainable travel behaviors, with notable variations across generations. The study's findings will look to understand how social media influences sustainable travel planning and how this may differ by generation. This research fills existing gaps in understanding the role of social media across different age groups, emphasizing the importance of demographic diversity in sustainable travel marketing.

The research outcomes are expected to benefit tourism stakeholders, including destination marketers, travel agencies, and social media platforms, by providing insights into effective strategies for promoting sustainable travel across different generations. Additionally, the study will contribute to academic literature by offering a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships between social media and sustainable travel behavior among diverse age groups.

TOURIST PERCEIVED RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

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Introduction

Tourism has the potential to promote cultural exchange and mutual understanding among diverse communities (Reisinger & Turner, 2003). However, beneath this surface, discrimination remains a significant issue, particularly racial discrimination, which negatively impacts tourists' experiences and satisfaction (Moliner-Tena et al., 2023; Zhou et al., 2021). Tourists from minority racial backgrounds face bias, aggression, and unequal treatment, with COVID-19 exacerbating xenophobic attitudes towards Asian tourists (Tse & Tung, 2023; Wassler & Talarico, 2021). Despite the progress in raising awareness about this issue, the specific ways in which racial discrimination occur remain underexplored, necessitating a closer examination from the perspective of affected tourists (Chambers, 2020). Perceptions of discrimination are different among individuals based on their own experiences and characteristics (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). This has been reinforced by the phenomenological theory and is referred to as subjectivity of perceptions (Husserl, 1970). The study of this issue requires a methodological approach such as Q methodology that captures individual perspectives and the subjectivity that comes with it (Kampen & Tamás, 2014).

Methods

This study uses Q methodology to investigate tourists' perceived experiences of racial discrimination, combining interviews and focus groups with a structured Q-sorting process to capture participants' subjective viewpoints. The methodology begins with concourse development, where a wide range of statements on racial discrimination is collected from interviews, literature, and focus groups, representing diverse perspectives on the issue (Bartlett & DeWeese, 2015). From this, a subset called the "Q set" is selected for Q-sorting, where participants (the "P set") rank these statements based on their agreement or disagreement, reflecting their personal experiences with racial discrimination in tourism. Participants sort the statements on a scale from "most agree" to "most disagree," allowing researchers to capture their subjective views (Ellingsen et al., 2010). Following the sorting, participants complete an open-ended questionnaire to provide additional context and demographic information. The sorted data is then analyzed using factor analysis to identify shared perspectives among participants (Newman & Ramlo, 2010), offering insights into how tourists experience and perceive racial discrimination. Finally, participants receive a summary of the study's findings and can offer feedback.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This research aims to fill a gap in the field of tourist experiences by exploring these subjective experiences, and eventually extracting the categories of racial discrimination, offering insights for policymakers and tourism organizations to address the issue effectively. By identifying specific categories of discrimination, insights for destination tourism planners to develop targeted coping mechanisms can be provided.

CAN HOTELS CONTRIBUTE TO THE WELL-BEING OF BOTH LOCALS AND NEW RESIDENTS, CONSIDERING THEIR ROLE AS A COUNTRY CLUB FOR DIFFERENT ETHNICITIES AND GROUPS IN THE SOCIETY?

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Introduction

Each year, a significant number of individuals immigrate to Texas, choosing to settle permanently. This migration has notable effects on both the newcomers and the existing local population, impacting various aspects such as the economy, culture, environment, and overall societal well- being. The role of the tourism industry, particularly hotels, in this dynamic is a key area of interest. Hotels have spaces where people of similar backgrounds, cultures, and interests can come together, fostering important interactions that promote friendship, networking, and cultural exchange. These interactions help to preserve and develop the immigrants' cultures, creating a positive impact on individual and collective well-being, and opening new markets for hotels owners.

The concept of utilizing hotel spaces as venues for gathering and networking draws inspiration from the idea of private country clubs, where elite individuals have long enjoyed the benefits of a shared space for social interaction. The concept of private country clubs traces its roots to 1988 with the establishment of St. Andrew's Country Club in New York (Hwang et al., 2015). Country clubs have been instrumental in enhancing personal well-being and fostering strong professional and social networks. However, not all groups of people have the financial means to establish or join such exclusive clubs. This is where hotels can play a vital role. While private clubs require high membership fees to maintain luxury services (Golf Digest, 2008), hotels can offer a similar function. They can provide affordable and accessible venues for regular gatherings. This allows individuals from diverse backgrounds to connect, share experiences, and celebrate their unique cultures.

Methods

The primary focus of this research will be on how hotels in Texas (with Pyramid Hotels used as a case study) can respond to the phenomenon happening in the state. The study will be conducted in three major cities in the state—Houston, Dallas, and Austin—selected for their diverse populations and significant immigrant communities. A mixed-methods approach will be used, combining elite interviews and surveys. Interviews with experts and hotel managers, as well as surveys of both new residents and locals, will be conducted to gather data. Criterion and snowball sampling will be used in the in-depth interviews. The survey will target both immigrants and locals through Typical-Case Sampling, with the goal of collecting about 300 completed responses. Data will be analyzed using STATA, and MAXQDA to ensure comprehensive and valid findings.

A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE MULTI-LEVEL SOCIAL IMPACTS OF LABOR UNIONS IN HOSPITALITY

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Introduction

Tens of thousands of Culinary Union workers gathered in Las Vegas, Nevada in 2023 to authorize a strike against three of the top hospitality employers in the state (Culinary Union, 2023). This is one example of many union actions including successful work stoppages, contract negotiations, and union petitions that are seen as evidence of a comeback for labor unions in the U.S. (Poydock & Sherer, 2024). Unionization rates in the U.S. hospitality sector are low (2.9%) compared to other industries (6%), but there has been a marked increase since 2021 (Statista, 2024). Another trend that bodes well for unions is that many businesses now align with social sustainability goals that elevate employees' rights and wellbeing (Zientara et al., 2024). As a result of this flood of union activity and continued commitment to social justice issues, there is a public interest in and openness to unions that has not been observed in the U.S. in past decades (Shierholz et al., 2023). This study develops a systematic literature review of the multi-level (macro, meso, and micro) impacts of unions in the hospitality industry using the International Labour Organization's union benefits framework as its foundation (ILO, 2015). Through this review the researchers will also examine how the hospitality union literature has evolved overtime and how it differs from union research in other sectors.

Methods

Following the five-step process presented by Khan et al. (2003), the systematic review will be conducted by: (1) framing the question, (2) identifying relevant publications, (3) assessing study quality, (4) summarizing evidence, and (5) interpreting findings. Articles referencing unions, organized labor and collective bargaining published between 1994 and 2024 from peer-reviewed academic journals recognized by the Web of Sciences (WoS) Master Journal List Social Sciences or Emerging Sources Citation Indices will be retrieved from the WoS Core Collection and Scopus databases. Thematic analysis will be conducted on the articles selected focusing on stated research objectives and findings.

Results/Discussion/Implication

At a time when interest in unions and labor rights is expanding, this research seeks to analyze the literature as it relates to the impacts of unions in the hospitality and tourism industry. Given that the tourism sector is among the most labor intensive and its workers suffer greatly from unstable and insecure employment, or precarious work (Drascovic et al., 2022), makes it an important area of study in relation to how unions can benefit those workers and businesses, and society more broadly. The study aims to identify gaps in the current literature while providing practitioners with a foundational set of themes to support labor relations, union organizing and collective bargaining activities. To date, the authors know of no such previous research undertaking.

EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF OVER-COMMODIFICATION ON HERITAGE PRESERVATION: A CASE STUDY OF CAPE COAST CASTLE

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Introduction

Historically important sites like the Cape Coast Castle in Ghana, a former location of the transatlantic slave trade and now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, offer opportunities to educate, remember, and connect tourists with the past, particularly among the African diaspora (Mensah, 2015; Timothy, 2014). However, with increasing global tourism, there is the risk of commodification, where sites are modified to meet tourist demands rather than to preserve authenticity.

Scholars have noted similar trends at sites such as Robben Island in South Africa and Auschwitz in Poland, where the pressures of tourism have prompted difficult choices between heritage preservation and economic optimization (Naidu, 2013; Dalziel, 2016). Therefore, this study, grounded in theoretical frameworks of commodification and authenticity, seeks to examine the different stages of heritage commodification of the Cape Coast Castle in Ghana and assess how they influence both the site's historical integrity and the perceptions of the local community.

Methods

This study will adopt a qualitative case study approach, which allows for an in-depth examination of the subjective experiences and perspectives of those most connected to Cape Coast Castle. Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews with three primary stakeholder groups: local community members, heritage managers, and government officials. To begin with, purposive sampling will identify participants with specific knowledge or experience related to the Castle's tourism impact, while snowball sampling will help identify additional participants to gather rich information.

