

Asia Pacific Tourism Trends: Is the Future Ours to See?

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Abstract: This paper explores current and emerging tourism trends in the Asia Pacific region via content analysis of industry publications and subsequent review of related academic literature. Experience economy and activity-oriented travel lead the development of the sector in the region and impact other trends. Economic growth, favourable political environment and improved infrastructure have sustained continual growth in visitor numbers from long-haul and intra-regional markets. However, the profile of travellers and their interests are increasingly diverse. Additionally, technology has been playing a significant role in hospitality and tourism industries, while human resources remain one of the biggest challenges in the region. Despite the huge increase in academic literature on sustainability, the industry has not appeared to be engaged with the subject. A number of knowledge gaps are identified for future research to better understand tourism development in the Asia Pacific region.

Keywords: tourism, trend, Asia and the Pacific, development, future.

Introduction

This paper aims to explore emerging trends for tourism in Asia and the Pacific, the region that has seen high growth in travel over the last thirty years and is posed to be the centre of tourism in the future (Yeoman & Beeton, 2014). The paper is built on an ongoing research project of the UNWTO to identify tourism trends through a content analysis of industry media. Both academic and non-academic publications have been reviewed and integrated into the present discussion on emerging issues for tourism development in this region. Knowledge gaps are identified as agenda for future research to better understand tourism in Asia and the Pacific. The underpinning rationale for this paper is to demonstrate to the academic and practitioner community where interests of industry and the academia in Asia Pacific tourism have been different. Thus this paper aims to serve as a guide for academic researchers to identify future research opportunities that will be of benefit for academia, industry and the wider society. This focus has influenced the structure and content of the paper.

Structurally, the article begins with an overview of the various methods used to identify and analyse trends in tourism. Previous trends studies in tourism starting from the 1980s, with both global and regional focus, are acknowledged to provide a historical context and perspectives on factors affecting development in the last thirty years. Subsequently methods used in this study are discussed. Results are presented in a series of trends organised by frequency of their appearance in the selected media and their perceived salience or influence on the industry. The paper concludes with discussions and suggestions for future research on emerging issues in the Asia Pacific region.

Trend Analyses: A Review

There are three key terms used to describe changes: “fad”, “trend” and “megatrend”. “Fads” are short-lived and typically do not have broad social implications or significance. Fads are phenomena that are fashionable. “Trends” have a greater impact on society that is typically long-lasting. However, the word “trend” has become a very popular term and may be applied to changes in a variety of contexts and to phenomena of varied significance (Nordin, 2005). The term “megatrend” has been coined by Naisbitt (1982) to describe overarching transformations in society which will have great and long-lasting impacts. Informed by media analysis, Naisbitt (1982) distinguishes “fads” as top-down flows from “trends” as bottom-up waves. Content analysis of media has been established as a tool to examine trends and patterns in the late 19th century (Krippendorff, 2012). The rationale is that within the limited amount of space only stories that are most relevant to the public will be published, and therefore themes recurring in the media constitute the trends (Naisbitt, 1982).

Methods for trends analyses encompass techniques such as quantitative analysis of statistical data and survey results, qualitative analysis of interviews, and/or the Delphi approach. The quantitative methods are more prominent in demand modelling and forecasting (Peng, Song & Crouch, 2014). However, the reliance on past data to forecast future may be unreliable due to changing political, social and economic environments as well as unforeseeable crises (Prideaux, Laws & Falkner, 2003). On the qualitative side, Yeoman (2009, 2012) uses scenario planning to discuss what future tourism by 2030 and 2050 will look like. This approach usually aims to understand key factors and/or uncertainties impacting on a phenomenon. The key factors driving global changes in tourism are often derived from economic, political, environmental, technological, demographic, and social/societal scenarios (Dwyer, Edwards, Mistilis, Roman & Scott, 2009; Varum, Melo, Alvarenga & de Carvalho, 2011; Yeoman, 2009, 2012).

One early publication which adopts Naisbitt’s (1982) method is Chon and Olsen’s (1987) “Analysis of the Trends in the Hospitality Industry through Content Analysis of Industry Publications”. It reviews macro- and micro- business environment of US hospitality industry. Another early example of trends analysis is a special issue of *Tourism Management* (1987). The issue covers wide geography with topics such as marketing, transportation, urban development, social trends, national tourism organisations, cruise tourism, inclusive/package tourism, and tourism economics. Shackelford (1987) discusses the trends of the time through the lens of World Tourism Organization, including, information service, tourism forecasting, education about travel, tourism and development, exchange rates, low-probability/high-impact events, socio-demographic changes, nuclear family, accommodation, long-haul becoming shorter, new and exotic tourist products, and new destinations/emerging countries.

