

Souvenir in tourism research: a literature review and future agenda

Fangxuan (Sam) Li
School of Tourism, Hainan University, Haikou, China

Souvenir in
tourism
research

15

Received 20 September 2022
Revised 12 October 2022
20 October 2022
8 November 2022
Accepted 8 November 2022

Abstract

Purpose – Souvenirs have been repeatedly studied as both a subject and as a variable for other tourism-related phenomena, but research into this issue is fragmented. The purpose of this study is twofold: first, to analyze souvenir in tourism to provide a comprehensive state-of-the-art review. Second, this paper contributes to identifying the directions for future search through reviewing existing literature. This study is one of the first papers to offer a systematic overview of the key themes in tourism souvenir research. In addition to the key themes, this paper also offers insights into future souvenir research.

Keywords Souvenir, Souvenir research, Souvenir in tourism, Literature review

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Over the past several decades, academic tourism research has focused frequently on the topic of souvenirs (Swanson, 2014). Given the link between souvenirs and tourism shopping, souvenir is seen as a crucial component of the travel experience. Souvenirs refer to commercially tangible produced items that are purchased to remind visitors of their intangible travel experiences of destinations (Kim *et al.*, 2011a, 2011b; Swanson and Horridge, 2006; Swanson and Timothy, 2012). For tourists, souvenirs can help “locate, define, and freeze in time a fleeting, transitory experience, and bring back to an ordinary experience something of the quality of an extraordinary experience” (Peters, 2011, p. 235). The behavior of seeking souvenirs is usually perceived as a quest for authentic experiences (Hitchcock and Teague, 2000). Due to the close relationship between tourism and souvenirs, the topic has been studied by scholars from different perspectives.

Souvenirs, which mark memories of tourists’ travel experiences in time and place, are universal artefacts of tourism (Gordon, 1986). However, the types of souvenir items that are offered to tourists vary (Swanson and Horridge, 2004), but the most popular ones include arts and crafts, gemstones, jewelry, leather goods, antiques, collectibles, postcards and local products such as food and clothing. Gordon (1986), as one of the earliest scholars to categorize souvenirs, distinguished five major categories of souvenirs: pictorial images, symbolic

© Fangxuan (Sam) Li. Published in *Tourism Critiques: Practice and Theory*. Published by Emerald Publishing Limited. This article is published under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) licence. Anyone may reproduce, distribute, translate and create derivative works of this article (for both commercial and non-commercial purposes), subject to full attribution to the original publication and authors. The full terms of this licence may be seen at <http://creativecommons.org/licences/by/4.0/legalcode>

This research was supported by Hainan Provincial Natural Science Foundation of China (No. 623RC444 and 721QN223).



shorthand souvenirs, piece-of-the-rock merchandise, local products and place markers. A new taxonomy of souvenirs has been developed by [Swanson and Timothy \(2012\)](#) and is divided into four categories: tourist commodities, symbolic reminders, other commodities and other reminders. Souvenirs play the role of commodities in trade among tourism providers and tourists ([Kong and Chang, 2012](#); [Swanson, 2014](#); [Swanson and Timothy, 2012](#)). [Kong and Chang \(2012\)](#) summarized the significant commercial value of souvenirs, including gauging the favorability of a destination, enhancing local economic development, adding a valuable addition to the tourism portfolio and acting as a form of publicity. In addition to their economic value, tourists are exposed to the culture and history of a location through souvenirs, which are also exploited as commodities in the commodification of material culture ([Litirell et al., 1994](#)). Hence, souvenirs are universally associated with tourism ([Swanson and Horridge, 2006](#)) and contribute to sustainable tourism development greatly ([Tosun et al., 2007](#)).

Despite the importance of souvenirs in tourism, “research into souvenirs has been a minor but consistent subtheme within the tourism literature for several decades” ([Trinh et al., 2014](#), p. 275). The body of literature on souvenirs is expanding; however, the existing literature related to this topic is fragmented, and few review articles are found ([Swanson and Timothy, 2012](#)). Therefore, it is crucial to analyze the literature on souvenirs attentively and compile a comprehensive summary of it.

Method

This study first selected 26 journals that have a direct link with tourism from the subject category of an SSCI database named “Hospitality Leisure, Sport, and Tourism” for an initial research. The authors then started to search for articles within selected journals by using keywords. To have a comprehensive result, the authors use not only the keywords *souvenir* but also other closely linked terms to souvenir research, such as *craft* and *gift*. The articles that include the keywords in the title, abstract or keywords from 2000 to 2020 were selected after an initial research. As a growing number of articles related to souvenir had been published after 2000, the year 2000 was chosen as the search’s starting point to find current subjects in souvenir research. After an initial research, the authors further read the abstract and the main part of the papers to determine the appropriateness of the selection. The samples are limited to full-length articles only. Therefore, the analysis does not include short communications, reports, comments or book reviews.

Finally, 47 publications related to souvenirs are chosen from 15 journals ([Table 1](#)), including *Tourism Management* (TM), *Annals of Tourism Research* (ATR), *Journal of Travel Research* (JTR), *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* (JST), *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research* (JHTR), *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing* (JTTM), *Tourism Geographies* (TG), *Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management* (JHMM), *Tourism Management Perspectives* (TMP), *Current Issues in Tourism* (CIT), *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research* (APJTR), *Journal of Vacation Marketing* (JVM), *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism* (SJHT), *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* (JTCC) and *Tourist Studies* (TS).

