




Tourist-resident interaction affects mutual understanding but defined by social distance

Xing Su, Bas Spierings & Pieter Hooimeijer


To cite this article: Xing Su, Bas Spierings & Pieter Hooimeijer (2023) Tourist-resident interaction affects mutual understanding but defined by social distance, Journal of China Tourism Research, 19:3, 589-608, DOI: [10.1080/19388160.2022.2107134](https://doi.org/10.1080/19388160.2022.2107134)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/19388160.2022.2107134>

 View supplementary material [↗](#)

 Published online: 07 Aug 2022.

 Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)

 Article views: 248

 View related articles [↗](#)

 View Crossmark data [↗](#)

RESEARCH ARTICLE



Tourist-resident interaction affects mutual understanding but defined by social distance

Xing Su^a, Bas Spierings^b and Pieter Hooimeijer^b

^aCollege of Tourism and Service Management, Nankai University, Tianjin, China; ^bDepartment of Human Geography and Spatial Planning, Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the interrelationships of social distance, tourist-resident interaction and mutual understanding between mainland Chinese tourists and residents in an urban destination of Hong Kong. Social distance affects tourist-resident interaction that predicts their mutual understanding for both tourists and residents are tested. A total of 416 tourist questionnaires and 315 resident questionnaires were obtained. The results show that quality of interaction is a major factor in predicting mutual understanding but negatively affected by social distance for both tourists and residents. From tourist perspective, only quality of interaction predicts the understanding but negatively affected by their social distances. From resident perspective, both quality of interaction and focused interaction positively affect the understanding but defined by their social distances. Co-presence does not affect residents' understanding but is positively related to their social distance. Overall, tourist-resident interaction may contribute to mutual understanding, but only when the social distance is small to start with. The research findings have significant implications for sustainable development of tourism destinations.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 30 December 2021
Accepted 2 June 2022

KEYWORDS

Tourist-resident interaction; social distance; mainland Chinese tourists; Hong Kong residents

关键词


游客-居民互动; 社交距离; 内地游客; 香港居民

游客-居民互动影响相互理解但受限于社交距离

摘要

本文探讨了中国内地游客与香港城市目的地居民之间的社交距离, 游客-居民互动和相互理解之间的作用关系。社交距离会影响游客-居民互动, 从而预测他们之间的相互理解的研究假设被检验。本研究共获得游客问卷416份, 居民问卷315份。结果表明, 对于游客和居民而言, 互动质量是预测相互理解的主要因素, 但都受到其社交距离的消极影响。从游客的角度来看, 只有互动质量能够预测理解, 但受到其社交距离的消极影响。从居民的角度来看, 互动质量和集中互动都会对理解产生积极影响, 但由他们的社交距离决定。共存互动不影响居民的理解, 但与他们的社交距离呈正相关。总体而言, 游客-居民互动可能有助于相互理解, 但只有在社交距离很小的情况下。研究结果对旅游目的地的可持续发展具有重要意义。

CONTACT Xing Su  xingsu@nankai.edu.cn  College of Tourism and Service Management, Nankai University, No. 38 Tongyan Road, Haihe Education Park, Tianjin, 300350, China

 Supplemental data for this article can be accessed online at <https://doi.org/10.1080/19388160.2022.2107134>

© 2022 Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group

Introduction

Sustainable development of tourism destinations depends on favorable relationships between tourists and residents. Excessive tourism activities could lead to residents' negative attitudes, and even evoke tensions or conflicts toward tourists (Chen et al., 2018; Siu et al., 2013). Social interactions can result in an improvement of relations and understanding between the groups of people involved (Maoz, 2000). In tourism contexts, tourist-resident interaction involves opportunities for both groups to get to know each other better, potentially enhancing mutual understanding (Raymond & Hall, 2008; Tomljenovic, 2010). Thus, maintaining and improving mutual understanding between tourists and residents through their social interactions is essential and beneficial for sustainable development of tourism destinations.

Tourist-resident interaction is a multi-dimensional social contact in tourism scenarios. Research into tourist-resident interaction has been a persistent hot topic in tourism literature (Tse & Tung, 2022a; Zhang et al., 2021). Many authors have recognized the intensity and the quality as important dimensions of tourist-resident interaction (e.g., Huang & Hsu, 2010; Su et al., 2020). Others have indicated that different intensities and qualities of interaction could lead to different attitudes, perceptions and behaviors (e.g., Carneiro et al., 2019; Pizam et al., 2000; Su et al., 2021). More specifically, both higher intensities or better qualities of interaction may contribute to a more favorable relationship between tourists and residents (Fan et al., 2017; Su et al., 2021). However, the multi-dimensional tourist-resident interaction could have different impacts for tourists and residents involved. Limited studies have attempted to explore the asymmetry in different intensities and qualities of interaction influencing mutual understanding between tourists and residents, which needs to be further examined.

Tourism brings tourists and residents together in the multi-dimensional interactions. However, both parties often bring their own predispositions to the interactions (Pi-Sunyer, 1989; Sharpley, 2014). The predispositions could predict the occurrence of tourist-resident interactions (Tomljenovic, 2010). Social distance is a particular type of predisposition that has often been used to assess the degree of physical and emotional closeness between individuals or groups (Yilmaz & Tasci, 2015). In other words, the potential of tourist-resident interaction contributing to mutual understanding seems to depend on the social distances between tourists and residents.

In tourism literature, previous studies suggest that a small social distance would increase interaction opportunities whereas a large social distance signals the opposite (Woosnam & Lee, 2011; Yilmaz & Tasci, 2015). However, the impacts of social distance on different intensities and qualities of interactions are still lacking and needs to be further examined. Moreover, existing tourism studies on social distance mostly focused on the resident perspective (e.g., Thyne et al., 2018, 2022; Yilmaz & Tasci, 2015) or the tourist perspective (e.g., Aleshinloye et al., 2020; Bai & Chang, 2021; Çelik, 2019; He et al., 2021; Tasci, 2009; Woosnam & Lee, 2011). Nevertheless, more research are needed to compare and combine both perspectives in one study – investigating a potential asymmetry in social distance affecting the multi-dimensional tourist-resident interaction.

By addressing these gaps, this study aims to examine the interrelationships of social distance, tourist-resident interaction, and mutual understanding in the destination. The hypothesis is that social distance affects tourist-resident interaction that predicts their

mutual understanding for both tourists and residents. More importantly, this study casts the doubt on the asymmetry in the interrelationships of three concepts between tourists and residents. In addition, the relationship between a dominant tourist market and local residents should be further examined (Chen et al., 2021; Tse & Tung, 2022b; Zhang et al., 2021).

Hong Kong is the major destination for a huge influx of mainland Chinese tourists, and their interactions with residents add to the complexity of Hong Kong-mainland China relations. Despite the geographical proximity, the historical and social bonds between both territories, many differences in terms of economic structure, educational system, history, culture, and lifestyle could lead to increasingly complex relationship between Hong Kong people and mainland Chinese (e.g., Siu et al., 2013; Ye et al., 2012). In this context, Hong Kong is an ideal case to examine the interrelationship of three concepts and potential asymmetry between tourists and residents. This study will add values to tourism knowledge in two ways: 1) testing the interrelationship among social distance, tourist-resident interaction and mutual understanding; 2) investigating the asymmetry in the interrelationship by taking tourist and resident perspectives into consideration. This study will bring practical implications for the destination and its sustainable development by developing better understanding and strategies for improving tourist-resident relationship.

