

# COMPETITION OR COMPLEMENT? EVALUATING AGRITOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN CONNECTION WITH THE LOCAL TOURISM SECTOR IN UMBRIA, ITALY

**Yasuo Ohe**

*Tokyo University of Agriculture, Japan*

**Adriano Ciani**

*University of Perugia and AMAR, Italy*

## INTRODUCTION

These days, agritourism has become recognized as a measure of rural development in such a way that farmers can earn income on an on-farm basis (Ohe, 2020). This tourism activity has diffused from Western Europe to other parts of the world including developing countries (Bhatta and Ohe, 2020; Bhatta et al., 2020). Among agritourism activities, agriturismo, or agritourism, in central Italy, has played a leading role as good practice in that country's rural development and as one of the most successful models anywhere in the world (Ohe and Ciani, 2011; 2012). Although agritourism studies have been rapidly increasing in every part of the world, insufficient attention has been paid to the relationship between agritourism and the local tourism sector during the process of agritourism development. This point will become more critical for sustainable and co-existing rural development through both agritourism and the local tourism sector as agritourism develops further. Thus, it is necessary to empirically investigate the relationship between agritourism and the local tourism sector, i.e., competitive or complementary. This paper explores this relationship with the panel data by focusing on Umbria, located in central Italy and has been the growth centre of agritourism in that country. Finally, the paper presents policy implications for harmonized tourism development in rural areas.

## METHOD

Agritourism in Umbria has developed rapidly for the last three decades. Umbria is located as a southern neighbour to Tuscany, which has a

worldwide reputation as a well-preserved traditional rural landscape and the Italian Renaissance's cultural heritage. Compared with Tuscany, Umbria is more rural as the "green heart of Italy" and less famous than Tuscany. The authors think that Umbria is more suitable for agritourism study under the circumstances of closer to ordinary rural areas that are often unlikely to have appealing rural resources.

Panel regression models were employed for the panel data of 12 areas in Umbria from 1999 to 2012, obtained from tourism statistics compiled by the Umbrian regional government. All data are yearly data due to the data constraint. This study needs both demand and supply sides, and only comparable yearly data is available for both sides during that period. We consider short-term and medium-term effects on the relationship between agritourism and the local tourism sector. The short-term effect is represented by the number of beds offered by agritourism farms and the medium-term effect by the number of agritourism farms. This is because an increase in the number of beds is a relatively easy and less costly investment for agritourism farmers. On the other hand, such a business's inauguration takes much longer scrutiny and imposes a heavier financial burden than the latter decision to increase the number of beds.

Based on the consideration above, estimation models assume that both agritourism and local tourism's demands affect the supply increase in agritourism with a one-year lag of demand. For the explanatory variables, we considered two types of stays, by Italian and foreign tourists, because tourism in Italy consists of domestic tourists and those inbound from abroad (Ohe and Ciani, 2012). Due to these different segments of local tourism sectors, we considered hotels and non-hotel

accommodation, such as B&B establishments and apartment rentals. Fixed effect and random effect models were employed, and a Hausman test was conducted to check which effects model is valid.

## FINDINGS

The estimation results are summarized in Table 1, which revealed that Italians' demand in both the hotel and non-hotel sectors is competitive. In contrast, the market by foreigners in the hotel

sector was competitive in the short term against agritourism's increase in its number of beds. In the medium term, demands by Italians in the hotel sector and by foreigners in the non-hotel sector were competitive against agritourism supply in new farms entering into agritourism. In summary, Italians' hotel demand is more competitive against an agritourism supply increase than hotel demand by foreigners in the medium term. On the other hand, the foreign market is more competitive against agritourism in the non-hotel demand.

**Table 1. Estimation Results of Panel Data Regression Model on the Relationship with Agritourism**

Term	Explained	Hotel		Non-hotel	
		Italian market	Foregner market	Italian market	Foregner market
Short term	No. beds	Competitive	Competitive	n.s	Competitive
Medium term	No. AT farms	Competitive	n.s	n.s	Competitive

Source: Panel data based on tourism statistics edited by Umbria Region from 1999 to 2012.

