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Bleisure travel experience: Scale development and validation

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ABSTRACT

Bleisure travel is a new type of travel, and bleisure travel experience has become an emerging topic worthy of investigation. However, studies on bleisure travel have mostly employed a qualitative research approach. We accordingly executed our research to develop – through a rigorous process – a bleisure travel experience scale with validity and reliability for assessing the bleisure travel experiences of business travelers. The validity and reliability of the scale, comprising 28 items in 6 dimensions, was proven. This paper details our findings' theoretical and practical implications and outlines possible directions for future research.

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Introduction

Bleisure is a new type of travel that involves travelers integrating a leisure itinerary into their business trip (Economist, 2019; Expedia, 2018). Bleisure is nexus between work and tourism, with the bleisure traveler switching between the roles of worker and tourist (Unger et al., 2016). According to Expedia (2022), bleisure travel is an emerging trend in the postpandemic era. For example, in corporations that adopt remote work policies, more than half of employees (56%) are willing to conduct bleisure travel, indicating that the bleisure market is continually growing (Expedia, 2022; Lichy & McLeay, 2018). Furthermore, projections reported by Future Market Insights (Future Market Insights, 2022) reveal that the bleisure tourism market's worth will reach an estimated US\$2,967.1 billion by 2032. Accordingly, considering the future growth in international business travel, in-depth studies should be conducted on bleisure travel and tourism (Walia et al., 2021).

"Bleisure" is a portmanteau word, blending the concepts of "business" and "leisure." It refers to conducting sightseeing or leisure activities prior to or after a business trip (Cambridge Dictionary, 2018; Chung et al., 2020). According to a survey conducted by Expedia (2018), most business travelers convert a business trip into bleisure travel, selecting a destination far from home to stay in for 2 or 3 nights instead of making a long-term stay. Bleisure differs from the conventional model of tourism in that tourist

activities are fit around professional obligations, blurring the leisure – business boundary. Bleisure travelers are defined as professionals who, to make their business travel more fun and rewarding, integrate it with leisure time (Lichy & McLeay, 2018). Therefore, bleisure travel refers to business travelers using their free time during their business trip to conduct leisure activities.

Bleisure travel has gradually been accepted and adopted by major enterprises worldwide (Walia et al., 2021). Blackshaw (2017) described the trend of leisure opportunities being provided in workplaces and stated that leisure has become a critical component of work in contemporary society. Hence, bleisure is perceived as a strategy to enhance employees' motivation (Chen et al., 2016) and quality of life. Bleisure enables employees to more deeply understand the culture and customs of the destination of their business trip, which means they can conduct business in a more effective manner. Moreover, bleisure is conducive to improving employees' work efficiency (Future Market Insights, 2022). Ali and Schmitz (2018) reported that travelers who engage in bleisure have higher work efficiency, can more easily achieve a work – life balance, and have lower travel costs. Accordingly, bleisure travel has benefits for enterprises and employees.

Scholars have begun to explore topics related to bleisure travel. For example, Lichy and McLeay (2018) surveyed business travelers and categorized them into five types of traveler on the basis of their motivation for participating in bleisure: research-active trailblazers, altruistic knowledge

sharers, working vacationers, escapers, and experiential learners. By considering the consumers' perspective, Chung et al. (2020) developed the bleisure tourism experience chain (B-TEC) and indicated that tourism value chain models that have been developed by considering the industry perspective may not effectively reflect the travel behaviors of tourists. In their exploration of the influence the COVID-19 pandemic has exerted on bleisure travelers and their travel behaviors, Walia et al. (2021) identified factors that may affect future bleisure travel behaviors. Pinho and Marques (2021) explored the trend in and potential of developing bleisure travel in Porto, Portugal, and proposed several factors that can be evaluated by bleisure traveler and destination stakeholders. Several scholars have investigated bleisure travel by using a qualitative approach (Chung et al., 2020; Lichy & McLeay, 2018); nevertheless, empirical research on bleisure travel remains scant. Compared with a normal tourist, a bleisure traveler is more purposeful in participating in and paying for leisure activities (Expedia, 2018). Lichy and McLeay (2018) and Chung et al. (2020) have suggested that researchers should explore bleisure travelers' travel experiences. Accordingly, the present study developed a conceptualized scale and created a theoretical framework for measuring bleisure travel experience.

Bleisure travelers encounter coworkers or collaboration partners of different nationalities and from different cultures during their trips (Chung et al., 2020; Unger et al., 2016). Therefore, they may have outstanding abilities to adapt to different cultures and be open-minded. Compared with regular tourists, bleisure travelers are more prone to breaking the environmental bubbles established by the tourism industry. Hence, bleisure travelers can acquire a close connection with the authentic destination they are visiting and are more willing to acquire tourism experiences related to culture than are regular tourists. Walia et al. (2021) reported that bleisure travelers enjoy visiting nature-based destinations to relieve work stress and enhance their mental health. For example, such travelers might go hiking or on a bike tour. From the perspective of the experience economy, Chung et al. (2020) reported that four types of experiential leisure activity should be provided to bleisure travelers: entertainment, educational, aesthetic, and escapist activities (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). However, no scholar has explored bleisure travelers' travel experience; consequently, the content of the travel experience within bleisure tourism is not clearly understood. Although scholars have investigated the tourism experience under various contexts (Chang & Hung, 2021; Lee & Jan, 2019), they have developed and identified inconsistent concepts and connotations of such travel experience. In particular, bleisure travel is a type of

transformative tourism (Tasci & Godovykh, 2021), and it differs from travel involving a single theme or context. Consequently, existing scales and items for assessing travel experience may be unsuitable for measuring bleisure travel experience effectively.

A literature review revealed that researchers have not yet identified the content of the bleisure travel experience or obtained insights into the construct. To fill this gap in the literature, we explored the travel experience of bleisure travelers to provide insights into the bleisure travel experience. This study also conceptualized bleisure travel experience and developed a measurement scale. The findings fill the research gap by extending the results of Lichy and McLeay (2018) and Chung et al. (2020)—thereby providing a valuable foundation for research on and theory related to travel experience and business travel – and make a contribution to the fields of bleisure and travel experience. We make suggestions for destination marketing and travel management practitioners on the basis of our results.

Literature review

Bleisure travel

The Future Laboratory first proposed the concept of “bleisure” to reflect the blurred boundary between business and leisure travel (The Future Laboratories, 2008). Bleisure represents a type of travel that entails conducting sightseeing or leisure activities during, after, or before business trips (Lichy & McLeay, 2018). Chung et al. (2020) defined bleisure tourism as travel that integrates business and leisure. Bleisure tourism involves business travelers extending their stay and enjoying leisure activities at the destination during their business visit (Walia et al., 2021). Keadplang (2018) defined bleisure travelers as business tourists who conduct short-term personal or group trips during international trips. These travelers might seek opportunities to travel before they complete their work, during their work, or after they complete their work. Therefore, bleisure is a new business travel model that involves the pursuit of personal leisure. This model integrates personal leisure holidays with a business agenda, blurring the boundary between work and leisure, and is thus characterized by convertibility and interoperability between personal leisure and work. Hence, bleisure travel constitutes an in-depth integration of work and leisure.

