

Seonjin Lee

seonjin@sc.edu | tourismscientist.com

Updated: May 03, 2026

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Tourism resilience assessment
- Social network analysis of tourism
- Impact of tourism on tourists, environment, and local society
- Macro-level spatiotemporal data analysis of tourism
- Bayesian statistics and probabilistic programming

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy – Hospitality Management

University of South Carolina

Aug 2023 — Present

- Dissertation: Bayesian Approaches to Tourism, Non-Tourism, and Destination Resilience
- Award: 2025 Outstanding Doctoral Student Researcher
- Remarks: Presidential Fellowship

Master of Arts – Tourism Studies

Pusan National University

Mar 2021 — July 2023

- Thesis: Demystifying tourists' authenticity perception: Attribute substitution of perceived authenticity with image congruency
- Remarks: Alumni Scholarship of Excellence

Bachelor of Arts – Tourism and Convention

Bachelor of Arts – International Studies (dual degree)

Pusan National University

Mar 2015 — Feb 2021

- Remarks: Summa Cum Laude

ACADEMIC AFFILIATIONS

University of South Carolina

Richardson Family SmartState Center for Excellence in Tourism and Economic Development

School of Hospitality and Tourism Management

Aug 2023 — Present

- Position: Graduate research assistant
- Director: Dr. Lori Pennington-Gray

- Position: Graduate research assistant
- Director: Dr. Tammi Richardson

Pusan National University

Specialized Global Marine Tourism and Convention City Development Research Team

Department of Tourism and Convention

Aug 2021 – Feb 2023

- Position: Graduate research assistant
- Director: Dr. Insin Kim

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-reviewed Journal Articles

1. **Lee, S.**, & Pennington-Gray, L. (2025). Measuring resilience of the tourism sector: Reflective resilience index (REFLEX) approach. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 114, 103983. [DOI](#)
2. **Lee, S.**, & Pennington-Gray, L. (2025). Metatheorizing tourist flow at macro-level: Universal forces theory and herding among tourists. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 113, 103961. [DOI](#)
3. Pennington-Gray, L., & **Lee, S.** (2025). The nexus of politics, pandemic policies, and travel emotions: Insights from a state-level analysis of a pandemic. *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events*, ahead-of-print. [DOI](#)
4. An, J., Hur, D., **Lee, S.**, & Kim, H. (2025). Exploring Metaverse's impact on the MICE industry from the industry experts' lens. *International Journal of Event and Festival Management*, 16(2), 148–167. [DOI](#)
5. Sim, M., **Lee, S.**, Schroeder, A., & Kim, H. (2025). Decisions and prospects of short-term rental hosts under uncertainties. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 28(1), 79–98. [DOI](#)
6. Stepchenkova, S., **Lee, S.**, & Kim, H. (2024). Experiencing authenticity in organic and staged settings: Does it matter for tourists? *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 41(9), 1211–1226. [DOI](#)
7. Pennington-Gray, L., & **Lee, S.** (2024). The demand for safety measures in the hospitality industry: Changes over three phases of a pandemic. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 122, 103873. [DOI](#)
8. Hur, D., **Lee, S.**, & Kim, H. (2024). The Impact of Airbnb on Long-Term Rental Markets in San Francisco: A Geospatial Analysis Using Multiscale Geographically Weighted Regression. *ISPRS International Journal of Geo-Information*, 13(9), Article 9. [DOI](#)
9. **Lee, S.**, Kim, M., & Kim, H. (2024). Relationality of Objective and Constructive Authenticities: Effects on Existential Authenticity, Memorability, and Satisfaction. *Journal of Travel Research*, 63(1), 195–214. [DOI](#)
10. **Lee, S.**, & Kim, H. (2023). Four shades of Airbnb and its impact on locals: A spatiotemporal analysis of Airbnb, rent, housing prices, and gentrification. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 49, 101192. [DOI](#)
11. Hur, D., **Lee, S.**, & Kim, H. (2022). Are we ready for MICE 5.0? An investigation of technology use in the MICE industry using social media big data. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 43, 100991. [DOI](#)

12. Lee, S., & Kim, H. (2022). Understanding tourism related risk factors and risk response strategies: Application of meta-analysis and content analysis in tourism crisis management. *Journal of Tourism and Leisure Research*, 34(12), 5–25. DOI
13. Choe, Y., Lee, S., & Kim, H. (2022). The Role of Tourists' Expectations in Congruency on Forming Authenticity Perception and Memorable Tourism Experience. *Journal of MICE & Tourism Research*, 22(4), 201–222. DOI

Manuscripts Under Review

1. Lee, S., & Pennington-Gray, L. (2025). Large Language Models Yield Unsustainable Tourist Flows. [Preprint](#)
2. Lee, S., & Pennington-Gray, L. (2025). Recreation Under Risk: How Perceived Water Quality and Health Threats Influence Behavior and Participation.
3. Pennington-Gray, L., & Lee, S. (2025). Water Through Different Lenses: Recreation Activity Typology and Perceived Water Quality in SC.

