

Co-creation of value for cultural festivals: behind the scenes in Macau

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In their capacity as performative cultural assets located in destinations, festivals offer visitors potentially convivial and memorable experiences. Though previous studies have examined the psychologies of festival attendees, few have considered the perspective of festival stakeholders towards the co-creation of cultural value. The present study examines the case of a traditional festival that epitomizes intangible cultural heritage - the Feast of Na Tcha in Macau. The researchers examine how organizers, performers, government officials, local shop owners and tourists play roles in co-creating value for the festival. The paper examines an overlooked dimension – contributions from multiple stakeholders to the multifaceted concept of value in cultural festival settings. The findings present a value co-creation paradigm that may inform prospective creative enhancements to the festival experience.

Keywords: traditional festivals; value co-creation; festival experience; stakeholders; Macau

Introduction

The concept of value co-creation has been widely applied across the services sector as a means of enhancing experiences through active customer involvements in the processes of production and consumption (Grönroos, 2011). In the case of festivals, managers have adopted co-creation strategies as potential contributions to the experience by embracing perspectives and perceptions from multiple stakeholders (Goolaup & Mossberg, 2017). The concept advocates interaction and cooperation between suppliers and customers as a means of co-creating value for the benefit of both parties (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). In their capacity as social happenings and socio-cultural constructs whose meaning is not confined to commodified experiences, festivals undoubtedly merit scholarly treatment. Previous studies have shown that the individuals and collectives that contribute to such events derive their own meanings from participation and have asserted that

these are at the core of the value co-creation process (Goolaup & Mossberg, 2017). Since experiences are socially and culturally constructed, each participant in the collective activity draws upon a value system that informs their perceptions. When the value co-creation concept is applied to cultural festivals, scholars have acknowledged a role for interactivity and audience participation and of collaborations between multiple stakeholders that create performance spaces. Such co-creation is manifest in practices which feature intense and extraordinary visitor experiences (Morgan, 2008). The generated value encompasses a combination of both cultural and utilitarian components (Del Barrio, Devesa, & Herrero, 2012). As opposed to their one-off equivalents, recurring cultural festivals entail ongoing external recognition of cultural value, and communities can be revitalized when there is a sharing of cultural ownership (de Bres & Davis, 2001). The staging of festivals can help governments to deliver a public good that generates positive economic impacts and advances intangible assets for the enjoyment of both locals and visitors. For tourism marketers, festivals offer opportunities for cultural investments that contribute to the achievement of tourism goals (Attanasi, Casoria, Centorrino, & Urso, 2013). However, despite the various scholarly contributions about value co-creation, more insights are needed about the manifestations of this phenomenon in the case of cultural festivals.

The idea of value co-creation has been applied to the domain of heritage resource management (Ardley, Taylor, McLintock, Martin, & Leonard, 2012; Minkiewicz, Evans, & Bridson, 2014) both theoretically (Crowther & Orefice, 2014; Minkiewicz et al., 2014) and practically (Chen, 2018; Suntikul & Jachna, 2016b). Though interest in the concept of value co-creation has been growing, Alexiou's (2019) examination of the value co-creation in the case of a cultural heritage festival in Greece is an example of the prevalent approach of focusing exclusively on festival participants, without consideration for other stakeholders' perspectives.

Luonila, Suomi, and Lepisto's (2019) case study of a networked festival production drew upon theory to explore and emphasize the importance of value co-creation in such settings. However, this example considered only the organizer perspective and exemplifies the absence of empirical studies examining the roles of all key stakeholders in facilitating value co-creation in festival settings.

As long-standing practices which have survived into the contemporary era, traditional festivals and events have been of enduring interest to tourism scholars as examples of sustainable development (Laing, 2018). Festivals are manifestations of cultural capital. They display multifaceted cultural phenomena through the medium of unique, lively and unrepeatable performances. Their outcomes are culturally complex and offer potential value for both visitors and locals through their strong associations with creativity and social cohesion (Del Barrio et al., 2012). Tourists are attracted by the high level of involvement that cultural festivals offer to participants (Kim, Suh, & Eves, 2010). Bernick and Boo (2013) have suggested that festival tourism epitomizes the prevalence of entertainment in the tourism industry. Festivals feature prominently in tourism promotions and particularly in social marketing because they help to advance social inclusion policies (Getz, 2010). This is particularly evident through traditional cultural festivals which offer a strategic medium to convey cultural and social meanings (Crespi-Vallbona & Richards, 2007).

To date, no researchers have undertaken a comprehensive examination of cultural festivals from the perspective of a full range of participating stakeholders. Insights have been notably lacking about how stakeholders make assessments about and then contribute to the multifaceted nature of value in the case of cultural festivals. The current research uses the example of the Feast of Na Tcha Festival to address this gap and examines stakeholder

perspectives of value co-creation. The study aims to illustrate the multifaceted nature of value in a cultural festival and the ways in which the combined efforts of multiple stakeholders contribute to co-created value. The Na Tcha festival provides an appropriate tourism and heritage context to achieve the research objective. It is staged annually in Macau's Historic Centre, a UNESCO World Heritage-listed site that accommodates millions of tourists annually. The researchers pose the following question: how do the various types of stakeholders involved in these events co-create the traditional cultural festival experience? To address this question, this study interrogates various stakeholder categories in terms of their views about the festival and their particular contributions to the co-creation of the festival experience. A qualitative research approach is adopted with a view to ensuring an in-depth evaluation of the multiple and potentially overlapping perspectives.

