

Exploring entertainment tourism experience in integrated resorts: a process-based perspective

Abstract: Entertainment tourism experience is an emerging but largely overlooked phenomenon. The current study, adopting a qualitative approach, explored travel motivation and entertainment tourism experience from tourists' and industry professionals' perspectives. A total of 33 tourists and 18 industry professionals in Macao were interviewed. Three layers of entertainment tourism experience were identified, namely, behavioral, functional and affective aspects of experience. Furthermore, the three layers of experience were reported to be interrelated and played different roles in creating tourists' entertainment experience. The study accordingly established an integrated flow of entertainment tourism experience. Moreover, the study offered practical implications to destination marketing organizations, industry practitioners, and tourists on cultivating a desired entertainment tourism experience for the tourists.

Keywords: entertainment tourism; behavioural experience; functional experience; affective experience; integrated resorts.

1. Introduction

Tourism and entertainment have become two of the most important sectors in the service industry. The demand of tourism continues to increase as the international tourist arrivals grow steadily. Tourist arrival increases from 25 million in 1951 to 1.5 billion in 2019. In addition, roughly 10% of the jobs in the world came from the tourism sector and nearly 30% of the international exports of services came from tourism (UNWTO, 2020). Entertainment has become more important in global business. Globally, the entertainment, as well as the media business, contributed 1.6 trillion USD in 2013 and reached 2.1 trillion USD in 2017 (Bond, 2013). Moreover, people in the United States spent over 200 billion USD a year on entertainment (Chen, 2012).

Entertainment tourism is economic activities within the entertainment and tourism sector, becomes increasingly popular, not only for academics, but also for practitioners (Luo & Lam, 2018; Adeboye, 2012) due to its ability to attract people and people's soul. Entertainment activities are tourism products that are created to satisfy the needs of customers and to create unforgettable experience (Xu, 2010). Entertainment businesses in different places are changing rapidly in the last several years (Minton, 1998). Gambling, when combined with entertainment, creates fascinating image and products for the gambling business (Loi & Pearce,

2012). Many internationally well-known brands, such as MGM, Crown Resorts, Wynn Resort, etc., have opened many integrated resorts all over the world (O'Connor, 2018).

According to the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO, 2018), entertainment is a major factor inducing tourists to visit. Macau is an important and internationally well-known gaming destination and is the only city in China which people can gamble legally. Macau is one of the largest and the most luxurious resorts in the Asian region (Luo, Lam, Li & Shen, 2016). By the end of 2019, there were 36 integrated resort hotels in Macau (DSEC, 2020). Macau is under the process of changing from a gaming concentrated city to a more family- and business-oriented destination (Luo & Lam, 2018). This expectation gave Macao considerable opportunities to develop new attractions and markets. Under this transition, destination practitioners should not only understand goals that underpin tourist experience, but also design experience that will incorporate consumers' resources (Fesenmaier & Zheng, 2017). According to Luo and Lam (2018), the performance of tourism products provided by Macau did not match the expectation of tourists. Meanwhile, many tourism scholars emphasized the importance of tourist experiences (Kang & Gretzel, 2012; Zatori, Smith & Puczko, 2018; Luo, Lam & Fan, 2020). However, capturing tourist experience is a difficult task, hence, a comprehensive conceptualization is necessary (Godovykh & Tasci, 2020). Further, most existing literature in tourism experience treats different elements of experience as equal and simultaneous, but

different layers of experience are yet to be specified and their roles in formatting tourists' experience in entertainment tourism are largely unknown (Luo & Lam, 2018).

The main purpose of this research is to explore tourists' experience in integrated resorts based on the data gathered from both tourists and industry professionals. The results of this research will contribute to the literature by revealing the travel motivation of entertainment tourism, and understanding different layers and roles, as well as the formation process of entertainment tourism experience. Furthermore, this study provides practical values to Macao and other entertainment destinations to serve as a guide in developing entertainment tourism products. The remaining of this paper is structured as follows. Firstly, literature about the entertainment tourism in Macao, tourist motivations and experience are reviewed. Secondly, the study's qualitative research methodology employed is discussed. Finally, the tourist's motivations and experiences of entertainment tourism in Macao are identified and presented in a framework.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Tourist motivations

Motivation is an essential concept that helps understand tourism experience (Luo et al., 2020).

Motivation is defined as the psychological needs and wants; it is an integral force that arouses, directs and integrates a person's behaviour and activity (Dann, 1977; Uysal & Hagan, 1993;

Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Huang, Luo, Ding & Scott, 2014). There are three main theories on tourists' motivation, which are Dann and Crompton's push-and-pull factors, Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Iso-Ahola's escape-seeking theory (Park, Reisinger, & Kang, 2008). Dann (1977, 1981) argued that while the push factors are people's urge that encourage them to travel, pull factors are the attractions of the destinations that lure people to travel. Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943) argued that people's needs can be classified into (in ascending level of priority) physical needs, security, belonging, acceptance, and self-actualisation. Iso-Ahola (1982) validated that there are two ingredients of tourists' motivation. The first ingredient is seeking, which refers to the intrinsic value, while the second is escape, which refers to running away from the daily environment. The theory consists of four motivation categories: personal seeking, interpersonal seeking, personal escape and interpersonal escape.

