

# Competing Model of Event Marketing Activities

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## Abstract

Event marketing is the important strategy for the regional tourism development. It is worthwhile to be discussed that the cooperation between regional image and physical environment can shape the regional features and intensify tourists' attitudes and tourist willingness towards regions. This study took the regular event marketing activities (Xinshe Sea of Flowers events in Taichung; Sakura Festival in Formosa Aboriginal Culture Village in Sun Moon Lake) held in two regions in Taiwan as the examples to discuss the effect of event marketing activities in different regions, regional image and physical environment on tourists' experiential value, satisfaction, trust and commitment, so as to establish the competing model, compare the intensity difference in each path relationship and deeply analyze the effect of different event marketing activities.

After the analysis of 500 valid questionnaires, it can be found that: (1) the event marketing activities and physical environment in two regions both have the significantly positive effect on tourists' experiential value; (2) The tourists' experiential value has the significantly positive effect on satisfaction and trust; (3) The tourists' trust has the significantly positive effect on commitment; (4) However, the regional image has no significant effect on tourists' experiential value. Besides, there is significant difference in the influencing intensity of the two paths: (1) The tourists' satisfaction for Xinshe Sea of Flowers events in Taichung has the significantly positive effect on trust, while there is no significantly positive effect in the other region; (2) The influencing intensity of tourists' experiential value for Sakura Festival in Formosa Aboriginal Culture Village in Sun Moon Lake on trust is significantly greater than that in the other region. It can be seen that the event marketing in different regions can generate the impact with different intensity. Therefore, each region should cooperate with its physical environment to plan the characteristic event marketing strategies.

**Keywords:** event marketing, regional image, physical environment, experiential value

## 1. Introduction

The event marketing originating from the integrated marketing communications is the communication tool which can best increase the direct contact between enterprises and consumers. The main reason is that the direct experience supplied by the event is used to promote the interaction between consumers and brand and increase the connection between consumers and brand; through the direct interactive contact, the effect brought by event marketing is more significant (Hsu & Wang, 2009; Tafesse, 2016).

Therefore, in recent years, the regional event marketing based on city has become the main force in regional competition in each country (Liu, 2010). The concept of regional marketing mainly advocates the local government to actively improve physical environment, offer various incentives attract the entry of commercial activities, so as to attract tourists and drive the local diversity and wealth. The event marketing is the indispensable and important marketing tool to combine regional features and develop regional tourism industry; it can attract both tourists and investors to bring new power for the regional economy, develop the local features and obtain the diversified and integrated benefits (Chang, 2008). However, the event marketing activities held in each region are inevitably similar and even there are no regional features. Therefore, it is worthy to be discussed deeply whether the regional features can be really formed and rooted in tourists' mind and whether the advantage of sustainable operation can be achieved after the activities are over and tourists leave.

The regional event marketing activities are usually jointly cooperated by the local government and practitioners to market the regional images and features, with a view to attract enterprises, tourists or other people to come here for investment, sightseeing or settlement, so that the goal of attracting capital investment, creating local

employment opportunity and prospering the local development can be achieved (Kearns & Philo, 1993). The local government must co-create the tourism experience with tourists, and the process of joint participation and co-creation of experiential value can improve tourists' satisfaction and loyalty (Vargo & Lusch, 2006). Therefore, the regional execution of event marketing activities needs to cooperate with the local regional images and physical environment.

Therefore, the regional image is the important and intangible influence factor for the success of event marketing. As the regional image can be kept in the heart of tourists and tourists can keep such image deeply in the memory through the event marketing activities in the region as well as the traveling experience (Qu, Kim, & Im, 2011), so creating an excellent regional image is the important and key factor to promote the regional development as well as the important element for event marketing success.

Physical environment is the tangible influence factor for the regional development, including space planning, atmosphere, building design, transportation planning, parking lot, sign, natural landscape, etc (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000). The physical environment and its formed atmosphere can influence tourists' inner feeling and emotional reaction, further influencing consumption behavior (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). Tourists' emotions are usually correlated with physical environment, which will influence both tourists' behavior and purchase decision (Baker, Grewal, & Parasuraman, 1994).

Event marketing activities, regional image or physical environment are all required to enhance tourists' feeling intensity through actual experience as experience can leave a deep impression on tourists (McLuhan, 2000). During the process of experience, tourists can generate the identity in experiential value so that they can have the final consumption behavior (Mathwick, Malhotra, & Rigdon, 2001). The interaction with consumers through event marketing activities, environmental facilities and excellent image offered by the region can help consumers reach their goals, thus improving the experiential value. Therefore, experiential value is also a non-ignorable associated impact dimension, and it can intensify tourists' satisfaction and trust and further tourists make their commitment.

In conclusion, this study discussed the effect of event marketing, regional image, physical environment and other factors on tourists' experiential value, satisfaction, trust and future commitment, and analyzed and compared the different regions to understand the different effects for different event marketing. Therefore, this study chose the two regular event marketing activities, i.e., Xinshe Sea of Flowers events in Taichung and Sakura Festival in Formosa Aboriginal Culture Village in Sun Moon Lake in Taiwan as the examples and investigated the tourists who had ever participated in either activity, so as to analyze the tourists' experiential feelings in the two regions and compare the similarities and differences in the two regions. It is hoped that more concrete information can be offered through this study to assist the local government and relevant practitioners in making appropriate event marketing strategies.