Value co-creation

The concept of value co-creation has been widely applied by tourism scholars (e.g. Minkiewicz et al., 2014; Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Suntikul & Jachna, 2016a). Pine and Gilmore's (1999) defining work drew substantially from the tourism phenomenon by identifying its contributions to the experience economy. Within the experience economy context, co-creation is an experience-oriented concept which emphasizes interactions between supply and demand. It stresses the combined and interacting efforts of customers and suppliers in creating experiences (Ramaswamy & Gouillart, 2010). The overlapping meanings of "experience co-creation" and "value co-creation" have prompted many scholars to use the terms interchangeably. When applied to experience-based activities, value co-creation concerns how the experience is produced and consumed in relation to the value that is created, from both the demand and supply perspectives (Samuelsen & Norway, 2010). The various suppliers engage participants in the

creation of experiences that contribute value to their respective organizational and business operations, whilst participants benefit from an enhanced experience, involving complex psychological perceptions. Scholars have sometimes conflated the evaluation of events with the collecting of stakeholder opinions (Brown, Getz, Pettersson, & Wallstam, 2015). Furthermore, many event-related studies only collected commentary from either event managers or from participants. Such opinions are then used as a basis for recommending improved event promotions and management (e.g. Agbabiaka, Omoike, & Omisore, 2017; Bigné, Sánchez, & Sánchez, 2001; Kim et al., 2010). However, few of the previous studies have focused on the role of value creation in the formation of experiences. The present study provides a unique contribution by evaluating how the multifaceted nature of value is attributable to the involvement of multiple stakeholders in a festival setting as the epitome of an experience-based occasion.

A proper understanding of value co-creation should consider multiple perspectives. When approached from the marketing angle, value co-creation can be an extension of service-dominant logic, where services rather than goods form the core object of consumption (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). But it has been noted that this view neglects aspects such as value-centered understandings of experience and the role of customers in co-creating value (Vargo, Lusch, Akaka, & He, 2010). One potential approach to how festivals are experienced by different parties is using a constructionist perspective towards value and meaning. There is merit in considering the social environment as a context in which customers form subjective perceptions of the value co-creation experience (Rihova, Buhalis, Moital, & Gouthro, 2014). Anthropological and ethnographic perspectives approach value as a creation that occurs through practice. Applying this perspective in the context of the arts involves conducting a critical assessment of the conditions within which such practices occur (the experience environment) and of the parties

involved in the negotiation with the expression of inter-subjectivities (Oliver & Walmsley, 2011). The experience environment is a critical component of co-creation, since the fostering of stakeholder interactions occurs through a constructive combination of place and time (Andrades & Dimanche, 2014). Co-creating value in festival contexts involves exchange and interaction amongst multiple parties and reflects the collective and disparate interests of the various key stakeholders (Reid & Arcodia, 2002; Troisi, Santovito, Carrubbo, & Sarno, 2019). Sometimes, the returns cannot be readily measured in financial terms, such as stakeholder relationships and the level of community support (Crowther & Orefice, 2014).

Value co-creators

The festival preparation stage involves participation by a variety of stakeholders, whether overtly or behind-the-scenes. Such efforts extend to the on-site staging and help to ensure a smooth delivery of the festival. The stakeholders are involved in co-creating value and are constantly contributing to the significance and impact of the festival. Though they have been recognized, the roles of some stakeholders may have been underestimated by scholars. Though considerable attention has been devoted to the perspective of local residents, the focus has been on the economic and social benefits of festivals (Delamere, 2001; O'Sullivan & Jackson, 2002; Okech, 2011; Richards, 2017), or their impacts on community wellbeing (Yolal et. al., 2016), destination image building (Prentice & Andersen, 2003), place making (Richards, 2017), the hotel industry (Litvin & Fetter, 2006), cultural identity (Crespi-Vallbona & Richards, 2007) and urban development (Del Barrio et al., 2012). Other researchers have explored the perspectives of festival managers, the role of power and hegemony in planning (Clarke & Jepson, 2011), strategic approaches (Carlsen & Andersson, 2011; Larson, 2011), issues of sustainability (Getz,

Andersson, & Carlsen, 2010), costs and benefits (Del Barrio et al., 2012) and public policy (Arcodia & McKinnon, 2004).

Getz, Andersson, and Larson (2006) analyzed various types of festival in order to identify stakeholder categories, including their roles and relationships. Those stakeholders include organizers who make events happen, performers who engage in performing components of the event, all types of supporters and active audience participants. Scholars have also explored the interests of the key stakeholders. For instance, policymakers tend to give greater emphasis to economic and political issues in organizing cultural events, whereas cultural producers are more concerned with the social aspects of identity (Crespi-Vallbona & Richards, 2007). Festival organizers exercise power and hegemony over other stakeholders in the planning process, criticizing the absence of attention to community opinions (Clarke & Jepson, 2011). Government authorities tend to focus on diversifying their tourism markets and enhancing recognition of the local culture (Crowther & Orefice, 2014). Participants “create the ‘atmosphere’ or generate the ‘emotional energy’ of the event, even if they are not actively involved in creation or programming” (Richards et al., 2014, p. 199). Each participant contributes actively through transmission of their cultural knowledge, understandings, competencies and influence (Goolaup & Mossberg, 2017). Methodologically, Jarman, Theodoraki, Hall, and Ali-Knight (2014) identified the prospects of using social network analysis in festival and event studies, which allow for a broader understanding of intra- and inter-festival networks and the various relationships between stakeholders. Though previous studies have covered a range of stakeholders and have considered some types of stakeholder collaboration (Getz, 2015; Yan, Zhang, & Li, 2012), little attention has been given to the full spectrum of stakeholder opinions and this constitutes a knowledge gap (Getz, 2010).