Notes: "Competitive" means competitive against agritourism and "n.s." means not significance.

Thus, we empirically confirmed the competitive relationship between the local tourism sector. Specifically, the hotel sector for the Italian market and the non-hotel sector for the foreigner market are competitive against the agritourism sector. This relationship has not been statistically verified before. Italian agritourism has now reached the saturation stage after rapid growth in the past three decades. It is time to explore an opportunity to transform from a competitive to a more complementary approach among local tourism stakeholders, including agritourism.

## CONCLUSION

Unexpectedly, the relationship between agritourism and the local tourism activities has been sparsely investigated, although the authors often heard during our continuous visit survey in Umbria that some operators said competitive and others said complementary to each other. This study revealed the rivalry between agritourism and local hotel sectors during its development from 1999 to the early 2010s. That study period was a demand growing period for local tourism, including agritourism, which was likely to cover up the existence of rivalry. This is one reason why operators expressed the above different opinions.

In contrast, currently, the demand became stagnant, which will make that rivalry appear more clearly. Thus, it is time to consider a co-creating local development strategy that integrates the local tourism sector and agritourism. A partnership will be more required among local tourism stakeholders and demand analysis for each segment in this respect.

A limitation of this study is that rapidly growing shared accommodation services such as Airbnb were not considered due to the study focus on orthodox accommodation businesses and the scarcity of data on such emerging services. This issue should be addressed in the future.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study was financially supported by KAKENHI (Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research) No. 18H03965 and No. 20H04444 by JSPS (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science).

# FACTORS INFLUENCING RESIDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF TOURISM IMPACTS IN SOUTHEASTERN NIGERIA

**Afamefuna P. Eyisi**

*Murdoch University*

**Diane Lee**

*Murdoch University*

**Katheryn Trees**

*Murdoch University*

## INTRODUCTION

Following increased awareness that economic benefits do not justify tourism support, attention has shifted to residents' perceptions of socio-cultural and environmental impacts. Since the 1970s, such studies have grown exponentially (Mansfeld & Ginosar, 1994; Tosun, 2002; Vargas-Sanchez, Porras-Bueno & Plaza-Mejia, 2011) to help create a balanced approach to tourism planning and decision-making. Researchers argued that for tourism to be successful, residents' support is essential (Ap & Crompton, 1998; Javier, 2016; Jurowski & Gursoy, 2004); their support encourages sustainable tourism development and helps to manage impacts (Castillo Canalejo, Nunez Tabales & Sanchez Canizares, 2016). Many research on this topic area employed some theories, especially social exchange theory (SET), to argue that residents' perceptions are more favourable when tourism impacts are perceived positive and vice versa. However, during tourism development in many destinations (mostly within the emerging economies), residents' concerns are sometimes neglected. In many cases where the local people are consulted, such consultation adopts a top-down approach (Tosun, 1999). The reason could be the centralized governance structure or the perceptions of tourism developers about the local people lacking the skills to contribute to the development process (Moscardo, 2011; Tosun, 2000). This paper adopts SET to explore residents' perceptions of tourism impacts in Southeastern Nigeria because there is limited literature on tourism development in the area.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