## **2. Literature Review and Establishment of Hypothesis**

### *2.1 Relationship between Event Marketing and Experiential Value*

Event activity is merely the starting point of a successful event marketing and meanwhile plays the role of catalyst in many items, such as, building the brand popularity, increasing sales, inspiring customers, increasing media exposure, improving the cooperation relationship with regions, etc. (Schreiber & Lenson, 1994; Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013). Event marketing accompanied by advertising, public relation and sales promotion forms a complete marketing plan, playing the role of building popularity, persuading the potential buyers to purchase the goods or service (Goldblatt, 2002). No matter the event marketing is small or large, it can successfully integrate the marketing communication tool and play a role of powerful influence (Piesiewicz, 2010).

Tai (2009) classified the event marketing into sports type, music type, public welfare type, cultural type and charity type. The regional event marketing is mainly to create a new image for the region to facilitate the regional promotion and increase the regional value and image through the features of event marketing activities (Holcomb, 1993).

Event marketing must be executed via experience and the value generated from experience is obtained from the direct utility or appreciation of products or service and other interaction behaviors (Mathwick et al., 2001). The outstanding events can create suitable experience feeling and affection for customers and determine customers' experiential value (Smith & Colgate, 2007). The experiential value of event marketing refers to the perceived benefits obtained after tourists' personal sense organ, perception, mind and behavior generate the interactive relationship with the surroundings (Wu & Zheng, 2014). Therefore, tourists pay attention to enjoying the

experience, as it can leave an unforgettable memory and joyful mood (Pine & Gilmore, 2003). For instance, Mathwick et al. (2001) classified the experiential value into 4 types: consumers' return on investment, service excellence, interestingness, sense of beauty. Wu & Zheng (2014) classified the experiential value into 5 types: functionality, sociality, emotionality, interestingness and sense of beauty.

Event marketing is characterized by freshness, popularity and high contact, through which marketers can enhance the contacts with target consumers and give consumers better perceived value (Rungfapaisam, 2006). Thus, if the event marketing can meet consumers' experience required, it can improve the customers' value to a higher level (Johnny, O'Toole, Harris, & McDonnell, 2008), so does the regional event marketing. If the detailed planning can make tourists obtain happiness and sharing, it can help to improve tourists' value (Jackson, 1997). It can be concluded from the above narration that the regional event marketing can make tourists have the sense of participation and establish tourists' favor degree towards regions and improve the value in tourists' heart.

Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

H1: The event marketing held by the regions can significantly improve tourists' experiential value.

### *2.2 Relationship between Regional Image and Experiential Value*

Regional image is the integration of people's long-term belief, view and attitudes towards the regions and also the overall evaluation for the regions, including the people's cognitive impression and affective image (Wu & Liou, 2015). The good image in tourist regions is the key factor for the success of tourist regions (Chen & Kerstetter, 1999). Therefore, shaping an excellent and profound regional image is positively helpful for the regional marketing.

Grewal, Krishnan, Baker, & Borin (1998) found that if the regional image has higher popularity, the tourists will have higher perceived value. Therefore, good regional image can improve tourists' experiential value and regional image is often thought to be the important factor influencing tourists revisit (Zimmer & Golden, 1988; Romaniuk & Sharp, 2003). According to the different consumers' benefits, Park, Jaworski, & MacInnis (1986) develop out three types of brand concept images: functionality, figurativeness and experience. In regard to regional image, the functional image emphasizes on assisting tourists to solve the problems related to leisure; symbolic image is mainly to satisfy tourists' inner demands, such as self-enhancement and self-identity; experiential image is to satisfy tourists' inner demands to pursue diversity and stimulation to provide pleasure and stimulation in cognition. The higher regional image represents that in tourists' opinion, its environment is better, service level is better and quality is more reliable. It can be seen that the regional image has the positive correlation with tourists' experiential value (Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991).

According to the above discussion, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

H2: Better regional image means tourists' higher experiential value.

### *2.3 Relationship between Physical Environment and Experiential Value*

Physical environment is one of the context factors influencing consumers' behavior, mainly covering the concrete space environment of consumers' motion (Belk, 1975). Bitner (1992) suggested that the attributes of physical environment include natural environment, humanistic environment and social environment. Beerli & Martín (2004) used the natural and cultural resources, the public leisure and facilities, atmosphere, safe environment and tourism resources as the dimensions of physical environment, and they will jointly shape people's overall environmental impression and further affect tourists' mood. Therefore, natural beautiful scenery, historical relics, local features, etc will influence tourists' perceived value towards regions (Bitner, Barnes, & Ward, 1992). Physical environment can enhance the good regional image to make the intangible become tangible and influence customers' expectation. Therefore, tourists will regard physical environment as the perceptual factor of tourism and as a consideration factor to determine whether they will come here again or not (Booms & Bitner, 1982).

Baker, Grewal, Parasuraman, & Voss (2002) indicated that environment can influence consumers' impression and subjective judgment. The elements of music, light, smell, touch, color, arrangement, etc in the physical environment will enhance or inhibit consumers' behavior (Wu & Huang, 2015). Consumers will have a positive effect on experiential value through the positive interaction with the surroundings (Baker, 2006). Therefore, a good physical environment will positively influence tourists' feelings as well as the experiential value.