Picolla (1987) states that in 1986 the world has entered the “Age of the Pacific” and predicts that the trend of a changing focus in tourism towards Asia Pacific region will continue into the 21st century. In addition, Hobson (1994) reviews the trends in Asia Pacific tourism in a publication focused mostly on statistical data. He identifies three groups of issues for successful

development of tourism in Asia and the Pacific: infrastructure, environment and human resources. The use of content analysis for trend identification has also emerged in tourism studies. Jurowski and Olsen (1995) use content analysis to discuss such trends as changing consumer preferences, niche markets, greater local involvement in tourism development, role of technology and geographical expansion of tourism. Based on visitor arrivals and tourist receipts, Singh (1997) has predicted a bright future for tourism in Asia Pacific region. However, Leiper and Hing (1998) are more cautious due to such factors as natural disasters in Malaysia, the handover of Hong Kong, political instability in Indonesia and Cambodia, and the Asian Economic Crisis. Recognising Asia Pacific's rich cultural heritage as well as growth of cultural tourism, Timothy and Prideaux (2004) analyses issues of heritage and culture, identifying authenticity, interpretation, contestation of space and of meaning of heritage sites, marketing, control and preservation as key issues. A more recent study by Pan, Chon and Song (2007) discusses the key trends in Asia Pacific tourism based on the content analysis, including among others: Travel becomes more activity-interest based rather than destination based; Consolidated social-environmental awareness and consciousness; Chasing Chinese and Indian tourists; LCCs—One of the king makers of booming tourism; Safety and health concerns require timely communication to mitigate negative impacts on a destination; and Seniors and women will travel more.

Recently trend analysis has been performed in a number of state of the art reviews of tourism research (Ballantyne, Packer & Axelsen, 2009; Buckley, Gretzel, Scott, Weaver & Becken, 2015; Tribe, 2008; Xiao & Smith, 2006). In relation to the Asia Pacific region, Pearce (2004) has identified major issues for tourism research and suggested that embracing a variety of epistemological approaches to knowledge and methodologies as well as focusing on development of conceptual schemes would be beneficial for research in the region. Furthermore, Edgell (2013, 2014) has been continuously monitoring important issues and trends that affect tourism development by means of reviewing literature, conference themes and programs, forecasts, Delphi studies, and conversations with or comments from tourism academics and students. One of the latest journal publications regarding Asia Pacific tourism trends was a special issue of *Journal of Travel Research* (vol. 53, no. 6, 2014). The topics include visitor number forecasting, workforce-related issues, future of volunteer tourism, nature-based tourism, eMarketing, domestic tourism, carbon emissions, and changing patterns of mobilities in the region.

Various industry organisations have been analyzing tourism and travel trends. For example, UNWTO (2014a) annually publishes *Tourism Highlights* which identify arrivals and expenditure. World Tourism and Travel Council (WTTC, 2014a) looks at short-term trends in economic impact of tourism and publishes monthly updates. Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA, 2014) publishes thematic reports on Asia Pacific travel-related issues and trends (e.g., China's visitor economy and air passenger taxes). International organisations that are not tourism specific also look into tourism trends (OECD, 2014). Other notable trend publications include those from ITB Berlin (2014), Euromonitor International (2014) and Skift (2014).

Methods

This research is exploratory and constructivist in nature. It looks at a specific time-period and aims to understand a phenomenon and the influences that shape it, i.e., to construct a meaning. Links between various themes are sought for a better understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Krippendorff, 2013; Schreier, 2012; Silverman, 2013). The present research

utilises content analysis of articles from tourism industry/trade magazines in order to analyse current trends for Asia Pacific tourism. For the purpose of this study, TTG Asia, Travel Weekly US, and Travel Weekly UK - the three leading tourism and travel trade magazines - were selected for the analysis. Since TTG Asia focuses on Asia Pacific region, all articles from its issues were analysed. Only those articles directly related to Asia Pacific region were selected from Travel Weekly US and Travel Weekly UK via keyword search for “Asia” and “Pacific”. Additionally, reports related to tourism in Asia and the Pacific from BBC World News were included. A total of 499 articles were obtained and included in this content analysis. Only articles of approximately 400 words or more were selected, as they cover topics in greater details. Promotional articles and articles without an author name have been excluded (Miller, 1997). The current sample is large enough to include rare cases, even though this is not necessary for the fulfilment of the objectives of this research: analysis of the general themes appearing in text (Krippendorff, 2013). The present research did not aim for in-depth qualitative analysis of the textual data that would require analysis of the symbols or “reading between the lines”. Such in-depth approaches are better suited for analyses of limited size of textual data (Silverman, 2013).

The QDA Miner and WordStat software package was utilised for the management and analysis of the textual data (LaPan, 2013; Lewis & Maas, 2007; Silver, 2014). The general approach to data analysis is based on Pan, Song and Chon (2007). The textual material was coded using several approaches. The first set of codes was developed based on previous research by Pan, Song and Chon (2007). Using the WordStat, word frequencies were checked to identify the most common terms and phrases used within the text. The text under analysis was then read to assign codes. After the manual coding of text, the keywords that have been listed for each code were retrieved for an automatic coding. This allowed for coding of the text that has been possibly missed during manual coding. Thus, both keyword analysis and code-and-retrieve analysis have been undertaken (Silverman, 2013). A total of 245 codes were created and combined into 31 categories. Some codes were closely related. The codes were analysed in terms of the frequency of occurrence across all articles. Based on these results, the codes were regrouped to form trends. A total of 174 codes were used to develop 18 trends.

