



Journal of Smart Tourism

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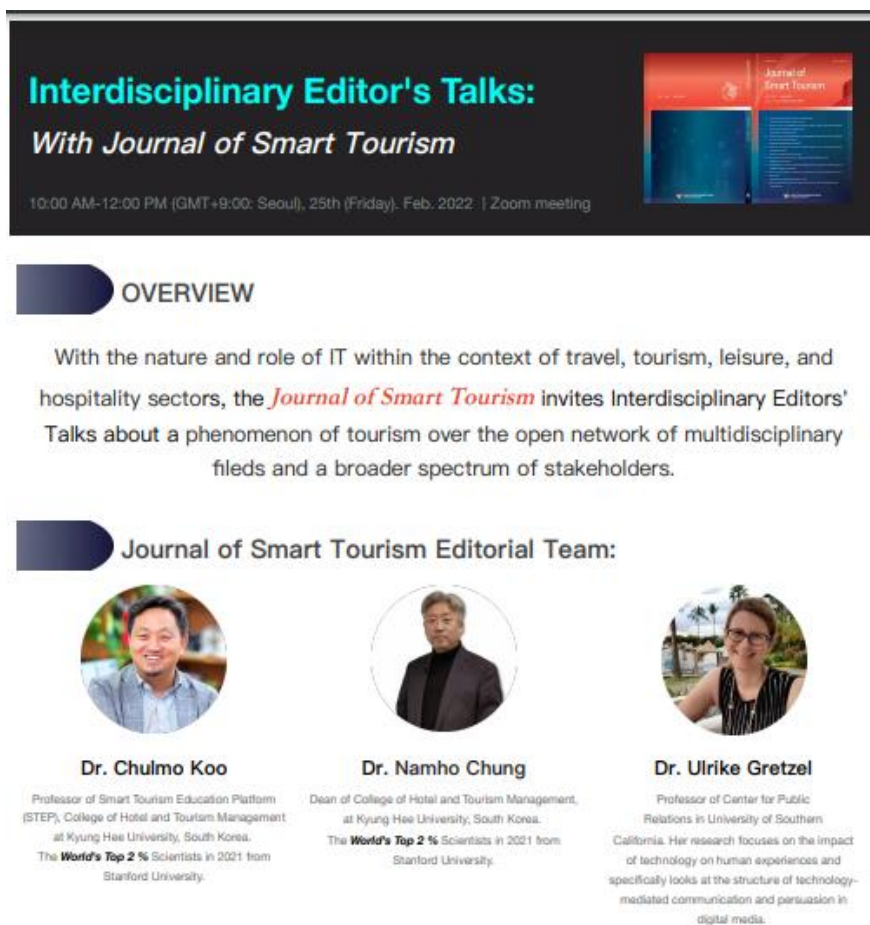
Interview

Interdisciplinary Talks by Journal Editors with Journal of Smart Tourism

Seunghun Shin^a , Jookyung Kwon^{b,*} , and Chulmo Koo^b 

^aSchool of Hotel and Tourism Management, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Kowloon, Hong Kong

^bSmart Tourism Education Platform, Kyung Hee University, Seoul, Republic of Korea



Interdisciplinary Editor's Talks:
With Journal of Smart Tourism

10:00 AM-12:00 PM (GMT+9:00: Seoul), 25th (Friday), Feb. 2022 | Zoom meeting

OVERVIEW

With the nature and role of IT within the context of travel, tourism, leisure, and hospitality sectors, the *Journal of Smart Tourism* invites Interdisciplinary Editors' Talks about a phenomenon of tourism over the open network of multidisciplinary fields and a broader spectrum of stakeholders.

