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1st INTERNATIONAL
Meeting Incentive Convention Exhibition
MICE
CONFERENCE AND FORUM

29th - 30th August 2018 Bangkok, Thailand

1st International MICE Conference and Forum
Conference Proceedings

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About Us

The 1st international MICE Forum & Conference will be held in Bangkok, Thailand from August 29 to 30, 2018. The conference will be hosted jointly by the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB), University of North Texas (UNT) and MICE Academic Cluster as a strategic partner.

Objective

The main objective of the 1st international MICE Conference & Forum is to provide a platform for researchers, academicians, practitioners, as well as industrial professionals from all over the world to actively exchange, share, and challenge new ideas, applied experiences, state-of-the-art research, and case studies on MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions/Events) and/or related MICE and Events industry.

The conference invites conceptual and empirical research papers, and case studies on MICE related topics. Papers and presentations are expected to address both (but not limited in) the theoretical, methodological, and practical aspects of MICE.



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The Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) in decision making for MICE Destination

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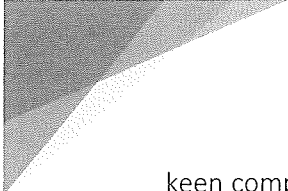
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This conceptual paper presents three-level evaluation structure is constructed. The highest level of the hierarchy is the overall goal evaluation structure is constructed for MICE Destination selection the second level represents the criteria (i.e., factors) affecting MICE Destination selection, including Infrastructure and Accommodation, site environment, Cost and Extra conference Opportunities. Various sets of subcriteria (i.e., attributes) associated with each factor in the second level are linked to the third level. The findings indicate that the AHP approach is a useful tool to help support a decision in MICE Destination selection. As a result, the findings will be of value to destinations that seek to compete for a share of the market. Specifically, the research sheds light on how destinations can increase their competitiveness, and where resources and efforts ought to be focused to improve a destination's attractiveness in this industry. A further potential application of the empirical results reported in this study would be the development of a numerical decision-support model that could be used to perform 'what-if' assessments and sensitivity analyses that would directly estimate the change in the probability of site selection as destination attributes are varied.

Keywords: analytical hierarchy process (AHP); decision making; destination; MICE

Introduction

The MICE industry has emerged as one of the largest and fastest growing sector. The growth of the industry can be attributed to various factors including the globalization, growth of business and technological advancements , drivers of tourism destination development as well as an essential generator of employment, income and foreign investment. During the last ten years, a major development has taken place in this industry. Many new destinations realized the economic benefit of this industry and have invested heavily to improve their cities to meet the meeting industry's needs. (SCHÜTTER,2010) The importance of hosting a meeting and convention to a city has emerged as a crucial strategic decision for stakeholders of a destination since the numbers of meetings, attendees, and spending create a positive economical multiplier impact to a destination. The meeting planners play an important role in determining the site selection and their decisions are very critical to the cities hosting the meetings and conventions (HUO,2014). The attractiveness of convention tourism has spurred destinations to proactively pursue the meetings and conventions market. Conventions may be hosted almost anywhere in the world, resulting in



keen competition among potential host destination sites (Crouch and Louviere 2004). Because of the growing intensity of competition, it is of great importance to those competing for business to understand the crucial factors affecting the convention site selection process (CHEN,2006).

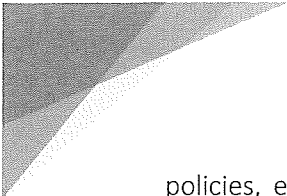
Countries and destinations are vying with each other to promote themselves as a popular MICE destination, but the distributional potential of the MICE sector is highly dependent on the activities of professional conference organisers, event planners and their willingness to discover and market new destinations. One of the most important decisions that event planners have to make is selecting an appropriate site for an event (Vogt et al., 1994). The decision they make influences the number of attendees and determines how successful the outcome of the meeting will be (Lee & Back, 2005). The analytical hierarchy process (AHP), a prevalent MCDM method, could facilitate understanding the decision-making process and thus assist decision makers in allocating limited resources to strategic investment such as marketing, positioning, and so on. Satty's (1980) AHP is a pairwise comparison procedure designed to capture relative judgments in a manner that ensures consistency. This article presents a decision-making model based on AHP for MICE Destination Selection

Destination Image

Ryan (1991, 1997) identified a destination as an 'experience supplier' that binds together different products and services. Destinations can be divided into leisure and business travel destinations. In the leisure travel context, destination attractiveness is measured as the potential to generate a wonderful experience and provide an optimum sense of well-being during a holiday trip. The success of tourist destinations depends on the attractiveness of characteristics that make up the tourist strengths of a certain area (Cracolici & Nijkamp, 2009).