By utilising co-occurrence and cluster analysis, which are functions within QDA Miner, it was possible to link codes to explain current dynamics in the tourism industries. The cluster analysis of codes and categories provided a basis for further discussion of the relationships amongst various arising themes. Furthermore, the network data were exported to network analysis software: Gephi (n.d.). It provided a network graph of the trends identifying the relationships. Thus, the research utilises mixed-method textual analysis combining quantitative content analysis based on frequencies with qualitative analysis of text aiming at understanding linkages between the categories and influences that shape identified themes (Silverman, 2013).

However, the study is subject to several limitations. The main limitation of the method used is that it is impossible to reproduce the study. Plurality of meaning and subjective interpretation of meaning within the text by a reader, i.e., the researchers, is an inherent issue concerning analysis of content (Krippendorff, 2013). Moreover, some codes have various degree of “fit” into each category and may be found equally suitable for a different category by a different researcher. Another limitation is that the findings are based on the analysis of text only from four sources. Wider search would improve understanding of current processes within the region and especially

various sub-regions. Despite these limitations, the authors argue that the approach taken for the present research provides a basis for an important discussion.

Content Analysis Results: Appraising the Constancy of Change

The following is the discussion of trends, which focuses on issues that require additional attention in further research. The discussion reconciles information provided in the reviewed industry articles with the academic literature. Table 1 lists the major trends resulting from the selected media analysis (sorted by frequency of their appearance in the reviewed industry publications) and the following sub-sections discuss major themes emergent from the trends. Comparisons are also drawn to Asia Pacific trends identified in previous studies undertaken in 2005 and 2008 respectively. Notably, the “Experience Economy” emerges as the leading theme. “Activity-Oriented Tourism” stands as the second most frequently mentioned trend, taking different types of activities or alternative forms of tourist experiences. “Marketing and eCommerce” is the third most popular theme, as destinations and companies attempt to attract more visitors from diverse markets. The “Hotel Sector” continues its expansion and diversification, and therefore attracts media attention. “Emerging Markets” is the fifth trend as market structures are changing with growing importance of Asia being both origins of and destinations for tourists. Next, “Regulatory and Political Environment” is identified as an important factor in relation to political stability in a destination society, and support for tourism development by governments and international organisations. In comparison to the two previous time periods presented in Table 1, this analysis has been undertaken after the global financial crisis and during the European debt crisis. These events have accelerated the shift of economic power towards Asia. As a consequence, the tourism sector has also changed with Asia Pacific region representing both important outbound market and a more accessible and diversified destination with high proportion of intra-regional travel (ITB Berlin, 2015).

Table 1 Trends in Asia Pacific Tourism

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Trends 2014</i>	<i>Case Occurrences</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Trends 2005</i>	<i>Trends 2008</i>
1	Experience Economy	484	97.2%	Activity Oriented	Activity Oriented
2	Activity-oriented Tourism	445	89.4%	China Fever	Business Travel
2.1	Nature/Culture-based Tourism	344	69.1%	eTravel	Hotel Industry
2.2	Food and Wine Tourism	168	33.7%	Business Travel	Aviation Industry
2.3	Cruise Tourism	87	17.5%	Aviation Industry	Polarization
2.4	Other Activity-oriented Tourism	350	70.3%	Competition/Cooperation	Socio-environmental Awareness
3	Marketing and eCommerce	431	86.5%	Low Cost Carriers	Competition/Cooperation
4	Hotel Sector	386	77.5%	Polarization	IT and eCommerce
5	Emerging Markets	384	77.1%	Hotel Industry	Emerging Markets
6	Regulatory and Political Environment	371	74.5%	Political Influence	Safety and Security
7	Role of Travel Companies	326	65.5%	Travel Agent Transformation	Demographic Niche Markets
8	Polarisation	323	64.9%	Experience Economy	Chasing Chinese Market
9	Infrastructure Development	298	59.8%	Emerging Destinations	Low Cost Carriers
10	Aviation Growth	294	59.0%	Social-environmental Consciousness	Strategic Marketing
11	Co-opetition	284	57.0%	Safety and Health	Infrastructure
12	Human Resources	264	53.0%	Demographic Niche Markets	Experience Economy
13	Diverse Demographics	206	41.4%	India Fever	Medical/Health and Wellness Tourism
14	Investment climate	182	36.5%	Timely Communication	
15	Corporate Travel	157	31.5%	Image/Branding	
16	Social/Environmental Consciousness	151	30.3%	Infrastructure	
17	Events	129	25.9%	Human Resources	
18	Seasonality	96	19.3%	Multi-destination Travel	
				Intra-regional Travel	
				Shrinking World	
				Regional Tourism Organisations	
				Marketing	

Based on a network view (Figure 1), it appears that these trends are closely linked or interrelated. Seventeen out of twenty-one trends (activity-oriented tourism is represented in Figure 1 by four sub-trends) are directly linked with each other based on the analysis. Another four trends (food and wine tourism, investment climate, social/environmental consciousness and seasonality) are directly linked to all except one trend. Therefore, the network of trends represents a single cluster. The position of a trend within the network is determined based on how closely it is linked to other trends. The number of co-occurrences within the same paragraph of an article determined how closely these trends are linked. The size of a node (each circle representing a trend) is based on betweenness and centrality – that is how often a node serves as a “bridge” between two other nodes. The colour of a node is determined by eigenvector centrality – a calculation of how influential a node is in the network. The colour of the label is determined by the weighted degree of a node – how many times it has been linked to all other trends. The colour of edges (lines between nodes) is determined by the degree – the number of links between two trends (Jackson, 2010). In all cases darker colour or larger size suggests higher occurrence of a trend in the media and a higher influence of it. These relationships form a basis for the subsequent in-depth discussion of the trends that are perceived as influential to future tourism development in Asia and the Pacific.

