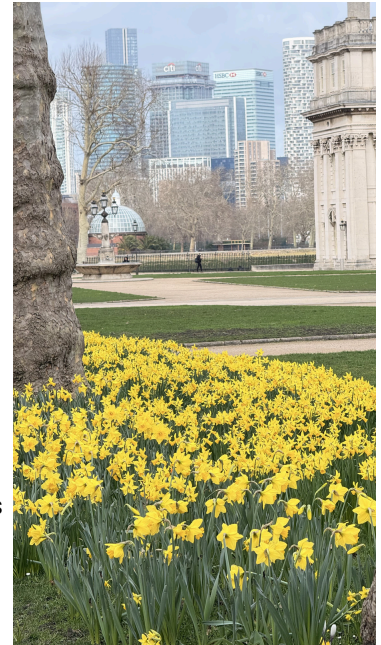


Welcome

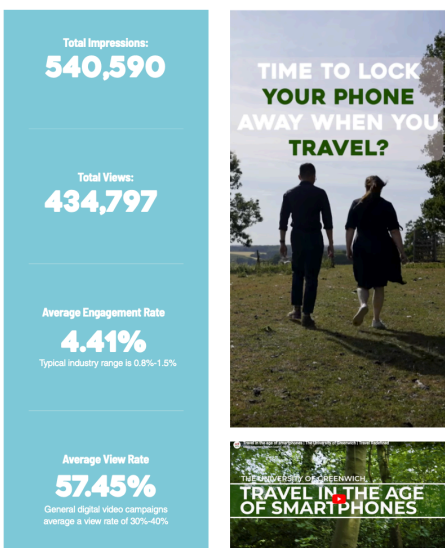
As February slips by in its characteristically brief way, there is already a real sense of spring in the air. Around campus, the daffodils are beginning to bloom, bringing a welcome brightness after the grey of winter and reminding us that new energy is quietly returning. Although it is a short month, it has been full of activity, and we are already busy planning a range of exciting events and gatherings for the months ahead. This issue captures that sense of momentum beautifully. It highlights the wonderful range of work taking place across our community, from public engagement and media contributions to conference achievements, research impact, and international recognition. It is especially encouraging to see so many examples of colleagues bringing their work into conversation with wider publics, communities, and professional audiences. Whether through collaborative projects, public-facing research, or sharing expertise beyond the university, these contributions matter deeply.

I want to say how much I value this kind of work. Not everything that counts can be easily measured, and public engagement is often one of those things. It is through this work that our research reaches beyond academic spaces, connects with people's lives, and shows its wider relevance in generous, thoughtful, and meaningful ways. This issue offers some lovely examples of that, and I hope you enjoy reading them.



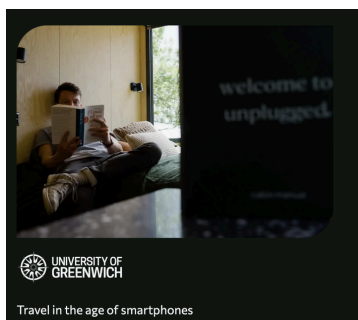
Wenjie

Global reach for TMRC research through Global Sustainable Tourism Council Series



Last year, the Tourism and Marketing Research Centre (TMRC) featured in the *Travel Redefined: Tourism for People and Planet*, Global Sustainable Tourism Council's first global digital series produced with Content With Purpose. TMRC's film, *How social media and digital detox are shaping the future of travel*, featured the work of **Dr Lauren Siegel** and **Dr Wenjie Cai**, bringing TMRC research on social-media-driven tourism and digital-free travel into an international sustainability conversation.

The wider campaign has delivered exceptional impact. Filmed across six continents using local crews, the series spanned more than 50 filming days and produced 24 cinematic short films, 22 thought leadership videos, 10 expert interviews and 3 case studies. It has since become Content With Purpose's most successful digital series to date, generating 22.6 million impressions, 16.2 million views, and more than 40 pieces of earned editorial coverage with an estimated audience reach of over 5 million. Alongside the research featured on screen, TMRC Director **Dr Nikki MacLeod** and Deputy Director **Dr Ryan Yung** played an important role behind the scenes, actively liaising with the production team and supporting the development of the series. Greenwich's own content performed strongly, generating **540,590 impressions** and **434,797 views**, alongside a 4.41% average engagement rate and a 57.45% average view rate, both above typical industry benchmarks. These figures demonstrate not only the scale and visibility of the campaign, but also the strength of TMRC's contribution, both in shaping the content and in bringing Greenwich research into wider industry, policy, and public conversations on sustainable tourism.



