

Guest Editorial Preface

Special Issue on Sports and Leisure Marketing in Asia

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INTRODUCTION

Asia has been hosting an increasing number of major sports event in recent years including the largest sporting event in the world, the Olympics, in Beijing in 2008. In 2020, it will again play host to the Olympics, this time in Tokyo. As a result, this has generated a lot of interest from commercial organizations seeking new marketing and sports sponsorship opportunities in the region. In addition, this has also led to the growth of the Asian sports and leisure industry.

This special issue aims to provide both academics and practitioners a sense of this development through a collection of research papers examining sport and leisure marketing practices in Asia. In part, it is also a response to the demand for research in this area as can be demonstrated from the successful publication of two recent edited books on sports management by IGI Global. These are “Strategies in Sports Marketing: Technologies and Emerging Trends” in 2014 and “Emerging Trends and Innovation in Sports Marketing and Management in Asia” in 2015.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

The first paper looks at one of the most expensive sport in the world, the Formula One Grand Prix. The Grand Prix is held in several countries with several legs in Asia. This paper examines the Singapore leg which was started in 2008 as the first ever Formula One night race. The motor sports event has attracted many sponsors, in part due to its prestige and the large number of fans. The focus of the paper is to examine whether there are differences in the effectiveness of sponsorship based on the placement of the sponsors’ logos. The findings from the paper suggest that brands that are placed on motor vehicles and drivers are more likely to be recalled when compared to brands placed along the perimeter of the racing track.

Community sports clubs in Japan play an important role in promoting sports in the country as they offer quality instruction for a large number of sports. However, to maintain their viability, the cost-plus pricing strategy used by many community sports clubs may not be appropriate. The second paper in this special issue examines this situation. It suggests that the Price Sensitivity Measurement method can be used to derive the internal reference price for services at community sports clubs. This will allow the community sports club to determine prices that are market-driven rather than cost-driven.

The third paper focuses on baseball, a popular sport in Taiwan and several other Asian countries. It offers an alternative statistical method to measure the performance of the Chinese Professional Baseball League. The findings suggest that the number of foreign coaches i.e. non-Taiwanese coaches, has a positive effect on the team’s performance as they are able to introduce innovations to the team. In

addition, the number of Taiwanese aborigines in the team has a positive effect on team performance. The paper ends with a discussion on practical implications for the development of the sport in Taiwan.

Soccer is one of the world's most popular sport. In particular, Asia has the most number of participants in the sport when compared to other continents. As a mature sport, it needs to look to new markets for growth. For some time, the sport has considered targeting female participants and fans. The fourth paper contributes to the literature in this area by exploring whether there are any differences in how Asian female fans react to marketing campaigns based on their level of fandom. The study found that highly involved female fans are not only more likely to support soccer through the purchase of merchandise but are also more active in seeking information on their favorite soccer teams through social media.

Technology has changed how sports is consumed. In many Asian countries, the penetration rate of smartphones has reached very high levels. Consequently, the use of smartphone applications or apps, has been extensive in these countries. The fifth paper examines the factors influencing consumers' use of sports and fitness related apps in Korea. Adapting from the Technology Acceptance Model, the study found that consumers are more likely to use apps when they perceive that such apps are not only useful, but easy and fun to use.

CONCLUSION

From the collection of papers in this special issue, it can be seen that there is an interest in sport marketing research in Asia. This collection featured studies spanning from north eastern Asian countries including Japan, Korea and Taiwan to Singapore, a country at the south of the Asian continent. Just as there is diversity in terms of the culture, language and customs of these Asian countries, this special issue has shown that diversity is also present in sports. Asians play many sports including soccer and baseball. As such, there are many opportunities for both marketing sports and marketing through sports.

The papers in this collection has shown how sports can be marketed better through the development of a better product (eg enhancing the competitiveness of the baseball teams); the development of a better pricing strategy (eg deriving internal reference price); or more effective sponsorship strategies (eg the placement of sponsors' logos). The papers have also examined differences in consumer behavior across psychographic segments (eg fandom) and demographic segments (eg age). They have also examined recent technological trends in sports marketing including the use of social media marketing and smartphone applications. These papers have only suggested the potential for future research in this area. In the near future, more exciting research is likely to emerge.

Finally, we would like to thank the many people who have made this special issue possible. This includes the staff at IGI Global, in particular Matthew Richwine. We would also like to thank the Editor-in-Chief of the International Journal of Asian Business and Information Management, Dr. Patricia Ordoñez de Pablos, for her guidance and support. Last but not least, we would like to thank those who served as members of the Editorial Advisory Board for this special issue for lending their time and expertise:

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