



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

## Journal of Destination Marketing &amp; Management

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/jdmm](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/jdmm)

## Research Paper

## Tourism communicative actions of sojourners and information recipients

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## ARTICLE INFO

## Keywords:

Self-confidence

Foreign sojourner

Tourism communicative action

Macao

China

## ABSTRACT

This study examines the antecedents and consequences of communicative actions of tourism information. It first proposes the associations of foreign sojourners' communicative action and its antecedents that reflect their self-confidence with three aspects: quality of transmitted information, confidence originating from the identity as a sojourner, and confidence about the positive expectation of communication outcomes. This study further proposes a conceptual model describing how the overall tone and the perceived frequency of sojourners' communication affect the information recipients' perceptions and behavioral intentions. The mediating role of perceived information quality on the information recipients is also considered. Data were collected from foreign sojourners in Macao and information recipients in China. The results show a significant association between sojourners' self-confidence and their communicative action, and they provide additional insight on the impact of foreign sojourners' communication on information recipients' perceptual and behavioral reactions and the mediating role of perceived information quality.

## 1. Introduction

Diversified actors in this globalized and digitized world have transformed the way individuals share information. In tourism, reflecting such social trends, increasing attention has focused on a diversified communication pattern. The main focus has been on understanding the communication strategies of individuals, mostly tourists, who collect and share general and specialized pre-trip, on-site, and post-trip information using different online platforms (Choe, Kim, & Fesenmaier, 2017; Okazaki, Andreu, & Campo, 2017). Actors who have been overlooked in the body of literature are non-tourists who participate in, and may greatly contribute to, tourism information generation and processing. In recent years, more research has focused on the roles of local residents and immigrants, especially in VFR (visiting friends and relatives) tourism (Shani & Uriely, 2012; Williams & Hall, 2002) and place branding (Kalandides, Braun, Kavaratzis, & Zenker, 2013). Recent studies have stressed the unique tourism behaviors of temporary foreign residents who represent expatriates, sojourners, or international students (Dutt, Ninov, & Haas, 2016; Liu & Ryan, 2011).

An increase in non-permanent foreign residents who do not intend to permanently reside in a destination region has led to the concept of the sojourner. The sojourner group, recognized with increasing global mobility, includes international students, volunteers, missionaries, and foreign workers and employers. Studies have focused mostly on their communication during their adjustment in a destination country or region (Church, 1982).

Even with the increasing communicative role of this group, little research has theorized its perceptual and behavioral conditions and outcomes of its communicative pattern of tourism information about the destination region. Acknowledging such a research gap, this study aims to propose and test conceptual models that predict communicative actions and their outcomes from both foreign sojourners as information disseminators and information recipients as those with direct connections to the sojourners. In order to better understand the cause and impact of communication, this study focuses on the self-perceptions of sojourners as specialized and differentiated information disseminators and others' perceived expectations that originate from the information disseminators' identity as sojourners. In order to identify the perceived specialized communicative roles of the sojourners, this study adopts the concepts of self-confidence and expected outcomes to identify the salience in tourism information processing and its impact on information recipients.

The study contributes to the body of literature both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it adopts the concept of self-confidence and applies the concept comprehensively and uniquely by focusing on transmitted information, perceived self-identity, and outcome expectations. It is also theoretically significant in that it considers not only foreign sojourners' communicative process of local information but also information recipients' situational and perceptual factors along with their cognitive, affective, and conative outcomes. Such a comprehensive approach provides valuable implications in understanding the

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unique roles of sojourners and both the actual conditions and impacts of communication by them after identifying the factors of recognizing the content shared and the perceived outcomes of communication as well as self-identification as a sojourner in addition to understanding the information recipients' perceptions towards a communicative action. Practically, this paper provides insight for destination marketing and management in acknowledging the roles of sojourners as information processors and disseminators, who may have crucial impacts on the success of VFR tourism. The findings will provide evidence on not only how much the group of sojourners is influential but also how it influences those back home who have the potential to be visitors and secondary information disseminators.

## 2. Self-confidence and sojourners' communicative action

### 2.1. Self-confidence

Self-confidence is an individual's feeling of capability and assurance of what he or she decides to do and self-belief of processing information effectively (Bearden, Hardesty, & Rose, 2001). It is differentiated from self-esteem in that the latter denotes a broad and overall affective evaluation of an individual, while the former is likely to be situation- or product-specific. Self-confidence implies perceptions at the individual level: personal difference is thus acknowledged. In particular, with similar previous experience and knowledge, individuals' perceived states may be different because of personal variation. Self-confidence is an outcome of one's perceptual and behavioral history and state, such as previous experience, self-esteem, perceived control, and dominance (Bearden et al., 2001).