Literature review

Social contact tends to foster better intergroup relations and mutual understanding between the groups of people involved (Allport, 1954; Amir, 1969; Maoz, 2000). In tourism contexts, social contacts between tourists and residents (i.e. tourist-resident interaction) generate a variety of impacts on their mutual understanding, such as related with local culture, ethnic identity, and lifestyle (e.g., Andereck et al., 2005; Chen & Rahman, 2018; M. M. Su et al., 2016). For instance, tourists may gain knowledge about the destination and its people, change destination image, recognize cultural differences and enhance cultural understanding (Aleshinloye et al., 2020; Cohen, 1972, 1979; Fan et al., 2017; M. M. Su et al., 2016). Similarly, residents may develop cross-cultural competences, enhance local pride and change attitudes toward tourists (Carneiro et al., 2018; Dillette et al., 2017; Eusébio et al., 2018; M. M. Su et al., 2016; Tsaour et al., 2018).

In general, tourist-resident interactions are understood to promote greater mutual understanding between them (Carneiro & Eusébio, 2015). However, tourist-resident interaction does not always lead to a better understanding between both groups. The interaction may have negative effects on mutual understanding – reflected in tensions and conflicts between tourists and residents (Joo et al., 2018). According to social contact theory, contact between different groups could improve mutual understanding under favorable conditions (Allport, 1954). Such favorable conditions can be analyzed by looking at the quality of interaction (e.g., Amir, 1969; Huang & Hsu, 2010; Maoz, 2000; Su et al., 2020). Generally speaking, tourist-resident interaction occurring under favorable conditions tends to generate a better understanding for both parties (Fan et al., 2017). Carneiro et al. (2019), for instance, indicated that close interaction of a youth tourism market (university students) with residents during their longest trip recently could produce positive outcomes – such as respect development, cultural enrichment

and prejudice reduction. Unfavorable interaction, on the other hand, may result in remoteness, suspicion, and negative attitudes toward each other (Maoz, 2000). However, even when the conditions for tourist-resident interaction are not optimal, there is still potential for mutual understanding being enhanced – as Li and Wang (2020), for instance, found that Chinese tourists in group tours to North Korea had more understanding of the country and people living there under the restricted interactions with locals.

Next to the quality of interaction, intensity is another important dimension of tourist-resident interaction (e.g., Eusébio & Carneiro, 2012; Su et al., 2020). The intensity of interaction could provide additional explanation for whether the interaction improves mutual understanding. When it comes to the intensity of interaction, Goffman (1967) divided the intensity into two levels: co-presence (i.e. the minimum level) and focused interaction (i.e. the maximum level). Moreover, different intensities of interaction may lead to different attitudes toward each other (Valentine, 2008). In tourism contexts, the higher the intensity of interaction between tourists and residents, the more profound the impacts of interaction tend to be for both groups – resulting in the development of cross-cultural understanding and international friendship, for instance (Cohen, 1972; De Kadt, 1979; M. M. Su et al., 2016). An early study of Pizam et al. (2000) found that focused interaction with residents among working tourists in Israel tends to result in the most positive attitudinal change toward the destination and its residents. On the other hand, another study from resident perspective (Andereck et al., 2005) concluded that focused interaction with tourists for residents in different counties of Arizona usually has positive impacts on tourism development of destination. Conversely, even though tourists and residents have co-presence, in the sense of limited to sharing the same space, this still could preclude mutual understanding and even generate social tensions and conflicts (e.g., Prendergast et al., 2016; Yeung & Leung, 2007).

Thus, tourist-resident interaction with different intensities and qualities is assumed to bring about different impacts on their mutual understanding. However, the quality and intensity of interaction could be affected by their social distances between tourists and residents. Social distance itself tends to be affected by several factors, e.g., historical events, education, or social media (Çelik, 2019; Tasci, 2009) and is inherently tied to stereotypes and prejudice (Yilmaz & Tasci, 2015). In general, the more prejudiced, the less likely the person will engage into intergroup interaction (Amir, 1969; Williams, 1964).

When it comes to the intensity of interaction, Yilmaz and Tasci (2015) added that a low degree of social distance between European tourists and local service providers in Mugla of Turkey means a high willingness to have focused interaction, and vice versa. When it comes to the quality of interaction, Woosnam and Lee (2011) indicated that residents with large social distances toward voluntourists are likely to experience a lower quality when interacting with tourists. Several scholars have indicated that social distance could affect tourists' and residents' attitudes and relations (e.g., Sinkovics & Penz, 2009; Tasci, 2009; Thyne et al., 2006; Woosnam & Lee, 2011). For instance, Nyaupane et al. (2008) found that the perceived social distances of undergraduate students from US visiting Australia, Fiji, Austria or the Netherlands had an effect on their attitudes toward residents. Thyne et al. (2018) indicated that social distance of Japanese residents significantly influenced their attitudes toward different inbound tourist markets and

tourism development, especially for Chinese tourists. However, previous studies have underestimated the effect of social distance in explaining the relationship between tourists and residents.

It is worth noting that social distance, tourist-resident interaction and mutual understanding as well as their interrelationships between tourists and residents considered to be asymmetrical. Focused interactions could affect both tourists and residents, whereas co-presence (i.e. sharing space without communication) could have no effects on tourists but potential effects on residents (Sharpley, 2014). Su et al. (2020) verified that the quality of interaction is different in three urban neighborhoods of Hong Kong, which may contribute to mutual understanding for tourists and residents in different ways. In addition to tourist-resident interaction, social distance could vary across different groups. Nyaupane et al. (2015) found that different social distances are perceived across four religious groups. Thyne et al. (2018) examined the differences in Japanese hosts' social distances toward tourists with different nationalities. As such, the asymmetry in the interrelationships of social distance, tourist-resident interaction and mutual understanding between tourists and residents will be further investigated.

Based on the above, the following assumptions have been summarized and visualized via a conceptual model in Figure 1. First, tourist-resident interaction may contribute to their mutual understanding – whereas different intensities (i.e. co-presence and focused interaction) and qualities of interaction may generate different impacts on mutual understanding between tourists and residents. Second, tourist-resident interaction may be defined by social distance – with the effects of tourist-resident interaction on mutual understanding depending on their social distance of both groups.