Tentatively, 21 participants will be recruited to capture a comprehensive view of the increased tourism activities and commodification process at Cape Coast Castle, with 7 representatives of each stakeholder group. Interviews will be conducted via Zoom and recorded, with data transcribed and analyzed thematically to uncover patterns in how commodification affects heritage authenticity and economic sustainability.

Results/Discussion/Implications

This study anticipates revealing the current stage of commodification at Cape Coast Castle, detailing the ongoing practices. Preliminary reviews indicated mixed emotions among locals: they value tourism’s economic benefits, yet worry that commodification distorts the castles role as a site of memory (Dalziel, 2016; Naidu, 2013). The findings will contribute to ongoing global debates on sustainable tourism particularly in postcolonial settings where tourism and cultural preservation must coexist. Theoretically, this study will contribute to the commodification and authenticity narratives as they relate to UNESCO sites. Practically, the insights gathered will be invaluable for policymakers and heritage managers striving to develop tourism models that prioritize both economic benefits and cultural integrity.

GENERATION Z'S ADOPTION OF VIRTUAL REALITY TOURISM: PRO ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVE

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Introduction

VR travel allows tourists to experience destinations through visualization, immersion, and interactivity without physical presence, thereby producing no CO2 emissions and avoiding negative environmental impacts (Gutierrez et al., 2008; Talwar et al., 2022). However, little is known about whether tourists would engage in VR travel for environmental reasons and how their environmental attitudes influence their willingness to participate. Especially for Generation Z, characterized by higher levels of social media engagement and greater global awareness, environmental issues have a greater impact compared to previous generations (Sakdiyakorn et al., 2021; Turner, 2015; Salinero et al., 2022). Therefore, using the Value-Belief-Norm Theory as a framework, this study examines how personal environmental values (human-centered or nature-centered) and norms affect Generation Z's adoption of VR tourism.

Methods

This research employs an online survey as the primary research method. Seven-point Likert scales are used to measure five key constructs, with responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Personal Value is measured using the NEP scale (Dunlap et al., 2000), which includes 15 items that evaluate individuals' environmental worldviews and beliefs. The measurements for Awareness of Consequence, Ascription of Responsibility and Personal Norm are adapted from Salinero et al. (2022). The dependent variable, Behavioral Intention, is adapted from Stern et al. (1999) and Shen et al. (2022), with adjustments made for this study.

Prior to formal data collection, a pilot survey with 100 participants will be conducted to assess the reliability of the scales. The formal data collection will take place through an online survey hosted on Qualtrics, with the survey link distributed via various social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, Twitter). To ensure the accuracy of the data and, thus, validity of the results, meticulous data cleaning procedures will be applied. Additionally, PLS-SEM will be employed to test the hypotheses and structural model.

Implications

Theoretically, this research establishes a framework for understanding how pro-environmental attitudes can influence the adoption of innovative technologies such as VR, thereby bridging the gap between technology adoption and sustainability efforts. Practically, it offers valuable insights for tech companies and tourism-related businesses by capitalizing on the increasing trend of virtual tourism.

GUIDING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM THROUGH THE LENS OF INSTAGRAM INFLUENCERS: AN APPLICATION OF THE AIDA MODEL AND FRAMING THEORY

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Introduction

Traditional tourism marketing, led by Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs), has relied on one-directional promotional campaigns aimed at enticing tourists, but these may fall short in fostering genuine engagement due to limited personalization and one-sided messages (Pan, Santos, & Kim, 2017; Kilipiri et al., 2023). Influencer marketing on Instagram could emerge as a powerful alternative, enabling more trustworthy, relatable, and authentic storytelling that resonates with modern tourists (Razak & Mansor, 2021). This study will investigate how Instagram influencers in South Asia might leverage Framing Theory and the AIDA model (Attention-Interest-Desire-Action) to guide tourists toward sustainable behaviors and cultural preservation, with framing techniques tailored to promote eco-conscious travel choices and respect for local heritage (Strong, 1925; Goffman, 1974).

Methods

Using a mixed-methods design, this research will analyze the Instagram posts of three influencers from Indonesia, Bhutan, and Nepal, selected for their focus on sustainability and cultural themes. Content analysis will examine influencers'visual and narrative framing styles, such as the use of environmental and cultural frames, and will measure engagement through metrics like comments, shares, and likes. A survey of 50 international tourists will assess the extent to which influencer content moves audiences through AIDA stages, from capturing attention to driving sustainable travel actions. Additionally, tourists'willingness to pay (WTP) for sustainable experiences will be measured through the Becker-DeGroot-Marschak (BDM) auction method. Structural equation modeling (SEM) will test the relationships among AIDA components, while moderation analysis will explore the role of destination competitiveness - including infrastructure, cultural assets, and environmental resources - in influencing tourists' responses (Gretzel, 2017; Chen et al., 2023).

Results/Discussion/Implication

The anticipated results will likely show that influencer content emphasizing environmental responsibility and cultural preservation increases tourists' awareness and interest in sustainable tourism. Influencers highlighting local traditions and eco-friendly practices are expected to capture attention, spark interest, and drive readiness for responsible travel behaviors (Hanifah, 2019; Chwialkowska, 2019). High destination competitiveness, with robust infrastructure and cultural assets, is predicted to strengthen tourists'willingness to engage in sustainable actions, aligning with Framing Theory's premise that presentation affects perception (Gómez-Vega & Picazo-Tadeo, 2019; Yıldırım, 2021). These findings will inform DMOs on the effectiveness of influencer-driven digital storytelling. Future research could also expand to other platforms, like Facebook and TikTok, to explore cross-platform impact in promoting sustainable tourism.

ENGAGING THROUGH STORYTELLING: THE POWER OF NARRATIVES ON HOTEL CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY COMMUNICATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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Introduction

Effective communication is fundamental to the successful implementation of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. By clearly articulating their CSR activities, organizations can foster positive customer perceptions, enhance corporate images, and strengthen stakeholder relationships. The advent of social media has transformed CSR communication, enabling companies to shift from "one-way disclosure" to "two-way interaction" with their audiences. Notable hotel brands such as Hilton, Marriott, Accor, and IHG actively engage with the public and business partners through social media channels like Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn, showcasing their CSR campaigns.

In light of the pervasive influence of social media on corporate narratives, recent literature has increasingly emphasized the importance of storytelling in CSR communication. Research has focused on contrasting narrative (storytelling) messages with expositive (semantic, rational, or non-narrative) messages to determine the irrespective impacts.

A notable gap exists between the theoretical potential of storytelling and its practical application, with many companies not fully harnessing narratives, especially within the social media context. This deficiency is particularly evident in the CSR narratives of corporations, which often lack compelling narrative elements. Therefore, further investigation is warranted to explore whether and how narratives can enhance the effectiveness of hotel CSR communication on social media.

Methods

Grounded in narrative paradigm theory, the research employs computerized content analysis and zero-inflated negative binomial regression models to analyze social media data from Top 50 hotel brands on Facebook.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study proposes a theoretical framework of narrative elements of CSR posts and provides a comprehensive understanding of the effect of narrative CSR posts on social media engagement, specifically within the hotel industry.

The findings highlight the significant role of storytelling in boosting social media engagement with CSR posts across diverse themes and modalities. By identifying the most effective narrative elements, the research offers valuable insights for both theory and practice, helping brands to craft and design more engaging and impactful CSR messages.

Despite its limitations, the study's methodological rigor and practical relevance make it a significant contribution to the fields of marketing, corporate communication, and social media research.

THE ROLE OF SUSTAINABILITY PLEDGES IN SHAPING GREEN INNOVATION, TRUST, AND VALUE IN TOURISM

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Introduction

The resurgence of global tourism has intensified environmental and socio-cultural challenges, prompting destinations to adopt sustainable practices. This study examines the role of sustainability pledges in influencing tourists' perceptions of green innovation, trust, and green value, leading to travel sustainably. Destinations like Iceland, Finland, and New Zealand use pledges to raise tourists' awareness of their impacts on the environment and society (Albrecht & Raymond, 2022). These pledges aim to increase awareness of tourists' environmental and consumption impacts, which frequently lead to economic loss and environmental harm in local communities (Lev-Tov et al., 2020). By promoting these pledges, destinations can educate visitors, foster awareness, and encourage sustainable actions, thereby supporting the goal of enhancing sustainable tourism in these areas (Raymond & Albrecht, 2022). This study seeks to investigate whether a sustainable pledge strategy can impact tourists' behavior toward sustainability by leveraging their intentions related to perceptions of green innovation, trust, and green value.