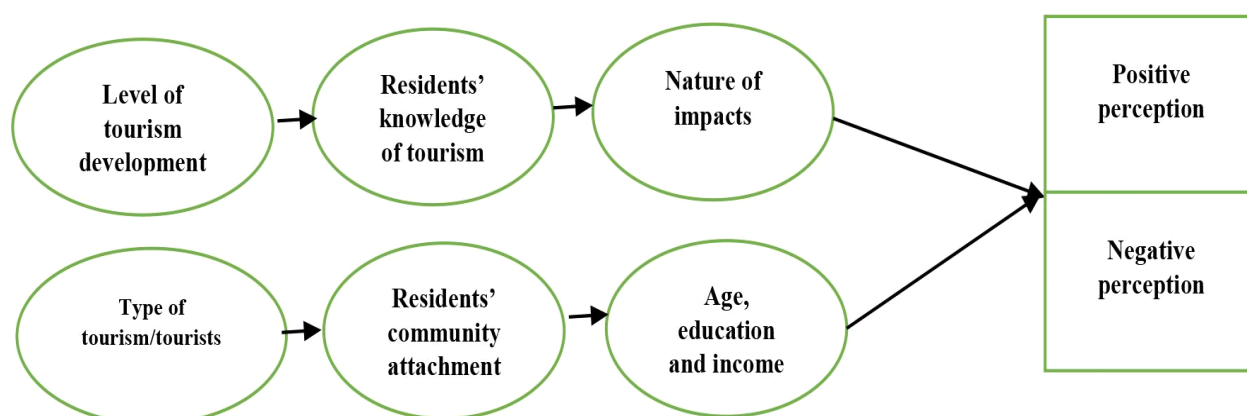
The tourism literature is replete with findings on the variables and socio-demographic features that influence residents' perceptions of tourism impacts. Garcia, Vazquez and Macias (2015); Jurowski and Gursoy (2004); Lankford and Howard (1994) and Madrigal (1995) discussed some of these variables, including perceived economic benefits, level of tourism development, type of tourism/tourists, residents' attachment to the community, residents' level of involvement in decision-making, the role of government, the distance of tourism to residents, the extent of contact between residents and tourists and residents' level of knowledge about tourism. The socio-demographic variables include age, gender, income, status and education. Ap and Crompton (1998); Choi and Sirakaya (2005) and Lankford and Howard (1994) further argued for a tourism impact attitude scale (TIAS) as a universal model for understanding residents' perceptions. However, Vargas-Sanchez et al. (2011) acknowledged the difficulty in proposing a universal model because of some factors, including the level of tourism development at each destination, attributes of residents, economic dependence on tourism and residents' knowledge of tourism. These make comparisons problematic, highlighting the need for more research, especially from emerging economies.

Most findings from the topic area confirmed that when the positive economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts of tourism outweigh the negative, residents' perceptions are supportive and vice versa (Javier, 2016; Cordero, 2008; Vargas-



Sanchez, 2011). The findings equally highlighted the subjective nature of residents' perceptions of tourism impacts (Cordero, 2008). Cordero (2008) highlighted the contradictory findings, methodological issues, theoretical complexities and a lack of standard scales in the topic area. The author agreed that future researchers should extend such studies to other destinations in the early stages

of tourism development, such as some African countries, including Nigeria. Therefore, this paper contributes to knowledge in the topic area by studying the Southeastern region of Nigeria as one of the destinations where tourism is in the early stages of development. To this end, the conceptual framework for the research is reflected in Figure 1:



**Figure 1: Factors that influence residents' perceptions of tourism impacts (positive & negative)**

## METHOD

Data were collected during ethnographic fieldwork conducted in the Southeastern region of Nigeria, home of the Igbo tribe (see Figure 2). The region was selected because the primary researcher is indigenous and has the required linguistic advantage to interact with participants. Ethnography offered an opportunity for in-depth interactions with participants and encouraged a good representation of their voices. Ethnography was also deemed appropriate because it created the opportunity for participants to share their perceptions about tourism impacts in details. The purposive sampling technique, which encouraged knowledgeable participants about the research subject to be selected (Robinson, 2014), was used to identify key tourism stakeholders who could influence tourism development in the region. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions

were organized with the selected 208 stakeholders, comprising the traditional rulers, men, women and youth representatives, chief priests and local security agents. All the interviews were audio-recorded, lasted between one and two hours, and conducted in the native Igbo language and later transcribed to English to suit an English reading audience. The interviews with the traditional rulers were conducted in their traditional palaces, while the interviews with the local security personnel, men, women and youth leaders were conducted separately at the community squares (to empower each group to speak freely without fear or favour). The interviews with the chief priests were conducted at their shrines. Data were analyzed using content analysis (CA), which is fundamental in qualitative analysis because it helps to identify themes that are vital for addressing the research question(s).