Thematic analysis, as one of the most commonly used types of academic reviews, was adopted by this research to pursue a deeper understanding of existing literature on souvenir research. Thematic reviews not only can identify major themes emerging from existing relevant literature by providing a broad overview of what has been done but also provide a synthesis of key aspects of a topic ([Jin et al., 2017](#)). The thematic analysis of the current progress described the research produced in the area of souvenir in tourism research, summarized the emerging themes and identified gaps for future research simultaneously.

Journal name	2000–2005	2006–2010	2011–2015	2016–2020	Total
JTSM	2	2	3	0	7
TM	0	2	3	3	8
ATR	1	2	0	0	3
CIT	0	0	0	4	4
JVM	3	1	0	0	4
JTCC	0	0	2	2	4
JTR	2	0	1	0	3
JHMM	0	0	1	0	1
SJHT	0	1	0	2	3
TG	0	1	1	0	2
TMP	0	0	0	2	2
TS	1	0	0	2	3
APJTR	0	0	1	0	1
JHTR	0	0	0	1	1
JST	0	0	1	0	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>47</i>

Table 1.
Number of articles by
journal and time
period

Source: Table created by author

Results

This section aims to synthesize key views and perspectives in existing work on souvenir in tourism research. Specifically, this section discusses the key themes in souvenir research. To trace the trends of the research in this field, the authors first analyzed the word frequency of the keywords. Based on the identified keywords (Table 2), the authors summarized the papers thoroughly to indicate the research progress. The categories of themes used by this paper follow a similar category summarized by Swanson and Timothy (2012). Some papers may include more than one theme or topic; therefore, the identified themes or topics are not mutually exclusive.

Souvenir shopping

At popular tourist spots, routine actions such as buying and selling souvenirs generate billions of dollars annually (Swanson and Timothy, 2012). Due to its significant commercial value, the most popular topic in souvenir research is souvenir shopping. This paper identified three main sub-themes related to souvenir shopping: motivations, behaviors and satisfaction, by summarizing the existing literature.

Souvenir shopping motivations. There has been a large amount of study done on why people buy souvenirs. For example, Wilkins (2011) has identified gifts, memory aids and

Keywords	Frequency
Souvenir	31
Authenticity	10
Tourism shopping	6
Tourism	6
Souvenir shopping	5
Shopping	5
Memory	5

Table 2.
Most frequent
keywords in the
publications
reviewed

Source: Table created by author

evidence as three motivations for purchasing souvenirs. Adapted from Wilkins' (2011) souvenir motivation scale, Lin (2017) found that among three motivation dimensions, the strongest motivation for purchasing food souvenirs is acquiring gifts. In addition to the functions of souvenirs, Sthapit (2018) highlighted the importance of the characteristics of souvenirs and argued that the uniqueness drove tourists to buy souvenirs. Moreover, with the increasing popularity of augmented reality technology, App-based souvenirs have become a new way of enhancing tourists' postvisit memories (Lee *et al.*, 2017).

Wilkins (2011) argued that one of the core importance of souvenir purchase is to bring them back as gifts and seven measurement items related to the role of souvenirs as gifts were proposed by this study. The role of souvenirs as gifts for family members and friends was confirmed by Li and Ryan (2018), who explored Chinese tourists' souvenir purchase behaviors in North Korea. Lin (2017) explored tourists' behaviors toward purchasing food souvenirs as gifts in Chinese culture. In the Chinese cultural setting, giving gifts is a social standard, a responsibility and a reciprocal behavior; hence, this study adds two items to Wilkins' gift dimension (2011): "It's obligatory to buy food souvenirs for family or friends after a trip" and "I buy souvenirs as thank-you gifts." Park (2000) pointed out that gift-giving behaviors vary in different cultures by examining various similarities and differences between Japanese and Korean tourists' gift-giving. This study discovered that both Japanese and Korean tourists used presenting gifts to foster relationships with others. This paper also illustrated the existence of differences in what and how souvenirs should be given as gifts for Japanese and Korean tourists. Specifically, Japanese tourists are more likely to purchase food souvenirs for friends compared to Korean tourists, while Korean tourists are more likely to purchase tangible souvenirs compared to Japanese tourists.

Previous research has found that tourists' souvenir shopping motivations are influenced by various factors, including demographic characteristics (Kim and Littrell, 2001; Wilkins, 2011; Yu and Littrell, 2005), perceived value (Lin and Wang, 2012; Yu and Littrell, 2005), the perceived cultural difference (Wong and Cheng, 2014; Park, 2000), souvenir attributes (Lin, 2017), travel motivations (Li and Ryan, 2018), shopping companions (Yu and Littrell, 2005), personal habit (Cheng *et al.*, 2010) and destination image (Wong and Cheng, 2014). Below is a brief summary of existing literature related to the factors influencing souvenir purchase motivations.