Methods

The following research will use a scenario-based experimental design in which participants are exposed to travel scenarios with and without sustainability pledges. Participants will be recruited via Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) and surveyed using the Qualtrics platform. To isolate the pledge effect, participants will be divided into two groups, each being exposed to one of two scenarios-with or without a sustainability pledge. Data analysis will be done by using structural equation modeling to test various effects on green innovation, trust, and value perceptions. Measurement scales for key variables-green innovation, trust, and green value-have been adapted from already validated studies in sustainable tourism to ensure reliability and validity.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The expected outcomes will show whether the commitment to sustainability enhances perceptions of green innovation among tourists, their trust in sustainable practices, and perceived green value. The expected implications are that destinations will benefit from understanding how pledge-based strategies may be employed to encourage more responsible forms of travel behavior. To this effect, the research will provide knowledge on how pledges can act as one tool for modifying behavior to support sustainable tourism development because the tourism practices are aligned with sustainability objectives. It may improve both the responsibility of the individual tourist and the sustainability image of the destination.

SEEDS OF SUCCESS: CULTIVATING ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSETS AMIDST POVERTY

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Introduction

Tourism entrepreneurship acts as a powerful catalyst for innovation, productivity, and the creation of new businesses, contributing significantly to economic growth (van Praag & Versloot, 2007). In emerging economies, the role of entrepreneurship is even more critical (Bruton et al., 2008), as these economies often grapple with challenges such as high unemployment rates, poverty, and limited access to essential services (Bruton et al., 2021). Entrepreneurship growth and its sustainability depend on the interplay between environmental factors, such as the business environment, policies, and resources available, and personal factors, such as a person's motivation.

Previous studies have focused on the linkage between tourism development and poverty, exploring how tourism development can alleviate poverty and how poverty influences tourism development (Folarin & Adeniyi, 2020; Liang & Bao, 2018). The intersection of tourism entrepreneurship and poverty remains a relatively underexplored area, especially regarding how tourism entrepreneurship thrives amidst poverty. Research shows that rural poverty can act as a catalyst, encouraging local communities to initiate small tourism businesses as a pathway out of poverty (Liang & Bao, 2018). However, there is a lack of research on how critical antecedents of entrepreneurship, such as the entrepreneurial mindset, are cultivated in these contexts.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative research design using semi-structured interviews to collect data from tourism entrepreneurs in Mto wa Mbu, Arusha, Tanzania. Interview questions were developed based on the literature, notably the works of Kuratko et al. (2021) and Morris & Tucker (2023). Interviews, originally developed in English, were professionally translated into Swahili. Two researchers reviewed the questions for content and face validity.

A pilot study with five tourism entrepreneurs led to minor revisions for clarity. Interviews were conducted face-to-face at business locations by a bilingual research assistant. The interview will be conducted with 20-25 entrepreneurs and continue until data saturation. Interviews will be recorded, transcribed, and translated by the research team. NVivo 14 will analyze the data.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Preliminary findings suggest that, in poverty-affected areas, entrepreneurship is deeply intertwined with resourcefulness, self-confidence, and adaptability rather than innovation alone. This context- specific entrepreneurial mindset challenges universal frameworks, underscoring the need for localized support systems.

By focusing on these context-specific factors, the research aims to inform a more inclusive framework for fostering entrepreneurship in challenging environments. The research suggests that institutions such as schools, community organizations, and religious groups could play a critical role in providing resources like literacy training, mentorship, and support services to help individuals in poverty cultivate a resilient and adaptable entrepreneurial mindset.

LEVERAGING SOCIAL NETWORKING FOR MODERN SLAVERY & HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS

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Introduction

Slavery dates to very ancient times and has negatively impacted every culture. Article 4 of the UNs Declaration of Human Right of 1948 states "No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms." (United Nations, 1948, p. 2) However, statistics show that over 40 million people are enslaved throughout the world generating $150 billion yearly (Anthony, 2018). Despite increased global efforts to combat human trafficking, the lack of awareness remains a significant challenge (Savoia et al., 2023).

Many individuals are unaware of the signs, risks, and prevalence of human trafficking in their communities. Moreover, people encounter misleading, partial, and outright false information about the issue, often on social media (Moran, et al., 2023). The shortcomings of traditional awareness efforts have led to hospitality companies, including Marriott, in legal trouble for failing to combat human trafficking, highlighting the requirement for more efficiency to promote awareness across the industry (Miller, 2024). The literature review suggests that social networking platforms have the potential to enhance human trafficking awareness significantly which requires careful strategy development to overcome algorithmic limitations and communicate the knowledge in society.

Methods

The research will utilize a mixed-methods approach to gain a comprehensive understanding of how social media network platforms can be leveraged to raise awareness in three stages: First, data will be collected from the following social media platforms: X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, Reddit, and Facebook. Through semantic, time series, and content analysis, we will confirm the impact factors of the existing anti-slavery campaigns. NodeXL software will be used to collect and analyze 3.0 network meta data, while webometrics will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of platforms in promoting anti human trafficking by comparing the engagement factors of the relevant campaigns. Based on the qualitative analysis, a pilot campaign (stage 2) will be launched on social media, in the university setting, targeting population of Generation Z and late Millennials. Finally, a focus group involving semi-structured interviews (stage 3) will be conducted to identify success factors in using social media to raise awareness against human trafficking.

Theoretical Grounding/Implication

The research is grounded in social network theory which investigates networked structures, how entities (nodes) are interlinked and influencing one another through flow of information (Liu et al., 2017). The theory provides a strong theoretical basis to substantiate the findings of the study on how social connectivity and digital activism can enhance knowledge about human trafficking and modern slavery. The methodology employed in this study will improve content moderation to leverage social network algorithm. We believe this will ultimately translate into mass awareness in society. Further, the study will aid the hospitality industry with better knowledge to prohibit human trafficking incidents. While the multidisciplinary expansion of Social Network Theory in the field of social networking advocacy to eradicate modern slavery will be a value addition for academia. expanding the academic multidisciplinary approach through Social Network Theory. to internet advocacy will be a value addition.

ASSESING THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF HURRICANE-INDUCED FLOODING ON PEER-TO-PEER ACCOMMODATIONS: USING THE SEA, LAKE, AND OVERLAND SURGES FROM HURRICANES(SLOSH) SIMULATION MODEL

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Introduction

Climate change is becoming more important in the tourism and hospitality sector. As climate disasters increase, tourism must face these challenges (Aliperti et al., 2019; Gómez-Martín, 2005; Pforr & Hosie, 2008). Hurricanes, one of the climate hazards intensified by climate change, increase the risk of coastal flooding, damaging infrastructure and reducing the attractiveness and accessibility of destinations. P2P accommodations, especially non-traditional ones, often face higher risks due to a lack of contingency plans and organization (Carballo Chanfón et al., 2023; Park, 2021). Therefore, quantifying the impacts of hurricanes on P2P accommodations will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of climate disasters and highlight the need for adaptation strategies tailored to the different locations of these accommodations.

This study is about Miami-Dade County, Florida, a tourist area at risk of hurricanes. This study uses the SLOSH model to estimate the area subject to storm surge based on hurricane intensity. This study assesses regional vulnerability to storm surge, identifies areas subject to inundation, locates Airbnb listings within these areas, and quantifies the economic impact on the tourism industry. This approach contributes to the discussion on disaster management, resilience, and sustainable tourism development.

Methods

Miami-Dade County is an ideal place to study disaster preparation because it has a strong tourism industry and it is at risk of hurricanes. We examined the level of vulnerability to flooding using the SLOSH simulation model. To illustrate the flooded areas, the first purpose of this study, we used the SLOSH method to map the flooded areas by hurricane level. To identify the Airbnb corresponding to each flood category, we obtained the Airbnb for each category using a GIS-based geoprocessing tool. Finally, we calculated the economic loss using the Airbnb price, revenue per room, and occupancy rate.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Flood levels vary with hurricane intensity. Areas closer to the coast are at greater risk, even during low-level hurricanes. Higher hurricane intensity levels result in more widespread flooding. As hurricane intensity increases, both the percentage of Airbnb properties affected and the corresponding total revenue loss increase significantly. Specifically, flooding from level 1 hurricanes affects 18.79% of Airbnb in Miami-Dade County, resulting in a total RevPAR loss of $34,805.49. On the other hand, when a level 5 hurricane causes flooding, over 75% of Airbnb accommodations are affected, resulting in a total RevPAR loss of $147,822.28.

This study highlights the importance of disaster preparedness planning and risk management strategies in the operation and management of the tourism industry, particularly accommodations. Policies and strategies are necessary to protect communities and economies from natural disasters such as hurricanes. This study also highlights the need for tailored management strategies based on the vulnerability of each region, providing valuable insights for policy makers and stakeholders in the tourism industry.