On 3rd February, TMRC Deputy Director Dr Ryan Yung was featured on Channel 4's new series, Bargain Holiday Secrets premiere. Hosted by Jasmine Harman, the 5-part series offers viewers insider tips, industry secrets and practical advice on the tourism industry. In Episode 1, which focused on the ever-growing cruise industry, Ryan contributed to deconstructing some of the sophisticated psychology behind on-board upselling and marketing techniques the companies employ to drive passenger spending. By bridging academic research with consumer advocacy, Ryan's contribution offered viewers a transparent look at how brands influence consumer behaviour through techniques such as de-coupling, often shared with the casino sector. The episode is now available on demand [HERE](#)



As part of their ongoing research into the experiences of female chefs in the UK, **Dr Maria Gebbels** and **Dr Juliane Thieme** have published an applied article in Institute of Hospitality magazine. Drawing on interview data and document analysis, the article shares early findings from the project, with a particular focus on practical ways employers and managers can better support female chefs in professional kitchens. By translating research insights into actionable workplace recommendations, the article aims to help hospitality organisations create more inclusive, sustainable career pathways that can be implemented directly by industry practitioners.

Award & Prestige



PhD student **Fatima Nayan** recently attended the 9th International Conference on "The Future of Women 26 – Feminist Perspective in Global Concepts", held in Bali, Indonesia, on 9 and 10 February 2026. The conference brought together scholars and researchers engaging with critical issues around gender, empowerment, and feminist perspectives in global contexts. We are delighted to share that Fatima was recognised as **Session Best Presenter in the student category** under the theme of Gender Equality and Empowerment. This is a wonderful achievement and reflects the quality of her work and presentation.



Reflecting on the experience, Fatima described the conference as both valuable and enriching. While independently managing the costs of attendance was challenging, she found the opportunity deeply rewarding. The conference offered an important platform to share her research, engage with international perspectives, and celebrate academic exchange in a supportive scholarly environment.

Research Outputs

Dr Tippayanet Sorosrungruang and colleagues explore whether AI fitness instructors can really ease loneliness, and under what conditions they come closest to human coaches. In an online experiment with 592 Chinese adults doing a one-minute digital workout, participants were randomly told their instructor was either human or AI, while the workout content itself stayed the same. Human instructors generated stronger feelings of psychological closeness, which in turn were linked to reduced loneliness, confirming that people still bond more easily with other humans in this setting. Yet the study shows AI is not emotionally hopeless: when participants felt a strong sense of co-presence (the feeling of "being with" the instructor) and genuinely enjoyed the session, the psychological gap between human and AI instructors narrowed and AI could also contribute to easing loneliness. The authors argue that future fitness, health and education platforms should deliberately design AI experiences that maximise enjoyment and co-presence, so AI can support, not replace, human-led approaches to emotional well-being in an increasingly digital world.

- Feng, Y., Cheah, J.-H., **Sorosrungruang, T.**, Meng, J., & Xia, S. (2026). Can AI alleviate loneliness? The role of psychological closeness, co-presence and enjoyment in digital workout environment. *Internet Research*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1108/INTR-11-2024-1843>



Filoumena Zlatanou and co-authors published a recent study in *Industrial Marketing Management* looking into how emotions actually carry the impact of key events in business relationships through to trust. Drawing on Relational Norm Theory and interviews with boundary spanners, they develop and experimentally test a dual-pathway model in which emotions sit alongside traditional structural and attitudinal mechanisms.

The study shows that when core relational norms are fulfilled or violated, boundary spanners experience positive or negative emotions that partially mediate the effect of these events on trust. Interestingly, emotions of equal intensity shape trust to a similar extent, whether they are positive or negative. The study also finds that (non)fulfilment of performance-related norms (such as delivery and quality) triggers stronger emotional reactions than interaction norms (such as friendliness or communication style), underscoring that “hard” performance issues are emotionally charged too.