Tourism motivation is desires that induce people to participate tourism activities (Meng, Tepanon, & Uysal, 2008). Moreover, it is also an important concept in analyzing the decision of tourist (Huang et al., 2014). Hence, through the investigation of motivations to visit, tour operators can better understand tourists' decision processes, identify opportunities with promising satisfaction and develop new products (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Huang et al. 2014). Although tourist motivation has been widely investigated, most of the existing studies do not focus on entertainment tourism. Entertainment tourism is a recent and important

concept to tourism (Adeboye, 2012; Luo & Lam 2018; Luo, Lam, & Wang, 2021). Entertainment does not only attract people to the destination, but also brings memorable, encouraging and fascinating experience to visitors (Xu, 2010; Vogel, 2014). In addition, while some traditional entertainment activities, such as Internet or video games, require the facilities, rather than a particular venue, there are other entertainment activities, such as gambling, theme parks, concert or clubbing, require a particular venue and ambience. Entertainment tourism integrates different resources in a destination together to provide entertainment experience. However, there are few studies which focus on investigating the motivations of visiting these entertainment destinations.

2.2 Tourist experience

The research of tourist experience can be dated back to the 1960s, and today, it continues to be one of the most important research areas (Zatori et al., 2018). According to Tan (2017), tourist experience is complex and is inherently personal. Furthermore, tourist experience involves highly complex sociological, psychological and cognitive interaction process during moments of consciousness (Carlson, 1997; Kang & Gretzel, 2012). The social, environmental and activity components of the experience are some of the various explanations of tourist experience (Adhikari & Bhattacharya, 2016). Cutler and Carmichael (2010) argued that when people visit a place, they do not only experience the place, but also themselves in the place.

Experiences allows people to escape from their routine activities and focus on others which are more interesting (Ray, 2008). The traditional conceptualisation of the tourist experience needs to evolve under a more dynamic environment (Uriely, 2005; Gretzel & Jamal, 2009).

Previous studies have usually classified end-state experience into cognition and affect orientation (Helkkula, 2011). Whilst a cognitive orientation is associated with a conscious mental state, an affective orientation is associated with the moods, feelings, and emotions of a person (Lin & Kuo, 2016). Given that different tourists coming from different background had different preferences, they would have different interpretations of the same product (Ooi, 2005) and different moods, feelings and emotions. These different moods, feelings and emotions will then affect the experience interpretations.

To obtain a thorough understanding of tourist experience, different researchers discovered many experiential components. Otto and Ritchie (1996) provided the six components of tourism experience: hedonism, interactive/social, novelty/escape, comfort, safety and stimulating/challenge-seeking dimensions. Le Bel, Sears and Dube (2004) suggested tourism experience as sensory (or physical), social, emotional and intellectual. Kang and Gretzel (2012) measured tourist experiences using three dimensions: learning, enjoyment and escape. Learning experience is the experience of learning new and novel things. Enjoyment experience is the enjoyable experience different from the actual value of the experience. Escape experience

is the immersed experience which people get away from their daily life (Kang & Gretzel, 2012). Luo, et al. (2020) proposed an entertainment tourism model using learning, enjoyment, escape, refreshment, novelty, involvement and local culture to measure tourist experiences. However, Luo et al. (2020) only examined several constructs, which may not cover all the aspects in the literature.

Several concerns were raised by the existing literature in entertainment, travel motivation and experience. Firstly, although research focusing on travel motivations and general service experience is considerable, studies providing an in-depth understanding of entertainment tourism motivations and experience are limited. Secondly, the typology of tourist experience is ambiguous and inconsistent. Existing experience studies categorise tourist experience in a homogeneous and static manner; however, the potential interrelationship and process-based nature of experience are largely ignored. Finally, the majority of existing experience studies are based on the tourists' viewpoint. As a crucial player in entertainment tourism, service providers' understanding of the phenomenon is not well explored. In that case, a multi-stakeholder investigation is urgently needed to establish a holistic picture of the subject. To fill in the abovementioned research gaps, the current study aims to explore entertainment tourism motivations and experiences from tourists' and industry professionals' perspectives. According to the findings, practical implications are to be provided to the corresponding parties.