Cultural festivals

Researchers have examined festivals ranging from the traditional (e.g. Qinhuai Lantern Festival (Shen, 2014)) to the modern (e.g. Pink Festival (Giovanardi, Lucarelli, & Decosta, 2014)). The various categories of festivals target distinct audiences, and their different traits reflect the nature and characteristics of each festival. Previous researchers have adopted several approaches to examine proposed constructs and have tested potentially significant relationships (e.g. Báez & Devesa, 2014; Bruwer & Kelley, 2015; Pegg & Patterson, 2010). There has been evidence of a growing focus on “traditional” festivals (see Brown, Savinovic, & Kim, 2012; Chang, Gibson, & Sisson, 2014; Del Barrio et al., 2012; Shen, 2014). Quyen and Khanjanusthiti (2015) explored community views about the cultural impacts of tourism on traditional festivals. Agbabiaka et al. (2017) examined tourist visitation at traditional festivals in Sub-Saharan Africa. Both Chew (2009) and Suntikul (2018) examined the cultural sustainability of traditional festivals in Hong Kong and in Bhutan respectively. Despite the aforementioned studies, Laing (2018) has identified the need for more research on traditional festivals. It is evident that the role and impact of cultural festivals extend beyond cultural products and entail beneficial social and economic development (Attanasi et al., 2013; Del Barrio et al., 2012).

Festivals could bring derived effects by attracting tourists who join these events because cultural heritage is an important factor in the destination image (Bowitz & Ibenholt, 2009). There has been little examination to date of cultural festivals at World Heritage sites, particularly in the tourism context. The few relevant studies have emphasized negative impacts such as commercialization through the transformation of traditional festivals into tourism activities (Imon, 2014; Sedana, 2002; Vong & Lam, 2009). However, tourism scholars have gained only minimal insights into such contexts. An exception is Okech’s (2011) examination of the impacts

of cultural festivals in a local community located in a World Heritage site in Kenya. However, the impact on local economic development of exploiting cultural festivals remains largely undocumented. This is regrettable because festivals tend to project the cultural dynamics of host communities rather than economic stimuli (Getz & Frisby, 1988). This suggests that examinations of value creation in the context of cultural festivals should be holistic and consider a multiplicity of influences.

Research Context – The Feast of Na Tcha in Macau

Macau is a densely populated World Heritage city that occupies a confined geographical area of 32.9 square kilometers (Statistics and Census Service (DSEC), 2020). The Historic Centre of Macau, which provides a stage for the festival of current interest, was inscribed on the World Heritage list in 2005 (UNESCO, 2005) and has subsequently become an intense tourism hub. Tourist arrivals reached 39.4 million in 2019, more than half of whom (20.8 million) were same-day visitors (DSEC, 2020). Of Macau's various community-based cultural festivals, the most representative is The Feast of Na Tcha. The festival combines three typical traditional customs - Na Tcha Customs and Beliefs of Macau and its celebrative components of Taoist Ritual Music and Cantonese Opera. Each of these has been included in the official Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) items at local, national and/or international levels (Cultural Affairs Bureau, 2017). The festival is undoubtedly a significant representation of local culture. It has been staged for over a century and constitutes a suitable context to research the value system applicable to cultural festivals (Figure 1). It is probably Macau's largest-scale traditional festival and its associated activities (e.g. the Prince Na Tcha Parade, worship rituals, dragon and lion dances) (Macau Temple Civilization, 2012) (Figure 2) are rich and diverse and allow visitors to enjoy an all-round experience of the local culture. Tourists can experience the festival at any point during

its staging period and in any of its various sections. The deep local roots and grand scale of the celebrations provide the researchers with a compelling environment to solicit the opinions of diverse stakeholders.

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Methodology

The preceding literature on festivals has revealed the predominance of quantitative research to examine various relationship constructs (see Lee & Kyle, 2012; Yolal et al., 2016). The adoption of a constructionist approach to study value co-creation can permit investigation of a socially constructed reality through means such as interviewing or participant observations (Goolaup & Mossberg, 2017). An exploratory qualitative approach may be considered as appropriate in a domain such as experience consumption which is still not fully understood (Davis, 2016; Medway, Warnaby, & Dharni, 2010). It allows respondents to engage in free, open and honest expression that may be considered a deep and rich way to explore meanings and their sources from the perspective of involved stakeholders, and reduce inherent bias (Laing, 2018; Li & Petrick, 2005). The proposed method is consistent with previous research on co-creation practices (Andrades & Dimanche, 2014; Rihova, Buhalis, Gouthro, & Moital, 2018) and on cultural contexts (Suntikul, 2018). Using in-depth and semi-structured interviews, the researchers set out to undertake an exploration of the opinions of a broad and representative spectrum of stakeholders (e.g. government authorities, festival organizers, performers, surrounding businesses and participating tourists) in terms of their interrelationships and their respective roles in contributing to value creation of a traditional cultural festival.

The in-depth interviewing was conducted in two phases. To attain adequate data coverage and extend demographic distribution, the researchers interviewed tourists over two consecutive years, corresponding to the periods 10 - 12 June, 2017 and 29 June - 1 July 2018, and interviews were undertaken at field locations when and where the public performances were held. Another set of interviews was conducted by appointment with key informants representing government authorities, the festival organizers, performing teams and local shop owners. These particular cultural festival stakeholders were mainly chosen because of their respective roles in constructing the environment that contributes to enjoyment on the part of participants. In other words, the participation of these stakeholders contributes to ensuring a smooth delivery of the festival experience with the organizers' efforts, government's support, professional performing teams' engagement and the continuous concern from the surrounding local shops that witnesses the growth and changing of the festivals over time.

The questions that were addressed to tourists concentrated on their festival experiences with a focus on their post hoc evaluations of personal benefits acquired from their participation (e.g. How did they evaluate the festival? What were the impacts of the festival on them and on their trip?). Other key informants were asked about their perceptions of how the festival is valued by their organization and their motivations for being involved in organizing, performing, supporting and participating. How was the decision made to organize the festival and what were the expected outcomes? The researchers contended that their explanations or "background story" might indicate the value or weighting of the festival from the organizational standpoint. The findings will address the research question about the value attached to cultural festivals from the perspective of multiple stakeholders.