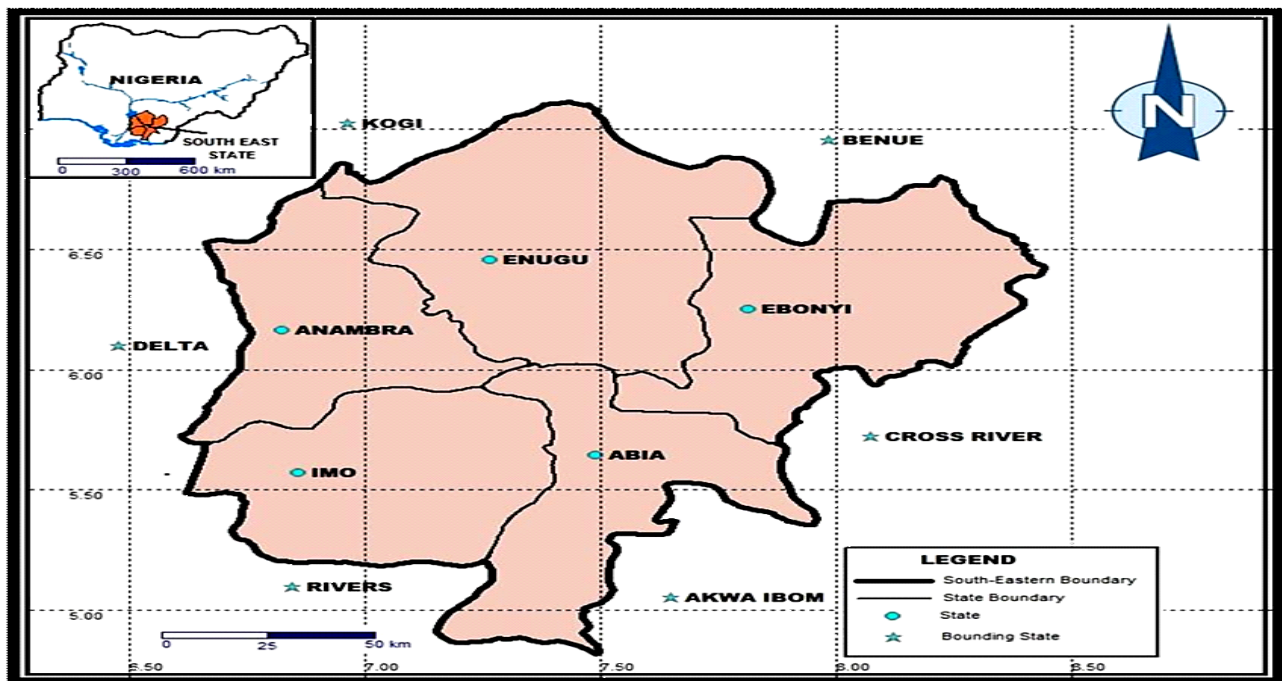


Figure 2: Map of South-eastern showing the five major states.

Source: Okonkwo and Eyisi (2014).

## FINDINGS

Results confirmed the application of SET in understanding residents' perceptions of tourism impacts. The results also identified factors that could influence residents' perceptions of positive and

negative impacts, including economic benefits and job opportunities, cultural preservation, gender inequality, fear of western influence, opportunities for glocalization and demonstration effects and social vices. The results are briefly explained in Table 1 below.

Positive perceptions	Description	Negative perceptions	Description
Economic benefits and job opportunities	Participants noted that they would support tourism if it guarantees economic benefits and creates job opportunities because of the high poverty level in the area. They also expect to generate benefits through selling souvenirs, serving as tour guides and collecting gate fees from tourists.	Gender Inequality	In the study area, as part of the Igbo culture, people do not believe in gender equality. This implies that men are allowed more freedom than women. Most women participants acknowledged that such orientation would affect their participation in tourism development and during impact assessment.
Cultural preservation	Cultural preservation influenced how residents perceive tourism impacts in Southeastern Nigeria. The chief priests, adherents of African traditional religion and the traditional rulers did not support any tourism that would harm their culture and incur the wrath of their gods	Demonstration effects and social vices	The negative impacts of tourism could influence residents' perceptions. Many participants were antagonistic toward the potential negative impacts of tourism, such as copying tourists behaviour (language and dressing) and altering their culture.
Opportunity for glocalization	Participants further expected tourism to contribute to community development by attracting good roads, steady electricity supply and telecommunication networks.	Fear of neo-colonialism and western influence	Britain colonized Nigeria, and many participants, especially the older adults who experienced colonialism, were worried that tourism as a western phenomenon might have psychological effects.

