

Academic Weekly Digest

School of Hospitality & Tourism Management



Unravelling the knowledge management practices of tourism consultants

Successful tourism development requires extensive knowledge provision and support, which has resulted in the growth of professional tourism consultants, who play a pivotal role in knowledge creation and transfer. Based on an innovative participant-observation methodology, and a project ecology approach, [Allan Williams](#), [Gang Li](#) and their former PhD student Chao Liu analysed the complex practices whereby creativity and accumulated knowledge are applied in tourism development projects.

Knowledge Management Practices of Tourism Consultants: A Project Ecology Perspective

Prof Allan Williams & Prof Gang Li

Tourism development companies and tourism consultants play a pivotal role in transferring knowledge to clients engaged in tourism development. However, they have received limited scholarly attention, and their knowledge management activities remain largely unexplored. This study advances the contextual understanding of knowledge management practices adopted by tourism consultants in the setting of tourism development projects. It goes beyond the traditional understanding of the bounded nature of firms to analyse knowledge management issues from the contextual perspective of the project ecology by focusing on its two essences – knowledge and relationships. A participant-observation methodology is utilised to study knowledge management practices in 15 projects across three tourism development companies in China over a 12-month period. The study reveals two underlying logics that shape knowledge management practices: the imperatives of creativity and accumulation. The findings exhibit how knowledge management is moulded by the practices within, and interactions among, the four tiers of a multi-level project-specific contextual framework.



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This study is the first theoretically-informed empirical study that offers insights into how tourism consultants manage their knowledge to accomplish their work. It offers insights into how multi-layered dynamic interactions among tourism consultants and other entities, both key creative events and banal everyday practices, shape the co-production of knowledge management. This research has implications for managing the most valuable resources in tourism development projects: people and their knowledge.

Further Reading:

Liu, C., A.M. Williams and G. Li (2022). Knowledge management practices of tourism consultants: a project ecology perspective. *Tourism Management*.

Link: bit.ly/3yb9MXz