The concept of a destination is widely utilized in the context of convention trips, with a number of authors having discussed convention destinations, examining convention destination image, choice and selection (e.g., Chacko & Fenich, 2000; Crouch & Louviere, 2004; Oppermann, 1996). These studies have identified convention site (destination) selection variables and their relative importance in attracting both meeting planners and delegates to a particular convention in a given destination. Convention site section variables include: 1) accessibility, 2) local support, 3) extra-conference opportunities, 4) accommodation facilities, 5) meeting facilities, 6) information, 7) site environment, and 8) other criteria (Crouch & Ritchie, 1998).

The convention site selection process is potentially very complex due to the multitude of variables that influence a decision (Clark & Mc Cleary 1995). The factors affecting the site selection decision can be broadly divided into site-specific and association factors (Weber & Chon 2002). Fortin, Ritchie, and Arsenault (1976) found that there is a relationship between the importance of site selection factors and the structure of association characteristics, past experience, association



policies, environmental conditions, and convention objectives. The following literature review helps to look at site selection factors so far studied in the literature.

Grant and Weaver (1996) shed more insight on what the attendees of conferences considered when selecting a meeting (networking, education, leadership and destination attractiveness and recreation/social program).

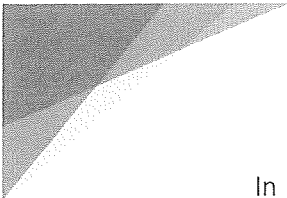
Oppermann (1996) pointed out, the meeting and convention industry generally involves three major players, namely, meeting suppliers (host destination, facility, service providers), meeting buyers (associations, corporations, government, meeting planners), and meeting attendees/participants. This suggests that researchers could examine different aspects of the three meeting players, and different MICE sectors should be fully explored. However, most of the previous research seems to focus on one aspect of the industry or the perspective of one player (Smith & Garnham, 2006). This may potentially oversimplify or underestimate the fragmented and complex nature of the industry, rather than exploring the relationships between and within it (Ladkin, 2002). In this respect, it is recommended that more work is needed on other elements/aspects of the industry in order to better understand how the various elements are interrelated and to examine their relationships within the industry (Smith & Garngam, 2006; Yoo & Weber, 2005).

Oppermann & Chon (1997) and Jago et al. (2003) studied factors influencing convention decision making and the relationship between the three main players identified in the model (international convention associations, international attendees and professional conference planners).

Oppermann and Chon (1997) studied the decision making process from the perspective of the main three players: the association, the destination and the potential delegates, where most emphasis was put on the last group. The authors identified four sets of variables influencing the participant decision process: the association/conference factors, locational factors, personal/business factors and intervening opportunities.

Crouch and Ritchie (1998) developed a descriptive model to explain the variables involved in the site selection process important to event planners. The model covered six site selection factors (accessibility, local support, extra-conference opportunities, accommodation facilities, information and site environment).

Hinkin and Tracey (2003) indicated that similar factors were of importance to both event planners and the meeting participants. Security was ranked as the most important factor while other variables included: staff, meeting rooms-sensory, guest rooms, pricing and billing, food and beverage, public areas, recreational amenities and convenience.

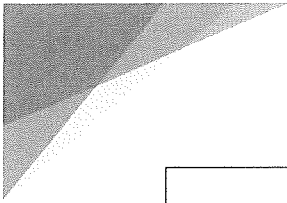


In a review of literature on site selection criteria there were nine destination selection factors most frequently identified in the studies: accessibility, availability of facilities (conference rooms, exhibit space, hotels, restaurants etc.), service quality, affordability, destination image and reputation, attractions, safety/security, previous experience with a destination and overall cost (Oppermann, 1996; Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Crouch & Ritchie, 1998; Chacko & Fenich, 2000; Getz, 2003; Taylor & Shortland-Webb, 2003; Comas & Moscardo, 2005). They were used as a basis for conducting the present study.

