



## Editorial Note

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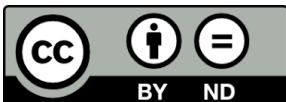
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Amidst the ever-changing landscape of the tourism and hospitality industry, Issue No. 2 of Volume 3 of the South Asian Journal of Tourism and Hospitality (SAJTH) arrives at a pivotal moment. As we embark on this journey, navigating the dynamic currents of the South Asian region's tourism sector, we must pause and reflect on the prevailing trends shaping its trajectory. South Asia stands at a crossroads, witnessing a resurgence in tourism following the disruptions caused by the economic recession in South Asia. With borders reopening and travel restrictions easing, the region welcomes travellers eager to immerse themselves in its rich cultural tapestry and awe-inspiring landscapes. However, this revival occurs against a backdrop of profound geopolitical shifts, economic uncertainties, and mounting environmental concerns, presenting stakeholders with a formidable challenge—to adapt and innovate in response to consumers' evolving preferences and the market's ever-shifting dynamics.

At SAJTH, we recognise our pivotal role in shaping the discourse surrounding tourism and hospitality in the South Asian region. With a steadfast commitment to excellence and innovation, we strive to remain at the forefront of emerging trends and future directions within the industry. Our mission is not only to chronicle the ongoing transformations but also to contribute to them actively. As we continue to evolve, we are dedicated to fostering interdisciplinary collaborations and promoting groundbreaking research that addresses the changing needs and challenges of the sector. By cultivating a platform for dialogue and knowledge exchange, we aim to empower stakeholders across the tourism and hospitality spectrum—from policymakers and industry leaders to academics and practitioners—to navigate the currents of change with confidence and foresight.

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In this issue, our journey begins with exploring the factors driving satisfaction among young Vietnamese tourists, immersing themselves in the traditional cuisine of Hue City, Vietnam. Led by Nguyen Van Hoang, Dao Thi Thuy Ninh, and Pham Do Van Trung, this research offers valuable insights into the intersection of culinary heritage and tourist experiences, highlighting the importance of gastronomic tourism in promoting cultural exchange and fostering sustainable development.

Transitioning from culinary delights to economic dynamics, S.P. Jayasooriya and R.A.S.P. Bandara delve into the demand dynamics of international tourism in Sri Lanka. Their study illuminates the intricacies of tourist preferences and expenditure patterns through an almost ideal demand system framework, providing policymakers and industry stakeholders with valuable insights for strategic planning and destination management. Continuing our exploration, Ruwanthika Jayaweera sheds light on female tour guides' career challenges in Sri Lanka's travel and tourism industry. Drawing upon Social Role Theory, this research underscores the need for gender-inclusive policies and initiatives to empower women in tourism, fostering diversity and inclusivity within the workforce.

In the digital age, social media influencers wield significant influence over tourists' travel intentions, as explored by Bulumulla D. S. K., Epa U.I., and Gamage T. C. Their study examines the mediating role of traveller authenticity and destination image, offering fresh insights into the evolving landscape of digital marketing strategies within the tourism sector. Furthermore, we are delighted to present a thought-provoking book review by M. S. H. Rathnasiri and W. V. De Silva, spotlighting "Marketing for Tourism, Hospitality & Events: A Global & Digital Approach (2023)," authored by S. Hudson and L. Hudson. This insightful review offers a glimpse into the comprehensive guide's relevance and significance in navigating the complexities of modern-day marketing within the industry.

As we embark on this enriching journey through the pages of SAJTH, we invite you to join us in exploring the diverse facets of tourism and hospitality in the South Asian region. We offer a global platform for disseminating research findings, concurrently encouraging the dialogue of new research pathways and novel contributions to theories. Our contributors have dedicated their expertise and passion to unravelling critical topics, from culinary tourism to digital marketing strategies, from gender dynamics to international demand patterns. As we chart our course forward, guided by innovation, inclusivity, and sustainability principles, let us seize the opportunities and confront the challenges with resilience and determination. Through collaboration, creativity, and a shared commitment to excellence, we can shape a brighter tomorrow for the tourism and hospitality industry that celebrates diversity, preserves cultural heritage, and safeguards the natural environment for future generations.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the authors, reviewers, and editorial team whose dedication has made this issue possible. We hope the insights shared in this volume will spark discussions, inspire further research, and foster innovation within the vibrant realm of tourism and hospitality.