CROSS-BORDER TOURISM PLACE IDENTITY BETWEEN THE SPANISH AND FRENCH BASQUE REGIONS

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Introduction

Cross-border tourism marketing unites neighboring countries for mutual tourism benefits, especially in politically tense regions where it can foster peace and economic growth. This collaboration uses cultural and geographic proximity for joint strategies, driving regional development and foreign currency inflow (Salouw et al., 2023). Benefits include shared marketing costs, infrastructure improvements, and economic interests (Kozak & Buhalis, 2019). However, challenges like political climates, regulatory inconsistencies, and economic disparities can hinder efforts (Salouw et al., 2023; Kozak & Buhalis, 2019).

In the Basque Country, Spanish and French territories have distinct identities, laws and autonomy levels making collaboration difficult. Institutional differences, such as financial resources impact tourism development (Itçaina & Errotabehere, 2014). Despite these challenges, recent public policy shifts provide innovative ways for cross-border tourism, fostering flexible governance and capitalizing on shared cultural assets for regional growth (Klijn & Skelcher, 2007). This study aims to assess the Basque region's place identity and propose effective cross-border management strategies.

Methods

This study will be conducted using a mixed-methods approach that will aim to enhance cross- border tourism practices between the Spanish and French Basque regions. It will combine a literature review on cross-border cooperation in tourism along with quantitative data from semi- structured interviews. The interviews will target business owners, native residents and frequent travelers to the Basque Country. These interviews will be conducted during their highest travel season (summer). Data will be collected online through a survey, recorded, and analyzed using content analysis to identify key themes. Insights from the interviews will be integrated with the literature review to develop practical strategies for improving cross-border tourism collaboration, economic growth, and a unified visitor experience in the Basque Country.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This proposal will examine cross-border tourism between the Spanish and French Basque regions focusing on challenges like institutional asymmetries, political priorities, and economic disparities. While these barriers complicate cooperation, leveraging cultural and geographical assets offers mutual benefits, promoting regional development and a shared identity (Saluow et al, 2023; Kozak & Buhalis, 2019).

Findings will underscore the need for stakeholder coordination among policymakers, businesses, and civil society to create flexible governance and cohesive marketing that appeals to local and international tourists, fostering economic growth, cultural exchange, and peacebuilding in the Basque region.

CREDIBILITY OF SUSTAINABLE HOTEL BADGES: IMPACT ON GUEST INTENTIONS, INSPIRATION, AND BOOKING BEHAVIOUR

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Introduction

This study investigates the impact of sustainable hotel badges' credibility focusing on attributes like attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise, on consumer attitudes, inspiration, and booking intentions toward eco-friendly hotels. The research is framed within the Stimulus-Organism- Response (S-O-R) model, positing that credible badges serve as stimuli that shape guests' psychological responses, ultimately enhancing their likelihood to book sustainable hotels (Assaker & O'Connor, 2023; Godovykhet al., 2024). As travelers become more eco-conscious, sustainable practices and their effective communication through badges on booking platforms are increasingly significant (Sharma et al., 2024). Yet, a notable attitude-behavior gap persists, where positive attitudes toward sustainability don't always translate into green booking choices (Chen & Peng, 2012), highlighting an area that needs further examination (Wut et al., 2023).

To address this, the study integrates the Source Credibility Theory (Pornpitakpan, 2004) with the S-O-R framework to assess how credible badges can bridge this gap by enhancing consumers' psychological responses toward sustainable hotels. Prior research has identified factors like environmental awareness and perceived value as drivers of green hotel bookings (Dong et al., 2024), yet the role of badge credibility, specifically trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness, remains underexplored (Lee & Kim, 2020; Alyahia et al., 2024). This study aims to fill this gap by examining the influence of these badge attributes on consumer behavior, providing valuable insights for hotel managers and marketers to foster eco-friendly booking behaviors effectively.

Methods

For this study, the data will be collected from 350 participants using an online survey. Participants will view a simulated Booking.com page featuring a sustainability badge representing eco-friendly practices. The research will evaluate how different attributes of the badge, such as Attractiveness, Trustworthiness, and Expertise (Ohanian, 1990), Customer Inspiration (Bottger et al., 2017), Green Attitude (Han & Kim, 2010; Teng et al., 2015), Green Image (Cretu & Brodie, 2007), and Intention to Book Sustainable Hotels (Gao et al., 2016), influence consumer attitudes and behaviours. These factors will be measured using a Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Data analysis will be conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) 3.0.

Results/Discussion/Implication

It is a work-in-progress study. The findings will be included after the data collection and analysis. Conclusions will be drawn accordingly.

BLEISURE TOURISM MOTIVATION

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Introduction

The aim of this study is to elucidate the evolving nature of international business travel through the examination of bleisure motives. By incorporating leisure into their overseas business obligations, bleisure travelers provide an example of how working professionals might enjoy the effects of leisure—potentially in tandem with their loved ones—while fulfilling their professional obligations abroad.

Methods

By gathering and interpreting data on this subset of tourist, the authors hope to better understand bleisure traveler motivations and explore opportunities to more effectively channel the tourism dollars of international business travelers into sustainable tourism solutions in the global destinations that need them most.

Subjects will be identified and semi-structured interviews conducted. The data will then be coded and analyzed using primarily qualitative methods of analysis.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The interview results could potentially assist in qualifying and building upon extant bleisure typologies (Lichy & McLeay, 2017). They might also be employed to inform bleisure-friendly policies, amenities and marketing strategies across various sectors.

Particularly amid the remote work renaissance following the COVID-19 pandemic, this timely examination could help optimize professional productivity and workforce retention while improving individual outcomes. Such outcomes could potentially include physiological and psychological effects, household stability generated through family leisure experiences, and increased global awareness.

Ultimately, the augmented understanding of bleisure traveler motivations could provide the insight needed to address the seemingly inescapable challenge of balancing work with life (Lichy & McLeay, 2017).

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TAOISM AND ECOTOURISM: EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF TAOIST PHILOSOPHY ON CHINESE TOURISTS' ECOTOURISM CHOICES

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Introduction

Ecotourism has become an integral part of sustainable travel, promoting a harmonious interaction between human experiences and the natural environment. While previous studies have investigated the concept of Connectedness with Nature (CWN) among Chinese tourists (Hua et al., 2024), the broader influence of cultural and philosophical beliefs remains underexplored. Given China's rich historical and cultural landscape, particularly the influence of Taoist philosophy, understanding how these elements shape ecotourism behavior is essential. Taoist principles emphasize respect, adaptation, and protection of nature, potentially impacting travel intentions. Integrating CWN theory with Taoist philosophy, this study seeks to address gaps in the current literature by examining the effect of these beliefs on ecotourism behavior. This research aims to reveal the complex interplay of cultural factors and ecological attitudes that motivate sustainable travel, offering a richer perspective on how ancient philosophies inform modern environmental practices.

Methods

This study uses a qualitative research approach. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews about CWN and Taoist philosophy will be conducted to explore how Taoist philosophy influences Chinese tourists' ecotourism behavior, focusing on their emotional connection, cognitive understanding, and experience in ecotourism. The interviews will include questions from existing literature, highlighting Taoist philosophy, environmental knowledge, and their impact on ecotourism preferences. About 25 Chinese ecotourism consumers aged 18 and above will be interviewed, either face-to-face or online. Each interview will last around 30 minutes and will be recorded with consent. NVivo software will be used to organize and analyze the data.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The study highlights the significant influence of Taoist philosophy on Chinese tourists' ecotourism preferences, suggesting that cognitive understanding, emotional connection, and experiential engagement rooted in Taoist values may play key roles. It is anticipated that Taoist teachings may shape tourists' beliefs in minimal intervention and sustainable travel. Tourists may cite a strong emotional bond with nature, rooted in the Taoist concept of "the unity of man and Heaven", which could foster a sense of spiritual fulfillment. This study enriches ecotourism literature by integrating Taoist cultural perspectives, aiding policymakers in crafting nature-centric, culturally resonant tourism strategies and educational programs that align with these philosophical values.

FROM CULTURAL APPROPRIATION TO CULTURAL APPRECIATION: EXPLORING THE USE OF CULTURE IN HAWAIʻI TOURISM

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Introduction

Tourism is often criticized for negatively impacting local cultures, and commodifying the elements of culture for commercial purposes within the industry (Viken, 2022). Misrepresenting or fragmenting cultural elements can result in cultural appropriation, undermining the authenticity and respect that should accompany these experiences. Considering the importance of culture in tourism, the topic of cultural appropriation and tourism's role in contributing to it has been long discussed and recognized as critical. For destinations like Hawaiʻi, where culture is deeply intertwined with the identity of the land and its people, ensuring that cultural practices are portrayed accurately and respectfully by the tourism industry is crucial. The local DMO - the Hawaiʻi Tourism Authority acknowledges the importance of accurately presenting the Native Hawaiian culture and continuously supports programs that aim to perpetuate the Hawaiian culture (HTA, n.d.). Nonetheless, there is a lack of empirical research to determine the alignment of current practices and policies related to Hawaiian culture representation in the tourism industry with the values of the Native Hawaiian community. This study aims to fill this research gap.

