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# Examining the relationships among event perceived value, destination image and tourist behavioral intentions

By Yueying Xu, Ip Kin Wong, and Xiuchang Tan

## Introduction

Planned events as tourism products are getting more important to destinations, especially to those without sufficient and/or competitive natural tourist attractions. It has been proved by many researchers such as Kim, Kang & Kim (2014) that events have significant impacts on destination image. Image of event itself can also be transferred to destination image (Deng & Li, 2013) and so events with their own appeal and image can be ‘co-branded’ with the destination. Positive destination image has also been proved to improve tourist’s revisit and recommendation intentions (Jin, Lee, & Lee, 2013). To plan for effective event tourism, a concept of “event portfolio” has been advocated by researchers (Getz, 2005; Ziakas, 2010; Ziakas & Costa, 2011) within which events of different type/theme, scale, and significance throughout the calendar are integrated strategically and each contributes to achieving the vision of the host’s event tourism development. Synergies and cross-leverages among events can greatly benefit the host in economic, social, and tourism perspectives. Having an attractive and diverse portfolio of events is considered to be critical in destination branding (Jago, Chalip, Brown, Mules, & Shameem, 2003). However, as different events provide different benefits and have different implications to the host, deciding what events to integrate in a portfolio and how to promote them in destination marketing is a big concern for the policy makers and destination marketing organizations (DMOs). Policy makers and event planners should have a thorough understand of the nature and contribution of each event in the portfolio before they can synergize the various events in terms of target market, resources allocation, operations, and promotion programs, etc. However, most of the extant studies of events focus on only single events or one type of events. It is necessary to take a close look at different events simultaneously and make a comparison among them.

This study aims to investigate the contribution of two different types of event (Particularly one sport hallmark event and one cultural regional event) in forming tourists’ image of the destination which further impacts tourists’ behavioral intentions. In particular, the perceived values of different events are hypothesized to have unique effects on the host destination image and further affect tourists’ behavioral intentions.

The theoretical framework is proposed in Figure 1. The following hypotheses are proposed:

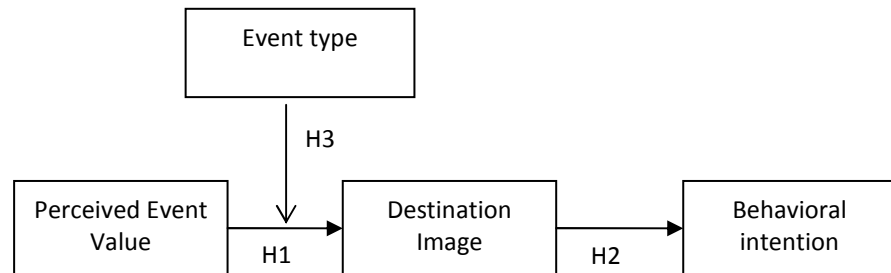
*H1a: Perceived event value will have an impact on cognitive destination image.*

*H1b: Perceived event value will have an impact on affective destination image.*

*H2a: Cognitive destination image will have an impact on behavioral intention.*

- H2b: Affective destination image will have an impact on behavioral intention.*
- H3a: Event type will moderate the effect of perceived event value on cognitive destination image.*
- H3b: Event type will moderate the effect of perceived event value on affective destination image.*

Figure 1: Proposed Research Framework



## Methodology

Two regionally well-known events of Macau, Macau Grand Prix (MGP) and Macau Food Festival (MFF) were chosen as the study subjects. MGP, a car racing event, can be considered the “hallmark event” of Macau defined by Getz as “events with such profile that the image of event and destination become inseparable and mutually reinforcing” (Getz, 2005, p. 139). Getz argued that hallmark events are closely associated with the destination and therefore should be a critical part of destination branding and positioning. MGP has a long history of 60 yearly events. In the 2013 event, it received 111,000 spectators over six days, and nearly 800,000 according to the organizer’s official website (MGP, 2014). MFF is a periodic food festival with a special food theme each year. Admission is free to the publics but food vouchers have to be purchased before getting in the venue. It usually lasts for around three weeks (17 days) in November. According to an interview with the organizing committee, MFF received around 500,000 visitors yearly. MGP charges a fee for admission and is held on two weekends (four days) during the period of MFF. A self-administered paper and pencil survey was conducted during the event period in November 2013. The questionnaire is composed of five parts: event experience of respondents, perceived event value, destination image, behavioral intention, and the demographics. Interviewers approached the event visitors on the two event sites and asked for their agreement to participate the study. Only tourists were surveyed. A total of 490 respondents were collected and around 100 tourists approached refused to do the survey. So the response rate was nearly 80%. Among the total sample, 243 attended MGP and 247 attended MFF.