The respondents consisted of 38 tourists (Table 1), the President and Vice President of the organizing body, two experienced performers who play critical roles in the performance, eight local shop owners and three government officials (Table 2). Although the number of non-tourist respondents is modest, they are key informants who were able to provide meaningful insights and to generate rich data based on their positions, organizations and work experience. To broaden the potential range of information and scope, the sampling method is normally contingent rather than representative (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The sample selection criteria appear tailor-made to conform to each purpose of the research. However, the number of sampling is not standardized (Wengraf, 2001). But there is a need for all key event facilitators, producers and planners to facilitate and produce events for the destination (Getz, 2008). The number of tourist and shop owner respondents was not determined prior to data collection, because tourists may decline to be interviewed. Local shop owners may also be reluctant to be intercepted while they are busy operating their businesses. The ultimate number of interviews was determined by the availability of prospective respondents and their willingness to be involved.

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Interviews were conducted in either Chinese or English, depending on the linguistic background and proficiency of each respondent. Questions were initially composed in Chinese, then translated back into English and checked by tourism experts to ensure the accuracy of expression and that the two versions for consistency. Each interview was recorded and transcribed verbatim. Subject to data analysis, Chinese transcripts were translated into English

and were analyzed manually with the aid of NVivo 11 (a software that organizes a large body of text and displays visual representations of collected data after users' analysis) following each data collection period during the festival. The researchers used manipulative techniques to analyze the emerging themes. This involved identifying themes and subthemes; building hierarchies of themes; and linking themes into theoretical models (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). They proceeded to provide a detailed coding of the most consistently and commonly encountered terms in response to each question and made comparisons across all interviews with a view to revealing alignments and contradictions. Themes/codes were developed, expanded/distilled, re-labeled, merged and further divided to form a relatively complex hierarchy with levels of sub-themes/codes. The resulting coding structure was cross-checked by the researchers before concluding with the formulation of a thematic framework (Bazeley, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1984).

Findings and Discussion

As has been stated previously, festivals manifest social phenomena. In co-creating value for experience-based activities, suppliers join together to form the environment that will provide a setting for enjoyment to occur (Sotiriadis & Gursoy, 2016). Participants engage in the co-creation of value through encounters with the various material and immaterial components that are provided by festival organizers and form perceptions of the event through their various interactions.

Tourists' perceptions of value-in-experience

The findings confirmed the prevailing view amongst scholars that co-created festival experiences contribute to tourists' satisfaction with Macau, thereby influencing behavioral intentions (Zhang,

Fong, & Li, 2019). In distinction from previous studies on certain aspects of festival motivation placed into different categories, the qualitative approach adopted here allows the observation of a different phenomenon, namely the description by almost all tourist respondents (37 out of 38) of their festival participation as spontaneous. It is evident that they had no expectations and sometimes no awareness about the festival prior to joining. *“This festival just happened by surprise”* (Respondent 3). *“I didn’t know it is a special day. I just showed up here by chance”* (Respondent 9). These quotes may provide a clue that novelty-seeking and experiencing the festival atmosphere may be two primary motives for festival attendees (McCartney & Kei, 2018; Prentice & Andersen, 2003). In acknowledging the critical role of experience environment in the co-creation of value as an interplay amongst stakeholders, such spontaneous participation was motivated by physical stimuli, notably in the case of colorful decorations and sounds. One respondent commented: *“I just finished lunch around the area. I heard a loud noise [the drum sounds] and became curious about what was happening”* (Respondent 33). *“I saw the child character in the appearance of Na Tcha in costume and makeup. It was very interesting. Then, I saw the flag with the words ‘Na Tcha Temple’ and I realize it is a celebration of Na Tcha”* (Respondent 30). Based on Oliver’s (1980) expectancy confirmation theory, one would expect that tourist satisfaction would be higher if the perceived performance exceeded expectations. One tourist observed that the spontaneity of respondents’ happening upon the festival without prior knowledge or expectations may enhance satisfaction:

Some events may have grand promotion before they are held. The risk is that you may have certain expectations of that event, but when you go and see it [you may feel that] it is not worth visiting as it may not reach to your expectations. But if it is like this and you join it by chance, you will find the experience much better. (Respondent 14)

Previous researchers have argued that the emotional outcomes of festivals are more important than other tangible manifestations (Crowther & Orefice, 2014). Festivals organizers may consider such emotions when providing a medium for value creation. Most respondents evaluated the festival experience positively and frequently mentioned as: “*impressive*”, “*out of expectation*” and “*added value*”. “[*The festival*] *enhances our experience. It is not something we normally see in Europe. For us, it is very exotic and interesting*” (Respondent 20). Some respondents’ reflections indicate a sense of surprise: “*I never thought Macau had such traditions*” (Respondent 32). Other respondents further express their appreciation for the effective preservation of local practices.

I have a strong impression of this festival. It indicates a good preservation of traditional culture. I live in Shanghai and we used to have traditional entertainment in old times. But it is becoming less and less. But [here] I could see the transmission of the local culture, which is really worth praising. (Respondent 22)

Cultural festivals represent a distinct form of the performing arts. Their charm derives from their value as a defining element of the destination. Such value-in-experience as perceived by tourists contributes to an enhanced destination image for Macau with strong perceptions of a lively culture.

I could see another aspect of local culture. It is a kind of way to understand the local culture. [I] can see the people joined the event here. They are very supportive of the local culture... It shows that there is more to explore in Macau than casinos. (Respondent 21)

The role of tourists in festival co-creation practices can also be inferred from their behavioral intentions (Semrad & Rivera, 2018). That is, participants play the role of transmitters, disseminating the value of festival to others, notably in the case of younger tourists who are technologically agile. Their behavioral intentions provide a stimulus, including a strong desire to

return (31 out of 38 respondents), to join similar events when possible (29 out of 38) and a willingness to recommend the event to others through various channels (i.e. orally or through social platforms) (34 out of 38).

