

**AN EVALUATION OF THE POTENTIAL OF THAILAND  
AS A MICE\* INDUSTRY HUB FOR THE  
INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION INDUSTRY IN ASIA**

**\*(MEETING, INCENTIVES, CONVENTIONS, AND EXHIBITIONS)**

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of  
the requirements of Liverpool John Moores University  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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## **Declaration**

This is to certify that this thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the School of Education, Leisure and Sport Studies at Liverpool John Moores University and it is entirely my own work and I have not submitted it for any other degree.

**Suphaphon Akkhaphin**

## **Dedication**

I wish to dedicate this study to my parents: my father who always pointed out to all of his eight children that education is the most important instrument for one to change their life, and to my mother who is a great cook and always provided good food for her children. I also would like to dedicate this thesis to my boyfriend for his mental and financial support all the way through this. He always reminds me that 'one step forward is one step closer'. Therefore, I always hope to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

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## **Abstract**

The Meeting, Incentive, Convention and Exhibition (MICE) industry, including conferences and trade shows, is a large and rapidly growing industry over the recent decade. Its growth not only brings benefits for the tourism sector, but also delivers many other potential benefits to host nations. In Thailand, the tourism and MICE industry is a major economic factor as it generates a huge amount of revenue. However, the Thai MICE industry is subject to market fluctuations and sustainable growth is difficult to maintain. Hence, this research examines the factors which influence the decisions of delegates to participate in international conventions as well as factors or criteria influencing organising committees and planners take into consideration when holding international conventions, along with an investigation to the potential of Thailand as a MICE destination, and the positioning of Thailand as a hub for the international conference and convention industry in Asia. The research also aims to identify any factors which limit the potential growth of Thailand as an international hub for the MICE industry through a Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis. The guidelines for a best practice and specifically implemented development policies including marketing strategies are developed, as well as recommendations to help Thailand become a sustainable hub for the international convention industry in Asia. A mixed-methods was employed to collate both the qualitative and quantitative data obtained from the delegates, convention organising committees and planners. The methods entailed interviews, a focus group, and responses of open-ended questions from questionnaire surveys to collate qualitative data, and a questionnaire survey was employed to collect the quantitative data. The data obtained through the qualitative and quantitative methods was triangulated in order to complement the weaknesses of one approach with the strengths of another. The result of the questionnaire survey revealed that 86 percent of the respondents agreed that Thailand has the potential to become a major MICE destination and a hub for the international convention industry in Asia,

due to the advantages that Thailand offers as a destination, such as service quality; affordability and value for money; tourism activities; the attractiveness of destination; intervening opportunities; destination image factor; safety and security issues; the standardisation of hotels and accommodation; the quality of the facilities, and standardisation of the conference venue; and the quality and sufficiency of food and beverages. However, the weaknesses of Thailand as a MICE destination include other opportunities; long haul flights or travelling distances and political instability. Following triangulation with the qualitative results, it was recommended that Thailand needs to create its own events particular relevant to agriculture which Thailand does best with help from MPs, CVBs, service providers, as well as employing a diversity of strategies, including the marketing mix beyond 8Ps.

**Keywords:** Thailand MICE industry, factors influencing international convention delegates' attendance, factors or criteria influencing organizing committees and planners considering when holding international convention, mixed methods, thematic analysis, triangulation

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## Glossary

<b>4Ps</b>	Price, Product, Promotion, Place
<b>7Ps</b>	Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical evidence
<b>8Ps</b>	Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, Physical evidence, Productivity and Quality
<b>AACVB</b>	Asian Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaux
<b>AEC</b>	ASEAN Economic Community
<b>ANOVA</b>	Analysis of Variance
<b>ASEAN</b>	Association of South-East Asian Nations
<b>B2B</b>	Business to Business
<b>B2C</b>	Business to Consumer
<b>BBC</b>	British Broadcasting Corporation
<b>BITEC</b>	Bangkok International Trade & Exhibition Centre
<b>BOI</b>	Board of Investment
<b>BTS</b>	Bangkok Mass Transit System Public Company Limited
<b>CEOs</b>	Chief Executive Officers
<b>CNBC</b>	Consumer News and Business Channel
<b>CNN</b>	Cable News Network
<b>CSN</b>	Customer Services Network. CSN & Associates is a member of the CSN Research Group
<b>CVB</b>	Convention and Visitors Bureau

<b>EIBTM</b>	European Incentive & Business Travel & Meeting, Exhibition with conferences
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FL.</b>	Factor Loading
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GMR</b>	Great Mekong Region
<b>IAPCO</b>	International Association of Professional Congress Organisers
<b>ICCA</b>	International Congress and Convention Association
<b>ICER</b>	International Conference on Educational Reform
<b>ICNIRS</b>	International Councils for Near Infrared Spectroscopy
<b>ICs</b>	International conventions
<b>IHRA</b>	International Harm Reduction Association
<b>IMPACT</b>	Impact Convention and Exhibition Centre
<b>ISGA</b>	International Symposium on Genetics in Aquaculture
<b>KMO</b>	Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin
<b>MICE</b>	Meeting, Incentive, Convention, Exhibition
<b>MOUs</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>MPs</b>	Members of Parliament
<b>MRT</b>	Bangkok Metro Public Company Limited
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental Organisation

<b>NVivo10</b>	A qualitative data analysis computer software package 10
<b>PATA</b>	Pacific Asia Travel Association
<b>PCA</b>	Principal Component Analysis
<b>PCOs</b>	Professional Conference Organiser
<b>PEACH</b>	Pattaya Exhibition & Convention Centre
<b>PhD</b>	Doctor of Philosophy
<b>PHECC</b>	Paragon Hall Exhibiton & Convention Centre
<b>PR</b>	Public Relations
<b>QDA</b>	Qualitative Data Analysis
<b>QSNCC</b>	Queen Sirikit Naitonal Convention Centre
<b>QSR</b>	QSR International, a qualitative research software developer of qualitative data analysis (QDA) software products
<b>RATER</b>	Reliability, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy and Responsiveness
<b>RMUTK</b>	Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep
<b>S.W.O.T</b>	Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat
<b>SE</b>	Standard Error
<b>SERVQUAL</b>	The service quality model was developed by a group of American authors, 'Parsu' Parasuraman, Valarie Zeithaml and Len Berry, in 1988. It highlights the main components of high quality service.

<b>SITE</b>	Society of Incentive and Travel Executives
<b>SMART</b>	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timed
<b>SMS</b>	Short Message Service
<b>SPSS</b>	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
<b>TAT</b>	Tourism Authority of Thailand
<b>TCEB</b>	Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau
<b>THB</b>	Thai Baht
<b>TICA</b>	Thailand Incentive and Convention Association
<b>UFI</b>	Union des Foires Internationales (French), or Union of International Fairs in English. The name change to "UFI", accompanied by the tagline "The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry"
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>UNWTO</b>	United Nations World Tourism Organisation
<b>US</b>	United States
<b>VCB</b>	Visitors and Conference Bureau
<b>WTO</b>	World Tourism Organisation

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# CHAPTER ONE

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## INTRODUCTION

---

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a study of the potential of Thailand as a MICE industry hub for the international convention industry in Asia. The benefits from the industry are not only creating job opportunities and investment regarding the accommodation, convention venues, infrastructures and transport, but also creating small supply chains to the industry and generating the economic growth for the country. Another important advantage of MICE industry relates to seasonality which means that conferences and conventions could be held all year round. This Chapter aims to explain the rationale for this research study, as well as providing an introduction to this thesis. Section 1.2 provides a general background to the study, while section 1.3 explains the focus and justification for this thesis. The research methodology including the methods employed in this thesis are described in section 1.4, and the aims and objectives of the research are presented in section 1.5. Finally, in Section 1.6 an outline of the thesis is presented while section 1.7 summarises the chapter as well as introducing Chapter Two.

### 1.2 BACKGROUND

The World Travel and Tourism Council, Thailand (2014) recognises the important economic impact of travel and tourism, noting that in 2013 it contributed 9.5% of the global GDP, and that it is growing faster than other sectors and that it supports over 266 million jobs. Therefore due to the importance of travel and tourism for the economy and in particular job creation this industry is being further supported by every country. The Kingdom of Thailand is a rich country in term of tourism resources (Anan, 2008), with islands and beaches to the south, World Heritage sites in the

central region, and forest and mountains to the north (TAT, 2014). The country is also known as the "land of smiles" (Anan, 2008) and has long been recognized as a popular travel destination for its cuisine, culture, and spas (Royal Thai Embassy for Singapore, 2009). With the number of tourists reaching approximately 21 million in 2012 and 27 million visitor arrivals in 2013, exceeding the year's original target of 26.1 million and representing a 19.6 per cent increase (TAT News, 2014) it can be noted that the country has remained a popular destination for tourists.

The importance of Meeting, Incentive, Convention and Exhibition (MICE) as a "high value adding business" (Invest Seoul, 2013) meant that many countries are now actively attempting to entice large scale events. In the late 1990s, it was recognized as a new paradigm for tourism (UNWTO, 2006); by 2008 the industry seemed to have peaked with a growing demand across sectors: telecommunications, education, insurance, healthcare, energy and many more (www.worldluxurytourism). However, as the industry is easily affected by both internal and external factors, the demand slightly decreased following the economic crisis of 2009 (Fletcher, 2008). By 2013, the growth of the global travel sector improved, with outbound travel trips rising by 4%, and spending rising 6%, and within the business travel industry, the MICE sector grew much more significantly than it had since 2009. Consequently, the MICE segment constituted 54% of the aggregate business travel worldwide market (UNWTO, 2014).

The term 'MICE sector' as it is generally known in North America and Asia (Dwyer et al, 2007) is also referred to by other terms, as can be noted below:

**'meetings industry'** as it is generally known amongst in European countries. This term may not include exhibition and trade shows (Davidson and Cope, 2003).

**'business events'** as it is known in Australia, (Dwyer et al, 2007).



Recently, the term '**meetings industry**' is increasingly used to avoid confusion from the term of 'MICE' (ICCA, 2013). Rogers (2008, 2011) refers to this kind of industry as the '**conference and convention industry**'.

A summary of how the 'MICE' term is defined is presented in Table 1.2(1) below.

Table 1.2(1): Definitions of MICE term

<p><b>M</b></p>	<p><b>Meeting</b> means the coming together of a large group of people in one place to carry out an activity with a specific purpose. In this context, meetings also include conferences, convention, training seminars and product launches (Rogers, 2013). Such meeting events can be held by firms, associations or government sectors in order to facilitate communication with and between their employees, customers, shareholders and members (Davidson and Cope, 2003). The meeting term is also employed to discuss a symposium, colloquium, assembly, conclave, and summit; however, they may have slightly different meanings and organized in different procedures (Rogers, 2013).</p>
<p><b>I</b></p>	<p><b>Incentive</b> is a meeting event in which the participants are rewarded for a previous performance (ICCA, 2013). Incentive programs are implemented by commercial firms with the goal of increasing sales and profits, enhancing performance and morale, retaining staff, as well as providing high-profile recognition (UNWTO, 2006). It is utilised in order to motivate and reward staff, and as the name suggests, to 'incentivise' good performance (SITE 2013). The trip is often luxurious and entails travel to attractive places (Davidson and Cope, 2003). Unlike other types of MICE tourism, incentive tourism is usually</p>

	conducted purely for entertainment, rather than professional or education purposes (SITE, 2013).
<b>C</b>	<b>Conference</b> is held to allow participants to engage in a discussion, a debate, as well as fact-finding and subsequent resolution to a problem. A conference can be either small or large, depending on the number of attendees and has the objective of facilitating the attendees to exchange information. The term 'conference' does not depend on the frequency; however, it is limited by length of time and objectives (ICCA, 2013).
<b>E</b>	<b>Exhibition</b> is the events held in a hall where products and services are displayed (ICCA, 2013). Exhibitions are also known as 'exposition' and usually last from a few days to a week. In this instance, this is where purchases and sales occur, and where the sellers or exhibitors meet the buyers or visitors. 'E' sometimes includes events (Davidson and Cope, 2003).

Because the term MICE is used throughout Thailand and in ASEAN countries, therefore, the term MICE is used to mean the four sectors of the industry. However, as this research study specifically focuses on the conference and convention industry, so the term '**convention industry**' is also used in this study.

According to the UNWTO, "MICE tourism is a relatively young industry in Asia; the region is quickly becoming a key player in this sector, accounting for 16% of total meetings activities worldwide. As the Asian continent continues to grow and develop, business tourism is likely to play an even greater role in the decade ahead" (PATA, July 2011: 1). According to PATA (2011), the industry has emerged only in the early 1980s, when a dedicated infrastructure was developed, which led to the establishment

of the Convention Bureaux. The Asian Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaux (AACVB) was formed in 1983 (PATA, 2011). A summary giving a timeline of the Asian MICE industry is presented in Figure 1.2(1) below.

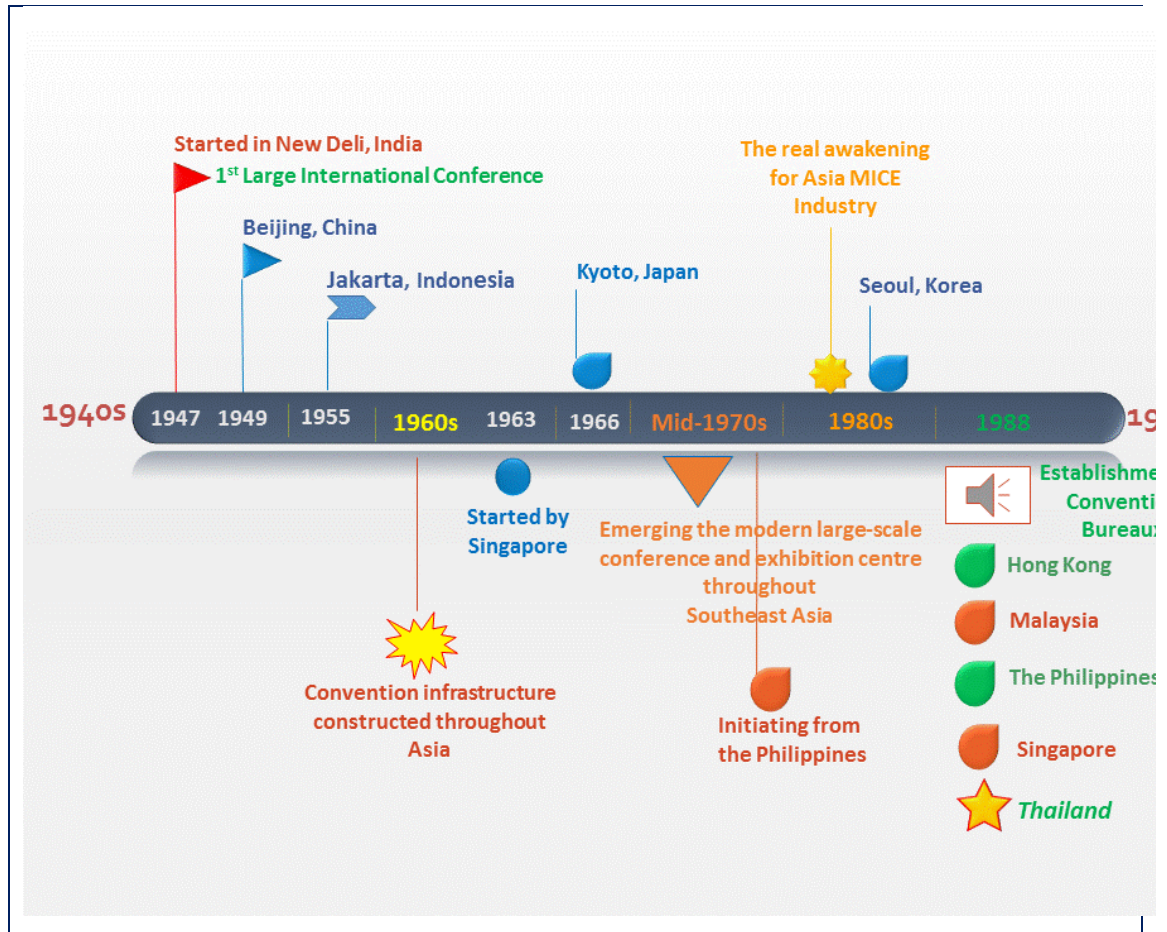


Figure 1.2(1): The Background of MICE Industry in Asia

With regard to the development of Thailand's MICE industry, the MICE Bureau was established in 1977, under the administration of the International Convention Division within the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT). Later, in 2002 TCEB was established and by 2004 it was fully operational in 2004, with all business issues, ongoing assignments and activities transferred and undertaken by TCEB. Under the office of Prime Minister, one of the Bureau's roles is "to encourage the inclusion of Thai arts and culture in these events in order to promote the national heritage". In addition, the Bureau's vision entails "increase[ing] revenues and establish Thailand as Asia's business events hub by the year 2016" (TCEB:

vision and mission). Table 1.2(2) below presents a summary of evolution of Thailand's MICE industry.

Table 1.2(2): A summary of Evolution of Thailand's MICE Industry

<b>Year</b>	<b>Establishment</b>
<b>1977</b>	The founding of the International Convention Division of Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT)
<b>1984</b>	The establishment of Thailand Incentive and Convention Association (TICA), a private sector organisation with the purpose of closely coordinating between government and the private sector to effectively develop and promote the MICE industry.
<b>N/D</b>	The Bangkok Convention Centre of the Sofitel Centara Grand Bangkok was built. This venue was recognized as the first international standard convention hall in Thailand.
<b>1991</b>	Queen Sirikit National Convention Centre (QSNCC), Thailand's first national and world-class convention centre was built.
<b>1980s- 1990s</b>	Several major convention venues were built to respond to the increasing demand of the MICE market. Most of these venues are located in Bangkok, namely, the Impact Convention and Exhibition Centre (IMPACT), the QSNCC, the Bangkok International Trade and Exhibition Centre (BITEC), and the Paragon Hall Exhibition and Convention Centre (PHECC).
<b>2000s</b>	The Pattaya Exhibition & Convention Centre (PEACH) was opened in Pattaya, in the eastern region (150 kilometers from Bangkok).

	In other regions, such as Chiang Mai in the north, Khon Kaen in the northeast, Phuket in the south, most events are held in 4-5 star hotels and in University Convention Centres in that region.
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With regard to the top 10 city rankings in 2013 for meetings and events in Asia Pacific, Bangkok and Chiang Mai in Thailand came 5<sup>th</sup>; after Shanghai; Singapore; Sydney; and Hong Kong and Macau respectively (American Express Meetings and Events Destination Analysis, October, 2013). Presently, Thailand is not only a popular destination for tourists, but it is also becoming increasingly popular as an increasingly desirable destination for holding international events.

According to the national statistics of 2012, Thailand organized 7,382 events and received 895,224 overseas MICE travellers to international conferences and exhibitions, with these events generating foreign exchange earnings of 79.77<sup>1</sup> billion Baht, representing 9.49% of the total GDP from tourism, and 0.58% of the entire GDP (TCEB, 2013). In 2013, the performance of the industry had increased by 13.2% with 1,013,502 persons participating in the 7,866 MICE events held in Thailand and the income from MICE delegates was 88.49<sup>2</sup> billion Baht. Significantly, MICE foreign visitors spent more than three to four times as much as regular travellers. Therefore, the proportion of the revenue from MICE business was as high as 80% of the total revenues from international tourism.

Conventions are of particular importance, accounting for 33% of the entire MICE sector, while corporate meetings and incentive travels had roughly equal shares (TCEB, 2013). Figure 1.6 below shows the numbers of MICE visitors to Thailand in 2013 and figure 1.7 presents numbers of MICE visitors to Thailand in 2013 classified by continents ([www.businesseventsthailand.com](http://www.businesseventsthailand.com))

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<sup>1</sup> £1.49 billion equivalent. Exchange rate on 21 July, 2015, £1 = 53.56 Baht

<sup>2</sup> £1.65 equivalent. Exchange rate on 21 July, 2015, £1 = 53.56 Baht

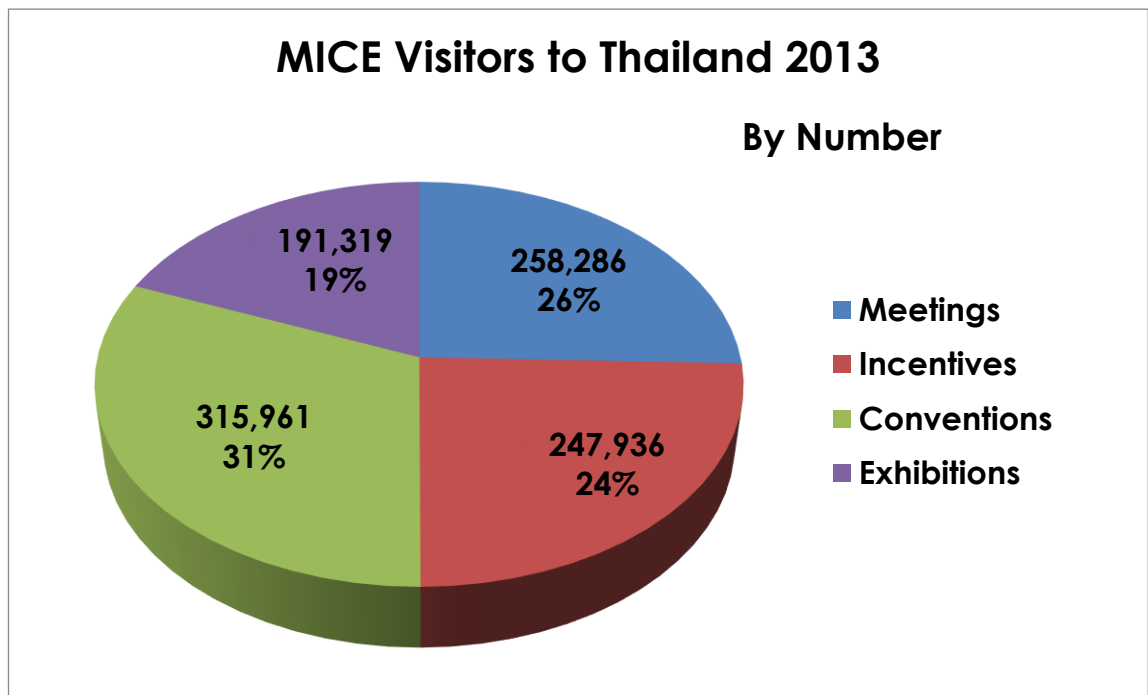


Figure 1.2(2): Numbers of MICE Visitors to Thailand in 2013. Source: TCEB - Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau, from <http://www.businesseventsthailand.com>

The revenue generated from MICE industry was not only from the expenses of visitors, but also from the investment in convention venues, event organisers, accommodation facilities, caterers and support services that provide staff for MICE events or relevant business. Recently, Thailand MICE Venue Standard (TMVS) has been raised to the Master Plan (2016 – 2020) to serve as a role model and to create a unified ASEAN MICE Venue Standard for wider regional application (*Bangkok-post*, 31 July, 2012). Although such standardization started in Thailand, a number of venues throughout the kingdom have now been certified. Also, there will be investment in a new venue in Khon Kaen, as the city is already the gateway to Greater Mekong Sub-region, Indochina and South China will become a hub for MICE activity in Northeast Thailand (TCEB, 2013). Five major MICE destinations have been set up in the kingdom.





Figure 1.2(3): Five Major MICE Destinations in Thailand. Source: TCEB - Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau, from <http://www.businesseventsthailand.com>

However, a number of minor MICE destinations also have been named, namely Kanchanaburi, Hat Yai, Koh Chang, Koh Samui, Krabi, and Mae Hong Son.

Whilst Thailand's MICE performance was going well, the forecast for 2014 was for 987,000 delegates to participate in those events, thus generating 96.93 billion Baht revenue (TCEB, 1 May, 2014). As the number of events increase every year, the experience available in Thailand of organising and planning events has developed, and with it the satisfaction levels of delegates became higher (TCEB). This reflects that the people who work in the industry have the "know how" or practical knowledge. Consequently, the MICE industry has the potential to be further developed and expanded. There is also the belief held by the Royal Thai Embassy for Singapore (2009) that expansion of corporate events could also benefit the tourist industry, and in this way these sectors could be seen to complement each other.

Nonetheless, the MICE market in Thailand is uncertain. Between 2008 and 2014, the market fluctuated and declined, especially in comparison to the market shares of neighboring countries (TAT, 2005-06 and TCEB, 2012). Reasons for this decline include the worldwide breakout of Swine Flu in 2007 and 2008; the global economic slowdown brought about by the European and US financial crises, which also began at the same time. Not to mention the climate of political instability in Thailand, resulting in civil turmoil and social chaos on a national level between 2008 and 2009, as well as two coups in a ten-year period. All of these factors have had a detrimental effect on Thailand as a tourist destination. This resulted in a decline in the number of tourists traveling to Thailand. Regarding the performance in fiscal year of 2009, the MICE industry in Thailand decreased by 10%, with 686,609 MICE travellers generating revenue of 53,714<sup>3</sup> million Baht. However, in 2011 the number of MICE travellers to Thailand was increased to 840,054 overseas travellers and the generated revenue was 70,625<sup>4</sup> million Baht (TCEB, Annual Report 2010). Figure 1.2(4) presents the number of Thailand MICE visitors from 2008 to 2013 ([www.businesseventsthailand.com](http://www.businesseventsthailand.com))

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<sup>3</sup> £993.231 million equivalent. Exchange rate at £1 equals 54.08 Thai Baht, on 22 July, 2015.

<sup>4</sup> £1305.93 million equivalent. Exchange rate at £1 equals 54.08 Thai Baht, on 22 July, 2015.



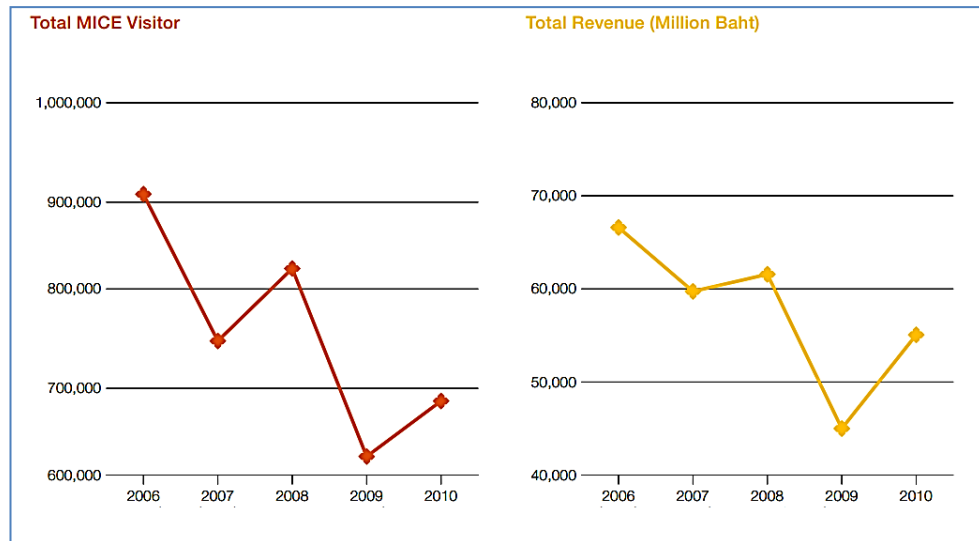


Figure 1.2(4): Figure of Thailand MICE's Fluctuation from year 2006 and 2010. Source: TCEB - Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau, from <http://www.businesseventsthailand.com>

Currently, Thailand has a decreased share of the MICE market in Asia, compared to that of neighboring competitors, such as China, Japan, Korea, and Singapore. Barret (2006) explains that Hong Kong and Singapore attract many MICE visitors because of their status as commercial hubs and home to the head offices of many multinational companies. Nine reasons as to why Thailand has failed to become a major MICE destination are given by Alford (2005), which are: (1) the lack of a completed, fully inclusive convention centre; (2) the poor locations of most of the existing exhibition centres; (3) the fact that there are only a few hotels in close vicinity to the larger convention centres; (4) the fact that Thai hospitality is not what it once was; (5) a lack of human resources at a rank and file level who understand the needs of MICE tourists; (6) the fact that the MICE industry tends to favor established Asian business centres like Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Singapore; (7) the fact that the TCEB has focused too much on numbers, and (8) has largely ignored the strength of Thailand as an incentive destination; and finally, (9) the approach that the 'TCEB Knows Best'.

