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Asian Wave in Travel and Tourism Research

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ASIAN WAVE IN TRAVEL AND TOURISM RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT. Although numerous tourism-related articles have been published by authors affiliated with Asian universities, operationalized here as the “Asian Wave,” little research effort has focused on examining such authorship. Adopting a publication counting method, this study analyzes articles published in four top tourism journals from 1999–2008 that are either Asia-focused or co-authored by researchers from Asian universities. The results reveal that both Asian research productivity and Asia-related contributions have increased over time, although there have been few inter-Asia and international research collaborations in the past decade. A discussion of the Asian Wave and suggestions for its further growth are provided.

KEYWORDS. Asian studies, Asian Wave, journal review, tourism journals, travel and tourism research

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a rapidly evolving sector of the global economy and a maturing academic discipline. Academic research plays an important role in extending knowledge of the tourism phenomenon (Sheldon, 1991) and helping tourism practitioners to solve managerial and operational problems (Van Scotter & Culligan, 2003). Research is also important to the tourism and hospitality departments of universities. Law and Chon (2007), for example, emphasized the significance of publications in leading research journals to success in grant applications and institutional prestige. Arpan, Raney,

and Zivnuska (2003) demonstrated that the institutional ranking of various programs is typically determined by their national and international research publication records. Consequently, both universities and the scholars within them devote significant time and effort to boosting research productivity. The numerous research articles published in the tourism and hospitality discipline are evidence of this phenomenon.

In line with the proliferation of such research in recent years, a number of reviews and evaluations have been conducted to better understand the latest research findings, implications, and trends in this field (Law & Cheung, 2008; Law, Leung, & Buhalis, 2009; Oh, Kim, & Shin,

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2004). Most of these reviews have adopted the publication counting method to examine the contributions made to leading tourism and hospitality research journals during a certain period of time. The findings are generally organized according to author affiliation, repeat authorship, and research contributions from different regions of the world (Jogarathnam, Chon, McCleary, Mena, & Yoo, 2005; Jogarathnam, McCleary, Mena, & Yoo, 2005; Severt, Tesone, Bottorff, & Carpenter, 2009; Sheldon, 1991).

In authorship analysis of three top-tier tourism journals in the 1980s, Sheldon (1991) found that North American researchers accounted for the largest proportion of tourism article authors (65.1%). The Asia-Pacific region—including Australia, New Zealand, China, and other Asian countries—was the third most prolific region, contributing 7.3% of all published articles. Jogarathnam, McCleary et al. (2005) investigated the research contributions made to 11 leading tourism and hospitality journals from 1992 to 2001. Despite its insignificant share of total contributions, Asia was a substantial contributor in this period, accounting for 6.3% of authors in the journals reviewed. Severt et al. (2009) replicated the study carried out by Jogarathnam, McCleary et al. (2005) by analyzing the research papers published in these journals between 2002 and 2006, and presented a 15-year aggregate snapshot of research output by region. They found that Asian research output had grown considerably over the earlier period, with the region becoming one of the world's top three contributors, accounting for 14.8% of all articles published in the leading tourism and hospitality journals during the 5-year period from 2002–2006. Severt et al. (2009) also noted that the Asian continent now has the fastest tourism and hospitality research contribution growth rate.

Thanks to strong economic development and a stable political environment, the tourism and hospitality industries have been rapidly evolving in many Asian countries, as evidenced by the strong recovery in international tourist arrivals in the Asia-Pacific region following the recent economic turmoil (United Nations World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2010a). During the 8th Asia Pacific

Forum for Graduate Students Research in Tourism Conference, Dr. Kaye Chon, Editor-In-Chief of *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, defined the shift in travel toward Asia as a phenomenon named the “Asian Wave” in hospitality and tourism (Winter, 2009). Of all countries in Asia, the UNWTO (2007) forecasted that Mainland China, the largest country in the Asia-Pacific region, will be the top international destination country in the world by the year 2020 under the steady domestic growth and strong domestic tourism. To support tourism education and research, increasing numbers of Asian countries are establishing tourism programs in post-secondary institutions. In Mainland China, there are more than 1,300 post-secondary institutes offering programs in tourism studies (Tang & Law, 2006). The growth of the region's tourism business, together with the recent proliferation of Asia-related tourism studies and research carried out by Asian university-affiliated scholars, points to the significance of tourism research in the region. Since the research performance a place's tourism could directly reflect the maturation of tourism in that place (Zhao & Ritchie, 2007; Bushell, Prosser, Faulkner, & Jafari, 2001), the representation of research articles related to Asia or authored/co-authored by researchers affiliated with Asian educational institutions is operationalized as the “Asian Wave” in this study. A recent joint conference held by the Asia Pacific Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education (APac-CHRIE) and the Asia Pacific Tourism Association (APTA) adopted the theme of “Tourism and Hospitality Education and Research: Coming of the Asian Wave” (Lema, 2007), further indicates that the academic community recognizes the region's substantial contributions to tourism research.