## CONCLUSION

This paper discussed factors that could influence residents' perceptions of tourism impacts in Southeastern Nigeria. The results confirmed the application of SET and showed that residents' perceptions of tourism impacts are complex and are influenced by some destination-specific factors. Research in this topic area has gained recognition because of the negative impacts of conventional tourism, which focused more on economic outcomes. Emphasis shifted to measuring the socio-cultural and environmental impacts to offer a holistic approach to planning. For scholars to achieve a complete assessment of tourism impacts, understanding residents' perceptions have become necessary; thus, the need for more studies. Therefore, the findings from the Nigerian case study has contributed to knowledge in the topic area.

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# INVESTIGATING CONSUMER DECISION POSTPONEMENT AND BOOKING DECISION

**Pengsongze Xue**  
*University of Guelph*  
**WooMi Jo**  
*University of Guelph*

## INTRODUCTION

The rising popularity of online travel agencies (OTAs) brings intensifying competitions and conflicts in hotel market. Specifically, advanced applications from consumers' mobile phones and other electronic devices provide the convenience and flexibility for quick searching and receiving the latest information to make reservations. However, some obstacles could be created for consumers as overwhelming information will cause confusion or hesitation (Chernev, Bockenholt, & Goodman, 2015). As an example, both OTAs and hotels develop their own loyalty program to attract new consumers and retain existing members. When consumers are uncertain about which booking option is the best, they have to invest necessary amount of time and efforts to compare potential benefits and loss from switching one website to another. Thus, delaying the decision becomes an effective strategy to deal with uncertainty and evaluation difficulty. Although technology development increases the number of choices, no in-depth understanding of the psychological process and behaviors in hotel booking to-date is available. Additionally, decision postponement (DP) has been recently treated as a consequence of confusion (Shiu, 2017), but its related behavior outcomes is underexamined. Therefore, a deeper understanding of DP's influence during decision-making process is urgent to help researchers explore consumer decision process from a comprehensive view.

The purpose of this study is to examine switching cost (SWC) and alternative attractiveness (AA) as two determinants of DP and to explore the mediation effect of DP on the relationships between these two components of switching barriers and repurchase intention (RI) in the online hotel

booking context.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

SWC refers to "the perception of the magnitude of the additional cost required to terminate a relationship and secure an alternative one" (Patterson & Smith, 2003, p. 108). SWC arises when consumers perceive that cost outweighs benefit. DP is identified as a strategy for confused consumers to seek for a better purchase decision (Allan, Chieh, & Dogan, 2015). When consumers perceive high SWC, extra time allows them to seek for a better option compared to current one. Meanwhile, SWC has a positive impact on consumer retention, since consumers perceive high financial loss from leaving current service provider (Kim, Park, Park, Kim, & Kim, 2018). Thus, SWC increases final burden for consumers to detect to another provider (Fornell, 1992). If consumers observe a significant price difference across different booking channels, they would be more likely to choose familiar channels with cheaper rates.

- H1: SWC has a significant positive influence on DP.
- H2: SWC has a significant positive influence on RI.