3. Methods

The study mainly adopted an interpretivism paradigm. According to Rossman and Rallis (2003), interpretivists believed that human creates their own reality. In addition, interpretivists understood a phenomenon from the perspective of people's experience. Therefore, an in-depth interview method was adopted as the main technique to generate primary and rich data from individuals. Furthermore, this study used a qualitative approach and was divided into two steps. The first step involved conducting 18 personal semi-structured interviews in February 2018. Purposive sampling was used to select the interviewees, and these interviewees were all Macao's entertainment suppliers' managers or owners. Those participants were identified through the researchers' professional social network and were approached through either WeChat or telephone communication. In the second stage, 33 tourist personal interviews were conducted in May 2018. Convenient sampling was done to obtain the participants. The personal interview was conducted in three major tourist departure points in Macao: Border Gate, Macao International Airport and Outer Harbour Ferry Terminal. A semi-structured interview protocol was used to assist the interviews. The protocol contained two sections: Section 1 involved the respondents' demographic information, whilst Section 2 assessed the travel motivation and experience. Interview protocols in bilingual and semi-structured format are prepared separately for the suppliers and tourists. For the tourists, questions such as: "why do you prefer to

participate in the entertainment tourism?”, “what is entertainment tourism? Any related entertainment program for tourist in Macau?”, “what kind of entertainment experience have you achieved in Macau?”, and “what are the core elements of management in entertainment tourism? Could you please elaborate?” were included in the interview protocol. Regarding the entertainment industry suppliers, questions such as: “what are the motivations of tourists to participate the entertainment tourism?”, “what do you think is entertainment tourism?”, “what can the tourists experience in Macao for the entertainment tourism?” and “what can Macao provide to the tourists regarding entertainment tourism?” were included in the industry interview protocol. The interviews were conducted in the interviewees’ mother languages. Each personal interview lasted for 20–35 min for tourists and 30–50 min for industry professionals. After the interview, the transcripts were translated back and forth. Data was analyzed using the constant comparison technique, which allows researcher to record, code and analyzed the data systematically (Glaser & Strauss, 2009). The interview was recorded, transcribed, and input into NVIVO 12 for thematic analysis. Regarding the trustworthiness of the study, data triangulation, investigator triangulation and member checks were utilised throughout the research process to secure the data’s credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Denzin, 1989). This research further introduces information from different stakeholders, a method called data triangulation. The interview process stops when information is saturated. Regarding

the investigator triangulation, a team of two researchers worked individually and collaboratively. The researchers first studied the transcript and developed a framework independently. Then, they discuss their framework until they reach a common consensus. In addition, member checks were achieved by randomly selecting five transcripts, their summarized characteristics and the derived themes from the transcripts. Respondents receive a copy of the above and verified the accuracy of the information.

4. Findings

4.1 Demographic profile of informants

Tables 1 and 2 display the demographic information for the tourists and the industry professionals. Amongst the 33 tourist informants, 11 are female, and 22 are male. The majority of the informants are traveling from Mainland China. Twenty out of 33 informants are in the age range of 20–29, followed by 30–39 and 40–49. Fifteen of them are working as clerks in their jobs, and ten are currently students. The informants are generally well educated as 27 of them holds university degrees, including bachelors and masters. Regarding the industry professionals, over half of them are working in different casinos in Macao and holding supervisor, managerial positions or above. In addition, most of the industry professional informants are female. In terms of their working experience, the average length of working in the entertainment industry is 9.6 years.

(Inset Table 1 here)

(Inset Table 2 here)

4.2 Travel motivations for entertainment tourism

Tourists are motivated to join entertainment tourism by certain reasons, and most of them, interestingly, are related to their internal desires. Relaxation is an important motivation for entertainment tourism. *“I think the entertainment tourism can heal tourists both mentally and physically. Modern people are under lots of pressure from their daily life and they need a regular escape to recreate and to relax” (Tourist informant 17). “For short-haul travel to Macao, tourists would like to seek a peace-of-mind and may not want to involve in many kinaesthetic activities. Instead, they want to pursue a real relaxation activated by immersing in this all-for-fun world” (Industry professional 17).*

Tourist curiosity, another motivation for entertainment tourism, is a strong internal desire to know or experience the destination. The mysterious and unusual nature of entertainment tourism is well promoted via different online and traditional media and word-of-mouth. The fantasy of entertainment makes the tourists eager to explore by themselves. *“I heard about Macao from TV, magazine and online travel agents. Last year, one of my colleagues came to Macao with his family and he posted many pictures on his WeChat page. He shared with us about what he did and I felt it wonderful. I would like to try the big casinos and those great*

shows, which I can hardly experience at home. Since then, visiting Macao is on my wish list” (Tourist informant 12). *“I would like to experience the bungy jump once in my life and I did that in Macao from the Macao Tower, which is the highest commercial bungy jump in record!”* (Tourist informant 9).

Similarly, novelty and uniqueness seeking also motivates tourists to experience entertainment tourism. Different from curiosity that focuses on the strong interests of particular objectives, novelty seeking is more like a feeling and overall experience and emphasises more on experiencing the differences and uniqueness of the destination: *“I like to travel to different destinations and to experience different culture. Macao provides me an integrated culture experience with traditional Chinese landscape and Portuguese colonial architecture”* (Tourist informant 10). *“Even though you are travelling from Hong Kong, less than one hour away by ferry, the lifestyle is entirely different. Hong Kong tourists can slow down and enjoy life here”* (Industry informant 9). *“To attract tourists to come back again and again, many casinos change their exhibitions frequently to create a sense of novelty. MGM is doing well in this area. For example, they exhibit tropical fish in this season, and then butterfly for the next season”* (Industry professional 15).