In spite of the acknowledgement of the Asian Wave by academe, little, if ever any, effort has been devoted to investigating its development and research contributions. Clark (1986) suggested that tracking research productivity in quality journals can provide evidence of changes in research contributions over time. Considering the absence of published articles examining the issue of Asian Wave, a study that examines Asia-related travel and tourism

research issues will be of interest to both academic scholars and industry practitioners. Since Mainland China's strong performance in tourism has sustained in the past decade (Zhang & Lew, 2003), research contributions by researchers affiliated with institutes in Mainland China are specifically highlighted.

The objectives of this study are: (a) to assess Asian research productivity by counting the number of full-length research articles published in four leading tourism journals—including *Annals of Tourism Research (ATR)*, *Tourism Management (TM)*, the *Journal of Travel Research (JTR)*, and the *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing (JTTM)*, between 1999 and 2008; (b) to highlight output affiliated with an Asian university and/or Asian data source, with the aim of identifying significant changes during different time periods (i.e., 1999–2003 versus 2004–2008); and (c) to examine research collaborations in different contexts among Asian countries.

The remainder of the article is organized as follows. The next section reviews published articles related to analyses of research productivity and collaboration. It is followed by a section that presents the methodology adopted in this study. The penultimate section presents the study's findings and further discusses the Asian Wave phenomenon, and the article ends with conclusions, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Methodologies Employed in Research Productivity Analysis

The methods of assessment adopted to analyze research productivity in tourism and hospitality journals vary, with content analysis being most frequently employed in the 1980s and 1990s. In a meta-analysis of 441 articles published in *ATR* and the *Journal of Leisure Research* from 1974 to 1986, Dann, Nash, and Pearce (1988) explored the interplay between theoretical awareness and methodological sophistication in tourism research. They emphasized the need for tourism researchers

to find a balance between theory and method. Crawford-Welch and McCleary (1992) as well as Baloglu and Assante (1999) employed content analysis to examine publications in four hospitality journals and one tourism journal in terms of subject area and research techniques for the 1983–1989 and 1990–1996 periods, respectively.

More recently, Xiao and Smith (2006) adopted this method to examine a single top-tier research journal, *ATR*, although analyses of research publications across tourism journals are more common (Baloglu & Assante, 1999; Law & Cheung, 2008; Zhao & Ritchie, 2007). In addition, to account for the varied interests of tourism and hospitality researchers, a number of studies have considered broader ranges of publications and journals in both disciplines (Huang & Hsu, 2008; Jogaratnam, Chon et al., 2005; Jogaratnam, McCleary et al., 2005; Law et al., 2009; Severt et al., 2009).

Based on an analysis of more than 1,500 articles published in advertising journals, Barry (1990) suggested that the quantity and quality of research output are the two major issues in research productivity analysis. Quantity refers to the number of times authors are referenced by subsequent researchers, whereas the implication of quality is that higher quality studies are cited more frequently. Citation analysis, which measures research productivity by counting how many times a paper has been referenced by other researchers (Law & Chon, 2007), is one of the most widely used methods of examining the influence of a journal article. The Thomson ISI scale, which now encompasses the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) and other indices, is a well-known citation method that assesses more than 8,750 journals. Such approaches are subject to bias, however, because journals with higher rankings tend to be more readily available within academic databases and more easily accessed by citation indices. Possible misinterpretations may also influence the validity of their findings (Morgan & Janca, 2000).

Publication counting methods, which count the number of published articles in selected research journals (Weaver, McCleary, & Farrar, 1990), are another proxy for assessing research productivity and are considered to be easy to

perform and interpret. Weaver and McCleary (1989) published one of the first tourism and hospitality studies that measures the number of research publications appearing in related journals. More recent efforts include analyses of the trends in faculty selection and review criteria (Sheldon & Collison, 1990); the academic leadership tourism research (Zhao & Ritchie, 2007); and the rating of journals in the tourism and hospitality fields (Ferreira, DeFranco, & Rappole, 1994; McKercher, Law, & Lam, 2006; Ryan, 2005). Although all of these studies have contributed to the literature, none has specifically examined Asian research contributions. Although the use of publication counting methods to explore research productivity is not without criticism, these methods are frequently employed to measure research quality and quantity (Wood, 1995). Severt et al. (2009) suggested that expanding the number of selected journals and assessing periodic variations in output could potentially ameliorate the limitations of publication counting methods. The study reported herein reviewed journal articles published in four tourism journals during the 10-year period from 1999 to 2008, and assessed the changes in research contributions between the first and second 5-year periods.