Based on the statistics given earlier in this chapter and rationale explaining why Thailand still needs further development, the topics which should

receive the most attention include the establishment of Thailand as a MICE destination hub, marketing Thailand as a potential MICE hub, and the promotion and campaign for Thailand to become a MICE marketplace. Furthermore, the report by Alford also revealed that there was an insufficient amount of research related to the Thai MICE industry. Therefore, if Thailand would like to establish itself as the MICE hub or a capital market in the MICE industry, there must be a steep increase in the amount of research conducted on this industry and related areas. In order to set the marketing as well as the strategies, therefore, it has become paramount that what factors make the delegates go for an international convention need to be known. Similarly, criteria or aspects that the committee or organisers consider when planning an international convention also need to be revealed. In addition, data on the perspectives and satisfaction of these delegates and organisers with regard to the effectiveness of the international conventions held in Thailand are also required. The voice and views from professional planners and organisers toward how to enhance Thailand MICE market as the hub of Asia are also important as they have the knowledge from within the sector. Therefore, the research carried out for this thesis is important for understanding the current situation in Thailand and also how to appropriately develop its MICE industry.

### **1.3 FOCUS AND THE JUSTIFICATION OF THIS STUDY**

The service sector plays an important role in the economic transformation of Thailand (Chemsripong and Mahmood, 2008). In addition, the external and internal factors affecting MICE growth in Thailand are challenging because attempting to stabilise the industry performance is more difficult than increasing sales volume. The stabilisation of the industry can lead to the government spending less money on the marketing that is carried out to increase the sales volume. As Thailand competitively markets its tourist industry, according to Chemsripong and Mahmood (2008), the current services export structure in Thailand is a manifestation of its relative specialisation based upon given resources, activities, and strategies. For

this reason, the study of the quality and effectiveness of operations and management of the industry, as well as issues of capability and sustainability, play a crucial role in the long term health and success of the economy, and therefore require closer examination. Therefore, becoming the hub of MICE tourism industry in Asia would provide Thailand with a significant advantage over its potential competitors, and create substantial benefits for the country. Not only employment and investment opportunities, but also direct and indirect spending which will generate economic growth. Therefore, it is essential to carry out a detailed analysis of which factors will influence the optimum development of the MICE Industry of Thailand, particularly international conventions. This research will be conducted in order to elicit strategies, and to develop a best practice model, which could allow Thailand to dominate the MICE tourism capital market, particularly in terms of international meetings, conferences, and convention destinations among competing Asian nations.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A mixed methodology was employed in this research, with the quantitative and qualitative data also triangulated. The quantitative method utilized questionnaire surveys, while the qualitative employed interviews, panel and group discussions, and responses to open-ended survey questions. The quantitative questionnaire was designed for two groups of research samples: convention delegates and planners and organisers. The elements questioned upon related to service quality and the effectiveness of international conventions (see Appendices 1 and 2 for the questionnaires). The findings from both groups of samples were then compared and triangulated. A critical examination was then undertaken with regard to service quality, and the capability and the competitiveness of Thailand as a MICE destination. Further detail on the research philosophy and methodological design used in this study is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three.

## **1.5 THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The research aims to evaluate the potential of Thailand as a MICE industry destination and identify the ways in which Thailand could become a sustainable hub in the international convention market. Four objectives have been established for his investigation.

- 1) to examine the factors which influence conference delegates to participate in international conventions
- 2) to investigate the elements which organising committees and planners consider when selecting the international convention destination
- 3) to seek the potential of Thailand's MICE industry to position itself as a hub for international convention hub in Asia

Furthermore, this research study attempts to identify how Thailand is perceived as a MICE destination and what the factors and/or weaknesses to its current strategy may be. The study also creates marketing strategy guidelines, including the development policies to boost Thailand's MICE industry if it fails to achieve the goal of hub in Asia, as well as recommendations for Thailand in order for it to be a sustainable hub of international convention industry in Asia.

## **1.6 OUTLINE OF THE THESIS**

This thesis is divided into nine chapters. A description of each chapter follows:

Chapter One provides an introduction, an overview of the development, and the background of this study. It also provides the general background of MICE in Asia and Thailand. It describes the significance of this study, it gives a brief overview of the research methodology, and the focus and justification of the thesis. It also lists the aim and objectives of the study and illustrates the outline of the thesis.

Chapter Two presents a review of the literature on development theory, tourism development planning, decision making criteria of delegates and organisers, including service quality and marketing mix (8Ps) in the service industry. Literature relating to these aspects will be discussed as it relates to the research aim and objectives.

Chapter Three presents an overview of the research methodology, starting with the philosophy underpinning the research. It also details the research design, methods and strategies, plus factors including how the population and the sample were chosen. The pilot study undertaken in order to test the reliability and validation of questionnaire survey is also presented.

Chapter Four presents results of data analysis of the quantitative research obtained from the questionnaire surveys. From the findings it is possible to ascertain what are regarded as important factors which influence the decisions of the delegates to attend international conventions, regardless of the destination and the satisfaction levels of delegates towards international conventions held in Thailand. This chapter begins with an analysis of the respondents. The statistical tests employed to analyse the data are both descriptive and inferential.

Chapter Five reveals a further analysis of the quantitative data. The chapter examines the criteria influencing the planners and organisers on selecting the international convention sites. Again statistical tests used to analyse the data are both descriptive and inferential statistics, namely T-Test, One-Way ANOVA and Factor Analysis.

Chapter Six reveals a further analysis of quantitative data regarding the potential of Thailand as a hub for the international convention industry, the advantages, and limitation or obstacles. The chapter focuses on the potential of Thailand as a hub of international convention in Asia with respect to the perspectives of delegates and planners and organisers. The chapter also presents the key benefits that Thailand has to offer in international convention industry customers, along with its

limitations/obstacles that Thailand is facing according to the perspectives of delegates, planners and organisers. The statistical tests employed to analyse the data are the Bartlett's Test, Scree Test, factor extraction and factor rotation.

Chapter Seven presents an analysis of the qualitative data, obtained from interviews, focus-group and the open-ended answers from the questionnaires. Findings indicate the most appropriate strategies and policies for Thailand to become the hub of international conventions in the Asian market. The procedure of analysis follows the instruction of Thematic Networks, presented by the work of Attride-Stirling (2001). From using NVivo, The merging nodes and themes are grouped into three categories: a Basic Theme, an Organising Theme and a Global Theme.

Chapter Eight provides a comprehensive discussion of the quantitative findings, which were first presented in Chapter Four, Five and Six. It also discusses the triangulated results identified via qualitative analysis and presented in Chapter Seven, in order to merge the findings obtained through different approaches. It also discusses the findings in relation to the literature.

Chapter Nine presents conclusion and recommendations for future research relating to MICE industry.

## **1.7 SUMMARY**

This chapter has outlined the structure of the thesis. The next chapter will go on to explore literature relevant to the study. Literature discussed relates to service quality, MICE organisers and attendees decision making criteria, strategies and policies for developing the MICE industry, as well as marketing in the service industry.

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## **CHAPTER TWO**

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### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

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#### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter Two presents the literature review and is separated into several sections. Section 2.1 examines the research already carried out on the MICE industry in Asia and Thailand. Section 2.2 presents factors which influence the decision making process of delegates to participate in international conventions. Section 2.3 focuses on the organising committees and planners' decision making criteria for site selection when organising international conventions. Section 2.4 discusses customer satisfaction, and includes defining and measuring 'service quality'. This chapter also presents the marketing mix employed in the service industry: the 8Ps, which are discussed in Section 2.5, whereas 2.6 summarises the chapter.

#### **2.1 RESEARCH ON THE MICE INDUSTRY IN ASIA AND THAILAND**

In the UNWTO report published in 2014 regarding the Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions industry, specifically mentions that "Asia and the Pacific region is one of the fastest developing regions for the MICE industry in the world, with some countries and cities already leading in MICE tourism" (UNWTO, 2014, p.8). As already discussed in the Introduction (Chapter 1), the convention and meeting industry has developed rapidly in the past few decades. According to the worldwide ranking of MICE country 2014, the U.S.A. was ranked first among top ten countries, followed by Germany, Spain, United Kingdom, France, and Italy with regards to the number of conventions and meetings were held in these countries. Japan and China-P.R. from Asia-Pacific region were ranked in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> place, after with the Netherlands and Brazil in 9<sup>th</sup> place and 10<sup>th</sup> place respectively. Unfortunately, Thailand came the 33<sup>rd</sup> place of the worldwide ranking, after Chinese Taipei (28<sup>th</sup> place), Singapore (29<sup>th</sup>

place), and Malaysia (30<sup>th</sup> place). According to Asia Pacific & Middle East rankings, Japan was ranked first, followed by China-P.R., Australia, Republic of Korea, Chinese Taipei, Singapore, and Malaysia respectively. Thailand was in 8<sup>th</sup> placed, down from 7<sup>th</sup> place in 2012 ([www.iccaworld.com](http://www.iccaworld.com)). Due to the fact that the number of convention delegates is typically greater than the amount of people travelling for personal reasons and that they have a greater economic impact; for example the number of nights they stay are typically longer than that of other groups of tourists; as participants in international conventions are also bigger spenders, as they performing dual role as both tourists travelling for business plus pleasure (Kim et al., 2011) then more needs to be understood about convention delegates, and how to entice them to visit a specific destination.

Carlsen's (1999) work on Asia noted that, "a review of the literature reveals that Asian research on the MICE industry is very scarce" (p.53). Furthermore, there are problems in terms of defining the MICE industry as well as understanding the scope and scale of the industry. Due to the fact that the terms 'conference' and 'event' are used interchangeably, the Asian Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus (AACVB) is limited in terms of estimating the actual economic contribution of the sector. The data on the conference delegates is often not collected or is not disaggregated from the conglomerate categories of visitor arrivals.

A comparison between Australian research with that of research conducted in Asia, Europe and North America demonstrates that a greater coordination of systematic research is required (Carlsen, 1999). In the past, MICE research in Australia focused on descriptive statistics and issues such as the destination image and the choice of city (Oppermann 1996a, 1996b), in order to identify the aspects of destination choice in relating to the competitiveness of the destination. Other topics relevant to the convention industry recognised by Oppermann include understanding the delegates and organising committees, money spent by delegates, the size of the party, average length of stay, as well as other



quantitative data. In qualitative terms, Carlsen (1999) noted that there has been minimal research into the perceptions and satisfaction levels of delegates.

With regard to Thailand specifically, between 1990s to present, nineteen research papers relating to the MICE industry could be found in relevant academic journals, and the topics range from evaluation of the potential and competitiveness of MICE industry among competitors in Asia and Pacific, economic impact of MICE industry to Thailand, a SWOT analysis of the MICE industry in Thailand, the satisfaction levels of MICE stakeholders, factors such as catering and expenditure, the identification of the obstacles which adversely affect the Meeting and convention industry in Thailand, a study of the marketing mix for the MICE industry in Thailand, risk management, communication for innovation development, career profiles, the image of Thailand, to trends of Asia-Pacific MICE in 1997-98, including the study of the perceptions of attendees of green meetings. Although, as can be noted, Thailand as a MICE destination has been researched to an extent, this research can contribute and further work carried out by others, particularly as MICE is developing in the country. Need for such research has been noted by Carlsen (1999) as he asserts that a sound base of information needs to be developed in this sector, as it receives the highest economic value of all visitor types.

Hence, by following Carlsen's guidance and examining the earlier academic work carried out on the MICE industry in general, but also specifically on Thailand, this research aims to evaluate the potential of Thailand in becoming the Asian market hub of the international convention industry.

## **2.2 DELEGATES DECISION MAKING CRITERIA PROCESS**

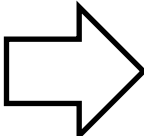
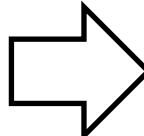
The convention market is comprised of the following three sectors: (1) convention agencies, (2) the convention planners, and (3) the delegates (Var et al., 1985). When looking at the convention planning process, the three main players proposed by Oppermann and Chon (1997) comprise

of (1) international convention associations, (2) professional conference organisers, and (3) international delegates.

A number of scholars have studied the attributes or factors influencing the convention site selection, including delegates decision making to attend an international convention (e.g., Clark and McCleary (1995), Var et al. (1985), Hiller (1995), Crouch and Ritchie (1997), Go and Zang (1997), Oppermann and Chon (1997), Oppermann (1998), Jun and McCleary (1999), Go, Govers and Vliegthart (2002), Webber and Chon, (2002), Crouch and Louviere (2004), Baloglu and Love (2005), Jago and Deery (2005), Crouch (2007), Zhang, Leung and Qu (2007), Yoo and Chon (2010), Kim, Yoon and Kim (2011), Lee and Min (2013), Shen, Park and Wu (2013), Terzi et al. (2013), Hayat et al. (2014), Lee and Lee (2014), Pike and Page (2014), and Whitfield et al. (2014).

Most of the academics, used Opperman (1996) and Oppermann and Chon's (1997) model to assess which attributes or factors influence delegates on whether or not to participate in an international convention. Oppermann and Chon (1997) split the delegates into two categories: 'participating members' and 'non-participating members'. They stated that the actual percentage of members that attend an annual convention is very low, while the participation by non-members is higher relatively. Delegates may also travel in groups or bring their family or friends. Oh, Roehl and Shock (1993) found that family members are influential in terms of the decision-making processes of these delegates. Oppermann and Chon (1997) argued that there are other so called "push" and "pull" factors involved in decision-making as well as obstacles and intervening opportunities. They further pointed out that convention delegates may attend conventions for very different reasons but the main reasons could be grouped into four categories: (1) personal or business factors, (2) association or conference factors, (3) location factors, and (4) intervening opportunities.

Zhang, Leung and Qu (2007) made a further study of Oppermann and Chon's (1997) model. They pointed out that a major factor delegates considered when deciding whether or not to attend a conference or convention was cost, both monetary and temporal. Zhang, Leung and Qu (2007)'s model had two major modifications: 1) the original concept of a 'location factors' was split into two subcategories the 'attractiveness' and the 'accessibility' of the convention destination; and 2) the original 'intervening opportunities'. The attribute of 'total cost factor', as discussed by Oppermann and Chon's model (1997), was replaced by 'total cost in terms of time' and 'total cost in terms of money' of the trip. They argued that there is a significant difference between monetary and temporal costs. In addition, Zhang, Leung and Qu (2007) also refined the factors affecting whether or not delegates participate in conventions, as can be seen from figure 2.2, which illustrates the factors and relating issues they found from their research.

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Relevant Issues</b>
<b>1. Personal and business</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Health</li> <li>▪ Financial constraints</li> <li>▪ Time availability</li> <li>▪ Family</li> <li>▪ Funding</li> <li>▪ Opportunity to seek professional development; and</li> <li>▪ A desire to learn about the event topic.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Association and conference</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Involvement with associations</li> <li>▪ Peer recognition</li> <li>▪ Professional contacts</li> <li>▪ Personal interaction and local communities</li> </ul> <p>(If commonly attend professional conventions)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Involvement with several associations</li> <li>▪ The level of involvement varied</li> <li>▪ Having opportunities to make personal contacts with influential speakers, guests and experts</li> </ul>

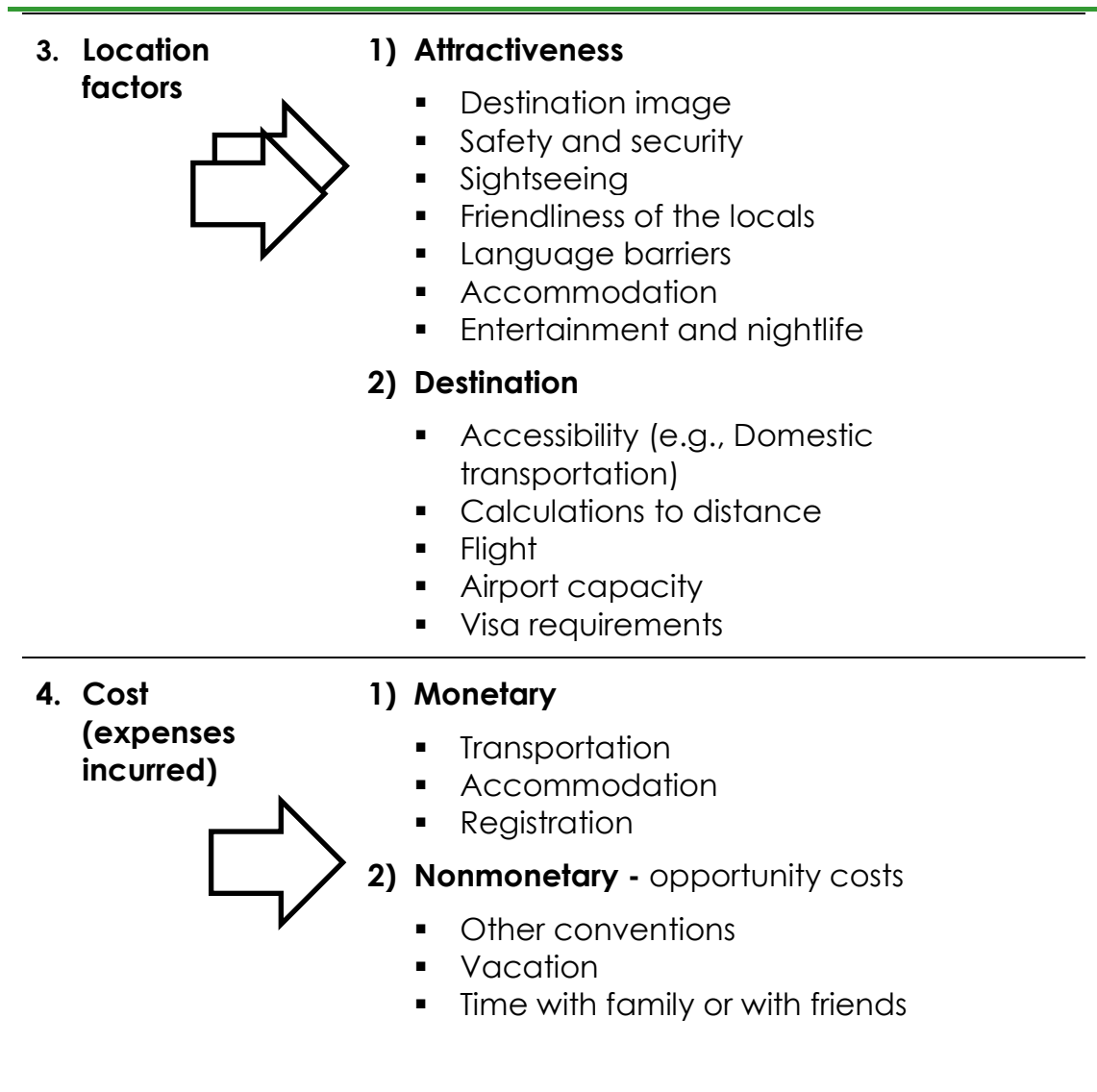


Figure 2.2: Factors Affecting Delegates Convention Participation and its Relevant Issues

The scale used to examine the factors affecting the decision-making process with regard to participation in international conventions was further developed by Yoo and Chon (2008). Five dimensions were regarded as meaningful: (1) stimuli in the destination; (2) professional and social networking; (3) educational opportunities; (4) health and safety issues; and (5) travel capability. Zhang, Leung and Qu (2007) also note that the perceptions of prospective attendees regarding the quality level of the conventions is influenced by the content of the convention which they perceive as being instrumental in helping them to develop themselves professionally. In addition, the priorities in added value to a

destination were noted by Zhang, Leung and Qu to happen through personal experiences or a chance to have a memorable trip.

### **2.3 ORGANISING COMMITTEES OR PLANNERS' DECISION MAKING CRITERIA FOR SITE SELECTION**

There are three forms of meetings and conventions: (1) corporate, (2) association, and (3) government meetings. With regard to the objectives of this study, only conferences and conventions of professional associations will be focused on, as it will be possible to understand the decision making process for these two forms in more detail, whereas for government meetings, political reasoning or other incentives may impact from a different perspective on why a destination was chosen.

Clark and McCleary (1995) noted that the process of selecting a convention site is potentially very complex as there are a multitude of variables which influence the decision-making process. Researchers have also examined the site-specific variables which can be defined as the attributes that influence the selection of a site for a convention between 1900 and 2000 based on the studies of Fenich (2002), Bonn et al. (1994), Clark and McCleary (1995), Var et al. (1995), Fortin, Ritchie and Arsenault (1976), Oppermann (1996a), Fortin and Ritchie (1977), and Crouch and Ritchie (1998). An analysis of the relevant literature on the significant attributes of a convention destination yielded a range of different variables (e.g., Fortin, Ritchie and Arsenault (1975); Fortin and Ritchie (1976); Oppermann (1998)). Table 2.3 below illustrates and compares the attributes and variables presented by these scholars.

Table 2.3(1): Review of Important Attributes for Convention Location Decisions

<b>Authors &amp; Year of Publication</b>	<b>Fortin, Ritchie and Arsenault 1975</b>	<b>Fortin and Ritchie 1976</b>	<b>American Society of Association Executives 1991</b>	<b>Meetings and Conventions 1993</b>	<b>METROPOLL 1993</b>
<b>Important variables or attributes for location selection criteria</b>	Air access Hotel service Hotel rooms Conference rooms Price levels Local interest Geographic location Personal safety Hospitality Restaurant facilities Local availability Hotel assistance Tourism features Transport facilities Convention center Previous experience	Choice of hotels and/or other facilities needed for the meeting Geographical accessibility Distance Transport cost Climate Availability of leisure activities Tourism, cultural and other activities Decision of superiors Image of the city	Quality of service Meeting room facilities Overall affordability Sleeping room facilities Location image Dining/entertainment Air transportation Exhibit facilities Highway accessibility Geographic rotation Recreational facilities Climate	Availability of facilities Access to location Transportation costs Distance from attendants Climate Recreational facilities Tourist attractions Mandated by By-laws Location image	Food and lodging costs Access to location Convenient airline service Travel costs Hotel room availability Attractiveness of hotel Clean/attractive location Security/crime rate Popularity of location

Note: The table above is adapted from Oppermann (1998: p.40), who presented Fortin et al.'s study that included 39 variables, from ASAE, 1992; Edelstein and Benini, 1994; ERA/SRA, 1993; Fortin, Ritchie and Arsentault, 1976, and added Fortin and Ritchie (1977).

Nonetheless, as presented in Table 2.3(1), Crouch and Ritchie (1998) have presented the most comprehensive model which was based on their review of the literature, and it has heavily influenced later studies. They conceived a conceptual model for the site selection process, consisting of 5 steps and identified eight groups of categories regarding site selection factors, together with thirty-six dimensions or sub-variables or categories to be considered when selecting the convention site. The five steps included: (1) the preplanning, (2) the analysis of recommendations on site selection, (3) the site selection decision-making process, (4) the convention location, and 5) a post-convention evaluation. A set of eight primary categories, including several dimensions resulted in the identification of thirty six attributes which determine the choice of a convention site. Figure 2.3(1) below illustrates the following variables/attributes.

Category	Dimensions
<b>1) Accessibility</b>	<p><b>Cost-</b> the monetary expense of transportation and access</p> <p><b>Time-</b> the duration/distance of travel involved and the opportunity cost of that time</p> <p><b>Frequency-</b> the frequency of connections to the site</p> <p><b>Convenience-</b> the scheduling convenience of the connections</p> <p><b>Barriers-</b> the extent of any travel formalities that inhibit travel such as visas, customs, etc.</p>
<b>2) Local support</b>	<p><b>Local chapter-</b> the extent of assistance and backing offered by the local chapter of the association</p> <p><b>CVB/convention center-</b> the extent of planning, logistical, and promotional support offered</p> <p><b>Subsidies-</b> the extent to which the destination offers to defray costs through rebates and subsidies</p>

Figure 2.3(1): Convention Site Selection Factors (continued)





Category	Dimensions
<b>3) Extra-conference opportunities</b> 	<p><b>Entertainment-</b> restaurants, bars, theaters, night clubs, etc.</p> <p><b>Shopping-</b> malls, major, department stores, low prices, etc.</p> <p><b>Sightseeing-</b> architectural, museums, monuments, attractions, parks, historical sites, local tours, etc.</p> <p><b>Recreation-</b> sports and activities either as spectator or participant</p> <p><b>Professional opportunities-</b> visiting local clients, negotiations, business deals, selling making contacts, etc.</p>
<b>4) Accommodation facilities</b> 	<p><b>Capacity-</b> the number of rooms available and whether more than a single hotel is required</p> <p><b>Cost-</b> the cost of suitable accommodation at the site</p> <p><b>Service-</b> the perception of the standards of service</p> <p><b>Security-</b> the extent to which the hotels provide a safe and secure environment</p> <p><b>Availability-</b> are the facilities available?</p>
<b>5) Meeting facilities</b> 	<p><b>Capacity-</b> ability of site to provide suitably sized facilities</p> <p><b>Layout-</b> suitability of the facility layout and floor plan</p> <p><b>Cost-</b> the cost of the meeting space required</p> <p><b>Ambiance-</b> the ability of the facility to create an appropriate atmosphere and environment</p> <p><b>Service-</b> the perception of the standards of service</p> <p><b>Security-</b> the extent to which the facility provides a safe and secure meeting space</p> <p><b>Availability-</b> are the facilities available when required?</p> <p><b>Experience-</b> has the site performed satisfactorily in the past?</p>
<b>6) Information</b> 	<p><b>Reputation-</b> what is the reputation of the destination among other meeting planners?</p> <p><b>Marketing-</b> the effectiveness of the destination's marketing activities</p>

Figure 2.3(1): Convention Site Selection Factors (continued)



Category	Dimensions
7) Site environment	<p><b>Climate-</b> the desirability of the climate of destination</p> <p><b>Setting-</b> the attractiveness of the destination's surroundings</p> <p><b>Infrastructure-</b> the suitability and standard of local infrastructure</p> <p><b>Hospitality-</b> the extent to which the host organizations and community excel in welcoming visitors</p>
8) Other criteria	<p><b>Risks-</b> the possibility of strikes, natural disasters, boycotts, and other unexpected events</p> <p><b>Profitability-</b> the extent to which the site would produce a profit or loss for the convention</p> <p><b>Association promotion-</b> would the site add credibility to the association and build membership?</p> <p><b>Novelty-</b> the extent to which the destination represents a novel location for the association's next convention</p>

Figure 2.3(1): Convention Site Selection Factors. Source: Crouch and Ritchie (1998: p.59-60).

Oppermann (1998) presented research on the perceptions of meeting planners from small and large associations on convention destinations. He combined the level importance of the attributes (Mean scores) with respect to the perceptions of the meeting planners, on hub scales. The most important aspects with regard to attributes and variables were (1) meeting rooms and facilities; (2) hotel service quality; (3) hotel room availability; (4) clean and attractive locations; (5) safety and security; (6) ease of access to air transportation; (7) food and lodging costs; (8) overall affordability; (9) image of the city; (10) transportation costs; (11) restaurant facilities; (12) exhibition facilities; (13) scenery and opportunities for sightseeing opportunities; (14) climate; and (15) the nightlife. In a similar manner, Kim and Kim (2003) provided a review summarising the major criteria for the selection of a site and came to the conclusion that the main attributes were (1) meeting room facilities; (2) service quality; (3) restaurants; (4) transportation; (5) and the attractiveness of the destination.

Crouch (2007) further conducted research on the impact and significance of the attributes which shape the competitiveness of a destination. Ten of the 36 attributes which were regarded as being the most important in terms of the competitiveness of the destination were: (1) climate and physiography; (2) culture and history; (3) tourism superstructure; (4) mix of activities; (5) awareness of the public image; (6) special events; (7) entertainment; (8) infrastructure; (9) accessibility; and (10) the branding and positioning.

Kingston (1995) notes that a typical error made by convention planners is to assume that the convention itself is enough to lure potential delegates. Based on Kingston's recognition, Go and Zhang (1997) classified the selection criteria for convention sites into two main categories: (1) the environment and the capacity of a city to host an international convention, and (2) the actual meeting facilities. In the same way, earlier research by Meeting Planners International (1980), indicated the preferences of the conference organisers were most concerned with accessibility and attractiveness (i.e., climate and facilities, the availability of leisure and cultural activities) in convention venue decisions (cited in Fortin and Ritchie, 1977: p.197). Crouch and Weber (2002) also added that factors such as location, value for money, price, and service quality were the highest priority factors determining the selection of the venue.