In studies of consumer behavior, self-confidence has been adopted to explain one's information behavior, focusing on the ability to acquire information from the right source (i.e. information acquisition) and to sort out information suitable for a specific situation (i.e. consideration-set formation). In addition, its aspects have been suggested as confidence about positive outcomes through personal decision-making (i.e. positive decision-making outcomes), positive outcomes for people around them (i.e. social outcomes of decision-making), discerning facts from tactics (i.e. persuasion knowledge), and active address of issues (i.e. marketplace interfaces) (Bearden et al., 2001). These dimensions imply that confidence captures one's self-perception of the ability to efficiently collect information, sort out unnecessary information, and positively expect the impact of information sharing: all of which originate from accumulated experience. In the self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977) and the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), Bandura proposes the impact of positive outcome expectation on an individual's behavior. In addition to confidence in an individual's information, if he or she expects positive outcomes from information sharing, a cognitive force would lead to positive behavioral outcomes such as active communication. In addition to the sojourners' positive outcome expectations, by adjusting the original concept of self-confidence to the context of sojourners' communicative actions, this study stresses two aspects of self-confidence: the quality of shared information and self-recognition as a differentiated communicator of local information.

Self-confidence can be of particular interest in understanding sojourners' communication, considering the linkage of human perception and communication during the decision-making and, in particular, problem solving. In identifying the sojourners who are actively involved in the communication about the experience and information about the host region, this situational variable, rather than socio-demographic, geographic, and other psychographic variables, is particularly useful because communicative actions about such topics are likely to be triggered by the situational motivations (Kim & Grunig, 2011). The three variables are also partly linked to the situational theory of problem solving (Kim & Grunig, 2011): the theory of communication that was developed to explain the salience in individuals'

communication as a process of problem solving, which can be extended to the general communication context and those among sojourners, and can be applied to the context of marketing in general and marketing communication, as related theoretical literature argues (Kim & Grunig, 2011). Self-confidence about shared information quality has common features with the referent criterion, defined as the knowledge or subjective judgement accumulated based on experience and second-hand-information processing, with which one can solve a problem, which has been suggested as a condition for communicative action. Self-confidence originating from identity is linked to involvement recognition in that this proposed variable concerns their identity as those who are relatively deeply involved with the host region, while this study additionally considers the recognition of sojourners' unique position originating from their personal condition of temporary residence. Lastly, positive outcome expectations are conceptually grounded by reverse constraint recognition from the situational theory of problem solving in that this variable identifies the confidence of oneself in making a difference and improves the situation through the action of communication.

### 2.2. Communicative action in problem solving as an outcome variable

Kim and Grunig (2011) acknowledge that enhanced motivations for problem solving lead to enhanced communicative action, which is, in the context of this study, communication between sojourners as information disseminators and strangers and acquaintances from their home countries and regions as information recipients using online and offline platforms. Furthermore, problem solving is observed as a communicant's process to fill in the knowledge gap between the information providers — experienced tourists, residents and expatriates, and, broadly, sojourners in this study — and information recipients. This study assumes that communication is a tool to solve problems and decrease a knowledge gap, and with an increase of problem recognition, activeness in communication would increase.

In capturing the scope and dimensions of communicative action, this study considers the dimensionality from the communicative action in problem solving (CAPS) model proposed by Kim and Grunig (2011). As an extension of the communicative variables in the theory of publics, which includes information seeking and processing, CAPS includes comprehensive communicative dimensions after considering the active and passive aspects of communication. Passive communication has heuristic characteristics, which involve less cognitive processing. In contrast, active aspects of communication involve relatively comprehensive and systematic information processing with an intensive cognitive effort required to solve a problem. The active and passive aspects of communication are further classified into three types of actions: information acquisition ('active information search' and 'passive information finding'), information selection ('actively ignoring unreliable information' and 'passively welcoming information'), and information transmission ('actively looking for chances to talk' and 'passively willing to talk if somebody asks').

Individuals are particularly motivated to acquire information after recognizing a problem and being motivated to solve it. Information acquisition involves intentional information gathering of relevant information or unintentional exposure to information that may be captured through an individual's five senses and stored and then retrieved to assist problem solving. Passive information acquisition may be initiated by not ignoring but rather attending to information for reference. Active and passive aspects of information selection explain an individual's cognitive processing to achieve optimized problem solving by enhancing efficiency through sorting out unnecessary information and systematically pursuing relevant information. In addition, information transmission includes voluntary information giving and reactive information sharing after questions have been asked and solutions have been sought. Communication studies have showed evidence that, with a high level of problem recognition and less constraint

recognition and with expected positive outcomes through communication, one becomes an active, systematic, and strategic problem solver (Kim & Grunig, 2011).

Although not comprehensive, a few tourism studies have been conducted on tourism information or knowledge sharing (Zeng, Guan, & Chen, 2014) and word-of-mouth (Chen, Dwyer, & Firth, 2015). In marketing, an active information transmitter is conceptualized as an opinion leader or a market maven (Feick & Price, 1987). Market mavenism is defined as the willingness to communicate information to others (Bearden et al., 2001). Some studies examining the traits of market mavenism have considered both information acquisition and information dissemination. Furthermore, Mowen, Park, and Zablah (2007) recognize individual selectivity differences in finding information sources and relevant product information. In addition, consumer studies have tested the linkage of self-confidence and market mavenism (Clark, Goldsmith, & Goldsmith, 2008). Considering the linkage of self-confidence and a positive expected outcome as a source of self-confidence and their linkages to market mavenism and communicative action, the alternative hypothesis on sojourners' communicative action is proposed as follows:

**H<sub>1</sub>.** Self-confidence has a significant, positive influence on sojourners' CAPS.

### 3. Effects of sojourners' communicative characteristics and quality of information perceived by information recipients