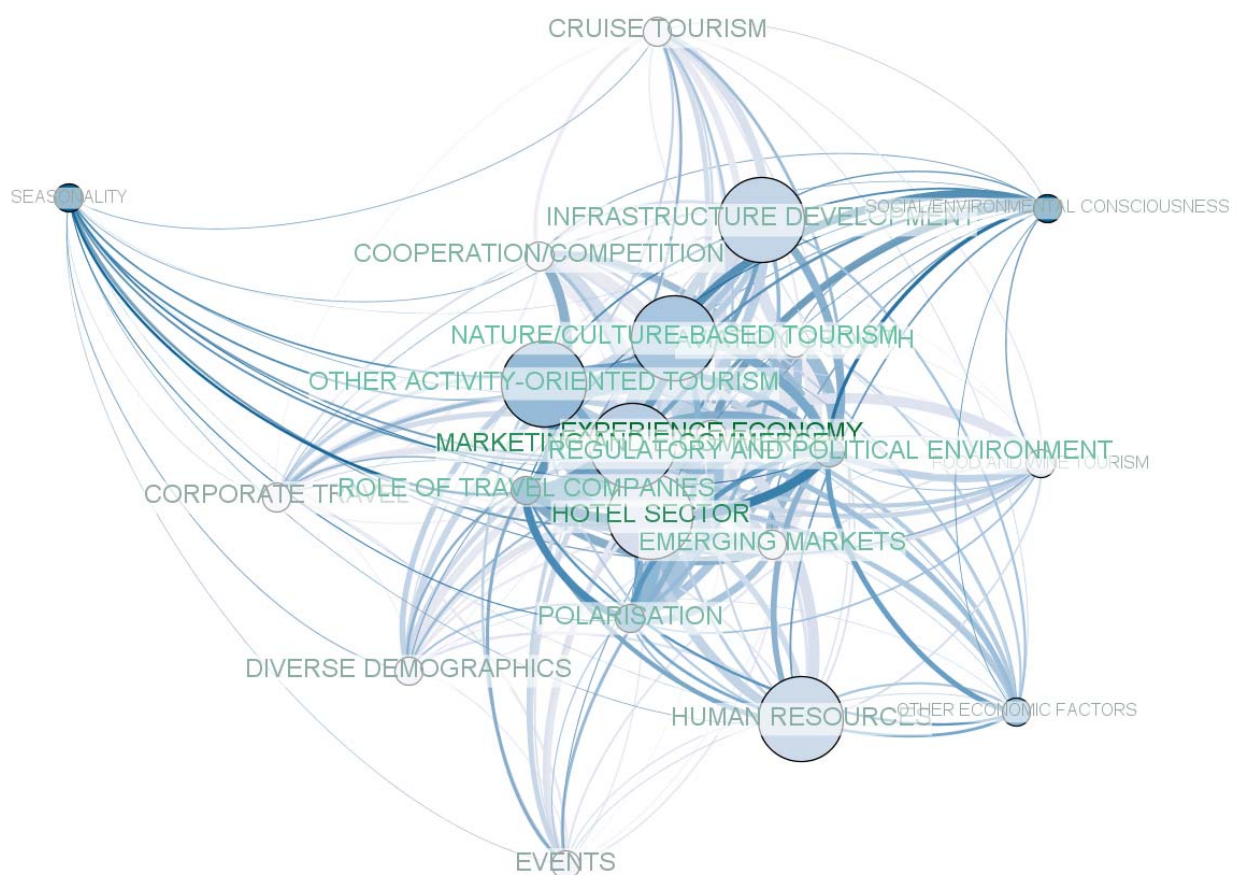


Figure 1 Network Structure of Asia Pacific Tourism Trends

Per analytic integration and synthesis, eight broad themes have emerged from the analysis that merit in-depth discussion. These themes encompass experience economy and experience activities, technology and innovation, changes in market profiles, planning and political environment, transportation and the value of co-opetition, human resources, business travel, MICE and events, and sustainability. Each trend from Table 1 is presented within the relevant broad theme as provided in Table 2. The trends are presented according to the frequency of occurrence provided in Table 1.