Methods

This study takes an exploratory approach using qualitative methodology to address the identified research gap. It includes in-depth interviews with Hawaiian cultural practitioners, historians, and community leaders to gather diverse perspectives on how Hawaiian culture is represented in tourism, focusing on issues of cultural appropriation and ways to foster cultural appreciation. In the second stage, interviews with tourism industry representatives will explore existing policies, practices, and efforts to prevent cultural misrepresentation, assessing how the sector incorporates local cultural insights and ensures authenticity in cultural experiences. Finally, tourists' perspectives on the use of culture will be explored via interviews.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The preliminary discussions with cultural experts underscore the critical need for enhanced collaboration between the tourism industry and local communities. Experts agree that authentic cultural representation necessitates meaningful engagement from those who hold and maintain cultural knowledge. However, there is a lack of structured mechanisms to facilitate this collaboration. Thus, while there are policies designed to prevent cultural appropriation, their implementation is inconsistent. By integrating cultural experts' perspectives with the tourism industry's operational realities, the proposed study aims to develop a holistic understanding of the challenges and opportunities in promoting respectful and accurate cultural representation. The ultimate goal is to create actionable recommendations that support the preservation of Hawaiian cultural heritage while enhancing the quality and authenticity of cultural experiences offered to tourists.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM UNDER STATE GOVERNANCE: A MIXED METHOD APPROACHED ANALYSIS OF PALM GROVE CONSERVATION IN MARRAKECH

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Introduction

Marrakesh, Morocco, has been recognized as an early Garden City model since 1602. This city is notable for its extensive palm groves surrounding the city's northeastern walls. These groves were integral to the city's identity and ecology but have deteriorated due to neglect and rapid tourism development (De Montesquiou, 2008), necessitating urgent restoration. In 2009, Marrakesh established the organization Palm Grove Observatory (OPM) (MAP, 2011) to enhance state governance for protecting and restoring the groves. However, OPM's impact has not been systematically evaluated to determine whether OPM has positively contributed or failed, which is crucial for assessing the role of state governance in environmental protection.

This study aims to assess the impact of OPM on Marrakesh's palm groves with a mixed- method approach. By selecting regions with similar ecological and socioeconomic conditions but lacking comparable governance institutions as a control group, the study will apply the Geographic Information System (GIS) and Synthetic Control Method (SCM) to evaluate OPM's actual effects. And qualitative research will be conducted to provide deeper insights into governance implementation and challenges.

Methods

This study employs a mixed-method approach to assess the impact of the Marrakesh Palm Grove Observatory (OPM) on the city's palm groves.

Quantitative Analysis#1:

Regional Analysis (North Africa): We use the Synthetic Control Method to compare land cover changes in a 30 years period between the Marrakesh Palm Grove (treatment group) and over 20 similar North African palm groves without comparable governance (control group), evaluating OPM's effectiveness.

Quantitative Analysis#2:

Local Scale Analysis (Marrakesh): Models like Ordinary Least Squares regression, we identify drivers of land cover change in Marrakesh, such as luxury tourism, population growth, nighttime light intensity, and built-up areas.

Qualitative Analysis:

Through interviews and surveys with OPM officials and local stakeholders, we aim to explore governance mechanisms and challenges, enriching our quantitative findings.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The study aims to provide empirical evidence on the effectiveness of OPM in protecting and restoring Marrakesh's palm groves. By identifying key drivers of land cover change, the findings will guide policymakers in optimizing governance strategies and promoting sustainable development. The insights gained can inform environmental governance and resource management practices in similar regions, emphasizing the importance of effective governance and stakeholder participation in environmental conservation

CONSTRUCTING DESTINATION RESILIENCE MODEL FROM DESTINATION MARKETING STRATEGY DURING CRISIS

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Introduction

Despite from being a profitable industry, tourism is a fragile industry which is easily disturbed by internal and external factors ranging from political conflicts, epidemic disease, and natural disasters (Zibani, 2014 and Gretzel, et al., 2018). An unforeseen and unexpected shock that has a huge impact on the tourism industry, for instance, is a natural disaster. Considering the damage on the destination facility and accessibility, natural disaster could pose a great disturbance for tourism industry.

When all focus goes to the natural disaster mitigation effort, tourism destination marketing efforts are often forgotten and destination reputation is at stake. Many scholars have spent immense amount of effort focusing on mitigating destination vulnerabilities and improving resilience to ensure the longevity of the destination during crisis. To assist DMOs in adapting to the growing prominence of destination marketing resulting from natural disasters, this research gap warrants further exploration.

It is essential to identify the factors that are deemed important as a destination marketing strategy during crisis. Through the approach of critical discourse analysis, this study identified three key themes found in the data namely, Destination Trust, Sense of Safety, and Destination Dependence which are the antecedent factors to investigate the perceived destination resilience in the studied data. The theoretical model will investigate how these themes influence destination resilience as an outcome behavior. The destination resilience model developed through tourism discourse will be a significant reference to enrich the study of destination marketing in CDA approach and as a real-life model of the variety of marketing strategy in similar situation for future use.

Methods

The study will utilize mixed methods approach to investigate the propositions. This methodology comprises a qualitative study of Tourism Discourse (Step 1) and a quantitative investigation into hypothesized relationships (Step 2). Step 1 investigates the occurrence ofpower from the tourism discourse produced during crisis for marketing purposes. For Step 2, a theoretical model will be developed to test the study's hypotheses using the themes identified from Step 1 as antecedent variables and Destination Resilience as an outcome variable.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The theoretical implication of this study will be an enrichment to the study of destination marketing and its relation to the perceived destination resilience. The three themes identified from Step 1 derived from a meticulous organization of the discourse, a constant effort on building safety rapport during crisis, and the core ideology that local community uphold. With these variables, Step 2 will investigate the perceived destination resilience to ensure the robust destination in facing adversity brought by natural disaster crisis.

EFFECTS OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ON FRONTLINE STAFF WORK OUTCOMES

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Introduction

This study is designed to evaluate the impact of corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs on gambling employees with regard to the orientation towards their customers, dedication to work and emotional attachment to their job. It also recognizes the complex nature of gambling activity, including both the economic value and the social costs, and the need for stronger CSR in order to foster trust among the general public and employees. Carroll's (1991) framework, one of the most prominent framework in the filed of CSR, is used with four major elements namely economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic. Applying Social Exchange Theory, it suggests that two possible intermediate variables–work engagement and affective organizational commitment mechanisms – should facilitate the effect of CSR on customer orientation.

Methods

A casino in Korea is selected as study population and a total of 317 final data is used for analysis. This casino has been awarded for CSR efforts such as ecological preservation, welfare-oriented gambling-related harm prevention, and scholarship system (Lee, 2015). All 29 items are derived from previous research. Measurement items are translated from English to Korean and from Korean back to English for precision. The methodology is concerned with descriptive research using rigorous quantitative approaches. Data analysis includes confirmatory factor analysis, second order structural equation modeling, and the PROCESS micro model 4.

Results/Discussion/Implication

CSR has a positive two-way relationship with customer orientation and its various consequences on employees, specifically illustrating the mediating forces of work engagement and emotional commitment in attention to customers. CSR increases both affective organizational commitment and work engagement, however work engagement does not show significant results. As the effect is so small, it is very possible that other factors such as identification with the firm, personality trait), self-efficacy, and appreciative management and work type are most likely to contribute more to work engagement. affective organizational commitment in the parallel mediation model seems to have given a higher influence as significant results are also obtained. Casinos can improve their sustainability and secure their workers' commitment and engagement through linking CSR programs with employees' approaches. Theoretically, this study contributes to highlighting the role of CSR in realization of work engagement and affective organizational commitment concepts within the casino industry, thus providing the effect of CSR on employee perceptions more clearly under social exchange theoretical perspective. Casino managers can implement CSR strategies to enhance staff work engagement, affective organizational commitment, and customer orientation leading to better customer satisfaction. Limitations include lack of generalizability, imbalance between gender distribution of the sample, and the cross-sectional design of the study which can be considered in future studies.

RESIDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF ATTITUDES, PERCEPTIONS, AND SENTIMENTS

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Introduction

Tourism development is a double-edged sword for many communities, offering economic benefits while often introducing challenges to residents' quality of life. As a result, understanding how residents view and respond to tourism has become a central focus of tourism research (Adeleke, 2015; Akay, 2022; Chen et al., 2021; Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004). Various terms, such as resident attitudes, resident perceptions, and resident sentiments, are frequently employed to describe how locals think, interpret, and feel about the impacts of tourism on their communities. However, a review of the literature reveals that these terms are often used interchangeably, leading to potential confusion and an oversimplification of residents' complex responses to tourism activities. Given the critical role that residents play as co-creators of tourism destinations and ambassadors of local culture, accurately capturing and differentiating between their attitudes, perceptions, and sentiments is vital. Such clarity is essential for advancing tourism research and fostering sustainable and equitable tourism development. This paper aims to address this gap by conducting a systematic review of existing literature on residents' attitudes, perceptions, and sentiments toward tourism development.