As for any other types of tourism, enjoyment also plays an important role in motivating tourists to travel to a destination. *“Our life is busy, right? So we want to enjoy our life, so we*

join so many interesting programs” (Tourist informant 33). “I think being happy is the priority for travel. No matter what we do and where we go, the ultimate thing we would like to obtain is happiness. I go shopping and gamble because they can make me feel happy and that is good enough” (Tourist informant 9). “Tourists want to have fun, so when they come to destinations, they want to have fun.... People want to be entertained” (Industry professional 12). Apart from the relaxation, curiosity, novelty seeking, and enjoyment, gambling, shopping and culture exploration are also mentioned by some of the informants.

4.3 Entertainment tourism experience

Experience is a highly heterogeneous concept, which involves a dynamic logic and multi-dimensional investigation. This study explores the entertainment tourism experience from tourists’ and industries’ perspectives to showcase a comprehensive and multi-stakeholders’ understanding of the experience.

4.3.1 Tourists’ view of entertainment tourism experience

Tourists hold different understandings of the entertainment tourism experience according to their own experience in Macao. Transcripts from the tourists support that the entertainment tourism experience involves diverse activities they participated in Macao. Similarly, industry professionals also expressed that entertainment tourism experience should include dynamic,

pleasurable and memorable activities. For instance, gambling is a must-try program for most of the tourists. *“My impression for this Macao trip is all about casinos and gambling. Macao’s gambling industry is very mature and has been developed for so many years. I like the ambience inside the casino as it makes people totally relaxed and well pampered. I can try gambling not because that I am addicted to it, but because that I would like to do something crazy and risky that I can never have the chance to do in my daily life. I think it is kind of fun”* (Tourist informant 9). *“Macao is a destination that provides most Chinese tourists the first gambling experience of their life. Gambling is legalized in Macao and they want to come here to try their lucks, just as in the movies”* (Industry professional 6).

In addition to gambling, entertainment shows, concerts and performances form an important component of tourists’ entertainment experience. Tourists come to Macao not only for the gambling experience, but also for the world-class performances and shows that they could hardly access at their original places. In the last decade, Macao SAR and Chinese governments had been encouraging the economy to diversify the overly concentrated gaming industry. Under this developing instruction, many holidays, festivals, events and attractions have been promoted as the city’s name card. Meanwhile, Macao has also become a great host of different types of shows, concerts, circuses and even sports events. Tourists can enjoy diverse entertainment elements in one trip. As mentioned by one informant, *“We watched the*

show 'The House of Dancing Water' last night, and it was superb! The effect of the lights, music together the movements from the stage create an unforgettable experience for our family. Very impressive!" (Tourist informant 7). "We are very proud of the Macao Grand Prix, and it successfully attract increasing audience worldwide. Macao is the paradise for the racing lovers" (Industry professional 16). The entertainment elements include not only big shows and concerts, but also those attractions, themed decorations, and luxury ambience casinos designed for tourists. "The Venetian itself is a great attraction. I was so impressed by its interior design and it is well maintained. It was like I was traveling in Europe, not in Asia. The Gondola ride in the canal is enjoyable and relaxing. You can stay inside the casino for the whole day, dining, shopping, gambling and sightseeing" (Tourist informant 7). "We found attractions and design in casinos are perfect background for selfie" (Tourist informant 9). In addition, food and beverage, accommodation and transportation experiences are also reported to be supporting parts of their entertainment experience.

In addition to the common elements regarding diverse entertainment activities, tourists expressed some other components of entertainment tourism experience. When describing their experience in Macao, tourists emphasised more on their emotions and feelings during their trips. Terms such as "*hedonism*", "*indulgence*", "*immersion*", "*engagement*" and "*sensation*" can be extracted to express their experience. "*For my understanding, joining any entertainment*

activities is just a medium. Actually, the goal everybody wants to achieve is the true happiness and freedom activated by those activities” (Tourist informant 2). “The entertainment activities should be tourist oriented. Tourists would like to actively participate in those activities and co-create our experiences together with the service provider. The more I engage, the happier I feel” (Tourist informant 7). “When I stayed in the casino, I felt that I was living in a fantasy land. I was not the same person as I was in my daily life. I can do anything I like without bothering others’ judgement” (Tourist informant 7). “If you like the slow tourism or want to do nothing in your trip, entertainment tourism may not suit you at all. Here people seek for the sensation maximization by participating many activities” (Tourist informant 1). A full list of entertainment experience reported by tourists was shown in Figure 1.