Business travel differs from leisure travel in terms of its purpose and activities. Bleisure travel involves specific business goals, such as expanding the scope of a business, promoting it, facilitating business deals, and creating opportunities to increase sales (Walia et al., 2021).

Bleisure's purpose, according to Chung et al. (2020), is to increase leisure and entertainment activities during business travel. Furthermore, bleisure has the following features: (1) it extends the duration of business travel (by arriving early or departing late) and involves recreational activities conducted during the extended duration, and (2) it involves participating in socialization or sightseeing activities in between meetings or work activities. In addition to conducting business, business travelers have goals such as learning, challenging themselves, and escaping their troubles, and they are willing to pay for leisure during their business trips (Expedia, 2018); therefore, the bleisure travel experience is critical for business travelers.

Travel experience

Experience refers to a feeling that a person recognizes after participating in an event or activity (Duerden et al., 2015). Experience is the tourism industry's core product and is thus of great importance (Hung & Wang, 2021; Kim & Ritchie, 2014). Travel experience was described by Otto and Ritchie (1996) as being the subjective mindset that travelers feel during the entire travel process; travelers seek a special, authentic experience and hope to gain an unforgettable memory during the travel process. After coining the term "experience economy," Pine and Gilmore (1999) maintained that consumers seek a comprehensive and memorable experience. The work of these two researchers started a new era in research in the fields of economy, recreation, and tourism. Schmitt (1999) broadened the conventional concept of the customer experience and stated that experience includes not only customers' rational decisions but also their rational and emotional pleasure. Larsen (2007) stated that travel experience comprises individual mental processes that are typically related to the process of memory, and they defined travel experience as past travel events that had generated strong emotions and long-term memories in the tourists' minds. Therefore, travel experience can be considered to comprise a series of conscious thoughts or feelings that arise during the travel process and can be considered to generally represent a highly complex psychological, social, or cognitive interactive process.

Regarding assessment constructs related to the tourism context, Cohen (1979) proposed that tourism experience can take five forms: recreational, diversionary, experiential, experimental, and existential. They derived this typology, which is based on motivation, from the perspective of social psychology. Leisure experience was classified by Unger and Kernan (1983) into five components: freedom, mastery, involvement, spontaneity, and arousal. Pine and Gilmore (1999)—under the experience economy framework—put

forward the concept of consumer experience. On the basis of the degrees of consumer involvement and activity, they categorized consumer experience into four types, namely consumer experience related to education, escapism, aesthetics, or entertainment. Schmitt (1999) proposed strategic experience modules and divided consumer experience into five constructs, namely sensing, feeling, thinking, acting, and relating. Subsequently, scholars developed scales for evaluating the experience people gain when conducting different activities or using various products, such as scales for appraising lodging experience (Oh et al., 2007), cruise sightseeing experience (Hosany & Witham, 2010), pilgrimage experience (Chang et al., 2020), memorable travel experience (Kim et al., 2012), cultural sightseeing experience (Cetin & Bilgihan, 2016), medical tourism experience (Ghosh & Mandal, 2019), event and festival experience (Geus et al., 2016), low-carbon travel experience (Lee & Jan, 2019), and cultural and creativity tourism experience (Chang & Hung, 2021).

Although scholars have developed travel assessment experience scales pertaining to various types of travel, these scales are applicable to specific participants and contexts and may not be able to explain bleisure travel experience. In the tourism and leisure field, the definition and validity of bleisure travel experience have not been investigated, and a valid scale for evaluating bleisure travel experience is lacking. Accordingly, we comprehensively examined and conceptualized bleisure travel experience and developed a measurement tool for such travel. A reliable and valid scale for practical assessment is conducive for exploring the different connotations of bleisure and its impact on travelers; hence, establishing a scale for measuring bleisure travel experience is essential.

Bleisure travel experience

We can generally stratify extant travel experience scales into three categories. First, from the phenomenological perspective, Cohen (1979) employed the concept of travel motivation to propose five types of travel experience ranging from personal, pleasurable feelings to deep and comprehensive experiences. Travelers consider their personal needs when seeking a type of experience as their goal for participating in travel activities. However, Cohen (1979) stated that his classification does not consider that tourists might seek multiple types of experience, which means the scale may be unsuitable for specific contexts such as bleisure travel. Second, after introducing the experience economy and on the basis of the degree of customer involvement and activity, Pine and Gilmore (1999) developed a theoretical framework of consumer experience. Building on this foundation, Oh

et al. (2007) established a travel experience scale. Their scale measures the relationship between the methods and activities in which tourists participate. Third, Schmitt (1999) proposed the concept of experiential marketing. He used the theories of consumer psychology and social behavior to develop strategic experience modules. These scales focus on measuring consumers' senses and psychological factors and are suitable for evaluating experience in recreational activities (e.g. nature-oriented sightseeing, including low-carbon travel and wetland sightseeing; Lee & Jan, 2019; Wang et al., 2012) as well as for in-depth investigation of travel experience.

According to bleisure travel's characteristics, bleisure travelers have spatial and temporal freedom when they participate in work and leisure activities (Walia et al., 2021). Therefore, bleisure travelers can fulfill their job responsibilities and participate in relaxing and explorational leisure activities; this is a type of transformational tourism (Tasci & Godovykh, 2021). Moreover, Chung et al. (2020) stated that a person's experience during travel is crucial because major economic and leisure activities occur during this experience. Chung et al. (2020) and Pinho and Marques (2021) have suggested that the perspective of the experience economy should be employed to explore the content of the travel experience of bleisure travelers. Accordingly, experience economy theory (Pine & Gilmore, 1999) is suitable for explaining the travel experiences of bleisure travelers.

On the basis of the characteristics of bleisure travel and relevant previous studies, we in the current study defined the bleisure travel experience as the perceptions generated, influenced, and stimulated by travel activities and the environment during business travel. We used experience economy theory as a basis for dividing the constructs of bleisure travel experience into six domains, which are detailed in the next section.

Job-related learning experience

Job-related learning experience refers to the experience acquired by tourists when they proactively participate physically, psychologically, and spiritually in leisure activities at their destination, which enables them to learn, obtain knowledge, and improve their knowledge and skills (Huang et al., 2022). Ye and Xu (2020) mentioned that business trips promote personal development, increase people's knowledge, and enrich their life experiences. In practice, many business travelers arrange activities that allow them to acquire knowledge or enhance their occupational capacities. For example, travelers visit exhibitions that they are interested in or that are related to their specialties, or they join local factory tours to gain valuable knowledge (Chung et al., 2020) that they can apply in their future work. Moreover,

they might participate in local holidays and festivals. By studying pamphlets or participating in activities, travelers can learn about the culture of their destination. Therefore, bleisure travelers participate in leisure activities to acquire knowledge or learn, enabling them to obtain job-related learning experience.