Research Collaboration

Tourism is generally considered to be a major economic contributor. For destination marketers, the management of tourist destinations is of the utmost importance because it is directly associated with tourism's ability to contribute to the local community and economy. Given the keen competition in the tourism industry, a strong research base is needed to guide destination planning and management (Innes & Boohar, 1999). This need has driven the proliferation of collaborative studies conducted by government, stakeholders, and academic researchers (Bushell et al., 2001; Helling, 1998).

The measurement of research output over time has become routine practice among academic institutions and journals, both for identifying the contributions of that output to knowledge and for ranking educational programs and institutions. Sheldon and Collison

(1990) indicated that research journal articles constitute the most important criterion for hiring, promotion, and tenure at all university ranks. Hence, many universities recognize research as a higher status than teaching (Rowland, 1996). The emphasis placed on research in the tourism and hospitality fields is also evidenced by the proliferation of new academic journals devoted to these fields in recent years.

To provide insight into the development of these fields, Sheldon (1991) conducted a study on the authorship of articles in tourism journals according to author affiliation, research contributions of the employing institutions, and research contributions of different geographic locations. She concluded that there is a need for more collaborative research projects. McKercher (2007) specifically examined prolific authors by analyzing full papers published in 25 leading tourism and hospitality journals between 2000 and 2004. He found that more than 40% of these papers were co-authored, 23% of them by three or more scholars. Another interesting finding was that many prolific authors frequently collaborate with non-prolific authors and take a leadership role (McKercher, 2007). Zhao and Ritchie (2007) conducted a similar study to examine the most prolific scholars by analyzing the research publications in eight tourism journals between 1985 and 2004. The result suggested that over 70% of research articles conducted by the 57 most prolific scholars were collaborative research.

These studies demonstrate a trend toward research collaboration, possibly because of the interdisciplinary nature of tourism research (Leung & Law, 2006; Sheldon, 1991). Tourism journals often publish the work of researchers in other disciplines—including marketing, information technology, and financial management. Furthermore, as research projects become more sophisticated, their execution may require research teams rather than single researchers (Law & Cheung, 2008), and it is believed that increasing numbers of academics with diverse skills will team up for research projects in this arena in future (Leung & Law, 2006). Despite the proliferation of cross-disciplinary and international collaborations in tourism research,

little substantive analysis of the trend has been published.

METHODOLOGY

The objective of this study was to assess Asia-related research productivity by counting publication occurrences in leading tourism journals. Given the profusion of research journals in the tourism and hospitality fields, an argument could be made for including all such journals in this study. Assessing such a large body of output, however, would be an overwhelming task (Jogaratnam, McCleary et al., 2005). In a study ranking 70 tourism and hospitality journals, Mc Kercher and colleagues (2006) identified the *ATR*, *TM*, *JTR*, and *JTTM* as among the top five, and thus these four are chosen for this study. Sheldon (1991) suggested that the *ATR*, *TM*, and *JTR* are the highest quality and most referenced tourism journals. As it serves as a forum for scholarly articles in the field of tourism and travel marketing (Laws, 1992), the *JTTM* was added to our list to provide additional breadth of content and a greater international perspective. The study period was limited to 10 years, the same timeframe adopted by Jogaratnam, McCleary et al. (2005) and Law and Cheung (2008). Asia's tourism industry has witnessed significant growth over the past decade, and it is thus meaningful to examine the region's output of tourism research in this period. To highlight the formation of an Asian Wave, significant changes in the development and trends of published articles are explored by comparing the 5-year period beginning in 1999 with the 5-year period ending in 2008.

Data were collected from late-2008 to early-2009. Only full-length research articles published in the four selected journals were included. Research notes, conference reports, introductions to special reports and communications were excluded. A total of 2,157 articles were identified for examination.