Book Chapters

1. Pennington-Gray, L., Lee, S., & Ballouli, K. (2024). Stakeholder Sentiment of SDGs of the Beijing Olympics 2020. *In A. Sharma, M. Lesjak, & D. Borovčanin (Eds.), Sport Tourism, Events and Sustainable Development Goals: An Emerging Foundation* (pp. 114–139).

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Externally Funded

Lanterns in the Wild: An Economic Development Strategy for Firefly Tourism

Southeast Crescent Regional Commission

2026 — Current

- PI: Dr. Eric LoPresti

Identifying Adaptation and Limits in the Face of Persistent River and Coastal Flooding and Its Impacts on the Gullah Communities

South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium/NOAA

2025 — Current

- PI: Dr. Lori Pennington-Gray

Planning: CHIRRP: Exploring a Gullah-Geechee Community-Driven Effort to Mitigate Risks and Impacts of Coastal Flooding

National Science Foundation

2024 — Current

- PI: Dr. Tammi Richardson

Measuring the economic value of South Carolina open spaces

State of South Carolina

2023

- PI: Dr. Paul Gayes & Dr. Lori Pennington-Gray

Conceptualizing and developing scales for Fear of Missing Out(FOMO) and Joy of Missing Out(JOMO)

National Research Foundation of Korea

2021 — 2023

- PI: Dr. Hany Kim

Understanding tourism related risk factors and risk response strategies: Application of meta-analysis and content analysis in tourism crisis management

National Research Foundation of Korea

2020 — 2021

- PI: Dr. Hany Kim

Internally Funded

Algorithmic Redlining of Travel: Evaluating Sociodemographic Bias in Generative AI Travel Recommendations

SPARC Graduate Research Grant Program, University of South Carolina

2026

- PI: Seonjin Lee

From Human Signals to Insights: Integrating Wearable Biometric Tools into HRSM Research

Innovation Fund, College of Hospitality, Retail and Sport Management, University of South Carolina

2026

- PI: Dr. Lori Pennington-Gray

Decision to host under uncertainties: Prospects of short-term rental hosts and their impact on local economy

Global Fellowship Funding, Graduate School, Pusan National University

2023

- PI: Miyeong Shim

PRESENTATIONS

International Conferences

1. **Lee, S., & Pennington-Gray, L.** (2026). Network Mechanisms in the Formation and Persistence of Visa-Free Travel Agreements. *2026 Workshop on Informatics, Data Science, and Economics in Hospitality and Tourism Research*
2. **Lee, S., & Pennington-Gray, L.** (2026). Simulating How Large Language Models Will Shift Travel Patterns. *31st Annual Graduate Education and Graduate Student Research Conference in Hospitality and Tourism.*
3. **Lee, S., & Pennington-Gray, L.** (2025). The Role of Intra-region Travel in Tourism Resilience. *30th Annual Graduate Education and Graduate Student Research Conference in Hospitality and Tourism.*
4. **Lee, S., & Pennington-Gray, L.** (2024). Macro Understanding of Tourism Through Universal Forces Framework: Spatial Big Data Approach. *54th Annual Travel and Tourism Research Association International Conference.*
5. **Lee, S., & Pennington-Gray, L.** (2024). Anthropogenic impact of tourism on water: Spatiotemporal analysis of lake water quality. *29th Annual Graduate Education and Graduate Student Research Conference in Hospitality and Tourism.*
6. **Lee, S., Yeom, Y., & Kim, H.** (2022). Quantifying the effect of Airbnb on renters: Spatial analysis of San Francisco residents' rental spending. *92nd Annual Tourism Society of Korea International Conference.*