Journal of Smart Tourism Editorial Team:




 <p>Dr. Chulmo Koo Professor of Smart Tourism Education Platform (STEP), College of Hotel and Tourism Management at Kyung Hee University, South Korea. The World's Top 2 % Scientists in 2021 from Stanford University.</p>	 <p>Dr. Namho Chung Dean of College of Hotel and Tourism Management, at Kyung Hee University, South Korea. The World's Top 2 % Scientists in 2021 from Stanford University.</p>	 <p>Dr. Ulrike Gretzel Professor of Center for Public Relations in University of Southern California. Her research focuses on the impact of technology on human experiences and specifically looks at the structure of technology-mediated communication and persuasion in digital media.</p>
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Fig. 1. Webinar poster

On February 2022, Smart Tourism Research Center (STRC) invited the editors of nine international academic journals in different fields and hosted a webinar “Interdisciplinary Editor’s Talks” (Figure 1). With three questions, each editor has shared its own opinion and insight about the current pandemic situation, the role of information technology (IT) in the research field, and the management of academic journals. Dr. Chulmo Koo, a senior researcher of STRC and co-editor-in-chief of *Journal of Smart Tourism* moderates the webinar. The whole webinar is edited and abridged for brevity and clarity. The invited editors are as follows (alphabetical order) (Figure 2):

- Dr. Cathy Hsu (Editor-in-Chief of *Tourism Management*)
- Dr. Dimitrios Buhalis (Editor-in-Chief of *Tourism Review*)
- Dr. H. Raghav Rao (Co-Editor-in-Chief of *Information Systems Frontiers*)
- Dr. James Petrick (Co-Editor-in-Chief of *Journal of Travel Research*)
- Dr. Jim Jansen (Editor-in-Chief of *Information Processing and Management*)

*Corresponding author:

Jookyung Kwon, Smart Tourism Education Platform, Kyung Hee University, Seoul, Republic of Korea

E-mail address: htmkwon@gmail.com

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- Dr. Rainer Alt (Editor-in-Chief of *Electronic Markets*)
- Dr. Sangwon Park (Managing editor of *Tourism Management*)
- Dr. Stanislav Ivanov (Editor-in-Chief of *European Journal of Travel Research*)
- Dr. Ulrike Gretzel (Co-Associate-Editor of *Journal of Smart Tourism*)
- Dr. Zheng Xiang (Editor-in-Chief of *Journal of Information Technology & Tourism*)

Participating Editors



Dr. Cathy Hsu

Editor-in-Chief of *Tourism Management* (Elsevier, Impact Factor, 10.967), The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, China



Dr. James Petrick

Editor-in-Chief of *Journal of Travel Research* (Sage, Impact Factor, 10.982), Professor of Texas A&M University, USA



Dr. Jim Jansen

Editor-in-Chief of *Information Processing & Management* (Elsevier, Impact Factor, 6.222), Professor in the College of Science and Engineering, Hamad bin Khalifa University, Qatar



Dr. Rainer Alt

Editor-in-Chief of *Electronic Markets* (Springer, Impact Factor, 4.765), Professor of Business Information Systems, Leipzig University, Germany



Dr. Dimitrios Buhalis

Editor-in-Chief of *Tourism Review* (Clarivate Impact Factor, 5.947), Professor of Marketing, Strategy, and Innovation, Bournemouth University, England



Dr. Stanislav Ivanov

Editor-in-Chief of *European Journal of Tourism Research* (Open Access, Scopus, Emerging Sources Citation Index), Varna University of Management, Bulgaria



Dr. Sangwon Park

Managing Editor of *Tourism Management* (Elsevier, Impact Factor, 10.967), Kyung Hee University, Korea



Dr. H. Raghav Rao

Editor-in-Chief of *Information Systems Frontiers* (Springer, Impact Factor 6.191), Infrastructure Assurance and Security at The University of Texas at San Antonio, USA



Dr. Zheng Xiang

Editor-in-Chief, *Journal of Information Technology and Tourism* (Springer, Impact Factor, 2.449), Professor of Hospitality and Tourism Management at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, US

Fig. 2. Participating editors' profiles

First, we asked experts to share their perspectives on COVID-19's impact on the hospitality and tourism industries, as well as academic research. Specifically, Dr. Chulmo Koo questioned, "Can you share your thoughts on how COVID-19 affects the hospitality and tourism industry, and how researchers should reflect the impact of the pandemic in their research?"