Research design

Study site, sampling method, and data collection

Hong Kong was selected as the context of this study. Due to its geographical location as well as close relationships and preferential policies, Hong Kong gains most from China's tourism market growth. According to HKTB Research (2019), tourist arrivals from mainland China accounts for over 78% of the total number, with a rise of 14.8% in 2018 reaching a total of about 51 million visitors. The differences between mainland China and Hong Kong may not only attract large numbers of mainland tourists toward

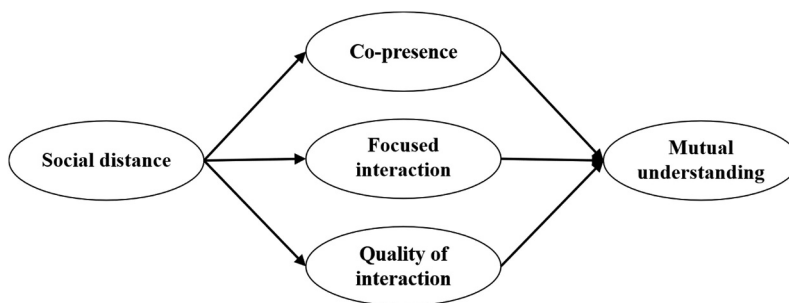


Figure 1. Conceptual model.

Hong Kong but involve social distances between both groups of people (Yeung & Leung, 2007). For instance, Hong Kong residents accused mainland Chinese tourists of uncivilized behaviors and causing a variety of problems in the city, such as crowding and increasing property prices (Prendergast et al., 2016). At the same time, mainland Chinese tourists have complained about not receiving reasonable or fair treatment in Hong Kong by its residents (Ye et al., 2012).

Hong Kong consists of Hong Kong Island, Kowloon Peninsula, the New Territories and many outlying islands. Three different urban areas within Hong Kong were selected for case study, namely Central, Mong Kok and Sha Tin, located on Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, and New Territories respectively. As suggested by the study of Su et al. (2020), these three typical urban settings offer different tourist-resident interactions, which may further affect the mutual understanding for both groups. Data for this study was collected from mainland Chinese tourists through an online survey and from Hong Kong residents through an on-site survey. Survey respondents were selected based on whether they visited or live in the three above-mentioned urban settings. Online survey was chosen for mainland Chinese tourists because of the high rejection rate of on-site survey for tourists traveling in Hong Kong. In June 2017, the online questionnaire (in Mandarin) was distributed among mainland Chinese who visited Hong Kong before and live in a variety of mainland Chinese cities. The distribution was facilitated by wjx.cn, the largest online survey company in China, and respondents were randomly selected from its large database with 2.6 million members through a stratified sampling approach. The tourist sample was diverse with demographic information, e.g., gender, age, education, income, and origin. Moreover, the IP addresses of the respondents filling out the survey questionnaires were used to confirm the reliability of the questionnaires for mainland Chinese tourists. At the same time, the on-site questionnaire (in Cantonese) was distributed among residents living in Hong Kong through a random intercept approach on both weekdays and weekends in different areas throughout the city. Ultimately, 416 valid tourist questionnaires with a response rate of approximately 70% were obtained, while 315 valid resident questionnaires were collected with an on-site acceptance rate of about 14%.

Survey instrument

The survey questionnaire was designed to contain four sections, i.e. tourist-resident interaction, mutual understanding, social distance and respondents' demographic information and other characteristics. Mutual understanding between tourists and residents as the dependent variable was operationalized in the questionnaire through a 9-item measurement scale based on previous studies. Specifically, Fan et al. (2017) identified a variety of 'impacts after contact' through in-depth interviewing, including obtaining recommendations, knowing more about destination, recognizing differences, reinforcing original culture, changing images, cross-cultural competence, and making friends. M. M. Su et al. (2016) developed a diagram of types of tourist-resident interaction and impact perceptions through a combination of in-depth interviews, informal discussions and on-site observations. From both studies, the items measuring the quantitative aspects of mutual understanding were developed for this study.

The tourist questionnaire contains nine statements regarding whether tourists feel that their interaction with residents 'improve the image of Hong Kong and its people', 'make you know more about Hong Kong people and their lives', 'enhance cross-cultural understanding', 'result in making new friends', 'enhance ethnic identity', 'reinforce the original culture', 'make you recognize the difference of financial conditions', 'make you understand cultural differences' and 'make you recognize the behavioral difference'. The resident questionnaire contains the same nine statements but reformulated to reflect how Hong Kong residents feel about their interactions with mainland Chinese tourists affecting mutual understanding. Altogether, respondents were asked to what extent they agree with formulated statements regarding the impacts of tourist-resident interaction on their mutual understanding (from 1 = 'strongly disagree' to 7 = 'strongly agree').

Regarding tourist-resident interaction, the tourist and resident respondents were asked how frequently (from 1 = 'never' to 7 = 'very frequently') they interact with the other group through different types of interaction activities. Based on Fan et al.'s (2017) study and personal on-site investigations in Hong Kong in June 2017, sixteen types of interaction activities were taken into account – involving both co-presence and focused interaction. Moreover, based on the previous studies regarding the quality of interaction (Huang & Hsu, 2010; Islam & Hewstone, 1993), the respondents were asked to assess quality of interaction (e.g., friendly, close and interesting) by looking at the extent to which they perceived the interaction on a scale of 1 = 'strongly disagree' to 7 = 'strongly agree'.

When it comes to social distance, one of the most often applied measurement scales in the social sciences has been developed by Bogardus (1925, 1933). The Bogardus scale was widely applied in existing studies to determine social distance because of its high reliability and validity (e.g., Firat & Koyuncu, 2021; Huskin et al., 2018). Thus, social distances of tourists and residents were measured by the Bogardus social distance scale in this study. The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they accept each other ranging from 'closest' to 'farthest'. The dimensions that respondents could make a choice from are the following: accepting the other group, respectively, as ① 'married to a close family member', ② 'close friend', ③ 'neighbor', ④ 'colleague', ⑤ 'citizen', ⑥ 'visitor', and ⑦ 'should be banned from the city'.

Data analysis

First, single imputation method was applied to handle missing data in the sample. Specifically, a randomly chosen value from the same data source will replace the missing data. This approach is widely used under the condition that the missing data are less than 5% (Eekhout et al., 2014). In this study, less than 5% of the total values are missing, thus this method was applied. Afterward, factor analysis was first applied to both the tourist sample and the resident sample to investigate the underlying factor structure of tourist-resident interaction and mutual understanding. Second, the partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed with SmartPLS 3.0 software (Ringle et al., 2015). It has been widely applied in social sciences in the case of non-normality and relatively small sample sizes (Hair et al., 2013). More importantly, the application of PLS-SEM is suggested under conditions of theory development and newly developed

Table 1. Sample profiles.

Demographics		Tourist (416)		Resident (315)	
		Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	163	39.2	164	52.1
	Female	253	60.8	151	47.9
Age	18–29	177	42.5	153	48.6
	30–39	236	48.1	66	20.9
	40–49	30	7.2	42	13.4
	50–59	6	1.5	25	7.9
	60 or above	3	0.7	29	9.2
Education	Below Bachelor	59	14.2	137	43.5
	Bachelor's degree	225	54.1	152	48.3
	Master's degree and above	132	31.7	26	8.2
Monthly income*	Low	130	31.3	106	33.7
	Medium	235	56.5	122	38.7
	High	51	12.3	87	27.6

For tourists, low means less than 8,000 RMB, medium means 8,001–16,000 RMB and high means more than 16,000 RMB; For residents, low means less than 10,000 HKD, medium means 10,000–20,000 HKD and high means more than 20,000 HKD.

measurement scales (Hair et al., 2017). To assess the model in this study, PLS algorithm procedures and bootstrapping technique were applied in two steps. As a first step, evaluating the reliability and validity of the measurement model by combining several indicators: factor loadings, Cronbach's Alpha, the composite reliability (CR) and the average variance extracted (AVE). As a next step, assessing the relationships among latent constructs in structural models via path coefficients and the significance levels of the proposed hypothesis.