7. **Lee, S.**, Kim, M., & Kim, H. (2022). Effect of perceived authenticity on tourism experience, satisfaction, and memorability: Differences between settings and authenticity orientations.. *52nd Annual Travel and Tourism Research Association International Conference*.
8. Kim, H., **Lee, S.**, Hur, D., & An, J. (2022). Will metaverse forever change the meeting industry? A qualitative study on industry experts' perspective.. *52nd Annual Travel and Tourism Research Association International Conference*.
9. Hur, D., **Lee, S.**, & Kim, H. (2021). Use of event technologies in the era of MICE 5.0: Social media sentiment analysis approach.. *90th Annual Tourism Society of Korea International Conference*.
10. **Lee, S.**, Gong, Y., Kim, H., & Schroeder, A. (2021). What does the landscape of tourist safety videos on social media look like? Exploring the presence of tourist safety videos on YouTube.. *51st Annual Travel and Tourism Research Association International Conference*.

Regional / Non-refereed Conferences

1. **Lee, S.**, & Pennington-Gray, L. (2026). The More Popular, the More Favored: Testing Popularity Bias in Generative AI Using the Baseline-Rescaling Outcome Model. *2026 HRSM Research Symposium*.
2. **Lee, S.**, & Pennington-Gray, L. (2025). How did the pandemic change the role of recreational waters in bringing visitors? Analysis of South Carolina mobility big data. *2025 REC Net National Conference*.
3. Ali, F., Kwon, A., Kumari, V., & **Lee, S.** (2025). The Power of AI Disclosure Uncovering the Empowerment–Algorithmic Control Paradox in Generative AI Cocreated Experiences. *USC Graduate Scholar Roundtable*.
4. **Lee, S.** (2025). Heterogeneity of Airbnb and Its Impact on Locals. *2025 South Carolina Short-term Vacation Rentals Workshop*.
5. Borji, S., Kim, M., **Lee, S.**, & Zhang, J. (2025). The Power of AI Disclosure. *7th CIC Research & Creative Scholarship Symposium*.
6. **Lee, S.**, & Pennington-Gray, L. (2024). Understanding Post-Pandemic Visitors for Managing Recreational Waters in South Carolina. *2024 South Carolina Water Resources Conference*.
7. **Lee, S.**, & Pennington-Gray, L. (2024). Value beyond money: Health benefits of recreational water accessibility. *9th biennial University of Florida Water Institute Symposium*.

TEACHING

Undergraduate Courses

Hospitality and Tourism Marketing (HTMT450)

Instructor

Spring 2026

Foundations of Tourism (HTMT280)

Instructor (evaluation: 4.59 / 5.00)

Fall 2025

Instructor (evaluation: 4.47 / 5.00)

Spring 2025

Co-instructor (evaluation: 4.53 / 5.00)

Fall 2024

Tourism Resources (TC3500285)

Co-instructor

Fall 2022

Special Seminars

Reading, Writing, and Generative AI

Graduate School, University of South Carolina

Feb 2026

- Guest lecture for Grad Launch seminar class (GRAD 700)

Using Python for Tourism Research

Department of Tourism and Convention, Pusan National University

Dec 2022

- Introductory programming seminar for master's and doctoral students

Foundational Statistical Methods

Department of Tourism and Convention, Pusan National University

Jan 2022

- Introductory statistics seminar for master's and doctoral students

Student testimonials

- *“One of the best professors I've had at the University so far! My favorite class hands down. Truly a pleasure to attend class each day.”* *Fall 2025*
- *“Great instructor who gauges class with open participation and actively getting students involved in answering real life scenarios to help understand the topics being taught.”* *Spring 2025*
- *“He was an amazing professor who I would happily take again! He is obviously passionate about the topic and is very engaging and funny.”* *Spring 2025*

HONORS AND AWARDS

Paper Awards

Best paper award

2026 HRSM Research Symposium

Apr 2026

Excellence in research award

2025 REC Net National Conference

Oct 2025

Best big data research award

90th Annual Tourism Society of Korea International Conference

Jul 2021

3 Minute Thesis (3MT) runner up

51st Annual Travel and Tourism Research Association International Conference

Jun 2021

Honors / Other Awards

Outstanding doctoral student researcher of the year

College of Hospitality, Retail and Sports Management, University of South Carolina

Apr 2025

- Given to an exemplary doctoral student who has shown outstanding contributions and academic achievements in scholarly research

Alumni award of excellence

Pusan National University Alumni Faculty Association

Jul 2023

- Given to the outstanding future doctoral student who completed undergraduate and graduate studies at Pusan National University