Point of view, identified to three players in meeting and convention industry. Association meeting planners ranked availability of hotels/facilities as the most important criteria for site selection decision making. According to Fortin and Ritchie (1976) found the relative importance of the following 10 key variables that influence association meeting planners' site selection decisions: hotel service level, air accessibility, hotel room availability, conference room availability, price level, hospitality in the city, restaurant service and quality, personal safety, local interest, and geographic location. Meeting planners, Studies of both association and corporate meeting planners show a strong concern for the facilities at a location. For example, McCleary (1978) found the main concerns for corporate meeting planners were the meeting accommodations themselves, the facility's status, and then location. According to Hu and Hiemstra (1996) in a study of 136 US meeting planners determined that price was the most important hotel attribute followed by location, guestroom comfort and meeting room properties. And attendees/participants attendees of conferences considered when selecting a meeting (networking, education, leadership and destination attractiveness and recreation/social program) and including the association/conference factors, locational factors, personal/business factors and intervening opportunities. According to Var, Cesario, and Mauser (1985) concluded that location was the key aspect, noting that "accessibility and attractiveness constitute by far the most important element in conference venue decisions". They conclude that the combined effects of emissiveness (individual differences in choice behaviour), attractiveness and accessibility give rise to a particular level of attendance at each conference. A location factor was also identified by Oppermann and Chon (1997) as having a bearing in several ways on the decision whether or not to attend a conference.

Table 1.Recent studies in destination images

Author	Sample	Attribute	Finding
Oppermann (1996)	Meeting planners	Climate , Hotel service quality , Nightlife , Clean/attractive location , Ease of air transportation access , Hotel room availability , Restaurant facilities , Exhibition facilities , Scenery/sightseeing opportunities , Meeting rooms/facilities , Food & lodging costs , Safety/security , Transportation costs , City image , Overall affordability	Using three case studies, it illustrates how individual destinations have different strengths and weaknesses.
Jun, Mc Cleary (1999)	Meeting planners	These factors are: logistics/attractiveness of site , cost/added value , distance/environment , Social elements. These clusters are: distance/environment-oriented meeting planners , social elements-oriented meeting planners , logistics/cost-oriented meeting planners.	The results of multiple discriminant analysis indicated that education, type of association, and type of meeting to be planned were the significant variables that distinguish one cluster from another.
Baloglu, Love (2004)	Association meeting planners	Restaurant/Retail/ Accessibility, Facilities, Logistics, City Image, CVB services & Support	The study found that association meeting planners have differentiated images and intentions for the convention cities.



			<p>The identified strengths and weaknesses, coupled with qualitative evaluations and importance of perceptual dimensions, provide important implications for the convention cities in terms target marketing, positioning, and communication strategy.</p>
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Author	Sample	Attribute	Finding
CHEN (2006)	association	Meeting and Accommodation Facilities , Cost , Site Environment , Local Support , Extra-conference Opportunities	The findings indicate that the AHP approach is a useful tool to help support a decision in convention site selection.
Robin et al (2008)	Meeting planners	Accessibility by air , Accessibility by road , Choice of restaurant , Variety of nightlife , First class hotel rooms , Brand name hotels , Exhibit space , Desirable destination image , Reputation for hosting successful events , Safety and security, Support services for events , Overall cost , Perceived value for money	Findings show that there are differences in the most important criteria used by each of the associations, with the International Association of Exhibitions and Events (IAEE) rating exhibit space, Meeting Professionals International (MPI) rating perceived value for the money, and Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) rating support services for events as the highest criteria.
Tosun (2015)	tourists.	Accommodation , Local Transport , Cleanliness , Hospitality , Activities , Language communication ,Airport services	The study's findings, perceptions related to language, accommodation, hospitality and activity services were found to have a positive and significant effect on the perception of the destination's affective image. Accordingly, destination management organizations (DMOs) are advised to adopt strategies to ensure that quality perceptions of tourists regarding language, accommodation, hospitality and activity services are addressed