According to the above discussions, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

H3: Better physical environment means tourists' higher experiential value.

#### *2.4 Relationship between Experiential Value and Satisfaction*

Kotler (2003) pointed out that consumers' satisfaction comes from the comparison between the expectation before purchase and cognitive performance after purchase as well as the gap between the formed pleasure or disappointment. Thus, tourists' satisfaction refers to the collection of overall satisfaction and feelings after comparing the expectation before traveling to one region and cognitive performance after the traveling (Cole & Scott, 2004); it refers to the tourists' overall evaluation for the recreation process, which is the measurement for the overall pleasure degree (Lee, Graefe, & Burns, 2004). Correspondingly, tourists' overall satisfaction, including tourists' fondness, loyalty, highly recommendation, priority selection and other items, can be measured respectively in the aspect of humanity, landscape, construction, activity and overall image, (Anderson & Srinivasan, 2003).

Tourists' experiential value can improve their satisfaction (Wu & Liang, 2009; Lai & Chou, 2010). Lee & Overby (2004) found that any type of value can have a positive effect on customers' satisfaction. Huang & Zhang (2010) also found in their research results that experiential value has a positive effect on customers' satisfaction. When tourists feel a better recreational experience than what they expect after the actual experience, they will show higher satisfaction and the willingness of revisit.

Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

H4: Tourists' higher experiential value means tourists' higher satisfaction.

#### *2.5 Relationship between Experiential Value and Trust*

Trust refers to the willingness of believing and relying on exchange partners and having the reliable and honest confidence in exchange partners (Moorman, Deshpande, & Zaltman, 1993). Lewis & Weigert (1985) indicated that trust should contain three aspects, i.e., cognition, affection and behavior. Trust is the basis of developing a good relationship and the performance of customers' reliability on service provider (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999). When the buyer-seller relationship between customers and service providers is filled with sense of trust, it can promote the sound communication and understanding between customers and service providers to further achieve the mutually satisfactory results (Pavlou, 2003).

The experiential value can also form the trust in goods. With the increased experience in goods, customers can have a deeper understanding of goods features, thus it can improve customers' trust in products (Dwyer, Schurr, & Oh, 1987). Therefore, after the end of experiential activities, the value created in these activities will be kept in memories, and such experiential value kept in consumers' heart can form the trust (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Therefore, tourists' experiential and cognitive values have a positive effect on tourists' trust (Sung & Kim, 2010).

Therefore, this paper proposes the hypothesis:

H5: Tourists' higher experiential value means tourists' higher trust.

#### *2.6 Relationship between Satisfaction and Trust*

Bloemer & Odekerken-Schröder (2002) found in the research that consumers' trust mainly comes from satisfaction, so customers' satisfaction will bring about higher trust. Lane & Bachmann (1996) emphasized that the generation of trust is rooted in the previously satisfactory experience, showing that consumers' overall satisfaction will have a positive effect on trust (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999; Ha & Perks, 2005). Satisfaction and trust are the important factors to form loyalty. If products can satisfy customers and obtain customers' trust, thus the brand loyalty can be developed from it (Franz, Tobias, Bernd, & Patrick, 2006). It can be seen that tourists' satisfaction has a significantly positive effect on trust. Therefore, this paper proposes the hypothesis:

H6: Tourists' higher satisfaction means tourists' higher trust.

#### *2.7 Relationship between Satisfaction and Commitment*

Commitment refers to consumers' affection and identity for enterprises, the attitude generated by a kind of psychological attachment, as well as the willingness to establish and maintain the mutual relationship based on fondness, belonging and sense of identity (Geyskens, Steenkamp, & Scheer, 1996). Therefore, commitment is the guidance to maintain the long-term relationship, showing that the connection of relationship can obtain the higher benefits (Hennig-Thurau & Klee, 1997). Thus, commitment refers to the willingness to continuously cooperate with the existing partners for the long-term benefits (Solberg & Nes, 2002).

Morgan & Hunt (1994) classified commitment into three dimensions, including input, promise and desire for continuous relationship. In the opinion of Garbarino & Johnson (1999), commitment includes the identity for

organization, reliability in customers' psychology, caring for long-term well-being and loyalty. Gronholdt, Martensen, & Kristensen (2000) put forward four dimensions, i.e., willingness of revisit, willingness of recommendation, price tolerance, establishment of public praise to measure commitment. As for the features of event marketing held in the regions, willingness of revisit, recommendation to others, willingness of settlement, etc can be used to measure commitment.

When consumers feel higher pleasure for marketing events, they will have higher satisfaction and affective commitment (Moliner, Sanchez, Rodriguez, & Callarisa, 2007); thus it is more difficult for them to switch behaviors (Bansal, Irving, & Taylor, 2004). It can be seen that customers' satisfaction will have a positive effect on commitment (Wang et al., 2009), and the highly satisfaction can positively enhance the commitment (Lewis & Soureli, 2006). Such concept can be applied in the regional marketing strategy.

Thus, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

H7: Tourists' higher satisfaction means tourists' higher commitment.