Overall, this research positions emotions as an alternative explanatory mechanism in B2B relationships, complementing classic constructs like dependence, commitment and relationship-specific investments, and opening up new avenues for both research and managerial practice.

Zlatanou, F., Dickert, S., & Henneberg, S. (2026). Let's be Emotional! Experimental Evidence for an Alternative Mediation Logic of Emotions in Business Relationships. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 132, 246–263. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2025.12.002>

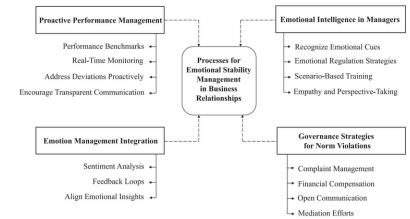
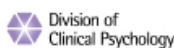
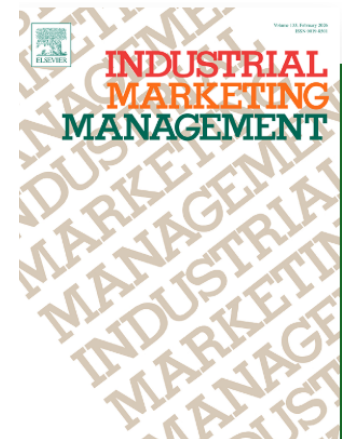


Fig. 7. The four structured processes with their sub-activities for relational stability.



Dr Tippayanet Sorosrungruang and colleagues examined an important challenge faced by many charities and support services: although they deliver vital, often life-changing help, they can struggle to demonstrate their impact in ways that satisfy funders and commissioners. Working with DASH through an ESRC Social Science Impact Accelerator Award, the project focused on how domestic abuse services record and report outcomes, and how these processes could be improved.

The study found that impact is often documented in inconsistent ways, making it difficult to track progress over time, compare outcomes across services, or build a strong case for long-term funding. The research team therefore proposed a number of practical recommendations. These included agreeing a shared set of core outcomes, adopting trauma-informed and survivor-centred approaches to evaluation, and combining numerical data with lived experiences such as case studies, feedback, and focus groups. They also highlighted the importance of collecting clearer and more detailed data, including by ethnicity and disability, so that unequal access and unmet need are not overlooked. This research matters because weak or inconsistent evidence can put essential services at risk of losing funding, which may lead to reduced capacity and longer waiting times. More broadly, the study shows that better evaluation is not simply a technical exercise, but a way to ensure that the experiences of vulnerable and marginalised groups are recognised and reflected in future service design and funding decisions.

Luzón, O., **Sorosrungruang, T.,** & Batchelor, C. (2025). Enhancing impact evaluation: A case study on improving reporting practices in a domestic abuse service. *Clinical Psychology Forum*, 394, 24–33. <https://doi.org/10.53841/bpscpf.2025.1394.24>



Dr Lauren Siegel was invited to host a session on ethical travel photography at the Dark Peak Photography Festival in Derbyshire, engaging an audience of photographers, creatives, and visual storytellers from outside academia. The session explored the ethical dimensions of photographing people, places, and wildlife in travel contexts, encouraging participants to reflect on issues such as consent, representation, environmental responsibility, and respect for local communities. It was particularly engaging in translating academic research into a format accessible to practitioners, sparking thoughtful discussion and meaningful exchange of perspectives.

Dr Juliane Thieme and **Joanna Goodey**, both took part in a recent panel discussion at International Confex, "Event Management Graduates – What's Next, and Are They Prepared for It?". Joanna hosted the panel in her dual role as Executive Board Member for the Association of Event Management Education and Juliane joined as a panellist, bringing her expertise as the MGM Employability lead and Senior Lecturer in Events and Tourism. They were joined on the panel by Kimberly Strempele, a current International Events Management Master's student at UoG. As well as Anna Green, from the events agency Broadsword and Josh Heyburn from Buckinghamshire New University and the Occassional Staffing Group.

A central theme emerging from the discussion was the importance of articulating the value of event management education. The panel emphasised that graduates contribute far more than creative flair; they bring strategic and critical thinking, fresh perspectives, strong motivation and a high degree of adaptability. The sector, they argued, must communicate these strengths more confidently and consistently.