Entertainment experience

Entertainment experience refers to the experience acquired by travelers when they participate in leisure activities that are fun and entertaining. Such experience is the most common form of travel experience (Hosany & Witham, 2010) and is offered at destinations to provide information and attract travelers' attention. In practice, many travelers engage in culinary tourism by tasting local food, participate in cultural programs to explore local cultures (Chung et al., 2020; Pinho & Marques, 2021), or watch sports games, which may stimulate their senses and be pleasurable. Accordingly, travelers have an entertainment experience when they participate in activities or events that attract their attention and make them feel they are having fun.

Escapist experience

Escapist experience refers to the experience that travelers obtain when they completely immerse themselves in local or culturally relevant activities to escape from reality and reinvigorate themselves (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Walia et al., 2021). Luo et al. (2018) reported that tourism offers travelers an opportunity to escape their jobs. Escapist experience is highly immersive and involves active participation (Lee & Jan, 2019). In practice, bleisure travelers may choose to participate in extreme sports and adventure programs (such as experiencing the Flight of the Gibbon in the jungles of Thailand or participating in indoor skydiving; Chung et al., 2020), or they might go hiking to release stress and enjoy a feeling of escape. Hence, when tourists participate in leisure activities to escape their daily life or work stress, they have an escapism experience and may completely immerse themselves in local or culturally relevant activities.

Sociocultural experience

Sociocultural experience is a critical travel motivation and travel experience for tourists (Luo et al., 2018). Ye and Xu (2020) stated that business travelers have novel or special experiences when they enjoy leisure activities. Moreover, they can experience local cultures and cuisines and conduct cultural exchanges with locals (Unger et al., 2020). As asserted by Chung et al. (2020), exploring local culture and historic sites and tasting authentic local food are the most common leisure activities for bleisure

travelers (Economist, 2019). Alahakoon et al. (2021) discovered that local culture can pique travelers' curiosity and make them want to experience local activities. In practice, many travelers are willing to taste local food, understand the local culture, and participate in local celebrations during their trip. For example, travelers visiting Japan like to experience izakaya culture to release work-related stress and facilitate their relationships with partners, in addition to understanding the daily life of the Japanese working class. Hence, travelers engage in leisure activities to acquire knowledge concerning their destination's local culture and food and to interact with the locals. Thus, they can acquire socio-cultural experience.

Prestige experience

Prestige experience refers to the experience had by travelers when their social and interpersonal demands are met during travel and when they perceive respect, recognition, and attention from others. Correia and Kozak (2012) argued that prestige experience mainly originates from the form of travel, not the destination of travel, and that the purpose of prestige experience is to increase travelers' social status. Ye and Xu (2020) stated that the modes of travel used by business travelers are often symbols of their privilege or identity. During the bleisure travel process, travelers may feel privileged or that they are being treated with honor. Such travel results in prestige experience, which may be a valuable promotion and marketing tool of the travel type (Lee & Jan, 2019). Consequently, when tourists participate in leisure activities that satisfy their interpersonal demands and positively affect their behavior, they acquire prestige experience.

Smart technology experience

Smart technology experience is travel experience mediated by technology. Jeong and Shin (2020) observed that bleisure travelers are more likely to use innovative technology applications than are business or leisure travelers. Bleisure travelers use online travel agent (OTA) platforms (such as TripAdvisor and Expedia) to obtain travel information, or they use travel-related applications (such as Trip.com, KKday, and Klook) to purchase travel products (Expedia, 2018). The interactive functions provided by smart travel technology help travelers participate in travel activities and enhance their travel experience (Jeong & Shin, 2020). In addition, Au and Tsang (2022) discovered that smart systems offer smart services at travel destinations and that travelers can employ them to rapidly obtain information about tourism service providers and the destination, thereby enhancing their travel experience. Accordingly, this

study used smart technology experience as a critical dimension within the construct of bleisure travel experience. We defined it as the use of information technology and Internet technology by travelers to satisfy their travel needs, communicate on social media, promote the entertainment experience, and facilitate their trip.

Research design

The scale development procedure described by Churchill (1979), Carlson et al. (2000), Tsaur et al. (2022), and Yen et al. (2021) were employed in the present study to design a scale for measuring bleisure travel experience. Because of their clarity and straightforwardness, the aforementioned approaches are commonly used by scholars (Kock et al., 2019). The scale established in this study was derived by first generating some preliminary items, collecting a first set of data and then refining the scale, and finally collecting a second set of data before reanalyzing the items (Figure 1).

Item generation

Specify domains of bleisure travel experience construct

Churchill (1979) indicated that one of the first steps in developing a scale should be accurately describing the definitional scope of the relevant concept. This is typically achieved by reviewing the literature and then summarizing the content and preliminarily phrasing the items. By reviewing studies on bleisure travel and travel experience (Chung et al., 2020; Hosany & Witham, 2010; Lee & Jan, 2019; Lichy & McLeay, 2018; Oh et al., 2007), we clarified the concept and content of bleisure travel experience and then formulated the scope and wording of the items.

Focus group interviews

To systematically obtain items that cover the content or aspects of bleisure travel experience, this study conducted interviews in focus groups. We invited 24 Taiwanese international business travelers to participate in three focus group interviews. These travelers had traveled internationally for business during the preceding 2 years and had bleisure travel experience. During the interviews, we first explained the concept and meaning of bleisure travel experience and then posed questions to guide them to recall their travel experiences. For example, we asked the interviewees about the forms, causes, durations, and locations of their bleisure travels as well as the identity of their partners in these travel experiences. Second, we asked them to share memories from their trips. Third, we asked them to narrate their trip

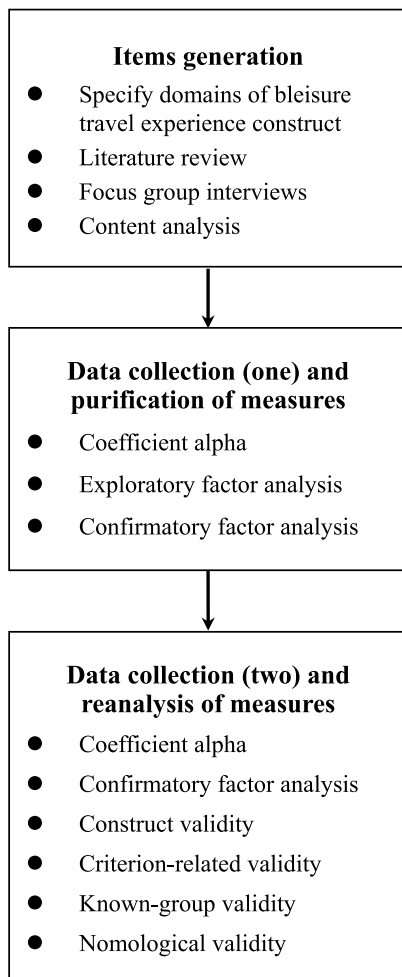


Figure 1. Flow chart of the scale development procedure.

experiences through questions such as “How did you manage your travel time and change your mood? Please share with us your memorable travel experiences.” Fourth, we invited the interviewees to examine the wording and context of the drafted scale items on the basis of their travel experiences; their responses enabled us to modify the

items that did not fit the research context and add items regarding relevant aspects that had not been covered by the original items. Each interview took 1.5–2 h. Audio recorders were used to collect group dialogue data. The three focus group interviews were conducted on March 15, 30, and 31, 2020. Among the 24 interviewees, 13 and 11 were men and women, respectively. The interviewees’ mean (range) age was noted to be 35.6 (27–45) years (Table 1).