### *2.8 Relationship between Trust and Commitment*

Trust is extremely important in the field of relationship management as it is the important factor to promote consumers' commitment to continuous dealing (Dai, 2002). Sirdeshmukh et al. (2002) proposed that trust is the basis of commitment, and trust can determine consumers' future behavior model. Therefore, customers' trust has a positive effect on their relationship commitment, i.e., when customers have the highly trust relationship with cooperative enterprises, they are more willing to maintain the long-term relationship with the enterprises and make the commitment (Wu & Huang, 2015). It can be seen that customers' trust has a positive effect on commitment, showing that customers' inner subjunctive trust attitude can effectively influence the generation of inner commitment, i.e., they are willing to make a commitment to maintain the good relationship with the enterprise (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Therefore, consumers' trust will positively influence consumers' commitment (Vatanasombut et al., 2008).

According to the above discussion, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

H8: Tourists' higher trust means tourists' higher commitment.

### *2.9 Comparison in the Effect of Event Marketing in Different Regions*

In recent years, many regions in the world emphatically promote the regional features with event marketing, expecting to drive the regional economy and vitality through tourism revenues. However, the features, natural environment, culture and history, local foods, marketing strategy shown in each region differ from each other. Therefore, there is still no discussion about whether there is difference in tourists' feelings for the event marketing, regional image and physical environment and in the effect of experiential value, in face of the different features in each region. Thus, this study took Xinshe Sea of Flowers events in Taichung and Sakura Festival in Formosa Aboriginal Culture Village in Sun Moon Lake in Taiwan as the research subjects to discuss the interrelationship between event marketing, regional image, physical environment, etc in the two regions, and tourists' experiential value, satisfaction, trust and commitment, and also to compare the effect difference in event marketing in different regions. Thus, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

H9: The event marketing activities have significant difference in relationship path intensity for each dimension in different regions.

## **3. Research Design**

### *3.1 Research Framework*

Based on the literature review, this study established the research hypothesis and research framework, and used qualitative research, questionnaire design and sampling survey and analysis to verify research hypothesis and the concept model proposed. The research framework is shown in Figure 1.

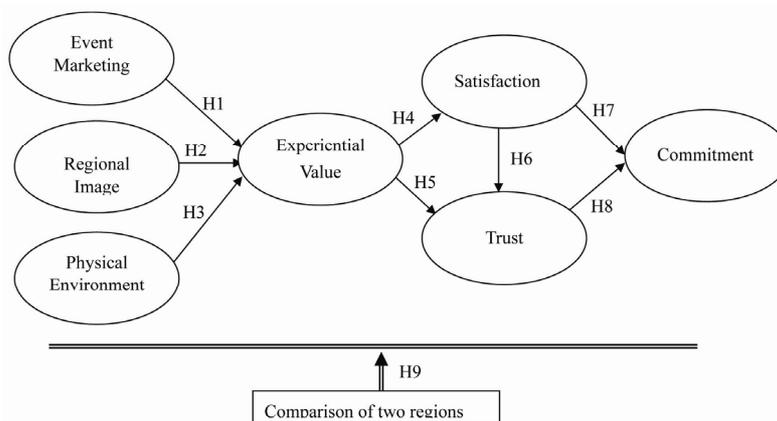


Figure 1. Research framework

### 3.2 Questionnaire Design and Pretest

This study firstly collected relevant theories and literatures as the basis of research framework, and then applied questionnaire survey to collect primary data to design them into the first draft of questionnaire. In order to obtain the effective measuring tool, this study revised the questionnaire in the stage of the pretest and pilot before the distribution of formal questionnaire. During the process of pretest, the method of convenience sampling was used to select 60 tourists who had ever actually participated in the Xinshe Sea of Flowers events in Taichung and Sakura Festival in Formosa Aboriginal Culture Village in Sun Moon Lake for in-depth interview. The results show that the sentences are required to be revised due to unclear meaning in some items.

After the revision of questionnaire, this study used the method of convenience sampling to select 120 interviewees as the samples in pilot and made the reliability and validity analysis for the data answered in this questionnaire. The pilot results in the questionnaire show that the Cronbach  $\alpha$  value in each measurement dimension conforms to the standard of greater than 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978), the item to total correlation coefficient is greater than 0.5 (Kerlinger, 1978), showing the good reliability for each dimension. The factor analysis (EFA) results show that eigenvalue for each dimension is greater than 1, the cumulative explained variance is greater than 0.5; while the factor loading for each variable is greater than 0.5, showing that each dimension has the convergent validity (Kaiser, 1958).

Therefore, this questionnaire was used for the 2-month formal survey. Questionnaire included 8 parts: Part 1 is event marketing, totally 9 items; Part 2 is regional image, totally 9 items; Part 3 is physical environment, totally 12 items; Part 4 is experiential value, totally 15 items; Part 5 is satisfaction, totally 5 items; Part 6 is trust, totally 9 items; Part 7 is commitment, totally 5 items. The scales are based on a Likert seven-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Part 8 is basic data, totally 9 items, measured with nominal scale.

## 4. Results Analysis

### 4.1 Sample Structure

This study took the tourists who had participated in the Xinshe Sea of Flowers events in Taichung and Sakura Festival in Formosa Aboriginal Culture Village in Sun Moon Lake as the sampling subjects, and the method of questionnaire distributed by people was used for quota sampling survey. Totally 550 questionnaires were distributed, and there were 500 valid samples after deducting the invalid samples, and the valid return is 90.91%. The number of people participating in Xinshe Sea of Flowers events in Taichung and Sakura Festival in Formosa Aboriginal Culture Village in Sun Moon Lake accounted respectively for 50.0%.