The publication counting method was employed to examine Asia-related research productivity. The study adopted the official geographic categories used by the United Nations (2000): Eastern Asia, South-Central Asia,

South-Eastern Asia, and Western Asia. Previous researchers have analyzed research productivity by counting absolute and relative authorship appearances (Barry, 1990; Jogaratnam, Chon et al., 2005; Jogaratnam, McCleary et al., 2005). As it is difficult to verify the contributions of each author in a project, this study counted instances of articles alone. In other words, one point was assigned for each author affiliated with an Asian university or instance of an Asian data source.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Analysis of Asian Research Productivity

Table 1 presents an overview of Asia-related tourism research published in the four selected journals between 1999 and 2008. Sheldon (1991) postulated that the quantity of tourism research is directly related to global economic conditions. As a country's tourism sector grows along with its economy, increased funding for related educational programs stimulates more tourism research. In 2008, which witnessed a global financial crisis, relatively little such research was published relative to the previous year. This paucity of research may be the result of reduced funding, which would support Sheldon's (1991) supposition.

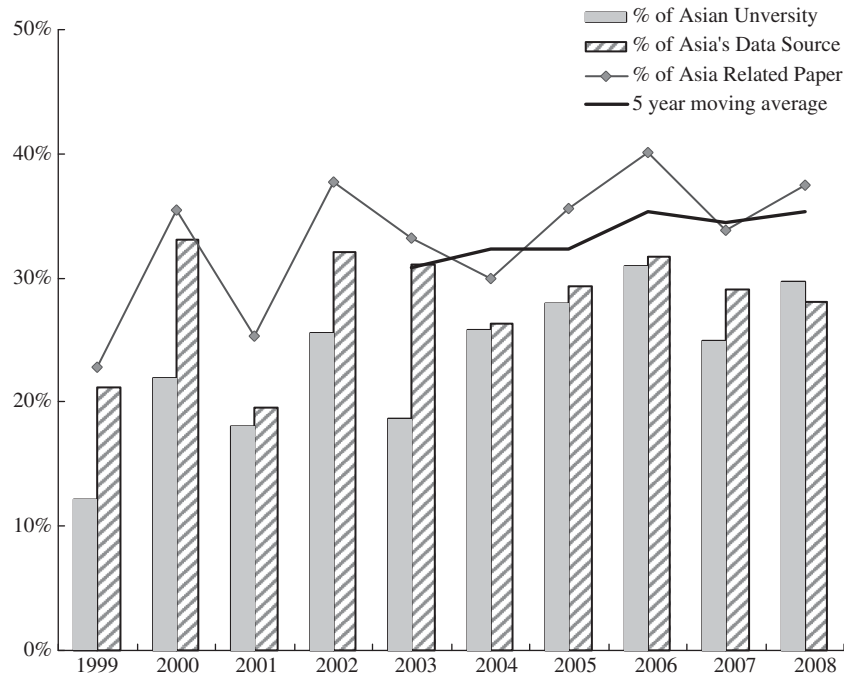
In terms of the percentage of papers related to Asia, 521 of those collected (24.2%) had authors affiliated with Asian universities, and 610 (28.3%) employed a data source(s) from an Asian country/region. Some papers were both authored by scholars affiliated with Asian universities and drew on Asian data sources, but were awarded only 1 point each to avoid repetition in the counting. A total of 723 Asia-related papers were identified, meaning that 33.5% of all of the papers reviewed employed an Asian data source(s) or had at least one author affiliated with an Asian university.

Despite their small share of total publications, the percentage of Asia-related articles has increased over time. For example, they accounted for only 22.8% of the total in 1999, but their proportion had increased to 37.5% by 2008. As shown in Figure 1, the 5-year moving

TABLE 1. Total Number of Research Papers Related to Asia Published in Four Journals During 1999–2008

Year	Total no. of papers	Authors of papers affiliated with an Asian university		Papers with Asian data source		Papers with Asian university-affiliated author/Asian data source	
		No. of papers	%	No. of papers	%	No. of papers	%
1999	189	23	12.2	40	21.2	43	22.8
2000	169	37	21.9	56	33.1	60	35.5
2001	194	35	18.0	38	19.6	49	25.3
2002	196	50	25.5	63	32.1	74	37.8
2003	193	36	18.7	60	31.1	64	33.2
2004	217	56	25.8	57	26.3	65	29.9
2005	208	58	27.9	61	29.3	74	35.6
2006	287	89	31.0	91	31.7	115	40.1
2007	272	68	25.0	79	29.0	92	33.8
2008	232	69	29.7	65	28.0	87	37.5
Total	2157	521	24.2	610	28.3	723	33.5

FIGURE 1. Trend of Asia-Related Journal Articles Published in the Four Journals During 1999–2008 Period



average indicates a steady increase in Asian involvement in tourism research. Although the fluctuations in the percentage of Asia-related paper are high, the moving average clearly reflects that more Asian tourism scholars have

begun to publish in the leading tourism journals. In addition, there has been an increase in Asia-related tourism research topics supported by empirical results from Asian countries/regions in recent years.