Results

Sample profile

Table 1 shows the sample profiles of tourists and residents. The gender division shows more females (60.8%) than males (39.2%) for tourists and more males (52.1%) than females (about 47.9%) for residents. Most residents (48.6%) fall within the age range 18–29 and most tourists (48.1%) fall within the age range 30–39. The tourists mostly have a high education level (85.8%), holding a bachelor's or master's degree and above. A substantial percentage of residents also have a high education level (56.5%). Overall, the resident sample has a lower education level than the tourist sample. Moreover, most tourists (56.5%) fall within the medium monthly income range and the same goes for the residents but to a lower degree (38.7%), whereas residents (27.6%) have a higher percentage than tourists (12.3%) on the high monthly income.

According to other information regarding tourist characteristics (see Table A1), most tourists visiting Hong Kong were repeaters (69.7%) compared to first-time tourists (30.3%), and the majority of tourists have stayed in Hong Kong with a medium duration of 2 to 7 days (79.8%), followed by day trippers (13.0%) and long-term duration with more than 7 days (7.2%). In terms of travel behavior, the tourists traveling with family/relatives/friends had a high percentage of 53.6%, and other tourists traveling in organized tourists and traveling alone has a certain

percentage of 25.0% and 19.7%, respectively. Regarding the travel purpose with multiple choices, most tourists visited Hong Kong for sight-seeing with a percentage of 79.3%, followed by holiday (61.3%), shopping (36.1%) and business/conference (14.2%).

Factor structure of tourist-resident interaction and mutual understanding

To determine the factor structure of tourist-resident interaction and their mutual understanding, factor analysis was applied to both tourist sample and resident sample in a comparative way (see, Table 2). The KMO values (>0.80) and Bartlett’s test of sphericity value ($p < .001$) confirm that the data of both groups are suitable for factor analysis. Moreover, the items with low factor loadings or high cross-loadings were removed (Choo & Petrick, 2014).

The same factor structure for tourists and residents was found and labeled as co-presence, focused interaction and quality of interaction – containing the same items for both groups. For tourists, three factors of interactions with residents

Table 2. Factor analysis for tourist-resident interaction and mutual understanding.

Factors & Items Interaction	Tourist			Factors & Items Interaction	Resident		
	FL	M	SD		FL	M	SD
Co-presence^a				Co-presence^a			
Sitting around	.642	4.42	1.517	Sitting around	.594	4.66	1.350
Dining in restaurants	.815	4.83	1.707	Dining in restaurants	.753	4.73	1.266
Walking on roads	.892	5.16	1.980	Walking on roads	.850	5.63	1.279
Wandering in the area	.900	5.07	1.865	Wandering in the area	.841	5.49	1.343
Taking a bus or subway	.853	5.17	1.868	Taking a bus or subway	.655	5.03	1.671
Shopping	.843	4.85	1.892	Shopping	.746	5.22	1.659
Focused interaction^a				Focused interaction^a			
Chatting casually	.748	3.63	1.710	Chatting casually	.662	3.20	1.601
Having photos taken by residents	.733	3.62	1.881	Taking photos for tourists	.640	3.25	1.607
Taking photos for residents	.778	2.84	2.029	Having photos taken by tourists	.778	2.44	1.495
Bargaining	.571	3.77	1.759	Bargaining	.727	2.25	1.684
Making friends	.834	3.00	1.992	Making friends	.776	2.10	1.507
Inviting to home	.813	2.76	2.038	Inviting to home	.764	1.77	1.418
Quality^b				Quality^b			
Harmoniously	.896	5.03	1.487	Harmoniously	.885	4.17	1.402
Friendly	.904	5.06	1.547	Friendly	.909	4.20	1.394
Interesting	.879	4.94	1.479	Interesting	.833	4.15	1.507
Equal	.881	4.88	1.569	Equal	.833	4.28	1.476
Cooperative	.802	4.75	1.508	Cooperative	.561	3.80	1.632
Close	.888	4.82	1.644	Close	.892	4.05	1.488
Profound	.864	4.91	1.521	Profound	.736	4.31	1.308
KMO = .906				KMO = .869			
Cumulative variance explained (%) = 71.452				Cumulative variance explained (%) = 62.354			
Tourist understanding^b				Resident understanding^b			
Improve the image of Hong Kong and its people	.794	4.98	1.504	Improve the image of mainland China and its people	.894	4.10	1.341
Know more about HK people and their lives	.870	5.35	1.457	Know more about mainland Chinese and their lives	.914	4.31	1.313
Enhance the cross-cultural understanding	.898	5.28	1.427	Enhance the cross-cultural understanding	.914	4.34	1.350
Enhance ethnic identity	.626	4.86	1.573	Enhance ethnic identity	.839	4.05	1.548
Reinforce the original culture	.877	5.46	1.403	Reinforce the original culture	.847	4.14	1.580
KMO = .863				KMO = .882			
Cumulative variance explained (%) = 67.090				Cumulative variance explained (%) = 77.818			

Note: FL: factor loading, M: mean, SD: standard deviation.

were identified, explaining about 71% of the total variance. Similarly, for residents, three factors were identified, explaining about 62% of the total variance. For mutual understanding, one factor was identified, containing five items from the survey. About 67% of the total variance was explained by the factor for tourist sample, while around 77% of the total variance was explained for resident sample. Overall, both tourists and residents appear to have more co-presence ($M > 4.00$) than focused interaction ($M < 4.00$) but tourists perceive a higher quality of interaction than residents. Regarding mutual understanding, tourists show a better understanding than residents in general.

Social distance between tourists and residents

Table 3 shows the social distances of mainland Chinese tourists and residents in Hong Kong. The results reveal a significant difference between both groups ($F = 24.247$, $p = 0.000$), with a higher mean social distance score for residents ($M = 3.90$) than for tourists ($M = 3.23$). This suggests that mainland Chinese tourists feel a higher intimacy for Hong Kong residents than the other way around, pinpointing an asymmetry in social distance between tourists and residents.

Model assessment of interrelationship among social distance, tourist–resident interaction, and mutual understanding

Measurement model

To assess the measurement model of interrelationship among social distance, tourist–resident interaction and mutual understanding, the reliability and convergent validity for the constructs were tested (Table 4). The indicators include factor loadings with associated items, Cronbach's alpha, CR and AVE. The results show that the factor loadings of associated items ranged from 0.660 to 0.979, which fits the criteria that the loadings should be higher than 0.60 (Henseler et al., 2009). The internal consistency reliability (Hair et al., 2017) was confirmed by Cronbach's alpha (>0.7) and CR values (>0.7) of the constructs (i.e. co-presence, focused interaction, quality and mutual understanding) for both tourists and residents. In addition, all of the AVE values for both tourists and residents were higher than 0.60 under the condition of the recommended threshold value 0.50 (Hair et al., 2017), which confirmed the convergent validity.