It can be known from the sample analysis that male accounts for 44.8%, female accounts for 55.2%. As for age, 25~34 years old is the most, accounting for 33.0%, followed by 15~24 years old, accounting for 22.0%. As for the living area, the central region is the most, accounting for 58.6%, followed by northern region, accounting for 29.0%. As for education background, university/junior college is the most, accounting for 59.4%, followed by senior high school (higher vocational education), accounting for 24.8%. As for occupation, service industry is the most, accounting for 28.6%, followed by students, accounting for 15.8%. As for the monthly average income, NTD 10,001~30,000 is the most, accounting for 38.0%, followed by NTD 30,001-50,000, accounting for 29.8%. As for average visit frequency, once a year is the most, accounting for 38.0%, followed by less than half a year

(including), accounting for 25.2%.

#### 4.2 Reliability and Validity Analysis

Based on the 500 valid questionnaires, this study used Cronbach  $\alpha$  value, correlation analysis, factor analysis, etc to evaluate the questionnaire's reliability and validity. According to the conclusion proposed by Nunnally (1978), Cronbach  $\alpha$  value which is greater than 0.7 or above is called high reliability, and also Kerlinger (1978) proposed that item to total correlation coefficient is required to conform to the criteria determination which is greater than 0.5. It can be known that the Cronbach  $\alpha$  value and correlation coefficient for each measurement dimension in this study both conform to the standards. Therefore, the questionnaire's overall reliability in this study is good (See Table 1).

Kaiser (1958) proposed that eigenvalue extracted from factor analysis is required to be greater than 1, the factor loading of each variable in each factor dimension is required to be greater than 0.5, and the cumulative explained variation is required to be greater than standard determination of 0.5. It can be known that the value for each item in the questionnaire is greater than the standard value. Therefore, convergent validity of questionnaire in this study is also good (See Table 1).

In order to verify the efficiency of measurement dimension, aimed at the measurement model for the 7 dimensions of regional image, event marketing, physical environment, experiential value, satisfaction, trust and commitment, AMOS software was used for confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). According to the rigorous standards, the determination principle should be: goodness-of-fit indicator is required to conform to the ratio (not greater than 3) of chi-square value to degree of freedom (Carmines & McIver, 1981), RMSEA is less than 0.05, and GFI, AGFI, NFI, RFI, CFI are greater than 0.9 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Joreskog & Sorbom, 1989). In the results of goodness-of-fit indicator,  $\chi^2/df$  value is 1.603, RMSEA value is 0.035, GFI value is 0.766, AGFI value is 0.707, NFI value is 0.866, RFI value 0.838, and CFI value is 0.944, showing that measurement model can be accepted although it is not so ideal. Therefore, this measurement indicator has the construct validity and measurement efficiency.

Table 1. Reliability and validity analysis of questionnaires

Aspects and items	Means	Item to total correlation coefficient	Factor loading	Eigenvalue	Cumulative explained variation %	Cronbach $\alpha$
<b>Event Marketing</b>						
1. This activity <b>has the unique styles and features.</b>	5.83	0.807	0.852			
2. This activity <b>is impressive.</b>	5.72	0.797	0.843			
3. This activity <b>has rich and wonderful contents.</b>	5.59	0.763	0.814			
4. This activity can <b>drive the surrounding commercial development.</b>	5.72	0.711	0.770			
5. This activity is helpful to <b>improve the city's popularity.</b>	5.86	0.796	0.842	6.173	68.590	0.943
6. This activity is helpful to <b>increase the tourists.</b>	6.01	0.764	0.818			
7. This activity can <b>display the local cultural features.</b>	5.77	0.788	0.838			
8. This activity can <b>improve the regional image.</b>	5.77	0.769	0.823			
9. This activity can <b>improve the regional tourism attraction.</b>	5.90	0.802	0.851			
<b>Regional Image</b>						
1. This region has <b>the good overall tourism quality.</b>	5.5200	0.734	0.792			
2. This region has <b>the rich tourist attractions.</b>	5.5760	0.725	0.787			
3. This region has <b>the convenient transportation system.</b>	5.1180	0.720	0.779			
4. This region has <b>the good image.</b>	5.3460	0.777	0.830			
5. This region has its <b>unique lifestyle.</b>	5.4960	0.723	0.786			
6. This region has the <b>characteristic leisure and recreational activities.</b>	5.4140	0.735	0.796	5.884	65.379	0.934
7. Traveling in this region brings me the feeling of <b>joy.</b>	5.6100	0.766	0.823			
8. Traveling in this region brings me the feeling of <b>convenience.</b>	5.1960	0.787	0.835			
9. Traveling in this region can make me <b>pursue the diversified life.</b>	5.3440	0.798	0.846			