Summa Cum Laude

Pusan National University

Feb 2021

- Ranked 1st out of 44

Award of excellence

Hana Financial Group

Feb 2021

- Given to the student who set a positive example for other students and showed outstanding academic performance

Award of excellence

ASEAN-Korea Centre

Jan 2018

- Given to the team who showed outstanding performance and a high level of dedication toward the final presentation

Best Student Tutor Award

Center for Teaching and Learning, Pusan National University

Dec 2017

Global competitiveness project award

Department of Global Studies, Pusan National University

Dec 2017

- Topic: Sustainable clothing and rentable fashion

Fellowships / Scholarships

Presidential fellowship

Graduate School, University of South Carolina

Aug 2023 — Present

- University-wide fellowship for students who have shown track record of significant accomplishments and special interests, exceptional creativity, commitment to improving the lives of others, and capacity for leadership.

Graduate scholarship for excellence

Graduate School, Pusan National University

Mar 2021 — Feb 2023

- University-wide scholarship for graduate students who have shown track record of academic excellence.

ACADEMIC MEMBERSHIPS AND SERVICES

Memberships

- Travel and Tourism Research Association (TTRA) *2020 — Present*
- American Association of Geographers (AAG) *2023 — Present*
- South Carolina Networks Consortium (SCNC) *2025 — Present*

Journal Reviewer

- Annals of Tourism Research
- Scientific Reports
- Humanities and Social Sciences Communications
- Tourism and Hospitality Research
- Local Development and Society

Conference Services

Moderator

2026 Workshop on Informatics, Data Science, and Economics in Hospitality and Tourism Research *Apr 2026*

Conference reviewer

2026 International Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education Global Conference *Mar 2026*

Poster session reviewer

Discover USC 2025 *Apr 2025*

Conference reviewer

30th Annual Graduate Education and Graduate Student Research Conference in Hospitality and Tourism *Jan 2025*

Volunteer

54th Annual Travel and Tourism Research Association International Conference *Jun 2024*

Volunteer

2024 SECSA CHRIE Conference *Mar 2024*

Poster session reviewer

29th Annual Graduate Education and Graduate Student Research Conference in Hospitality and Tourism *Jan 2023*

OTHER SERVICES

Advisory council

Presidential fellowship, University of South Carolina *Aug 2023 — Present*

- 2023-2024 cohort representative

Honors thesis second reader

Student: Waddington, C.

Honors College, University of South Carolina

Apr 2026

Practical exam evaluator (HRSM301)

Graduate school, University of South Carolina

Mar 2026

Rising star fellows mentorship

Graduate school, University of South Carolina

Jan 2024

- Participated in mentorship session about doctoral program application

Student ambassador

Department of Global Studies, Pusan National University

Mar 2017 — Feb 2018

- Outreach role for Global Studies Program

Student tutor

Pusan National University

Sep 2017 — Dec 2017

- Subject: TC16185-Introduction to accounting

Service Monitor

BEXCO (Busan Exhibition & Convention Center)

Dec 2016 — Dec 2017

- Participated in exhibitions held in BEXCO and gave feedback for improving facility operation and visitor experience

Open campus student ambassador

Department of Tourism and Convention, Pusan National University

Mar 2016 — Dec 2017

- Hosted tours of the campus and information sessions for potential applicants

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

ASEAN Community-Based Tourism Program

ASEAN-Korea Centre

Jan 2018

- Korean representative
- Improving community-based tourism in Mae Kampong Village, Thailand

WORK EXPERIENCE

Freelance interpreter and translator

Mar 2020 — Aug 2022

- Interpreter and translator for American International School Chennai
- Listed translator at APlus Translations Inc., Cadence Translate Inc, and WhizWordz International Pte. Ltd.
- Consecutive interpretation for virtual meetings
- Translated publications and documents in Korean, English, and Japanese
- Localization of the website and mobile application

Navy interpreter (Enlisted, Petty Officer Second Class)

Commander Third Fleet, Republic of Korea Navy

May 2018 — Feb 2020

- On-the-bridge interpreter
- Facilitated 2019 ASEAN Defense Minister's Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus)
- Consecutive interpretation for Commander, Maritime Battle Group 3 (Capt.)

Interpreter and Designated Liaison Officer

Jan 2016 — Apr 2018

- Provided interpretations and liaison services for government officials
- Assisted minister of finance of Niger during 2018 African Development Bank Annual Meeting
- Assisted minister of foreign affairs of Brunei during 2017 Forum for East Asia-Latin America Cooperation