Integrating AHP into MICE destination selection

Analytic hierarchy process (AHP), initiated by Saaty in 1971, has been widely used to deal with multi-criteria decision making problems, including ranking attributes, determining the optimal alternative, and synthesizing performance indicators in the fields of management, economics, marketing, tourism and engineering (e.g. Saaty, 2000; Udo, 2000; Ananda & Herath, 2003; Vaidya & Kumar, 2006; Ho, 2008; Hong, 2009). The AHP is a comprehensive framework designed to cope with the intuitive, the rational, and the irrational when decision makers make multi-objective, multi-criterion and multi-factor decisions with or without certainty about any number of alternatives (Harker & Vargas 1987). The AHP approach was designed to help decision makers incorporate qualitative (intangible) and quantitative (tangible) aspects of a complex problem. It systematically solves complex problems by decomposing the structure of a problem into hierarchies and the users then make pairwise comparison judgments as to importance or preference to develop priorities in each hierarchy. (Gerdria & Kocaoglub, 2007)

The AHP has been applied to a wide variety of decisions and the human judgment process (Lee et al. 2001). The approach is used to construct an evaluation model and has criterion weights. It integrates different measures into a single overall score for ranking decision alternatives. Applying it usually results in simplifying a multiple criterion problem by decomposing it into a multilevel hierarchical structure (CHEN, 2006).

Applying the AHP procedure involves three basic steps: (1) decomposition, or the hierarchy construction; (2) comparative judgments, or defining and executing data collection to obtain pairwise comparison data on elements of the hierarchical structure; and (3) synthesis of priorities, or constructing an overall priority rating (Harker & Vargas 1987).

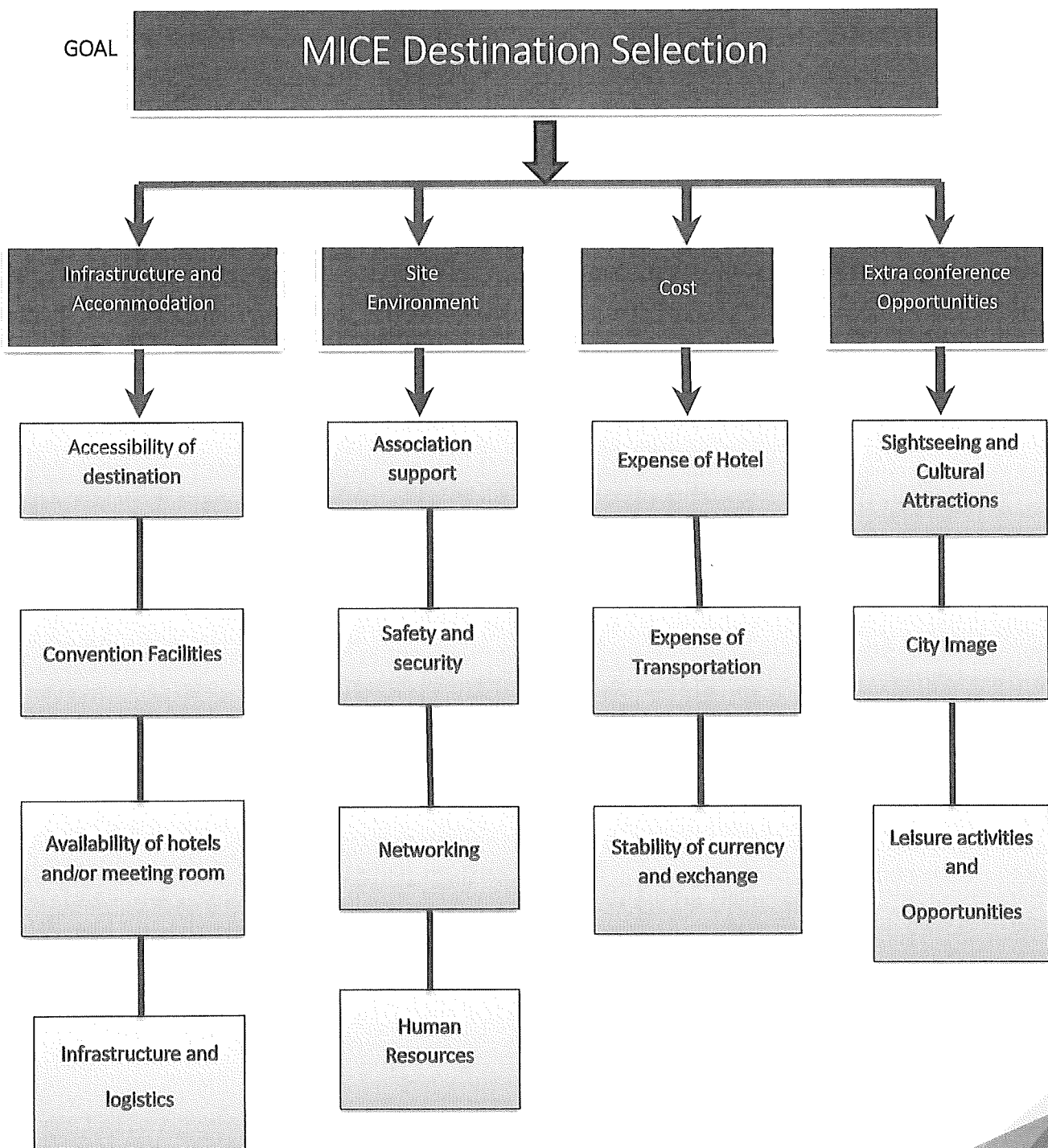
Enhanced MICE destination selection process: A Conceptual Model