Analysis by Individual Journal

Table 2 shows the distribution of Asia-related research in the four selected journals. Of the 2,157 full-length research papers reviewed, *TM* published the largest number with 769, followed by *ATR* with 573, the *JTR* with 423, and the *JTTM* with 392. As can be seen from Table 2, although all four journals devoted space to Asia-related research with a quarter of their total space overall, their distributions differed. In terms of percentages of such research, *TM* came first, with an average of 40% of its papers related to Asia. The *JTTM* ranked second with 36%. Although the remaining two published fewer such papers than *TM* and the *JTTM*, at least a quarter of those published were Asia-related.

Analysis by 5-Year Period

To highlight the formation of an Asian Wave and the significant changes in Asian research contributions over time, the 10 years of the sample period were divided into two 5-year periods, with the results presented in Table 3. Overall, the total number of Asia-related papers published in the first 5-year period (1999–2003) was 290, and the number in the second period (2004–2008) was 433, representing a jump from 30.8% to 35.6%. This significant increase in output can be explained by the growing number of Asian institutions offering tourism programs and the growing realization of the significance of tourism research (Law & Chon, 2007).

When individual journals are considered, it can be seen that the three most highly regarded ones by Sheldon (1991)—namely, *ATR*, *TM*, and *JTR*—published more papers related to Asia in the second 5-year period than in the first. Although *JTTM* has relatively fewer papers published in the second 5-year period, approximately one third of the papers focused on Asia. These findings reflect the greater research emphasis on Asian tourism issues in recent years.

Analysis of Author Affiliations

The sample was further analyzed by the geographic regions of the institutions with which

authors were affiliated at the time of publication. Table 4 lists the Asian countries/regions that contributed one or more papers to the four journals during the study period. In terms of the absolute count for authorship, 865 instances of authors affiliated with universities from 16 Asian countries/regions were found in the research publications related to Asia.

Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Korea were the top three contributing countries/regions, with 239, 177, and 146 authors affiliated with their institutions, respectively. Although Mainland China is the world's most populated country and predicted to become the world's number 1 travel destination by 2020 (UNWTO, 2007), only 26 research articles in our sample were published by authors affiliated with the Mainland, possibly because of the differences between its research and education systems and those of other countries. Law and Cheung (2008) also found researchers from Mainland China to be poorly represented in the leading tourism and hospitality journals.

Analysis of Research Collaboration

In view of their increasing occurrence (Leung & Law, 2006, 2007; Sheldon, 1991), we also considered research collaborations among countries in Asia. Figure 2 shows instances of research collaboration within a country/region and those between two or more countries/regions. Over the past decade, 206 collaborative studies related to Asia were reported in the four journals. The majority were conducted across two or three countries/regions, with only three exceptions found. This result is in line with the conclusions of Sheldon (1991) as well as Leung and Law (2006) with regard to scholars' increasing tendency to collaborate on research projects. As research projects become more complex in nature and scope, instances of researchers from different disciplines and countries working together will increase. One of the Asia-related papers reviewed in this study which was authored by Pizam et al. (2004), reported a cross-cultural study that involved 11 researchers from 11 countries.

TABLE 2. Distribution of Asia-Related Research Published in Four Journals from 1999–2008