Methods

This study employs a two-step methodological approach to systematically review the existing literature on residents' attitudes, perceptions, and sentiments toward tourism development. The first step involves a bibliometric analysis, which was conducted to quantitatively evaluate trends in the literature, identify the most frequently used keywords, and analyze citation networks. The second step comprises a thematic analysis to qualitatively explore the underlying themes and patterns in the research, providing deeper insights into the constructs and their application in tourism studies. The thematic analysis utilized abstracts to code and identify recurring trends and themes. This comprehensive approach sheds light on key contributors, prevailing themes, and future opportunities. Web of Science (WoS) was used as the main database for systematic analysis.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The bibliometric analysis confirmed that researchers often use "resident attitude," "resident perception," and "resident sentiment" interchangeably, though sentiment has gained recent prominence for its broader scope. Results were heterogeneous, varying significantly across destinations (Chuang, 2013; Teye et al., 2002), signaling the need to investigate resident perspectives based on specific destination characteristics (An et al., 2021; Boley et al., 2017), cultural contexts, and tourism life cycle stages. This highlights that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to understanding residents' perspectives and responses to tourism.

ENHANCING CSR ENGAGEMENT AND BRAND EQUITY THROUGH GAMIFICATION ON HOSPITALITY SHARING ECONOMY PLATFORMS

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Introduction

The sharing economy (SE) has reshaped the hospitality industry, enabling service providers to connect with customers via digital platforms, with prominent examples including Airbnb and similar accommodation-sharing services. Despite its efficiency and economic appeal, the SE faces increasing criticism over its environmental and social consequences, as large-scale adoption raises concerns about sustainability, resource usage, and community impact (Kuhzady etal., 2021). This has intensified calls for corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives that address such issues, as consumers demand more sustainable and ethically accountable business practices within SE platforms (Mi & Coffman, 2019). CSR engagement is essential for maintaining trust and satisfaction among SE stakeholders, including business owners and users, and for enhancing brand loyalty and equity in a highly competitive market (Fatma et al., 2020).

Gamification, defined as the application of game-like elements (e.g., badges, points, and rewards) in non-gaming contexts, offers a promising approach to motivating CSR behaviors among business owners on SE platforms. By aligning gamification strategies with CSR objectives, SE platforms can engage business owners in responsible and sustainable practices that support the platform's brand reputation, trust, and long-term loyalty (Koroleva & Novak, 2020; Maltseva et al., 2019). This study addresses notable research gaps by examining CSR from the perspective of service providers on SE platforms—an area that has received limited scholarly attention (Ahn, 2021). Integrating stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) and self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), this research proposes a theoretical model that investigates the effects of gamification on CSR engagement, satisfaction, trust, brand loyalty, and equity. This framework aims to identify effective mechanisms by which SE platforms can leverage gamified CSR initiatives to encourage responsible behavior, drive user satisfaction, and ultimately build brand equity.

Methods

This study focuses on the hospitality SE in Iran, utilizing purposive sampling to survey accommodation owners on these platforms. Data collection will involve a structured questionnaire, formatted on a 7-point Likert scale, measuring CSR engagement, satisfaction, trust, brand loyalty, brand equity, and gamification elements. To ensure linguistic and cultural accuracy, we applied back-translation between English and Farsi and conducted a pilot test with 30 respondents, refining items as needed. Hypotheses will be tested using Smart PLS-3, examining the interrelations between gamification elements, CSR engagement, and brand equity.

Results/Discussion/Implication

We anticipate that gamification will drive CSR engagement among SE business owners, strengthening trust and satisfaction, which are expected to enhance brand loyalty and equity (Fatma et al., 2020). This study provides a novel approach to integrating CSR within SE hospitality, suggesting that gamified CSR can advance sustainable tourism and support long-term brand growth in the sharing economy (Negruşa et al., 2015; Freeman, 2015).

THE GAZE OF MEDUSA? A STUDY ON THE GAZE OF OTHERS AND EXISTENTIAL AUTHENTICITY IN TOURISM EXPERIENCE

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Introduction

The famous line "L'enfer, c'est les autres" ("The hell, it is the others") from Jean-Paul Sartre's play Huis-Clos (No Exit) highlights how interpersonal encounters profoundly shape human existence, as the gaze of others can lead to one's objectification (Sartre, 1943, 1989). In tourism, the journey is often regarded as a quest for authentic self-discovery (MacCannell, 1976; Cohen, 1988). This pursuit, known as existential authenticity (Wang, 1999), has been recognized as a key motivator of tourism demand and loyalty (Fu, 2019; Yi et al., 2018, 2023). Existential authenticity is inherently linked to the exchange of gazes between individuals in tourism contexts (Wassler & Kirillova, 2019; Lin & Fu, 2021), though this relationship remains underexplored. Therefore, this study aims to investigate how the gaze of others impacts tourists' perceptions of existential authenticity through in-depth interviews.

Methods

The study adopts descriptive phenomenology, a suitable approach when the aim is to examine the essence of relationships or the structure of meanings within a phenomenon (Sanders, 2003; Kirillova, 2018). In phenomenological research, in-depth interviews are considered the primary method of data collection (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Padilla-Diaz, 2015), and therefore, semi- structured interviews are used. Additionally, online communication platforms like Zoom are utilized, allowing researchers to focus fully on participants without distractions while maintaining the quality of the interview experience (Hyde & Rouse, 2023). Individuals who have experienced various types of gazes during their travels are eligible for recruitment.

The study employed Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenological method, which comprises seven steps for the data analysis; (1) Familiarization; (2) Identification of significant statements; (3) Formulation of the meanings; (4) Clustering themes; (5) Exhaustive description; (6) Production of the fundamental structure; and (7) Verification of the fundamental structure (Morrow et al., 2015).

Results/Discussion/Implication

The study anticipates that tourists will experience existential authenticity primarily through the pure tourist gaze. However, when subjected to the gaze of other tourists or hosts, they may perceive themselves as objectified, which could disrupt their sense of authenticity (Sartre, 1943). Interactions with tourists from similar socio-cultural backgrounds are expected to undermine the purity of touristic communitas, affecting interpersonal authenticity (Wang, 1999). Additionally, interactions with hosts may influence intrapersonal authenticity depending on the attitudes (Wang, 1999; Wassler & Kirillova, 2019).

The expected findings highlight the complex interplay between gaze and existential authenticity in tourism, as suggested in Table 6. Understanding these dynamics can inform strategies for enhancing authentic experiences by addressing the impact of different types of gazes and interactions to create more supportive environments that improve overall tourist satisfaction and experience.

SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD LABELING IN RESTAURANTS: A VIRTUAL REALITY EXPLORATION OF CONSUMER PREFERENCES

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Introduction

Sustainable practices in the seafood industry have become increasingly vital due to concerns over overfishing, marine ecosystem destruction, and the need to secure long-term food resources (Cojocaru et al., 2022; Laffoley et al., 2020). Because 15% of aquatic food was wasted in 2021 (World Economic Forum, 2024), the Blue Economy has emerged to promote sustainable marine resource use (Stephenson & Hobday, 2024). Sustainability labeling (SL) in restaurants represents one strategy to encourage consumer behavior that aligns with environmental responsibility, particularly in seafood choices across dining formats (Asioli et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2022). Although SL programs have shown promise in raising consumer awareness, a gap remains in understanding the effect of SL in varied restaurant contexts and what levels of sustainability information may impact consumers' choices. Therefore, this study aims to investigate how SL categories and restaurant types affect consumer choices, with knowledge of sustainability as a moderator in a virtual reality environment.

H1: The type of SL will influence consumers' seafood purchasing decisions, with higher sustainability levels leading to a higher likelihood of purchase.

H2: Consumers dining in a virtual fine dining restaurant will be more likely to purchase sustainably labeled seafood compared to those in a virtual casual dining setting.

H3: Prior knowledge of sustainability will moderate the relationship between SL and purchasing decisions, with participants with higher prior knowledge being more responsive to SL.

H4: There will be an interaction between restaurant type and prior knowledge of sustainability, such that participants with higher prior knowledge in a fine dining setting will be most likely to purchase sustainably labeled seafood.