4.3.2 The industry’s view of entertainment tourism experience

Compared with the tourists, besides a wide range of activities that have been identified by tourists, industry professionals highlighted some other elements that they believed to be critical for achieving an entertainment tourism experience. Many of them are representing a managerial understanding of this market. For instance, *“inclusiveness”* is recognized to be an important feature in entertainment tourism. *“All inclusive destination and one-stop service are the initial factor for the success of entertainment tourism. Like Las Vegas, it attracts tourists not only because of the gambling, but also the diverse performances and other entertainment activities.*

Macao needs to learn from it” (Industry professional 15). “I think entertainment tourism means that the casino should cooperate with all the other services and products. For example, Casino can provide all the supporting services such as dining, accommodation, and transportation. Tourists can also book any kind of entertainment tickets from the casino as well. It is a way to travel with no hassles” (Industry professional 6). Some managers mentioned that they want to create a hyper realistic world for the tourists. “Within the casino, we would like the guests to fully immerse in the themed zone we built for them. They can take different roles. We build up those themed zones by different details and covering different areas, from interior design to our cast members, from the lighting to the background music, from the restaurants to shops. Technology helps us to achieve this” (Industry professional 4).

Uniqueness and co-creation are also highlighted by some casino operators. They would regularly change their attraction settings to respond to different seasons, for instance, the Snow World for Christmas. Some restaurants make pizzas for guests and the chef comes out and have the pizza together with guests; this instance may provide guests a different experience. *“We would like the tourists to feel unique and special, that they cannot find the same thing anywhere else. We want to interact with them and co-create the experience with them” (Industry professional 12).* A full list of the industry professional’s understanding of entertainment experience was provided in Figure 1.

4.4 Integrated flow of entertainment tourism experience

Combining tourists' and industries' understanding of the entertainment tourism experience allows a reconsideration of its components. Entertainment tourism experience includes different stages and those stages are closely connected with each other. Relating the coding results with the literature, the first stage is concluded as *Behavioural Experience*, which includes different types of physical entertainment activities such as gambling, entertainment performance, shows, concerts, shopping and sightseeing (Le Bel et al., 2004). By participating in those activities, tourists obtain the first layer of entertainment tourism experience that acts as the direct touchpoint of their destination experience. The second stage of the experience is conceptualized as *Functional Experience*, including featured elements that could contribute to tourists' overall entertainment tourism experience, such as diversification, uniqueness, hyperreality, gamification, ambience and co-creation. This type of experience corresponds to the cognitive experience (Helkkula, 2011) and intellectual experience (Le Bel et al., 2004) in the literature, but emphasizes more on their functional features out of participating in entertainment tourism. By obtaining the Behavioural Experience at the beginning, tourists can achieve a deeper experience by the functional layers. This layer represents the underlying mechanism transferring the tourists from the first layer of experience to the next. As reported by Industry professional 4, "*Here men can go gambling, women for shopping, young people*

for concerts and performance, kids for attractions, and the seniors for relaxation. In a family, different members can join different activities without moving around. They appreciate such kind of one-stop service and inclusiveness provided by us". "When our chefs made pizzas together with our customers, they were co-creating a unique memory and experience with the customers" (Industry professional 12). The ultimate stage of experience is Affective Experience—a deep experience level, which involves tourists' emotional attachment and connection (Helkkula, 2011; Le Bel et al., 2004). In this stage, tourists feel hedonic, relaxed, indulgent, engaging and soothing. Meanwhile, the tourists achieve an experience saturation or maximisation and sensory stimulation via participating in different entertainment activities. "I love the ambience of the casino I stayed. I can do whatever I want, and there are plenty of things to be explored. Eating, shopping, spas, and performance.... I felt very much pampered. It is definitely a hedonic experience for me! Only there, and only then" (Tourist informant 24).

Given this integrated entertainment tourism experience flow (see Figure 1), Behavioural Experience is identified that it acts as a medium that could provide access to any further experience. The Functional Experience represents the functional attributes that bridge tourists from the Behavioural Experience to the Affective Experience as the ultimate achievement. A tourist can hardly achieve the Affective Experience without involving in any of the first two experience stages.

(Insert Figure 1 here)

5. Discussion and Implications

Findings from this study provide new insights to the existing literature on experience. This study reveals that tourists' entertainment experience includes three components: Behavioural, Functional and Affective experiences. Although studies by Adhikari and Bhattacharya (2016), Cutler and Carmichael (2010) and Helkkula (2011) mentioned the importance of different components such as activities, cognitive experience, and emotional experience, few studies have considered those components together to represent the overall experience. Many existing research emphasised the affective or emotional components of experience although the external components of experience were also identified, such as social and environmental aspects.

This study also provides a new angle to understand the concept of tourism experience. Traditionally, scholars proposed different types of tourism experience—hedonism, interactive/social, novelty/escape, comfort, safety and stimulating/challenge seeking dimensions by Otto and Ritchie (1996) and learning, enjoyment, escape, refreshment, novelty, involvement and local culture by Luo et al. (2020). However, all those dimensions are context-based and considered simultaneously and equally to tourists' experience. According to the nature of different experiences, this study identified three distinct types of tourist experience, representing three different layers of entertainment experience and playing three dynamic roles

in formatting tourists' entertainment experience. Firstly, Behavioural Experience indicates different types of entertainment activities that tourists participate in during their visits. Secondly, Functional Experience includes the featured elements that could intensify and upgrade tourists' overall entertainment tourism experience. Finally, Affective Experience involves tourists' emotional attachment and connection and is treated as an ultimate level of entertainment experience.