Journal	Year	Total no. of papers	Authors of papers affiliated with an Asian university		Papers with Asian data source		Papers with Asian university-affiliated author/Asian data source	
			No. of papers	%	No. of papers	%	No. of papers	%
<i>ATR</i>	1999	58	5	8.6	10	17.2	11	19.0
	2000	53	7	13.2	14	26.4	14	26.4
	2001	59	8	13.6	11	18.6	13	22.0
	2002	66	13	19.7	16	24.2	19	28.8
	2003	53	6	11.3	15	28.3	15	28.3
	2004	54	9	16.7	10	18.5	12	22.2
	2005	62	11	17.7	16	25.8	19	30.6
	2006	61	19	31.1	19	31.1	26	42.6
	2007	57	9	15.8	16	28.1	18	31.6
	2008	50	8	16.0	14	28.0	17	34.0
<i>Total</i>		573	95	16.6	141	24.6	164	28.6
<i>TM</i>	1999	61	9	14.8	12	19.7	14	23.0
	2000	52	18	34.6	19	36.5	20	38.5
	2001	55	11	21.8	13	23.6	17	30.9
	2002	55	18	32.7	20	36.4	22	40.0
	2003	57	17	29.8	21	36.8	23	40.4
	2004	68	30	44.1	31	45.6	33	48.5
	2005	81	30	37.0	28	34.6	34	42.0
	2006	111	42	38.7	41	36.9	50	45.9
	2007	128	46	35.9	48	37.5	55	43.0
	2008	101	36	36.6	27	27.7	40	41.6
<i>Total</i>		769	257	33.8	260	33.9	308	40.4
<i>JTR</i>	1999	41	7	17.1	11	26.8	11	26.8
	2000	42	7	16.7	8	19.0	10	23.8
	2001	44	5	11.4	3	6.8	5	11.4
	2002	39	7	17.9	11	28.2	15	38.5
	2003	42	6	14.3	9	21.4	11	26.2
	2004	42	9	21.4	8	19.0	10	23.8
	2005	41	12	29.3	12	29.3	15	36.6
	2006	48	8	16.7	7	14.6	11	22.9
	2007	40	9	22.5	7	17.5	10	25.0
	2008	44	12	27.3	7	15.9	12	27.3
<i>Total</i>		423	81	19.4	83	19.6	110	26.0
<i>JTTM</i>	1999	29	2	6.9	7	24.1	7	24.1
	2000	22	5	22.7	15	68.2	16	72.7
	2001	36	11	30.6	11	30.6	14	38.9
	2002	36	12	36.1	16	44.4	18	50.0
	2003	41	7	17.1	15	36.6	15	36.6
	2004	53	8	15.1	8	15.1	10	18.9
	2005	24	5	20.8	5	20.8	6	25.0
	2006	67	20	29.9	24	35.8	28	41.8
	2007	47	5	10.6	8	17.0	9	19.1
	2008	37	13	35.1	17	43.2	18	51.4
<i>Total</i>		392	88	22.7	126	31.9	141	36.2

Most of the cases identified involved international research collaborations with countries outside Asia, with few conducted between/among countries/regions in Asia. North America was the region most favored

by Asian scholars in terms of collaboration, as can be seen from Figure 2. Although Europe, Australia, and New Zealand boast renowned tourism institutions, Asian scholars appear to have engaged in relatively few

TABLE 3. Distribution of Asia-Related Articles Published in the First and Second 5-Year Periods

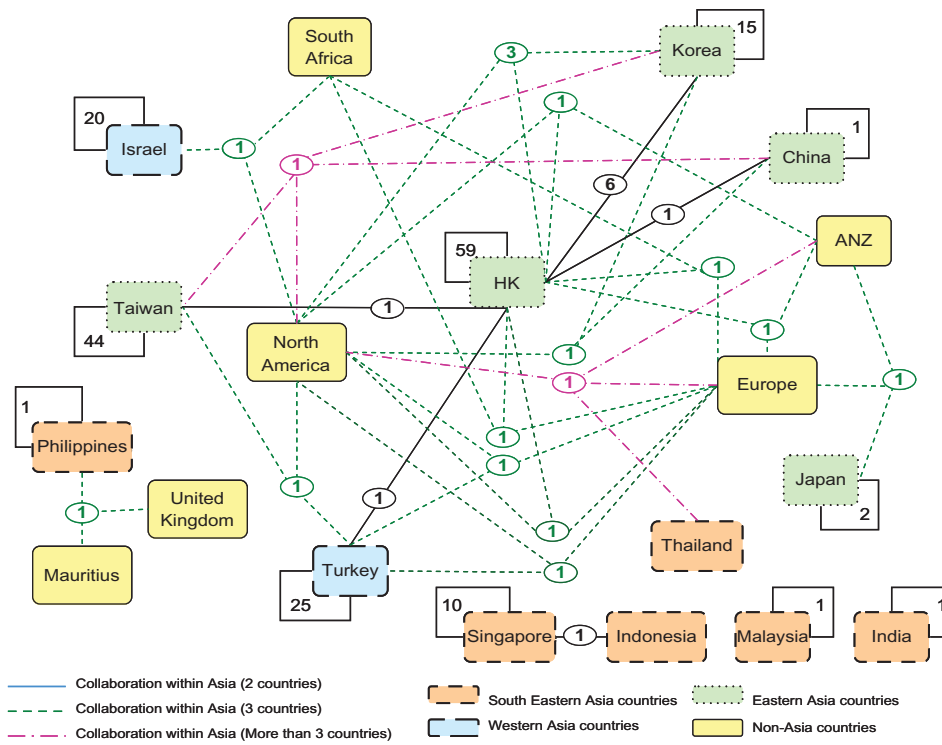
Journal	Period	Total no. of papers	Authors of papers affiliated with an Asian university		Papers with Asia data source		Papers with Asian university-affiliated author/Asian data source	
			No. of papers	%	No. of papers	%	No. of papers	%
ATR	First 5-year	289	39	13.4	66	22.8	72	24.9
	Second 5-year	284	56	19.7	75	26.4	92	32.3
TM	First 5-year	280	73	26.0	85	30.3	96	34.2
	Second 5-year	489	184	37.6	175	35.7	212	43.3
JTR	First 5-year	208	32	15.3	42	20.1	52	25.0
	Second 5-year	215	49	22.7	41	19.0	58	26.9
JTTM	First 5-year	164	38	23.1	64	39.0	70	42.6
	Second 5-year	228	51	22.3	62	27.1	71	31.1
Overall	First 5-year	941	181	19.2	257	27.3	290	30.8
	Second 5-year	1,216	340	27.9	353	29.0	433	35.6
Total		2,157	521	24.1%	610	28.3	723	33.5