AA is described as "the degree to which individuals are attracted to, prefer, and support relationships with a company give its enduring attributes" (Marín & Ruiz de Maya, 2013, p. 695). It is a significant predictor for customers' decision to whether stay or leave the current relationship (Rust & Kannan, 2003). AA is proposed to have significant influence on DP, because negative

emotions resulted from reviewing too many attractive options could lead to unfavorable decision behaviors, such as delaying decision and decreasing purchase intention (Akhtar, Siddiqi, Akhtar, Usman, & Ahmad, 2020). As one type of negative emotion, regret plays an important role in decision making (Saffrey, Summerville, & Roese, 2008). When customers place high value for the current choice and highly satisfied, they probably believe that they will not receive the same or higher level of value from other providers (Yang & Peterson, 2004). Similarly, Yim, Chan, and Hung (2007) found that more available AA positively affected switching intention and negatively affected repurchase intention.

- *H3: AA has a significant positive influence on DP.*
- *H4: AA has a significant negative influence on RI.*

DP, defined as “a delay to better deal with confusing circumstances surrounding the purchase” (Allan, et al., p.1331). While, RI is defined as consistent and repetitious purchase behavior (Bowen & Chen, 2001). Once consumers have decided to delay their choices, they are more likely to stay with familiar brands or service providers if they have difficulties in evaluating each option, as they have built trust from frequent purchases (Lobbers & Benlian, 2019). Also, repeat purchase from same booking channel would be simple and safe to avoid psychological discomfort occurred from information processing (Akhtar et al., 2020).

- *H5: DP has a significant positive influence on RI.*
- *H6: DP mediates the relationship between switching barriers (SWC & AA) and RI.*

## METHODS AND RESULTS

An online convenience sampling was adopted to collect panel data. After removing unqualified cases, 352 usable surveys were retained for analysis. All measurement items were modified as needed to fit within the context of this study. SWC and RI were measured by four items and three items respectively (Kim, Cho, & Han, 2014). AA was

measured four items adopted from Liao, Lin, Luo and Chea (2017). Four DP measurement items were adopted from Walsh, Hennig-Thurau, & Mitchell. (2007). A single item for TP was measured (Saqib & Chan, 2015). A 7-point Likert scale (1 = “Strongly disagree” to 7 = “Strongly agree”) was used for all measurement items.

The two-step process was followed to conduct confirmative factor analysis (CFA) and the structural equation modelling (SEM) (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). SPSS PROCESS macro was employed to test the mediating effect of DP by inspecting the direct and indirect effect with 95% of confidence interval (Hayes, 2013). All hypotheses are supported except H4. The SEM results shows that H1:  $SWC \rightarrow DP$  ( $\beta = 0.38$ ,  $t = 6.05$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), H2:  $SWC \rightarrow RI$  ( $\beta = 0.48$ ,  $t = 6.59$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), H3:  $AA \rightarrow DP$  ( $\beta = 0.31$ ,  $t = 4.65$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), H5:  $DP \rightarrow RI$  ( $\beta = -0.36$ ,  $t = -5.17$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The opposite path was found on H4:  $AA \rightarrow RI$  ( $\beta = 0.21$ ,  $t = 3.05$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The mediating test result shows that DP significantly mediated the relationships between switching barriers and RI.

## DISCUSSION

Both SWC and AA are found to be predictors of DP, indicating that either the high level of SWC or attractiveness from available options can increase consumers' willingness to defer their decisions. Consistent with previous study, confusion is created by the complexity in evaluation, having an influence on consumer further behavioral intention, such as DP (Walsh et al., 2007).

The positive relationship between SWC and RI is consistent with some past studies (Chuah, Marimuthu, Kandampully, & Bilgihan, 2017), however, it is interesting to find that AA had a positive effect on RI as well. That means, even though consumers can search other attractive options online, they still make repeat patronage. One possible explanation could be that these consumers might not necessarily trust observed attractiveness.

DP is found to have a significant negative relationship with RI. The Image Theory suggests that deferral happens when all options cannot pass the threshold value in processing stage (White, Hoffrage, & Reisen, 2015). Once all these options are rejected, consumers have to expand their choice

set by searching additional options. DP has a partial mediating effect between SWC and RI, while, full mediating effect exists between AA and RI.