Methods

This study utilizes 3 (SL: no sustainability information vs. moderately sustainable information vs. highly sustainable information) × 2 (restaurant type: fine dining vs. casual dining) × 2 (prior knowledge of sustainability: high vs. low) between-subjects design. Participants (18+) will be recruited online but will attend in-person VR simulations, where they experience dining in either a fine or casual setting. A pre-experiment survey will assess sustainability knowledge, followed by a VR dining experience with randomly assigned SL levels on a seafood menu. Participants' choices, attitudes, and demographics will be recorded. Data will be analyzed using ANOVA to assess main effects and interactions, with post-hoc tests and manipulation checks to validate results. Post-hoc tests will be conducted to further analyze significant effects. Descriptive statistics will be used to summarize participants' attitudes toward sustainability and verify experimental manipulation.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study reveals how sustainability labeling and dining environments influence seafood choices, providing valuable insights for policymakers, restaurateurs, and hospitality stakeholders. The findings could enhance sustainable seafood awareness, guide effective labeling strategies, and support environmental goals in the restaurant industry.

ACTIVE SPORT EVENT TOURISM AS A SOCIAL HUB: A SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS OF THE SENIOR GAMES

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Introduction

With the growing aging population, addressing social isolation and loneliness has become urgent, prompting research into the role of tourism to alleviate these issues among mid-and-later-life adults (Hu et al., 2024; Morgan et al., 2015). Active sport-event tourism, particularly the Senior Games, enhances physical health and strengthens social connections, providing travel opportunities and social benefits (Dionigi, 2006; Cardenas et al., 2009; Gibson, 2013; Heo et al., 2013). However, research on how sport events shape participants' social networks to offer social benefits is limited.

This study fills this gap by using social network analysis to examine the network among Senior Games participants, aiming to understand how active sport-event tourism serves as a place for social interaction among mid-and-later-life adults. Specifically, it explores the structure of social networks formed between participants and their chosen sports, focusing on how network centrality contributes to social ties. The research addresses two questions: 1) What is the social network structure among participants and their sports at the Senior Games? 2) How does network centrality influence social connections among participants?

Methods

Data were collected from an online survey of participants in a local-level Florida Senior Games (N=260). Of the participants, 67.8% (n=154) were male and 32.2% (n=73) were female. In terms of age, 49.3% (n=111) were between 49 and 64, and 65.6% (n=139) were over 65. Regarding participation, 76.9% (n=200) competed in one sport, while 12.3% (n=32) participated in two. The sports included individual and team events such as golf, cycling, basketball, and softball. Additionally, 34.4% (n=73) regularly take vacations centered on sports. Social Network Analysis using R software was conducted to examine degree and betweenness centrality, with degree centrality indicating participants with the most connections and betweenness centrality identifying bridge roles within the network (Freeman, 1978). Connections were analyzed using an adjacency matrix, marking links with '1' and no links with '0' (Hanneman & Riddle, 2014).

Results/Discussion/Implication

The results indicate that active sport-event tourism fosters social interaction among mid-and-later-life adults (Dionigi, 2006; Heo et al., 2013), with particular sports fostering connections beyond physical activity. Participants with high degree centrality, mainly involved in basketball, track and field, and softball, establish numerous direct ties, while those with high betweenness centrality, often involved in basketball, track and field, and golf, serve as bridges that link less-connected participants, thus integrating the network (Freeman, 1978). These central participants, who typically compete in multiple sports at the Senior Games and return each year, play a key role in strengthening social ties within the event (Langley & Knight, 1999; Unruh, 1979). Additionally, while team sports naturally facilitate group interaction, even individual sports like golf and track and field effectively promote social connections (Stenner et al., 2016; 2020). Thus, structured events like the Senior Games serve as social hubs, fostering lasting relationships that may contribute to mitigating social isolation and loneliness, underscoring the role of sport tourism in enhancing social connectedness among aging populations (Gibson et al., 2002; Glover, 2018).

UNVEILING THE DICHOTOMY OF WELLBEING: A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF HOSTING EVENTS THROUGH SUBJECTIVE AND OBJECTIVE PERSPECTIVES

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Introduction

Event tourism plays a crucial role in improving the quality of life (QOL) and enhancing the appeal of destinations by invigorating urban areas, parks, resorts, and public spaces, making them more attractive to tourists (Getz & Page, 2016). Recognizing the extensive impact of events on community sustainability, local authorities are increasingly prioritizing the wellbeing of residents in host communities (Park et al., 2022). While substantial research has examined residents' subjective wellbeing, often focusing on their perceptions of event impacts, there remains a significant gap in empirical evaluations of events' effects on objective quality of life. Most studies on wellbeing rely primarily on survey-based data (Parketal., 2022). Replicating these studies with secondary data could broaden our understanding and applicability of the findings (Uysal et al., 2016). This research aims to address this gap by incorporating both objective and subjective data to assess the impact of events on community wellbeing. It represents the first investigation within event tourism literature to concurrently integrate both measures of wellbeing.

Methods

Data collection for this study will proceed in several stages. First, event tourism-related data for the period 2000-2020 will be obtained from the Delaware Tourism Office. Second, objective wellbeing indicators for the same timeframe will be collected from the State of Delaware Statistical Analysis Center. These indicators will include metrics such as health, education, crime rates, environmental quality, housing, and employment. In the third stage, data from the U.S. Census Bureau will be gathered for mapping purposes. To analyze temporal and spatial variability, Kriging interpolation will be employed.

A comparative analysis will also be conducted to explore the causal relationship between event hosting and community wellbeing. Propensity score matching will be applied to control population, age, and demographic differences across counties, ensuring a robust examination of the link between event tourism and objective wellbeing. Subjective wellbeing, reflecting residents' perceptions, will be assessed through surveys. To analyze the data, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) will be used to directly measure the impact of event tourism on residents' subjective wellbeing. In addition, Fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) will be applied to investigate how different factors influence these impacts under varying conditions. This dual-method approach is designed to provide comprehensive insights into the complex relationship between event tourism and community wellbeing.

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study is the first in event literature to integrate both objective and subjective wellbeing approaches, offering afresh perspective on how events affect community wellbeing. By combining data-driven metrics with residents' personal experiences, it highlights the measurable impacts on health, economy, and infrastructure, along with the intangible effects on quality of life and happiness. Advanced techniques like big data analytics and geospatial analysis enable dynamic, large-scale assessments of the relationship between events and socio-economic changes, utilizing readily available secondary data over extended periods.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CUSTOMER-FACING TECHNOLOGY IN UPSCALE CITY CENTRE HOTEL TOUCHPOINTS

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Introduction

Technology is quickly changing the way consumers interact with hotels by offering more convenient services (Liu & Hung, 2018; Sommer, 2015). While this is occurring across the hotel industry, higher-end hotels are more likely to embrace innovative technologies versus budget hotels (Jung et al., 2014), even when these technologies minimize the opportunity for personable service delivery (Lee, 2018; Padma & Ahn, 2020). Despite the adoption of technology, a research gap exists in understanding its role across the entire detailed guest experience. While existing studies focus on individual technologies or generalized journey maps (Bartaloni & Alderighi, 2024; Quiñones & Rojas, 2022; Rojas et al., 2021), there is a need to understand the implementation of customer-facing technology across all onsite touchpoints in upscale city centre hotels. To address this gap, this qualitative study will utilize the guided tour method and a focus group to identify where customer-facing technology has been implemented along every onsite touchpoint in the upscale city centre hotel segment. These touchpoints will be identified using Service-Dominant Logics account of value co-creation involving both the consumer and the business (Vargo & Lusch, 2004).

Methods

This study will utilize the guided tour method, involving interviews and property walk-throughs with hotel management from various upscale city centre hotels in Toronto, to identify management's perspective of all onsite touchpoints in the guest experience and the associated customer-facing technologies within each until theoretical saturation is achieved (as suggested by Stausberg, 2011). The data from this study will be analyzed using thematic analysis. Since touchpoints are instances of value co-creation between a business and the consumer (Vargo & Lusch, 2004), a focus group with previous guests will then evaluate the onsite touchpoints identified by management, determining which ones add value to their stay, and where value is enhanced by technology. This will create a finalized list of all onsite touchpoints in upscale city centre hotels and highlight where customer-facing technology exists within this in-depth encounter of the guest experience.

Implications

This study will collect data from both practitioners and consumers to provide an in-depth exploration of the guest experience in upscale city centre hotels by identifying all possible onsite touchpoints. This advances research in Service-Dominant Logic by utilizing its theoretical framework where value is co-created by multiple actors to identify touchpoints in the upscale city centre hotel segment. During the guided tours and focus groups, these touchpoints will be used to determine where customer-facing technology fits within each touchpoint, providing a detailed account of customer-facing technology's implementation in the upscale city centre hotel segment. Lastly, this detailed framework can be used to guide future research looking to take a micro view on the guest experience rather than a macro and all-encompassing view.