TABLE 4. Research Contributions by Asian Countries/Regions

Author-affiliated country/region	ATR	TM	JTR	JTTM	Total
Hong Kong	25	102	48	64	239
Taiwan	16	135	9	17	177
Korea	23	97	13	13	146
Turkey	16	63	2	13	94
Israel	36	15	18	5	74
Singapore	13	11	15	11	50
China	9	12	2	3	26
Japan	2	5	3	6	16
Thailand	2	3	3	4	12
Philippines	5	1	0	0	6
Macau	0	1	3	1	5
India	0	4	0	0	4
Malaysia	0	2	0	1	3
Sri Lanka	0	3	0	0	3
Cyprus	1	1	0	0	2
China, USA*	0	1	0	0	1
Hong Kong, Turkey*	0	1	0	0	1
Hong Kong, USA*	0	0	1	0	1
Japan, Indonesia*	0	0	1	0	1
Korea, USA*	0	0	1	0	1
Turkey, UK*	0	0	1	0	1
Turkey, USA*	0	1	0	0	1
USA, China*	0	1	0	0	1
Total	148	459	120	138	865

Note. *Authors affiliated with universities in two different countries/regions, where the first country/region represents the first affiliated institute and the second country/region represents the second affiliated institute.

FIGURE 2. Research Collaborations in Asia (Color online only).



collaborative studies with their counterparts in these locales.

Eastern Asia, home to the three most prolific Asian countries/regions, was also the major contributor to collaborative research. According to McKercher's (2007) analysis of the world's most prolific tourism and hospitality researchers, Eastern Asia was second only to North America in terms of the number of institutions producing prolific authors. It is clear from the current study that the region also has a predilection for collaborative research.

In line with McKercher's (2007) finding that it is home to the most prolific hospitality and tourism authors in Asia, Hong Kong continues to be the continent's most active research center, with numerous inter-Asian and international collaborative publications, according to the findings of the current study. Korea is its major collaborative partner, with the two responsible for nine of the collaborative studies reviewed. Although Mainland China is home to 1,300 post-secondary institutions offering tourism and

hospitality management programs (Tang & Law, 2006), it is surprising that only three collaborative studies in the four journals were related to the country. To conclude, although it is clear that there is an increased tendency to collaborate on tourism research, collaborations among Asian countries/regions remain limited.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study analyzes Asia-related research productivity in leading tourism journals to confirm the rise of an Asian Wave. Previous studies have suggested that reviews of tourism research have the potential to reveal research trends in the field (Law et al., 2009; Oh et al., 2004). However, limited effort has been devoted to examining the changes in and development of the research contributions made by particular countries/regions.

In the past decade, Asia has witnessed unprecedented growth in its tourism sector. As

the economic benefits of the sector increase, so too should funding and support for tourism-related educational programs, particularly as tourism research is acknowledged to help government stakeholders to better understand tourism in their regions. Given that article productivity has long been used as a measure of institutional quality (Clark, 1985), it is believed that most, if not all, universities in Asia are also placing an increased emphasis on research as a way of enhancing their reputation, which can be seen in the steady increase in Asian involvement in tourism research documented herein.

Although this steady increase is indicative of an Asian Wave, the distribution of research among Asian countries/regions is extreme. The international nature of Hong Kong, and its comfortable combination of a Western lifestyle and Chinese traditions, gives it advantages in drawing research talent from around the globe. In addition, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University's strong commitment to tourism and hospitality research is another contributor to Hong Kong's successful research performance (Law & Cheung, 2008). Taiwan, too, has been successful in this regard, in line with the expansion of its tourism sector and economic development in recent years and its greater emphasis on tourism education (Kim, Chen, & Jang, 2006). These factors all help to explain the healthy contribution to tourism research documented here.