Content analysis

This study employed content analysis to systematically analyze and organize the data obtained from the focus group interviews (Kassarjian, 1977). The units of analysis were data in a sentence or paragraph. On the basis of the literature review, we recruited two scholars in the field of tourism and recreation who were familiar with content analysis to classify and label the data. Each coder evaluated the descriptions of bleisure travel experience to clarify the analysis units. Before classifying the bleisure travel experience data, the coders simplified the meaning of each sentence. For example, a sentence extracted and adapted from a focus group interview was as follows: “During business travel, I employ various means or channels to acquire knowledge related to work.” This sentence was simplified to the following analysis unit: “Allows me to learn knowledge related to my work.” During the content analysis process, we generated 286 analytical units, which were classified by the two experts into 42 preliminary items (Table 2). The interrater reliability was higher than 0.8 (Kassarjian, 1977). Thus, the bleisure travel experience items could be organized into a tool for assessing bleisure travel experience.

Once the preliminary items had been generated, we followed the suggestions of Rossiter (2002) and recruited a six-member expert team to assess the items’ content relevance as well as their content validity. The expert team, comprising three researchers with experience in

Table 1. Profile of the interviewees.

Variable	Focus group 1		Focus group 2		Focus group 3	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Gender						
Male	5	62.5	4	50.0	4	50.0
Female	3	37.5	4	50.0	4	50.0
Age						
30 and below	2	25.0	1	12.5	1	12.5
31–40	4	50.0	5	62.5	6	75.0
41 and above	2	25.0	2	25.0	1	12.5
Business trip destination						
Northeast Asia	1	12.5	0	0	2	25.0
Southeast Asia	2	25.0	3	37.5	2	25.0
China	0	0	1	12.5	0	0
Hong Kong and Macao	0	0	1	12.5	1	12.5
Europe	1	12.5	1	12.5	0	0
Australia and New Zealand	0	0	0	0	1	12.5
United States and Canada	4	50.0	2	25.0	2	25.0

Table 2. Potential indicators of bleisure travel experience.

items	Relevant literature	
Allows me to learn knowledge related to my work.	Oh et al. (2007); Hosany and Witham (2010); Kim et al. (2012)	
Allows me to improve my work skills.**		
This is an educational journey.		
I am interested in participating in local leisure activities.		
Local leisure activities (or performances) are attractive to me.		
I like local leisure activities (or performances).		
I find local leisure activities (or performances) fun.		
Participating in local leisure activities is pleasurable.		
I feel as if I am in a different time and place.**		
Makes me imagine that I am a different person.		
Makes me completely escape reality.		
Makes me forget my daily routine.		
Makes me feel as if I am in a different world.		
The travel method is approved by my enterprise.	Lee and Jan (2019)	
This travel method reflects my social status.	Jeong and Shin (2020)	
I take pride in being involved in this task.		
I can easily download local travel apps.		
I can easily use local travel apps.**		
Allows me to learn knowledge related to my industry.		Focus group
Allows me to understand industry development trends.**		
Provides me with an opportunity for self-growth.		
Provides me with new thoughts or ideas.**		
Allows me to fulfill my job responsibilities.**		
Facilitates the relationship between me and my work partners.**		
Helps me in conducting market development or marketing and promotion for my company.**		
Helps me find new collaborators (suppliers or channels).		
Allows me to interact and conduct exchanges with locals.		
Allows me to understand locals' lifestyle.		
Allows me to share locals' work values.		
Allows me to experience local cultures and characteristics.		
Allows me to taste unique local cuisine.		
Allows me to visit unique local sites.**		
I feel respected by others.		
I have been treated with great hospitality.*		
By using smart technology, I gain useful travel information.**		
Smart technology helps me with my local travel.		
I can use smart technology to share travel-related information with others.		
I can use smart technology to interact with others.		
I can use smart technology to gain personalized (customized) information.		
I use smart technology to plan travel activities.*		
I use smart technology to understand my destination.*		
I use smart technology to gain information related to travel.*		

Note: * items deleted after content validity.

**items deleted during exploratory factor analysis.

developing scales and three researchers specializing in the field of tourism and recreation, assessed each item and definition's suitability on a 5-point Likert scale with the endpoints 1 ("highly unsuitable") and 5 ("highly suitable"). The experts suggested ways in which it would be appropriate to revise the items by, for example, altering the terminology and adding or omitting specific items. The experts were discovered to award an average score of < 3 to four items, which were thus eliminated. The scale's preliminary items comprised the remaining 38 items.

Data collection (one) and purification of measures

Exploratory factor analysis

Our preliminary bleisure travel experience scale comprised the aforementioned 38 preliminary items. During our first data collection cycle, the items were scored using

a 5-point Likert scale with the endpoints 1 ("strongly disagree") and 5 ("strongly agree"). In accordance with flying duration and distance to the travel destination, Taiwan's tourism industry divides trips into long-haul travel (pertaining to journeys with a flying duration longer than 5 h or a flying distance greater than 3,000 km) and short-haul travel (pertaining to trips with a flying duration of ≤5 h; Lo & Lam, 2004; Yen et al., 2018). Scholars have reported that short-haul travelers mainly focus on leisure and recreational experiences, whereas long-haul travelers seek various cultural experiences depending on their learning or personal development motivation (Bao & Mc Kercher, 2008; Ho & Mc Kercher, 2014). Therefore, bleisure travelers may have different travel experiences to other travelers because of a difference in the scope of their trips. Consequently, to confirm our bleisure travel experience scale's applicability, we conducted separate

questionnaire surveys among long- and short-haul business travelers.

In the first questionnaire survey, we surveyed short-haul business travelers. To achieve a wide sample range and fully understand bleisure travel experience, we recruited employees who had conducted international business travel in the preceding 2 years and had bleisure travel experiences. We also collected data from travel agencies that had organized international business trips, chambers of commerce (such as the American, British, and Singapore International Chambers of Commerce), and international enterprises. After collecting basic information on enterprises and organizations, the researcher contacted individuals in them by phone or email, explained our research purpose, and invited unit supervisors to participate in the survey. Subsequently, we delivered in person or mailed paper copies of the questionnaire to the enterprises and organizations. Each respondent was informed that the survey was voluntary, the data would not be disclosed, and personal information would be kept confidential. Subsequently, we asked the unit supervisors to distribute questionnaire copies to employees who had participated in business trips. A return envelope was provided with each questionnaire. After the participants had completed the questionnaire, they mailed it back to our team themselves. We executed our first sample collection process between September 1 and October 31 2020. During this process, we distributed 480 questionnaire copies overall, retrieving 461 copies; we noted 428 of the 461 copies to be valid, representing an 89.2% valid return rate. Most of the respondents in the first survey were men (58.2%) and were single (59.1%). The largest age group was 28–34 years (37.1%). More than two-fifths had received a university education (42.3%); 29% had a monthly salary of US\$1,051–US\$1,400, 38.3% worked in the industrial or commercial sector, 54.2% made business trips lasting 1–5 days, and 41.1% reported northeast Asia as the destination of their business trips.