<b>Physical Environment</b>							
1.	This region has the good <b>scenic spots and ecological maintenance.</b>	5.37	0.737	0.786			
2.	This region has the <b>unique landscape.</b>	5.56	0.711	0.768			
3.	This region has lots of <b>natural beautiful scenery.</b>	5.62	0.668	0.731			
4.	This region has <b>the good public construction</b> quality.	5.06	0.711	0.762			
5.	This region has <b>the good city planning.</b>	5.01	0.728	0.776			
6.	This region has the good <b>planning of leisure attractions.</b>	5.16	0.766	0.809	6.953	57.940	0.934
7.	This region has the <b>characteristic old streets.</b>	4.77	0.690	0.742			
8.	This region has the <b>cultural relics with historical value.</b>	5.08	0.717	0.764			
9.	This region has the <b>famous landmark attractions.</b>	5.46	0.704	0.758			
10.	This region has the <b>characteristic diet.</b>	5.46	0.674	0.729			
11.	This region has the <b>characteristic souvenirs.</b>	5.19	0.711	0.764			
12.	This region has <b>the features which other cities do not have.</b>	5.37	0.682	0.742			
<b>Experiential Value</b>							
1.	Participating in this activity <b>can make people happy.</b>	5.80	0.775	0.806			
2.	Participating in this activity is <b>worthy of showing off.</b>	5.41	0.805	0.830			
3.	Participating in this activity harvests <b>more than my original expectation.</b>	5.35	0.840	0.861			
4.	Participating in this activity can <b>have a better interaction with others.</b>	5.42	0.828	0.851			
5.	Participating in this activity can <b>facilitate the affection between friends and relatives.</b>	5.63	0.822	0.845			
6.	Participating in this activity can make my <b>interpersonal relationship become better.</b>	5.40	0.789	0.816			
7.	Participating in this activity can <b>relieve my life pressure.</b>	5.78	0.814	0.842	10.527	70.179	0.970
8.	Participating in this activity can <b>relax myself.</b>	5.76	0.798	0.829			
9.	Participating in this activity is <b>unforgettable for life long.</b>	5.46	0.794	0.822			
10.	This activity has the <b>entertainment.</b>	5.47	0.801	0.828			
11.	This activity has the <b>interestingness.</b>	5.45	0.806	0.832			
12.	This activity is <b>creative.</b>	5.47	0.807	0.834			
13.	this activity has the <b>marvelous visual presentation.</b>	5.74	0.802	0.832			
14.	This activity <b>has the special sense of beauty.</b>	5.71	0.844	0.868			
15.	This activity has the <b>beautiful design style.</b>	5.68	0.842	0.867			
<b>Satisfaction</b>							
1.	This activity is <b>unforgettable.</b>	5.58	0.750	0.846			
2.	<b>I feel satisfied with</b> this activity.	5.45	0.808	0.886			
3.	<b>The humanity resources</b> in this region are <b>satisfactory.</b>	5.32	0.834	0.901	3.733	74.657	0.914
4.	<b>The tourist attractions</b> in this region are <b>satisfactory.</b>	5.41	0.830	0.898			
5.	<b>The public construction</b> in this region is <b>satisfactory.</b>	5.10	0.675	0.784			
<b>Trust</b>							
1.	The information for this activity is <b>worthy of reference.</b>	5.65	0.821	0.863			
2.	This activity held is <b>worthy of trust.</b>	5.54	0.837	0.876			
3.	<b>I have the confidence</b> in the activities held in this region.	5.39	0.817	0.859	6.601	73.341	0.954
4.	This activity <b>has its value.</b>	5.66	0.835	0.875			
5.	This activity should <b>be held continuously.</b>	5.76	0.811	0.854			
6.	<b>I am fond of</b> this activity.	5.65	0.688	0.745			
7.	After participating in this activity, <b>I have harvested a lot.</b>	5.49	0.852	0.887			

8.	After participating in this activity, I <b>feel it rewarding</b> .	5.52	0.853	0.888			
9.	It is a <b>correct</b> decision to travel in this region.	5.64	0.813	0.852			
<b>Commitment</b>							
1.	I have an <b>extremely high willingness</b> to participate in this activity again.	5.61	0.787	0.869			
2.	I am willing to actively <b>recommend this activity to others</b> .	5.65	0.802	0.878			
3.	I have an <b>extremely high willingness</b> to travel in this region.	5.53	0.802	0.876	3.778	75.560	0.919
4.	While traveling, I will <b>give preference to this</b> region.	5.16	0.768	0.854			
5.	I am willing to participate in <b>other activities</b> in this region.	5.49	0.793	0.869			

#### 4.3 Analysis of Competing Model in Two Regions

According to the analysis of competing model that there are some similarities and differences in the intensity of relationship path between each dimension in two regions, which are narrated separately as follows:

The event marketing in two regions has the significantly positive effect on experiential value, and this result supports H1. However, the regional image in two regions has no significant effect on experiential value, and this result does not support H2. The physical environment in two regions has the significantly positive effect on experiential value, and this result supports H3. The tourists' experiential value in two regions has the significantly positive effect on satisfaction, and this result supports H4. The tourists' experiential value in two regions has the significantly positive effect on trust, and this result supports H5. However, tourists' satisfaction in Xinshe Sea of Flowers events in Taichung has the significantly positive effect on trust, while tourists' satisfaction in Sakura Festival in Formosa Aboriginal Culture Village in Sun Moon Lake has no significant effect on trust, and this result does not support H6. Tourists' satisfaction in two regions has no significant effect on commitment, and this result does not support H7. Tourists' trust in two regions has the significantly positive effect on commitment, and this result supports H8 (analysis results are shown in Table 2).