Table 2 Discussion Themes and Corresponding Trends

Discussion Theme	Corresponding trends in Table 1
<i>Experience Economy and Experience Activities</i>	Trend 1 – Travelling is increasingly experience-based. Trend 2 - Experience economy demands activity-oriented travel. Trend 4 – Hotel Sector will keep growing and diversifying.
<i>Technology and Innovation</i>	Trend 3 - Marketing, eCommerce and IT remain important as innovation continues. Trend 7 – Role of travel companies is changing under the influence of FITs and the Internet.
<i>Changes in Market Profiles</i>	Trend 5 – Tourism growth will continue buoyed by strong performance of emerging markets of Asia. Trend 8 – Travel markets are polarised between the high end and budget travel. Trend 13 – The tourism industry is further segmented according to demographic categories.
<i>Planning and Political Environment</i>	Trend 6 – Regulatory and political environment will determine where tourists will go. Trend 14 – Future growth of travel will depend on the investment climate, taxation and regulation.
<i>Transportation and the Value Of Co-Opetition</i>	Trend 9 – Infrastructure development is one of the main constraints for tourism growth Trend 10 – Aviation industry is growing with new flight connections to be introduced. Trend 11 – Despite the competitiveness of tourism sector, cooperation remains important.
<i>Human Resources</i>	Trend 12 – The tourism industry will have to work harder to recruit and develop talents.
<i>Business Travel, MICE and Events</i>	Trend 15 – Companies limit budgets on corporate travel, while business travellers aim to combine business with leisure. Trend 17 – While mega events are drawing the attention of the world, local cultural festivals are being rediscovered to attract experience seeking travellers.
<i>Sustainability</i>	Trend 16 – Travel is becoming more socially and environmentally conscious, however the industry has to contribute more effectively towards sustainable development.
<i>Seasonality</i>	Trend 18 – Some destinations manage to have high visitation year round, while others struggle to lessen the effects of seasonality.

Experience Economy and Experience Activities

As noted by Bellows, editor of *National Geographic Traveller*, “Today vs. even five years ago, it's more experiential. Live-like-the-locals. Slow it down. Transformational. Wellness. Spiritual” (*Travel Weekly US*, 16.04.2013).

The term “experience economy” has gained popularity since the publication of Pine and Gilmore (1999). Organisations involved in tourism are constantly developing new experiential products, and itineraries to new destinations. Unique experiences and accesses to places that were “off-limits” are attractive to modern travellers. Differentiation of products, interest in exotic locations and authentic experiences are not new in tourism research (Cohen, 1984; Gonsalves, 1987; Singh, 1997). However, the transformation of the traveller and transformative travel appear to be an under-researched area (Lean, 2012), therefore further investigation is required into psychological impacts of travel and travel as a complex social phenomenon.

The hotel sector has become involved in delivering travel experience and destination immersion to the guests with even more sophisticated property design and variety of facilities available. However, there is little research on areas such as design and themes of Asian hotels. More publications on various types of hotels, such as boutique hotels (Henderson, 2011), would be beneficial to demonstrate the diversity of accommodation options in the Asia Pacific region.

Compared to Pan, Song and Chon (2007) several sub-categories within activity-oriented travel have become trends in their own right as they have acquired a substantial coverage in the media. These are nature-/culture-based travel, food and wine tourism, and cruise tourism. The importance of nature-based tourism is evidenced by Frost, Laing and Beeton (2014). However, management of nature-based tourism assets, which are mostly presented by protected areas is challenging and requires further investigation (Eagles, 2014). One of the greatest challenges is financing protection of natural areas (Whitelaw, King & Tolkach, 2014). Regarding cultural and heritage tourism, Prideaux and Timothy (2013) identify such key issues in Asia and the Pacific as retention of authenticity and contestation of heritage and cultural sites between tourism and traditional activities. These require further research in order to provide policy-makers and civil society with recommendations on appropriate governance of heritage (Su & Xiao, 2009).

Local cuisine has become one of the important selling points for many destinations. Food and wine have become an important part of the overall travel experience. Travel and celebrity chef shows to a large extent have been driving this trend. Food tourism research often utilises a marketing perspective (Horng & Tsai, 2010). For example, Thai government uses Thai cuisine in promotion of Thailand as a destination (Suntikul & Tang, 2014). Further research could focus on social, ethnographic and gastronomic approaches to food tourism.

Research on cruise tourism acknowledges the high growth of this sector in the Asia Pacific region (Sun, Feng & Gauri, 2014). Much of the growth is occurring in East and Southeast Asia where this trend has begun in the late 1990s (Singh, 1999). There is growth in Chinese-only cruises, which is challenging for some operators due to necessary adjustments for this segment (Fan & Hsu, 2014). A large expansion is occurring within the river cruises, however this sector is under-researched compared to ocean cruises. The biggest challenge for future growth in cruise tourism is the port and road infrastructure. While Singapore and Hong Kong have developed

cruise terminals, other ports of call remain primarily used by cargo shipping. Cruise tourism is a high cost activity with expectation of public money expenditure on infrastructure. With increasing competition among the ports in Asia, destinations have to think carefully whether they should invest in cruise tourism instead of less costly alternatives (Brida & Zapata, 2010).

Other notable activity-oriented types of tourism include wellness/medical tourism in Thailand, Korea and Singapore; integrated resorts with casinos and/or theme parks in Singapore, Malaysia and Macau; shopping tourism, weddings and honeymoons in Thailand, Malaysia, Maldives, Vietnam and Sri Lanka, and film-induced tourism in New Zealand, Korea and Thailand. There is now a breadth of research literature on most of these topics. While the trend towards diversification and activity-oriented travel is evident, prior research suggests that segmentation of tourists based on activities may lead to inaccurate results, myths and/or misunderstandings (McKercher & Chan, 2005; McKercher & Prideaux, 2014).