Value in production

Festivals are unique organizational constructs that exhibit relationships among multiple stakeholders. Each stakeholder attaches a different weighting to the significance of the festival and contributes to the setting of experience environment. Value co-creation is commonly observed in practices which entail the active engagement of multiple and interdependent stakeholders (Lugosi, 2014; Van Winkle & Bueddefeld, 2016). The value of the festival reveals a cumulative effect of the various interests of the engaged parties. By undertaking a detailed investigation of the inner thoughts of these stakeholders, the following discussion reveals deeper concerns about the longer-lasting practices of this cultural festival, rather than simply an indication of their individual opinions.

Festival organizers' value creation

The festival organizers are key stakeholders and exercise the strongest power in their capacity in providing the resources and support to make the festival happen (Getz et al., 2007). Event managers play a dual role by choreographing the various event settings and enabling co-creative exchanges through interactions with attendees (Crowther & Orefice, 2014). The managers of the Na Tcha Festival have strong emotional ties to traditions and have used practices inherited from previous generations in their festival delivery. Staging the festival has become part of their lives and careers.

I know the history of Na Tcha quite well since my parents both grew up here. I took over this festival organization in my 30s in 1992. Since there is a Na Tcha Temple near the Ruins of St. Paul's, when the representatives from the World Heritage Committee came to Macau to review the nomination of the Historic Centre of Macau in 2004, I was interviewed to give my opinions on the inscription. When a report on the Na Tcha Customs and Beliefs was prepared for ICH nomination, I also contributed by providing a lot of historic documents and photos, as well as dedicating myself to the efforts of the opening of the exhibition centre of Na Tcha. (President)

The festival organizers' descriptions are indicative of their pride in the various practices around the event and affirm the importance of the festival. Consistent with Taoist philosophy, it is anticipated that the value of the festival can be delivered by disseminating positive attitudes amongst visitors. For the Chinese, the Na Tcha character represents traditional filial piety.

Through organizing the festival, we'd like to pray for the harmony of the world and society and expect that those who believe in this can practice themselves with a peaceful mind. Since there are many negative emotions and behaviors in the society as people easily get angry about social affairs, we expect that participants in our festival can feel a positive attitude or atmosphere. For the youth and children, the promotion of Na Tcha characters can encourage them to show filial piety to their parents. (Vice President)

The persistence of cultural practices reveals a need for heritage preservation and benefits sustainable development. *"It is [also] expected to attract more youngsters to join us and help transform this culture. We are old now, we need to pass it down to the next generation"* (Vice President). Longer-term development is also considered:

It is a continuous effort to promote the Na Tcha Temple as an influential association which can drive other temple associations to promote temple culture in Macau collectively. Each temple has its own story and rituals, but the fact is that most of them encounter a great challenge with cultural sustainability. If our festival can receive great success, so can the others. Luckily, Taoist beliefs and the Na Tcha Temple culture are developed quite well in Macau, with a strong community base. (President)

Placing the festival within a tourism context allows the promotion of local culture to outsiders.

We can create a tourism culture with a belief as the driving force for tourists. Tourists who come to Macau are not only here for gaming, but also to experience the local culture. Na Tcha customs and beliefs could be part of it. We also attempt to add value to our own culture through communication with other temple associations. In terms of cultural sustainability, if we can get more donations from believers and visitors, such donations will contribute to our social service back to the society. (President)

The organizers picture this modest-scale festival as both grand and meaningful. They attribute the unique character of the festival to its historic and socio-cultural significance. In practice, the organizers are also instrumental in coordinating with other stakeholders to deliver the experience, through activities such as fundraising (government authorities) and preparing for the performance (performers).

Performers' value creation

The entire surrounding environment has the capacity to contribute to the scenes where their performances and experiences will be delivered. In their capacity as supporters of the event, performers are the key to the experience environment as their engagements in a festival environment can be perceived actively by tourists. They are normally affiliated with the festival organizers. The interviewed representatives of these two stakeholder groups exhibit substantially similar thinking. Interviews were undertaken by appointment with two experienced performers. The younger (Mr. Sing) had been practicing for ten years and the other had been practicing since he was aged 16. Both expressed enjoyment of the practice and advocated for preserving the culture.

We are just here to preserve the tradition. This culture has been transmitted from generation to generation. I am the third generation. If the audience invites us to take photos with them, we are happy to do so, as we can take this opportunity to promote this traditional practice to others. (Mr. Sing)

Through their dedication to the performance, the performers also achieve personal fulfillment (e.g. pride, meaningfulness). *“With less and less practice in temple culture, I do hope our efforts can achieve cultural awareness from other people. I will try my best to practice this performance and expect to influence and inspire more youngsters to join us to keep up the tradition”* (Mr. Lee). For these stakeholders, value creation is associated with preserving the various practices that underlie the festival, transmitting the culture to outsiders as well as to the youth of their own community with dedication, whilst simultaneously achieving personal fulfillment through their engagement.

Government authorities’ value creation

Government agencies may be viewed as festival facilitators due to their role as non-participating providers of resources for the festival through cash grants, marketing efforts and other in-kind support (Getz et al., 2007). Two main governmental bodies are involved in the Na Tcha Festival - Macau Government Tourist Office (MGTO), Macau’s DMO which is charged with tourism management, and the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC), which handles cultural management issues. Their involvement in the festival management is confined to financial and promotional efforts, since the organizers submit regular applications for tourism and cultural funds (e.g. Request for Subsidy for Association Activities Plan). Both make use of traditional and social media to support the festival promotions.

As a DMO, MGTO valued the festival because of the government’s explicit pursuit of tourism diversification.