In a similar manner, Var et al. (1985) noted that the decision to hold a meeting in a particular location involves a decision-making process. The attributes and variables considered by the convention planners cover a wide spectrum, and include factors such as: (1) accessibility of potential meeting sites; (2) overall attractiveness of the area both as a convention site and as a tourist spot, such as amenities and facilities; and (3) quantity and quality of available accommodation. "For simplicity, the accommodation aspect can be viewed as a constraint rather than a decision variable, so that the decision-maker (i.e., convention planner) chooses a site based on accessibility/attractiveness considerations subject to the availability of suitable accommodation" (p.196-7). The

appeal of the destination to tourists is also a “central consideration for meeting planners” (Judd, 1995: p. 179). Similarly, a research report commissioned by the major European Meetings Industry indicated that the respondents rated the content of an event and the cost of attending a meeting as being less important than the appeal of the destination or the venue. The factor of guest celebrity speakers was considered to be far less important to delegates (EIBTM - Exhibition for the Incentive Business Travel and Meetings, see [www.iccaworld.com](http://www.iccaworld.com)). According to the Borghans, Romans and Sauermann (2010), the conference location is of paramount importance for the successful organisation of scientific conferences. It is the second most important factor which influences the delegates to make their decision on convention attendance. Terzi et al. (2013) made the list relating to those delegates' consideration with regard to the convention destination location. Good infrastructure will meet the needs of both convention organisers and attendees in terms of accommodation and facilities. Historical, cultural heritage including appropriate weather conditions could increase the interest of participants. Good travel services, calm environment as well as safe destination will make that destination have high potential of attendance.

While some studies emphasize the importance of available meeting facilities and aspects such as the quality of the accommodation and their facilities, it is clear that a number of additional destination attributes play a critical role. Convention destinations need to consider all of the potential factors contributing to site selection to avoid the pitfalls of the assumption that it depends on the design and size of a convention centre facility and the quality and range of accommodation available (see Crouch, 2007). Table 2.3(2) below illustrates the importance of local attributes in destination competitiveness.

Table 2.3(2): The Destination Competitiveness Local Attributes Importance  
(Crouch, 2007)

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Local Attributes</b>
<b>(1) CORE RESOURCES and ATTRACTORS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Special events</li> <li>Physiography and climate</li> <li>Culture and history</li> <li>Mix of activities</li> <li>Entertainment</li> <li>Superstructure</li> <li>Market ties</li> </ul>
<b>(2) SUPPORTING FACTORS and RESOURCES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infrastructure</li> <li>Accessibility</li> <li>Facilitating resources</li> <li>Hospitality</li> <li>Enterprise</li> <li>Political will</li> </ul>
<b>(3) ESTINATION POLICY, PLANNING and DEVELOPMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>System definition</li> <li>Philosophy/values</li> <li>Vision</li> <li>Positioning / branding</li> <li>Development</li> <li>Competitive/collaborative analysis</li> <li>Monitoring and evaluation</li> <li>Audit</li> </ul>
<b>(4) DESTINATION MANGEMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organisation</li> <li>Marketing</li> <li>Quality of service/ experience</li> <li>Information/ research</li> <li>Human resource development</li> <li>Finance and venture capital</li> <li>Visitor management</li> <li>Crisis management</li> <li>Recourse stewardship</li> </ul>
<b>(5) QUALIFYING and AMPLIFYING DETERMINANTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Location</li> <li>Safety / security</li> <li>Cost / value</li> <li>Interdependencies</li> <li>Awareness / image</li> <li>Carrying capacity</li> </ul>

McCartney (2008) argued that the destination selection process varies due to the factors which influence the decision-making process. McCartney also stated that choice of a destination selected by an association could be influenced by various external and internal factors. The external factors, such as image or perception can be a factor which motivates the participation of the delegates. This includes the perceived costs of the destination. Hence, the image perception could also determine the eventual choice of destination (McCartney, 2008). The aspect of the attractiveness of some convention destinations may also result in a higher turnout of spouse or families due to the delegates and their loved ones enjoying the location for recreation or sightseeing. Clearly, as the delegates are already in the convention location, it gives their friends and family the unique opportunity to also visit the location (Oppermann and Chon, 1997). Furthermore, leisure activities and opportunities also drive the participation of the delegates. It has been established that the factor of the tourist destination is an important element for organising committees and planners to take into consideration. There are also variations in terms of internal forces also vary. "As an employee to a corporate meeting, the specific destination or city will be determined by the company, with expenses paid by the company. It will be a key corporate executive or small group who determines the destination, accommodation, transportation, number of guests, work and social program, hospitality hosting, and partner programs, perhaps guided by a meeting planner or conference organiser. Pike and Page (2014) proposed that any destination having an attractive environment, profitable industry, positive visitor experiences, and ongoing investments in new product development, a sustainable community, ease of access, and effective organisation has more chance to be selected. With government meetings, the setting is of less importance, with a focus on political agendas and decision making, and less on social program and meeting backdrop." (McCartney, 2008, p.298-9).

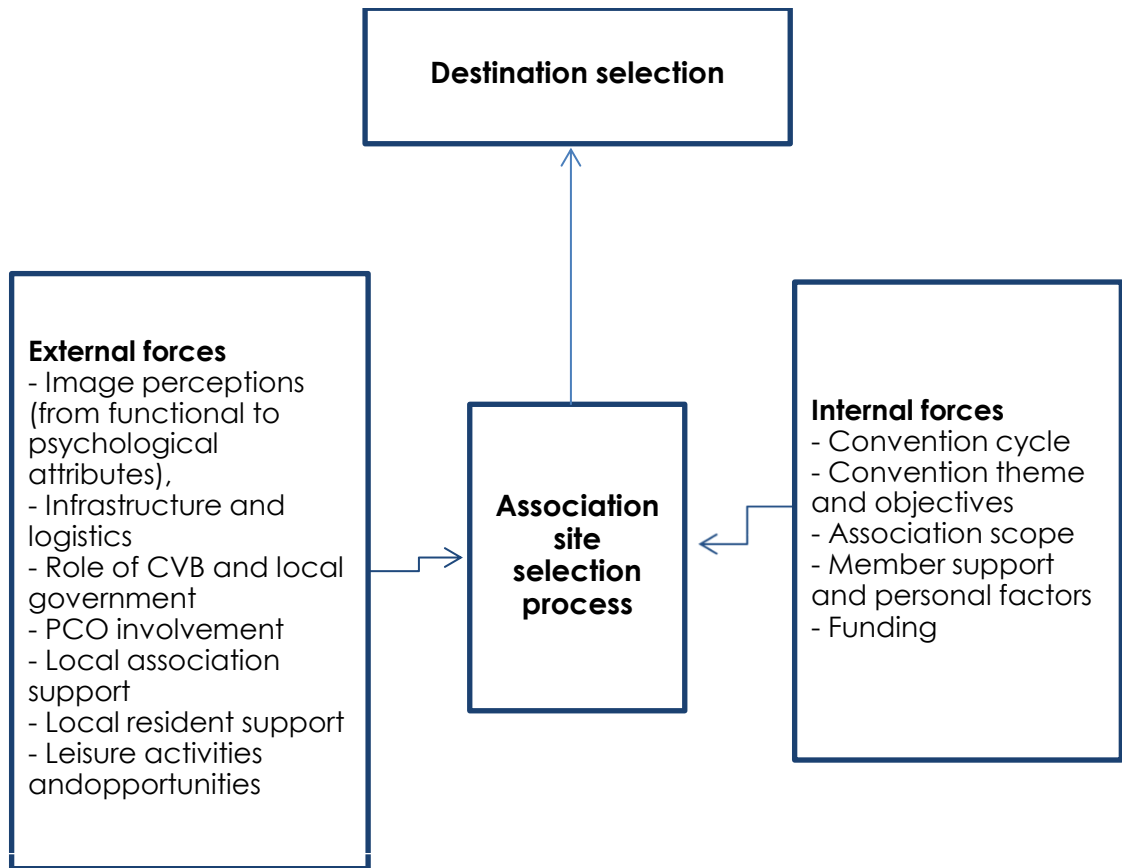


Figure 2.3(3): Factors influencing the Selection of a Destination

**Source:** Glenn McCartney, 2008: p. 299

## 2.4 SERVICE QUALITY

The growth of service(s) is a relentless global phenomenon that shapes the global economy and profoundly affects our lives (Bitner, et al., 2010). Services refer to efforts, deeds or processes consisting of activities or a series of activities performed by the service provider, quite often in close co-operation and interaction with the customer (Kasper et al., 2006). Service quality can meet the needs of target customers and thus retain them for future events (Lee and Lee, 2014). A service is the application of specialized competences (knowledge and skills) through deeds, processes, and performances for the benefit of another entity or the entity itself. Services are economic activities, rather than tangible products, offered by one party to another. Rendering a service to recipients,

objects, or other assets depends on a time-sensitive performance to bring about the desired result (Vargo and Lusch, 2004).

Services usually deal with intangibles: things that cannot be held, nor seen before using them. Services refer to deeds, processes and experiences. The ownership of services is generally not possible. Satisfaction is based on the quality of the delivery process and the actual outcome of the service delivery process (Kasper et al., 2006). In other words, they cannot be perceived by the five senses or conceptualized before purchase. Providers are part of the service experience because providers and customers must both be present for the transaction to occur. Customers themselves may also be part of the service experience because of their greater involvement in the production process. The presence of other customers may become part of the service experience. The quality of services is likely to vary or suffer from consistency because of variables such as the provider, location, timing, etc. Services are not durable and only last a short while; they cannot be stocked as inventory for future sales or use.

Good service management entails ease in term of ordering, delivery, installation, customer training, and the service program that ensures customers maintain purchased products in good working order. Ease of ordering refers to how easy it is for customers to place an order with a company. Ease of delivery refers to how well the product or service is brought to the customer. This includes factors such as care throughout the process, accuracy, and speed. Installation refers to the work performed in order to make a product or service operational in its planned location. Ease of installation has become an important selling point, especially if the majority of the target market is technological novices. Customer training refers to training the employees to use vending equipment efficiently and properly (Kotler et al., 2009). The organization that wishes to survive will not only have to understand the mutability of the environment, but will have to adapt to this aspect. As part of market orientation, marketers must pay attention to the experiences reported by customers and their perception

in terms of quality (Kasper et al., 2006). Services marketing typically refers to the marketing of businesses to consumers (B2C) and from business to business (B2B) (Lovell and Wirtz, 2011). An example of B2B is how well the professional conference organiser (PCO) serves delegates or even the organising committees.

A service is an act or a performance offered by one party to another. Although the process may be tied to a physical product, the performance is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of any of the factors of production (Lovell and Wright, 1999). Service quality is regarded as an important attribute in the service industry. It is defined as the consumer's judgment regarding excellence or superiority of an entity (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry 1988). It also affects customer satisfaction level, and it is one of the critical factors for business survival and competitiveness in the service industry. With regard to Chen and Phou (2014), satisfaction has a significant positive direct effect on the customers' trust. Moreover, it also plays an important role on both direct and indirect effects of customers' loyalty.

According to Newman (2001), service quality is a successful strategy that is beneficial for both service providers and their customers because as a result of customer satisfaction it can lead to positive word-of-mouth marketing and an enhanced market share, and increasing customer retention. However, service quality is not only inherently difficult to define but also problematic in terms of being measured accurately. This area has been the subject of much debate over the last two decades (Dale, 2003), with the terms 'quality' and 'customer satisfaction' often being used interchangeably. It is generally agreed however, that service quality is a kind of mind-set, related but not equal to customer satisfaction.

Lovell's (1992) theory demonstrated that service characteristics are comprised of the intangibles of *inseparability*, *heterogeneity* and *perishability*. Therefore, the challenge for many service organisations is in adopting this theory, which was devised for the manufacturing



environment and thus tangible, into the service culture, which they viewed as different fundamentally. Intangibility is deemed to be the most fundamental difference between goods and services. Services are physically intangible, goods are tangible. This means that services cannot be easily tested or measured before delivery and consumption (Zeithaml, 1981). Customers can therefore only judge quality by reputation, their own past experiences or by some tangible aspect such as the appearance of the staff or décor. Shostack (1997) developed the Tangibility Spectrum, which indicated how dominant tangibility was in various types of industries, indicating that goods and services were not all of a poor quality. Education lay at the end of the spectrum as an Intangible Dominant. The factor of inseparability is concerned with the fact that the production and consumption is being carried out simultaneously. In other words, the customer must be present in order for the service to take place. Therefore, it is the interaction between personnel and customers that is most important when measuring the impact of quality (Drummond, 1992). It is the control of this service encounter that is vital in providing good quality services. However, heterogeneity also makes services difficult to standardize for example, producers, customers and day-to-day circumstances can vary greatly. Service scripts, training and service standards are often employed but need to be varied. Because of this variability, precise and quantifiable standards for services becomes more difficult (Morris and Johnston, 1987). Perishability concerns the fact that goods cannot be stored for later use; they must be consumed as they are produced. Therefore supply and demand may become an issue due to fluctuations in demand and the resulting difficulties in terms of a staffing perspective.

According to Williams and Buswell (2003), customer satisfaction is adversely affected by all aspects of service delivery processes, such as encounters with staff; tangible elements; the time it takes for the service to be delivered and whether or not it has been delivered correctly, as well as the outcomes of the experience. The customer may judge the quality

of a delivered service as 'good' but that does not necessarily mean that, they were denied satisfaction from the experience (Randall and Senior, 1996). *Crompton and MacKay (1989)* state, "Satisfaction is a psychological outcome emerging from an experience, whereas service quality is concerned with the attributes of the service itself" (p. 368). Parasuraman et al. (1988) agree with this notion but argued that customers use the same criteria to judge both factors, as the two are interrelated. However, Oliver (1997) levels off the differences in terms of how customers judge service quality and customer satisfaction.

Anderson and Fornell (1994) considered that the factor of service quality is too subjective for customers to formulate their own judgments about. One of the original theories is on service quality that customers are satisfied when their judgment of the service they have received or their perceptions is equal to or greater than what they expected. The subjective judgment of customers to regarding whether or not they are satisfied with the service they have received is not as affirmative or negative as a yes or no answer. Satisfaction can be ranked from lesser to a greater degree, from 'adequate' through 'desired' to 'delight' (exceeding). However, between 'desired' and 'adequate'; and below 'adequate' the continuum represents totally unacceptable level of service (Williams and Buswell, 2003).

Therefore, as explained in the Methodology Chapter, a five point Likert scale was used in the questionnaire survey in order to ask the delegates about their perspectives on the importance of specific attributes in international conventions held in Thailand, in order to evaluate their levels of satisfaction.

An influential tool in terms of service quality is SERVQUAL, which was developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985). The SERVQUAL instrument consists of five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. The original ten determinants of the SERVQUAL instrument comprised of reliability, responsiveness, competence, access,

courtesy, communication, credibility, security, understanding or knowing the customer, and tangibles. SERVQUAL has become the foundation of service quality measurement in a variety of industries, which compares customer expectations and the realisation of the performance of specific services. Since then a number of researchers have identified additional determinants that they deemed important for their particular industry or the type of service provided (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985).

Measurement of quality is vital to the success of an organization. Parasuraman, et al. (1985, 1988) believed that service quality could be measured in terms of the expectations of the customer regarding what an excellent service should provide (normative), minus their perceptions regarding the actual service received (predictive). However, this resulted in a number of researchers arguing against the ability to accurately measure expectations. In today's environment, the expectations of customers are changing and the need for companies to understand this is now more important than ever (Dale et al., 2007). Customers are now recognised as having a life-time value to an organization, so an association is significant in terms of developing a long-term relationship. Some researchers, for example, Bitner (1990) and Bolton and Drew (1991) argue that customer satisfaction is a precursor of service quality, while others, for example, Spreng and MacKoy (1996) believe good service quality leads to customer satisfaction. Cronin and Taylor (1992) argue that the distinction between satisfaction and quality is important to organizations because they need to know whether or not their objectives should be to create satisfied customers, (who will then develop a favorable perception), or that they should aim for high service quality as a way of developing and increasing levels of customer satisfaction. This relationship is given further weight as one of the main aims of service providers is to engender customer loyalty in order to at best increase their wealth or at least to maintain their position in the market place.

## 2.5 MARKETING IN A CONVENTION DESTINATION

Competition among international convention destinations has increased dramatically in the past decade due to the heavy investment in infrastructure, marketing, and human resources, fuelled by the desire to reap the industry's significant economic benefits (Weber and Ladkin, 2004). Destination marketing is now acknowledged as a pillar of the future growth and sustainability of tourism destinations in an increasingly globalised and competitive market for tourists (UNWTO, 2011). According to Kim et al. (2011: 87), "the economic impact of the convention industry on a national economy is much greater than that of the traditional tourism industry. Particularly, East Asian countries recognize the convention industry as a high value-added, knowledge-based industry with strong economic impact. More economically advanced governments have, therefore, taken the initiative to develop their convention industries by constructing state-of-the-art convention centers, promoting convention related industries, e.g. hotels, restaurants, shopping, and entertainment, including establishing convention development laws."

Marketing and quality assurance are both central to understanding important emergent markets and business activities. "Important in this respect are the MICE sector; event or events management; and resorts" (Brotherton and Wood, 2008, p.25). The convention and meeting market is cyclical in nature and susceptible to changes in the business environment (Weber and Ladkin, 2004). Regarding (Robinson et al., 2010), the most common segmentation variables are as Geographic, Demographic, Psychographic (or Lifestyle), Benefit, and Behavioural. With respect to the geographic aspect, it is assumed that people who live in the same area have similar consumption patterns and needs. In term of demographic, a population is divided by age, income, gender, socio-economic status. With psychographic (or Lifestyle) – people are identified into personality traits, attitudes and opinions. Regarding benefits, people all see the same benefit from a purchase, but have chosen the product for different reasons. With regards to behaviour, people are identified by

how they consume a product or the frequency of their purchases. The next stage to focus on marketing is the target. Targeting is about selecting the most relevant segments and developing a product to offer the public and communications strategy that will be attractive to the segments. The relevant segments have been identified may be done via focus groups or customer panels. The testing should involve checks to establish the most effective variables for the group. This may be everything from the colour of the promotional material to the key elements of the message or a sales proposition or position. There are three targeting strategies: Undifferentiated targeting; differentiated targeting and niche targeting. Nonetheless, Crouch and Weber (2002) pointed out that the convention tourism market segments require different marketing strategies. Therefore, marketing strategy for driving the customers' need involves dividing a market into smaller groups of buyers with distinct needs, characteristics, or behaviors who might require separate products or marketing mixes (Kotler, 2015).

Event marketing is the function in the event management process whereby marketers create, promote and stage event experiences that satisfy customer needs and that customers choose over other competitors in the marketplace. Utilizing the principles of segmentation and targeting, marketers identify and attract new and existing audiences (by informing them about the event) and work to retain them for future events, a process informed by carrying out market research of the event environment and existing and potential audiences. Marketing enables event organisers to capture customer data and understand what motivates event attendance; it also allows customers to tell event organisers their dislikes, in order to improve future events (Robinson et al., 2010). Some destinations perceive marketing as little more than an exercise in promoting a destination. However, effective marketing involves much more than promotion alone. Marketing convention tourism requires, first, an understanding of the two main customers of the meeting and convention industry – corporations and associations (Crouch and

Weber, 2002). Likewise, Kotler et al. (2010) noted that events appeal to different people, and every consumer has their own individual make-up (e.g., attitudes, interests, and opinions). Marketers need to gain an understanding of what motivates consumers to attend events in order to create, improve (customer feedback) and market events effectively by selecting appropriate marketing channels and deploying the right marketing desire to purchase by placing stimuli in marketing communications that appeal to the personal characteristics of the event consumer.

Convention destination marketing occurs at both local and national level (Rogers, 1998). Convention and visitors bureaus (CVBs) represent the most prominent form of convention destination marketing organization (Morrison et al., 1998). The prime role of a CVB is to "solicit and service conventions and other related group business and to engage in visitor promotions which generate overnight stays for a destination, thereby enhancing and developing the economic fabric of the community" (Gartrell 1994, Cited in Rogers, 2002, p.A-100). Convention and visitors bureaus (CVBs) may represent a specific city, a greater metropolitan area, a number of cities, or a regional destination. In Europe and Asia, convention bureaus representing an entire nation, supporting the efforts of individual industry players, are not uncommon (Gartrell, 1994). CVBs can be either public or private, nonprofit or for-profit organisations (Crouch and Weber, 2002). CVBs are usually formed and financed as partnerships between public and private sector bodies. At a national level, CVBs usually depend on substantial funding from the government and, indeed, may be structured as a government agency (Rogers, 2002). Pike and Page (1014) stated that effective destination management comprises of an attractive environment, profitable industry, positive visitor experiences, ongoing investments in new product development, a sustainable community, supportive host community, ease of access and effective organisation.

Marketing initiated from only one 'P' (price), but later, McCarthy (1964) created the "marketing mix", which became known as the "4Ps": price, product, promotion, and place, as a means of translating marketing planning into practice (Bennett, 1997). The main reasons the marketing mix is a powerful concept is because it makes marketing seem easy to handle, allows the separation of marketing from other activities and the delegation of marketing tasks to specialists (Grönroos, 1994). Services marketing is noted as being dominated by the 7Ps of marketing namely product, price, place, promotion (communication), people, process and physical evidence (Booms et al., 1981) to address the different nature of services. Each event is unique and the marketing mix must be manipulated to reflect the marketing environment, completions and future trends, and get the product to market so that the targeted consumers choice is met (communication creates the desire for the consumer to consume). Products and services need to be designed and delivered for/to the target market, at the right price, and available to purchase/experience in the right place using the most appropriate communication tactics for the targeted customer in an ever-changing marketing environment (Robinson et al., 2010).

By focusing on the 'product' from the 7Ps model, Zeilthaml and Bitner (1996) demonstrated that for the "Convention tourism 'product' it involves the buying and selling of convention destination services. The product of convention tourism is clearly a service, more specifically, the product is the total experience that the client and its employees or members receive when a convention is held at a particular destination (Crouch and Weber, 2002). Levitt (1986) explained that "instead of talking of 'goods' and of 'services', it is better to talk of 'tangibles' and 'intangible'" (In Crouch and Weber, 2002, p.61). Services involve a number of actors: employees, suppliers, shareholders and stakeholders. Services require a mix of people, process and physical evidence to be employed for the delivery of the event experience. Hence, the convention tourism product is created from the combination of physical facilities, branding (designation

image), service performance and quality, accessory services (e.g., audio-visual services), and packaging (through the local convention and visitors bureau or destination management companies). Successful convention destination marketing recognises the product as consisting of all influences affecting the convention experience of the client (Robinson et al., 2010).

The place element of the marketing mix relates to all factors that are involved in connecting convention customers to convention products (Crouch and Weber, 2002). Most transactions are handled on a direct basis between the user of convention facilities and service providers. These intermediaries play a critical role in the selling function and can significantly influence the convention site selection decision. In this context, the reputation of the convention destination and word of mouth are critical. Transportation is also an important place element, but in this instance, it brings the customer to the product rather than distributing the product to the customer, as occurs in many other marketing situations (Robinson et al., 2010).

Promotion uses marketing communication channels to sell products and services to targeted consumers (Robinson et al., 2010). Convention destinations engage in all forms of promotional activity (Crouch and Weber, 2002). The communications mix consists of advertising, sponsorship, direct and word-of-mouth marketing, PR, sales and merchandising. Integrated marketing campaigns use a variety of communications methods and media to create as much impact as possible for a product or service within a specific timescale. The trend for electronic communications has seen the rise in campaigns opting for this medium, but traditional methods are still employed, such as paper brochures, direct marketing by postal mail, and flyers and billposters (Robinson et al., 2010).

Promoting events is key to the success or failure of an event, the skill is to hit as many of the marketing channels appropriate to the targeting



strategy as possible, sending repeated communications to build anticipation, excitement and a desire to purchase. Advertising involves communicating a message to a target market through the most suitable channel that motivates purchase behaviour. There are a number of free listing services that the event planner can tap into to communicate prior notice of events: newspaper, specialist publications, radio, other similar events, noticeboards and through placing posters/banners in the area where the event will take place. Events and sponsors of events use merchandising opportunities for high brand recognition (Robinson et al., 2010). Merchandise is advertising material containing messages relating to a specific event, e.g. tour T-shirts and memorabilia (Jack, 2009). Social networking and websites are a means in which users can generate their own content; on-line communities can upload pictures, videos and directly share their experiences about the events. This enables marketers to not only reach customers easily, cheaply and in a very focused way, but also offers a semi-tangible legacy to an event days, weeks, months, years after the event has taken place. With faster and faster broadband speeds, online video is the fastest growing area in e-marketing. A massive viral campaign where the users themselves disseminate videos and other content, has become an incredibly powerful medium (Robinson et al., 2010).

The Price of a destination as a convention site is a critical marketing variable. Major convention destinations are normally more expensive as the higher cost of real estate and facilities drives up the price of meeting space, accommodation, and the cost of other services. In recent years, so-called "second-tier", for example, cities have become more competitive while still offering good meeting facilities in less congested but attractive environments (Crouch and Weber, 2002). Second-tier cities are suburbs of major cities or smaller cities that are different from first-tier cities in the hotel room inventory, the size of the convention centre, and the city wide hotel rack rates (Shure, 1997, in Crouch and Weber (2002: p. 62-3). Competition on price-focused advertising as a result of the recession has

spurred price perception strategies to be used to communicate price position to customers (Robinson et al., 2010).

People's role is key in the successful marketing of services because the convention tourism product is an experience (Crouch and Weber, 2002). Therefore, internal training systems need to make sure that staff are equipped to deliver the level of service required to perform the service and portray it at all times when performing their job role (Robinson et al., 2010).

Physical evidence presents customer-facing communications to customers, incorporating signage, transportation, uniforms and websites; these all have to be in keeping with the brand image. This is achieved through uniformity in design features, e.g. colours, logos and messages conveyed to consumers. Atmospherics is about understanding how the enjoyment and physical attributes of a venue or surroundings can affect the customers' behavior and enjoyment, both on a conscious and sub-conscious level. Whether they realise it or not, customers will respond differently to colours, floor coverings, music and lighting. It is therefore important that marketers understand these changes in behavior and use them to maximize impact (Robinson et al., 2010).

The process of an event incorporates systems and procedures set up to deliver the event to the consumer (Robinson et al., 2010). The whole flow and mix of activities from the beginning to the end of the process will govern the customer's overall experience and perception of the destination as a convention site. The selling and planning stages leading up to the convention and the post-convention activities such as follow-up marketing research, satisfaction surveys, and resolution of any complaints, all shape the perceived quality of the experience (Crouch and Weber, 2002). Processes need to be communicated to all event stakeholders, be managed and controlled, and are subjected to internal audit systems (e.g., checklists, and external audits, mystery guest) (Robinson et al., 2010).

Later, another P was added to services marketing mix strategy (Kotler, 2015). The 8th P refers to productivity and quality. It is integral to services management, improving productivity is a requisite in cost management; but quality, as defined by the customer, is essential for a service to differentiate itself from other providers (Business Fundas, 2011). The marketing mix, 4Ps and extra 4Ps is presented below.

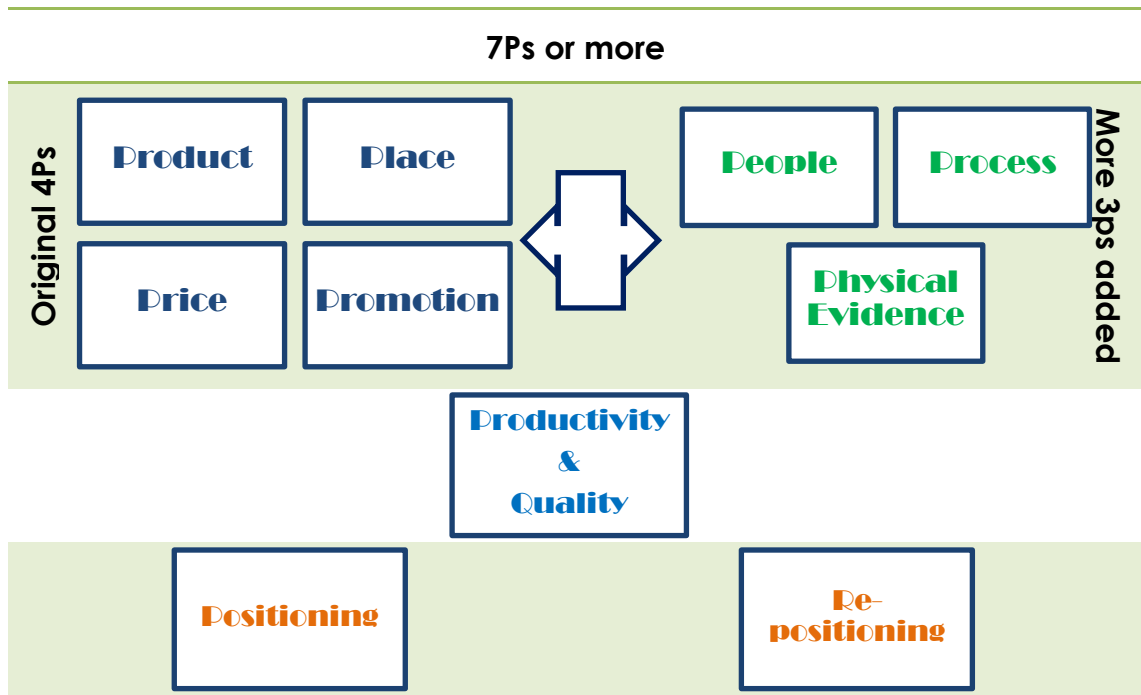


Figure 2.5: Services Marketing, 7Ps and More

However, collaboration plays an equally significant role as competition in these decades. With regard to Wang et al. (2013), the convention destinations, particularly located in the same region could collaborate in some ways in term of destination marketing. At least three ways have been classified: 1) cost sharing and reduction, 2) regional product enhancement, and 3) knowledge sharing and learning. The destination country and work together with other countries in the same region to allow them to reach more people at a smaller cost by pooling their money together. The motivation is to reduce costs. In addition, the countries destinations can 'package their products to provide more value for the travellers'. This strategy allows them to increase the competitive advantage of a region by expanding and diversifying the regional

product mix among neighbours. Moreover, these countries could share their knowledge and expertise through educational and networking opportunities, familiarisation tours of the area, and sharing of information and marketing research results.