#### 3.1. Unintentional conversation as awareness of external needs in the VFR context

Most previous studies on tourism information acquisition and search have assumed that tourists conduct an active information search when they decide to travel. In an attempt to provide a comprehensive understanding of the internal and external information search, Gursoy and McCleary (2004) propose that one's previous knowledge is accumulated through external stimuli, such as advertisements, printed media, and mass media. In fact, external stimuli through conversations with friends and family may increase familiarity, and these stimuli may be influential especially to inexperienced tourists in decision making (Choi & Kim, 2015). The effect of such incidental learning has not been considered as a crucial knowledge source for actual tourism information processing. Rather, intentional learning, which claims to involve detailed information gathering, has primarily been emphasized in understanding tourist familiarity as well as expertise building (Gursoy & McCleary, 2004). The notion that intentional learning is likely to be superior to incidental learning may be based on a psychological theory that addresses intentional impression formation involving conscious and willful inference and appraisals and that involves crucial motivation for memory (Gleitman & Gillett, 1957).

Marketing studies examining the effect of advertising messages and the cues retrieved from the memory (Keller, 1987) have found evidence of the impacts of incidental information acquisition and processing (Williamson, 1998), which may be spontaneous, less controlled, episodic, and less systematic (Carlston & Mae, 2003). Media-induced tourism, such as music-induced tourism (Oh, Ahn, & Baek, 2015) and drama-induced tourism (Huang, 2013), assumes that incidental exposure to destination information is important as a trigger of destination decision making. In addition, Hyde (2007) notes the influences of friends and family during the decision-making process. For example, Lo, Cheung, and Law (2004) consider friends and family as informants of mainland Chinese. However, specific limited research has focused on the influences of casual tourism conversation and information transmitted by foreign sojourners on cognitive, affective, and conative outcomes.

This study focuses on sojourners' incidental conversation. A spectrum of 'hosts' is expected to have different levels of influences on

information recipients because of different expected experiences, different types of expertise, and information sought by each group (Arsal, Woosnam, Baldwin, & Backman, 2010). Choi and Kim (2015) and Veasna, Wu, and Huang (2013) have considered cognitive, affective, and conative enhancement as outcomes of information acquisition. In addition, the present study considers expectations about information recipients' enhanced quality of tourism experience as a potential outcome of incidental communication with the sojourners.

Choi and Kim (2015) reveal the effect of incidental communication. The frequency and positivity of communicated content positively affect cognitive, affective, and behavioral outcomes. Incidental communication affects such outcomes through perceived quality of information — what is communicated and especially how the communicated content is perceived as good quality — namely, reliable, unique, rich, and specialized reflection of the informants' first-hand experience (Veasna et al., 2013). Based on the theoretical argument linking psychology and marketing (Wu, 2013), studies on marketing communication in general and on tourism in particular have provided evidence of the impact of valence as well as the strength of positivity as key variables in predicting the information recipients' attitudinal and behavioral outcomes (Ladhari & Michaud, 2015; Ye, Law, & Gu, 2009). As proposed in previous studies (e.g. Dickinger, 2011), information recipients perceive that information shared by acquaintances is different from that shared by other information sources, such as destination management organizations' official information, professional travel information, and information shared by other experienced travelers to Macao. Alternative hypotheses on information recipients' perceptions and reactions are thus proposed as follows:

**H<sub>2</sub>.** Perceived frequency of sojourners' conversation about Macao has a significant, positive linkage with perceived quality of shared information.

**H<sub>3</sub>.** Perceived positivity of sojourners' conversation about Macao has a significant, positive linkage with perceived quality of shared information.

**H<sub>4</sub>.** Perceived frequency of sojourners' conversation about Macao has a significant, positive linkage with the enhanced effect on the information recipients.

**H<sub>5</sub>.** Perceived positivity of sojourners' conversation about Macao has a significant, positive linkage with the enhanced effect on the information recipients.

**H<sub>6</sub>.** Perceived quality of sojourners' conversation about Macao has a significant, positive linkage with the enhanced effect on the information recipients.

### 4. Methods

The participants in this empirical study were foreigners living in Macao (i.e. sojourners and Chinese citizens who lived in Chinese-speaking regions and had acquaintances living temporarily in Macao, SAR). Two self-administered surveys were conducted in 2015 and 2016: one distributed to sojourners, including foreign workers and students in Macao, and the other distributed to the residents in Chinese regions, including Hong Kong and mainland China, who personally knew at least one sojourner in Macao. Structural equation modeling (SEM) with maximum likelihood estimation was used to test the conceptual models. The SEM was deemed adequate for data analysis because the proposed models with multiple constructs linked with paths using SEM could be tested together.