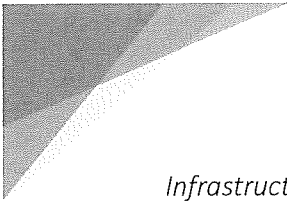
A conceptual model of the MICE destination selection process (Figure 1) that illustrates the influence of these site-selection factors, A simple three-level hierarchical structure is first constructed. Based on reviewing the literature on convention site selection, a proposed hierarchy is constructed as figure 1. The highest level of the hierarchy is the overall goal. Under the overall goal, the second level represents the criteria (i.e., factors) affecting MICE destination selection, including Infrastructure and Accommodation, Site environment, Cost and Extra conference Opportunities. Various sets of subcriteria (i.e., attributes) associated with each factor in the second level are linked to the third level.

As seen in figure 1, there are 16 attributes in total in the third level. The Infrastructure and Accommodation factor consists of four attributes (1. Accessibility of destination 2. Convention Facilities 3. Availability of hotels and/or meeting room 4. Infrastructure and logistics). The site

environment factor consists of four attributes (1. Association Support 2. Safety and security 3. Climate 4.Human resource). The Cost factor consists of three attributes (1.Expense of Hotel 2.Expense of Transportation 3.Stability of currency and exchange). Finally,The Extra conference Opportunities factor consists of three attributes (1.Sightseeing and Cultural Attractions 2.City Image 3.Leisure activities and Opportunities)

Figure 1. THE HIERARCHY OF DESTINATION SELECTION





Infrastructure and Accommodation

- *Accessibility of destination* Attendees are concerned with accessibility because it is strongly correlated with traveling cost. Less accessible destinations tend to require attendees to travel for a long time via multiple transportation modes. A destination must be able to serve as many destinations as possible; therefore a great amount of airlines serving the local airport is essential for easy access to the destination. Also, it is essential that the primary mode of transportation accessing the destination is by air followed by railway and road. How often the destination is served by a transportation mode is an important issue as well, since it has to be easy to get to on a regular and frequent basis. (SCHÜTTER,2010)

- *Convention Facilities* It is generally argued that convention venues and facilities are regarded as the key site selection factors for holding international events (Montgomery & Strick, 1995; Upchurch, Jeong, Clements, & Jung, 1999).

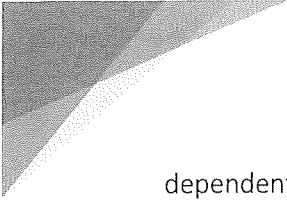
- *Availability of hotels and/or meeting room* The hotel infrastructure in a meeting destination should be vast and diverse ranging from small inns to five stars hotels. These should also vary in their size and price range in order to accommodate all sorts of meetings and budgets. (SCHÜTTER,2010)