Positioning and repositioning, also known as re-branding are also vital in marketing (Thomas, 2009). All product services have a perceived image and set attributes in consumers' minds – the product/services positioning. Often such a positioning has “just happened” or has emerged in a somewhat *ad hoc* manner over time. In an ideal marketing environment, however, positioning is carefully conceived (Chernatony, and Riley, 1998). Destination positioning is defined as one of the systematic processes for guiding decision makers, enabling them to locate a destination that is the most suitable and profitable place in the minds of the customers relative to those of its competitors (Kim and Agrusa, 2005). Positioning brings the benefits of the event, e.g. value and unique experience. To determine the benefits, the consumers' profile needs to be analysed (segmentation) and the marketer needs to be able to predict the most likely variables that will appeal to the targeted consumer. Marketing intelligence data from focus groups and other feedback mechanisms is used to determine variables (Robinson et al., 2010).

According to Thailand's MICE industry, the position of Bangkok as a conference/ convention destination in the Asian market, Kang et al. (2005) analysed the competitiveness of Asian international meeting destinations. They focused on the capital cities, namely Tokyo, Seoul, Hong Kong, Bangkok, and, Singapore based on the perceptions of both meeting planners and buying centers. The destination selection attributes included accessibility, attractions, cost, environment, facilities, image, information, safety and security and service. The meeting planners perceived that Tokyo was the most suitable convention destination in terms of the five domains of accessibility, attractions, environment, information and safety and security. However, the buying centers reported different responses from those of the meeting planners. However, if among Southeast Asian

destination, based on numbers of meeting and convention, currently the first rank of this region is Singapore; with Bangkok coming second (ICCA 2014 report).

Singapore claims that due to its socio-cultural background, and the fact that it uses English as an official language; that this has led to their manpower being highly-skilled and innovative. They also claim that their infrastructure for world class and business opportunities expected by many multinational corporations contributes in making Singapore the world's best MICE destinations. In addition, having sufficient potential demand from China makes Singapore have more opportunities for growth (Lee and Park, 2013). Nonetheless, Singapore faces a number of internal challenges, including its high costs and a dearth of scenic and cultural activities (Chang 1998). The limitations of city state, the scarcity of traditional Asian images and high competition with neighboring countries', are all challenges for Singapore (Lee and Park, 2013).

Thailand claims to have a good blend of legendary hospitality and service excellence. With high standard hotels and other forms of accommodation, Thailand's hospitality sets to become the world's new signature index. According to manpower and management, local MICE professionals and operators are widely adopted with various global standards management systems. Apart from holding thousands of mega-events, Thailand has won a number of awards for excellence, namely 'World's Best Countries for Food' nominated by TripAdvisor.com in 2012; and with Bangkok named 'World's Best City 2012' by Travel and Leisure Magazine; Bangkok ranked No.3 'Global Destination City Index for 2012' by Forbes Magazine and Master Card (after London and Paris). With respect to Asia's best, Thailand won 'Most Popular Travel Destination in Asia' by Go Asia Award 2012 in Berlin. In addition, Thailand ranked No.1 in ASEAN market for a number of international conventions and exhibitions hosted by ICCA and UFI. In 2012, Thailand ranked third for "Best Business Events Country in Asia" by CEI magazine, as well as Bangkok ranking second for 'Best Business Cities in ASEAN' by Business Travellers Asia Pacific

Award. These awards of excellence labels both Thailand and its cities as destinations of 'a-must' visit at least once in a lifetime (News: Market Watch, 2013). However, political instability and security concerns are also recognized as major threats. Other major barriers identified are the lack of availability of industry information, industry infrastructure and transportation (city links), human resources (English communication), and industry cooperation (News: Market Watch, 2013).

An important destination selection factor for meetings and conventions is the image of the country, particularly with regard to the issue of safety and security concerns. The issue of safety and security at the host destination has an impact on MICE customers' perceived risk in terms of buying MICE products and their decision to choose the destinations (Campiranon, 2007, cited in Sangpikul and Kim, 2009,). Hence, how to enhance the competitiveness of MICE in Thailand needs to be understood in order to position it appropriately and to recognize what impacts on whether or not it will become the hub of conference/convention industry in the region.

## **2.6 SUMMARY**

Chapter Two presented a review of the literature; it started with a discussion on research already carried out on the MICE industry in Asia and Thailand. It presented the attributes that make delegates more likely to participate in conventions and the criteria that organising committees/planners consider when organising their events in overseas destinations. As service quality is an important aspect to MICE operation and management, it has also been discussed in some detail. Marketing strategies, marketing mix for service industry which best suits for convention industry is also explained.

In the next chapter, Chapter Three, the research methodology, methods employed and means of analysis for this thesis will be presented.

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## CHAPTER THREE

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### METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

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#### 3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the research methodology employed and methods utilised to answer the research objectives. Section 3.1 describes the research methodological framework. As this research employed a mixed method approach, positivist and interpretivist schools of thought are explained, with a review of how the pilot study results led to the development of the research tools. Section 3.2 presents how the data were analysed as well as the validity and reliability of the research tools. The concept of triangulation, of combining quantitative and qualitative data is also explained.

#### 3.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

As the research aims to evaluate the potential of Thailand to be positioned as the hub of MICE Asian market, there is a need to understand specific feedback of those that have either attended or organized MICE in Thailand, but also the perceptions and feelings that are held on the country. Therefore, to gain quantitative data from convention delegates, organisers and planner and qualitative information on perceptions of convention delegates, organisers and planner, the research employs mixed-methods for collecting the primary data, and with the quantitative and qualitative analysis triangulated to reinforce one another and thus ensure that the research objectives are answered in the most appropriate manner.

The quantitative research involves statistical analysis to draw conclusions (Veal, 2006), and it also allows the researchers to familiarise themselves with the concept to be studied (Golafshani, 2003). Positivists believe that reality is observable and can be measured; therefore, scientific

knowledge is provable, using theories obtained from a systematic and rigorous way entailing observations and experiments. Positivists believe that human beings exist in the cause-effect of the relationships which can be observed, tested and measured (Bilton et al., 2002).

On the contrary, qualitative research is defined as empirical research where the data is not in the form of numbers (Punch, 2009; Veal, 2006), as the nature of it rather tends to be concerned with words (Bryman, 2004). Qualitative research tends to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2009), and gaining such data was appropriate to the research objectives concerning the effectiveness of Thailand in becoming a hub for international conference and convention in Asia. Interpretivists follow the belief that in social sciences human beings think and reflect. The interpretive paradigm relies more on studying people so that they can provide their own explanations of their situation or behaviour. The interpretive researcher tries to get inside the minds of subjects and see the world from subjects' point of view (Veal, 2006). Therefore, qualitative techniques commonly used in leisure and tourism research are in-depth interviews, group interviews or focus groups, participant observation, textual analysis, biographical methods, and ethnography (Veal, 2006). Hence, this study requires a qualitative approach to ascertain how people perceive Thailand as a MICE destination and what marketing strategies and development policies suits Thailand MICE market with regards to those delegates and organisers' perceptions.

For the reason as mentioned above, a mixed methodology research paradigm was selected for use in this study. With regard to the research design, this methodology is concurrent with a triangulated design; that means the quantitative and qualitative data collection were performed concurrently. The results of the two research strategies were triangulated in order to combine, compare, confirm, cross-validate, and corroborate these findings. The factors that influence the attendance of delegates, and the factors or criteria which influence organising committees and



planners when organising a convention are investigated through a quantitative approach. The perceptions and experiences of these delegates, organising committees and planners regarding the effectiveness of international conventions held in Thailand are also examined via a quantitative method. The advantages which would promote the growth of this industry in Thailand are also investigated by qualitative methods, along with the factors and issues affecting the growth and development of Thailand's MICE as an international convention destination. In addition, with qualitative approaches, the experiences and opinions of the organising committees and planners with regard to conferences and conventions and specialists in MICE industry are also scrutinised in order to identify the alternatives or resolutions which could affect the growth of this industry in Thailand. This research study attempts to identify how Thailand is perceived as a MICE destination and what the factors and/or weaknesses to its current strategy may be. That means the research also explores the development policies to boost Thailand's MICE industry if it fails to achieve the goal of hub in Asia. In addition, recommendations for Thailand's MICE in order for it to be a sustainable growth of international convention industry in Asia have been made.

The three main objectives of this study were as follows:

1. to examine the factors which influence conference delegates to participate in international conventions
2. to investigate the elements which organising committees and planners consider when selecting the international convention destination
3. to seek the potential of Thailand's MICE industry to position itself as a hub for international convention hub in Asia

Figure 3.1 below illustrates the research design framework.

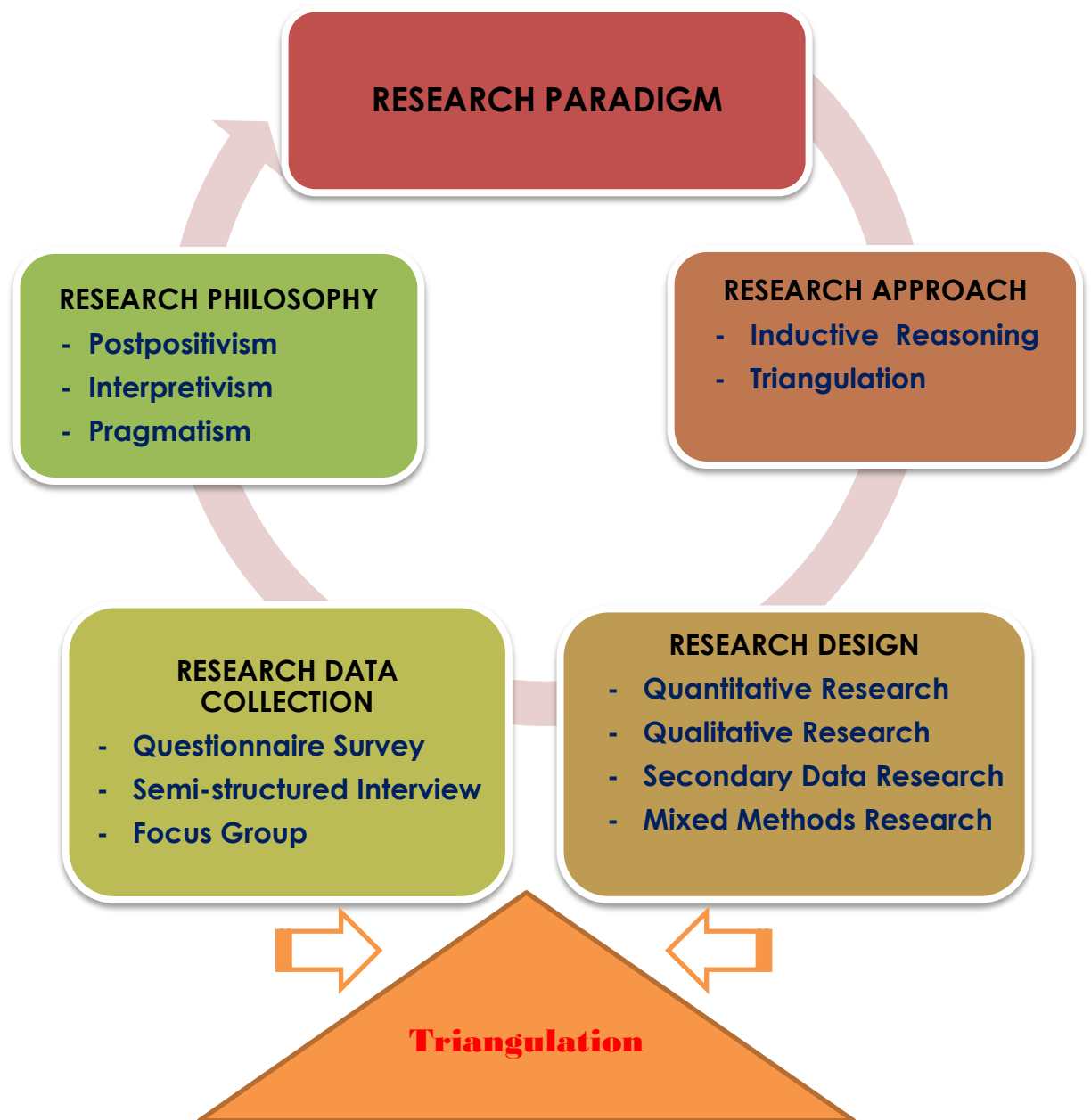


Figure 3.1: A research design framework – the interconnection of research philosophy, research approach, research design, and research methodology

### 3.1.1 Research Strategies

For this study, to examine the MICE industry in Thailand, quantitative and qualitative data will be collected. The quantitative data is collected through questionnaires, while the qualitative data is collated via semi-structured interviews and focus groups which derived from the research

samples, as well as the responses to open-ended questions given in the questionnaires. In this research, the mixed methodology will be a valuable strategy for validating the accuracy of the findings, checking for bias, and the development of the research instruments. The use of an alternative methodology allows findings discovered by one type of method to be compared with findings from another method. These are also the most appropriate methods for meeting the research objectives, such as the perceptions being found out from interviews whilst number of attendees etc. would be found out from questionnaires

In brief, this research has adopted a mixed methods approach. The findings of questionnaire survey were combined and validated with the findings of qualitative researches. Regarding the three main players involved in the planning process of international conventions, these are 1) international convention associations, 2) professional conference organisers, and 3) international delegates, (Oppermann and Chon, 1997; Jago and Deery, 2005), two groups of this research sample are convention delegates and organising committee or planners. Information collated from these two groups as a sample will be via questionnaires, in-depth interviews and a focus group.

With regard to the criteria used to select the research samples, the stakeholders in the convention industry need to be considered. There are numerous stakeholders in the convention industry; however, due to the limitations of this research study, and due to the three main players in convention process as mentioned earlier, only three groups of research informants were chosen: convention delegates, organising committees or planners, and specialists in the MICE industry. The perspectives from the latter group of research samples are particularly useful for strategies and policies to develop MICE in Thailand. However, as the objectives make clear, information will also be extracted from delegates to recognise the factors that influence their reasoning to attend international conventions and the criteria or elements that the organising committee or planners consider when selecting sites for conventions. Hence, this research study

is assigned to study both groups, something that to date has not been carried out, as academics tend to focus on the attendees or the meeting planners (Yoo and Chon, 2008). In terms of the channels used to approach these research samples, there were two methods used to collect this data. Visiting convention sites (captive group survey) and carrying out web based questionnaires for the quantitative research, and face-to-face interviews and using Skype or the telephone for qualitative interviews. A focus group was also run via face-to-face. In term of the data collection methods, questionnaire survey was chosen for two reasons: 1) it can be used to study with the wide range of research samples; and 2) the researcher can scope his/her study with the listed attributes. In addition, questionnaire survey is cheap to run regarding both time and cost (Punch, 2009). Interview and focus group were chosen due to the fact that the insights and information emerged from the interviewees' perspectives would compare or cross- validate from the results found from questionnaire survey. This is the reason why the triangulation method was used in this research. Moreover, as tourism is multi-disciplines, a variety of methods used to collect data would be useful (Veal, 2006). For these reason, with regards to the objective 1, 2 and 3, questionnaire survey and interview were employed to study the factors influencing delegates for their convention attendance and factors/ criteria for organising committees/ planners to consider when creating their international convention as well as the factors limiting the growth of Thailand as a destination country for international convention in Asian region. However, with regards to the objective 4, focus-group was chosen for data collection as the deep views from specialists in MICE industry is believed to be useful for the research objective findings.

### **3.1.2 Research Population and Sample**

Sampling is defined by Merriam-Webster's dictionary as "the act, process, or technique of selecting a representative part of a population for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population" (McCarthy, (2015, p.164).

As explained, the population for this research is 1) convention delegates; 2) convention organising committee and planners; and 3) specialists in MICE industry with regard to marketing strategies and policies. The sample of this population which are the delegates were conveniently chosen through three channels: 1) at convention sites that had been held in Thailand in 2009 and 2010 (captive group survey) in which the events were uploaded to the TCEB website in 2009 and 2010 and 2) via web surveys. Convenience sampling for questionnaire survey for convention delegates is employed in this research. It identifies individuals in any way possible who fit the criteria of the study (McCarthy, 2015). "It has been noted in the field of organizational studies, convenience samples are very commonly used, and more prominent than probably samples" (Bryman, 2008, p.183), as it is excellent means of obtaining preliminary information of the research in term of both being quick and cheap (Berg, 2009). The criterion for selecting the convention events was size: large-scale conferences are recognised as superior because delegates can make connections with a huge number of new leads. However, the downside of larger conferences is that delegates find it difficult to get to meet everybody that they want to. On the other hand, conferences with a smaller number of delegates tend to be more accessible and every delegate can participate. Hence, three types of sizes of international convention in Thailand in 2009 and 2010 were chosen. Two small conferences with between 300 to 500 delegates, one medium sized with between 1000 to 3000 delegates, and one large scale convention with over 3000 delegates. The sample was selected from these groups of delegates who had attended international conventions in Thailand in 2009 and 2010. The captive group surveys were conducted through attending conventions and asking delegates to complete the questionnaires. In the same conventions, questionnaire surveys and interviews were practiced concurrently. For the web-based survey, an identical questionnaire was uploaded to [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com) to allow the respondents to complete the questionnaire. The international conventions on the TCEB website could be linked to other sites with the names and email addresses of the delegates at these events. Finally, the

focus group was organised by TCEB to discuss the orientation of the Thai MICE industry, in terms of marketing strategies, policies, growth, and the future, this was studied as well as interviews with such specialists. As mentioned above, the conventions were selected with regards to its size; therefore, the organising committees/ planners were selective as its sizes according to this criteria. However, with regards to MICE industry specialists at a focus group, they were selected by TCEB, a governmental organization acting as Thailand VCBs. In a conclusion, samples of this research are both convenient and selective sampling. All details of data collection process are described in figure 3.1.2 below.

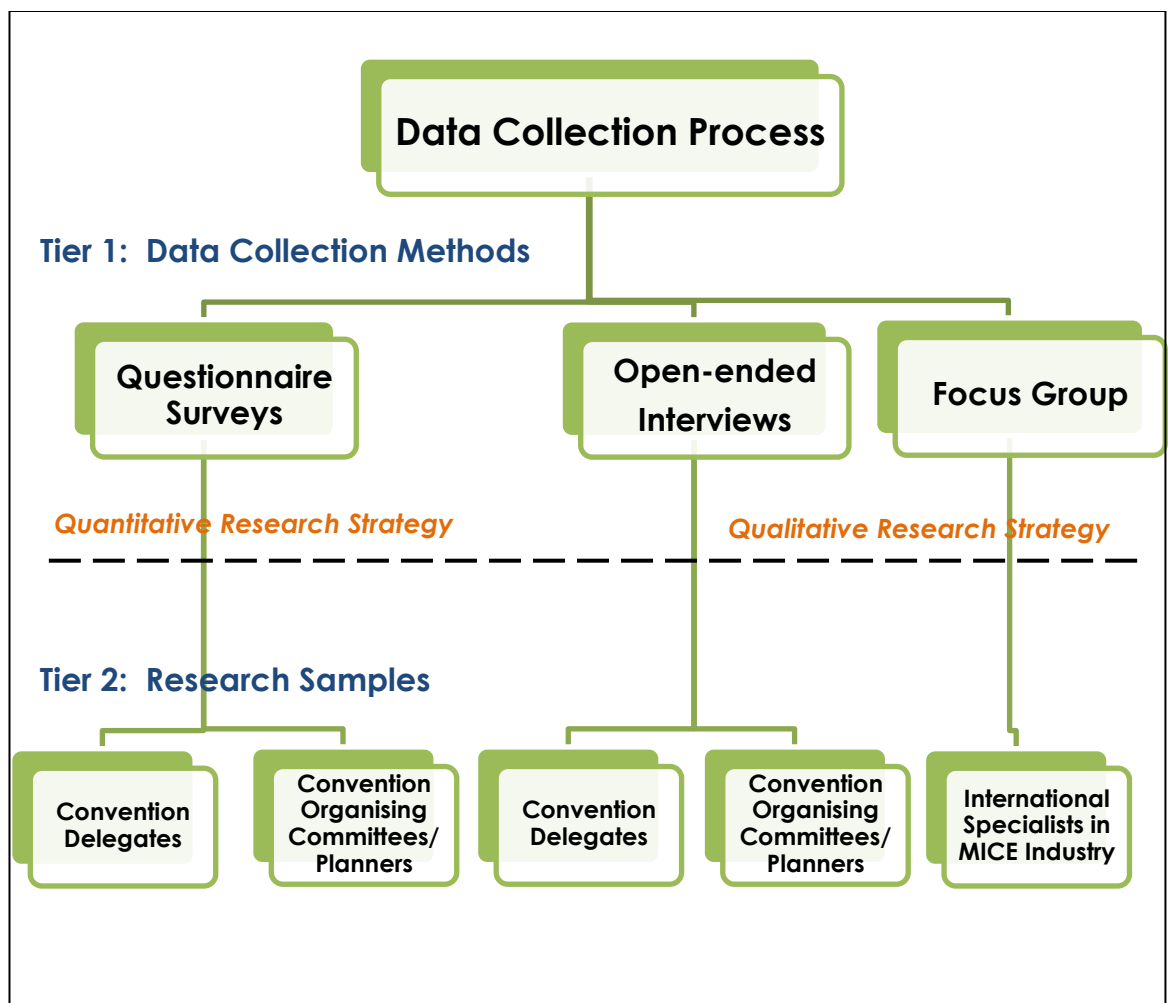


Figure 3.1.2: Data collection Process and the Number of Samples

### 3.1.3 Quantitative Approach: Questionnaire Survey

The rationale for choosing a questionnaire survey in order to obtain the data from convention delegates and convention organising committees/

planners that it saved time and by using a convenience sample it reduced the scale of the population to make the data manageable. However, its weakness can be “questionnaire surveys usually involve only a proportion, or the sample of the population that the researcher is interested in, and rely on information supplied by the respondents” (Veal, 2006, p.231). Nonetheless, questionnaire surveys are useful. As a mass phenomenon, the leisure and tourism industry requires the involvement of commercial, governmental, and non-profit organizations, which are dependent on quantified information in terms of their decision-making processes. Hence, questionnaire surveys are an ideal way to obtain this type of information. There are a wide range of tourism activities encompassing and displaying characteristics that can be quantified, such as duration, expenditure, frequency, location, levels of enjoyment, and type of participation (Veal, 2006).

The aim of this research is to evaluate the potential of Thailand’s MICE industry as a hub for international convention industry in Asia. There are three objectives altogether. The questionnaire survey is designed to find the results of three objectives in four objectives. These three objectives are designed to employ the questionnaire survey: 1) to examine the factors which influence delegates to participate in international conventions and the elements which planners and organisers consider when selecting international convention sites; 2) to evaluate the potential of Thailand’s MICE industry to position it as an international convention hub in Asia; and 3) to identify the development policies to boost Thailand as an international convention if it fails to achieve the hub of convention industry in Asia.

### **3.1.3.1 Questionnaire design**

Questionnaires were designed to survey two groups: 1) international delegates who had attended international conventions held in Thailand; and 2) members of organising committees and planners of associations with experience of organising international conventions. The

questionnaire surveys were given to these groups via two channels: captive group survey and web-based survey.

A self-completion questionnaire was selected for the administration of this survey. Additionally, since Internet-based surveys have become increasingly popular due to these three assumptions: (a) it is much cheaper to conduct; (b) It is faster; and, (c) when combined with other survey modes, it yields higher response rates than conventional survey modes by themselves (Couper 2000, Dillman 2000, Fricker and Schonlau 2002, Schonlau, Fricker and Elliott 2002, and Tuten et al. 2002). A web-based survey was designed as one of the means of distributing the survey. The website used was 'surveymonkey.com'.

With regard to the types and forms of the questions, this information is illustrated in a copy of each questionnaire, as given in Appendices 1 and 2 respectively. Although the delegates and the organising committees and planners were given different questionnaires, the questions were similar enough to be compared in terms of the perceptions and attitudes of two groups of research samples.

Based on the studies of Lee and Bank (2008), Crouch (2007), Hinkin and Tracey (2003), Weber and Chon (2002), Crouch and Webber (2002) and others, the first draft of the questionnaire was created and developed as questionnaire design can be created from previous studies (Veal, 2006). In addition, pilot testing the questionnaire helped with clarifying the wording of the questions, as well as the validity and reliability of the questionnaire (Field, 2009). According to the pilot study, the result of the Cronbach's Alpha test (0.974) clearly indicated that this questionnaire set is adequately reliable (Field, 2005).

### **3.1.3.2 Question types and format**

In term of question types and format, there are two basic question types: closed or pre-coded questions, and open questions. There are advantages and disadvantages associated with both types of questions.



Whilst the researcher can scope the area of research by creating –pre-coded questions; the respondents can complete their own answers or say what they like to say within the open-ended questions. Open-ended questions are useful for exploring new areas, or ones in which the researcher has limited experience or knowledge (Bryman 2008). However, “the completion level of open-ended questionnaires tend to be very low due to the fact that people are often too busy, or too lazy, to write out free-form answers” (Veal, 2006, p.244). The most significant challenge for a researcher is how to formulate questions which will obtain the most relevant and valuable information. The two types of questionnaires were designed and used in this research survey: one for international convention delegates, and one for international convention planners or committees. While the elements being evaluated were similar in each questionnaire, the questions were asked in different ways, depending on the audience.

#### **a. Questionnaire for Delegates**

There were four sections within the questionnaire for delegates. Section one asked general information about the respondents, such as gender, marital status, age range, education, country of residence, country of origin, type of work, position hold in their organisation, and times of year when they travel for conventions. Section two was used to extract the level of importance for factors influencing the respondents' decision to attend international conventions regardless of the particular destination. Question types on influential factors employed the 5 level Likert scales by starting from 1 very unimportant to 5 very important to them. 31 Elements were asked with regard to the destination itself and the effectiveness of the convention operation and management. In term of factors relevant to the destination, the elements were focused on in accordance with qualifying and amplifying determinants, destination policy, planning and development, destination management, core resources and attractions, and supporting factors and resources (Crouch, 2007; Crouch and Ritchie, 2003). The last question was open-ended with the purpose of extracting

information about the limitations for Thailand in becoming the hub destination in Asia (see questionnaire in Appendices 1).

### **b. Questionnaire for Organising Committees/Planners**

This questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first section was concerned with general information about the conference planners and organising committees, also requesting information on gender, age range, education, country of residence, position hold in their organisation, number of years of experience with planning and organising international conventions. The second section dealt with the evaluation of the criteria for the site selection of international conventions. The elements listed were similar to factors influencing these delegates for participating an international convention. Section three examined the effectiveness of international convention industry in Thailand with respect to these planners and organising committees' perspectives and experiences. The question types were both pre-coded; and open-ended, with the open-ended questions requesting suggestions on the ways in which Thailand could improve the organisation of international conventions. Questions asked the potential of Thailand to be the hub of international convention destination in Asia, including the key benefits that Thailand has to offer these planners and organising committees for convention industry. The final question was an open-ended question asking about what factors needed to be improved in the international convention industry with regard to issues relevant to the destination, quality of convention operation and management, and so forth (see questionnaires in Appendix 1 and 2).