Based on the above discussion, it is known that event marketing and physical environment are the important and key factors to intensify tourists' experiential value, while regional image is insignificant, which is an important discovery in this study.

According to the relation schema in different regions, this study further compared the path intensity, and the results show (see Table 2):

(1) The path intensity of "experiential value" to "trust" in two regions has the significant difference. According to T-test results, it can be known that the influencing intensity in this path in Sakura Festival in Formosa Aboriginal Culture Village in Sun Moon Lake is weaker, showing that tourists' experiential value for Sakura Festival in Formosa Aboriginal Culture Village in Sun Moon Lake can better intensify their sense of trust. Therefore, experiential value is the strong item for Sakura Festival in Formosa Aboriginal Culture Village in Sun Moon Lake.

(2) The path intensity of "satisfaction" to "trust" in two regions has the significant difference. The influencing intensity in Xinshe Sea of Flowers events in Taichung is stronger, while the influencing intensity in this relation path in Sakura Festival in Formosa Aboriginal Culture Village in Sun Moon Lake is not significant, showing that tourists' satisfaction is the main source of loyalty of Xinshe Sea of Flowers events in Taichung.

In the relation path of event marketing activities in different regions, tourists' commitment in Xinshe Sea of Flowers events in Taichung mainly comes from satisfaction, while tourists' commitment in Sakura Festival in Formosa Aboriginal Culture Village in Sun Moon Lake mainly comes from experiential value. Therefore, H9 is correct partially.

Table 2. Analysis of competing model between two regions

Path relations	Standardized Regression Weights		T-test
	Taichung (n <sub>1</sub> =250)	Sun Moon Lake (n <sub>2</sub> =250)	
H1: Event Marketing →Experiential Value	0.493***	0.342***	-1.734
H2: Regional Image →Experiential Value	-0.022	0.074	0.972
H3: Physical Environment →Experiential Value	0.486***	0.567***	-0.014
H4: Experiential Value →Satisfaction	0.954***	0.993***	-1.033
H5: Experiential Value →Trust	0.265*	0.807***	3.850***
H6: Satisfaction →Trust	0.695***	0.152	-2.399**
H7: Satisfaction →Commitment	0.211	-0.024	-1.061
H8: Trust →Commitment	0.739***	0.940***	0.564

Note. \*: p<0.1, \*\*: p<0.05, \*\*\*: P<0.01.

## 5. Conclusion and Suggestions

### 5.1 Conclusion and Suggestions

Based on tourists' viewpoints, this study used Xinshe Sea of Flowers events in Taichung and Sakura Festival in Formosa Aboriginal Culture Village in Sun Moon Lake in Taiwan as the research subjects of event marketing. The empirical research was used to discuss the effect of event marketing, regional image and physical environment on tourists' experiential value, satisfaction, trust and commitment and to establish competing model and efficient measurement indicator, which can be said to have the academic and practical value. It can be found from the analysis of competing model:

- (1) The event marketing activities in two regions have the significantly positive effect on tourists' experiential value, and this result is the same with the concepts proposed by Rungfapaisam (2006), Johnny, O'Toole, Harris, & McDonnell et al. (2008), showing that holding event marketing activities can increase exposure rate and attract tourists' eyes, and bring tourists the beautiful memories through the process of experience and further improve perceived value. It can be seen that the promotion of event marketing is the important marketing tool in the regions.
- (2) The regional image for cities holding event marketing has no significant effect on tourists' experiential value, and this result does not conform to the hypothesis. After the investigation, the reason is that the two places of holding event marketing belong to a small region in the city, and the impression on tourists is just for this region. Therefore, relatively speaking, the image for the city holding activities cannot improve tourists' experiential value. Thus, it can be known that tourists just pay attention to the event marketing activities themselves, but they care nothing about the image of hosting city.
- (3) The physical environment in two regions has the significantly positive effect on tourists' experiential value, and this result is the same with the concept proposed by Wu & Huang (2015), Baker et al. (2006), showing that if the physical environment (such as the atmosphere, arrangement, facilities, etc in the site of activity) for activities held can make tourists feel joyful, it can create better perceived value.
- (4) The tourists' experiential value in two regions has the significantly positive effect on satisfaction, and the influencing intensity is the greatest, showing the tourists' experiential value of participating in event marketing activities can greatly improve their satisfaction. Tourists' participation in event marketing activities can enrich the harvest of trip and increase tourists' perceived value and further generate the higher satisfaction. Therefore, experiential value is the most important factor for tourists' satisfaction.
- (5) The tourists' experiential value in two regions has the significantly positive effect on trust, and this result is the same with the concept proposed by Chaudhuri & Holbrook (2001), Sung & Kim et al. (2010), showing that if tourists' experiential feeling exceeds their expectations, it can make tourists become more confident in event marketing activities and improve the sense of trusting.
- (6) The two regions show some difference in the effect of tourists' satisfaction on trust. Tourists' satisfaction in Xinshe Sea of Flowers events in Taichung has the significantly positive effect on their trust, while tourists' satisfaction in Sakura Festival in Formosa Aboriginal Culture Village in Sun Moon Lake has no significantly positive effect on their trust. As for its reasons, it maybe because Xinshe Sea of Flowers events in Taichung is held for free by Taichung City Government, while Sakura Festival in Formosa Aboriginal Culture Village in Sun Moon Lake is held by enterprises and the admission fee is required to be charged, which may increase tourists' expectation and decrease their satisfaction. Therefore, the lower satisfaction than expectation for activities will

reduce the confidence in this activity.