Kim and Littrell (2001) have identified the relationship between demographic characteristics and intentions to purchase three categories of souvenirs, including a generic handcraft (placemat), a symbolic marker (*t*-shirt) and an ethnic product (rug). They found that material status is related to souvenir purchase intention significantly. Married women's purchase intention is higher than any other group. Moreover, Wilkins (2011) focused on investigating the impact of gender among demographical factors on the motivations for souvenir purchase. The findings indicated that the role of memory was not important for males to purchase souvenirs. According to Lin and Wang (2012), who explored tourists' souvenir-repurchasing motivations, souvenir-repurchasing intentions are influenced by perceived value according to their souvenir-repurchasing model. The two important determinants of perceived value are authenticity perception and hedonics. Yu and Littrell (2005) confirmed the finding and pointed out that tourists' intentions to purchase handcraft souvenirs are affected by utilitarian value.

In terms of perceived cultural differences, Park (2000) investigated how social and cultural factors affect the motivations of souvenir purchasing by conducting a comparative study on Japanese and Korean tourists. On one hand, as Japanese and Korean have the same Asian cultural background, most motivations for purchasing souvenirs for Japanese and Korean are Chinese. On the other hand, this research also found that affection is more

important for Koreans during the choice of souvenirs, while the obligation is more important for Japanese during the choice of souvenirs. Further research by [Wong and Cheng \(2014\)](#) revealed a moderating effect of perceived cultural differences in the link between visitors' perceptions of heritage sites and their attitudes toward souvenir shopping.

In addition to the perceived cultural difference, food souvenir purchase motivations are significantly influenced by food souvenir symbol attributes such as authenticity and indigenouness ([Lin, 2017](#)). Specifically, authenticity and indigenouness have positive influences on driving tourists to purchase food souvenirs. According to [Cheng et al. \(2010\)](#), souvenir purchase motivations are also influenced by tourists' personal habits. They investigated the attitudes of tea tourists and nontea visitors about drinking tea as well as their desire to purchase tea as a souvenir. The results showed that people were more likely to purchase tea as a souvenir the more tea they drank on a regular basis. Moreover, tourists' souvenir-shopping attitudes are affected by destination image ([Wong and Cheng, 2014](#)). Specifically, the perception that tourists have of a heritage site has a favorable and direct impact on how they feel about buying souvenirs.

The association between purchasing intentions and other key indicators, such as prior travel experience and attitude toward souvenirs, was also investigated by [Kim and Littrell \(2001\)](#). It was found that the relationship is influenced by souvenir categories. For example, a greater travel experience has a detrimental impact on leisure travelers' desire to buy a symbolic object and an ethnic product.

Souvenir shopping behavior. Previous research has examined the souvenir-buying habits of travelers from a variety of angles, including the experience of souvenir purchasing ([Li and Ryan, 2018](#); [Mossberg, 2007](#); [Yu and Littrell, 2003](#)), factors influencing souvenir purchase ([Lehto et al., 2004](#); [Li and Ryan, 2018](#); [Oh et al., 2004](#); [Paraskevaidis and Andriotis, 2015](#); [Swanson and Horridge, 2004](#); [Swanson and Timothy, 2012](#); [Wilkins, 2011](#)) and souvenir shopper typologies ([Fairhurst et al., 2007](#); [Hu and Yu, 2007](#); [Kong and Chang, 2012](#)).

Souvenir was found to be one of the important factors influencing tourists' experience ([Mossberg, 2007](#)). For example, [Li and Ryan \(2018\)](#) investigated the experiences of Chinese tourists buying souvenirs in North Korea. They identified souvenir purchase motivations and specific items purchased in North Korea. [Yu and Littrell \(2003\)](#) suggested a model of purchasing behaviors for handcrafted mementos that takes into account travel activities, beliefs about the authenticity of crafts, beliefs about the qualities of handcrafted products, attitudes regarding shopping experiences and intention to buy at venues.

The majority of souvenir shopping studies examined the socio-demographic factors influencing tourists' souvenir purchase. According to [Lehto et al. \(2004\)](#), sociodemographic traits and travel-related factors are associated with tourists' purchasing preferences and spending habits. Specifically, the amount of shopping expenditure is influenced by travel motivation, travel style and demographic variables such as gender and age. [Oh et al. \(2004\)](#) confirmed this finding and found that demographic characteristics and trip typologies are useful indicators for predicting tourists' souvenir shopping behavior. [Wilkins \(2011\)](#) also identified the differences between men and women in terms of souvenir items purchased. For example, women are more likely to buy various types of keepsakes, especially those that are destination-specific, whereas males are more likely to buy reduced and branded goods. [Lee et al. \(2009\)](#) investigated the differences between first-time and repeat festival-goers. Their study revealed that first-time visitors showed stronger relationships with souvenir than repeat visitors. However, [Swanson and Horridge \(2004\)](#) challenged this link between demographic variables and souvenir consumption. They discovered that whereas tourist demographics were unrelated to souvenir consumption, travel activities had a favorable

impact on it. Apart from demographical variables, souvenir-shopping behavior is also influenced by travel motivations. For example, Swanson and Horridge (2006) discovered that the reasons why people travel affect the kind of souvenirs they choose, as well as the characteristics of the products and the stores where they buy them. Li and Ryan (2018) confirmed this finding and further pointed out that souvenir purchase is not only related to travel motivations but also the experience of the place. In addition, Paraskevaïdis and Andriotis (2015) argued that tourists' souvenir consumption is associated with four values of souvenirs, including use-value, exchange-value, sign-value and spiritual-value. Swanson and Timothy (2012) pointed out souvenir purchase behaviors are also influenced by travel experiences, destination identity and the depth of knowledge about the place. All of the literature explored shopping behaviors from the perspective of tourists; however, Swanson (2004) explored both retailers' and tourists' perceptions of souvenirs. The findings showed that there are commonalities between souvenir items, product qualities and store characteristics among retailers and tourists.