Culture is an important tourism resource in Macau. It would be meaningful if these events can be sustained in the long term with our help... Supporting these cultural events also benefits tourism development, which conveys the culture of Macau to tourists. Because not all tourists come to

Macau for gaming, some others may be interested in the local culture in particular.
(Representative from Organizational Planning and Development Department)

The value of the festival is utilized in a destination marketing strategy to encourage tourist behavioral intentions such as re-visitation and prolongation of visit. Another colleague supplemented this comment as follows,

We treat intangible culture as “soft” tourism resources. They are not like buildings or other tangible objects like souvenirs, but rather experiences. If tourists want to experience the culture again, they need to come back, even during different times of the year, and also they can stay longer in Macau for enjoyment. (Representative from Tourism Product and Events Department)

In contrast to MGTO, IC aims to preserve all forms of local culture. As a category of heritage, ICH embodies a value system, the guiding principle of which is that,

ICH items are not only important to the members of the local community who practice them, but also to other locals. Educational and research institutions in Macau, art groups, academic groups and all levels of the society can possibly join the events and make their own efforts to support the ICH. (Representative from IC)

Due to its multi-dimensionality, this cultural festival supports Macau’s cultural diversity, which can be preserved and promoted to a wider audience in alignment with MGTO priorities. *“During the themed events, we can combine different cultural elements into one or arrange the different programs for the audiences to enjoy a wide range of culture”* (Representative from IC).

Combining tangible architecture and intangible elements provides a vehicle to deploy cultural resources for maximum effect, while tourists who appreciate tangible structures can also enjoy the movable performing arts being celebrated nearby.

Local shop owners’ value creation

Local shop owners act as suppliers or collaborators in side products and services associated with

the festival (Getz et al., 2007). It is commonly agreed by these owners that the festival is effective in creating a lively atmosphere for adjoining neighborhoods. *“I find the festival is quite good. It keeps up the tradition and creates a lively atmosphere that can attract people’s involvement”* (Durian ice-cream shop owner). Such a lively atmosphere is considered to be a positive attraction for visitors to the area, with further benefits for tourism development across the city. *“[The festival is organized] in tourism spots here. I think there is no harm to organize various performative events in tourism areas. It can attract more tourists to hang out here”* (Pharmacy shop owner).

In order to attract tourists to this area, there has to be a particular culture or a certain atmosphere to stimulate such behavioral intention. So, Macau has to first do its best to achieve this, and bring the “outsiders” [tourists] a feeling of a home away from home. In particular in the promotional efforts, they need to input a lot of money. (Beef offal stall owner)

Although the interviewed shop owners admit that the festival cannot bring their businesses direct economic benefits, they perceive the value of the festival as indirectly positively affecting their operations in the longer term. They firmly believe that prosperous tourism development in Macau will attract many tourists, thereby giving them expanded opportunities to sell their products.

The festival has a positive effect on business, but not that much. In nature, I do hope the government can keep organizing local events which can make this street lively and revitalized. Although the gaming industry is dominant in the economic development of Macau, there are still other cultural assets to exploit. (Herbal tea shop owner)

Apart from its evident economic value, the festival also allows local community members to appreciate their own culture (de Bres & Davis, 2001). This is a critical research finding in the context of cultural festivals. *“Although I don’t quite understand some traditional practices, I know it is a habit in this city to pray to the god and bestow good wishes for the whole city”*

(Herbal tea shop owner).

The shop owner respondents joined in for part of the festival. The “caiqing,” in which the lion dance team comes in front of the shop, performs a simple devotional dance and receives in return a “red pocket” of money from the shop owners (Figure 2), is a blessing activity for good business. *“It becomes a ritual practice among us neighbors. In a word, that is for good luck and a booming business”* (Clothing shop owner). The red pocket is a kind of donation that emanates from the local community to support the festival. Such supportive behaviors indicate a strong cultural cognition of local practices and showcase the interactions between the local shop owners, event organizers and performers. Such an occasion becomes a unique component that is presented in the experience environment and may be perceived by tourists.

The multifaceted nature of value in cultural festival contexts

Exploring the multifaceted nature of value in the festival context has allowed a better understanding of cultural festivals and how value is perceived and presented for the benefits of its stakeholders and audience. The researchers have explained the inter-connections amongst the roles of these stakeholders as they jointly present an experience environment for the enjoyment of tourists, demonstrating the importance of well-organized joint efforts from all stakeholders in realizing the multifaceted value of festivals that extend beyond economic benefits. Figure 3 presents a model of the mechanisms by which the value of a cultural festival is generated through co-creation involving contributions of a variety of stakeholders. In some cases, multiple stakeholders contribute to value creation, and each stakeholder may hold multiple propositions about value. The value systems of some stakeholders indicate their desire to impact on others. For instance, organizers expect the audience to attach significance to the festival after visiting. As consolidated, there are two domains of festival value. The physical benefits that are derived

from the festival constitute functional value, while emotional value refers to contributions to the well-being of stakeholders, whether personal or at the socio-cultural level (Lee, Lee, & Choi, 2011). The diverse respondents provide a basis for insights into different aspects of functional and emotional value.

Please insert Figure 3 here

In Figure 3, items that are presented within oval shapes indicate the positions and interests of stakeholders. It is evident that MGTO views the festival as an opportunity to diversify Macau's various tourism offerings. By way of contrast, IC focuses on promoting this traditional festival as a means of preserving significant ICH. The two entities share a common interest in preserving and promoting the festival, along with the festival organizers and performers. These activities represent functional value by promoting cultural significance to attendees, and socio-cultural value for locals by contributing to the preservation of their culture. Although local shop owners make only modest contributions to the preparation of the festival, they view the events as indirectly benefiting their businesses. As members of a group that lives and operates within the local community, shop owners appreciate the continuity of ritual practices, which serve as a manifestation of their own culture. Tourists are the only group that sits outside the lives of the local groups, serving as outsiders whose main concern is the personal benefit that flows from participating in the festival. Given the spontaneity that observed, emotional value would be more associated with tourists. They gain rich psychological fulfillment from reflecting on the experience, and their behavioral intentions are also aroused.