Table 3. Social distance between mainland Chinese tourists and Hong Kong residents.

Variable	Tourist		Resident		F	Sig.
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Social distance	3.23	1.589	3.90	2.063	24.247	.000

Note: Social distance scale ranges from 1 = closest to 7 = farthest.

Table 4. Reliability and convergent validity for constructs.

Construct/associated items	Loadings		Cronbach's Alpha		CR		AVE	
	T	R	T	R	T	R	T	R
	Co-presence			0.923	0.844	0.906	0.885	0.661
Dining in restaurants	0.777	0.660						
Walking on roads	0.788	0.844						
Wandering in the area	0.800	0.842						
Taking a bus or subway	0.979	0.773						
Shopping	0.694	0.769						
Focused interaction			0.829	0.816	0.883	0.878	0.654	0.645
Chatting casually	0.787	0.756						
Taking photos	0.817	0.751						
Making friends	0.837	0.856						
Inviting to home	0.794	0.843						
Quality			0.941	0.899	0.953	0.923	0.771	0.67
Harmoniously	0.892	0.882						
Interesting	0.894	0.852						
Equal	0.879	0.850						
Cooperative	0.826	0.660						
Close	0.899	0.902						
Profound	0.878	0.737						
Mutual understanding			0.894	0.923	0.926	0.945	0.759	0.813
Improve the image of Hong Kong (Mainland China) and its people	0.836	0.898						
Know more about Hong Kong (Mainland China) people and their lives	0.885	0.922						
Enhance the cross-cultural understanding	0.901	0.922						
Reinforce the original culture	0.862	0.864						

Note: T: tourist, R: resident, CR: composite reliability, AVE: average variance extracted.

Table 5. Discriminant validity using HTMT ratio.

Constructs	CP	FS	QL	MU	SD	CP	FS	QL	MU	SD
	Tourist					Resident				
Co-presence (CP)										
Focused interaction (FS)	0.25					0.111				
Quality (QL)	0.07	0.311				0.212	0.469			
Mutual understanding (MU)	0.053	0.255	0.785			0.206	0.472	0.853		
Social distance (SD)	0.036	0.069	0.200	0.176		0.130	0.182	0.500	0.454	

The discriminant validity was tested through heterotrait–monotrait (HTMT) ratio. The recommended threshold value of HTMT ratio is 0.9 (Ali et al., 2018; Henseler et al., 2015). When the value of HTMT ratio is lower than 0.9, the discriminant validity is verified. Looking at Table 5, all the values of HTMT ratio are lower than 0.9.

Structural model

The structural model was evaluated by R², which was an important parameter to assess the explanatory power of the model. Based on previous studies, the R² threshold values was set to 0.25, 0.50 and 0.75, which represents the model validity concluded as weak, moderate and substantial, respectively (Hair et al., 2011). In

this study, both tourist understanding ($R^2 = 0.532$) and resident understanding ($R^2 = 0.623$) demonstrated that the structural models of tourists and residents are good fit.

The hypothesized relationships with path coefficients and significance levels were examined in the structural model (see, Table 6). From tourist perspective, the hypothesis of quality of interaction positively influencing mutual understanding was supported ($\beta = 0.722$, $t = 15.789$, $p < 0.001$). The hypothesis of social distance negatively influencing quality of interaction was also supported ($\beta = -0.193$, $t = 3.726$, $p < 0.001$). However, other hypotheses were not supported in the tourist model. It confirms that quality of interaction has a strong effect on tourist understanding toward residents, but defined by their perceived social distances.

From resident perspective, only the hypothesis of co-presence influencing mutual understanding was not supported, whereas other hypotheses were supported with all the paths were significant. Specifically, both focused interaction and quality of interaction had effects on mutual understanding, with a stronger positive effect from quality of interaction ($\beta = 0.722$, $t = 18.35$, $p < 0.001$). The three dimensions of tourist-resident interactions were all defined by residents' perceived social distance but in different ways. Specifically, social distance positively affected co-presence ($\beta = 0.135$, $t = 2.251$, $p < 0.05$), whereas negatively affected focused interaction ($\beta = -0.169$, $t = 3.449$, $p < 0.01$) and quality of interaction ($\beta = -0.479$, $t = 11.358$, $p < 0.001$). Obviously, social distance had the strongest effect on resident understanding.

The structural model results for tourists and residents were also visualized in Figure 2. Overall, mere co-presence does not affect the mutual understanding for both tourists and residents. Focused interaction only affects the understanding by residents but with a moderate positive effect. High quality of interaction is a major factor in predicting the mutual understanding for both but depends on the initial social distance. In particular, the residents of Hong Kong that report a large social distance to mainland Chinese also evaluate the quality of the interaction with tourists as poor and as not contributing to mutual understanding, and vice versa. In other words, tourism can contribute to mutual understanding, but only when the social distance is small to start with.

Table 6. Hypotheses testing of structural model.

Hypothesis	Standardized regression coefficient(β)		T-value		Decision	
	Tourist	Resident	Tourist	Resident	Tourist	Resident
CP \rightarrow MU	0.017	-0.047	0.42	1.361	not-supported	not-supported
FS \rightarrow MU	0.029	0.128	0.591	3.216**	not-supported	supported
QL \rightarrow MU	0.722	0.719	15.789***	18.35***	supported	supported
SD \rightarrow CP	-0.069	0.135	0.822	2.251*	not-supported	supported
SD \rightarrow FS	-0.067	-0.169	1.278	3.449**	not-supported	supported
SD \rightarrow QL	-0.193	-0.479	3.726***	11.358***	supported	supported

Note: * $P < 0.05$; ** $P < 0.01$; *** $P < 0.001$.

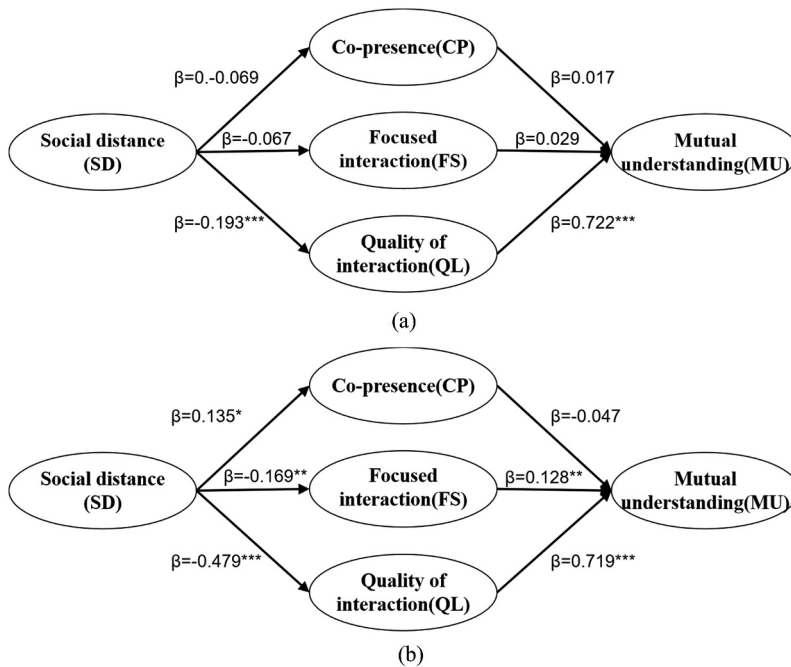


Figure 2. (a). Hypotheses testing of structural model for tourists. (b). Hypotheses testing of structural model for residents.