Previous studies have examined the souvenir shopping behaviors for different souvenir shopper typologies. Fairhurst *et al.* (2007) found that item purchases, sources of information used for selecting a shopping place and souvenir shopping behaviors are different for different tourist typologies (city individuals, historical individuals, active individuals, alone individuals and tour group individuals). Similarly, Hu and Yu (2007) explored visitors' shopping-related beliefs and behaviors toward craft souvenirs. Based on their criteria for choosing crafts and their level of shopping involvement, three types of souvenir shoppers – shopping aficionados, lovers of shopping and indifferent shoppers – were differentiated. Moreover, Kong and Chang (2012) investigated how four visitor subgroups – experience seekers, nature seekers, familiarity seekers and relief seekers – shopped for souvenirs.

Souvenir shopping satisfaction. Four satisfaction dimensions of souvenir shopping were identified by Oviedo-García *et al.* (2016) in their study on tourist satisfaction with souvenir purchases and its relationship to overall satisfaction with the destination: internal attraction, service differentiation, service provision and external attraction. Moreover, their study also indicated that service provision and external attraction affect overall tourist satisfaction rates. Vega-Vázquez *et al.* (2017) looked at the relationship between satisfaction with souvenir shopping and additional factors, such as shopping value, general tourist contentment and good word of mouth. The findings showed that while souvenir shopping satisfaction only slightly mediates the association between shopping value and good word-of-mouth, it totally mediates the relationship between shopping value and overall tourist satisfaction.

The study conducted by Suhartanto (2018) placed more emphasis on the souvenir shopping process and consumer behavior after making a purchase. The findings showed that tourists' perceptions of their destination and their commitment to it are significantly influenced by their pleasure with their souvenir-buying experiences. The study further pointed out that store and collectability attributes are two important determinants of tourists' satisfaction with the souvenir shopping experience. The association between option overload and pleasure with souvenir purchases has recently been studied by Sthapit (2018). The results indicated that the absence of choice overload leads to no regrets and high satisfaction levels.

Authenticity

Torabian and Arai (2016, p. 697) proposed four themes to describe the authenticity of souvenirs by examining travel blog posts based on constructivist grounded theory, including "using local materials at the destination, crafting by hand and produced locally by artist, displaying artist's signature or hallmark, and uniqueness costing more, but higher

quality and better design.” The key topics related to authenticity in souvenir research that have been explored by existing literature include authenticity perception (Chang *et al.*, 2012; Hashimoto and Telfer, 2007; Lin and Wang, 2012; Trinh *et al.*, 2014; Xie *et al.*, 2012; Yu and Littrell, 2003), authenticity and marketing (Fu *et al.*, 2018; Lin and Wang, 2012; Luscombe *et al.*, 2018; Xie *et al.*, 2012), the influence of inauthentic souvenirs (Sthapit and Björk, 2019; Yang, 2011) and souvenirs and tourism geographies (Hashimoto and Telfer, 2007; Peters, 2011).

Authenticity perception is regarded as one of the determinants of perceived value (Lin and Wang, 2012). According to Yu and Littrell (2003), tourists’ beliefs about the authenticity of craft souvenirs are influenced positively by travel activities. Given the close link between the authenticity of heritage souvenirs and indigenous tourism, Chang *et al.* (2012) explored tourists’ perceived authenticity of aboriginal heritage souvenirs. The results indicated that tourists’ perceived authenticity of aboriginal heritage souvenirs varies between different stakeholders, including residents, tourists, governmental officers and tourism entrepreneurs. Similarly, from the standpoint of design, Xie *et al.* (2012) also investigated how tourists perceived the authenticity of indigenous goods. It was discovered that tourists see a modern design with indigenous marks as being more authentic than traditional design. Moreover, from the standpoint of geography, Hashimoto and Telfer (2007) investigated tourists’ perceptions of authenticity. In Niagara Falls, Canada, they looked at the ideas of geographical size and geographically displaced authenticity in relation to souvenirs. Purchasing a souvenir from a location other than the destination being visited is referred to as having “geographically displaced authenticity.” Trinh *et al.* (2014) focused on exploring souvenir retailers’ attitudes toward authenticity to fill the gap in the literature. The findings showed that souvenir shops source locally and nationally, but they also try to market souvenirs that are seen as being authentic to the local area. The study also showed that visitors might establish their own experiential authenticity as potential “prosumers.”