## IMPLICATIONS

The antecedents and consequences of DP have not been examined comprehensively in consumer behavior literature, except for a few studies that treat DP as a confusion related outcome (Xue, Jo, & Bonn, 2020). Expanding on previous studies (Bhatia & Mullett, 2016), this study empirically demonstrates that both SWC and AA are two significant influential factors of DP. The study results also validate the significant relationships between two dimensions of switching barriers and RI (Koo, Yu, & Han, 2020).

Practically, knowledge of the antecedent and consequence of DP helps hotel practitioners motivate hotel guests engage in search-and-repurchase behavior. Overall, SWC has stronger influences on both DP and RI than AA. Hotel practitioners need to pay more attention on SWC. From monetary perspective, managers of hotels need to be aware of how their hotels are advertised online when incorporate with OTAs. From the non-monetary perspective, the ease of usage becomes important for hotel guest to make reservation, because they do not need to spend time on learning new applications (Yanamandram & White, 2010).

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# HOTEL EMPLOYEE WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING: ROLE OF MINDFULNESS

**Xiaoyan Yang**

*University of Guelph*

**WooMi Jo**

*University of Guelph*

## INTRODUCTION

The traditional work ethics (e.g., 9am to 9pm, six days per week) in China has forced individuals to devote themselves to their workplaces (Kim, Choi, Borchgrevink, Knutson, & Cha, 2018). Subject to such a cultural environment where strong work ethic and long working hours are enforced, employees' rights and well-being might have been greatly disregarded. This phenomenon might have significant impact on hotel employees' stress due to long working hours, restless night-shifts, ever-lasting smiley faces, and proactive responses to guests' needs (Shani, Uriely, Reichel, & Ginsburg, 2014) along with other workplace stressors, such as customer aggression, gossip and bullying. The impact might be even greater for those lower class and independent hotels without clear job descriptions or management supports to alleviate employees' stress. High intensity workload has also necessitated employees to recover during the off-work time.

Chinese workforces slowly have started doubting the value of devoting their lives to their workplace, and the meaning of work/workplace has been shifting for better personal life and wellness (Yang, 2014). Employees' healthy and sustaining psychological state are the critical ingredient to guest service quality in hotel business. Recovering from work can be one way to ensure employee's well-being (Lee, Choo, & Hyun, 2016). Employees gone through recovery experiences (i.e., psychological detachment and relaxation) have demonstrated better performance in energy recharge, sleep quality, intrapersonal relationships, job performance and work satisfaction (e.g., Janicke, Rieger, Reinecke, & Connor, 2018). However, most often, recovering from work until

they return to work is not guaranteed among Chinese hotel employees. In the collectivism society, many are bound to family obligations and filial responsibility to the extended family members during the off-work time (Kamo, 2000) and not able to respite at home. Moreover, the latest mobile phone and texting technology have distorted the boundary between work and personal life, increasing work-life conflicts (Li & Yuan, 2018). Work-life balance (WLB) indicated the ability of working individuals to deal with conflicts between professional and personal life (Carlson, Grzywacz, & Zivnuska, 2009). The imbalance between two is more likely associated with high job anxiety and less life satisfaction (Cain, Busser, & Kang, 2018). As the major hospitality workforce is younger generations (Gen X and Y), the imbalance is even more severe for young dual-earner or single parenting families without adequate support (Wang & Repetti, 2014). Furthermore, as they stand at the early stage of their career and focus on career development, support from their workplace for better WLB is deemed as an attractive welfare for organizations to retain and allure more qualified talents (Karatepe, 2010). The whole recover-to-wellness process also requires employees to stay focused on attention and cognition, which are part of trait mindfulness (Good et al., 2016). Mindful employees could concentrate on recovering at work while limiting their reactions to adverse external stimuli, such as work-life conflicts, thus better maintaining a state of well-being.

Despite the significance of recovery experiences and WLB, only a few empirical studies have paid attention to the effects of recovery experiences on life satisfaction (Lee et al., 2016) and that of WLB in hospitality research (Vanderpool & Way, 2013). Considering the current hotel work



environment in China, it is well-timed to examine Chinese hotel employees' subjective well-being (SWB). A thorough understanding of the effects of employee recovery experiences in terms of strengthening in WLB and SWB, as well as how a personal trait reinforce recovery experiences should send hotels worthwhile messages for human resources management.