The respondents' cognitive information was collected using a self-report scale; hence, common method variance (CMV) was possible and was thus assessed by employing Harman's one-factor test (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). For all items in the first survey, our executed factor analysis indicated that no factor explained more than 50% of the variance, with the highest variance explained by a single factor being 33.75%; thus, CMV was not severe for the first survey (Podsakoff et al., 2003). On the basis of the suggestions of Armstrong and Overton (1977), we executed a chi-square test to assess the demographic information in the early responses (i.e. the first 20% of questionnaires returned) and late responses (the last 20% of questionnaires returned) to

check for nonresponse bias. The executed test indicated that our demographic variables did not differ significantly between the early and late responses (sex: $p = 0.24$; marital status: $p = 0.21$; age: $p = 0.67$; education attainment: $p = 0.62$; monthly salary: $p = 0.59$; occupation: $p = 0.51$; days of travel: $p = 0.72$; and travel destination: $p = 0.54$; $p > 0.05$ indicated homogeneity). Therefore, clear nonresponse bias was not noted for our first survey.

Subsequently, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed using SPSS 25.0. For factor extraction, we conducted principal component analysis and then used varimax to rotate the axis. A factor was retained if it had an eigenvalue > 1.0 . To refine the items, the first-round data were subjected to EFA. The criteria for removing items were as follows: (1) factor loading < 0.5 or (2) an item with high factor loadings for different factors (Hair et al., 2010). In total, 10 items were removed on this basis (Table 3). Six eigenvalues greater than 1 were obtained in the EFA. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin index was 0.91, χ^2 was 8684.79, number of degrees of freedom (df) was 378, and statistical significance was $p < 0.01$. In our simplification of the items, we reduced the 38 preliminary items to 28 items that together had greater explanatory power. The six identified factors were named job-related learning experience, entertainment experience, escapist experience, sociocultural experience, prestige experience, and smart technology experience.

Confirmatory factor analysis

The data derived in the first survey were subjected to validity and reliability tests executed through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). For the 28 items, we noted the Cronbach α values and composite reliability (CR) values to be 0.86–0.92 and 0.86–0.92, respectively (Table 4). These values meet the standard (of being > 0.70) suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981) and Bagozzi and Yi (1988). This revealed the favorable internal consistency of the preliminary scale for measuring bleisure travel experience. In the aforementioned CFA, all goodness-of-fit indices met the suggested thresholds [(Hair et al., 2010; $\chi^2/df = 2.53$, goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = 0.88, adjusted GFI (AGFI) = 0.85, standardized root-mean-square residual (SRMR) = 0.05, root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.06, normed fit index (NFI) = 0.91, non-NFI (NNFI) = 0.93, confirmatory fit index (CFI) = 0.94, relative fit index (RFI) = 0.90, and incremental fit index (IFI) = 0.94]; thus, these results signify our bleisure travel experience scale's validity (Kelloway, 1998). Moreover, we determined our derived constructs to exhibit high convergent validity because the latent variables had high average variance extracted (AVE) values. The developed scale had favorable

Table 3. Results of exploratory factor analysis for samples one.

Factor/Item	Factor loading	Eigen value	Variance (%)	Cronbach's α
Job-related learning experience		3.77	13.48	0.91
1. Allows me to learn knowledge related to my work.	0.76			
2. Allows me to learn knowledge related to my industry.	0.74			
3. This is an educational journey.	0.64			
4. Provides me with an opportunity for self-growth.	0.61			
Sociocultural experience		3.67	13.10	0.92
5. Helps me find new collaborators (suppliers or channels).	0.77			
6. Allows me to interact and conduct exchanges with locals.	0.77			
7. Allows me to understand locals' lifestyle.	0.70			
8. Allows me to share locals' work values.	0.68			
9. Allows me to experience local cultures and characteristics.	0.67			
10. Allows me to taste unique local cuisine.	0.61			
Prestige experience		3.29	11.73	0.86
11. The travel method is approved by my enterprise.	0.74			
12. This travel method reflects my social status.	0.69			
13. I take pride in being involved in this task.	0.68			
14. I feel respected by others.	0.67			
Smart technology experience		2.83	10.11	0.88
15. I can easily download local travel apps.	0.79			
16. Smart technology helps me with my local travel.	0.76			
17. I can use smart technology to share travel-related information with others.	0.75			
18. I can use smart technology to interact with others.	0.75			
19. I can use smart technology to gain personalized (customized) information.	0.62			
Entertainment experience		2.72	9.72	0.91
20. I am interested in participating in local leisure activities.	0.85			
21. Local leisure activities (or performances) are attractive to me.	0.81			
22. I like local leisure activities (or performances).	0.79			
23. I find local leisure activities (or performances) fun.	0.70			
24. Participating in local leisure activities is pleasurable.	0.65			
Escapist experience		2.56	9.13	0.89
25. Makes me imagine that I am a different person.	0.83			
26. Makes me completely escape reality.	0.81			
27. Makes me forget my daily routine.	0.72			
28. Makes me feel as if I am in a different world.	0.63			

convergent validity, as reflected by the AVE of each construct being >0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Data collection (two) and reanalysis of measures

Confirmatory factor analysis

Churchill (1979) suggested verifying the simplified items of a developed scale by conducting a second questionnaire survey. Therefore, a second questionnaire survey was performed to ensure that the developed scale was robust. The second survey was conducted among long-haul business travelers. We applied an identical questionnaire and data collection process to those employed in the first survey. We executed our data collection between December 1 2020, and February 28 2021. During the process, we distributed 580 questionnaire copies overall, retrieving 563 copies; we noted 512 of the retrieved 563 copies to be valid, representing an 88.3% valid return rate. Most of the participants in the second survey were men (54.5%) and were single (53.7%). Nearly one-third were aged 35–41 years (32%), and approximately half had received a university education (52.3%). The most common monthly salary was US \$1,401–US\$1,750 (24.2%). Almost two-fifths of the respondents worked in the industrial or commercial

sector (39.8%), and 45.3% went on business trips lasting 11–15 days. North America was the destination of business trips for 43.2% of the respondents.

CMV in the second survey was analyzed through Harman's one-factor test (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). In the executed analysis, six factors were extracted that had an eigenvalue >1. The most critical factor was discovered to explain only 36.16% of the variance, which indicated that CMV was not a severe problem (Podsakoff et al., 2003). We again found that demographic variables did not differ significantly between the early and late responses (sex: $p = 0.39$; marital status: $p = 0.74$; age: $p = 0.47$; education attainment: $p = 0.71$; monthly salary: $p = 0.65$; occupation: $p = 0.52$; days of travel: $p = 0.54$; and travel destination: $p = 0.59$; $p > 0.05$ indicated homogeneity). Therefore, clear nonresponse bias was not observed for the second survey (Armstrong & Overton, 1977).