The integrated flow of entertainment tourism experience is the first attempt to explore the interrelationship amongst different experience elements. This study argues that tourists' entertainment experience involves a multi-layer process and a dynamic flow, rather than a static and one-off status. In this flow, tourists start with participating in those entertainment activities, and come to the direct touchpoints of their destination experience. Successful entertainment activities will further stimulate functional experiences on the tourists, such as diversification, uniqueness, hyperreality, gamification, ambience and co-creation. With those functional experiences, tourists may eventually achieve the affective experiences, which is the highest level of experience in this study. These findings correspond to the research by Aho (2001), which stated that two types of experience exist in general, namely, process-based and outcome-based experiences. In addition, this study addresses the outcome and process natures of the tourism experience by identifying the interrelationship amongst the behavioural, functional and

affective experiences. Findings also supplement the research by Helkkula (2011), which indicated that cognitive- and affective-oriented experiences emerge. Edvardsson (2005, p. 129) also described service experience as "...a service process that creates the customer's cognitive, emotional, and behavioural responses, resulting in a mental mark, a memory." In addition, Adhikari and Bhattacharya (2016) verified that researchers have examined consumption experience mainly from the external or the internal perspective. Furthermore, this study explored one step further and indicated that Functional Experience acts as a catalyst between behavioural and affective experiences and links the external and internal aspects of experience together.

Tourists and industry professionals, interestingly, have different emphases regarding entertainment tourism experience. The findings confirmed that both of them agreed that the behavioural aspect of entertainment tourism experience is a crucial element of entertainment tourism experience. Comparatively, industry professionals tend to highlight more of the Functional Experience from a managerial viewpoint, whereas tourists tend to emphasize their affective experiences during the entertainment tourism. The study, furthermore, supported that entertainment tourists are mostly motivated by relaxation, enjoyment, curiosity and novelty seeking, different from the general travel market. This finding is also reflected in the affective aspect of experience they aim to achieve during their entertainment tourism. Although the

entertainment tourism experience includes three elements, it is not necessary that every single tourist would go through all the three components. Achieving the Affective Experience needs the proactive participation of the tourists and the sound design of entertainment products from the service providers, which could deliver necessary functions bridging tourists' experience from the behavioural to affective levels. A tourist can hardly achieve the Affective Experience without going through the first two experience stages. The level of experience that a tourist could achieve also depends on their travel motivations.

This research provides theoretical contributions to the literature about experience in general and entertainment tourism experience research in specific. First, this study proposes the existence of three different experience elements and the different roles they play in constructing tourists' overall experience. It extends the literature of tourism experience by delineating the heterogeneous nature of different components. Second, this study pioneers in exploring the entertainment tourism experience from both tourists' and industry professionals' viewpoints. The inclusion of both sides of the service delivery allow a holistic understanding of the entertainment tourism and a connection amongst different layers of entertainment tourism experience. Their different emphases regarding functional and affective experience capture the gaps between entertainment tourism consumers and service providers, which enriches the understanding of tourists in this particular tourism sector. It also highlights the

important whereas often neglected role that affective experience plays in uplifting tourists' entire experience. Third, this study is the first attempt to explore the interrelationship and flow amongst different experience elements, rather than treating them as equal and simultaneous. Findings claim that entertainment tourism experience is a multi-layer and a process-based experience. Different layers of experience serve different roles in formatting tourists' experience in entertainment tourism. This study also identifies that, among all three elements of experience, functional experience acts as a catalyst to upgrade the behavioural experience to the affective experience. The integrated flow offers possibilities for future examinations regarding the antecedents and consequences of entertainment tourism experience.

Meanwhile, this study also offers practical implications to the destination marketing organisations (DMOs), the industry practitioners and the tourists regarding how to cultivate a desired tourists' entertainment tourism experience. Initially, the study provides a clear view of tourists' motivation towards entertainment tourism. As Macao government had been encouraging the economy to diversify the overly concentrated gaming industry and to achieve an inclusive entertainment destination, understanding what are desired from the tourists and what can be provided by the industry is essential. DMOs can adjust their existing marketing and branding strategies to fit in the market's mainstream needs. Industry professionals, furthermore, have a clear understanding of the entertainment activities and the functional