#### **3.1.3.3 Statistical tests for analysing the quantitative data**

This study uses both descriptive and inferential statistics to analyse the data obtained from the questionnaire surveys. *Descriptive statistics* can be described as "the procedures for summarizing data with the intention of discovering trends and patterns, and summarising results to facilitate understanding and communication. The outcome of this group of

*descriptive statistics* includes a frequency table, means, and correlations" (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, p.258). As descriptive statistics are not sufficient for the purpose of most types of research; inferential techniques were also used. "*Inferential techniques* are typically generated after the descriptive results have been examined. They are normally used to test hypotheses, or obtain descriptive results. Some examples of *inferential statistical methods* include the *t* test, which is used to test the significance of the differences between two group means; *multiple regression analysis*, which is used to determine the degree of a relationship between a set of variables; and a confirmatory factor analysis, a technique which can be used to confirm an emerging pattern of quantitative descriptive results from a study" (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, p.258). *Interval scales* within the attitude scales, such as *Likert-type scales*, are analysed by using inferential techniques (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). Hence, inferential statistics were used to analyse factors influencing the delegates to participate in international conventions and the importance of certain criteria/elements for planners and organising committees when considering organising international conventions. This kind of statistical method was also further used to describe t-test and factor analysis with regard to the area of the study (see more details in Chapter Four, Five and Six).

#### **3.1.3.4 The pilot study**

Conducting a pilot study is crucial in doing a research, particularly of a good study design. It can refer to "small scale version, or trial run, done in preparation for the major study" (Polit et al., 2001: 467). It is also called 'feasibility studies' of a full-scale study of a research project. It was conducted for the specific pre-testing of a particular research instrument such as a questionnaire or interview schedule. One of the advantages of conducting a pilot study is that it might give advance warning about where the main research project could fail, where research protocols may not be followed, or whether proposed methods or instruments are inappropriate or too complicated (van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001).

According to van Teijlingen and Hundley (2001), there are several reasons for conducting the pilot studies. Those reasons are as follows:

- 1) Developing and testing adequacy of research instruments
- 2) Assessing the feasibility of a (full-scale) study/survey
- 3) Designing a research protocol
- 4) Assessing whether the research protocol is realistic and workable
- 5) Establishing whether the sampling frame and technique are effective
- 6) Assessing the likely success of proposed recruitment approaches
- 7) Identifying logistical problems which might occur using proposed methods
- 8) Estimating variability in outcomes to help determining sample size
- 9) Collecting preliminary data
- 10) Determining what resources (finance, staff) are needed for a planned study
- 11) Assessing the proposed data analysis techniques to uncover potential problems
- 12) Developing a research question and research plan
- 13) Training a researcher in as many elements of the research process as possible
- 14) Convincing funding bodies that the research team is competent and knowledgeable
- 15) Convincing funding bodies that the main study is feasible and worth funding
- 16) Convincing other stakeholders that the main study is worth supporting

Nonetheless, there are a number of limitations when conducting the pilot studies, e.g. the possibility of making inaccurate predictions or assumptions on the basis of pilot data and problems arising from contamination. The contamination may concern about where the data of the pilot study is from and who the pilot participants are, but its results will refer to the feasibility of main study.

van Teijlingen and Hundley (2001) further presented that the pilot studies can be based on quantitative and/or qualitative methods and large-scale studies might employ a number of pilot studies before the main survey is conducted. Researchers may start with "qualitative data collection and analysis on a relatively unexplored topic, using the results to design a subsequent quantitative phase of the study" (Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998: 47). According to van Teijlingen and Hundley (2001), the first phase of a pilot might involve using in-depth interviews or focus groups to establish the issues to be addressed in a large-scale questionnaire survey. Next the questionnaire, e.g. the wording and the order of the questions, or the range of answers on multiple-choice questions, might be piloted. A final pilot could be conducted to test the research process, e.g. the different ways of distributing and collecting the questionnaires.

According to this study, only questionnaire of quantitative research was piloted while the questions of interviews of qualitative research was not pursued. There are several rationales to perform the pilot of questionnaire survey. Basically, it was designed to develop and check the wording, adequacy and the order of questions. It was also designed to pilot the range of answers on multiple-choice questions. Moreover, it concerns the assessment of the feasibility of a full-scale of the research study. More importantly, it was created to assess its validity and reliability which the variability in outcomes would help determining the real sample size of this research. Finally, it was conducted to test the research process, e.g. the different ways of distributing and collecting the questionnaires. The explanation below is revealed the assessment of validity and reliability of questionnaires of this research. In contrast, the qualitative research was not performed due to several reasons. According to Guba and Lincoln (1981), in order to be considered worthwhile, all research must have 'truth value', 'applicability', 'consistency', and 'neutrality', nonetheless, the nature of knowledge within the rationalistic or quantitative paradigm is different from the knowledge in naturalistic or qualitative paradigm. Morse et al. (2002) stated that reliability and validity remain appropriate

concepts for attaining rigor in qualitative research. They argued that qualitative researchers should reclaim responsibility for reliability and validity by implementing verification strategies integral and self-correcting during the conduct of inquiry itself. This ensures the attainment of rigor using strategies inherent within each qualitative design, and moves the responsibility for incorporating and maintaining reliability and validity from external reviewers' judgements to the investigators themselves. Finally, they made a plea for a return to terminology for ensuring rigor that is used by mainstream science. Moreover, (van Teijlingen and Hundley, V. (2001) noted that contamination is less of a concern in qualitative research, where researchers often use some or all of their pilot data as part of the main study. Qualitative data collection and analysis is often progressive, in that a second or subsequent interview in a series should be 'better' than the previous one as the interviewer may have gained insights from previous interviews which are used to improve interview schedules and specific questions. They further presented that some researchers have therefore argued that in qualitative approaches separate pilot studies are not necessary, for example, Holloway (1997: 121), argued that a qualitative interviewer conducting 15 focus group interviews will listen to the recordings or read through the transcripts of the first three or four in order to improve the questions, the way of introducing the issues into the group interview or even to add new topics. Thus, although there is no specific pilot study, analysis of the earlier focus groups may help improve the later ones. However, Frankland and Bloor (1999: 154) argue that piloting provides

Hence, according to the reasons mentioned above, the pilot study in qualitative research was not conducted. As there are 15 interviews of this research study were undertaken, the questions as well as its procedure to contribute to the interviewees were learnt and developed from the previous interviews.

### **a. Preliminary Studies and its Results**

As mentioned above, the pilot study was undertaken before the actual data collection happened to check that the questions were clear and that appropriate data was collected, as well as evaluating the feasibility of a large-scale survey. A web-based questionnaire survey was employed in this study as a pilot with 120 sets of questionnaires sent via email to attendees, 50 questionnaires were returned.

The essential elements found during the pilot questionnaires survey are summarized as follows:

- 1) There was one complaint with regard to the length of the questionnaire, and issues regarding the clarity or ambiguity of the questions.
- 2) 50% of the respondents seemed confused by Question 2, Section D, as could be recognised from their answers. As a result, this question was modified for reasons of clarity.
- 3) Positive feedback showed that there were no complaints found with regard to the use of the Likert 5-scale rating.

### **b. Validity and reliability**

A pilot test of the questionnaire informed the researcher of the reliability of the data collected and the validity of chosen research instruments. Validity test is essential as it truly reflects the phenomenon under investigation to the researcher (Bell, 1999). For this pilot study, the Cronbach's Alpha test was conducted in order to test the questionnaires coefficient of reliability in terms of the measurement of each question. The result of 0.974 clearly indicated that the questionnaire set is adequately reliable (Field, 2005).

The variety of data collected from the methods employed will ensure reliability in the overall findings. As expected, the level of reliability of results

will be further enhanced through the use of a mixed methods approach to data collection, and triangulation of the evidence. Some of the missing elements in the research instruments were identified as a result of the pilot studies. Hence, some questions were modified in order to be more accessible and to provide more precise data before a large-scale survey was conducted to complete this thesis.

### **c. Initial findings**

The preliminary results of this research found that there was a coefficient of reliability amongst the questions. The results of the Cronbach's Alpha test was 0.912, indicating that the measures used in this questionnaire were adequately reliable (Field, 2005).

#### **3.1.3.5 Questionnaire distribution**

The self-administrative questionnaires were designed based on the objectives given in this study. These questionnaires were sent to the respondents by 1) completion of a hard copy by the captive groups at international conventions in Thailand from 2009 and 2010, and 2) by answering a request on the website, called SurveyMonkey (see [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)). The web-based survey was available between 17<sup>th</sup> of April, 2009 and 11<sup>th</sup> of November, 2009. According to the [theguardian.com](http://theguardian.com), data collection service, SurveyMonkey has become a go-to tool for companies looking to stay ahead of the curve. The service has become fairly ubiquitous, from aiding the most basic market research to providing on-air statistics for a major US news network.

As with any data collection service, privacy can be an issue. The four sections filled in by the delegates and organising committee and planners questionnaires was created and accompanied with a cover page explaining the purpose of the study. These questionnaires were also sent to colleagues at Liverpool John Moores University and RMUTK, who specialise in quantitative research for further guidance.



### 3.1.3.6 Data collection

With regard to the delegates, there were 345 questionnaires completed, with 225 collated from the web-based survey, and 120 returned from the captive group surveys. The web-based survey began on the 17<sup>th</sup> of April, 2009, and was finished on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November, 2009. With regard to the captive group survey, 130 questionnaires were distributed at six international conferences, held from March to July, 2009, in Thailand. 120 questionnaires were completed, returned and could be analysed. With regard to the organising committees and planners, only the web-based survey was performed. 500 questionnaires were emailed to those people, and 206 questionnaires were returned which was counted for 41.2 percent of return rate. The summary of the completed work is displayed in table 3.1.3.

Table 3.1.3: Completed data collection

Types of data collection		Type of samples	Intended targeted	Obtained Number	Sum
Questionnaire	Web-based survey	Delegate	250	225	345
	Captive group survey		150	120	
	Web-based survey	Organising committee and Planner	500	206	206
	-				
<b>Total Questionnaire</b>			<b>551</b>		

### 3.1.4 Qualitative Approach: Interview and focus group

This research study is a mixed method approach by combining quantitative data derived from questionnaire survey and qualitative data obtained from interviews and a focus group. Bryman (2008) argued that within both quantitative and qualitative research, interview is a prominent data-collection strategy. Regarding the interview category, the interview of this study was guided or semi-structured interview (Berg, 2009) with the researcher asking questions which had been listed in advance of the

interview. The interviews were both face-to-face and long-distance interview facilitated by Skype on the Internet. The focus group run by TCEB entailed specialists in the MICE industry in Thailand sitting in a semi-circle on the stage in front of an audience, sharing their points of views in accordance with questions asked, with the moderator asking the questions stood on a podium, down from the stage.

The face-to-face interviews were performed and recorded at the convention sites with the delegates in Thailand; whilst the long-distance interviews took place via Skype on the Internet. In total, there were sixteen interviews conducted with seven convention delegates, nine organising committee and planner members and specialists on the convention industry, and one focus group. The semi-structured type of interview was used with both groups of research samples by a list of questions relevant to the scope of research being asked. After getting started with social greetings and small talk, the interviewees were then asked the questions in the context of the research title.

However, the circumstances of each interview differed slightly, according to the opinions of the interviewees, meaning that the actual sequence of questions in the interview may not match the sequence outlined in the schedule. Therefore, a series of questions were included in the interview schedule for the purpose of modifying the order of the questions. The interviewees were asked follow-up questions when they provided what was regarded as a significant reply. However, some questions that were not listed before, spontaneously follow-up questions from the interviewers, based on the replies of the interviewees.

There are several advantages of open-ended and semi-structured interviews. Firstly, it provides rich data, as original voices to be used in research construction and makes the quality of method invaluable due to the interviewer directing the conversation (Newton, 2010). Only open-ended questions, semi-structured and unstructured interviews allow interviewees to “use their own words and develop their own thought”

(Denscombe, 2007, p.176). Secondly, the researcher can be able to resort and change participants if they are deemed unsuccessful (Gomm, 2004). In accordance with ethical considerations, semi-structured interviews allow individuals to disclose thoughts and feelings which are private. This method relies on the inter-personal skills of the interviewer, the ability to establish relationship and rapport. These qualities are valuable but ethically very sensitive. The types of questions to be asked, issues of confidentiality and at times anonymity have to be thoroughly assessed and discussed. As mentioned above, trust is fundamental and must be maintained through professionalism and respect for each person whose perspective through this method should be recognised as unique and valuable (Newton, 2010). However, the weaknesses of open-ended and semi—structured interview needs to be recognised and addressed. Firstly, people respond differently depending on how they perceive the interviewer which is called the interviewer effect. “In particular, the sex, the age, and the ethnic origins of the interviewer have a bearing on the amount of information people are willing to divulge and their honesty about what they reveal. Nonetheless, this problem is very dependent on the nature of the topics being discussed” (Denscombe, 2007, p.184). Hence, the purpose and topics of the research must be clear at the beginning of an interview to seek and put the interviewee at ease (Gomm, 2004).

Therefore, the themes of the interview focused on the feasibility and the potential of Thailand as a hub in the Asian convention industry. The interviewees and focus group participants provided sufficient information and explanations of other significant aspects of the study obtained via the survey method. Finally, the interview and the panel discussion were conducted, and the audio and video recordings were transcribed for the purpose of analysis by a software package called Nvivo.

There were 20 in-depth interviews with attendees who had recently been to international conferences in Thailand. Regarding interview conduction, five interviews were face-to-face, and fifteen were facilitated via the

Internet due to the distance involved. Most of the interviews took approximately forty minutes to complete and were recorded via a digital voice recorder and a video-camera. The data obtained from interviews was transcribed and saved in order to facilitate the use of the QSR Nvivo application. Nodes and models were created within the software, and coded in order to identify any thematic links. A triangulation of themes was utilised to make the process more efficient. Further cross-examination or triangulation via the 'Nvivo nodes' of the interview sessions and questionnaire results were conducted comparatively later on in this process.

### **3.1.5 Secondary Data Research**

"In a time where vast amounts of data are being collected, compiled, and archived by researchers all over the world, the practicality of utilising existing data for research is becoming more prevalent" (Johnston, 2014: p.619). Utilised by the advanced technological, the vast amounts of data is now easily accessible for research (Johnston, 2014). According to Creswell (2009), the area of research investigation and method consists of how the researcher collects, analyzes, and interprets the data in the study. The key to secondary data analysis is to apply theoretical knowledge and conceptual skills to utilise existing data to address the research questions or objectives.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the potential of Thailand's MICE industry to become the international convention hub in Asia. Significantly, studying the secondary data research is useful. Hence, the first step in the process of doing research is to develop the research objectives. Data already existed can be utilised in addressing the research objectives, particularly guided by the previous research. After studying the relevant literature reviews, the questionnaire surveys of the quantitative research were created and piloted. The questions for the interviews of the qualitative research were listed. The secondary data archived was collected by the document exploration, e.g. the government publications

and official statistics which could supply a further avenue for exploring the topic. Documents can be treated as the effective source of data to the further questionnaires, interviews or observation processes, because these provided the cost and time saving advantages. This research has also investigated in the annual tourist statistics, particularly the Thailand MICE industry or TCEB as well as others useful documents such as news, articles, magazines, the academic articles. However, a weakness in using secondary data has been found in the government documents was those statistical data were not contemporary updated. To fill this significant weakness, the researcher also investigated some statistics on newspaper or news websites that reports on the current tourism situations.

Consequently, the data from secondary data research will be mixed with the data from quantitative and qualitative research. The mixing of data types which known as triangulation, so that diverse viewpoints or standpoints cast light upon a topic. Triangulation is not aimed merely at validation but at deepening and widening one's understanding. It can be achieved either by a person or by a research team or group. Triangulation and pluralism both tend to support interdisciplinary research rather than a strongly bounded discipline of sociology in social sciences (Olsen, 2004).

## **3.2 DATA ANALYSIS AND VALIDATION PROCEDURES**

The type of data analysis used in mixed methodology research depends on the type of research strategy. While quantitative analysis is concerned with descriptive and inferential numerical statistics, the qualitative approach deals with the descriptive, thematic or image analysis and classification, and the triangulation of the results of both research strategies.

### **3.2.1 Quantitative Data Analysis**

Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS version 20 with both descriptive and inferential statistics. While, descriptive statistics were used to describe the basic features of the data in the study in terms of

frequency of variables of the demographic detail of the participants, inferential statistics were used to make the predictions or inferences about a population based on the analysis of a sample. The results of an analysis can generalize a sample in terms of the larger population that it represents. Therefore, a t-test, One-way ANOVA, and factor analysis were used to test for generalisation and significance. Inferential statistics revealed that the probability of the results of the analysis of the sample were representative of the larger population.

The data from the questionnaire underwent inference tests via measurement scales. The nominal (categorical) data were analysed through Multiple Correspondence Analysis Category Plots in order to explore associations between variables of demographic data of studied delegates and organising committees and planners. The use of this Joint Category Plot allowed all variables to be seen within their associations in a single plot of the centroid coordinates, related to each selected variable (Field, 2005). Cross tabulations are also used to examine the relationship between two or more variables based on frequencies, while means tests compare the means of two or more variables. All of the aforementioned procedures were facilitated through using the SPSS program, version 20. The collated data was also evaluated by using a combination of a t-test, variance analysis (ANOVA), and factor analysis. Following these analyses and on completion of the data collection, the qualitative primary data (interviews and focus group) was triangulated. They are discussed in details in Chapter Four, Five, and Six.

### **3.2.2 Qualitative Data Analysis**

Qualitative data analysis was based on the notion of thematic networks illustrated by Attridge-Stirling (2001). Thematic networks and thematic analysis are similar in that the core features emerged from the qualitative data. They explore the understanding of an issue, or the significance of an idea emerging from the data. Thematic networks show a web-like network as an organising principle and a means of representation. It makes explicit

the procedures that may be employed in moving from the text to its interpretation. Thematic networks systematise the extraction process into three categories: Basic Themes, Organising Themes and Global Themes (Attridge-Stirling, 2001).

Facilitated by NVivo 10 software package for analysis, the qualitative data was coded and analysed. NVivo was employed as “Software can be particularly helpful for data storage, searching and retrieval and certain aspects of concept organization and theory testing. However, the role of computer software is posited to play as a function and capabilities of the software itself, but it cannot replace those moments of intuition when the relationships between concepts crystallise in the researcher’s imagination. Another word, it cannot make no claims beyond the level of ‘efficient clerk’. Therefore, the onus is on the researcher to justify the amount of data required to generate meaningful and robust analysis, and the volume and type of data have to be determined within the context of the research objectives and methodology” (Morrison and Moir, 1997, p.115).

Data obtained from interviews was transcribed and saved in order to be downloaded to the QSR Nvivo application. Nodes and models were created within the software, and coders analysed the documentation in order to identify any thematic links. A triangulation of themes was utilised to make the process more efficient. Further cross-examination or triangulation via the ‘Nvivo nodes’ of the interview sessions and questionnaire results were conducted comparatively later on in this process. Figure 3.2.2(1) illustrates the process of three categories of web-like thematic networks.

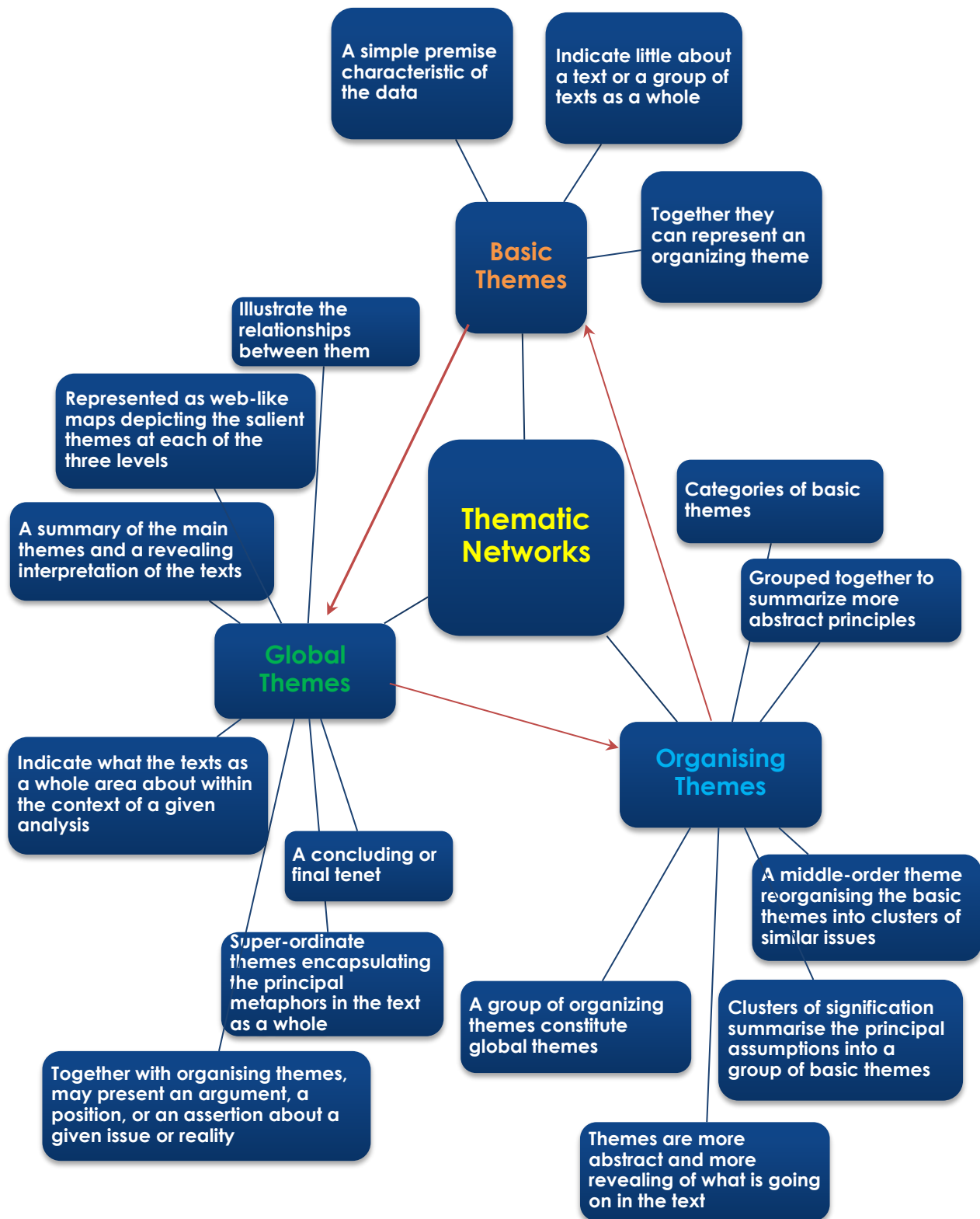


Figure 3.2.2(1): A Web-like Thematic Networks. Adapted from Attridge-Stirling (2001)



The summary of steps in analysis of thematic networks is illustrated in figure 3.2.2(2) below.

### ANALYSIS STAGE A: REDUCTION OR BREAKDOWN OF TEXT

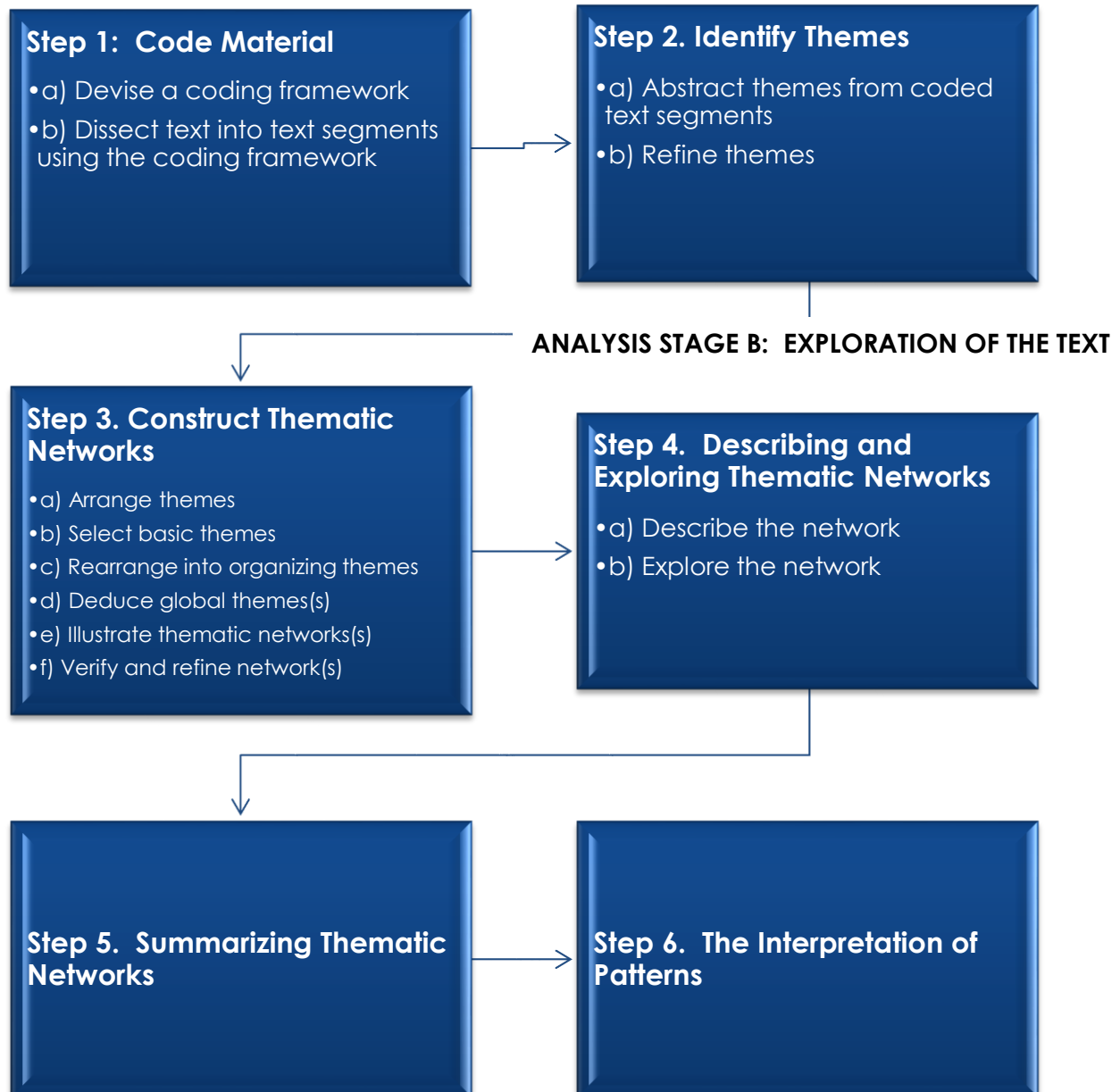


Figure 3.2.2(2): Steps in analysis employing thematic networks. Adapted from Attridge - Stirling (2001)

### 3.2.3 Triangulation

Methodological triangulation is the use of more than one method to investigate the one phenomenon (Risjord et al., 2000). It is a powerful technique that facilitates validation of data through cross verification from two or more sources (Bogdan and Biklen (2006). "The basic idea underpinning its concept is that the phenomena under study can be understood best when approached with a variety or a combination of research methods" (Rothbauer, 2008, p.892). Another word, one can be more confident with a result if different methods lead to the same result. It may be used as a means of mixing qualitative and quantitative data and record examples of triangulation for skills assessment (Begley, 1996; Cowman, 1993; Foss and Ellefsen, 2002).

The concept of triangulation is borrowed from navigational and land surveying techniques that determine a single point in space with the convergence of measurements taken from two other distinct points" (Rothbauer, 2008, p.892). This notion was used as a metaphor to describe the process of looking at the same phenomenon from more than one position in order to gain a more complete picture of the object of the study (Campbell and Fiske, 1959). Triangulation is most commonly used in data collection and analysis techniques, but it also applies to sources of data (Rothbauer, 2008).

Denzin (1970) has made an excepted and useful elaboration on the concept of triangulation in social science research and has outlined three types of triangulation, namely:

*Theoretical (or Method) Triangulation*, which may be seen as a means of testing the validity of a construct, can be sub-divided into within-method triangulation (where different types of the same method are used to study the same phenomenon) and between method triangulation (where different methods are used to study the same phenomenon).

*Data Triangulation*, aims to gather information using multiple sampling strategies and sources of information.

*Investigator Triangulation*, aims to make the same observation by more than one investigator, thus helping to rule out lack of reliability and observer bias. Each investigator (assessor) will bring their own particular set of knowledge and expertise to the observation."