#### 4.1. Survey of sojourners

Paid undergraduate student helpers majoring in the field of hospitality and tourism received data- collection protocols from the

**Table 1**  
Demographic profile of the two samples.

			Sojourners		Information recipients in China			
			<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>			
						%		
Gender	Male		160	50.0	65		35.3	
	Female		160	50.0	119		64.7	
Age	18–24		39	12.2	98		53.3	
	25–34		117	36.6	45		24.5	
	35–44		97	30.3	12		6.5	
	45–54		55	17.2	24		13.0	
	55–64		11	3.4	4		2.2	
	65 or above		1	.3	1		.5	
Marital status	Married		154	48.1	60		32.6	
	Single		151	47.2	113		61.4	
	Other		15	4.7	11		6.0	
Occupation	Professional		58	18.1	29		15.8	
	Administrative		41	12.8	20		10.9	
	White collar		68	21.3	23		12.5	
	Blue collar		26	8.1	4		2.2	
	Service worker		78	24.4	23		12.5	
	Student		26	8.1	66		35.9	
	Housewife		18	5.6	5		2.7	
	Retired / Not employed		1	.3	5		2.7	
	Self-employed		4	1.3	9		4.9	
Perceived social class (in home country / region)	Upper class		5	1.6	2		1.1	
	Upper-middle class		38	11.9	25		13.6	
	Middle class		166	51.9	71		38.6	
	Lower-middle class		89	27.8	68		37.0	
	Lower class		22	6.9	18		9.8	
Previous visiting experience to Macao	0		–	–	14		7.6	
	1		–	–	27		14.7	
	2		–	–	21		11.4	
	3		–	–	16		8.7	
	more than 4		–	–	106		57.61	
Originating country / region	China, Hong Kong, Taiwan		237	74.1	Guangdong	134	72.8	
	Other		83	25.9	Non-Guangdong	50	27.2	
Total			320	100.0	184		100.0	

researchers, and together they approached foreigners living in Macao and collected responses personally. The survey was conducted in either English or Chinese. It took approximately 7–10 min to complete each survey.

Three items about self-confidence in shared tourism information quality were used measuring the uniqueness, richness, and confidence originating from first-hand experience. Three indicators measured the sojourners' self-confidence originating from their identity as a sojourner. One indicator used the mean value of the items measuring their confidence in diverse experiential aspects of accommodations, eating, transportation, travel tips, and itinerary planning (Arsal et al., 2010). Two other items for this construct were confidence about the quality of information compared to other experienced tourists and other local residents. The items for positive outcome expectations included the expectation of learning unique things, enhanced familiarity, and special feelings. Outcome variables about communicative action included six items incorporating information acquisition, selection, and transmission (Kim & Grunig, 2011). All items were measured with a continuous scale ranging from 0 (do not agree at all) to 100 (totally agree).

#### 4.2. Survey of information recipients

Because of geographic constraints, an online survey was conducted to collect data on the information recipients in Chinese regions. The questionnaire was initially developed in English and then translated into both simplified and traditional Chinese. Chinese-speaking undergraduate students majoring in the hospitality and tourism field were recruited to assist the researchers in posting online advertising

messages on WeChat and Weibo for recruiting potential survey participants.

The respondents were asked for background information about how they communicated with the sojourners in Macao. To measure the variables, information recipients were asked about two predictors: perceived frequency and the overall positivity of the sojourner acquaintances' communication. In addition, to measure the perception of the quality of information shared by sojourner acquaintances, this study used five items: reliability, uniqueness, richness, real life, and good quality (Veasna et al., 2013). Communicative outcome was measured in two aspects. One aspect, reflecting the cognitive, affective, and conative outcomes, measured increased familiarity, increased preference, and intention to travel. The other aspect focused on the information recipient's increased confidence about a better, unique, and special experience as an outcome of sojourner acquaintances sharing information about Macao. All items were measured using a continuous scale anchored between 0 and 100, 0 indicating 'do not agree at all' and 100 indicating 'totally agree.'

## 5. Results

### 5.1. Sample profile

Demographic profiles of the two samples are summarized in Table 1. Usable responses from 320 sojourners living in Macao were used for the final data analysis. Half of the respondents were male and the other half were female; about half were below 34 years old and the other half were above 35; about half were married and the other half were single.

**Table 2**

Structural paths of the model on Macao sojourners' effects of self-confidence on communication actions and factor loadings.

	$\beta$	B	SE
Regression weight			
Self-confidence - > CAPS	.854*	1.005	.089
Factor loadings			
Self-confidence as a second-order factor			
Self-confidence about shared tourism information quality	.875	1	
Self-confidence originating from identity as a sojourner	.732*	.571	.058
Positive outcome expectations	.784*	.764	.075
Self-confidence about shared tourism information quality			
Information I share is unique.	.856	1	
Information I share is rich.	.808*	.975	.064
I share much information based on my own experience.	.525*	.569	.061
Self-confidence originating from identity as a sojourner			
Mean value of confidence in experiential domains	.758	1	
Compared to others with Macao tourism experience, information I share fits better.	.870*	1.365	.090
Compared to local residents from Macao, information I share fits better.	.840*	1.38	.093
Positive outcome expectations			
People around me learn unique things about Macao.	.779	1	
People around me become more familiar with Macao.	.679*	.899	.082
People around me have special feelings about Macao.	.721*	1.006	.087
CAPS			
I actively search for information about Macao's tourism.	.812	1	
I continuously find news about Macao's tourism.	.817*	1.083	.068
I ignore information that I do not think reliable about Macao's tourism.	.537*	.749	.078
I welcome any information about Macao's tourism.	.665*	.946	.076
I look for chances to give information about Macao's tourism.	.789*	1.02	.067
I am willing to talk about Macao's tourism if somebody else asks.	.425*	.415	.056

\* significant at  $p = .05$ .