The conversation also highlighted the responsibility of event organisations to strengthen early-career pathways. Panellists noted that sustainable talent development requires more than offering work experience or internships. It also depends on meaningful onboarding, structured training and ongoing professional development for junior staff. Clear progression routes and formal recognition were identified as essential components of a resilient and future-ready workforce.

Students themselves were encouraged to adopt a proactive approach to their development. The panel underscored the value of embracing learning opportunities, engaging in networking and gaining hands-on experience wherever possible. Broad exposure, they noted, significantly enhances long-term career prospects.

Finally, the discussion reinforced the need for deeper collaboration between industry and education to build diverse and inclusive talent pipelines. Initiatives such as the REACH Scholarship and Power of Events were highlighted as strong examples of partnerships already making a positive impact. The panel agreed that expanding such collaborations will be vital to the sector's continued growth and innovation.



Dr Maria Gebbels offered her expert insights on Generation Z and the future of work in the hospitality and tourism industry during a recent panel discussion, with particular emphasis on the evolving role of hospitality education in preparing students for long-term careers. The panel was moderated by Professor Adele Ladkin from Bournemouth University, and the other speakers included Mr Robert Richardson, CEO of the Institute of Hospitality; Associate Professor Lorna Wang from the University of Surrey; and Associate Professor Agnieszka Rydzik from the University of Lincoln. Dr Gebbels argued for greater involvement of students in decision-making processes rather than relying solely on their feedback. She also urged educator and employers to refocus on the positive meaning of careers in hospitality to change the longstanding negative perceptions, she also asked employers to reconsider existing employment models so they better align with the strategic thinking and expectations of future leaders. She highlighted that higher education must depend now more than ever on practical work experience, and that, despite rapid technological changes, including the growing influence of artificial intelligence, the future of hospitality work will continue to require distinctly human capabilities, such as empathy, creativity, adaptability, kindness, resilience, and cultural intelligence will remain essential in delivering personalised and authentic guest experiences.



This whole-day event was also attended by our students on MSc Strategic Tourism and Hospitality Management, alongside their programme leader **Dr Fatemeh Mohamadi**. It was a great day of learning, stepping outside the classrooms and engaging directly with sector leaders and contemporary industry debates.

Conference



Dr Lauren Siegel attended the IFITT ENTER eTourism Conference 2026 at Breda University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands, and presented two papers:

Virtual Hospitality: Materiality, Fantasy and the Appeal of Spaces in the Metaverse

Drawing on focus group research, the study examined how users perceive and engage with virtual hotels, finding that imaginative, fantastical environments were often more appealing than realistic digital replicas of physical properties. Participants emphasised immersive design, escapism, and social interaction as key drivers of engagement, suggesting that virtual hospitality experiences are shaped more by experiential and creative possibilities than by traditional brand loyalty. The research contributes to understanding how hospitality is evolving in alternate realities and offers insights for designing meaningful and engaging guest experiences in the metaverse.

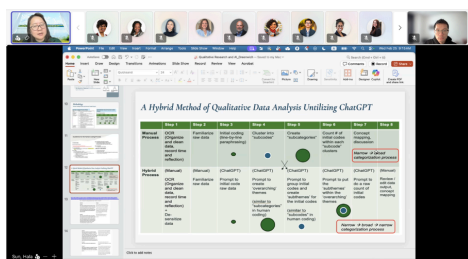
Resident Resistance to Tourist Gaze in the Mediatised Age

This study examined how smartphone photography is reshaping relationships between tourists and local residents in highly visited destinations. Drawing on survey data from residents in Kyoto's Gion district, the study found that tensions stem less from tourism itself and more from intrusive photographic practices, particularly when visitors fail to seek permission or respect social boundaries. The findings highlight how smartphones function not only as tools of documentation but as technologies that can disrupt everyday life and provoke resident resistance. The research contributes to debates on the "tourist gaze" and digital ethics, emphasising the need for destination managers to promote more respectful and responsible visual practices in the age of social media.