- *Infrastructure and logistics* According to the literature, ground transportation is regarded as a major site selection criterion for many corporations, associations, and meeting planners (Montgomery & Strick, 1995; Upchurch et al., 1999). With regard to public transportation, although the development of public transportation is a large project and requires a lot of investment, the Thai government needs to invest in this important infrastructure. Public transportation projects, such as bus, sky train, and subway systems, should be primary concerns and need serious attention from the government. This investment is needed to boost the country's economy, encourage foreign investment, and to benefit the social welfare of local residents. Efficient and adequate transportation would not only strengthen Thailand's economy and investment in the long term, but would also support the expansion of the tourism and MICE industries. (Aswin et al ,2009)

Site environment factors have been a growing concern in attendance decision as attendees are well aware of the impact of natural disasters, virus outbreaks, terrorism threats, and local violence. The aforementioned attributes of site environment have been known to affect destination image as well (Beerli & Martin, 2004).

- *Association support* Due to the strong competition in the region, cooperation among stakeholders is needed to enhance the competence and competitiveness of the industry (Aswin et al,2009). As a fragmented industry, there is a wide range of key players in the MICE industry, thus the scope of cooperation appears to be a challenge in coordinating the activities to provide a quality product that meets the needs of organizers and delegates. In particular, cooperation at both national and regional/local levels should be encouraged (Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, 2003).

- *Safety and security of destination* Tourism, including the meeting and convention industry, is especially vulnerable to the negative effects of safety and security concerns since it is heavily



dependent on people's perception of a destination (Campiranon, 2007; Fletcher & Morakabati, 2008). A destination that has very few strikes, especially in the transportation sector and energy supply sector, can be more successful than others since they are more stable and therefore more reliable. A destination has to have a level of social security if it wants to be successful within the meeting industry. (SCHÜTTER,2010)


- *Networking* A further motivation dimension which has been widely confirmed is networking. The conceptual framework outlined by Witt et al. (1995) suggests that networking is an important dimension, as does that of Oppermann and Chon (1997). They suggest that personal interaction with other likeminded people, keeping up with the changes in their field and learning new skills are all part of networking, although they term their factor 'Association/Conference Factors' (Oppermann & Chon, 1997). It is clear that networking plays an important role in the decision to attend an association conference and it may be argued that any framework intending to reflect the association conference attendance decision-making process should include reference to networking.

- *Human Resources* In a highly competitive market, human resources are ultimately crucial to sustaining the success of the industry, despite changing market conditions (Torraco & Swanson, 1995 cited in Dwyer & Mistilis, 1999). To prosper in the industry and compete with other leading destinations, the development of human resources in Thailand's MICE industry needs serious attention (Aswin et al,2009). Meetings and conventions are a complex business requiring staff skilled in areas such as management, marketing, budgeting, negotiation, interpersonal communication, and IT (Dwyer & Mistilis, 1999; MacLaurin, 2002; Mistilis & Dwyer, 1999). Academics suggest that developing sophisticated training and career development programs to provide staff with various skills may be important for the development of human resources in the MICE industry (Mistilis & Dwyer, 1999). All of the programs should be designed on the basis of understanding the MICE industry, its trends, and industry needs (MacLaurin, 2002).

Cost The cost concept presented by Var et al (1985). further stated that living expenses (hotels, meals, etc.) and air/ground transportation costs should be included in the costs of attending a meeting and that the 'value of the time' involved in making the trip was also an important cost. One further dimension that is likely to figure in the attendance decision is the cost factor. This is of particular relevance to the association market, as delegates are often required to contribute to their attendance, or even to entirely finance their attendance, where not required to attend by their employer. Oppermann and Chon (1997) include cost as part of the personal/business dimension and relate this to the financial status of the delegate – funding is highlighted as an important part of the decision to attend.

- *Expense of Hotel* The finding from costs attribute shows the hotel cost (rate) is the most important attribute while Chacko and Fenich (2000) observe that airfare is highly regarded among the costs attributes.

- *Expense of Transportation* Transportation expenses are a subset of travel expenses, which are all costs associated with business travel, such as taxi fare, fuel, parking fees, lodging, meals,



tips, and cleaning and shipping. Transportation expenses are narrower in that they refer only to the use of or cost of maintaining a car used for business, or transport by rail, air, bus, taxi or any other means of conveyance for business purposes.