From the point of marketing, authenticity is an important strategy for the marketing of commodified punishment used by tourism operators (Luscombe *et al.*, 2018). According to Lynch (2004, p. 261), commodified punishment refers to transforming “something that previously had no particular economic value” (p. 261) into a product that can be bought and sold. In addition to commodified punishment, authenticity also plays an important role in souvenir purchase. For example, design authenticity has an impact on travelers’ inclination to buy souvenirs (Xie *et al.*, 2012). Similarly, Lin and Wang (2012) found that tourists’ souvenir-repurchasing intention is associated with authenticity perception. In the context of experience consumerism, Fu *et al.* (2018) looked more closely at the connections between the authenticity of souvenirs, their perceived value and consumers’ behavior. It was discovered that authentic souvenirs have a stronger favorable impact on tourists’ behavioral intentions through perceived value in the context of experience consumption.

The literature above discussed the importance of authenticity in tourist perceptions and souvenir purchase, and some scholars have explored the influence of inauthentic souvenirs on tourist perceptions (Yang, 2011) and souvenir purchase (Sthapit and Björk, 2019). According to Yang (2011), inauthentic souvenirs harmed tourists’ perceptions of cultural authenticity at an ethnic theme park. However, Sthapit and Björk (2019) found that a lack of authenticity is an attraction for tourists in purchasing souvenirs. For example, sometimes tourists buy “genuine counterfeit products” during their travel due to their lower prices.

Peters (2011) examined the relationship between souvenirs and tourism geographies and asserted that souvenirs provide a fresh paradigm for thinking spatially about tourism. According to the findings, owners believed that commonplace mementos like tea towels, bookmarks and food and drink that have little to do with a particular location and dilute its significance were genuine.

Souvenir meanings

[Hunter \(2012\)](#) explored the cultural meanings of souvenirs and pointed out that representations of indigenous destinations are commonly used as popular tourist destinations to promote tourism destinations. Due to the significant cultural meanings of souvenirs, [Hunter \(2012\)](#) further defined a good souvenir as the result of inventive marketing, sponsorship and careful cultural heritage protection. [Cheng et al. \(2010\)](#) explored the cultural meanings of tea for tea tourists who buy tea as souvenirs. In addition to the cultural meanings of souvenirs, [Swanson and Timothy \(2012\)](#) argued that different functional meanings are attached to souvenirs depending on who owns them. The main functional meanings of souvenirs are gifts, memory aids and evidence ([Wilkins, 2011](#)). In terms of souvenirs as memory aids, [Wilkins \(2011\)](#) further pointed out that essential components of keepsakes that aid travelers in recalling their travel memories and motivating them to return to a destination include novelty, usefulness and practicality. [Marschall \(2012\)](#) agreed with [Sthapit and Björk \(2019\)](#) and argued that the choice of a tourist's destination, their experience there and their desire to share their travels with others by purchasing souvenirs all depend heavily on memory. [Marschall's \(2012\)](#) study was supported by [Morgan and Pritchard \(2005\)](#). They looked at how people subconsciously use souvenirs as markers of memory, (re)creating polysensual tourism experiences, and self-awareness of their roles as "tourists."

Different from [Wilkins \(2011\)](#), [Paraskevaïdis and Andriotis \(2015\)](#) looked at the meanings of souvenirs from the values of souvenirs as commodities. From a sociological angle, they added four values to the literature on tourism: use value, exchange value, symbol value and spiritual value. Apart from the significant meanings of souvenirs discussed above, the meanings of the souvenirs also played an important role in destination development. For example, [Lund et al. \(2017\)](#) found that souvenirs' meanings and material make-up have a significant impact on how Icelandic Arctic landscapes are shaped. In addition, [Lane and Waitt \(2007\)](#) identified a strong link between the meanings of souvenirs and the location of producing and purchasing souvenirs. They believed that when keepsakes are taken away from the location where they were made or purchased, their significance is lost. However, this opinion was challenged and criticized by later studies.

Conclusion

This paper reviewed 47 souvenir papers in 15 SSCI tourism journals from 2000 to 2020. Research efforts manifested in several fields, such as souvenir shopping, authenticity, gift-giving and souvenir meanings. Among all the reviewed papers, only [Paraskevaïdis and Andriotis's \(2015\)](#) study has a theoretical basis (i.e. Marx's use and exchange values, Baudrillard's sign-value and the spiritual-value). Hence, the primary issue for the study of this subject has been determined to be a lack of theoretical frameworks. Overall, souvenir in tourism has not reached the maturity stage as an academic field, based on [Weed's \(2009\)](#) commentaries of four markers:

"[...] a strong conceptualization of the field; the underpinning of empirical work by appropriate theory; the robust and appropriate application of methodology; and a clear community of scholars with a sustained interest in the field" (p. 625).

Limitations and future research direction

The discussions in this review demonstrate that each of these markers has not been achieved, and the research on souvenir in tourism is still at an early stage. This also

suggests that there are many venues for future research, which can be summarized as the following five aspects.

First, conceptual and theoretical research of souvenir in tourism should be a key research element in future research. As discussed above, conceptual discussions are still rare among the existing studies. Developing scholarship has been conducted on souvenir in tourism from the practical perspectives, which are useful in particular cases or destinations. However, differing viewpoints continue to exist, and more conceptual study is required to compile the findings into a coherent body of knowledge. Hence, it is necessary to map different meanings of the term “souvenir” and to differentiate souvenir from tourist shopping. Cultural geographies of souvenirs may have consequences for future study as well as theoretical relevance.