Conclusions and implications

The authors have presented a comprehensive examination of value co-creation in a traditional festival from the perspective of multiple stakeholders, based on Macau's Feast of Na Tcha. The exercise has provided a balanced assessment of the festival, which has avoided dominance by a single party, as has been the case in most previous studies (i.e. a focus on only tourists' festival experiences or on the perspectives of festival organizers and managers alone). The findings demonstrate that cultural festivals must be understood as entailing values that extend beyond the entertainment function to encompass a multifaceted model of value formation. It has done so by evoking and analyzing the perspectives of various stakeholders. It indicates that value is co-created by a multitude of stakeholders who are directly involved in both the organization of the festival and in aspects of the surrounding environment. In terms of contribution to theory, the study is the first to consider the perspectives of such a wide range of festival stakeholders through an application of value co-creation in a World Heritage context. The authors have thoroughly implemented the spirit of value co-creation by considering all these parties (i.e. tourists, organizers, performers, government officers and local shop owners), and not confining consideration to supply and demand perspectives. The study potentially expands the current literature with this new approach towards examining the value of cultural festivals. The researchers have explored the multifaceted nature of value in cultural festival contexts which has been absent from previous studies on cultural festivals. Drawing upon a particular study context, the researchers have viewed traditional cultural festivals as meaningful cultural assets and as unique cultural attractions for destination marketing, cultural preservation and visitor enjoyment.

Instead of focusing exclusively on relationships concerning tourists' psychological states and processes (e.g. their motivations, satisfaction and loyalty), the researchers have shown the

importance of exploring the “backstory” behind the staging of festivals. This extends to how tourists view the role of the festival, along with the views of other stakeholders whose efforts have significant impacts on tourists’ perceptions of value. The researchers can only be in a position to address festival management issues accurately and offer effective solutions when the complete story has been explained by all relevant parties, with particular reference to delivering a desirable experience. Although previous studies have examined local perspectives, little consideration has been given to their cultural insights. This is perhaps because “traditional” cultural festivals have received less attention in mainstream festival studies than well-attended mega events that generate considerable and obvious economic benefits because of large-scale sponsorship and attendance. Rather than diminishing the value of cultural festivals, this raises concerns that such cultural assets are being overlooked. With increasing acknowledgment that culture is at the core of the experience economy (O’Dell, 2005), we propose that all consumption activities have a cultural base and that experience-centered products and services can provide a new or expanding and long-lasting value set.

The researchers have documented value co-creation in a festival setting from multiple perspectives, thereby providing potential insights for organizers and performers. The addition of an external voice can contribute to their understanding of the ways in which their experience offerings are engaged in the creation of value, providing insights into how the management and development of the festival can affect the tourist experience and strengthen intentions to revisit and to recommend. The study findings can potentially benefit practitioners, despite the fact that it remains challenging for festival designers and producers to find strategies that facilitate interactions between the participants and other co-creators, other than maintaining a festival ‘feel’ (Richards et al., 2014). Deploying the co-creation concept offers the prospect of enhancing

interactions and encouraging active participation in the design of the event. Tourists can be motivated to participate actively in order to co-create their personal value. This could be achieved, for example, by designing and promoting themed tours and tourism activities during festival times. Another critical finding is that audience members engage in the event by happenstance, an indication that the timing of their participation is unpredictable. This indicates that these events are not at present well integrated into the pre-trip destination image or planned itineraries, which might be addressed by promoting festivals as a part of fly-stay packages that build such experiences into the trip, thereby involving tourists at the trip planning stage.

As for other stakeholders, value can be co-created with collective efforts through all stages of the experience. While festival organizers and performers are currently the main stakeholders determining how the festival is presented, other stakeholders could potentially play more active roles in the on-site performances, such as government authorities and local shop owners. Government authorities could provide additional on-site guidance and interpretation when potential or actual tourists are interested in the performance and in acquiring a more in-depth understanding of the event and the local culture. However, caution should be exercised when contemplating a potentially expanded festival role for local shop owners, given their active involvement in business operations during the festival and the temporary closure of some outlets to accommodate the festival.

Limitations

The study has only considered a single ICH item and this constitutes a limiting factor. Future researchers are encouraged to cover a wider range of traditional Macau festivals in order to enable a comparison of the value systems of different ICH-related festivals. Although the opinions of several local shop owners have been collected here, future researchers might

consider the perspectives of local audiences, particularly noting their opinions about sharing space with tourists to enjoy their own culture. It is essential to understand such perspectives if festival managers are to balance the interests of the community with those of tourists. On the one hand, festival organizers may expect to retain traditions as they are commonly perceived by locals, with no intention of engaging in commercialization. On the other hand, they might promote and extend the festival to a wider audience in order to make it more sustainable and far-reaching. Such issues again raise the great challenge and debate amongst heritage and tourism scholars about the nature of conservation and of development.

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Table 1. Demographic features of tourist respondents

Tourist respondents - Feast of Na Tcha						
Respondent	Gender	Origin	Age	Occupation	Education Level	Frequency of visiting Macau
1	Female	China (Guangzhou)	39	Doctor	Associate	Third time
2	Female	China (Guangzhou)	32	Accountant	Associate	First time
3	Male	Germany	42	Travel jets agent	Bachelor	First time
4	Male	China (Zhongshan)	29	Salesman	Bachelor	Second time
5	Female	China (Shenzhen)	24	Nurse	Associate	Second time
6	Female	China (Foshan)	27	Administrator	Bachelor	Three times a year
7	Female	China (Dongguan)	22	Worker	Middle School	First time
8	Female	China (Guangzhou)	30	Bank clerk	Associate	Fifth time
9	Female	China (Foshan)	54	Farmer	Middle School	Once a year
10	Female	China (Guangzhou)	34	Self-employee	High School	Second time
11	Female	Australia	58	Shop owner	Bachelor	Second time
12	Female	Japan	45	Language teacher	Bachelor	First time
13	Male	Malaysia	28	Bank clerk	Master	Second time
14	Female	Shanghai	39	Accountant	Bachelor	Once or twice in a year
15	Female	China (Nanjing)	25	Student	Master	First time
16	Male	Taiwan	30	Factory worker	Bachelor	First time
17	Female	China (Henan)	22	Student	Bachelor	First time
18	Female	Hong Kong	30	Retail	Bachelor	Once a year
19	Female	Korea	40	Professor	Doctoral	First time
20	Female	Malta, Europe	32	Transport staff	Master	First time
21	Male	Manila, Philippines	29	Analyst	Bachelor	First time
22	Female	China (Shanghai)	32	Teacher	Bachelor	First time
23	Male	China (Dongguan)	30	Real estate sales	Bachelor	Fifth time
24	Female	China (Foshan)	20	Student	Bachelor	First time
25	Male	China (Beijing)	35	Administrator	Bachelor	First time
26	Female	China (Shandong)	45	Healthcare personnel	Bachelor	First time
27	Female	China (Guangzhou)	25	Pharmaceutical registrar	Bachelor	Twice a year
28	Female	China (Guangzhou)	23	Freelancer	Bachelor	Second time
29	Female	China (Xiamen)	35	Engineer	Bachelor	First time
30	Female	China (Jiangmen)	35	Motor maintenance employee	High School	First time
31	Female	China (Shenzhen)	25	Bank clerk	Bachelor	Third time
32	Female	China (Zhuhai)	19	Student	Bachelor	Once in two months
33	Female	China (Zhuhai)	24	Nurse	Bachelor	Third time