Technology and Innovation

- “- So if someone tells you there is not much going on with OTA [online travel agencies] innovation, you'd say.....rubbish. There's huge innovation” (*TTG Asia*, No. 1661, 15– 21.06.2012).

New technology is constantly being developed to achieve marketing, promotion and sales objectives. Mobile marketing has become widespread with new platforms being rapidly developed and used for booking and sales via mobile phones (Skift, 2014). OTAs and mobile apps are being embraced by consumers in emerging markets. Some academic research has been undertaken on relationships between traditional travel agencies, OTAs, suppliers and consumers (Andreu, Aldas, Bigne & Mattila, 2010; Law, Buhalis & Copanoglu, 2014). Nevertheless, there appears to be a research gap with regards to travel agencies transformation in the Asia Pacific region. While some research examined distribution channels (Huang & Chuang, 2013), further work on power asymmetries amongst actors in the travel sector value chain would be of benefit (Ford, Wang & Vestal, 2012). Surprisingly, social media and blogs have not achieved high recognition in the reviewed industry articles. Indeed, Leung, Au and Law (2015) note that e-marketing is an under-researched area in Asia.

Technological advancement, such as sharing economy, may significantly disturb hospitality and tourism sector in the future. The sharing economy is also known as collaborative consumption or peer-to-peer marketplace. It refers to the practice when owners of goods and services share them (e.g., through rent) for a time period with consumers (Byers, Proserpio & Zervas, 2013; Skift, 2014). The transaction takes place via an online platform. One part of this new economy is shared accommodation, which is distributed through websites such as Airbnb and Couchsurfing and is gaining prominence around the world (Guttentag, 2013). In 2014 Airbnb focused on its growth in China and wider Asia (Kokalitcheva, 2014). However, there are already similar local services operating in China (Cheung, 2014).

Changes in Market Profiles

Taleb Rifai, UNWTO Secretary General, was quoted as saying, “Amid the current economic uncertainty, tourism is one of the few economic sectors in the world growing strongly, driving economic progress in developing and developed countries alike and, most importantly, creating much needed jobs” (*Travel Weekly UK*, 12.09.2012).

Tourism growth has continued largely driven by strong demand in domestic and regional travel in Asia. Outbound tourism is no longer dominated by Europe and the United States (UNWTO, 2011). The typical “north-to-south” travel pattern that has been dominating world tourism for more than half a century has been gradually changing with the emergence of Asia markets since the turn of the century (Xiao, 2013). On the contrary, European destinations are attempting to attract more Asian travellers. Despite the emergence of related academic literature over a decade ago (Arlt, 2006; Chen, 2001; March, 1997; Zhang & Heung, 2002), the industry appears to be slow to adjust to this trend. China and India continue with strong growth in outbound travel, however, India does not appear to attract much media attention. Emerging markets may be volatile and situation can change quickly as demonstrated by Russia’s outbound tourism which exhibited rapid growth in 2012-2013, but is in sharp decline in 2014-2015 (HKTB, 2014). Muslim market is another emerging segment. Halal food and Shariah-Compliant Hotels are emerging to attract Muslim travellers from the Middle East and Southeast Asia (Wang, Ding, Scott & Fan, 2010; Xingang, 2014).

The travel markets are increasingly polarised between luxury and budget products (ITB Berlin, 2014). The meaning of “luxury” has been changing from simply monetary value to exclusive access to experiences (Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2014). Asia appears to lag behind in this trend (Yeoman, 2011); thus research into perceptions of luxury would be useful. The budget travel from Asia has seen sharp rise due to growth in disposable income and generated growth in budget accommodation catering for domestic and intra-regional travel (Chan & Ni, 2011). The research in understanding demand and supply in domestic and intra-regional budget travel in Asia and the Pacific has been limited so far. Visitor profile in the Asia Pacific region is becoming more complex. One hypothesis that appeared in the media and requires testing is that a mix of guests from different source markets is preferable to dominance of one ethnic market. Line and Runyan (2012) have found that research into segmentation, positioning and targeting has been on a decline, despite Tsiotsou and Ratten’s (2010) call for more research. A portfolio analysis of market mix proposed by Chen, Jang and Peng (2011) can be further developed and utilised for these purposes.

Planning and Political Environment

“While national tourism organisations often paint pictures of what tourism outcomes in 2020 will look like, it is just as important that they flesh out how they intend for the trade to get there. Travel experts would also do well to chart their own 2020 roadmap” (*TTG Asia*, No. 1662, 29.06-05.07.2012).