Approximately 70% of the respondents had lived in Macao for five years or less, and about two-thirds of them had completed tertiary education.

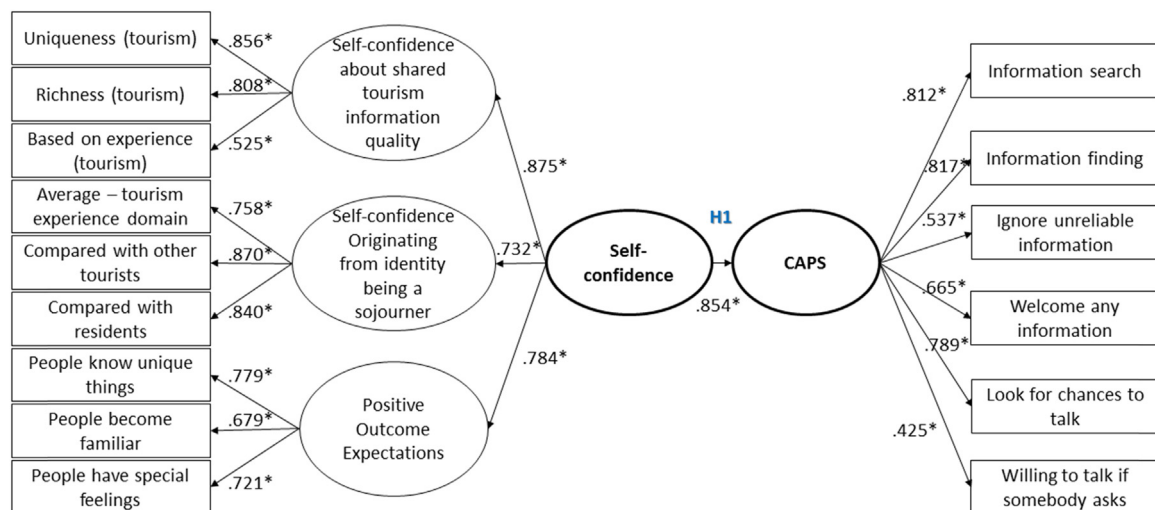
A total of 184 responses were collected from Chinese regions. Among the respondents, 14 (7.6%) had never visited Macao, 27 (14.7%) had visited once, and 21 (11.4%) had visited twice. There were about 30% more female than male respondents, and slightly more than half of the respondents were between 18 and 24 years old. The majority ( $n = 113$ , 61.4%) of the information recipient respondents were single.

## 5.2. Empirical testing of the sojourner model

The structural model had an acceptable fit with the data ( $\chi^2 = 216.166$ ,  $df = 86$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 2.514$ ,  $GFI = .919$ ,  $SRMR = .053$ ,  $CFI = .943$ ,  $TLI = .930$ ,  $RMSEA = .069$ ). The second-order factor

loadings for the self-confidence construct ranged between .732 and .875. The factor loadings for the first-order construct, 'self-confidence about shared tourism information quality,' ranged between .525 and .856. The item measuring the respondents' self-confidence that the information shared was based on their own experiences showed a relatively low factor loading for information quality; however, it still exceeded .500. Thus, it was still acceptable for inclusion as an indicator (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010).

Three indicators for self-confidence originating from the identity of being a sojourner had factor loadings between .758 and .870. Also, the factor loadings for positive outcome expectations ranged between .679 and .779. For communicative action about Macao's tourism in this context, the factor loadings ranged between .425 and .819. Although indicators for information forefending (.537) and information sharing (.425) had relatively low factor loadings, the items were maintained

**Fig. 1.** Results from structural model testing on Macao sojourners.



**Table 3**  
Model 1 with two outcome constructs – factor loadings for the construct.

	$\beta$	B	SE
Quality indicators			
More reliable than information shared by other sources	.805	1	
Provide unique information that cannot be seen from other sources	.876*	1.122	.079
Provide rich information	.940*	1.204	.076
Provide real-life information	.874*	1.076	.076
Provide good-quality information	.877*	1.132	.079
Outcome 1 indicators			
Become more familiar with Macao's tourism	.798	1	
Like Macao as a tourism destination more than before	.844*	1.189	.100
Want to travel in Macao	.891*	1.195	.112
Outcome 2 indicators			
I think I can experience Macao better than other travelers when I visit.	.860	1	
I think I can have a unique experience in Macao when I visit.	.834*	1.019	.074
I think I can have a special experience in Macao when I visit.	.764*	.909	.076

\* significant at  $p = .05$ .

**Table 4**  
Model 1 with two outcome constructs – path coefficients.

	$\beta$	B	SE
Frequency of sojourners talking about Macao - > quality	.244*	3.493	1.100
Positivity of sojourners talking about Macao - > quality	.158*	3.160	1.520
Frequency of sojourners talking about Macao - > outcome 1	.062	1.030	1.087
Quality - > outcome 1	.476*	.551	.088
Positivity of sojourners talking about Macao - > outcome 1	.287*	6.617	1.535
Quality - > outcome 2	.656*	.755	.091
Frequency of sojourners talking about Macao - > outcome 2	-.063	-1.042	1.109
Positivity of sojourners talking about Macao - > outcome 2	.195*	4.474	1.526

\* significant at  $p = .05$ .

because item specification was based on a theory of communicative actions with validated items (Kim & Grunig, 2011).