(7) The tourists' satisfaction in two regions has no significant effect on commitment, and this result does not conform to research hypothesis. It maybe because there are currently more and more flower marketing activities with isomorphism type in Taiwan, such as Taipei International Flora Exposition, the Hakka Tung Blossom Festival in Miaoli, etc, which will relatively disperse the tourists' visit. Besides, Xinshe Sea of Flowers events in Taichung and Sakura Festival in Formosa Aboriginal Culture Village in Sun Moon Lake have become the routine activities held every year, and there is no breakthrough in originality, thus, tourists will feel tired psychologically. Therefore, although tourists experience the activities by themselves and feel satisfied, it may not necessarily form commitment, and this result is worthy of attention.

(8) Tourists' trust in the activities held in two regions has the significantly positive effect on their commitment, and this result corresponds to the concept proposed by Sirdeshmukh et al. (2002), Vatanasombut et al. (2008), showing that the generation of trust will reduce tourists' uncertainty and risk. The tourists who trust in the activity will not only positively spread it in the form of word-of-mouth, and also establish the commitment of successive relationship. Besides, the research results find that trust is the only dimension to form commitment, showing tourists' commitment mainly comes from highly trust, and this is an important finding.

(9) It can be known from the comparison of competing models that there is significant difference in the two influencing paths in two regions. If tourists can identify with the experiential activity of Sakura Festival in Formosa Aboriginal Culture Village in Sun Moon Lake, it can powerfully improve tourists' reliability. On the other hand, if tourists are satisfied with Xinshe Sea of Flowers events in Taichung, it can positively increase trust. Therefore, holding event marketing in different regions should intensify their respective key factors to produce better results.

### *5.2 Managerial Implications*

According to the empirical analysis results, this study can offer each city the important reference information, which is respectively shown as follows:

(1) Event marketing is the marketing weapon of regional development.

The research shows that event marketing and physical environment both have the significantly positive effect on tourists' experiential value. Therefore, if tourists can feel the interaction between event marketing activities and the surrounding internal and external environment factors through personal experience, it can better generate the value perception. Therefore, it is advised that each city and region should promote event marketing strategies, combine the local natural landscape, human customs, local industry and other tourism resources and apply the originality and topic in event marketing itself to increase tourists' experiential depth in the trip.

(2) Experiential value is the key factor of satisfaction and trust.

The research shows that experiential value has the significantly positive effect on satisfaction and trust, showing that tourists can obtain the maximum satisfaction and utility from it after accepting the experiential activities. Thus, the higher the experiential value is, the higher the satisfaction and trust are. Therefore, it is advised that each region should intensify experiential implications and cultivate the interactive situation with tourists, so as to establish more interactive opportunities with environment, products and service for tourists and create the unique and unforgettable tourism experience. Thus, experience can be further transformed into tourists' satisfaction and trust.

(3) Diversified experiential marketing can establish tourists' commitment.

Nowadays, each city promotes various event marketing activities to attract tourists' eyes. Therefore, it is the important issue currently confronted by each city how to stand out from the numerous event marketing and seek innovation and change to meet tourists' demands, for instance:

- Creating new opportunity from the horizontal alliances: Sakura Festival in Formosa Aboriginal Culture Village in Sun Moon Lake and the Japanese popular animation—One Piece form the horizontal alliances to attract the potential tourists and animation fans' eyes; besides, the great reaction is generated through the brand charm, the enhancement of momentum, increase of highlights and topics, so as to exercise the much better effect and further deepen tourists' loyalty and commitment.

- Promoting the community to create the local tourism zone: the charm of event marketing lies in the energy of local mobilized participation and business opportunity effect in the surroundings. Therefore, each region should promote the community to create the tourism zone with local features; for instance, Xinshe region in Taichung should integrate more local special customs and products to inspire the zealous participation from the

local residents; meanwhile, the activity and local product marketing are used to benefit the resident, so as to bring tourism opportunity and facilitate the local sustainable operation and achieve the goal of local tourism marketing.

### 5.3 Research Limitations and Future Research Suggestions

The conceptual framework and empirical results established in this study can provide new viewpoints as the reference for the follow-up research. However, there are still some problems to be improved:

(1) The subjects in this study are the event marketing activities about flowers held in Taiwan, so the research results may not be generally applied to all types of event marketing activities. The difference in local feature and human customs as well as the event marketing contents may generate different research results. Therefore, it is advised that the follow-up research can discuss the different types of event marketing, such as Fireworks Show, Sky Lanterns Festival, etc. In this way, the range of application of different event marketing activities can be better found out, so that the conceptual framework in this study becomes more practical.

(2) This study adopts the competing model to compare the relationship between regional image, physical environment, experiential value, satisfaction, trust, and commitment in two event marketing activities. However, maybe some important dimensions are not included. It is advised to add other dimensions in the follow-up research to extend the research aspects and enrich the issues related to urban tourism industry.

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