elements of entertainment experience. However, they must also consider the affective experiences that could be offered to the tourists to create a profound experience. In that case, entertainment practitioners in Macao and other similar destinations should make efforts to identify the connection amongst the entertainment activities that can be provided, functions that can be derived from those activities and the ultimate affective experience tourists could reach by participating in entertainment tourism. For instance, integrated resorts provide entertainment activities such as gambling, shopping, dining and attractions. By designing those activities, integrated resorts should ensure that entertainment activities could deliver the functions as desired, such as one-stop service, gamification and experience co-creation. Those functional experiences can eventually activate tourists' affective experience, such as hedonism, indulgence and immersion. By experiencing all three levels of entertainment tourism, tourists would generate a memorable and positive experience, which may naturally lead to a higher degree of travel satisfaction and revisit intention. In addition, tourists nowadays are pursuing a quality travel experience, rather than a superficial visit or a standardised tour. Tourists for entertainment tourism are having clear motivations and are seeking hedonic, immersive, and sensory experiences during their travel. This study may also provide solutions and cues for tourists regarding how to explore the entertainment destinations as much as they can in their dreaming and planning stages (Fotis, 2015) before traveling. Tourists can also consciously

choose different entertainment activities which can lead to desirable functional and affective experiences. For instance, a busy workaholic can choose to experience the hyper reality and gamification via attending different exciting activities prepared by the destination, by which he or she can gain the relaxation, hedonism and indulgence out of the trip. Similarly, a multi-generational family group can take the entertainment tourism by experiencing the diverse activities fitting different individuals' needs at the same time without hassle, and hence enjoy the relaxation, engagement and soothing brought by the one-stop service and inclusiveness.

6. Conclusion

The current study, adopting a qualitative approach, explores travel motivation and entertainment tourism experience from both tourists' and industry professionals' perspectives. A total of 33 tourists and 18 industry professionals in Macao were interviewed. Results assert that tourists are motivated to join entertainment tourism by reasons, such as relaxation, curiosity, enjoyment, novelty and uniqueness seeking. Furthermore, findings deduce that most of them are related to their internal desires. Regarding the entertainment tourism experience, three layers were identified, namely, behavioural, functional and affective aspects of experience. Moreover, three layers of experience are interrelated and play different roles in creating tourists' entertainment experience. An integrated flow of entertainment tourism experience was established accordingly. This study is the first attempt to investigate the

interrelationship amongst and diverse roles of different experience elements. Three elements of experience developed from this research capture the features and uniqueness of entertainment tourism and enrich the academic understanding of different layers of experience in this particular tourism sector. The findings of this study shed lights on the emerging but scarce research realm on entertainment tourism experience in specific and provide new angle to understand the service experience in general. Moreover, the perceptual gaps identified between tourists and industry professionals regarding the essential components of entertainment tourism are helpful for the entertainment service providers to better design their projects and for the DMOs to clearly develop their marketing and destination branding plans.

As any other research, this research should be considered with the following notes. Firstly, this study focuses on the entertainment tourism experience, hence, findings derived from this piece of work are closely bonded to this research context. Future studies can investigate the proposed integrated flow of experience in other experience contexts, such as event tourism, sports tourism and culture tourism. Secondly, this study was conducted in Macao and thus assumes that Chinese culture might frame the results as the majority of the tourists and industry professionals are Chinese. Future research can be done in other experience tourism destinations, such as Las Vegas and Orlando in the United States as well as Singapore, to examine the applicability and robustness of this experience flow in other culture contexts.

Lastly, COVID 19 outbreak has significant impacted on entertainment and tourism industries since 2020. Tourism has changed and especially the entertainment area. The changes include the mode of travel and the types of entertainment engaged. Future research can focus on the recovery of entertainment tourism and tourist experience in post COVID.