The developed scale's validity and reliability were re-examined using the second-round data. For the 28 items, we noted the Cronbach α values and CR values to be 0.89–0.94 and 0.88–0.94, respectively (Table 4); these values met the standard (of at least 0.70) of Fornell and Larcker (1981) and Bagozzi and Yi (1988). Thus, our bleisure travel experience scale's internal

Table 4. Results of confirmatory factor analysis for samples one and two.

Factor/Item	Mean	Factor loading	CR	AVE	Cronbach's α	Model Fit Indices
Job-related learning experience						
			0.91 (0.91)	0.72 (0.73)	0.91(0.92)	$\chi^2 = 811.32$ (675.49)
1. Allows me to learn knowledge related to my work.	4.03 (4.05)	0.86(0.81)				$df = 321(318)$
2. Allows me to learn knowledge related to my industry.	4.01 (4.02)	0.89(0.88)				$\chi^2/df = 2.53(2.12)$
3. This is an educational journey.	4.11 (4.11)	0.84(0.87)				GFI = 0.88(0.92)
4. Provides me with an opportunity for self-growth.	4.15 (4.14)	0.80(0.85)				AGFI = 0.85(0.89)
Sociocultural experience						
			0.92 (0.94)	0.66 (0.73)	0.92(0.94)	SRMR = 0.05(0.04)
5. Helps me find new collaborators (suppliers or channels).	4.06 (4.17)	0.69(0.86)				RMSEA = 0.06(0.05)
6. Allows me to interact and conduct exchanges with locals.	4.20 (4.20)	0.87(0.90)				NFI = 0.91(0.95)
7. Allows me to understand locals' lifestyle.	4.22 (4.23)	0.87(0.88)				NNFI = 0.93(0.96)
8. Allows me to share locals' work values.	4.16 (4.18)	0.91(0.92)				CFI = 0.94(0.97)
9. Allows me to experience local cultures and characteristics.	4.28 (4.28)	0.79(0.81)				RFI = 0.90(0.93)
10. Allows me to taste unique local cuisine.	4.32 (4.32)	0.71(0.73)				IFI = 0.94(0.97)
Prestige experience						
			0.86 (0.88)	0.61 (0.65)	0.86(0.89)	
11. The travel method is approved by my enterprise.	4.03 (4.08)	0.74(0.76)				
12. This travel method reflects my social status.	3.95 (4.05)	0.77(0.78)				
13. I take pride in being involved in this task.	4.12 (4.15)	0.87(0.91)				
14. I feel respected by others.	4.16 (4.17)	0.73(0.77)				
Smart technology experience						
			0.89 (0.92)	0.62 (0.70)	0.88(0.91)	
15. I can easily download local travel apps.	3.38 (3.96)	0.61(0.74)				
16. Smart technology helps me with my local travel.	4.08 (4.10)	0.83(0.87)				
17. I can use smart technology to share travel-related information with others.	4.07 (4.09)	0.93(0.95)				
18. I can use smart technology to interact with others.	4.10 (4.11)	0.84(0.88)				
19. I can use smart technology to gain personalized (customized) information.	3.87 (3.94)	0.67(0.72)				
Entertainment experience						
			0.91 (0.92)	0.66 (0.71)	0.91(0.92)	
20. I am interested in participating in local leisure activities.	4.07 (4.08)	0.73(0.85)				
21. Local leisure activities (or performances) are attractive to me.	4.06 (4.09)	0.85(0.83)				
22. I like local leisure activities (or performances).	4.01 (4.05)	0.90(0.88)				
23. I find local leisure activities (or performances) fun.	4.03 (4.08)	0.84(0.88)				
24. Participating in local leisure activities is pleasurable.	4.10 (4.13)	0.74(0.77)				
Escapist experience						
			0.89 (0.91)	0.67 (0.72)	0.89(0.90)	
25. Makes me imagine that I am a different person.	3.68 (3.78)	0.79(0.78)				
26. Makes me completely escape reality.	3.62 (3.73)	0.88(0.92)				
27. Makes me forget my daily routine.	3.63 (3.75)	0.87(0.84)				
28. Makes me feel as if I am in a different world.	3.84 (3.88)	0.73(0.84)				

Note: * sample 1: $n = 428$; sample 2: $n = 512$.

*The second CFA data are expressed in parentheses.

consistency was concluded to be favorable. Additionally, the fitness indices met the standard of Hair et al. (2010; $\chi^2/df = 2.12$, GFI = 0.92, AGFI = 0.89, SRMR = 0.04, RMSEA = 0.05, NFI = 0.95, NNFI = 0.96, CFI = 0.97, RFI = 0.93, and IFI = 0.97), which indicated the validity of the developed bleisure travel experience scale (Kelloway, 1998).

In the tests of convergent and discriminant validity, each construct's AVE was >0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), which indicated the scale's acceptable convergent validity (Table 5). In addition, the square roots of the AVE were in the range 0.81–0.85 for the six constructs, and these values exceeded the coefficients of construct-pair correlations (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), signifying that our scale had favorable discriminant validity. Because of the success of the scale development procedure, we concluded that our 6 dimensions of the 28 items were suitable for measuring bleisure travel experience. Accordingly, the scale was named the Bleisure Travel Experience Scale.

Criterion-related validity

Our scale's criterion-related validity was investigated next. Travelers' travel experience reportedly affects their travel satisfaction (Godovykh & Tasci, 2020). Thus, this study used travel satisfaction as a criterion to verify whether bleisure travel experience is correlated with travel satisfaction. For travel satisfaction measurement, we adopted the satisfaction scale developed by Kwon and Lee (2020), which contains four items. Whether any dimension of the six constructs of the developed scale was correlated with travel satisfaction was determined using Pearson correlation analysis. The results indicated that job-related learning experience ($r = 0.37$), sociocultural experience ($r = 0.42$), prestige experience ($r = 0.38$), smart technology experience ($r = 0.35$), entertainment experience ($r = 0.46$), and escapist experience ($r = 0.36$) were positively correlated with travel satisfaction (Table 6), indicating that our scale had favorable criterion-related validity.

Known-group validity

According to extant research, long-haul business travelers have different travel experiences to short-haul

Table 6. Criterion-related validity analysis.

Bleisure travel experience	Travel satisfaction
Job-related learning experience	0.37**
Sociocultural experience	0.42**
Prestige experience	0.38**
Smart technology experience	0.35**
Entertainment experience	0.46**
Escapist experience	0.36**

Note: ** $p < 0.01$.

business travelers (Bao & Mckercher, 2008; Ho & Mckercher, 2014). Therefore, the known-group validity of our scale was analyzed and used to determine whether the samples had different mean values for the six scale constructs. For a particular scale, if the mean values of the scale's constructs differ among different samples, then the scale has high population validity (Bearden & Richard, 1999), generalizability, and applicability.