Dr. Zheng Xiang highlighted the need to develop research ideas and conduct studies based on the new phase of the pandemic situation: "While many researchers have been trying to explain different ramifications of the pandemic's impact, now, it is time for us to develop research ideas and conduct studies based on the new phase of the pandemic situation, namely how to live with COVID-19."

Dr. Rainer Alt said the pandemic emphasizes what we know from multi-channel marketing whereas each channel has its own strengths and shortcomings: "On the one hand, I expect business travel to decrease and to be substituted in many cases with virtual formats. On the other hand, there might be less implications in the leisure segment. For information systems researcher, this could mean to investigate the contribution of upcoming technologies. For example, the metaverse might mitigate business travel and decentralized technologies such as self-sovereign wallets with vaccination certificates could support travelers." Addressing such

questions calls for more interdisciplinary research and academic journals should devise mechanisms to value these approaches.

Dr. Sangwon Park emphasized data interpretation as a big issue. He argued that even the same research findings have to be interpreted in a different manner depending on whether the data are collected before or after the pandemic: "How to use our knowledge about the pandemic wisely to process data and derive valid implications is the point researchers should consider."

Dr. Cathy Hsu mentioned the balance between the local and global aspects: "Most current studies about COVID-19 are case studies and the findings are limited to a specific geographical or temporal context. From now on, researchers have to try to provide implications at a global level via macro-level studies."

Dr. Dimitrios Buhalis pointed out the importance of sharing our knowledge: "The pandemic gives us a good opportunity to contribute to the industry. Now, the industry people are asking for researchers to give guidance about how to deal with the current situation. As such, we need to share both what we have found from our studies and what we do not know either."

Lastly, according to Dr. Raghav Rao, the indirect results of COVID-19 should be considered together with its direct results: "For example, people actually feel the importance of cyber security as the pandemic has made most aspects of our lives be in

virtual space. Considering this change has led various businesses to take further steps regarding customer data management, such issues would be the areas that researchers should not overlook to explain the impact of the pandemic.”

Second, we asked experts to share their opinions about the role of IT in interdisciplinary research. Specifically, Dr. Chulmo Koo questioned “IT is an essential factor in interdisciplinary research in that it is involved in every aspect of our life and industry. Can you share your opinion about the role of IT in interdisciplinary research?”

According to Dr. Dimitrios Buhalis, IT is not something related to the future anymore, but about presence. He believed that COVID-19 has intensified such trend by digitizing every aspect of our lives (e.g., e-learning, e-social relation): “In the tourism context, IT is the absolute center of how travel is being produced and consumed. Thus, it might not be appropriate to consider IT as a different sector that can be a source for interdisciplinary research.”

Dr. Cathy Hsu defined IT as a core aspect of hospitality and tourism research in general. She said “As indicated by the increasing popularity of the smart tourism concept, IT becomes the core aspect of hospitality and tourism research in general. This trend seems to make our field adapt to the interdisciplinary approach. When I see the submissions to our journal (i.e., *Tourism Management*), a lot of them are from very different disciplines, such as urban studies, land surveying, geological information system, and so on. By enabling researchers from different fields to connect their ideas, IT has led us to pursue interdisciplinary knowledge.”

From the computer scientist’s perspective, Dr. Jim Jansen shared his opinion: “As a computer scientist, I often think about ‘what is tourism.’ While it was not an important question in my field, it now becomes one of the major questions. Without IT, this would not happen. IT has been making hospitality and tourism relevant topics even in seemingly unrelated fields.”

Dr. James Petrick also provided insight from the perspective of a journal editor: “As an editor of the journal which is oriented to theory development, the possibility to measure peoples’ cognitive, physiological, and behavioral reactions seem the best contribution of IT. It will keep developing our ability to understand individuals and their responses. As researchers, we need to be smart enough to take advantage of that benefit.”

Following his comments, Dr. Sangwon Park added another perspective as a journal editor. He stated that applying IT is the tool for providing insights into and discussion about the nature of tourism, not the goal of research: “Although I acknowledge the huge impact of IT in the research field, we should not forget that tourism is the core of interdisciplinary research in our field. According to the submissions to our journal (i.e., *Tourism Management*), quite many submissions simply apply new technologies, techniques, or data to the tourism context.”