The standardized path coefficient of self-confidence on CAPS was .854, with a  $p$ -value less than .001, indicating a strong and significant path. The result provides evidence that self-confidence as a second-order construct is an important predictor of activeness of sojourners in communicating information about Macao. The results are displayed in Table 2 and Fig. 1.

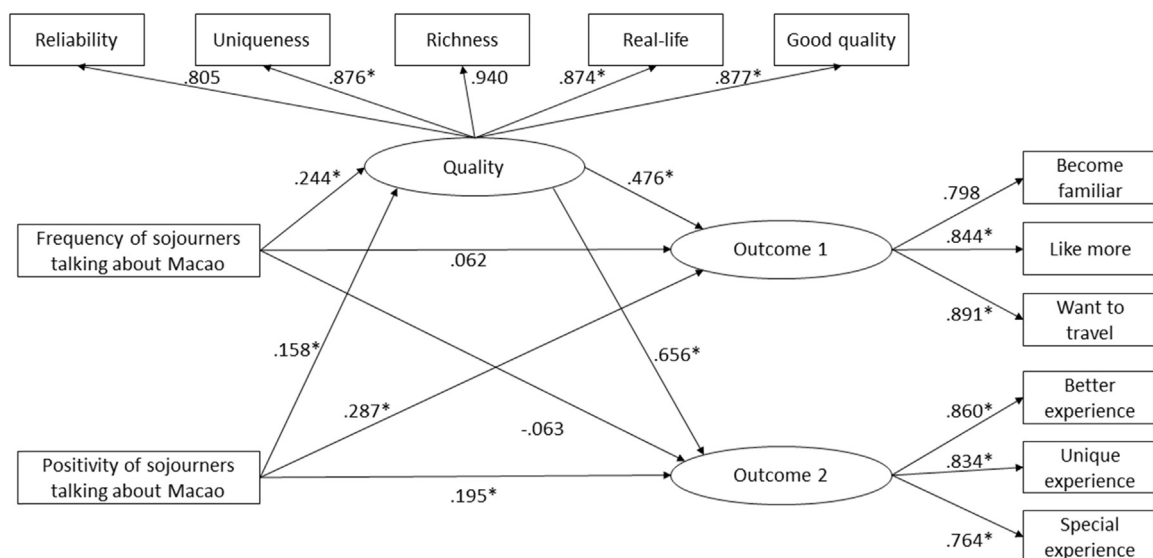
### 5.3. Empirical testing of the information recipient model

For the model on information recipients, two competing models were tested. Model 1 included two outcome constructs with three indicators each, capturing general outcomes in cognitive, affective, and conative aspects (i.e. increased familiarity, like more, and want to travel) and perceptions of a better quality experience as outcomes (i.e. better, unique, and special experience). This model had an acceptable fit with the data ( $\chi^2 = 133.342$ ,  $df = 55$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 2.424$ ,  $GFI = .909$ ,  $SRMR = .052$ ,  $CFI = .956$ ,  $TLI = .938$ ,  $RMSEA = .088$ ).

The standardized factor loadings of the indicators for the quality construct ranged between .805 and .940; those for the outcome one construct ranged between .798 and .891; and those for the outcome two construct ranged between .764 and .860 (see Table 3).

The regression coefficients showed that the frequency of sojourners' communication had no statistically significant associations with the two dimensions of communicative outcomes at the .05 level; however, the positivity of shared information had statistically significant associations with both outcome constructs. The perceived quality of shared information had significant associations with both aspects of outcomes, and both the frequency and positivity of sojourners' communication had significant associations with quality (see Table 4 and Fig. 2).

Although the linkages of frequency to the two outcome variables with the presence of quality were not statistically significant, significances in two indirect linkages from frequency to quality and quality to the two outcome variables were all statistically significant. When the model without the quality variable was tested, the directional linkage between frequency and outcome 1 became statistically significant ( $B = 2.923$ ,  $\beta = .178$ ,  $p = .015$ ); however, the path coefficients of frequency to outcome 2 showed that the linkage to outcome 2 was not statistically significant ( $B = 1.651$ ,  $\beta = .099$ ,  $p = .219$ ). The perceived frequency of sojourners may not directly influence the information recipients' perception, indicating that such information would improve the cognitive, affective, or conative image of Macao.