## Findings, implications, and contributions

Tourists visiting the two iconic events of Macau have different demographic profiles as shown in Table 1. Overall, the two events have attracted tourists mostly from Mainland China. There seems to be more young people, more singles and more women who have higher education but moderate incomes interested in attending the events. Specifically, the Grand Prix tends to have more males, more married and more middle-aged attendees who have higher education level and higher yearly income, as compare to the Food Festival. Attendees to MGP are also more diverse in the market sources, with nearly half of them (45%) came from the non-Mainland markets including Hong Kong, Taiwan, and other countries and regions. The survey also shows that the two groups of event attendees have different trip experience to Macau. The majority of Grand Prix's customers are repeat visitors to Macau and 84% of them had visited the city at least once. 38% of them had even paid at least 10 visits to Macau. However, around one third (31.2%) of Food Festival's customers are first time visitors and only 10% of them had paid at least 10 visits to Macau.

Table 1: Comparison of demographic profiles between the two events

		MGP (n=247)		MFF (n=253)	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Permanent residency</b>	Mainland China	134	55.1%	202	81.8%
	Hong Kong	76	31.3%	29	11.7%
	Taiwan	22	9.1%	15	6.1%
	Others	11	4.5%	1	0.4%
<b>Gender</b>	Male	85	42.0%	102	34.4%
<b>Marital status</b>	Single	131	53.9%	166	68.0%
<b>Age</b>	35 or younger	181	74.5%	209	84.6%
	36-45	50	20.0%	24	9.7%
<b>Education</b>	College and above	201	82.7%	177	71.7%
<b>Yearly income (in MOP)</b>	50,000 or less	109	44.9%	159	64.4%
	50,000-100,000	64	26.3%	54	21.9%
	100,000-200,000	59	24.3%	23	9.3%

For the dimensionality of perceived event value, EFA was run and the results identify a three-factor solution with five items removed which explains 77.42% of the total variance. The three factors are *economic and emotional (or econ-emotional) value*, *educational value*, and *social value* (See Table 2). Results from CFA show that the three factor measurement model fits the data adequately well with comparative fit index (CFI) = .98, non-normed fit index (NNFI) = .98, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .08, and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = .04. Convergent validity is supported with primary factor loadings above or equal to .60, t-values  $\geq 12.13$  ( $p < .001$ ), and average variance extracted (AVE)  $\geq .65$ . Discriminant validity is also warranted in that secondary factor loadings are below .40 and the square of the inter-factor correlation for each pair of variables is smaller than the AVE for each factor. The results also show evidence of scale reliability with Cronbach's alpha  $\geq .88$  and

composite reliability  $\geq .90$ . The three factors were then used as the exogenous variables to be tested on the final model with structural equation modeling in AMOS 19.0. First, another CFA model was run to test the measurement for all the variables included the model. And the model fit was quite satisfactory (CFI=0.97, NNFI=0.95, RMSEA=0.05). The structural model with multi-group comparison was then tested and the model fit were again satisfactory (CFI=0.96, NNFI=0.92, RMSEA=0.05).