- *Stability of currency and exchange* Indeed, the political stability of the host nation is increasingly important as a site selection criterion for international MICE organizations (Weber & Ladkin, 2004). Stability and security are must haves for any leading meeting industry destination; stability in terms of economy, politics, currency as well as society.

Extra conference Opportunities Oppermann and Chon (1997) contended that extra convention opportunities, including shopping, local attractions, and recreational activities, have been appealing to attendees. Given that most attendance is funded by their organizations, attendees and or their spouses prefer to participate in conventions that offer more extra convention opportunities.

- *Sightseeing and Cultural Attractions* A destination which is rich in cultural offers can have great advantages in terms of attractiveness. Decision makers of meetings and events tend to look for a destination that can offer an attractive cultural background. For instance, leisure activities can motivate people attending an association event. People sitting inside the whole day listening to presentations want to enjoy and relax in the evening. Off-site events are often a big part of the conference and organizers seek appealing locations and activities to provide. Therefore, a destination needs to offer a culturally exceptional experience that is unique to the destination. (SCHÜTTER, 2010)

- *City Image* City image is a sensual and spiritual remain of city life over people. People can shape their environment in definable and visible way. Perceiving city experience over and over in symbolic way and giving a new form to the city by using this experience is called "the city image" (Gölhan, 1997). It has been acknowledged that image perceptions will determine eventual destination choice (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991), and, for most destinations, the success or failure of the tourism industry is based on images held by potential visitors and how these images are managed (Sonmez & Sirakaya, 2002).

- *Leisure activities and Opportunities* Severt, Wang, Chen, and Breiter (2007) also uncovered two factors that relate to the location of a conference, which they term 'activities and opportunities' and 'convenience of the conference'. The activities and opportunities factor includes travel opportunities and visiting friends and relatives, whilst the convenience of the conference factor has variables such as reasonable travel time to conference and distance to conference loading on it.



Conclusion

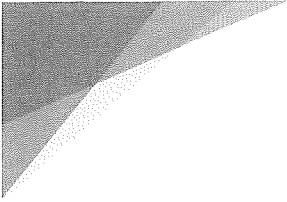
The Hierarchy of MICE Destination Selection can be used to help understand which factors are important to consider when a destination wants to become a major competitor on the international meeting industry market. When looking at the structure and the most important parties involved in the meeting industry. However, all parties can use these factors as a guideline and possibly a first step to analyse one's destination to find out any room for improvements.

The findings of this study strengthen the destination management organizations (DMOs) in explaining their meeting attractiveness within the context of hosting more meetings to their cities.

For governments and authorities, this article can help to look at the meeting industry more carefully and consider it as a serious economic driver for a destination or city. With their support, the industry can prosper and will have beneficial impacts on the local economy and its residents. Convention bureaus can have a major effect on the success of a destination. They can represent the destination on the right trade fairs, design the right marketing campaigns and activities, and create an extensive knowledge about the industry. Recognizing the importance of a convention bureau will help destinations to be able to compete with the top meeting industry destinations.

Buyers can use this article as a guideline or even checklist when looking for a destination for their upcoming events and meetings. Suppliers can use these factors to compare them to the destination where they are located in and analyse their destination regarding its strengths and weaknesses and then identify opportunities and threats. These findings can be a great assistance for many destinations to improve their local meeting industry and produce a step by step plan of how to lead the destination to become successful and a major player on the global meeting industry market.

Due to limited time and resources, further research is recommended especially when a destination wants to make improvements to its meeting industry offers and services. Very often feasibility studies are necessary to be carried out. It is recommended that this paper be used by destinations that already record certain meeting industry movements in their destination and actively seek advice in how to develop this industry and become a competitor on the global market.



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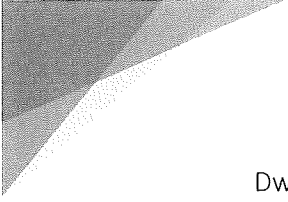
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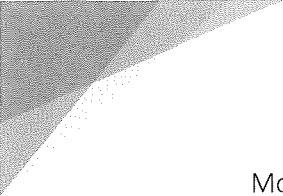
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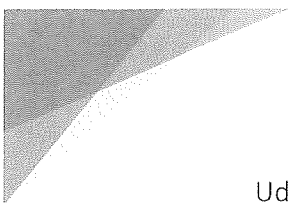
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