**Fig. 2.** Results from structural model testing – information recipients (model 1 with outcome variables).

**Table 5**  
Single outcome construct – factor loadings for the construct.

	$\beta$	B	SE
Quality indicators			
More reliable than information shared by other sources	.808	1	
Provide unique information that cannot be seen from other sources	.877 <sup>*</sup>	1.118	.078
Provide rich information	.940 <sup>*</sup>	1.201	.075
Provide real-life information	.873 <sup>*</sup>	1.072	.075
Provide good-quality information	.876 <sup>*</sup>	1.128	.079
Outcome indicators			
Become more familiar with Macao's tourism	.797	1	
Like Macao as a tourism destination more than before	.752 <sup>*</sup>	1.063	.098
Want to travel in Macao	.765 <sup>*</sup>	1.035	.104
I think I can experience Macao better than other travelers when I visit.	.839 <sup>*</sup>	.972	.078
I think I can have a unique experience in Macao when I visit.	.816 <sup>*</sup>	.993	.083
I think I can have a special experience in Macao when I visit.	.781 <sup>*</sup>	.923	.094
Frequency < - > positivity	.320 <sup>*</sup>	.254	.062

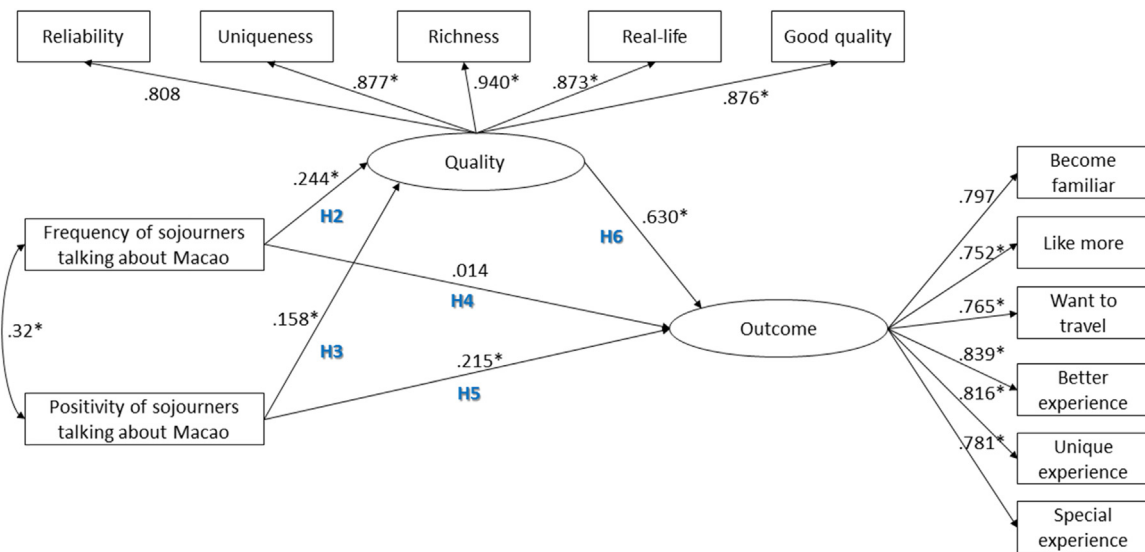
\* significant at  $p = .05$ .

However, the results indicate that such influence is expected if the perceived information attributes and quality — in particular, the information shared by sojourners — is strongly perceived to be reliable, unique, and rich based on their real life and good quality. However, regardless of the perceived quality of information, the frequency of talking appeared not to meaningfully influence the information recipients to have better expectations of their potential visit to the destination region. In sum, the results imply that, in yielding positive communicative outcomes, how positively the sojourners communicate is more important than how frequently they communicate.

An alternative model, specifying outcome as a single construct, also had an acceptable fit ( $\chi^2 = 137.972$ ,  $df = 57$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 2.421$ ,

GFI = .902, SRMR = .0515, CFI = .955, TLI = .938, RMSEA = .088). There was no statistically significant difference in model fit between the two competing models with one and two outcome variables ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 4.63$ ,  $\Delta df = 2$ ,  $p = .099$ ). The standardized factor loadings for the quality construct were similar to those in the two-factor model, ranging between .808 and .940. A total of six indicators for the outcome variable had standardized loadings ranging between .752 and .839 (see Table 5 and Fig. 3).

Consistent with Model 1, the frequency of conversation had no significant direct linkage with outcome; on the other hand, the perception of the positivity of information sharing had a direct significant linkage with the combined outcome construct (see Table 6). The in-



**Fig. 3.** Results from structural model testing – information recipients (single outcome variable) Standardized coefficients are displayed.

**Table 6**  
Single outcome construct – path coefficients.

		$\beta$	B	SE
H2	Frequency of sojourners talking about Macao - > quality	.244 <sup>*</sup>	3.504	1.103
H3	Positivity of sojourners talking about Macao - > quality	.158 <sup>*</sup>	3.171	1.525
H4	Frequency of sojourners talking about Macao - > outcome	.014	.227	1.027
H5	Positivity of sojourners talking about Macao - > outcome	.215 <sup>*</sup>	4.95	1.434
H6	Quality - > outcome	.630 <sup>*</sup>	.725	.091

\* significant at  $p = .05$ .

direct linkage of the frequency and positivity of sojourners' conversation through perceived information quality appeared significant, and the direct linkage of frequency and the outcome variable became significant ( $B = 2.718$ ,  $\beta = .166$ ,  $p = .028$ ), suggesting the full mediating role of the perceived quality in the linkage of the perceived communication frequency to the cognitive, affective, and conative enhancement and that of the information recipients' expected experience. Also, the statistical analysis showed a partial mediating role of the perceived quality of shared information in the linkage of positivity of information sharing and the outcome. The unstandardized and standardized regression weights of positivity on outcome with the quality variable in the model were 4.95 and .215, respectively, with a  $p$ -value less than .05. The regression coefficients were higher when the quality variable was not in the model ( $B = 7.481$ ,  $\beta = .328$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