It is acknowledged that future tourism development requires careful long-term strategic planning and policies and regulations on behalf of not only national tourism organisations, but other government bodies, international organisations and the industry (Edgell, 2013; OECD, 2014). A vivid example of the importance of policies is implementation of Tourism Law of the People's Republic of China (CNTA, 2013) which imposed stricter rules on Chinese tour operators. One of the most important policy issues is visas, since they represent barriers to the tourist flows (Edgell, 2013; Skift, 2014). Another regulatory issue is taxation. Heated debates have surrounded Airport Passenger Duty and Emissions Trading Schemes in Europe that would increase airfares and thus endanger tourist flows between Europe and Asia (PATA, 2014; WTTC, 2014b).

Linked to the diversification of destinations is the issue of political stability. Democratisation of Myanmar has rapidly made it one of the most sought after destinations in Southeast Asia (UNWTO, 2014a). However, political situation is a constraining factor for tourism development in much of South and Southeast Asia. On the other hand, politics have stimulated tourism to other destinations, such as North Korea. A new type of tourism has emerged that focuses on current affairs at destinations that have been inaccessible for some years. It has been termed "Taboo Travel" (Baran, 2013), "Political Tourism" (Moynagh, 2008) or "Post-Conflict Tourism" (Causevic & Lynch, 2011). This phenomenon deserves more attention from the academics.

Transportation and the Value of Co-opetition

"During an era where airlines are haemorrhaging millions of dollars due to volatile fuel prices, growing competition and the global economic slowdown, carriers are seeking ways to cut costs and increase scale in order to stem the bleeding" (*TTG Asia* No. 1666, 24.10-06.09.2012).

Transport infrastructure in many cases lags behind the demand and supply of tourism in the Asia Pacific region. Air connectivity in this region has been increasing, due to growth of flights and establishment of new links between cities and countries (AAPA, 2014). The constraining factor for aviation growth is the airports' capacity to deal with the traffic, and Asia's mega-cities remain underserved (IATA, 2011). While there were not many news related to fuel prices, sharp decline in oil and fuel prices have been welcomed by the industry (AAPA, 2014). Edgell (2013, 2014) also highlights the importance of fuel price fluctuations. Becken (2011) has pointed out a broader issue: the lack of knowledge about the relationship between oil and tourism, the issue that merits further research in the region (Buckley, et al., 2015).

Support infrastructure, such as roadways and railways are important in cruise terminal and airport development (Cui, Kuang, Wu & Li, 2013; Wang, Jung, Yeo & Chou, 2014). Great progress is being achieved on land with high-speed railways creating new opportunities for domestic and intra-regional travel (Lopez, 2014; Perlez, 2014). In the South Pacific, international access to destinations and geographical isolation of individual destinations have remained an issue (Prideaux & McNamara, 2013). The increase in overall number of arrivals to a destination in the highly competitive environment necessitates cooperation. This suggests that co-opetition (partial cooperation in a competitive environment) is a common practice (Edgell, 2013). Regarding the issues of collaboration and competition future research should focus on suppliers and intermediaries rather than destination competitiveness (Song, Liu & Chen, 2013; Tsai, Song

& Wong, 2009). Game theory approach could be a useful methodology for understanding cooperation and competition in tourism (Mohammed, Guillet & Law, 2015; Song, et al., 2012).

Human Resources

“The most important thing for companies to realise is, it is a competitive marketplace. Just like you compete for customers, you need to compete for talent... To engage [the new generation], keep them focused, interested, energised, motivated, challenged, recognised, accelerated – that is what any industry should be doing” (*TTG Asia*, No. 1682, 19.04-02.05.2013).

In 2012 at G20 summit in Los Cabos, Mexico, tourism has been recognised as an important driver for job creation (UNWTO, 2012a). However, hospitality and tourism is still not perceived as an attractive career in the Asia Pacific region (Jiang & Tribe, 2009; Lo, Mak & Chen, 2014; Richardson & Butler, 2012). Generation Y should be potentially attracted to hospitality and tourism jobs, since the sector suits some of the generational characteristics. For example, Generation Y is brought up on Internet and social networks, and has less patience and high expectations of fast career progression. Moreover, “Gen Y” are creative, flexible, like socialising, like to feel affiliated, and are socially and environmentally conscious (Cairncross & Buultjens, 2010; Strauss and Howe, 2000). However, Generation Y expects high rewards, which hospitality and tourism sector often fails to provide in the initial stages of a career.

Industry needs for future workforce in tourism and hospitality have been proactively analysed by Solnet et al. (2013). Such needs include skills and expertise of employees and visionary leadership among executives (Edgell, 2013; Guillet, Yaman & Kucukusta, 2012; Ladkin & Weber, 2011). Training and education are recognised as paramount for business success amidst rising tourist expectations. Another possible future workforce issue for Asia and the Pacific is related to the depletion of labour resources in the rural areas as evidenced by high urbanisation rates, while there is a growing tourism demand in the pleasure periphery (Robinson, et al., 2014). Further investigations into the future of tourism education, such as the ones by Airey, Tribe, Benckendorff and Xiao (2015) and Dredge, Benckendorff, Day, Gross, Walo, Weeks and Whitelaw (2013), would be beneficial. Attracting talent to the hospitality and tourism sector and developing future leaders is arguably the most important current issue in this human intensive industry.