"Questions that commonly arise in discussions of triangulation tend to address one of two concerns: the issues of using triangulation as a test of validity of research findings and the practical difficulties of using more than one method to study the same phenomenon" (Rothbauer, 2008, p.892). Imagining taking photographs, "multiple snapshots, even if some are not totally in focus, give a better picture than one poorly aimed photograph. The deficiencies of one method can be compensated for by the advantages of another and, in this way a better, more complete view of the skill and professionalism of the student can be judged" (Wilkinson, 2007, p.633). This means that a variety of assessments over a variety of times, which are matched against the areas we are interested in, is much more likely to provide reliable and valid information (van der Vleuten and Schuwirth, 2005, Wilkinson and Frampton, 2004).

This research employs mixed methods, by combining qualitative and quantitative data. The procedures or sequence used in this study involves the data collection of both quantitative approaches (questionnaire survey) and qualitative approach (interviews, focus groups) being pursued concurrently. The results of these two approaches were triangulated by combining, confirming, and validating the significance of each phenomenon.

"Concurrent triangulation design is the approach as a popular mixed method strategy that was aimed at confirming, cross-validating, or correlating findings within a study. In this strategy, data integration occurred in the interpretation phase and also addressed the degree of convergence of the findings. The use of qualitative and quantitative

approaches strengthens the validity of the findings by offsetting ‘the weakness inherent within one method with the strengths of the other method’” (Creswell, 2009, p.213). Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006) offered additional features of data analysis in a concurrent mixed design. First, they argued that researchers do not build one approach on the other. Second, in this design the results are consolidated after the analysis and interpretation of each data type. Third, this design included the creation of a meta-inference from the integration of qualitative and quantitative inferences. Figure 3.2.3 below illustrates the process of triangulation employed in this research.

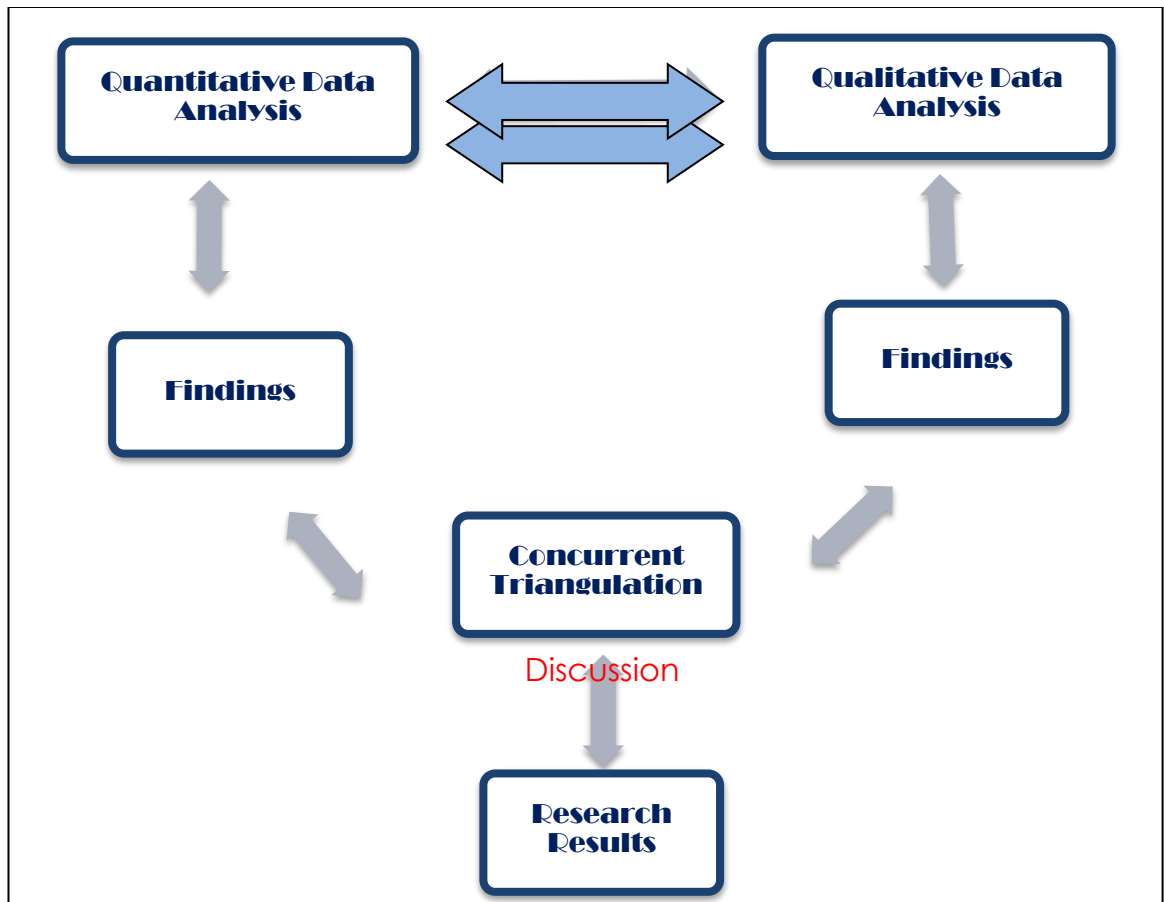


Figure 3.2.3: The process of triangulation employed in this research.

### 3.5 SUMMARY

The paradigm of this research is mixed-methods, and a concurrent and constant triangulation design was adopted. It was selected in order to compare the different methods used by different approaches to the

research for the purposes of confirming, cross-validating, and corroborating the findings. This research employs both quantitative and qualitative methods as a means to offset the relative strengths and weaknesses of each method. In this case, the quantitative and qualitative data collection was performed concurrently, occurring during different phases of the research study. In practice, both the quantitative and qualitative approach were given equal priority. This method of research is designed for the purpose of triangulation. The data analysis and the interpretation of the quantitative research were completed prior to the qualitative research. The findings from both research strategies were confirmed, cross-validated, and corroborated. The philosophical backbone of this research is interpretivism, and this mixed-methods research is informed by both quantitative and qualitative research strategies. This research employed inductive reasoning to interpret the findings of this study and draw conclusions about them. The data collection process involved three methods: a questionnaire survey, interviews, and focus group, which were collated concurrently during this phase of the data collection process.

There were two types of questionnaire surveys for the two groups of research samples, the international conference delegates, and planners or organising committees. The type of research sampling used was convenience sampling. There were two channels used to contribute to the questionnaires, the web-based survey uploaded to the website ([surveymonkey.com](http://surveymonkey.com)), and participation in international conferences and conventions held in Thailand in 2009-2010 (captive group survey). The preliminary results of the pilot study revealed a Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.974, indicating the coefficient of reliability of each question, and that the entire questionnaire set was adequately reliable (Field, 2005).

In terms of quantitative strategies, the data was analysed, described and presented by both descriptive and inferential statistics. The results of questionnaire survey were concurrently triangulated with the two other qualitative methods used after the analysis procedures. With regard to

qualitative strategies, the content is interpreted through the identification of themes, based on the research of Attride-Stirling (2001).

This chapter has discussed the methods employed for the research, and next chapter (Chapter 4) will give the initial findings of factors influencing the delegates in participating in international conferences.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

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### THE FACTORS INFLUENCING DELEGATES' ATTENDANCE AT INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

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#### 4.0 INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this chapter is to evaluate the factors which influence delegates to participate in an international convention (IC) in any destination. Such an understanding will demonstrate what influences delegates' decision making process. Hence, if Thailand aims to set itself to be the hub international convention destination in the Asian market, the attributes learnt from this research need to be taken into account to develop and improve the industry. In addition, apart from cost (Oppermann and Chon, 1997), comprising of monetary cost and time cost (Zhang, Leung and Qu, 2007) as well as location factors, such as attractiveness and accessibility of convention destination (Zhang, Leung and Qu, 2007), it needs to be understood what other attributes that delegates take into account. Consequently, by studying the factors influencing these delegates decision making criteria, Thailand has a greater opportunity in becoming the hub for international conventions. The findings from this chapter answer the research objective 1.

#### 4.1 SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESPONSES

311 questionnaires were completed by delegates, of which 79 were returned from the captive group surveys and 232 were completed online. With respect to the captive group surveys, 130 questionnaires were distributed at five international conventions (ICs) held in Thailand in 2009. As explained in Chapter Three, these international convention were selected with regard to their sizes: small, medium, and large convention. The return rate of this type of survey accounted for 60.76%. The questionnaires were distributed at the following ICs: (1) 'The 2<sup>nd</sup>

International Conference on Educational Reform 2009 (ICER 2009): Cultural Diversity and Sustainable Education in a Changing World, held from 25-27 March, 2009, at Charoensri Grand Royal Hotel, Udon Thani Province, Thailand; (2) 'Harm Reduction 2009: IHRA's 20th International Conference', held from 20–23 April, 2009, Bangkok, Thailand; (3) 'International Symposium on Laboratory Animal Science', held from 26-29 April, 2009, at the Royal Thai Navy Convention Hall, Bangkok, Thailand, (4) 'International Conference on Roles of Media during Political Crisis', held on 20th May, 2009, at the Emerald Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand, and (5) 'The 10<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Genetics in Aquaculture (ISGA 2009)', held from 22-26, June, 2009, at Sofitel Centara Grand and Bangkok Convention Centre, Bangkok, Thailand.

Table 4.1: Summary of questionnaire surveys

Types of surveys	Groups of samples	
	Delegate	Return rate (%)
Web-based survey	232	25.7
Captive group survey	79	60.76
Total	311	30.19

## 4.2 SUMMARY OF DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF DELEGATES

Convention attendees are arguably vital for the continued existence of the convention industry, as they bring several benefits to a convention destination through their expenses (Oppermann and Chon, 1997). Despite this, they are an important component of the sector; research into conference delegate motivations is scarce, including profiling of conference delegates using their motivations and demographic characteristics has seldom been undertaken (Mair, 2010). Many studies presented demographic profiles of their respondents; however, rarely have they investigated the relationship among variables. Ramirez et al. (2013) noted that “such information would be useful for destination marketers who are also promoting their convention destination through delegate boosting activities.” (p. 166). With respect to Mair (2010)'s study, “the resulting demographic profiles suggest that there are significant differences in the delegate clusters based on age, gender, and



education level, which allows the identification of distinct delegate market segments. This will result in more targeted marketing by conference organizers and destinations in order to achieve increased delegate numbers." (p. 176).

In this study, demographic analysis reveal that a vast proportion of samples were male, with 70.6%, and 29.4% of female delegates who were in the under 40 age range (36.5%), accounting for one-third of the sample. In terms of education levels, this revealed that a large proportion of the sample had completed postgraduate degree courses, and the majority of delegates (65.2%) had a PhD. In terms of country of origin, the respondents were classified into five regions: Africa, the Americas, Europe, the Asian-Pacific region, and the Middle East (World Tourism Organization, WTO). Due to the small number of respondents from African and Middle Eastern countries, these regions were combined. The largest group of delegates was from the Asia-Pacific region (45.6%), followed by Europe (24.9%), and the Americas. These samples mostly worked in academic institutions or sciences, or fields related to the sciences, at 36.2% and 35.9%, respectively (see Appendices 3).

According to multivariate analysis of correspondence between gender, age, education, and country of residence of the respondents, the relationship among these variables is presented in figure 4.2(1) below.

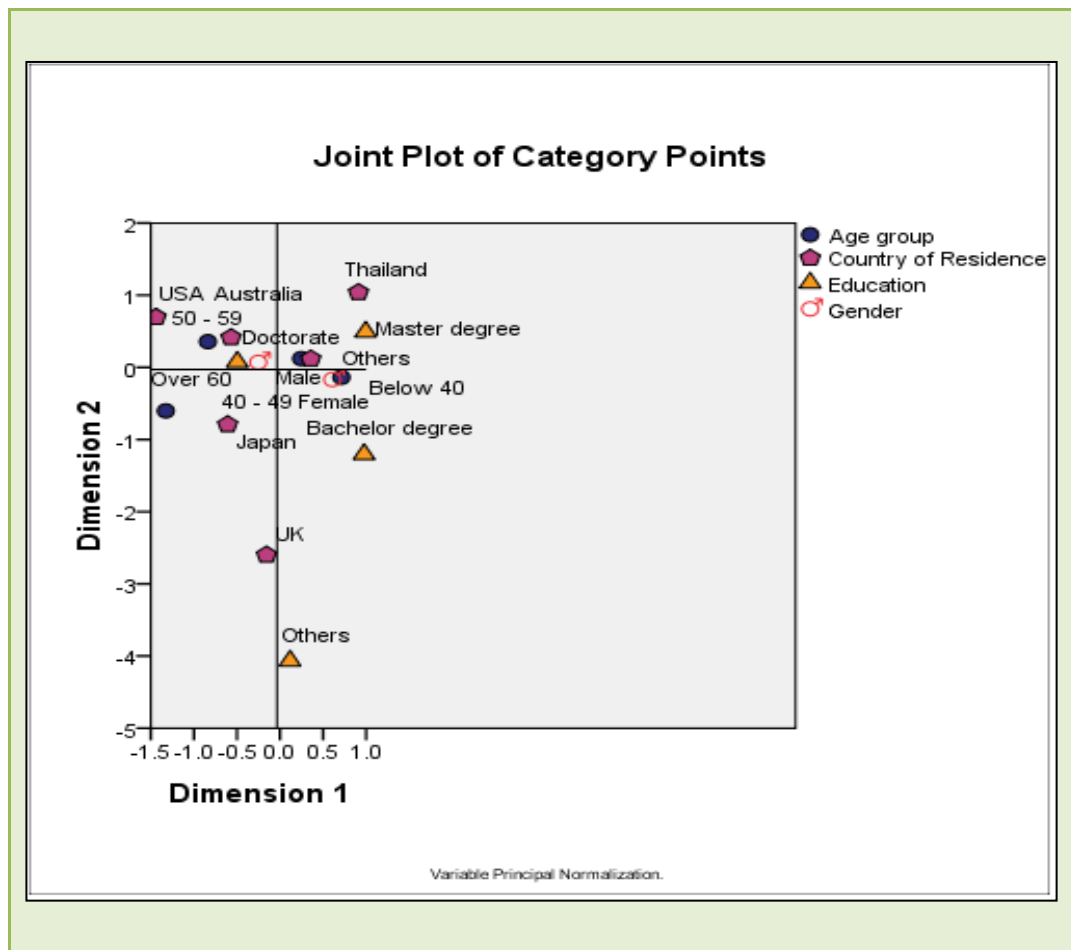


Figure 4.2(1): Joint Plot of Gender, age group, and education level, and country of residence of the respondents

On further examination of the relationship between the education levels of the delegates, the type of work they do, the positions they hold in their organisations, their countries or regions of residence and origin, and the frequency of their attendance at ICs is described as shown in figure 4.2(2) below.

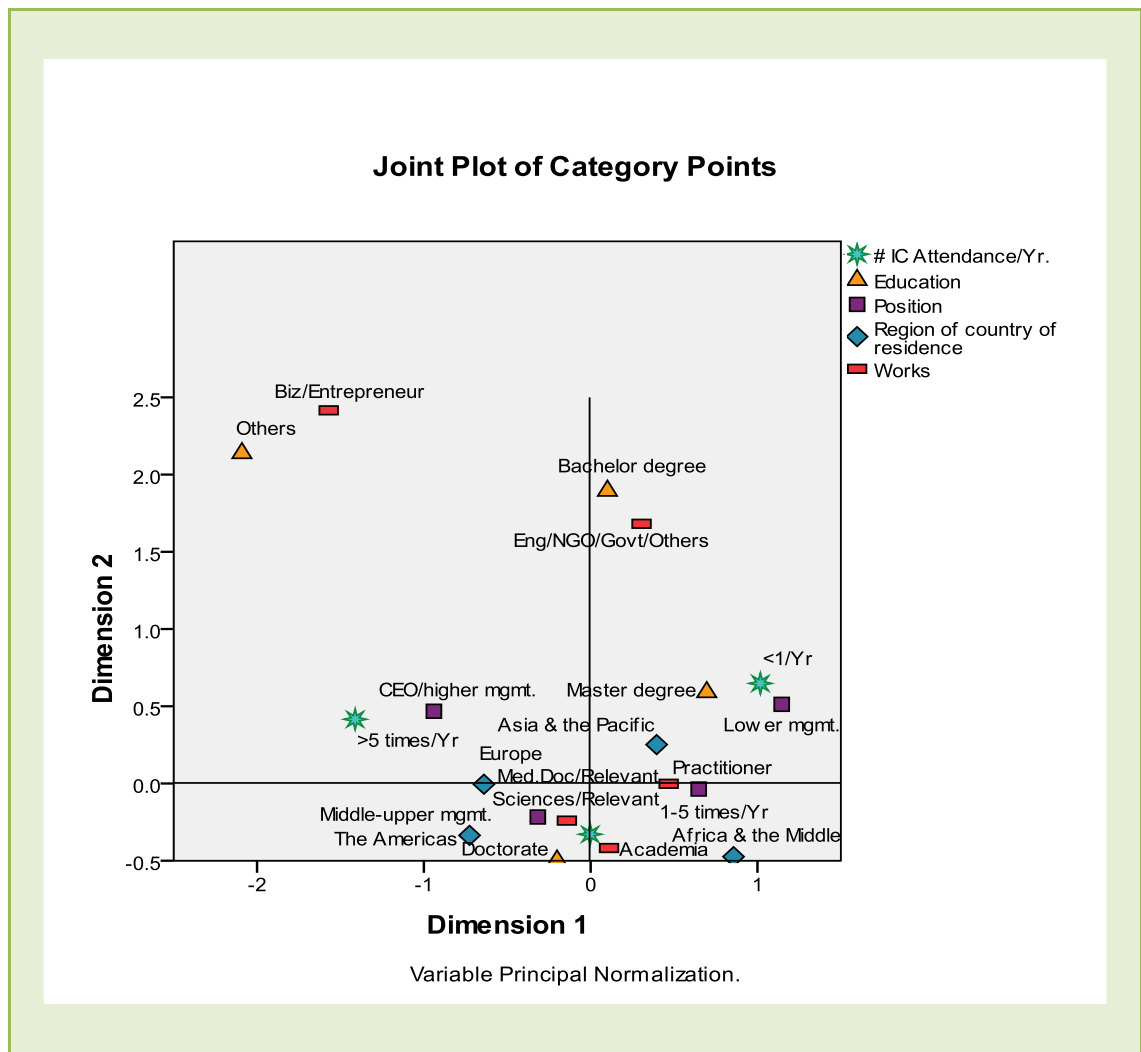


Figure 4.2(2): Education, work, position, region of country of residence, and frequency of IC attendance per year of delegates

### 4.3 ANALYSIS ON 5-POINT SCALE VARIABLES

The purpose of the questionnaire is to examine the factors that influence the decision-making process of delegates regarding IC participation. The data obtained from the questionnaire was analysed in accordance with the relevant sets of statistical analysis.

Where the analysis focused on the variables in the 5 point Likert scale of factors influencing delegates to attend ICs. The topics to be analysed consist of the following:

- a) The factors influencing delegates' IC attendance, with a focus on mean and percentages

- b) A comparison of the mean from the independent-samples t-test, analysed in terms of the responses of delegates and their genders
- c) A comparison of the mean from a one-way ANOVA test, analysed in terms of age group; education level; and region or country of residence and factors influencing delegates' attendance
- d) Multivariate analysis, including factor analysis, or principal component analysis (PCA); an analysis of the factors influencing IC attendance with regard to the perspectives of the delegates.

#### 4.3.1 The Reliability and Consistency of the Questionnaires

With regard to the 5-point Likert scale measurements, the questions were designed to investigate the factors influencing the decision-making process of delegates with regard to participating in ICs in any destination. In terms of the *reliability of measurement*, the questions used in the questionnaire had been checked and the results revealed a coefficient of reliability in each of the questions. The result of the Cronbach's Alpha test was 0.925, indicating that the measurements used in the questionnaires were adequately reliable (Field 2009). The results are displayed in Table 4.3.1 below.

Table 4.3.1: Reliability Statistics of the Measurements for Questionnaire Respondents

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.925	46

#### 4.3.2 The Factors Influencing Attendance at International Conventions – Mean and Percentage in a 5 point-Likert Scale

The delegates were asked to rate the level of importance of the factors influencing their IC attendance on a five point-Likert scale, on which 5 represented “Very Important” and 1 represented “Not important at all”.

The higher the score, the greater the importance of these factors influencing their decision-making process, in terms of participating in ICs in any destination, according to these attitudes and perceptions of the delegates.

The findings indicated that the delegates perceived every factor influencing IC attendance was based on variables above 3.00. The top ten factors that these delegates identified as being the most important in terms of influencing their IC attendance are presented Figure 4.3.2(1) below.

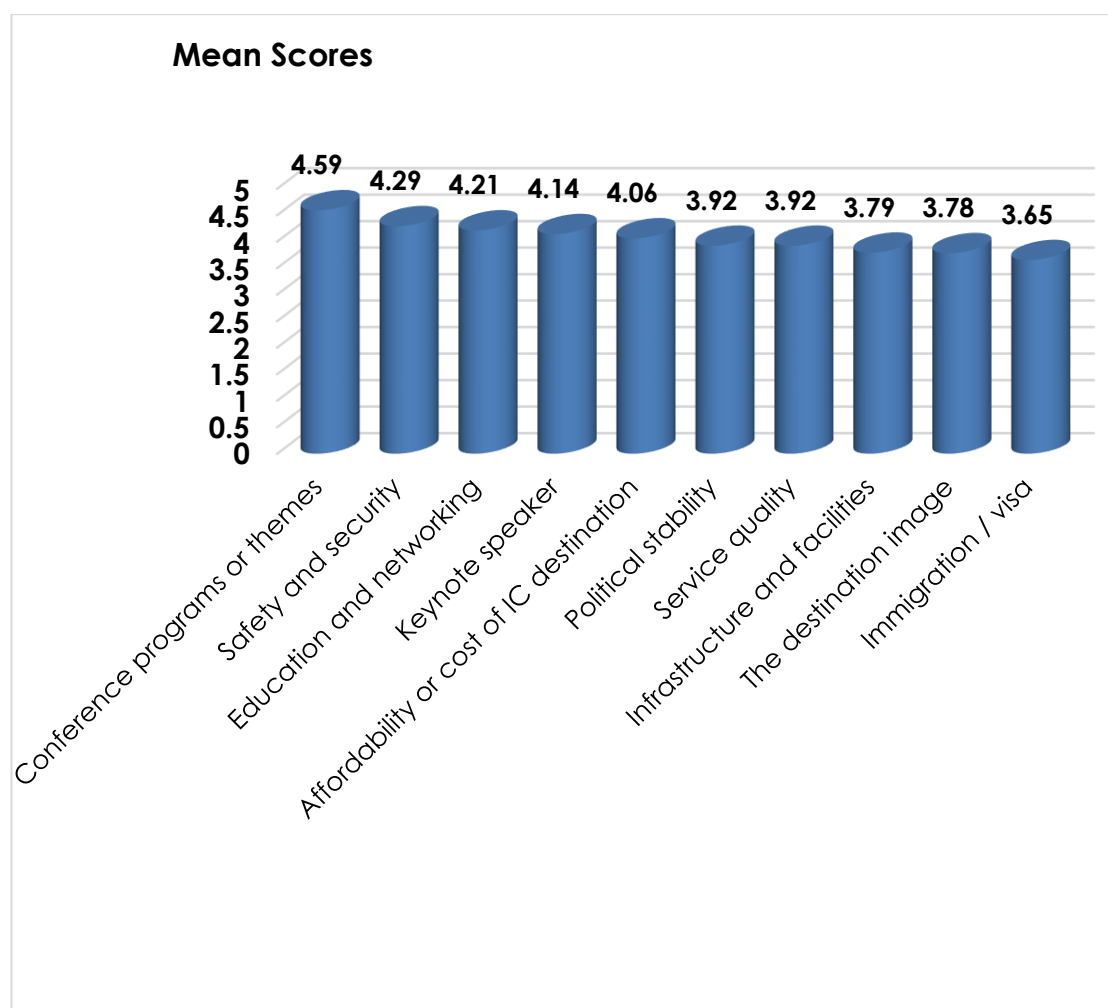


Figure 4.3.2(1): Top ten factors influencing delegates' decision-making to participate international convention

From the respondents, it could also be revealed the five factors presented that had less of an influence in the decision-making process of whether to

participate in international conventions in any destination. These five factors are presented in figure Figure 4.3.2(2) below.

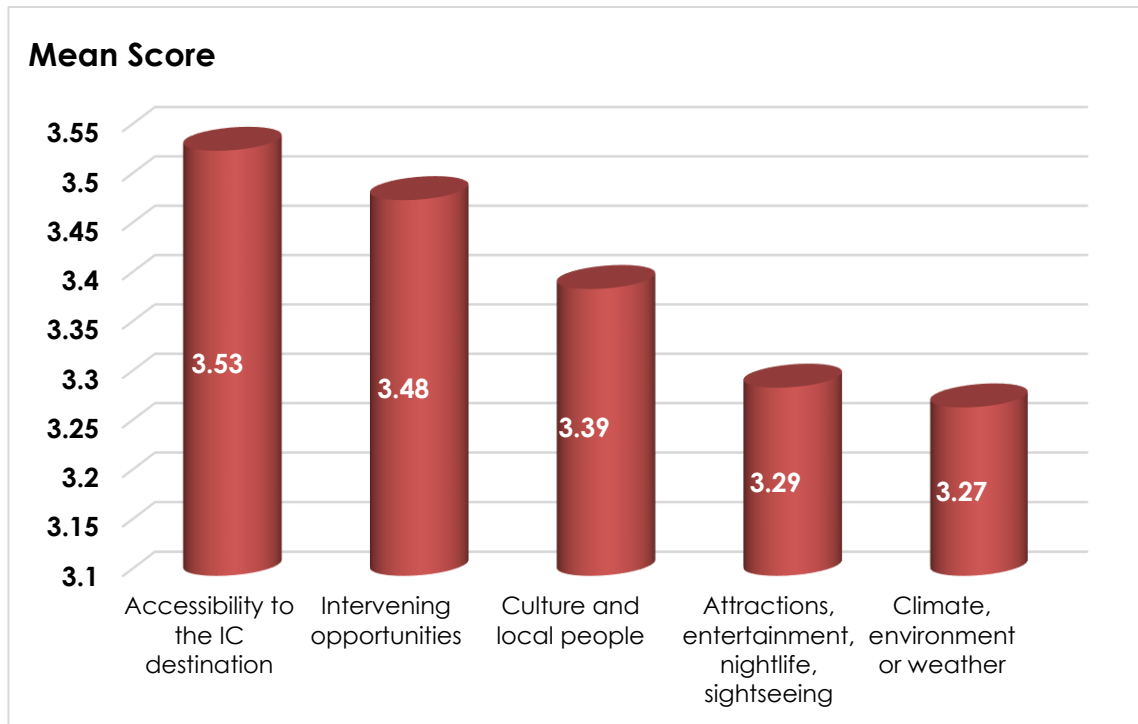


Figure 4.3.2(2): Five factors less influencing delegates' decision-making to participate in international convention

Table 4.3.2 below illustrate the order of the mean scores of these factors, as well as the percentages of the responses with regard to the level of importance.