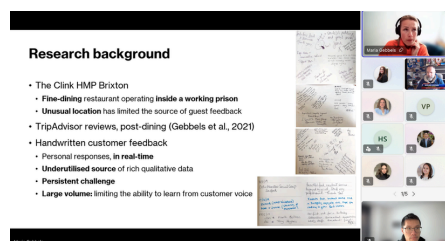
Dr Maria Gebbels and **Dr Juliane Thieme** organised Business of Supper Club, an industry-facing event co-hosted with Women in the Food Industry CIC. The event brought a panel of experienced supper club hosts to campus to share honest, practical insights into hospitality entrepreneurship, from legislation and costing to marketing, product development, and realistic hosting. The event also showcased cross-university collaboration, with colleagues from The Generator and the Help to Grow scheme introducing the enterprise and business support available to aspiring entrepreneurs. Positioned as an alternative career pathway outside traditional restaurant and hotel kitchens, the event highlighted how supper clubs and pop-ups can offer viable, flexible routes for female chefs. Supported by funding from the Tourism and Marketing Research Centre, the evening brought together well over 40 students from different subject areas, staff, industry and the wider public for lively discussion, networking and knowledge exchange.



Generative AI and Research Workshop Series 2: Using AI in Data Analysis



The second session in the Generative AI and Research Workshop Series organised by **Dr Wenjie Cai** focused on using AI in qualitative data analysis, drawing over 40 colleagues from across the Business School and wider university community. Dr Hala Sun (Michigan State University) opened by outlining methodological innovations and ethical considerations in AI-assisted analysis, including strategies for integrating generative AI into coding workflows, triangulating human and machine interpretation, and navigating IRB processes for AI-related studies. She highlighted the importance of maintaining human-centred research integrity and inclusive practices while leveraging new technologies.



Dr Maria Gebbels then presented a ChatGPT-enabled methodology for digitising large-scale handwritten customer feedback in hospitality. Using a fine-dining case study, she demonstrated how generative AI can transform unstructured comments into analysable datasets, unlock previously inaccessible insights, and support digital innovation in service research. Together, the talks showcased practical pathways for responsibly embedding generative AI into qualitative research design, analysis, and publication.

CREW seminar

On Tuesday 17 February, the Management Inquiry Group (MIG) of CREW hosted a thought-provoking seminar on corporate wrongdoing, bringing together three speakers working across business ethics, moral philosophy and anthropology.

Professor Wim Vandekerckhove of EDHEC Business School explored whistleblowing across different jurisdictions, focusing on the barriers that prevent people from speaking up and the conditions needed to build genuine speak-up cultures. Many at Greenwich will remember Wim from his earlier years at GBS.

Dr Athol Williams of the University of Oxford drew on his own experience as a whistleblower in South Africa, where he exposed corruption involving the South African Revenue Service and Bain & Company. His presentation examined restitution and asked how organisations and states might meaningfully respond to the harm caused by wrongdoing.

Dr Guodong Cheng of CREW presented ethnographic research on human rights abuses in Chinese manufacturing plants, showing how abusive practices can become normalised in everyday institutional life, and how formal principles of protection may be weakened in practice.

The seminar concluded with a lively panel discussion and attracted strong attendance from colleagues within and beyond the University, including online participants from South Africa. Later in the day, Professor Vandekerckhove also delivered a PGR/ECR workshop on using research to influence policy.



Congratulations

Filoumena Zlatanou successfully defended her thesis and passed her viva at Queen Mary, University of London with minor revisions! Congratulations Filoumena!



Upcoming Events

British Academy funding experience sharing & themed seminar: Technology, Monitoring, and the New Employment Relation (2-4 pm, 11th March QA 280, Calendar Invitation)

Making Britain Home: Celebrating Migrant Women Academics (Book Launch) (1-5 pm, 12th March, Cooper Building, book your ticket [HERE](#))

TMRC Public Seminar – Boundaries of Belonging: Queer Tourism, Events, and Space (2-4.30 pm, 25th March, QA280, Calendar Invitation or register [HERE](#))

Critical Theory Seminar (10-12, 26th March, 11_2007, invitation will be sent shortly)

Co-Creating Regenerative & Conscious Destination Futures – ATHE x TMRC Public Event (9.30-16.00, 15th April, Cooper Building, register [HERE](#))



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