Business Travel, MICE and Events

“The bleasure (combining business with leisure activities) phenomenon is also changing the way people meet: resorts are becoming a more popular destination for business travel and meetings, less time is being spent cooped up in the boardroom (reduced to an average of a day, with as many as two or three days spent in breakout sessions), and more time is being spent on programmes that include working with social and environmental charities” (*TTG Asia*, No. 1673, 30.11-13.12.2012).

A new phenomenon is growing among the business travellers to combine business with travel activities. More meetings are held in the resorts, when businessmen tend to bring their spouses along and enjoy local tours or other entertainment. According to Skift (2014), this trend is the result of demands of millennial generation, who tend to combine leisure with work and are used to flexibility and customisation. Ho and McKercher (2014) note that the business tourism literature is rather scant and further research is required to understand business travellers, who are not a homogenous segment. With regards to MICE, a number of new conference and convention venues have opened within the region and competition amongst MICE destinations in Asia and the Pacific is likely to intensify (Jin, Weber & Bauer, 2012b; Mair, 2013).

A number of articles promote sport and cultural events to attract visitors. A growing number of sport events take place in the Asia Pacific region. Cultural festivals can be a draw for the growing number of cultural tourists in the region. Government involvement is often required for successful mega events to take place due to long-term planning and infrastructure development. Getz (2012) has provided a review of the events studies to date, as well as identified issues for further research. Staging events is an important means to creating experiences, and therefore requires phenomenological research. Asia and the Pacific with its wealth of festival traditions has potential to greatly contribute to cross-cultural research. Major events, such as Olympic Games require great investment resulting in great risks (Weber & Ali-Knight, 2012). Thus, further economic, cost-benefit analysis is required.

Sustainability

“The industry needs to promote and pursue sustainable growth, which ensures benefits for consumers, businesses, local people and the environment” (*Travel Weekly UK*, 08.04.2013).

Responsible tourism, sustainable development, livelihoods of local communities and preservation of indigenous cultures received great attention from tourism scholars (Higgins-Desbiolles, Trevorrow & Sparrow, 2014; Prideaux & Timothy, 2013; Smith & Richards, 2013; Spenceley, 2010). However, the topic of sustainability has been far from dominating industry news. National tourism organisations and international bodies such as UNWTO and PATA appear to be more interested in sustainable tourism development than the private sector. Low interest towards sustainability issues within the tourism industry is evident from academic research as well (Buckley, 2012; Buckley, et al., 2015; McKercher, Mak & Wong, 2014). More efforts are required to develop awareness within the industry on how to embed sustainability in their business, and how sustainable practices will benefit the business, especially in the era of responsible and experience-based travel. Rather than developing new theoretical models, more empirical research on tourism impacts that goes beyond case studies is required. More action research to influence tourism sector would be beneficial.

Seasonality

“During high season you can play around with promotions, but you must be very careful with expenses in the low season” (*TTG Asia*, No. 1663, 13.07-19.07.2012).

Some destinations that have a mix of business and leisure travellers, as well as those located in pleasant climate are less affected by seasonality. Others continue to struggle to cope with high seasonality. This issue is further affected by the growing trend in weekend getaways, creating high variations between days of the week. There has been lack of research into seasonality, which is a traditional tourism and hospitality issue. It has been often approached from the demand forecasting perspective (Chang & Liao, 2010). The issue of seasonality will become more prominent in the near future due to change in tourist preferences and environmental factors, e.g., global warming impact on ski resorts (Pegg, Patterson & Gariddo, 2012).

Conclusion

In summary, this paper presented a content analysis of 499 industry magazine articles and discussed on the emerging trends for tourism in the Asia Pacific region. Some factors underpinning tourism development in this region remained unchanged after Singh (1997) and Leiper and Hing (1998): economic growth, political liberalisation, improved accessibility and technological advancement. This analysis found that a significant shift towards the experience economy has been driving most of the other trends in Asia and the Pacific. New technological advancements such as the “sharing” economy are able to transform the sector significantly. In terms of visitor arrivals and receipts, the future of tourism for Asia and the Pacific as a whole is bright, however within the region the differences are rather stark with more rapidly developing countries of East and Southeast Asia being at the forefront of tourism growth. Despite this, there seems to be a gap in understanding needs and desires of tourists, whose demographic, socioeconomic and psychological profiles have been changing over the years. Another significant challenge is attracting talents to the industry. Growth of hospitality and travel may not be sustained if the sector is unsuccessful in competition with other industries for human resources. Moreover, lack of understanding of sustainability and lack of sustainable tourism planning may undermine long-term development of the region to continually benefit livelihoods of the people whose culture is an increasingly important tourism product, and to preserve unique nature that attracts tourists to the region in the first place.

By implications, this review discussion and critique have encompassed a large variety of trends and issues that merit future research for contributions to be made to the theory and practice of Asia Pacific tourism in particular and to world tourism in general. Further, due to the nature of academic versus practitioner knowledge and the fact that Anglo-European paradigms may not always apply to culturally and historically distinct regions that in themselves have great differences amongst their sub-regions or countries (Winter, 2009), ongoing monitoring of changes and tourism trends from indigenous perspectives – in Asia and the Pacific and indeed in “other” world regions – will have made timely and useful readings for future tourism academics and practitioners alike. ▲

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