Table 4.3.2: Factors influencing delegates' convention attendance

Item	Factors	Very important Not important at all					Mean
		5	4	3	2	1	
		%	%	%	%	%	
1.	Conference programs/themes	62.5	35.0	1.9	0.3	0.3	4.59
2.	Safety & security	44.6	42.3	10.1	2.9	0	4.29
3.	Education & networking	36.5	49.7	12.2	1.3	0.3	4.21
4.	Keynote speakers	38.2	42.8	15.0	2.9	1.0	4.14
5.	Affordability or cost	28.1	52.8	15.8	3.3	0	4.06
6.	Political stability	24.1	50.2	19.9	5.2	0.7	3.92
7.	Quality of service	19.4	55.0	23.6	1.9	0	3.92
8.	Facility & infrastructure	18.4	48.5	27.9	4.6	0.7	3.79
9.	Destination image	18.3	50.7	22.9	7.5	0.7	3.78
10.	Immigration / visa	18.6	40.8	28.8	10.5	1.3	3.65

11.	Accessibility, travel distance (location), transportation	12.1	41.8	35.6	7.8	2.6	3.53
12.	Intervening opportunities (i.e., other conferences, vacations, visiting new place, etc.)	9.1	40.9	39.6	9.7	0.6	3.48
13.	Cultures & local people	7.8	36.5	43.6	11.4	0.7	3.39
14.	Attractions, sightseeing, entertainment, nightlife, etc.	7.4	34.0	41.7	13.9	2.9	3.29
15.	Climate & weather	6.6	29.2	49.5	14.4	0.3	3.27

### 4.3.3 Comparing Mean: Independent-Samples t-test

Attendees are an important component in the convention industry sector due to the fact that they bring several benefits to a convention destination through their expenditure on accommodation, restaurants, transportation, attractions, souvenirs, and other items (Oppermann and Chon, 1997). Despite the fact that they are recognized as important, research on gender and convention travel, in particular, is scarce to date. Ramirez et al. (2013) noted that “scholars have recognized that gender is fundamental to travel decisions, yet there is still an absence of gender-specific research in the convention attendee travel context.” (p.165). For this reason, not only should planners will design the convention programme to meet male and female attendees’ needs, but the destination marketers also need to pay attention on this perspectives in order to steer their marketing strategies to the right segmentation purposes, particularly for female attendees due to the proportion of female attendees increases year by year. Lee and Park (2002) noted that one of third of attendees of association convention are female. The changes in the composition of the workplace, including more women at senior levels, suggest that the number of women attending conventions is rising (Ramirez et al., 2013). Similarly, Jago and Deery (2005) contend that more needs to be done to address the specific needs of women, given that there are now many more female convention attendees. Likewise, Ramirez et al. (2013) found that “some women consider certain factors to be more influential on their convention attendance decision than men, such as the networking opportunities” (p.165). For this reason, this study

intends to compare mean between male and female delegates' influencing factors for their international convention attendance.

A t-test of the independent-samples was conducted in order to compare the mean scores between the delegates on the factors influencing the decision-making process to participate in ICs. Presumably, there are no statistically significant differences in terms of the genders of delegates, and between the mean scores of the delegates.

#### **4.3.3.1 Mean and the Gender of the Delegates**

A number of studies have noted that gender is fundamental to travel decision as women consider certain factors to be more influential on their convention attendance decision than men (Ramirez et al., 2013). There is clear difference identified between male and female respondents to questions of attendance motivations and facilitators (Mair, 2010).

Gender is a fundamental segmentation variable in marketing terms (Mair, 2010). Not only do planners need to continually attract repeat and potential attendees, they need to adjust their convention marketing strategies to appeal to different kinds of attendees, due to the shift in the types of people attending conventions compared to a decade ago. Notwithstanding there are few studies that examine differences between groups of attendees, this study could provide meeting planners with a better understanding of the male and female attendee segments (Ramirez et al., 2013), as women may have particular needs and wants in terms of their conference attendance (Ryu and Han, 2010). More needs to be done to address the specific needs of women, given that there are now many more female delegates (Jago and Deery, 2005).

The t-test output indicated that the mean scores, in terms of the delegate gender, fluctuated between small and large differences. However, the mean regarding two genders were above 3.00 of each variable.

The largest differences in terms of mean, on was '**other opportunities**' (e.g. other conferences, conventions, vacations), which the female delegates



( $M = 3.71$ ) rated much higher than their male counterparts ( $M = 3.39$ ). This mean that the female delegates considered other opportunities besides IC attendance, such as other conferences or vacations than males. Furthermore, there is significant difference in mean male as the  $p < .05$ . Thus, the variance is statistically different since the  $p$  value of Levene's test is .022 (a two-tailed  $p$  value of .001). Hence, there are significant differences between females and males, in terms of **intervening opportunities**.

Additionally, the female delegates were more attracted to **entertainment or recreational activities**, such as **sightseeing** than their male counterparts ( $M = 3.22$ ,  $F = 3.46$ ). However, this difference was not significant, as  $p = .349$  ( $p > .05$ ). This may explain the variance between the gender of the delegates and the factor of 'attractions, entertainment, etc.', since the  $p$  value of Levene's test is .349. However, the two-tailed value of  $p$  is less than .05 (Sig. = .028) and therefore, the amount of variance is statistically different. The differences between these conditions are not likely to have occurred by chance, and are likely due to the manipulation of the factor of how important 'attractions, entertainment, etc.' are in terms of IC attendance. Moreover, the female delegates also seemed more aware of the **cost or expense** of particular IC destinations than the male delegates ( $M = 4.00$ ,  $F = 4.20$ ). However, there is no significant difference in this factor as  $p = .955$  ( $p = < 0.5$ ).

The three factors which had the least significant differences included, 'conference programs or themes', 'culture and local people', which male delegates ( $M = 3.41$ ) considered it more influence his IC attendance than female ones ( $F = 3.36$ ), as well as the 'political situation' ( $M = 3.90$ ,  $F = 3.96$ ) respectively. However, the group mean for the female delegates were significantly higher than those of the male delegates in almost every factor. See more details in Table 4.3.3(1) and Table 4.3.3(2) below.

Therefore, it can be concluded that there are statistically significant differences between the group means of the delegates in terms of

gender, with more detail presented in Appendices 4 and Table 4.3.3.1 below.

Table 4.3.3.1: SPSS Output of t-test on delegates' genders

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Mean						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
<b>Destination image</b>	Equal variances assumed	2.094	.149	-1.359	304	.175	-.146	.107	-.357	.065
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.405	176.298	.162	-.146	.104	-.350	.059
<b>Safety &amp; security</b>	Equal variances assumed	.904	.343	-1.513	305	.131	-.145	.096	-.333	.044
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.590	186.384	.114	-.145	.091	-.324	.035
<b>Political situation</b>	Equal variances assumed	1.295	.256	-.487	305	.627	-.051	.106	-.259	.156
	Equal variances not assumed			-.497	170.887	.620	-.051	.103	-.256	.153
<b>Accessibility or travel distance</b>	Equal variances assumed	.338	.562	-1.245	304	.214	-.141	.113	-.363	.082
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.290	177.110	.199	-.141	.109	-.356	.075
<b>Availability of facility</b>	Equal variances assumed	.000	.982	-0.861	303	.390	-.088	.102	-.290	.113

	Equal variances not assumed			- .844	160.190	.400	-.088	.104	-.294	.118
<b>Quality of service</b>	Equal variances assumed	1.836	.176	- 2.181	307	.030	-.193	.088	-.366	-.019
	Equal variances not assumed			- 2.234	174.804	.027	-.193	.086	-.363	-.022
<b>Affordability (cost, expenses)</b>	Equal variances assumed	.003	.955	- 2.204	301	.028	-.209	.095	-.396	-.022
	Equal variances not assumed			- 2.329	183.185	.021	-.209	.090	-.386	-.032
<b>Attractions, sightseeing, etc.</b>	Equal variances assumed	.881	.349	- 2.067	307	.040	-.232	.112	-.453	-.011
	Equal variances not assumed			- 2.209	193.032	.028	-.232	.105	-.439	-.025
<b>Other opportunities</b>	Equal variances assumed	5.311	.022	- 3.232	306	.001	-.326	.101	-.524	-.127
	Equal variances not assumed			- 3.473	196.022	.001	-.326	.094	-.511	-.141
<b>Official documents</b>	Equal variances assumed	2.776	.097	- 1.621	304	.106	-.192	.118	-.425	.041
	Equal variances assumed			- 1.693	180.558	.092	-.192	.113	-.416	.032
<b>Cultures &amp; local people</b>	Equal variances not assumed	1.276	.260	.533	305	.594	.055	.102	-.147	.256
	Equal variances assumed			.546	175.315	.586	.055	.100	-.143	.252
	Equal variances	1.260	.262	- 2.184	303	.030	-.219	.100	-.416	-.022

<b>Climate, weather &amp; environment</b>	not assumed									
	Equal variances assumed			-2.182	163.706	.031	-.219	.100	-.417	-.021
<b>Guest or keynote speakers</b>	Equal variances not assumed	.929	.336	-1.069	304	.286	-.114	.107	-.324	.096
	Equal variances assumed			-1.021	149.125	.309	-.114	.112	-.335	.107
<b>Education &amp; networking</b>	Equal variances not assumed	.335	.563	-.790	302	.430	-.072	.092	-.253	.108
	Equal variances assumed			-.768	154.886	.444	-.072	.094	-.259	.114
<b>IC programmes &amp; themes</b>	Equal variances not assumed	.963	.327	.353	304	.724	.026	.073	-.119	.171
	Equal variances assumed			.330	144.905	.742	.026	.079	-.129	.181

#### 4.3.4 Comparing Mean with a 5-point Likert Scale: One-Way ANOVA

##### 4.3.4.1 Delegates' age group

Age, income, cultural backgrounds, and nationalities influence destination choices (Jang et al., 2009; Jonsson and Devonish, 2008; Kim and Lee, 2000; Meng and Uysal 2008). Hence, this study is also designed to focus on age group of delegates.

In terms of comparisons between age groups, the mean scores of each variable were not all that different: the mean of all the variables were over 3.00; with some of the factors at 4.00. Nonetheless, the delegates in the 60 years and over age range thought that the 'political situation' was highly significant in terms of influencing their decision to attend ICs (Mean = 4.00), while the respondents in other age groups found this factor much less

important. In terms of 'infrastructure and availability of facilities' the other groups of age ranges felt that this factor was of importance. The under 40 age group believed that this factor was less important in terms of influencing their decision on whether or not to attend ICs (Mean = 3.75), while the delegates in the 50-59 age group believed that this factor was more important (Mean = 3.96). According to immigration and visa, the delegates in the 40-49 age group believed that this factor was less important in terms of their decision making process (Mean = 3.54), while the delegates in the under 40 age group felt that it was slightly more important (Mean = 3.75). Additionally, the delegates of 60 years and over age group regarded 'guest speakers or keynote persons' as an important consideration in terms of IC attendance (Mean = 4.32); while the delegates in under 40 age group felt differently about this issue (Mean = 4.03). With regard to networking and education, the delegates 60 years and over, and the 50-59 age groups had similar perceptions of these factors in terms of their IC attendance (Mean = 4.21), while the delegates in the under 40 age group believed it is was less important (Mean = 4.15). On the other hand, the delegates in the 40-49 age group believed that the issue of networking and education were very important in terms of their decision of whether or not to attend any ICs (Mean = 4.30).

According to the results of the Post Hoc Tests, there were also no significant differences found in terms of the age groups of the delegates as  $p > .05$  in every factor. With regard to the results of both Tukey HSD and Duncan, the results were revealed the same (no significant difference). See more details in Appendices 5 and Table 4.3.4.1 below.

Table 4.3.4.1: One-Way ANOVA Result (ANOVA): Delegates' age group

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Destination image	Between Groups	.945	3	.315	.431	.731
	Within Groups	220.819	302	.731		
	Total	221.765	305			
Safety & security	Between Groups	.910	3	.303	.517	.671
	Within Groups	177.866	303	.587		
	Total	178.775	306			

Political situation	Between Groups	.297	3	.099	.140	.936
	Within Groups	214.667	303	.708		
	Total	214.964	306			
Accessibility or travel distance	Between Groups	1.718	3	.573	.707	.548
	Within Groups	244.517	302	.810		
	Total	246.235	305			
Availability of facility	Between Groups	2.348	3	.783	1.180	.317
	Within Groups	199.639	301	.663		
	Total	201.987	304			
Quality of service	Between Groups	1.364	3	.455	.903	.440
	Within Groups	153.614	305	.504		
	Total	154.977	308			
Affordability (cost, expenses)	Between Groups	1.055	3	.352	.615	.606
	Within Groups	170.991	299	.572		
	Total	172.046	302			
Attractions, sightseeing, etc.	Between Groups	.753	3	.251	.308	.820
	Within Groups	249.033	305	.817		
	Total	249.786	308			
Other opportunities	Between Groups	1.733	3	.578	.864	.460
	Within Groups	203.150	304	.668		
	Total	204.883	307			
Official documents	Between Groups	2.036	3	.679	.760	.517
	Within Groups	269.549	302	.893		
	Total	271.585	305			
Cultures & local people	Between Groups	.526	3	.175	.262	.853
	Within Groups	202.783	303	.669		
	Total	203.309	306			
Climate, weather, etc.	Between Groups	.322	3	.107	.166	.919
	Within Groups	194.092	301	.645		
	Total	194.413	304			
Guest/keynote speakers	Between Groups	3.890	3	1.297	1.815	.144
	Within Groups	215.783	302	.715		
	Total	219.673	305			
Education & networking	Between Groups	1.092	3	.364	.688	.560
	Within Groups	158.852	300	.530		
	Total	159.944	303			
I/C programmes or themes	Between Groups	.849	3	.283	.826	.480
	Within Groups	103.442	302	.343		
	Total	104.291	305			

#### 4.3.4.2 Delegates' education levels

Weber, and Ladkin (2009) noted that educational attainment level requires further research and analysis. Likewise, Mair (2010)'s study, it was found that there are significant differences in the delegate clusters based

on gender, and education level, which allows the identification of distinct delegate market segments. This will result in more targeted marketing by conference organizers and destinations in order to achieve increased delegate numbers.

This analysis found that the mean scores of 'safety and security' while attending ICs and the educational levels of the delegates was at a high level of above 4.00. When comparing the educational levels of the delegates, the 'safety and security' factor was at differing levels of importance for delegates with different qualifications. For example, the delegates with Master's degrees had a mean of 4.44, while those who held a certificate or diploma had a mean of 4.43. On the other hand, the delegates with Bachelor's degrees there was less of significance on this factor, with a mean of 4.11. In terms of the 'infrastructure and availability of facilities', the delegates who held a certificate and diploma, and those with a Bachelor's degree perceived them differently. The delegates who held Bachelor's degrees believed that this factor was quite significant, with a mean of 3.95, while the delegates with a certificate or a diploma found it much less important, with a mean of 3.71. Furthermore, the delegates with Master's degrees found that issues of affordability were important factors in terms of IC attendance, with a mean of 4.23, while the delegates with doctoral degrees were significantly less concerned about this factor, as indicated by a mean of 3.97. Moreover, the delegates with a certificate or diploma were not particularly interested in the factor of 'attractions, entertainment, etc.', with a mean of 3.00, while the delegates with Master's degrees were more interested in this aspect, with a mean of 3.40. In terms of the official documents, the delegates with doctoral degrees found that this factor was less important, with a mean of 3.58, while the delegates with Master's degrees thought it was more significant, with a mean of 3.80. Additionally, the delegates with a certificate or diploma were also more interested in the factor of 'other opportunities' with a mean of 3.57, while those holding Bachelor's degrees found it less so, with a mean of 3.16.

The delegates with Master's degrees felt that 'guest speakers or keynote persons' were more significant in terms of their decision to attend ICs, with a mean of 4.20, while those with a certificate or diploma placed far less significance on this aspect, with a mean of 3.71. Furthermore, those delegates with Bachelor's degrees claimed that the factor of 'networking and education' were quite significant factors that they took into consideration when considering IC attendance (mean = 4.47), while the delegates with doctoral degrees found it to be far less important in terms of their decision-making process regarding IC attendance (mean = 4.17). Finally, those delegates with a certificate or diploma identified the factor of 'conference programs or themes' as being of the highest significance for them (mean = 4.71), while the delegates with Master's degrees found it to be considerably less important (mean = 4.45).

Consequently, the statistical results indicated that there were no significant correlations between the factors influencing their IC attendance and their educational levels. According to the Post Hoc Tests, there were also no significant correlations between the factors influencing their IC attendance and their educational levels, and with regard to both the Tukey HSD and the Duncan test results, as the significance values were greater than .05 for every factor. See more details in the Appendices 5 and Table 4.3.4.2 below.

Table 4.3.4.2: One-Way ANOVA (ANOVA): Delegates' education levels

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>Destination image</b>	Between Groups	.685	3	.228	.312	.817
	Within Groups	221.080	302	.732		
	Total	221.765	305			
<b>Safety &amp; security</b>	Between Groups	3.210	3	1.070	1.847	.139
	Within Groups	175.566	303	.579		
	Total	178.775	306			
<b>Political situation</b>	Between Groups	2.171	3	.724	1.030	.379
	Within Groups	212.794	303	.702		
	Total	214.964	306			
<b>Accessibility or travel distance</b>	Between Groups	.560	3	.187	.229	.876
	Within Groups	245.676	302	.813		



	Total	246.235	305			
<b>Availability of facility</b>	Between Groups	2.056	3	.685	1.032	.379
	Within Groups	199.931	301	.664		
	Total	201.987	304			
<b>Quality of service</b>	Between Groups	1.563	3	.521	1.036	.377
	Within Groups	153.414	305	.503		
	Total	154.977	308			
<b>Affordability (cost, expenses)</b>	Between Groups	3.978	3	1.326	2.359	.072
	Within Groups	168.068	299	.562		
	Total	172.046	302			
<b>Attractions, sightseeing, etc.</b>	Between Groups	2.048	3	.683	.840	.473
	Within Groups	247.738	305	.812		
	Total	249.786	308			
<b>Other opportunities</b>	Between Groups	2.140	3	.713	1.069	.362
	Within Groups	202.744	304	.667		
	Total	204.883	307			
<b>Official documents</b>	Between Groups	3.198	3	1.066	1.199	.310
	Within Groups	268.387	302	.889		
	Total	271.585	305			
<b>Cultures &amp; local people</b>	Between Groups	1.568	3	.523	.785	.503
	Within Groups	201.742	303	.666		
	Total	203.309	306			
<b>Climate, weather, etc.</b>	Between Groups	4.121	3	1.374	2.173	.091
	Within Groups	190.292	301	.632		
	Total	194.413	304			
<b>Guest/keynote speakers</b>	Between Groups	1.518	3	.506	.701	.552
	Within Groups	218.155	302	.722		
	Total	219.673	305			
<b>Education &amp; networking</b>	Between Groups	1.853	3	.618	1.172	.321
	Within Groups	158.091	300	.527		
	Total	159.944	303			
<b>IC programmes or themes</b>	Between Groups	1.818	3	.606	1.786	.150
	Within Groups	102.473	302	.339		
	Total	104.291	305			

#### 4.3.4.3 Delegates' country of origin

A number of studies have identified that there are significant differences between age, income, cultural background, and nationalities influencing on the selection of convention destinations (Kim and Lee, 2000; Seddighi et al., 2001; Kozak, 2002; Jonsson and Devonish, 2008; Meng and Uysal 2008; Jang et al., 2009). Likewise, there are a number of studies that have identified the significant differences between tourists' motivation in term

of nationality and other travel related variables (Kim and Lee, 2000; Master and Prideaux, 2000; Kim et al., 2002; Reisinger et al., 2001).

The statistical results of this analysis indicated that there were significant differences between the mean scores of the factors influencing the IC attendance of these delegates and their country of origin.

Regarding the '**image of the destination**', the delegates from African and Middle-Eastern region placed more significance on it (mean = 4.11) than other regions, while the European delegates felt less strongly about the same topic (mean = 3.69). However, there is no significant difference in these mean scores ( $p = .089$ ). Similarly, the factor of '**attractions, entertainment, etc.**', the African and Middle Eastern delegates found this aspect to be the most compelling in terms of their decision to participate in an IC (mean = 3.54), the European delegates felt much differently (mean = 3.16). However, there is not significant different between the mean scores ( $p = .117$ ).

In terms of '**political stability**', the European delegates were more concerned than those from other regions, especially those from the Asia-Pacific region (mean = 3.88). Nonetheless, the statistics revealed that there is no significant difference between these mean scores as the  $p = .790$ . ( $p > .05$ ). Likewise, the '**infrastructure and availability of facilities**', the delegates from the Americas believed that this aspect was less significant in terms of IC attendance (mean = 3.64) than those of the African and Middle Eastern delegates (mean = 3.94). Nonetheless, the statistics revealed that there is no significant difference between these mean scores as the  $p = .334$  ( $p > .05$ ). In the other hand, the delegates from the Americas (mean = 3.75) found that the '**service quality**' was less important in terms of IC attendance than those from Africa or the Middle East (mean = 4.19). Plus, the statistics shows that there is significant difference between this mean group as  $p$  value is  $< .05$  ( $p = .034$ ). Similar to factor of 'keynote speaker', Americas found that it was less significant (mean = 4.02) than for

delegates from other regions (mean = 4.14). However, there is no significant difference between the mean scores ( $p = .649$ ).

The following factors that delegates from Africa & the Middle East rated them higher than delegates from other regions. In term of **'Safety & security'** the delegates from this region (M = 4.58) rated factor higher than those delegates from other regions which mean that the delegates from these two regions took this issue seriously into their accounts. In addition, as the ANOVA result, it was revealed that there is significant difference between mean scores ( $p = .025$ ). Similarly, they (mean = 4.22) rated the issue **of 'immigration and visas'** were more significant in terms of their IC attendance, which was significantly higher than those of delegates from the Americas (mean = 3.38). In addition, the statistics results indicate that there is significant different between the mean group ( $p = .000$ ). In addition, delegates from the Africa and the Middle East felt that the factor of 'intervening opportunities' were influential in terms of their IC participation (mean = 3.83), which was in contrast to the European delegates (mean = 3.29). And the statistics show that there is significant difference in these mean scores as the p value is  $< .05$  ( $p = .006$ ), the same as the factor of 'IC programmes or themes' ( $p = .008$ ).

According to the statistical results, it was found that nearly every factor would influence delegates' convention attendance, if they were from the African and Middle Eastern region, with the mean score 4 or more. Significantly, delegates from Europe and the Americas were more concerned about political stability, networking and education, and the convention programmes. Meanwhile, delegates from Asia and Pacific paid attention to culture and local people. Significantly, there are significant differences between the mean scores of the delegates from these regions. See more details in Appendices 6 and Table 4.3.4.3 below.

Table 4.3.4.3: One-Way ANOVA (ANOVA): Delegates' country of origin

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>Destination image</b>	Between Groups	4.739	3	1.580	2.191	.089
	Within Groups	216.979	301	.721		
	Total	221.718	304			
<b>Safety &amp; security</b>	Between Groups	5.425	3	1.808	3.152	.025
	Within Groups	173.268	302	.574		
	Total	178.693	305			
<b>Political situation</b>	Between Groups	.742	3	.247	.349	.790
	Within Groups	214.216	302	.709		
	Total	214.958	305			
<b>Accessibility or travel distance</b>	Between Groups	2.502	3	.834	1.031	.379
	Within Groups	243.511	301	.809		
	Total	246.013	304			
<b>Availability of facility</b>	Between Groups	2.274	3	.758	1.139	.334
	Within Groups	199.671	300	.666		
	Total	201.944	303			
<b>Quality of service</b>	Between Groups	4.357	3	1.452	2.931	.034
	Within Groups	150.614	304	.495		
	Total	154.971	307			
<b>Affordability (cost, expenses)</b>	Between Groups	5.793	3	1.931	3.461	.017
	Within Groups	166.250	298	.558		
	Total	172.043	301			
<b>Attractions, sightseeing, etc.</b>	Between Groups	4.783	3	1.594	1.983	.117
	Within Groups	244.499	304	.804		
	Total	249.282	307			
<b>Other opportunities</b>	Between Groups	8.339	3	2.780	4.291	.006
	Within Groups	196.273	303	.648		
	Total	204.612	306			
<b>Official documents</b>	Between Groups	17.817	3	5.939	7.095	.000
	Within Groups	251.941	301	.837		
	Total	269.757	304			
<b>Cultures &amp; local people</b>	Between Groups	1.772	3	.591	.887	.448
	Within Groups	201.169	302	.666		
	Total	202.941	305			
<b>Climate, weather, etc.</b>	Between Groups	1.864	3	.621	.971	.407
	Within Groups	192.018	300	.640		
	Total	193.882	303			
<b>Guest/keynote speakers</b>	Between Groups	1.195	3	.398	.549	.649
	Within Groups	218.457	301	.726		
	Total	219.652	304			
<b>Education &amp; networking</b>	Between Groups	1.585	3	.528	.998	.394
	Within Groups	158.316	299	.529		
	Total	159.901	302			

IC programmes or themes	Between Groups	4.044	3	1.348	4.062	.008
	Within Groups	99.903	301	.332		
	Total	103.948	304			

#### 4.3.4.4 Delegates' types of work

Regarding types of work, the mean differences varied quite a lot with factors influencing the delegates reasoning to attend international ICs. For the 'image of the destination', the mean was 3.78, indicating that this aspect was significant in terms of their IC attendance. The medical doctors rated it the most highly (mean = 4.04), followed by academics (mean = 3.92); while those delegates who worked as engineers, for the government, or for NGOs, rated the factor of 'the image of the destination' the lowest (mean = 3.53). The statistical results indicated that there was a significant difference between the mean scores for the type of work done by these delegates and the factor of 'the image of the destination' as  $F = 3.673$ ,  $DF = 4$ ,  $p < .05$  (Sig. = .006).

With regard to the aspect of 'safety and security', the score for a level of significance was 4.29. The delegates working as medical doctors were concerned about this factor, rating it the highest in terms of group work (mean = 4.47), followed by academics, businesspeople, and entrepreneurs (equal mean = 4.41); while the delegates who worked as engineers, for the government, or for NGOs were far less concerned about this issue, as they rated the factor of 'safety and security' the lowest (mean = 4.00). The statistical results indicated that there was a significant difference between the mean scores for the type of work done by these delegates and the factor of 'safety and security', with  $F = 3.590$ ,  $DF = 3$ ,  $p < .05$  (Sig. = .007).

Regarding the factor of 'the political situation', the delegates working as businesspeople or entrepreneurs rated the level of importance of this factor the highest with mean score of 4.18, followed by medical doctors (mean = 4.04); while the delegates working in engineering, for the government, or NGOs rated it as being the least important in terms of

group work (mean = 3.63). The mean for this factor was 3.92; indicating that the level of importance of the political situation was just slightly over neutral.

In terms of the factor of 'infrastructure and the availability of facilities', the mean was 3.79, indicating that the level of importance was quite significant. The delegates working in engineering, for the government, or NGOs rated it as being important (mean = 4.11), followed by medical doctors (mean = 4.06), which were very different results than those obtained from the delegates working in Science or related fields (mean = 3.56). The statistical results also indicated significant differences between the type of work done by these delegates and 'infrastructure and availability of facilities' as  $F = 4.885$ ,  $DF = 4$ ,  $p < .05$  (Sig. = .001).

With regard to the factor of 'service quality', the delegates working in engineering, for the government or NGOs rated it as being of the utmost importance (mean = 4.26), followed by medical doctors (mean = 4.06), while the delegates in the Sciences or related fields rated the factor of 'service quality' lower than the other groups (mean = 3.73). The mean score at a level of significance was 3.92. There was also significant differences between the type of work done by these delegates and the 'service quality' as  $F = 4.025$ ,  $DF = 4$ ,  $p < .05$  (Sig. = .003).

In terms of the factor of 'affordability or cost', the delegates working in engineering, for the government or NGOs rated this factor as being of the highest importance in terms of work groups (mean = 4.24), followed by medical doctors (mean = 4.16); while businesspeople and entrepreneurs did not pay much attention to this aspect (mean = 3.71). The mean for the factor of 'affordability or cost' was 4.06, indicating that the level of importance of this factor was quite high among these delegates in terms of their work groups. With regard to the factor of 'networking and education' it was also rated at a high level of importance (mean score = 4.21). The group with the highest mean score were businesspeople or entrepreneurs (mean = 4.47), followed by academics, who rated it at a

slightly lower of significance (mean = 4.10). See more details in Appendices 7 and Table 4.3.4.4 below.