We conducted a third questionnaire survey among short- and long-haul business travelers. The questionnaire and data collection process in the third survey were identical to those in the first two surveys, and 608 valid questionnaires were retrieved. On the basis of the method used in Ho and Mckercher (2014), we divided travelers into two sample populations, namely short-haul travelers (group 1; $n = 286$) and long-haul travelers (group 2; $n = 322$). The differences in the six constructs between these populations were analyzed using the independent-samples t test, the results of which are presented in Table 7. The bleisure travel experiences of the two populations differed significantly. The job-related learning experience, sociocultural experience, smart technology experience, and escapist experience scores of the long-haul travelers were significantly higher than those of the short-haul travelers. Hence, the developed scale had acceptable known-group validity.

Nomological validity

We also examined the nomological validity of our scale. Travelers' travel experience and travel well-being were discovered by Lyu et al. (2018) to be positively correlated. According to the perspective of resource conservation (Hobfoll, 1989), bleisure

Table 5. Correlations of all constructs.

Bleisure travel experience	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Job-related learning experience	0.85					
2. Sociocultural experience	0.45**	0.85				
3. Prestige experience	0.41**	0.43**	0.81			
4. Smart technology experience	0.31**	0.40**	0.40**	0.84		
5. Entertainment experience	0.35**	0.45**	0.41**	0.59**	0.84	
6. Escapist experience	0.20**	0.16**	0.21**	0.32**	0.35**	0.85

Note: ** $p < 0.01$.

Diagonal (in bold) represent the square root of average variance extracted.

Table 7. Known-group validity analysis.

Bleisure travel experience Factors	Group 1	Group 2	t-test
	(n = 286) M (SD)	(n = 322) M (SD)	
Job-related learning experience	4.07 (0.51)	4.08 (0.51)	-3.66**
Sociocultural experience	4.21 (0.50)	4.23 (0.49)	-3.72***
Prestige experience	3.99 (0.49)	4.04 (0.49)	-0.52
Smart technology experience	4.07 (0.52)	4.11 (0.53)	-3.68***
Entertainment experience	4.06 (0.50)	4.09 (0.49)	-0.62
Escapist experience	3.69 (0.64)	3.79 (0.58)	-2.67**

Note: ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

M: Mean; SD: Standard deviation; Group 1: short-haul travelers; Group 2: long-haul travelers.

travelers can gain resources or benefits from their travel, such as knowledge, skills, and social relationships. Through travel, travelers achieve personal growth, experience pleasure (including a sense of freedom), expand their social network, relieve their work- or life-related stress, and increase their happiness (Knobloch et al., 2017; Ye & Xu, 2020). Ye and Xu (2020) discovered that travel experience is conducive to increasing the travel well-being of business travelers. Accordingly, we adopted the travel well-being scale of Kang (2020), which consists of three items, to measure travel well-being and thus verify our scale's nomological validity. Regression analysis was executed between the six dimensions of bleisure travel experience and travel well-being (Table 8). The results indicated that the six dimensions had significant associations with travel well-being, with an adjusted R^2 of 0.38, signifying that the six dimensions significantly and positively affected travel well-being. The aforementioned results demonstrate the acceptability of the nomological validity of our bleisure travel experience scale.

Discussion and conclusions

In the present study, a bleisure travel experience scale was constructed by referring to the approaches to scale creation outlined by Churchill (1979) and other articles concerning the development of questionnaire-based measurement tools (Carlson et al., 2000; Tsauro et al., 2022; Yen et al., 2021). First, we identified 42 items for

bleisure travel experience evaluation by executing a literature review as well as focus group interviews. Second, through expert content validity analysis, we selected 38 preliminary items. Third, we collected sample data (the first survey) and used them to conduct EFA for refining the items and exploring the dimensions of bleisure travel experience. On the basis of the EFA findings, we reduced the number of items to 28. Fourth, we executed CFA to determine our scale's structure. Fifth, we collected data and re-executed CFA to confirm our scale's factor structure. Through this rigorous procedure, we developed a 28-item, 6-dimension scale for evaluating bleisure travel experience. This tool passed the tests for internal consistency and criterion-related and construct validity, demonstrating its favorable reliability and validity.

This study adopted the perspective of bleisure travelers and established the concept of bleisure travel experience. Bleisure travel is a travel mode in which travelers integrate a business agenda with purposeful leisure activities. Bleisure travel differs from leisure travel in that bleisure travel also involves work-related experiences. The focus group interviews conducted in this study resulted in the addition of items – primarily related to job-related learning experience, sociocultural experience, prestige experience, and smart technology experience – to our bleisure travel experience scale. First, job-related learning experience is a motivation for participation in leisure activities. Travelers often participate in leisure activities at their travel destination to learn and to acquire knowledge, thereby increasing their

Table 8. Nomological validity of bleisure travel experience scale with regression analysis.

Variable	β	t-value	p-value	Tolerance	VIF
Dependent variable: travel well-being					
Job-related learning experience	0.14	3.41	0.00	0.70	1.43
Sociocultural experience	0.10	2.36	0.02	0.67	1.50
Prestige experience	0.11	2.44	0.02	0.63	1.60
Smart technology experience	0.08	2.01	0.05	0.75	1.33
Entertainment experience	0.23	5.38	0.00	0.67	1.49
Escapist experience	0.27	7.04	0.00	0.86	1.16

Model F statistic (52.02), adjusted $R^2 = .38$, $p = .00$.

Note: VIF: variance inflation factor.

knowledge and skills. Unlike regular travelers, business travelers engage in job-related activities – such as participating in industry exhibitions (e.g. information technology exhibitions), visiting enterprises, and joining factory tours – during their trips to acquire knowledge or increase their job capabilities. This finding echoes that of Ye and Xu (2020), who reported that business trips can promote personal development, increase work knowledge, enrich life experience, and help personal development.

Second, regarding sociocultural experience, business travelers are generally unfamiliar with the local culture of their destination; hence, their experience of a different social culture enables them to conduct social exchanges with locals and gain an understanding of the local culture, local history, and traditions. Bleisure travelers can obtain assistance from local work partners to understand the local culture and work values, experience the local culture, and perform exchanges with the local people. The aforementioned aspect distinguishes bleisure travelers from regular travelers. One study reported that when tourists are exposed to local sites, cultures, and lifestyles, their interest and curiosity are piqued and they want to participate in activities with local features or obtain more information about the destination (Tsaur et al., 2022). Adopting the perspective of transformative travel, Alahakoon et al. (2021) asserted that local culture is a critical feature of the attractions of a destination. An interest in the local culture of a destination inspires travelers to understand and learn about the local culture. Business travelers experience local culture outside their work time. For example, they taste local food, use transportation unique to the destination, and participate in local cultural activities or festivals. These findings echo that of Chung et al. (2020), who discovered that the main leisure activities conducted by bleisure travelers are exploring local culture, visiting historic sites, and tasting authentic cuisine.