The second research direction lies in combining with the theoretical basis. The above review demonstrates that yet studies explaining certain issues from the chosen cases or destinations dominate current literature, leading to a dearth of theoretical basis. In the academic literature, souvenir scholarship spans multiple disciplines, including but not limited to tourism: sociology, business, geography, marketing and consumer behavior. Hence, exploring souvenirs from multidisciplinary perspectives is an innovative way that promises to contribute to discussions in a range of different fields, including tourism, geography and culture. Moreover, this research only reviewed articles published in journals listed in the Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism subject SSCI database. Some highly relevant research published in books and conference proceedings is not included, which is a limitation of the study. The relevant research published in books and conference proceedings can be further reviewed by future research.

The third area of research that may be useful in the future is the influence of trends in retailing, shopping and tourism on souvenirs. Technology has been identified as one of the biggest impact factors on tourists’ behaviors and experiences (Munar and Jacobsen, 2014; Wang *et al.*, 2016; Xiang and Gretzel, 2010). For example, some scholars have noticed the impact of the development of smart devices and online shopping on tourist shopping behaviors (Hew *et al.*, 2018; Kim *et al.*, 2011a, 2011b; Kim *et al.*, 2015). Given the deficiency of souvenir investigations in this respect, continued research on understanding online souvenir retailing is encouraged to move souvenir inquiry forward. There should be more concern about how the digital era has influenced souvenirs in tourism and related issues, such as tourists’ souvenir shopping behavior, tourist perception of souvenir authenticity, souvenir distribution channels, destination product portfolio, souvenir consumption and the commodification of material culture as well as the combination of indigenous cultures, traditional crafts and souvenirs.

Moreover, recent studies found that the COVID-19 pandemic has reshaped consumers’ shopping behaviors (Eger *et al.*, 2021; Kim and Im, 2022). This study examined findings derived from studies of souvenir purchases from 2000 to 2020, and consequently, given that time frame, the virus COVID-19 was not identified as an important theme determining souvenir selection. It remains to be seen if the pandemic may influence future souvenir buying, and this could be examined in future research if evidence emerges that it is a factor. Another potential determinant is the influence of virtual tourism, which Lu *et al.* (2022) identified as an important type of tourism occurring during the COVID-19 pandemic. This, too, needs to be explored in future research and could consider nonfungible token. The following topics can be explored, such as the meanings of virtual souvenirs for tourists, factors influencing tourists to purchase virtual souvenirs and tourist satisfaction with virtual souvenirs.

Finally, a review of the literature indicated that the majority of existing souvenir studies adopted qualitative research methods, such as interviews and focus group. Some used the approach of structural equation modeling. However, both approaches possess potential deficiencies when identifying the cause and effect of variables when considering actual and intended behaviors and the role of emotional attachment to place and activity when buying a souvenir due to the complexity of the phenomenon. The experimental method is becoming more popular in tourism research due to its ability to identify the relationship between cause and effect and to verify prior findings (Viglia and Dolnicar, 2020). Thus far, this approach is generally absent in the literature relating to souvenirs, and it is recommended that the experimental methodologies be adopted in future souvenir research to better understand tourists' purchase behaviors.

Overall, the review of the 47 tourism souvenir articles selected from 15 SSCI journals presents a picture of the research progress in this field. While this study identifies that the research of souvenir in tourism is still at an early stage based on Weed's (2009) indicators, many interesting perspectives have been explored by researchers, and insightful findings have been gained. Besides the articles reviewed, more research has been conducted in the forms of journal articles, research notes, books and news reports, which serve a thriving research community. These provide favorable conditions and solid foundations that future research can develop and flourish.

References

- Chang, J., Wall, G. and Hung, J.C. (2012), "Tourists' perceptions of aboriginal heritage souvenirs", *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 17 No. 6, pp. 684-700.
- Cheng, S.W., Xu, F.F., Zhang, J. and Zhang, Y.T. (2010), "Tourists' attitudes toward tea tourism: a case study in Xinyang, China", *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, Vol. 27 No. 2, pp. 211-220.
- Eger, L., Komárková, L., Egerová, D. and Mičík, M. (2021), "The effect of COVID-19 on consumer shopping behaviour: generational cohort perspective", *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, Vol. 61, p. 102542.
- Fairhurst, A., Costello, C. and Holmes, A.F. (2007), "An examination of shopping behaviour of visitors to Tennessee according to tourist typologies", *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, Vol. 13 No. 4, pp. 311-320.
- Fu, Y., Liu, X., Wang, Y. and Chao, R.-F. (2018), "How experiential consumption moderates the effects of souvenir authenticity on behavioural intention through perceived values", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 69, pp. 356-367.
- Gordon, B. (1986), "The souvenir: message of the extraordinary", *The Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol. 20 No. 3, pp. 135-146.
- Hashimoto, A. and Telfer, D.J. (2007), "Geographical representations embedded within souvenirs in Niagara: the case of geographically displaced authenticity", *Tourism Geographies* Vol. 9 No. 2, pp. 191-217.
- Hew, J.J., Leong, L.Y., Tan, G.W.H., Lee, V.H. and Ooi, K.B. (2018), "Mobile social tourism shopping: a dual-stage analysis of a multi-mediation model", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 66, pp. 121-139.
- Hitchcock, M. and Teague, K. (2000), *Souvenirs: The Material Culture of Tourism*, CABI, Wallingford.
- Hu, B. and Yu, H. (2007), "Segmentation by craft selection criteria and shopping involvement", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 28 No. 4, pp. 1079-1092.
- Hunter, W.C. (2012), "The good souvenir: representations of Okinawa and Kinmen islands in Asia", *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, Vol. 20 No. 1, pp. 81-99.
- Jin, H., Moscardo, G. and Murphy, L. (2017), "Making sense of tourist shopping research: a critical review", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 62, pp. 120-134.