In order to address the current phenomenon in China and the research gap, this study aims to examine 1) the effects of recovery experiences on WLB and employee SWB among Chinese hotel employees, 2) the mediating role of WLB on the relationships between recovery experiences and SWB, and 3) the moderating role of trait mindfulness on the relationships among the three constructs.

## METHOD

The study population is the hotel employees in China. Samples are selected by a self-administrated online survey through Sojump using the following criteria, all respondents must have at least one-year working experience in the current hotel, working at least 25 hours on average per week. The questionnaire is designed with measurement items from previous literature. There are total 45 items across four constructs. This study employed a two-step approach (CFA-SEM) to examine the construct validity and measurement model (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). To test the mediating effect, bootstrap estimation in AMOS was conducted. At last, this study compared the effect size between high and low trait mindfulness groups using a multigroup-SEM analysis to test the moderating effects (Byrne, 2001).

## FINDINGS

A total of 348 samples was collected. The study participants' demographics are, 65.5% female, 48.6% in their 30's, and 79.6% non-single. Most of them (99.5%) had at least one family member with income, and 84.5% have at least one dependent family member. Over 70% had a bachelor's degree in hotel management.

The CFA-SEM results indicated that the research model was of adequate fit. Only control

( $\beta = .16$ ,  $p < .05$ ) among four recovery experiences factors significantly positively affected life satisfaction; psychological detachment ( $\beta = .004$ ,  $p > .05$ ), relaxation ( $\beta = -.04$ ,  $p > .05$ ), and mastery experiences ( $\beta = -.03$ ,  $p > .5$ ) did not. Mastery experiences ( $\beta = .50$ ,  $P < .001$ ) and control ( $\beta = .35$ ,  $p < .001$ ) had a significant effect on life satisfaction. Work-life balance had a significant positive impact on life satisfaction. For the mediating effect, work-life balance fully mediated the relationship between mastery experiences and life satisfaction, and the relationship between control and life satisfaction. The moderating effect of mindfulness was significantly for high mindfulness group ( $\beta = .10$ ,  $p < .05$ ) in the relationship between psychological detachment and life satisfaction, and such significant difference were also found between high and low mindfulness group (Z-score=2.28,  $p < .05$ ) in the relationship of mastery experiences and work-life balance.

## IMPLICATIONS

Theoretically, first, this study demonstrated that recovery experiences represented a rich source of work-life balance, which significantly impacts on subjective well-being. This study validated the previous findings in the hotel setting. Second, this study advanced the literature by testing the mediating effect of work-life balance and explaining how recovery experiences and subjective well-being is related. Work-life balance serves as a coping ability in the face of high intensity workload, and it generates energy resources and consistently aggregates the effects of recovery experiences. Third, this study found out trait mindfulness strengthens the positive impact of recovery experiences on subjective well-being so that more mindful employees are happier in general.

Practically, while there is no way to increase the financial benefit for hotel employees, this study encourages more extensive enhancement of recovery experiences as non-financial aid to work stress. For example, master experiences can be gained through skill competition and on-job training. These activities do not only improve employees' competence but let employee earn their sense of achievement. Moreover, this study highlights the importance of work-life balance in

circulating the energy recharged by recovery experiences to subjective well-being. Other than family-friendly programs such as childcare and eldercare, hotel operators should start up a series of online “coping strategies training programs” (Anasori, Bayighomog & Tanova, 2020). For example, problem solving workshops provide employees knowledge and practical skills to enhance work-life balance. Lastly, based on the assistive role of trait mindfulness, it is suggested that hotel human resources employ few items of the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) (Brown & Ryan, 2003) in the recruitment process to recruit high mindful employees. Since trait mindfulness can also be cultivated, hotel operators should incorporate mindfulness practice into their daily routine, such as a 5-minute sketch workshops before briefing or breaks.

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