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY AND ITS IMPACT ON REPEAT HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM IN BOTSWANA

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Introduction

Tourism in Botswana is an integral part of the country's economic landscape and is valued for its diverse flora and fauna as well as its vibrant traditions. However, there is a severe lack of scientific research on the direct impact of cultural sensitivity on repeat tourism in the region. Cultural sensitivity, including the recognition and integration of different cultural norms and expectations, plays a key role in improving the tourist experience, thereby increasing the likelihood of repeat visits. Understanding this relationship is essential for developing sustainable tourism strategies to enhance the local economy and promote lasting tourist loyalty to Botswana (Chu et al., 2013; Keshavarz & Jamshidi, 2019).

Methods

This ongoing qualitative inquiry engages semi-structured interviews executed through Zoom to accumulate opinions from three vital groups active in Botswana's tourism scene: five officials from the government, eight industry practitioners, and seven local residents. To achieve a comprehensive range of insights, a targeted sampling strategy was adopted for participant selection. The span of each interview extends from 60 to 90 minutes and is transcribed precisely to bolster thematic analysis executed via NVivo software. To strengthen data reliability, independent coding is carried out, consequently assuring consistent and precise identification of themes (Bryman, 2016).

Results

This study aims to provide valuable insights regarding the influence of cultural sensitivity on repeat visitation in Botswana. By understanding and integrating culturally sensitive practices, hospitality providers have the capacity to greatly elevate tourist experiences, advance sustainable tourism efforts, and promote constructive cultural interactions that yield mutual benefits for the destination and its clientele.

HOW COLLECTIVE IMPACT FRAMING INFLUENCES TOURISTS' PRO ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOR

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Introduction

Human consumption of single-use plastic products (SUPs), such as carry bags, straws, and cups, has serious consequences for marine ecosystems (United Nations, 2023). Because a large portion of used SUPs end up in oceans. According to reports, around 8 million tonnes of SUPs end up in the oceans each year (United Nations Environment Programme, 2023). Because more than half of tourist attractions are located along the shore, the tourism industry has a substantial role in ocean plastic pollution. For example, over 200 million tourists visit the Mediterranean region each year, resulting in a 40% rise in plastic waste entering the ocean (World Wildlife Fund 2018). This problem is more apparent in developing countries like India, where there aren't enough waste collection and recycling facilities. As a result, researchers and managers are interested in low-cost interventions that can change tourists' behaviour towards alternatives to SUPs.

Prior literature has identified a variety of personal, social, and regulatory factors that contribute to reduced SUPs usage (Adam, 2023; Aruta, 2022; Bandyopadhyay et al., 2021; Borg et al., 2020; Chatterjee & Barbhuiya, 2021; Dorigoni & Bonini, 2023; Fanini & Guittard, 2021; Jakovcevic et al., 2014; Peter & Honea, 2012; Pham et al., 2021). However, there has been little research into the impact of external information interventions. In the current research, building on self-efficacy literature (Bandura, 1977), we propose that collective impact framing–showing how collective actions lead to positive results –can have a positive role in shifting intents from SUPs usage to reusable options (i.e., reusable water bottle in current research).

Methods

We will conduct two between-subject experiments to test the proposed relationships. Two studies are planned to collect data from tourists visiting coastal regions in the southern part of India. The procedure goes like this: after obtaining consent, respondents are assigned at random to treatment or control conditions. People in treatment will receive collective impact interventions in the form of newspaper advertisements showing a collective impact frame, while those in control will receive a standard message as a newspaper advertisement. Following that, we administer structured questionnaires (with study variables and demographics). In Study 1, we will investigate the direct effect of a 'collective impact intervention' on tourists' intention to use reusable water bottles. In Study 2, we will investigate the mediation effect of self-efficacy in the direct relationship.

Results/Discussion/Implication

The findings of the current work will provide some theoretical contributions; this is one of the first studies to examine the role of collective impact framing in encouraging tourists to engage in pro- environmental behaviour, contributing to the body of knowledge on sustainable tourist behaviour. In addition, the findings will help policymakers and destination managers design low-cost communication interventions to reduce plastic waste. The overall findings contribute to the United Nations' sustainable development goals (G12, G13, and G14).

INTERNATIONAL BENCHMARKING IN HOSPITALITY LEARNERSHIP/APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS: LESSONS FROM THE UNITED STATES FOR PROMOTING DIVERSITY EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN SOUTH AFRICA.

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Introduction

This study examines the extent to which best practices from the United States (U.S) can inform the design and implementation of hospitality learnership programs in South Africa, with particular emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). By analyzing successful models from the U.S., the research aims to address issues related to unemployment and skills shortages, ensuring that the programs are accessible, effective, and support historically disadvantaged groups.

The historical context of South Africa has led to entrenched inequalities in education and employment opportunities, necessitating the integration of DEI principles into learnership programs. The U.S., with its extensive experience in educational initiatives that prioritize diversity and inclusion, provides valuable insights that can be adapted to the South African context (Cherident & Gremillion, 2024). By aligning learnership programs with global best practices, South Africa can address historical disparities, foster a more equitable workforce, and promote long-term economic growth through inclusive skill development, while also enhancing social cohesion and reducing systemic barriers. This study is underpinned by Human Capital Theory, which posits that investments in education and training are critical for enhancing individual productivity and driving economic growth (Becker, 1975).

Methods

This study employed a comprehensive literature review and a survey administered to hospitality learnership stakeholders in South Africa and the United States via Qualtrics. The survey, combined closed-ended questions for quantitative analysis with open-ended questions for qualitative insights. The study adopted a mixed-methods approach to enhance understanding of complex phenomena (Collins et al., 2007). The study population comprised of 160 participants in hospitality learnerships, program administrators, and industry partners, with purposive sampling employed for data collection.

Results/Discussion/Implication

Preliminary survey results reveal mixed perceptions regarding the effectiveness of learnerships in promoting equitable access, indicating a generally positive outlook but highlighting the need for improvements. The U.S. experience offers critical lessons in integrating DEI principles through targeted outreach, mentoring, and support networks. Adapting these strategies within South African learnerships can help dismantle existing barriers, ensuring broader access and improved outcomes for participants. By incorporating successful strategies from international benchmarks, South African hospitality programs can work towards a more inclusive workforce. Future research can further explore these dynamics and refine recommendations for effective implementation, ultimately fostering a more equitable environment within hospitality education and employment.

SENSE OF PLACE AND HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM ENTREPRENEURS' RESILIENCE IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

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Introduction

Starting a small hospitality and tourism business is appealing for individuals looking for additional source of income, due to the lower barriers (Duarte Alonso & Liu, 2010; Molina-Collado et al., 2022). However, entrepreneurs face significant challenges in sustaining their business in rural communities. With the continuous setbacks, entrepreneurs' resilience become greater interest for researchers and policymakers to support entrepreneurship in rural communities (Wang et al., 2022). Sense of place is a person's emotional and psychological attachment to a place (Erfani, 2022), which can stimulate entrepreneurial involvement due to their commitment to the community (Haşim & Soppe, 2023). It can also improve their self-efficacy, crucial for their resilience and performance (Caliendo et al., 2023).

While a few studies have discussed the role of sense of place on hospitality and tourism entrepreneurship (e.g., Hallak et al., 2012; Liu & Cheung, 2016), they focused on entrepreneurial performance quantitatively, failing to fully capture the role of sense of place on entrepreneurs' resilience. Oklahoma state is primarily rural with one of the highest poverty rates in the U.S. (15.7%) and 35.4% rural population who experience minimal economic growth (France, 2023). Hence, this study aims to uncover the lived experiences of hospitality and tourism entrepreneurs in U.S. rural communities through qualitative research. This research will broaden the current knowledge on the literature of entrepreneurs' resilience and provide practical implications to improve entrepreneurial activities in U.S. rural communities through the enhancement of local's sense of place.

Methods

This study will employ a qualitative research design with semi-structured with hospitality and tourism entrepreneurs in rural communities with fewer than 5,000 residents and 2,000 households. (*Urban and Rural*, 2023). Entrepreneurs' businesses will be identified through online searches. The interview protocol will focus on entrepreneurs' community attachment and sense of place in relation to their resilience. The interviews will be held in-person, through call or video conferencing, lasting about an hour and will continue until theoretical saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The interviews will be transcribed and content-analyzed using NVivo 14 to categorize them into codes, subthemes, and themes. To confirm the credibility of analysis, member checks will be used (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Results/Discussion/Implication

This study is expected to capture the resilience of hospitality and tourism entrepreneurs in the rural communities, focusing on how their sense of place shapes their perceptions, decision-making, and coping strategies. The findings will expand the literature on sense of place and entrepreneurial resilience, providing a framework for this relationship and practical insights for policymakers to enhance entrepreneurial resilience by fostering a strong sense of place.