34	Female	China (Zhuhai)	23	Administrator	High School	Second time
35	Female	China (Zhuhai)	34	Cosmetic sale	Bachelor	First time
36	Male	China (Zhuhai)	19	Student	Bachelor	First time
37	Female	China (Liaoning)	36	Phone sales	Bachelor	First time
38	Male	Manila, Philippines	26	Tourism industry worker	Bachelor	First time

Table 2. Other respondents

Stakeholders	Position or affiliation
Organizer	President
	Vice President
Performer	Dragon dance performer
	Parade performer
Government officer	Tourism Product and Events Department of MGTO
	Organizational Planning and Development Department of MGTO
	Department of Cultural Heritage of IC
Local shop owner	Local Shop - Herbal Tea
	Local Shop - Durian Ice-cream
	Local Shop - Beef offal stall
	Local Shop - Pharmacy
	Local Shop - Souvenir - Dried Meat Slices
	Local Shop - Juice shop
	Local Shop - Souvenir – cookie
	Local Shop - Clothing shop



Figure 1. Feast of Na Tcha (the decorative display is located adjacent to the Ruins of St. Paul's)
(Source: authors)



Figure 2. Typical performative elements of the Feast of Na Tcha (Source: authors)

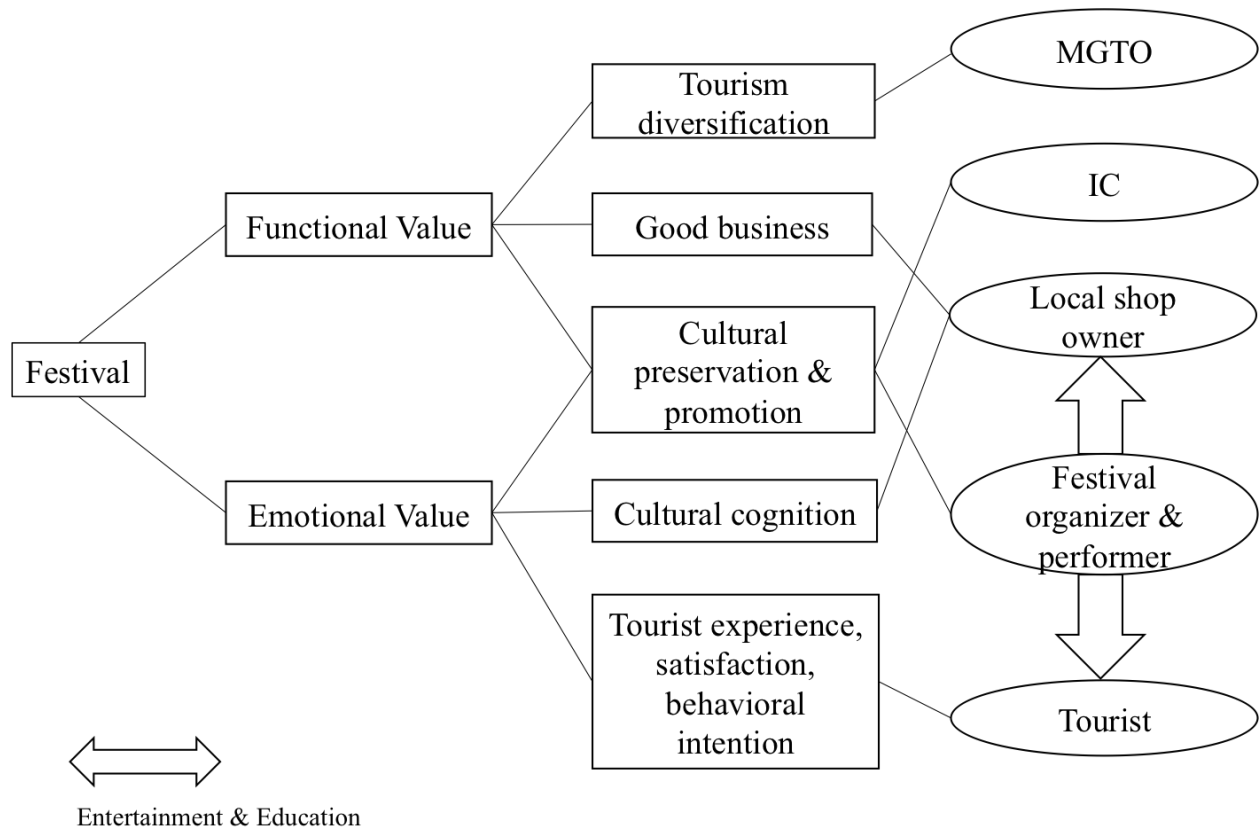


Figure 3. Festival values and the stakeholder role