The results show mixed effects of specific event values on the destination image: in the formation of both destination images (cognitive and affective), event econ/emotional value of the two events shows a significant effect. And in the formation of cognitive image, education value from both events also has a significant effect. However, in the formation of affective image, only education value of the Grand Prix shows a significant effect ( $b=.47, p<0.01$ ). Meanwhile, although event social value doesn't show a significant effect in the formation of affective image for either event, it does in the formation of cognitive image for the Food Festival ( $b=.24, p<0.01$ ). The mediating effect of destination image on behavior intention was also found to be significant for both events. And cognitive image showed a stronger effect ( $b=.83, p<0.01$  for MGP;  $b=.75, p<0.01$  for MFF) than affective image ( $b=.16, p<.001$  for MGP;  $b=.13, p<.05$ ) for MFF) did in both cases. The results also show the significant effects of both cognitive destination image and affective image on tourists' behavioral intention for both events. But cognitive image was found to have a much stronger effect ( $b=.83, p<.001$  for MGP;  $b=.75, p<.001$  for MFF) than affective image did ( $b=.16, p<.001$  for MGP;  $b=.13, p<.05$  for MFF). To further examine the moderating role of event type (i.e., MGP vs. MFF) on specific paths from event values to destination images, chi-square difference tests were performed in that the significance of  $\Delta\chi^2$  between an unconstrained freely estimated model and a group invariance model (i.e., a specific path among groups was constrained to be equal) was analyzed. The results show that 1) event type has significant moderating effect on the path from event educational value to both cognitive destination image ( $\Delta\chi^2 > 6.63, p < 0.01$ ) and affective destination image ( $\Delta\chi^2 > 6.63, p < 0.01$ ); 2) event type has no significant moderating effect on the path from event economic/emotional value to cognitive destination image or affective destination image; 3) event type has significant moderating effect on the path from event social value to cognitive destination image ( $\Delta\chi^2 > 3.84, p < 0.05$ ) but no significant effect on the path to affective destination image.

Table 2: Scale items for perceived event value

Scale items	Factor loading	Variance explained	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
<b><i>Economic and emotional value</i></b>	$\gamma = 8.83$	58.88	0.94	0.93	0.65
allows me to save money	0.83				
is worth my time during the trip	0.83				
offers value for money	0.81				
allows me to better enjoy my trip	0.77				
is a great deal	0.76				
makes me feel good	0.75				
is fun	0.68				
<b><i>Educational value</i></b>	$\gamma = 1.65$	10.97	0.94	0.94	0.71
opens my eyes	0.84				
allows me to enrich myself	0.83				
helps me to develop better knowledge	0.81				
allows me to learn something new	0.80				
satisfies my curiosity	0.76				
<b><i>Social value</i></b>	$\gamma = 1.14$	7.57	0.88	0.90	0.74
Offers me socialization opportunities	0.86				
Allows me to make good impression on others	0.85				
Allows me to interact with others	0.74				
<b>Total</b>		<b>77.42</b>			

Note: Items with primary loadings greater than or equal to .60 and secondary loadings less than or equal to .40 are retained.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy = .92. Bartlett's test of sphericity<sub>(105)</sub> = 6,834.12,  $p < .001$ .

AVE = average variance extracted.  $\gamma$  = eigenvalues.

In summary, the sport hallmark event contributes to the destination image (and further to tourists' behavior intentions) majorly with its educational value, while the cultural event contributes more with its social value. And their economic/emotional value has the similar influence in the image formation. Moreover, compared to the cultural event, the sport event played a more salient role in the formation of affective destination image. Practically, the results suggest the event planners and DMOs consider specific event elements to add/stress in different events in order to improve the destination image among tourists. In the case of the two Macau events, Grand Prix may try to enhance the educational value perception by adding more knowledge on car racing, such as background knowledge of the racers, car racing rules, and knowledge of the racing vehicles etc. Food Festival can offer more opportunities for socialization by adding such activities as food-making workshop and chef-customer interactions etc. in order to increase the social value. Also, when the destination plans to add a new event to its portfolio, it may consider a sport event if they try to boost the affective destination image among its target market, while a cultural event may be more appropriate in fostering a socializing atmosphere for the destination. Theoretically, the study is among the few that take into account multiple events simultaneously in examining their impacts of event value on the destination image and behavior intentions. The different value dimensions of the specific events were investigated and compared for the unique contribution to the host destination. This kind of comparison study provides a clearer picture for the strategic considerations of event portfolio, such as event program design, resources allocation, and event promotions.

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