-
- Kim, N.L. and Im, H. (2022), "Do liberals want Curbside pickup more than conservatives? Contactless shopping as protectionary action against the COVID-19 pandemic", *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, Vol. 46 No. 2, pp. 589-600.
- Kim, S. and Littrell, M.A. (2001), "Souvenir buying intentions for self-versus others", *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 28 No. 3, pp. 638-657.
- Kim, M.J., Chung, N. and Lee, C.K. (2011a), "The effect of perceived trust on electronic commerce: shopping online for tourism products and services in South Korea", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 32 No. 2, pp. 256-265.
- Kim, S.S., Timothy, D.J. and Hwang, J. (2011b), "Understanding Japanese tourists' shopping preferences using the decision tree analysis method", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 32 No. 3, pp. 544-554.
- Kim, M.J., Chung, N., Lee, C.K. and Preis, M.W. (2015), "Motivations and use context in mobile tourism shopping: applying contingency and task-technology fit theories", *International Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 17 No. 1, pp. 13-24.
- Kong, W.H. and Chang, T.Z. (2012), "The role of souvenir shopping in a diversified Macau destination portfolio", *Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management*, Vol. 21 No. 4, pp. 357-373.
- Lane, R. and Waitt, G. (2007), "Inalienable places: self-drive tourists in northwest Australia", *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 34 No. 1, pp. 105-121.
- Lee, I.J., Chen, C.H. and Su, C.Y. (2017), "App based souvenirs and entry tickets: a new means of enhancing post visit memories: a case study from Taiwan", *Tourism Management Perspectives*, Vol. 24, pp. 177-185.
- Lee, J.S., Lee, C.K. and Yoon, Y. (2009), "Investigating differences in antecedents to value between first-time and repeat festival-goers", *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, Vol. 26 No. 7, pp. 688-702.
- Lehto, X.Y., Cai, L.A., O'Leary, J.T. and Huan, T.C. (2004), "Tourist shopping preferences and expenditure behaviours: the case of the Taiwanese outbound market", *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, Vol. 10 No. 4, pp. 320-332.
- Li, F. and Ryan, C. (2018), "Souvenir shopping experiences: a case study of Chinese tourists in North Korea", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 64, pp. 142-153.
- Lin, L. (2017), "Food souvenirs as gifts: tourist perspectives and their motivational basis in Chinese culture", *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, Vol. 15 No. 5, pp. 439-454.
- Lin, C.H. and Wang, W.C. (2012), "Effects of authenticity perception, hedonics, and perceived value on ceramic souvenir-repurchasing intention", *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, Vol. 29 No. 8, pp. 779-795.
- Littrell, M.A., Baizerman, S., Kean, R., Gahring, S., Niemeyer, S., Reilly, R. and Stout, J. (1994), "Souvenirs and tourism styles", *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 33 No. 1, pp. 3-11.
- Lu, J., Xiao, X., Xu, Z., Wang, C., Zhang, M. and Zhou, Y. (2022), "The potential of virtual tourism in the recovery of tourism industry during the COVID-19 pandemic", *Current Issues in Tourism*, Vol. 25 No. 3, pp. 441-457.
- Lund, K.A., Kjartansdóttir, K. and Loftsdóttir, K. (2017), "Puffin love: performing and creating arctic landscapes in Iceland through souvenirs", *Tourist Studies*, Vol. 18 No. 2, pp. 142-158.
- Luscombe, A., Walby, K. and Piché, J. (2018), "Making punishment memorialization pay? Marketing, networks, and souvenirs at small penal history museums in Canada", *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, Vol. 42 No. 3, pp. 343-364.
- Lynch, M. (2004), "Punishing images: jail cam and the changing penal enterprise", *Punishment and Society*, Vol. 6 No. 3, pp. 255-270.
- Marschall, S. (2012), "Personal memory tourism and a wider exploration of the tourism – memory nexus", *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, Vol. 10 No. 4, pp. 321-335.