Mainland China has more post-secondary institutions offering tourism programs than many countries, and the government's increased investment in tourism education has also assisted in the country's research development. However, a study carried out by Law and Cheung (2008) indicated that differences in China's education and research systems relative to those of its neighbors in the region may explain its relatively poor research performance. Gu, Kavanaugh, and Cong (2007) stated that universities in Mainland China have a shortage of faculty members with postgraduate degrees in the tourism and hospitality disciplines. As this shortage results in less guidance and mentorship for junior researchers and fewer experienced researchers, high-quality publications are limited. Xiao and Smith (2006) also found Chinese

researchers to be overly reliant on Western research instruments and knowledge, a limitation that may hinder the overall development of tourism knowledge and research productivity in China. Moreover, as noted by Law and Cheung (2008), universities in Mainland China have relatively few research facilities and offer few competitive financial rewards, which may reduce their ability to attract international scholars and train local scholars with the skills needed to carry out high-quality research projects. To enhance the country's research productivity, a greater amount of investments is needed to improve research facilities.

In addition, the primary language of instruction and research in Mainland China is Chinese, with research findings often published in Chinese-language journals such as *Tourism Tribute* and the *Management of Tourism*. As these journals are not known to, and cannot be read by, international researchers, their value is limited. Sheldon (1991) stated that academic research is important to expanding knowledge of the tourism phenomenon, and it is believed that such knowledge should be presented in an international context. As English is currently the language of the international academic community, and as most of the top tourism journals are in English, it is recommended that Chinese universities encourage their scholars to publish their research findings in English-language journals.

It is also possible that the language issue explains the paucity of inter-Asian research collaborations in the past decade, as this issue is commonly recognized as a major factor in Asia's generally low level of international collaboration. English is not the first or the common language of many Asian countries/regions, which may affect the quality of published papers and increase communication difficulty. These countries/regions thus need to place greater emphasis on language education and skills. Moreover, researchers in Asia need to widen their exposure to international research-oriented events, which provide opportunities for researchers to interact with one another, exchange and discuss research ideas, and seek more opportunities for collaboration. The more scholars from different geographical regions

and disciplines work together, the greater the insights that are likely to be gained. To extend the Asian Wave, it is recommended that researchers in Asia actively pursue inter-Asian and international collaborative studies.

CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS

There is growing recognition of the important contributions made by the Asian Wave to hospitality and tourism research. This study has analyzed the Asia-related research contributions to four leading travel and tourism journals between 1999 and 2008. The findings are largely supportive of those of recently published research, suggesting that a growing number of scholars affiliated with Asian universities are publishing in tourism and hospitality. The use of Asian data sources has also gained in popularity over time.

Hong Kong continues to be the most active research region in Asia because of its international nature. Although it is the world's fastest growing country in terms of tourism, Mainland China's research output in English-language journals remains relatively limited. It is essential that scholars in Asia, particularly those in Mainland China, engage more actively in publishing research papers in top journals in English to disseminate their research findings and catch up with the rest of the world.

According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2010b), Asia's tourism business has strongly rebounded and will continue to grow in future. More research into the sector is therefore needed to tackle the practical problems and issues the region faces. In addition, as the review process for publication in the top journals becomes ever-more rigorous, it is suggested that more inter-Asian and international research collaborations be pursued to improve research quality and take tourism research to a higher level (Sheldon, 1991).

Results of the study are significant in that research endeavors related to Asia have begun to add another exciting dimension to tourism research. Perhaps it is time to take a strategic look at Asian tourism not only from the research perspective but also from industry practices that

may help to reshape the industry we have known for decades. Asian Wave in tourism research has become a reality as manifested in this study. Unique and authentic Asian tourism industry practices may enhance the spirit of Asian Wave. The sustainability of Asian Wave requires collaborative efforts within Asia and across the world. It is beneficial to both Asian scholars and scholars from other parts of the world from establishing their reputation by examining research issues related to Asia.

This study has several limitations. First, it included research articles published in only four English-language tourism journals, which may bias the results. It would thus be beneficial for future research to include leading tourism journals published in other languages. However, the continued proliferation of tourism journals makes the resources necessary to accomplish such a task considerable.

Second, only four leading tourism journals were examined. It would also be interesting to expand the scope of study by exploring the Asian Wave phenomenon in all tourism and hospitality journals. Another possible research direction, which would render this analysis more comprehensive, would be to compare and contrast research findings in such tourism-related disciplines as leisure, recreation, parks, accommodation, and food service.

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