Conclusions and discussion

This study examined the interrelationships of social distance, tourist–resident interaction and mutual understanding in an urban destination, taking mainland Chinese tourists and residents in Hong Kong as study case. The hypothesis that social distance affects tourist–resident interaction that predicts mutual understanding was tested and the asymmetry in this relationship between tourists and residents was examined as well. The findings showed the asymmetry in the different intensities and qualities of interaction affecting mutual understanding, but defined by their social distances for tourists and residents, respectively. For both parties, co-presence has no significant effects on mutual understanding, whereas quality of interaction has positive strongest effects on mutual understanding. More importantly, quality of interaction is limited by the social distances for both. Comparing tourists and residents, only quality of interaction has an effect from tourist perspective, whereas focused interaction also has positive effects on mutual understanding from resident perspective. Moreover, all the three dimensions of interaction are influenced by residents' social distances.

Previous tourism studies argue that tourist–resident interaction will bring about a better mutual understanding and that the effects may differ for tourists and residents. The findings of our study confirm this general argument but also bring additional insights. Several studies (e.g., Fan et al., 2017; Pizam et al., 2000) indicated that both focused interaction and quality of interaction will have positive effects on the mutual understanding between tourists and residents. This finding is generally verified through our

study on the Hong Kong case but, more importantly, it adds the insight that the quality of interaction has a much stronger effect on the mutual understanding than focused interaction, especially for residents. Moreover, we found that co-presence – i.e. when interaction is limited to sharing space, without physical interaction or verbal communication – have no effects on the mutual understanding for both.

This study mainly enriches tourism studies by providing evidence regarding the effect of social distance in the process from tourist-resident interaction toward mutual understanding. Social distance between mainland Chinese tourists and Hong Kong residents negatively affects the quality of interaction, limiting the potential for developing mutual understanding. Moreover, social distance has no significant influence on the co-presence and focused interaction for tourists but with moderate effects on residents. This is not consistent with the study by Yilmaz and Tasci (2015), who noted that social distance could explain for both tourists and residents the level of interaction each group is willing to engage in with the other. The reason may lie in that Hong Kong is much more urbanized with high densities of tourists and residents. This makes it much more difficult for both tourists and residents to avoid co-presence and focused interaction, having negative effects on the quality of their interaction.

By comparing and combining both the tourist and resident perspective in one study, this paper showed that social distance is asymmetric with residents perceiving a significantly larger social distance than tourists and had a much stronger effect on Hong Kong residents' understanding than on mainland Chinese tourists' understanding. This finding resonates with the study by Siu et al. (2013) who argued that Hong Kong people hold a mostly negative attitude toward mainland Chinese – which, according to Yeung and Leung (2007), is often not based on personal interaction with but rather on indirect information about tourists. As such, social distance as a deeply rooted social attitude tends to determine quality of interaction, with further influence for the potential development of a better mutual understanding.

Related with the theoretical contributions discussed above, our paper also brings practical implications for creating a more sustainable tourism destination. Firstly, social distance tends to determine the mutual understanding through quality of the interaction. Focused interaction and co-presence are not being defined by tourists' social distances but defined by residents' social distances. Moreover, focused interaction has a positive significant effect on residents' understanding. As such, the mutual understanding between tourists and residents could be improved by promoting more focused interaction for both tourists and residents. Secondly, whether tourist-resident interaction contributes to a better mutual understanding mostly seems to depend on social distance. The beneficial effects of tourism should not be overstated. A large initial social distance between the two populations will hamper the intensity and quality of tourist-resident interactions, precluding their positive effects on mutual understanding. This implies that tourist-resident interaction has an effect on mutual understanding only for those who perceive a small social distance to start with. Under the circumstances that social distance is high for tourists and residents, policies aiming to foster more and better interaction is likely to have very limited outcomes for improving mutual understanding between both groups.

The findings may also bring several policy implications for tourism development of urban destinations. Policymakers and urban planners could introduce some preferential policies to promote mutual understanding by increasing focused interaction but decreasing co-presence for both parties. This echoes the dispersal strategy of spreading the flow of tourists over much less crowded urban areas, for instance, suburban areas (Su et al., 2020). Specifically, focused interaction can be increased by developing tourism facilities and infrastructure in several areas outside the urban core. Co-presence can be decreased by redistributing tourists toward places away from local neighborhoods and residents' activity areas. Obviously, the COVID-19 pandemic may have changed the psychological needs of people in terms of health, social bonds, lifestyle, consumption patterns as well as leisure and traveling (Cheung et al., 2021; Li et al., 2020). However, the predispositions (e. g., stereotypes, prejudice, bias and social distance) between different individuals or groups can be formed over a long period of time and probably not easily changed (Chen et al., 2018; Pi-Sunyer, 1989). The present study provides some insights on how to promote the understanding between the divided communities and its people. More importantly, it provides us an opportunity to think about how to create a more sustainable and favorable relationship between people in urban destinations through tourism, especially for post-COVID era.

There are some limitations in this study and directions for future research. First, the samples for mainland Chinese tourists and residents in Hong Kong were from 2017, thus the recent and supplementary samples should be obtained, which can be used for further investigation and comparison, especially during the pandemic. Second, the present study was based on self-reports of survey questionnaires. The hybrid implicit measures will be highly recommended for better understanding the intergroup relations between tourists and residents, for instance, implicit association test (Tse & Tung, 2020). Lastly, the heterogeneity of tourist and resident population in terms of their demographic information and individual characteristics will be further examined as future directions for the possible consequences on their social distances, interactions, and mutual understanding.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This work was supported by “the Fundamental Research Funds for the Central Universities” [63222063].

Notes on contributors

Xing Su is Lecturer in College of Tourism and Service Management at Nankai University, Tianjin, China. Her current research interests focus on the areas of tourist-resident interactions, resident attitude, tourist experience, tourist spatio-temporal behaviors and application of big data in urban tourism research (E-mail: ptsemraoguz@gmail.com xingsu@nankai.edu.cn).

Bas Spierings is Assistant Professor in Urban Geography of the Department of Human Geography and Spatial Planning at Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands. His research focuses on the nexus between urban consumption and public space with specific attention for touristification, leisure, retail developments, (cross-border) shopping, walking mobilities and encounters with difference (E-mail: b.spierings@uu.nl).