- Morgan, N. and Pritchard, A. (2005), "On souvenirs and metonymy: narratives of memory, metaphor and materiality", *Tourist Studies*, Vol. 5 No. 1, pp. 29-53.
- Mossberg, L. (2007), "A marketing approach to the tourist experience", *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, Vol. 7 No. 1, pp. 59-74.
- Munar, A.M. and Jacobsen, J.K.S. (2014), "Motivations for sharing tourism experiences through social media", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 43, pp. 46-54.
- Oh, J.Y.J., Cheng, C.K., Lehto, X.Y. and O'Leary, J.T. (2004), "Predictors of tourists' shopping behaviour: examination of socio-demographic characteristics and trip typologies", *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, Vol. 10 No. 4, pp. 308-319.
- Oviedo-García, M.Á., Vega-Vázquez, M., Castellanos-Verdugo, M. and Reyes-Guizar, L.A. (2016), "Tourist satisfaction and the souvenir shopping of domestic tourists: extended weekends in Spain", *Current Issues in Tourism*, Vol. 19 No. 8, pp. 845-860.
- Paraskevaïdis, P. and Andriotis, K. (2015), "Values of souvenirs as commodities", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 48, pp. 1-10.
- Park, M.K. (2000), "Social and cultural factors influencing tourists' souvenir-purchasing behaviour: a comparative study on Japanese 'omiyage' and Korean 'Sunmul'", *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, Vol. 9 Nos 1/2, pp. 81-91.
- Peters, K. (2011), "Negotiating the 'place' and 'placement' of banal tourist souvenirs in the home", *Tourism Geographies*, Vol. 13 No. 2, pp. 234-256.
- Sthapit, E. (2018), "The more the merrier: Souvenir shopping, the absence of choice overload and preferred attributes", *Tourism Management Perspectives*, Vol. 26, pp. 126-134.
- Sthapit, E. and Björk, P. (2019), "Relative contributions of souvenirs on memorability of a trip experience and revisit intention: a study of visitors to Rovaniemi, Finland", *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, Vol. 19 No. 1, pp. 1-26.
- Suhartanto, D. (2018), "Tourist satisfaction with souvenir shopping: evidence from Indonesian domestic tourists", *Current Issues in Tourism*, Vol. 21 No. 6, pp. 663-679.
- Swanson, K. (2014), "Souvenirs, tourists, and tourism", in Lew, A.A., Hall, C.M. and Williams, A.M. (Eds), *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Tourism*, Wiley, pp. 179-188.
- Swanson, K.K. (2004), "Tourists' and retailers' perceptions of souvenirs", *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, Vol. 10 No. 4, pp. 363-377.
- Swanson, K.K. and Horridge, P.E. (2004), "A structural model for souvenir consumption, travel activities, and tourist demographics", *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 42 No. 4, pp. 372-380.
- Swanson, K.K. and Horridge, P.E. (2006), "Travel motivations as souvenir purchase indicators", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 27 No. 4, pp. 671-683.
- Swanson, K.K. and Timothy, D.J. (2012), "Souvenirs: icons of meaning, commercialization and commoditization", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 33 No. 3, pp. 489-499.
- Torabian, P. and Arai, S.M. (2016), "Tourist perceptions of souvenir authenticity: an exploration of selective tourist blogs", *Current Issues in Tourism*, Vol. 19 No. 7, pp. 697-712.
- Tosun, C., Temizkan, S.P., Timothy, D.J. and Fyall, A. (2007), "Tourist shopping experiences and satisfaction", *International Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 9 No. 2, pp. 87-102.
- Trinh, T.T., Ryan, C. and Cave, J. (2014), "Souvenir sellers and perceptions of authenticity – the retailers of hoi an, Vietnam", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 45, pp. 275-283.
- Vega-Vázquez, M., Castellanos-Verdugo, M. and Oviedo-García, M.Á. (2017), "Shopping value, tourist satisfaction and positive word of mouth: the mediating role of souvenir shopping satisfaction", *Current Issues in Tourism*, Vol. 20 No. 13, pp. 1413-1430.
- Viglia, G. and Dolnicar, S. (2020), "A review of experiments in tourism and hospitality", *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 80, p. 102858.

-
- Wang, X., Li, X.R., Zhen, F. and Zhang, J. (2016), "How smart is your tourist attraction? Measuring tourist preferences of smart tourism attractions via a FCEM-AHP and IPA approach", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 54, pp. 309-320.
- Weed, M. (2009), "Progress in sports tourism research? A meta-review and exploration of futures", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 30 No. 5, pp. 615-628.
- Wilkins, H. (2011), "Souvenirs: what and why we buy", *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 50 No. 3, pp. 239-247.
- Wong, I.A. and Cheng, M. (2014), "Exploring the effects of heritage site image on souvenir shopping attitudes: the moderating role of perceived cultural difference", *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, Vol. 31 No. 4, pp. 476-492.
- Xiang, Z. and Gretzel, U. (2010), "Role of social media in online travel information search", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 31 No. 2, pp. 179-188.
- Xie, P.F., Wu, T.C. and Hsieh, H.W. (2012), "Tourists' perception of authenticity in indigenous souvenirs in Taiwan", *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, Vol. 29 No. 5, pp. 485-500.
- Yang, L. (2011), "Cultural tourism in an ethnic theme park: tourists' views", *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, Vol. 9 No. 4, pp. 320-340.
- Yu, H. and Littrell, M.A. (2003), "Product and process orientations to tourism shopping", *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 42 No. 2, pp. 140-150.
- Yu, H. and Littrell, M.A. (2005), "Tourists' shopping orientations for handcrafts: what are key influences?", *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, Vol. 18 No. 4, pp. 1-19.

About the author

Fangxuan (Sam) Li is a Professor from the School of Tourism, Hainan University. His research interests include tourist behavior, tourism marketing and travel experience. Fangxuan (Sam) Li can be contacted at: lifangxuan12345@126.com

For instructions on how to order reprints of this article, please visit our website:

www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/licensing/reprints.htm

Or contact us for further details: permissions@emeraldinsight.com