## 6. Discussion and conclusions

This study attempted to understand the comprehensive processing of sojourners' communication by proposing the associations of foreign sojourners' communicative action and its antecedents that reflect foreign sojourners' confidence. It also attempted to describe how the overall tone and perceived frequency of communication from the sojourners influence the information recipients' perceptions and behavioral intentions using a conceptual model. The study not only focused on the sojourners as information disseminators but also examined perceptions of acquaintances back home as information recipients about the situation, quality, and outcomes of communication about local tourism information. The sojourners' communication model proposed and tested in this study illustrates how they are motivated to talk about the destination region, how such motivations can be understood, and how such perceptions are linked to activeness of communication. In doing so, this study applied and adjusted the concept of self-confidence and its conditions. Aspects of communication as the consequence of self-confidence were considered to measure the activeness of the sojourner's information behavior. In addition, the effect of such communication was considered from the information recipients' position. The conceptual model identified information recipients' perceptions of casual conversations with sojourners and perceived quality of information from sojourners and the effect of enhanced cognition, affection, conation, and expected experience caused by their conversation. These were tested within the context of Macao using two samples of international sojourners and information recipients in Chinese regions.

In addition, this study provides evidence of the important role of self-confidence in predicting foreign sojourners' activeness in communication. The results support and extend the situational theory of problem solving (Kim & Grunig, 2011) in the context of sojourner communication. Furthermore, for the recipients, this empirical study showed that the perceived quality of information shared by the sojourners not only strongly predicted the positive outcomes of communication but also mediated the attributes of situational information sharing of the destination region — Macao in this case — and outcomes of such communication. The results not only support the importance of quality in understanding the outcomes of word-of-mouth and e-word-of-mouth with increasing participation of the users in the communication process, documented previously (Ladhari & Michaud, 2015; Sparks, Perkins, & Buckley, 2013), but also add additional evidence about its mediating role in the specific context of communication between a sojourner and an information recipient. Moreover, positivity rather than frequency of conversations with sojourners appeared to more cognitively, affectively, and conatively affect the information recipients' perceptions of the destination region, supporting previous studies emphasizing the role of valence and tone of information shared (Ye et al., 2009) and expanding its function to the context of sojourner communication.

This study provides implications in that it sheds light on the communicative roles of foreign sojourners in Macao and that it considers

the impact of communication on information recipients in Chinese regions by developing and testing conceptual models of the communicative process in both groups. The results that sojourners' higher self-confidence in terms of the quality of information, the confidence of being a sojourner, and that about positive outcomes are associated with salience in communicative actions help to identify those among the sojourners who are active in collecting, selecting, and disseminating information about the region where they are temporarily living. To acknowledge the influence of active sojourner communicants in Macao's tourism planning and developing, it would be efficient to hear the voice of those actors and identify them by their perceived self-confidence in information quality, perceived identity, and perceived positive outcome expectations. Also, to enhance the overall effect of sojourners in attracting friends and relatives from home countries and regions, it would be efficient for destination management to help sojourners build self-confidence in information sharing by helping them have rich and unique information and tourism experience and to enhance their life conditions so they can confidently share positive aspects of the destination region based on their own first-hand experience. This notion is linked to enhancing behavioral relationship in addition to symbolic relationships between the host region and sojourners (Grunig, 1993). One effective way to enhance the positive information sharing about Macao among sojourners is not to merely say that Macao is a good place to travel but to enable sojourners to experience in such a way that they can spread positive tourism information and encourage friends and relatives back home to visit where they sojourn. Above all, this study emphasizes the unique role and impact of one of the local demographic groups as an influential segment in VFR tourism, highlights its role in hosting visitors and transmitting local information based on its first-hand experience.

In future studies, multi-faceted understanding in predicting communicative actions may broaden the spectrum of understanding communicative patterns of both information disseminators and recipients in the tourism scene. For example, the positive outcome expectations that this study focused on were the positive effects from the positions and benefits of information recipients sought by them. However, as Bandura (1977) discussed, from the position of information disseminators, positive outcome expectations can also be seen, such as enhanced personal reputation through information sharing, praise, and actual rewards, which are monetary and non-monetary.

Further studies can also examine motivations and outcomes not only of generalized communication behaviors but also of differentiated activeness used by each media platform. Recent studies on communication in similar contexts increasingly have pointed out differentiated media usage of publicly versus privately shared media (Zeng et al., 2014) or personal communication versus one-to-many communication forms (Chen et al., 2015). In addition, if studies consider a comprehensive spectrum of self-efficacy in addition to the positive outcome expectation adopted in this study and other conditions that may negatively influence communication, such as constraint recognition, information behaviors in general and communication between the sojourners and information recipients will be revealed more clearly. Moreover, the samples of sojourners and information recipients in this study were collected independently, and the paired effect of the communication was not directly observed. Future studies with the connected samples of sojourners and information recipients may have the direct impact and the nature of such communications. Finally, as this study used Macao and Chinese regions as the case regions, additional evidence from other regions would assist in revealing generalizable communicative patterns between foreign sojourners and diverse types of information recipients communicatively connected to the sojourners.

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