Pieter Hooimeijer is Professor of Human Geography and Demography in the Urban Futures Centre at Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands. His main research interest is the recursive relation between population change and the dynamics of housing and labor markets at a variety of spatial scales ranging from neighbourhoods to metropolitan areas. Current researches include the effects of neighbourhoods on social mobility and participation in society (E-mail: p.hooimeijer@uu.nl).

ORCID

Pieter Hooimeijer  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5072-6481>

References

- Aleshinloye, K. D., Fu, X., Ribeiro, M. A., Woosnam, K. M., & Tasci, A. D. (2020). The influence of place attachment on social distance: Examining mediating effects of emotional solidarity and the moderating role of interaction. *Journal of Travel Research*, 59(5), 828–849. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287519863883>
- Ali, F., Rasoolimanesh, S. M., Sarstedt, M., Ringle, C. M., & Ryu, K. (2018). An assessment of the use of partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) in hospitality research. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 30(1), 514–538. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-10-2016-0568>
- Allport, G. W. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*. Addison-Wesley.
- Amir, Y. (1969). Contact hypothesis in ethnic relations. *Psychological Bulletin*, 71(5), 319–342. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0027352>
- Andereck, K. L., Valentine, K. M., Knopf, R. C., & Vogt, C. A. (2005). Residents' perceptions of community tourism impacts. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 32(4), 1056–1076. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2005.03.001>
- Bai, S., & Chang, H. H. (2021). Effect of tourist-to-tourist encounters: Increased conflict or reduced social distance? *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10963480211014938>.
- Bogardus, E. S. (1925). Measuring social distance. *Journal of Applied Sociology*, 9, 299–308.
- Bogardus, E. S. (1933). A social distance scale. *Sociology and Social Research*, 17, 265–271.
- Carneiro, M. J., & Eusébio, C. (2015). Host-tourist interaction and impact of tourism on residents' quality of life. *Tourism & Management Studies*, 11(1), 25–34.
- Carneiro, M. J., Eusébio, C., & Caldeira, A. (2018). The influence of social contact in residents' perceptions of the tourism impact on their quality of life: A structural equation model. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 19(1), 1–30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1528008X.2017.1314798>
- Carneiro, M. J., Eusébio, C., & Caldeira, A. (2019). The youth tourism market: A structural equation model of determinants and impacts of social interactions. In A. Artal-Tur, M. Kozak, & N. Kozak (Eds.), *Trends in tourist behavior* (pp. 71–92). Tourism, Hospitality & Event Management. Springer.
- Çelik, S. (2019). Does tourism reduce social distance? A study on domestic tourists in Turkey. *Anatolia*, 30(1), 115–126. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13032917.2018.1517267>
- Chen, H., & Rahman, I. (2018). Cultural tourism: An analysis of engagement, cultural contact, memorable tourism experience and destination loyalty. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 26, 153–163. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2017.10.006>

- Chen, N., Hsu, C. H., & Li, X. R. (2018). Feeling superior or deprived? Attitudes and underlying mentalities of residents towards Mainland Chinese tourists. *Tourism Management*, 66, 94–107. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2017.11.007>
- Chen, N., Hsu, C. H., & Li, X. (2021). Resident sentiment toward a dominant tourist market: Scale development and validation. *Journal of Travel Research*, 60(7), 1408–1425. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287520947799>
- Cheung, C., Takashima, M., Choi, H., Yang, H., & Tung, V. (2021). The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the psychological needs of tourists: Implications for the travel and tourism industry. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 38(2), 155–166. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2021.1887055>
- Choo, H., & Petrick, J. F. (2014). Social interactions and intentions to revisit for agritourism service encounters. *Tourism Management*, 40, 372–381. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2013.07.011>
- Cohen, E. (1972). Toward a sociology of international tourism. *Social Research*, 39(1), 164–182.
- Cohen, E. (1979). A phenomenology of tourist experiences. *Sociology*, 13(2), 179–201. <https://doi.org/10.1177/003803857901300203>
- De Kadt, E. (1979). *Tourism: Passport to development. Perspectives on the social and cultural effects of tourism in developing countries*. Oxford University Press.
- Dillette, A. K., Douglas, A. C., Martin, D. S., & O'Neill, M. (2017). Resident perceptions on cross-cultural understanding as an outcome of volunteer tourism programs: The Bahamian family Island perspective. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 25(9), 1222–1239. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2016.1257631>
- Eekhout, I., de Vet, H. C., Twisk, J. W., Brand, J. P., de Boer, M. R., & Heymans, M. W. (2014). Missing data in a multi-item instrument were best handled by multiple imputation at the item score level. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*, 67(3), 335–342. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclinepi.2013.09.009>
- Eusébio, C. A., & Carneiro, M. J. A. (2012). Determinants of tourist–host interactions: An analysis of the university student market. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 13(2), 123–151. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1528008X.2012.645201>
- Eusébio, C., Vieira, A. L., & Lima, S. (2018). Place attachment, host–tourist interactions, and residents' attitudes towards tourism development: The case of Boa Vista Island in Cape Verde. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 26(6), 890–909. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2018.1425695>
- Fan, D. X., Zhang, H. Q., Jenkins, C. L., & Tavitiyaman, P. (2017). Tourist typology in social contact: An addition to existing theories. *Tourism Management*, 60, 357–366. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2016.12.021>
- Firat, T., & Koyuncu, I. (2021). Social distance of university students towards individuals with special needs. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*. 69(1), 61–75. doi:10.1080/1034912X.2021.1935499.
- Goffman, E. (1967). On face-work. In E. Goffman (Ed.), *Interaction ritual: Essays on face-to-face behaviour* (pp. 5–45). Doubleday.
- Hair, J. F., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2011). PLS-SEM: Indeed a silver bullet. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 19(2), 139–151. <https://doi.org/10.2753/MTP1069-6679190202>
- Hair, J. F., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2013). Partial least squares structural equation modeling: Rigorous applications, better results and higher acceptance. *Long Range Planning*, 46((1–2)), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lrp.2013.01.001>
- Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2017). *A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM)* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- He, M., Liu, B., & Li, Y. (2021). Redemption of travelers' spoiled identity in a time of health crisis: The role of empathy and social distance. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 47, 262–272. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2021.03.019>
- Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sinkovics, R. R. (2009). In *Advances in international marketing*, 20, 277–319.

- Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2015). A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 43(1), 115–135. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-014-0403-8>
- HKTb Research., (2019, January). *Visitor arrivals to Hong Kong in January 2019*. https://partner.net.hktb.com/filemanager/intranet/pm/VisitorArrivalStatistics/Vis_Stat_E/VisE_2018/Tourism%20Statistics%2012%202018_R1.pdf
- Huang, J., & Hsu, C. H. (2010). The impact of customer-to-customer interaction on cruise experience and vacation satisfaction. *Journal of Travel Research*, 49(1), 79–92. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287509336466>
- Huskin, P. R., Reiser-Robbins, C., & Kwon, S. (2018). Attitudes of undergraduate students toward persons with disabilities: Exploring effects of contact experience on social distance across ten disability types. *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin*, 62(1), 53–63. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0034355217727600>
- Islam, M. R., & Hewstone, M. (1993). Dimensions of contact as predictors of intergroup anxiety, perceived out-group variability, and out-group attitude: An integrative model. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 19(6), 700–710. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167293196005>
- Joo, D., Tasci, A. D., Woosnam, K. M., Maruyama, N. U., Hollas, C. R., & Aleshinloye, K. D. (2018). Residents' attitude towards domestic tourists explained by contact, emotional solidarity and social distance. *Tourism Management*, 64, 245–257. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2017.08.012>
- Li, F. S., & Wang, B. (2020). Social contact theory and attitude change through tourism: Researching Chinese visitors to North Korea. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 36, 100743. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2020.100743>
- Li, S., Wang, Y., Xue, J., Zhao, N., & Zhu, T. (2020). The impact of COVID-19 epidemic declaration on psychological consequences: A study on active Weibo users. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(6), 2032. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17062032>
- Maoz, I. (2000). Power relations in intergroup encounters: A case study of Jewish–Arab encounters in Israel. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 24(2), 259–277. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0147-1767\(99\)00035-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0147-1767(99)00035-8)
- Nyaupane, G. P., Teye, V., & Paris, C. (2008). Innocents abroad: Attitude change toward hosts. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 35(3), 650–667. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2008.03.002>
- Nyaupane, G. P., Timothy, D. J., & Poudel, S. (2015). Understanding tourists in religious destinations: A social distance perspective. *Tourism Management*, 48, 343–353. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.12.009>
- Pi-Sunyer, O. (1989). Changing perceptions of tourism and tourists in a Catalan resort town. In V. L. Smith (Ed.), *Hosts and guests: The anthropology of tourism* (pp. 187–199). University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Pizam, A., Uriely, N., & Reichel, A. (2000). The intensity of tourist–host social relationship and its effects on satisfaction and change of attitudes: The case of working tourists in Israel. *Tourism Management*, 21(4), 395–406. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177\(99\)00085-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(99)00085-0)
- Prendergast, G. P., Lam, H. S., & Ki, Y. P. (2016). Local residents' perceptions of an influx of tourists: A Hong Kong case study. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 28(4), 283–293. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08961530.2016.1165160>
- Raymond, E. M., & Hall, C. M. (2008). The development of cross-cultural (mis) understanding through volunteer tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 16(5), 530–543. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669580802159610>
- Ringle, C. M., Wende, S., & Becker, J. M. (2015). *SmartPLS 3*. SmartPLS GmbH, Boenningstedt. <http://www.smartpls.com>
- Sharpley, R. (2014). Host perceptions of tourism: A review of the research. *Tourism Management*, 42, 37–49. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2013.10.007>
- Sinkovics, R. R., & Penz, E. (2009). Social distance between residents and international tourists—implications for international business. *International Business Review*, 18(5), 457–469. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ibusrev.2009.06.002>

- Siu, G., Lee, L. Y., & Leung, D. (2013). Residents' perceptions toward the "Chinese tourists' wave" in Hong Kong: An exploratory study. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 18(5), 446–463. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10941665.2012.665062>
- Su, M. M., Long, Y., Wall, G., & Jin, M. (2016). Tourist–community interactions in ethnic tourism: Tuva villages, Kanas Scenic Area, China. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 14(1), 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14766825.2014.976228>
- Su, X., Spierings, B., & Hooimeijer, P. (2020). Different urban settings affect multi-dimensional tourist-resident interactions. *Tourism Geographies*, 1–22.
- Su, X., Hooimeijer, P., & Spierings, B. (2021). Why urban setting matters in shaping tourist attitudes towards interaction with residents: Causation or selection in three urban settings. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 22, 100657. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2021.100657>
- Tasci, A. D. (2009). Social distance: The missing link in the loop of movies, destination image, and tourist behavior? *Journal of Travel Research*, 47(4), 494–507. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287508326534>
- Thyne, M., Lawson, R., & Todd, S. (2006). The use of conjoint analysis to assess the impact of the cross-cultural exchange between hosts and guests. *Tourism Management*, 27(2), 201–213. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2004.09.003>
- Thyne, M., Watkins, L., & Yoshida, M. (2018). Resident perceptions of tourism: The role of social distance. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 20(2), 256–266. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2179>
- Thyne, M., Woosnam, K. M., Watkins, L., & Ribeiro, M. A. (2022). Social distance between residents and tourists explained by residents' attitudes concerning tourism. *Journal of Travel Research*. 61(1) , 150–169.
- Tomljenovic, R. (2010). Tourism and intercultural understanding or contact hypothesis revisited. *Tourism, Progress and Peace*, 17–34.
- Tsaur, S. H., Yen, C. H., & Teng, H. Y. (2018). Tourist–resident conflict: A scale development and empirical study. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 10, 152–163. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2018.09.002>
- Tse, S., & Tung, V. W. S. (2022a). Understanding residents' attitudes towards tourists: Connecting stereotypes, emotions and behaviours. *Tourism Management*, 89, 104435. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2021.104435>
- Tse, S., & Tung, V. W. S. (2022b). Measuring the valence and intensity of residents' behaviors in host–tourist interactions: Implications for destination image and destination competitiveness. *Journal of Travel Research*, 61(3), 565–580. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287521997576>
- Valentine, G. (2008). Living with difference: Reflections on geographies of encounter. *Progress in Human Geography*, 32(3), 323–337. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309133308089372>
- Williams, J. A. (1964). Reduction of tension through intergroup contact: A social psychological interpretation. *Pacific Sociological Review*, 7(2), 81–88. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1388531>
- Woosnam, K. M., & Lee, Y. J. (2011). Applying social distance to voluntourism research. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 38(1), 309–313. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2010.06.003>
- Ye, B. H., Zhang, H. Q., & Yuen, P. P. (2012). An empirical study of anticipated and perceived discrimination of mainland Chinese tourists in Hong Kong: The role of intercultural competence. *Journal of China Tourism Research*, 8(4), 417–430. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19388160.2012.728940>
- Yeung, S., & Leung, C. (2007). Perception and attitude of Hong Kong hotel guest-contact employees towards tourists from mainland China. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 9(6), 395–407. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.611>
- Yilmaz, S. S., & Tasci, A. D. (2015). Circumstantial impact of contact on social distance. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 13(2), 115–131. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14766825.2014.896921>
- Zhang, S., Chen, N., & Hsu, C. H. (2021). Facial expressions versus words: Unlocking complex emotional responses of residents toward tourists. *Tourism Management*, 83, 104226. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2020.104226>

APPENDIX**Table A1.** Descriptive summary of tourist characteristics.

Tourist characteristics		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Visit status	First-time visitor	126	30.3
	Repeater	290	69.7
Length of stay	Less than one day	54	13.0
	2–7 days	332	79.8
	More than 7 days	30	7.2
Travel companion	Alone	82	19.7
	Family/relatives/friends	223	53.6
	Organized groups	104	25.0
	Others	28	6.7
Travel purpose*	Sight-seeing	330	79.3
	Business/Conference	59	14.2
	Holiday	255	61.3
	Visiting relatives/friends	41	9.9
	Shopping	150	36.1

*Travel purpose are multiple choices that tourists may have more than one option.