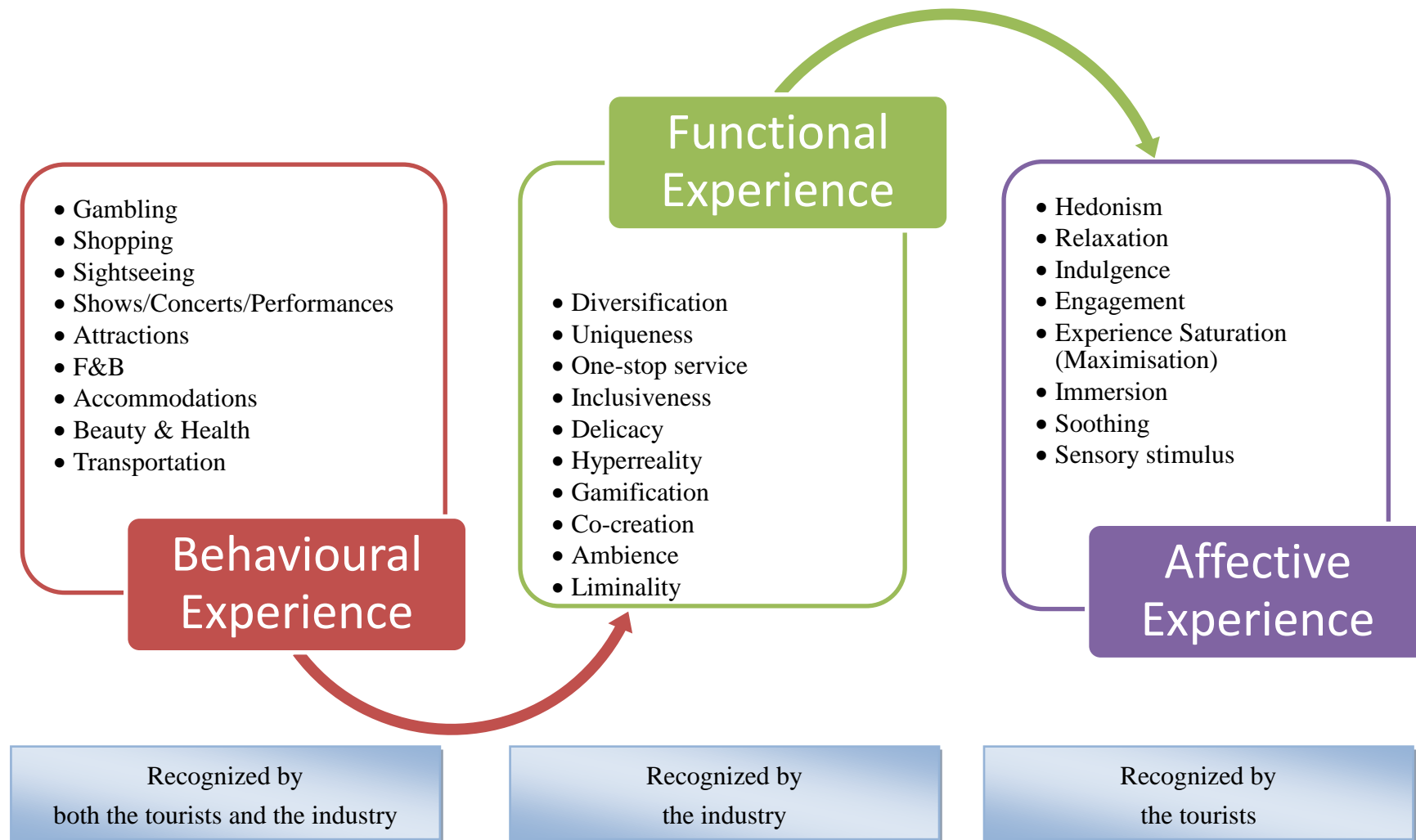


Figure 1. Integrated Flow of Entertainment Tourism Experience

Tables

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Tourist Informants

No.	Gender	Nationality	Age	Occupation	Education
1	Male	China	60–69	Clerk	University
2	Male	China	30–39	Clerk	Middle school
3	Male	China	40–49	Clerk	University
4	Male	China	40–49	Clerk	University
5	Female	China	20–29	n.a.	Diploma
6	Male	China	20–29	Student	University
7	Male	China	20–29	Student	University
8	Male	China	30–39	n.a.	Middle school
9	Male	China	30–39	Clerk	University
10	Male	China	20–29	Student	University
11	Male	China	20–29	Student	University
12	Male	China	40–49	Clerk	University
13	Male	China	30–39	Clerk	University
14	Male	China	20–29	Clerk	University
15	Male	China	20–29	Student	University
16	Female	China	20–29	Student	University
17	Female	China	20–29	Student	University
18	Male	China	20–29	Clerk	Middle school
19	Male	China	40–49	Manager	University
20	Female	China	30–39	n.a.	Diploma
21	Female	China	20–29	Student	University
22	Male	Hong Kong, China	50–59	Manager	Middle school
23	Female	China	20–29	Clerk	University
24	Male	China	20–29	Clerk	University
25	Male	Hong Kong, China	30–39	Professional	University
26	Female	Hong Kong, China	20–29	Clerk	University
27	Male	Hong Kong, China	20–29	Clerk	University
28	Female	Taiwan, China	20–29	Clerk	University
29	Female	Hong Kong, China	20–29	Professional	University
30	Male	China	20–29	Student	University
31	Male	China	20–29	Student	University
32	Female	Non-China	20–29	Clerk	University

33	Female	Non-China	30–39	Manager	University
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Table 2. Demographic Profile of Industry Professional Informants

No.	Company	Gender	Position	Length of work in entertainment industry (years)
1	Casino A	Female	Supervisor	3-4
2	Casino B	Female	Manager	10
3	Casino B	Female	Manager	15
4	Casino C	Female	Manager	12
5	Casino D	Female	Manager	7
6	Casino E	Female	General Manager or above	10
7	Casino F	Male	Manager	12
8	Casino G	Male	Manager	20
9	Casino F	Female	Manager	10
10	Casino F	Male	Supervisor	7
11	Casino F	Male	Manager	11
12	Bar	Male	Owner	20
13	Entertainment	Female	Supervisor	1
14	Health and Beauty A	Female	General Manager or above	2-3
15	Casino G	Female	Manager	10
16	Government industry connection	Male	Supervisor	2-3
17	Health and Beauty B	Female	General Manager or above	20
18	Performance	Female	Manager	10

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