Finally, we asked experts to share their thoughts regarding different levels of progress between the Asian and the Western academic community. Specifically, Dr. Chulmo Koo questioned “Compared to the Western academic community, the Asian academic community has a lower number of international journals. What challenge would be the critical one which the Asian community needs to address this situation?”

Dr. Stanislav Ivanov expressed the importance of the balance across journals in terms of their types: “It is important to establish both affiliated and independent journals in a balanced way. In my opinion, the development of an academic community is highly correlated to the diversity of communication channels. The potential journal editors should make a strategic decision regarding whether to be affiliated with big publishers (e.g., Elsevier, Springer) or be independent based on each option’s benefits. While the affiliation provides a journal with substantial marketing and technical supports, the independent management provides a journal with complete freedom in terms of sharing knowledge or promoting specific research topics.”

Dr. Zheng Xiang pointed out the journal identity: “What is




important for developing a journal would be its own identity. Our journal (i.e., *Journal of Information Technology & Tourism*) is the journal that has the longest history of publishing research papers about IT and tourism. Although it has been started and positioned as a niche journal, it has changed because IT has become a mainstream topic. While it is difficult to address how to develop a journal’s identity versus how to own a topic, this would be the important issue we have to deal with.”

A real impact of an academic journal has been emphasized by Dr. James Petrick: “The Asian community might be able to focus on creating academic journals of the real impact. The high impact factors of top-tier journals in the Western community do not necessarily mean that every research paper of the journals is read by a large number of practitioners or, even, researchers. While we, as researchers, need to play the game that the departments, schools, and universities demand (e.g., publishing a research paper in a top-tier journal), the more important mission for us is to advance society via research and science. If the Asian community aims to create a journal of a higher readership and a real impact, it would become the one where the best game for researchers will exist.”

Lastly, Dr. Ulrike Gretzel added comments about accessibility: “While a journal is an important element of our community, it does not mean it is the only thing we should consider for developing the community. To develop an academic community, it might be more important to make it open for everyone so that anyone can share her or his idea. I think it depends on how senior trains junior scholars and promotes such a culture.”

From the webinar, we have derived two major conclusions. First, it is critical for researchers and practitioners to plan how to respond to a potential pandemic while also considering the upcoming resumption of tourism. Although tourism is gradually returning to normal, a new pandemic can strike at any time, eventually shutting down the entire industry again. Researchers and practitioners must collaborate based on what they have learned over the past two years to make the hospitality and tourism industries more resilient to global pandemics. Second, researchers and practitioners should look beyond current practices to fully utilize IT for capturing human reactions. Although the important aspects of human reaction (e.g., cognitive and emotional responses) remain difficult to measure accurately, technological advancements have enabled researchers to gain new insights through the use of easy-to-use programs or devices. Eye-tracking devices, for example, are useful for measuring visual attention, facial expression recognition programs are beneficial for measuring emotion, and wearable optical topography devices can be used to estimate brain activities. Given that the travel experience is all about how people see, feel, and think about various contents, such technological potential is necessarily discussed in the hospitality and tourism fields. As a result of the discussion, hospitality and tourism researchers could not only improve the methodological aspects of their studies but conduct interdisciplinary studies by collaborating with researchers from other fields.

ORCID iD

Seunghun Shin  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7022-6732>
 Jookyung Kwon  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6438-5136>
 Chulmo Koo  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9822-1279>

Author Biographies

Seunghun Shin is an assistant professor at the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. His research interests include social media analytics in hospitality and tourism, traveler behavior in online platforms, and information communication technology.

Jookyung Kwon is a research professor at Smart Tourism Education Platform, Kyung Hee University, South Korea. Her research interest includes smart tourism, sustainability, inspiration, and luxury.

Chulmo Koo is a professor of Smart Tourism Education Platform, Kyung Hee University, South Korea. His research interest includes smart tourism, online reviews, IT & tourism, and MICE industry.