

## Special issue – emerging issues in festivals and events in the Asia Pacific

Research in festivals and events in the Asia Pacific region is comparatively scarce, yet, the many countries covered in this part of the world present some of the most traditional, vibrant and unique festivals on earth. One of the many fruits borne from the 3rd International Conference on Events: Making Waves in Macao, hosted in September 2015 by the Institute for Tourism Studies in Macao and Bournemouth University in the UK, this special issue on emerging issues in festivals and events showcases some of the research carried out in the region. The invitation was extended to those who have a keen interest in this field of study but did not make it the conference and we are very happy to have accepted four very interesting contributions to the special issue: two from New Zealand, one from Malaysia and one from Taiwan, China.

By using multiple diasporic events in New Zealand, Alison Booth extends her research work to understand the interrelationships between stakeholders in cultural production networks map by incorporating the broader role of iterative and pulsar events. Her research concludes by offering a new perspective in festival stakeholder management theory, which is important to inform festival organisers and policy-makers in their event strategic planning.

The research by Emma Hoksbergen and Andrea Insch focuses on music festival experience co-creation by social media, specifically Facebook, by using the case of Rhythm and Vines New Year's Eve Festival, New Zealand. Their research concludes that festival experience co-creation by social media is somewhat limited but the functional value of social media appears to be indispensable. Given the popularity of social media, their article calls for further research in the area, specifically, to evaluate how festival goers perceive different social media platforms and how they use these to co-create value.

Balvinder Kler's article sheds light on how Mount Kinabalu International Climbathon, Sabah Malaysian Borneo, dubbed the toughest event of its kind in the world, has been as successful as it is. Celebrating its 30th edition in 2016, many similar events would already have lost its prestige and position in the global sporting arena due to many different reasons, such as competition, health and safety or changes in political agendas. By incorporating documentation analysis, interviews and observations, Kler delineated key performance factors of the Climbathon's success. Her research suggests a textbook-type sport event strategy of key stakeholders working together, for instance, making use of Mount Kinabalu's unique destination propositions, adherence to and membership of international sporting regulations and standards, corporate sponsorship and positioning the Climbathon within Mount Kinabalu's tourism strategy.

Michael Lee, Chung-Ling Huh, Hung-Ming Yeh and Wei-Guang Tsaur in their article explain how festival attendees' emotions and attitudes influence retention at events. Their research took place at the Lantern Festival in Taiwan, China, where 203 valid surveys were collected through pre- and post- event surveys of the same individuals within the population sample. Data analyses suggest that visitors' perceptions towards a positive city brand influence their retention at events. Lee *et al.* conclude by recommending festival organisers to consider social media marketing to achieve desirable event marketing outcomes.

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The special issue offers an insight to current research being carried in festivals and events in the Asia Pacific region. Both articles by Hoksbergen and Insch and Lee *et al.* draw their conclusions by highlighting the importance of social media in modern event marketing strategies. Indeed, the proliferation of smartphones and wide adoption of the internet brought people closer together, consumers become more aware and informative of news while businesses are able to reach directly and develop relationship with their customers. The power of social media should not be harnessed solely for event marketing purposes, but to co-create event experiences before, during and after events. Booth and Kler illustrate a textbook-style examples of key stakeholders working together in order to achieve success in events. On the one hand, Booth's article emphasises on the need of maintaining community involvement in diasporic events. On the other, Kler's research suggests success in events is largely dependent of different players working together and maintaining both event and destination unique propositions.

Like many research projects in festivals and events, the four contributions in this special issue are not generalisable across different events as each has its own unique characteristics, influenced by the culture to which the event is staged, and vary from year to year for reasons that range from weather to wider economic environments, from trends to differing political agendas. Nonetheless, this special issue contributes to literature by enriching existing body of knowledge in festivals and events in the Asia Pacific, specifically, in the area of event marketing and sustainability (in the context of continuity) of events.

We would like to take this occasion to thank all the contributors, all those who had submitted to the special issue as well as the editorial team at the *International Journal of Event and Festival Management* for the wonderful opportunity.

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