Third, regarding prestige experience, studies have revealed that prestige experience is related to the form of travel. The travel method of bleisure travelers is considered a symbol of their identity or to indicate their privilege; therefore, in contrast to regular travel, bleisure travel can meet the interpersonal needs of travelers and make them feel they are respected and the focus of attention. Finally, regarding smart technology experience, smart technology has become a critical component of travel experiences (Huang et al., 2017). Au and Tsang (2022) stated that smart destinations provide smart services and smart systems that enable travelers to obtain crucial information, such as travel or activity information, which is conducive to enhancing their travel experiences. Many business travelers use smart

devices to plan their travel itinerary, enjoy activities at their destination, and share their travel experiences. Business travelers use smart devices more frequently than do leisure travelers. Bleisure travelers use OTA platforms to search for travel information or use applications related to travel to purchase travel products and tickets. The aforementioned findings echo that of Jeong and Shin (2020), who discovered that bleisure travelers use smart technology applications more frequently than do regular travelers. Moreover, the interactive function of applications prompts travelers to enhance their travel experiences by participating in travel activities. Thus, the four aforementioned major constructs demonstrate the value of our bleisure travel experience scale and underscore its difference from general travel experience scales.

Theoretical implications

Three major theoretical contributions are made by this study. First, topics related to bleisure travel are increasingly receiving attention from academia. Studies on bleisure travel have mostly adopted qualitative approaches; few have employed quantitative methods to measure the travel experiences of bleisure travelers. Consequently, the constructs and content of bleisure travel experience have not been comprehensively defined. Although Chung et al. (2020) employed the perspective of business travelers to construct the B-TEC model, they stated that destination marketing organizations (DMOs) typically overlook business travelers' travel experiences and have suggested that researchers should explore this aspect. This study is the first to define the constructs that constitute bleisure travel experience and to develop a tool for measuring this type of experience by utilizing both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The derived scale, containing 6 dimensions and 28 items, is novel in that it can effectively measure bleisure travel experience. Our findings thus contribute to the theoretical literature on bleisure travel and travel experience. This study additionally extends previous research findings (e.g. Chung et al., 2020; Lichy & McLeay, 2018).

Second, this study is the first to use the perspective of business travelers to conceptualize bleisure travel experience. By considering experience economy theory (Pine & Gilmore, 1999), we incorporated dimensions such as entertainment experience and escapist experience into the developed scale for evaluating bleisure travel experience. Entertainment experience is the most basic form of travel experience, whereas escapist experience reflects that travelers can escape their work or daily life and immerse themselves in leisure

activities (Lichy & McLeay, 2018). However, this study added four important dimensions: job-related learning experience, sociocultural experience, prestige experience, and smart technology experience. Because bleisure involves the incorporation of leisure activities into a business trip (Lichy & McLeay, 2018), job-related learning experience, sociocultural experience, and prestige experience were conceptualized from the work perspective. Specifically, the connotations of work partners and work values were incorporated into the dimension of sociocultural experience. Jeong and Shin (2020), who explored the experiences and behaviors of tourists who use smart tourism technology, discovered that bleisure tourists use smart devices more frequently than do business travelers and leisure travelers. Therefore, we incorporated smart technology experience as a critical dimension in our scale. On the basis of findings from our focused group interviews, we added items about sharing and interaction to this dimension. The aforementioned dimension is a unique feature of the bleisure travel experience scale.

Third, bleisure travel is a new travel mode. Although studies have developed various travel experience scales (Chang & Hung, 2021; Lee & Jan, 2019), these scales apply only to certain types of travelers and to specific contexts. Bleisure travel is a mode of travel in which business travelers integrate business and leisure and is thus a form of transformative tourism. We argue that when business travelers conduct bleisure travel and arrange business itineraries, they extend their stay to engage in meaningful recreational activities (such as those with the goals of learning, being challenged, or relaxing). Because of the uniqueness of bleisure travel, bleisure travel experiences may differ from other types of travel experience. Therefore, a scale specifically for evaluating business travelers' bleisure travel experiences was developed in the present study. Scholars can refer to our scale when executing research on causal relationships and can quantitatively examine relevant antecedents and consequences. The development of the bleisure travel experience scale is the principal theoretical contribution of this study, which has constructed a theoretical foundation for future studies on bleisure travel experience and on how the relevant constructs related to each other.

Managerial implications

Our derived bleisure experiences scale can serve as a reference for tourists, travel managers, and DMOs. Tourists can use the developed scale to self-assess their bleisure travel experience to understand the richness of this experience. For example, tourists can follow the

descriptions of items, such as "enables me to acquire knowledge related to my industry," to enhance their job-related learning experience. Moreover, the scale items offer directions for travelers to plan their bleisure travel. Travelers can use our scale to understand how to plan a bleisure travel itinerary that incorporates suitable leisure activities. Through the focus group interviews, we determined that sociocultural experience is a critical construct of travel experience for bleisure travelers. Hence, we suggest that travelers should ensure a sociocultural aspect to their itinerary and should participate in activities that involve interactions and exchanges with locals. Such measures can help travelers increase their understanding of local cultures, improve their relationship with local work partners, or find new collaborating partners.

Second, for travel managers and DMOs, our scale can serve as a reference when conducting marketing strategy management. The scale can be used to conduct regular surveys among visitors for objectively determining their bleisure travel experience at a site. Our results could serve as a reference in the design of policies and strategies for improving the marketing of a bleisure destination. Our scale's items can be used to examine travelers' use of applications and smart technology during travel to obtain comprehensive or customized travel information, thereby enhancing their smart technology experience. Third, policymakers, DMOs, and relevant parts of local governments can focus on the constructs of the developed scale when planning local festivals and cultural activities, develop a smart bleisure travel environment, and offer comprehensive transportation and business facilities to attract business travelers. Moreover, to attract bleisure travelers, we suggest that travel managers and DMOs establish virtual tour environments on the basis of our bleisure travel experience scale. For example, they can develop virtual-reality videos of local sightseeing sites for marketing the destination or as guiding tools. To enhance the online immersion experience, travel managers and DMOs can adopt game elements to increase interaction and fun. We suggest that travel managers and DMOs account for the results obtained using our scale when designing policies and plans related to bleisure travel in order to increase the number of bleisure travelers at their destinations and the willingness of these travelers to revisit a destination.

Limitations and directions for future research

A valid and reliable scale for evaluating bleisure travel experience was developed in this study, and critical insights into this experience were obtained. Nonetheless, this study has certain limitations. First, in

our data collection, we surveyed international business travelers from Taiwan alone. Thus, researchers should employ the developed scale with international business travelers from other countries and regions – such as the United States, China, Japan, Southeast Asia, and Europe – to confirm its applicability. Second, international business travel has been hindered by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has negatively affected all types of travel. Future studies on bleisure travel experience can consider related aspects, such as travel anxiety (Zenker et al., 2021) and COVID-19-related fears (Ahorsu et al., 2022). Furthermore, scholars can examine the effects of several types of bleisure (such as virtual or digital tours) on tourists' experiences in order to expand the understanding of bleisure travel experience. Third, this study conducted separate questionnaire surveys among long-haul and short-haul business travelers to ensure that the scale is applicable to both types of traveler. However, this study did not consider other traveler characteristics (such as belonging to Generation X or Generation Y). Future studies can consider these characteristics to expand the generalizability of our scale. Finally, in the validity tests conducted for the second and third questionnaire surveys, this study considered only the travel satisfaction and travel well-being constructs. However, the antecedents and consequences of bleisure travel experience are still not completely understood. Empirical research on casual models can be conducted using the developed scale.

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