Table 4.3.4.4: One-Way ANOVA (ANOVA): Delegates' Type of Work

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Destination image	Between Groups	9.811	4	2.453	3.472	.009
	Within Groups	211.907	300	.706		
	Total	221.718	304			
Political situation	Between Groups	4.381	4	1.095	1.566	.183
	Within Groups	210.576	301	.700		
	Total	214.958	305			
Safety/security	Between Groups	8.845	4	2.211	3.919	.004
	Within Groups	169.848	301	.564		
	Total	178.693	305			
Accesibility/hour on plane	Between Groups	13.398	4	3.350	4.320	.002
	Within Groups	232.615	300	.775		
	Total	246.013	304			
Availability of facility	Between Groups	12.383	4	3.096	4.883	.001
	Within Groups	189.561	299	.634		
	Total	201.944	303			
Quality of service	Between Groups	7.892	4	1.973	4.065	.003
	Within Groups	147.079	303	.485		
	Total	154.971	307			
Affordability	Between Groups	5.052	4	1.263	2.246	.064
	Within Groups	166.991	297	.562		
	Total	172.043	301			
Attractions/ entertainment/ sightseeing	Between Groups	11.363	4	2.841	3.618	.007
	Within Groups	237.919	303	.785		
	Total	249.282	307			
Official documents	Between Groups	11.173	4	2.793	3.241	.013
	Within Groups	258.585	300	.862		
	Total	269.757	304			
Intervening opportunity	Between Groups	6.587	4	1.647	2.511	.042
	Within Groups	198.026	302	.656		

	Total	204.612	306			
Cultures/ local people	Between Groups	2.576	4	.644	.967	.426
	Within Groups	200.365	301	.666		
	Total	202.941	305			
Climate/ weather	Between Groups	7.734	4	1.934	3.106	.016
	Within Groups	186.147	299	.623		
	Total	193.882	303			
Guest speakers/ keynote persons	Between Groups	2.315	4	.579	.799	.527
	Within Groups	217.338	300	.724		
	Total	219.652	304			
Networking/ education	Between Groups	3.523	4	.881	1.675	.156
	Within Groups	158.242	301	.526		
	Total	161.765	305			
Conference themes	Between Groups	4.261	4	1.065	3.222	.013
	Within Groups	100.193	303	.331		
	Total	104.455	307			

#### 4.3.5 Multivariate Analysis: Factor Analysis

Factor analysis, and Principal Component Analysis or PCA, is a technique used to identify groups or clusters of variables (Field, 2009). For this reason, it is useful to discover the group of variables influencing delegates' convention attendance. According to Field (2009), this technique can be used in three ways, for the purpose of this research, it will be used to reduce a data set to a more manageable size, while still retaining as much of the original information as possible.

There were 15 variables which influenced delegate's reasons to attend ICs, and 15 variables regarding the criteria considered by IC committees and planners, the findings of which are explained below. An analytical technique was employed to identify the patterns underlying the correlations between the variables. Field (2009) argues that the concept of 'factor loading' can be considered between a factor and a variable, and is known as a Pearson correlation. This could be utilised as a reliable method of simplifying the relationships between variables, and identifying the common associations or links between groups of factors.



#### 4.3.5.1 The factors influencing IC attendance of delegates

The perception of the delegates, with regard to the factors influencing their decision to participate in ICs in any destination, can be divided into 4 groups of components. Component 1 consists of the factors of 'infrastructure and the availability of facilities' with factor loading (FL) of .831; 'service quality' with factor loading of .796; 'accessibility or travel distance to the IC destination' with factor loading of .749; 'affordability or cost' with factor loading of .575; and 'official documents, such as visas, etc.' with the factor loading of .424. Component 1 was 'Management of the Destination'; and Component 2 was 'Destination Environment', along with the following factors: 'attractions, entertainment, nightlife, sightseeing' (FL = .751); 'climate, environment or weather' (FL = .737); 'other opportunities, such as other conferences, conventions, vacations etc.' (FL = .681); 'culture and local people' (FL = .644); and 'the image of the destination' (FL = .440). However, the factor of the 'image of the destination' appeared in both Component 2 and Component 3, and as a result, this factor was included in Component 3. Component 3 consisted of the following factors: 'political situation' (FL = .824); 'safety and security' (FL = .792); and 'image of the destination' (FL = .587). Therefore, Component 3 was named 'the security of the destination'. Component 4 was composed of the following factors: 'guest speaker or keynote person' (FL = .797); 'networking and education' (FL = .771); and 'conference programs or themes' (FL = .647). Component 4 was identified as 'IC program'. Therefore, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.925, and across a range of participants, the scores from both halves of the questionnaire should correlate closely to one another (Field, 2009).

Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was also conducted on the 15 items with orthogonal rotation (Varimax). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis, KMO = .809 (or 'good', according to Field, 2009), but other scholar may say 'very good', and all KMO values for individual items were > .569, well over the acceptable limit of .5 (Field, 2009), except one factor – 'service quality' (.445). However, it

was acceptable ( $> .4$ ) as the samples were all over 300 (Field, 2009). Bartlett's test of sphericity  $X^2(105) = 1271.37, p < .001$ , indicated that the correlations between these items were sufficiently large for PCA. An initial analysis was conducted in order to obtain Eigen values for each of the components in the data. The four components had Eigen values over Kaiser's criterion of 1, and in combination, explained 59.36% of the variance. Table 4.3.5(1) below shows the factor loadings after rotation. The items that clustered around the same components suggested that Component 1 was 'Destination Management', Component 2 was 'Destination Environment', Component 3 was 'Destination Safety and Security', and Component 4 was 'Effectiveness of IC program of Destination'. See more details in Table 4.3.5.1(1) and 4.3.5.1(2) below.

Table 4.3.5.1(1): A Factor Analysis of the Factors Influencing IC Attendance of Delegates

		Delegate			
Cronbach's Alpha = 0.925					
Factor	Component	Factor Loading	Mean	Std. Deviation	Analysis N
<b>Factor 1</b> <b>Management of destination</b>	Availability of facility	.831	3.79	.803	282
	Quality of service	.796	3.90	.712	282
	Accessibility or travel distance	.749	3.52	.909	282
	Affordability or cost	.575	4.07	.739	282
	Immigration / visa	.424	3.63	.939	282
<b>Factor 2</b> <b>Destination environment</b>	Attraction & sightseeing	.751	3.29	.898	282
	Climate & weather	.737	3.25	.793	282
	Intervening opportunities	.681	3.48	.819	282
	Culture & local people	.644	3.40	.822	282
	*Destination image	.440*	3.79	.867	282
<b>Factor 3</b> <b>Safety and Security of destination</b>	Political stability	.824	3.92	.829	282
	Safety & security	.792	4.28	.758	282
	*Destination image	.587*	3.79	.867	282
<b>Factor 4</b> <b>Effectiveness of IC operation of destination</b>	Guest or keynote speakers	.797	4.17	.820	282
	Networking & education	.771	4.22	.697	282
	IC programmes or themes	.647	4.58	.555	282

**Note:** Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Table 4.3.5.1 (2): Results of KMO and Bartlett's Test

<b>Delegates</b>	
<b>KMO and Bartlett's Test</b>	
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	<b>.809</b>
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	
Approx. Chi-Square	
<b>df</b>	1271.373
<b>Sig.</b>	105. <b>000</b>

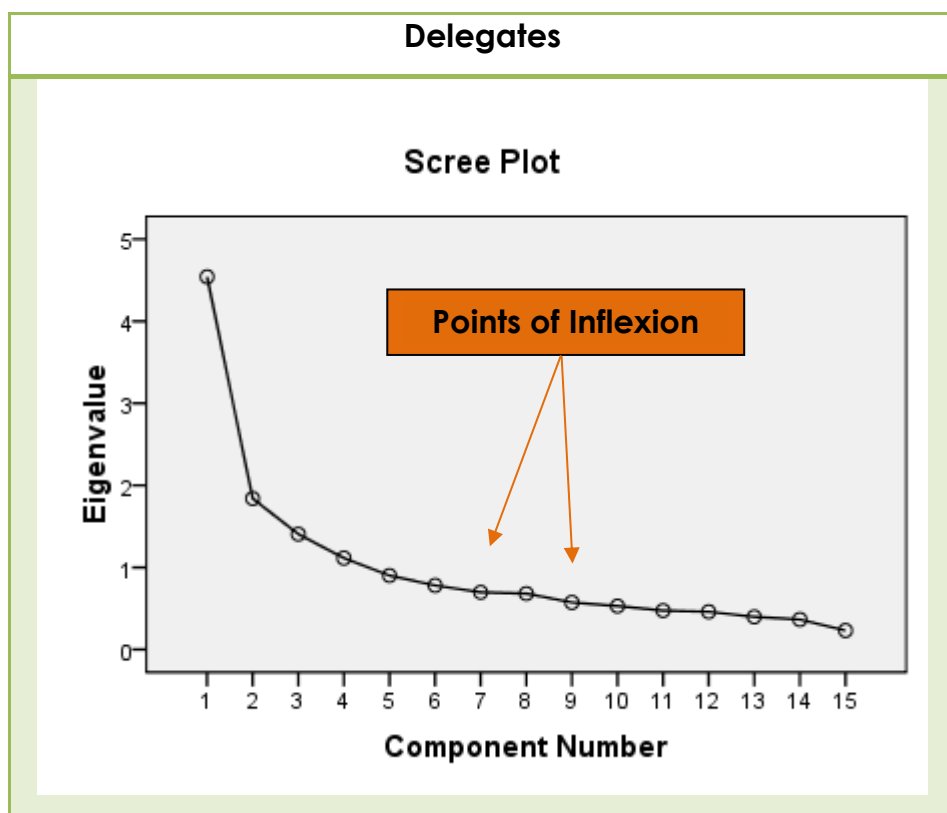


Figure 4.3.5.1: Scree Plots of Factor Analysis of Factors Influencing IC attendance of Delegates

The Scree plot, as shown in Figure 4.3.5.1 above was slightly ambiguous, revealing inflexions that would justify retaining both Component 7 and 9. Given the large sample size, and the convergence of the Scree plot and Kaiser's criterion of the four components, this is the number of components that were retained in the final analysis.

#### 4.4 SUMMARY

The questionnaires were completed by two groups of correspondents, with two distribution methods: a web-based survey and a captive group survey. These two methods of distribution were variations on a self-completion questionnaire. The total response rate in terms of questionnaire returns accounted for nearly 34% of the total; of which 30% were returned by delegates. The rate of response was quite low, which is a common problem with online surveys. "These questionnaires are often misidentified as part of the increasing volume of 'junk mail' received via email" (Veal, 2006: p. 244). However, the results were adequate enough to perform advanced statistical tests.

The **top five factors** that these **delegates** perceived to be the most important in terms of their IC attendance included the following: (1) 'conference programs or themes', (2) 'safety and security', (3) 'education and networking', (4) 'guest speakers or keynote persons', and (5) 'affordability or cost', respectively.

A factor analysis was also conducted in order to analyse the impact of a variety of established factors or criteria in order to identify which factors are most significant in terms of influencing the IC attendance of the delegates.

According to responses of the delegates, there were 15 variables clustered into **4 components**, which were the following: (1) management of destination, (2) destination environment, (3) security of destination, and (4) the operation of destination. With regard to the **factor loading**, it was found that the *availability of facility* had the most influence on the IC attendance of the delegates with an FL of 0.831, followed by the *political situation* (FL = 0.824), then *guest speakers or keynote persons* (FL = 0.797), and finally, *service quality* (FL = 0.796).

To recap, the **factor loading** of variables with the established factors influencing IC attendance of any *destination* included many related

aspects, including the following elements: 1) *culture and local people*, 2) *climate and weather*, 3) *education or networking*, 4) *other opportunities*, 5) *infrastructure and availability of facilities*, 6) *attractions, entertainment, nightlife, sightseeing*, 7) *the image of the destination*, 8) *service quality*, 9) *political situation*, and 10) *safety and security*. The perspectives of these delegates are restated in the review of the literature (Crouch and Ritchie (1998), and Webber and Chon (2002)).

The next chapter, Chapter Five presents the factors or criteria regarding the selection of international convention destination sites according to the perspectives of organizing committee members or planners (IC committees/planners). Due to the two main players of the convention industry being attendees and associations; the next chapter will investigate the criteria chosen by committees or planners' when selecting their convention sites.

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## CHAPTER FIVE

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# THE CRITERIA/ FACTORS INFLUENCING THE ORGANISERS/ PLANNERS' DECISIONS ON LOCATION SELECTION FOR INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

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### 5.0 INTRODUCTION

The main aim of this chapter is to evaluate the factors or criteria regarding the selection of international convention destination sites with regard to the organising committee members and planners (IC committees or planners). The findings of this chapter yield the answers of research objective 2.

Following a review of the literature, the questionnaire was designed to investigate the research objectives two from the research samples, the IC committees and planners, with IC organising and planning experience, including the selection of destination countries for their association or organisation. The findings obtained from the respondents were then analysed and compared using statistical techniques. The findings are summarised below, and are as follows:

- a) Summary of survey responses
- b) Descriptive analysis of survey responses
- c) Demographic profiles of respondents
- d) Analysis of association between variables – cross tabulations
- e) Multivariate analysis: multiple correspondence analysis
- f) Analysis of 5-point scale variables
- g) Reliability and consistency of the questionnaires
- h) The descriptive statistics on factors/criteria for the selection of an IC destination with regard to the perspectives of the organising committees and planners in 5 point-Likert scales
- i) Comparing means: a t-test of independent-samples
- j) Multivariate analysis: Factor analysis

## 5.1 SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESPONSES

Unlike the delegates, the questionnaires were distributed to the organising committee members and planners only via the web-based survey. The returning percentage of questionnaires was acceptable due to the fact that online survey response rate is recognized as lower than face-to-face distribution (Veal, 2006). Table 5.1 below illustrates the number of returned questionnaires.

Table 5.1: Summary of questionnaire surveys

Types of surveys	Groups of samples		
	IC committees and planners	No. of Return	Return rate (%)
Web-based survey			
Questionnaire sent out	500	206	41.2
Total Return	206		
Return rate (%)	41.2		

## 5.2 ANALYSIS ON 5-POINT SCALE VARIABLES

This type of questionnaire was specifically designed for the organising committees and planners. The purpose was to examine the criteria or factors the organising committees and planners used to select an IC destination for their international convention for their association.. The information obtained from this group of respondents revealed some interesting results, in particular the results of the 5-point rating scale.

In this section, the analysis focuses on the variables in the 5 point scale of the IC committees and planners. The topics to be analysed consist of the following:

- a) The reliability and consistency of the questionnaires for the IC committees and planners
- b) The criteria for the selection of IC destinations, with regard to the perceptions of the IC committees and planners, with using means and percentages to demonstrate the findings.

- c) A comparison of the means from the independent-samples t-test, analysed in terms of the genders of the IC committees and planners
- d) A comparison of the means from a one-way ANOVA, analysed in terms of age group, level of education, region or country of residence, type of work and position, as well as the number of years of experience and frequency of ICs for the IC committees and planners, and the criteria for the selection of IC destinations from the perspectives of IC committees and planners
- e) Multivariate analysis, including factor analysis, or principal component analysis (PCA); an analysis of the criteria for the selection of IC destinations from the perspectives of IC committees and planners. Basically, the same types of statistical tests were conducted as they had been done with the questionnaire for the delegates.

Following the analysis, this chapter will end with an overall summary

### 5.2.1 The Reliability and Consistency of the Questionnaires

The *reliability* on 5-point scale measurements was adequately reliable (Field 2009) according to the result of the Cronbach's Alpha test was 0.780. Field (2009) notes that the reliability coefficient of .70 or higher is considered 'acceptable'. Therefore, the questionnaire used in this study was reliable. The results are displayed in Table 5.2.1 below.

Table 5.2.1: Reliability Statistics of the Measurements for Questionnaire Respondents

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.780	15



### **5.2.2 Factors or criteria for the Selection of International Convention Destinations and the Perceptions of Organising Committees and Planners – Means and Percentage in a 5 point-Likert Scale**

The IC organising committees and planners were asked to rate the level of importance of the factors or criteria contributing to the selection of an IC destination on a 5-point Likert scale, with 5 representing ‘Very Important’ and 1 representing ‘Not Important at all’. The higher the score is; the greater the importance of the factors or criteria in terms of organising and planning an IC. The results, as displayed in Table 5.2.2 below illustrate that the mean values, in which all of the factors or criteria are very high, indicate scores over 3.00. The Figure 5.2.2(1) below presents the top ten factors or criteria according to the perceptions of the IC planners and committees. All of the mean averages of the criteria were over 4.00, indicating that the IC committees and planners believed that these factors were very important.

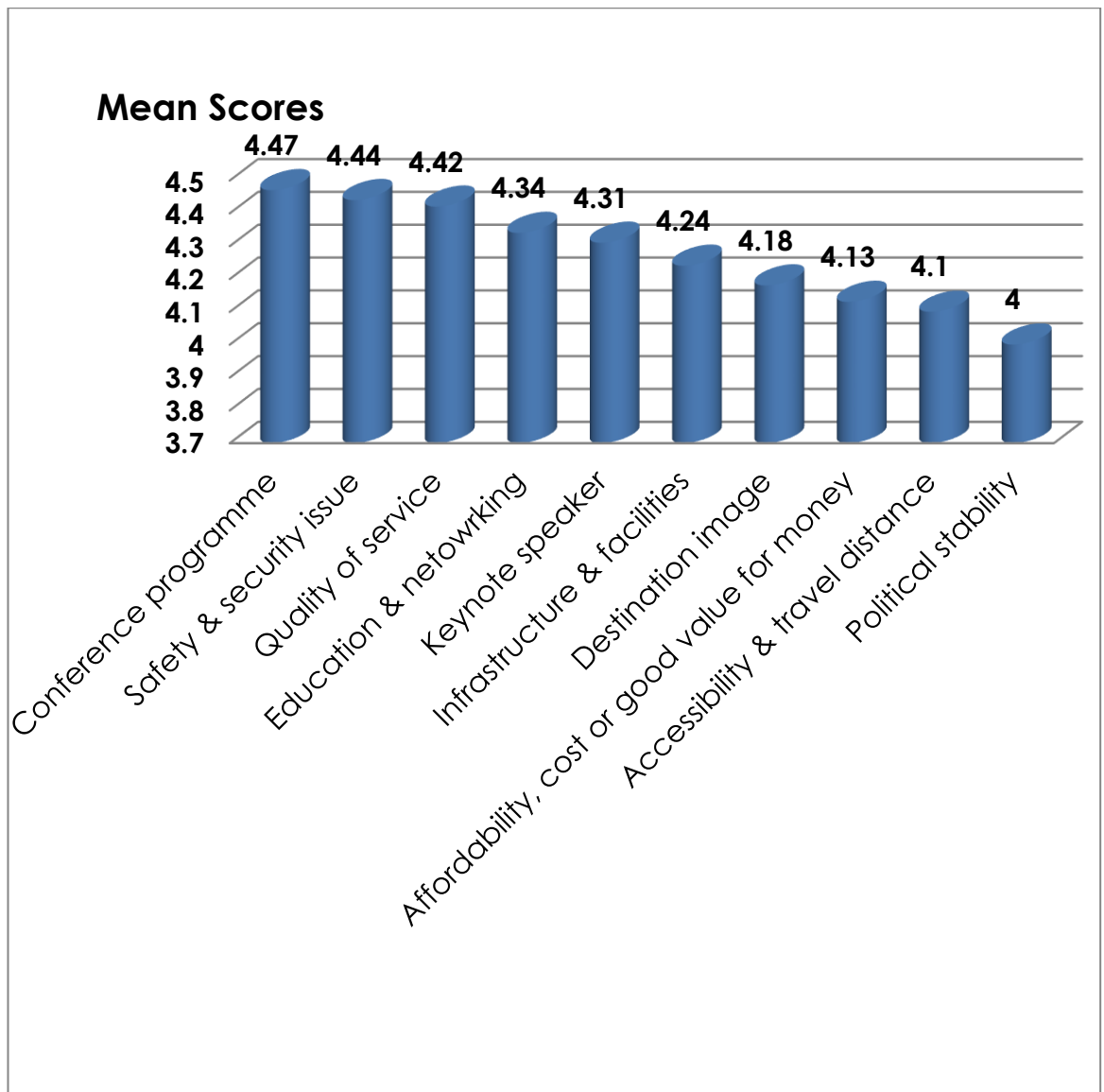


Figure 5.2.2(1): The top ten factors or criteria of site selection of IC planners and committees' perspectives

The criteria that the IC committees and planners rated as being least important in terms of organising ICs are presented in the figure 5.2.2(2) below.

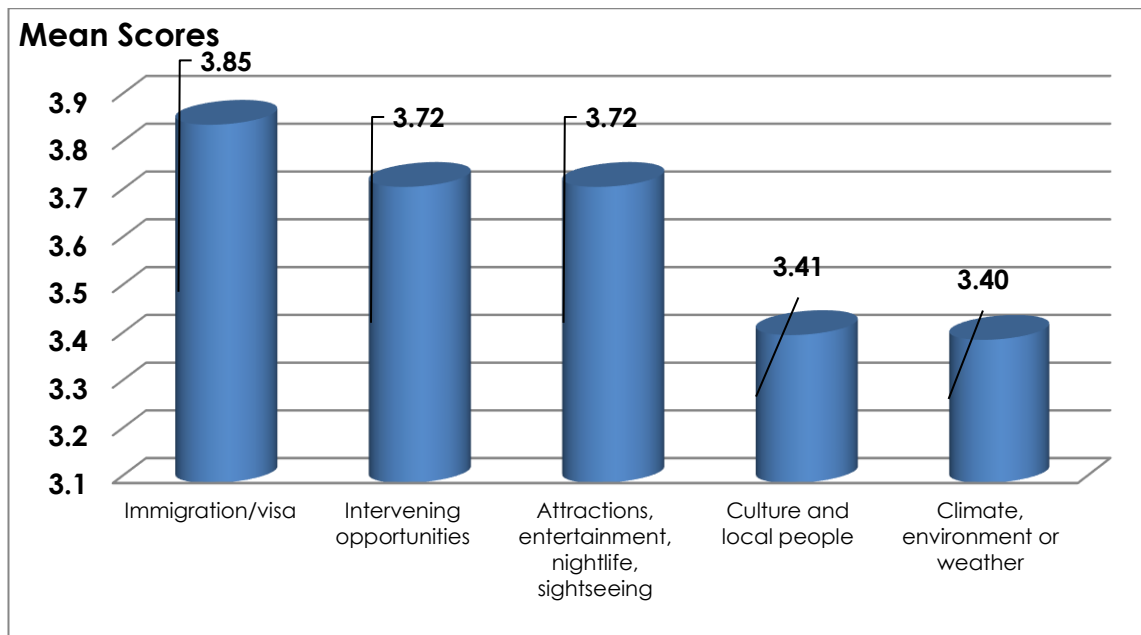


Figure 5.2.2(2): Five least influential factors or criteria for site selection of IC planners and committees

However, the mean average of these factors or criteria were all over 3.00, indicating that every factor/criteria were deemed important when planning or organising ICs with the perspectives of the research samples. Table 5.2.2 below illustrate the order of the mean scores of these factors/criteria with regard to the level of importance.

Table 5.2.2: The Important Order of Factors or Criteria Influencing the Selection of IC Destinations

Item	Factors	Very important					Mean
		Not important at all					
		5	4	3	2	1	
		%	%	%	%	%	
1.	Conference programs/themes	48.5	50.0	1.5	0	0	4.47
2.	Safety & security	49.0	46.6	3.9	0.5	0	4.44
3.	Quality of service	44.7	52.9	2.4	0	0	4.42
4.	Education & networking	34.5	65.5	0	0	0	4.34
5.	Keynote speakers	37.9	54.9	7.3	0	0	4.31
6.	Facility & infrastructure	24.8	74.8	0.5	0	0	4.24
7.	Image of destination	32.5	55.3	10.7	0.5	1.0	4.18
8.	Affordability or cost	27.2	59.7	12.1	0.5	0.5	4.13

9.	Accessibility, travel distance (location), transportation	31.1	51.9	13.6	2.9	0.5	4.10
10.	Political stability	27.7	49.0	20.4	1.9	1.0	4.00
11.	Immigration / Visa	21.4	48.1	25.7	3.9	1.0	3.85
12.	Intervening opportunities (other conferences/ vacations/ etc.)	10.2	56.8	28.6	3.9	0.5	3.72
13.	Attractions, sightseeing, entertainment, etc.	8.7	56.8	32.0	2.4	0	3.72
14.	Cultures & local people	2.9	42.2	48.1	6.3	0.5	3.41
15.	Climate & weather	2.9	42.2	48.1	5.8	1.0	3.40

### 5.2.3 Comparing Means: Independent-Samples t-test

A t-test of the independent-samples was conducted in order to compare the average mean scores of the factors or criteria for the site selection with regard to the perceptions of the IC committees and planners when planning and organising the ICs for their associations. There was a group of mean scores used to test the differences between a range of interval variables including the gender of the IC organising committees and planners.

Gender is fundamental to travel decision as women consider certain factors to be more influential on their convention attendance decision than men (Ramirez et al., 2013). There is clear difference identified between male and female respondents to questions of attendance motivations and facilitators (Mair, 2010). For this reason, T-test is conducted.

#### 5.2.3.1 Means and the gender of organising committees and planners

The SPSS output in Table 5.2.3.1 (1) and Table 5.2.3.1 (2) below revealed the differences between the means of male and female IC committees and planners with regard to the measured variables. Similarly, the female delegates and IC committees and planners also had mostly higher group means than their male counterparts.

The two tables demonstrates that the largest differences between these groups are the following three elements, 'keynote speaker', 'affordability

or cost of IC destination', and 'intervening opportunities, such as other conferences, conventions, vacations, etc.', respectively. This indicates that female IC committees and planners perceived these three factors/criteria more important than males.

Significantly, in comparison with the females, the male IC committees and planners only had two of the fifteen elements with a higher rate of difference than their female counterparts, namely, the 'image of the destination', and the 'accessibility or travel distance to the IC destination'. This indicates that the group means of male IC committees and planners had a higher rate of difference than those of the female respondents. Based on this figure, the interpretation of the data indicated that the female IC committees and planners thought it was extremely important to analyse every single one of the listed factors or criteria when considering the organization of ICs.

The factor which demonstrated the most significant difference between the male and female IC committees and planners was the 'keynote speaker', with a larger number of females ( $M = 4.47$ ,  $SE = .069$ ) than males ( $M = 4.25$ ,  $SE = .050$ ). This difference was not significant as the  $t$  value = -2.362,  $DF = 204$ , and  $p = .629$  ( $p > .05$ ). However, the Sig. (2-tailed) value was .010, which at less than .05 had a statistically different variance with respect to the perspectives of IC committees and planners by gender. These variances are approximately unequal; so there is a statistically significant difference between genders in terms of the importance of the factor of 'keynote speaker'.

In terms of the factor of 'networking and education', the group means of the male IC committees and planners ( $M = 4.32$ ,  $SE = .038$ ) was higher than that of the females ( $M = 4.42$ ,  $SE = .068$ ). The difference was not significant as the  $t$  value = -1.214,  $DF = 204$ , and  $p > .05$ . The variance is not statistically significant in terms of the genders of the IC committees and planners, since the  $p > .05$  (Sig. = .213). Hence, there is not a statistically significant difference between the group means of IC committees and planners in

terms of males and females. There were no statistically significant differences in terms of group means and the genders of the IC committees and planners in accordance with the measured variables.

Table 5.2.3.1(1): t-test on the Genders of IC Committees and Planners

Item	Variables measured	Group Statistics				
		Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
1.	Destination image	Male	153	4.20	.710	.057
		Female	53	4.11	.725	.100
2.	Political stability	Male	153	3.99	.843	.068
		Female	53	4.06	.691	.095
3.	Safety & security	Male	153	4.44	.616	.050
		Female	53	4.45	.539	.074
4.	Accessibility/ travel distance (location)	Male	153	4.12	.752	.061
		Female	53	4.06	.842	.116
5.	Availability of facility and infrastructure	Male	153	4.24	.430	.035
		Female	53	4.25	.477	.065
6.	Quality of service	Male	153	4.42	.545	.044
		Female	53	4.43	.537	.074
7.	Affordability(price, good value for money)	Male	153	4.08	.684	.055
		Female	53	4.26	.593	.081
8.	Immigration / visa	Male	153	3.83	.857	.069
		Female	53	3.91	.766	.105
9.	Intervening opportunities (other conferences, vacations, etc.)	Male	153	3.70	.726	.059
		Female	53	3.79	.689	.095
10.	Attraction, entertainment, nightlife, sightseeing	Male	153	3.68	.665	.054
		Female	53	3.83	.612	.084
11.	Cultures & local people	Male	153	3.39	.631	.051
		Female	53	3.45	.798	.110
12.	Climate & weather	Male	153	3.39	.650	.053
		Female	53	3.45	.798	.110
13.	Keynote speakers	Male	153	4.25	.621	.050
		Female	53	4.47	.504	.069
14.	Education & networking	Male	153	4.32	.468	.038
		Female	53	4.42	.497	.068
15.	IC programmes or themes	Male	153	4.46	.526	.043
		Female	53	4.49	.541	.074

Table 5.2.3.1(2): Statistical Test of IC organising committee and planners' genders

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Variables									Lower	Upper
Destination image	Equal variances assumed	1.238	.267	.785	204	.433	.089	.114	-.135	.314
	Equal variances not assumed			.778	88.996	.439	.089	.115	-.139	.318
Political situation	Equal variances assumed	.826	.365	-.542	204	.589	-.070	.129	-.323	.184
	Equal variances not assumed			-.596	109.459	.552	-.070	.117	-.301	.162
Safety & security	Equal variances assumed	1.306	.254	-.157	204	.876	-.015	.095	-.203	.173
	Equal variances not assumed			-.167	102.421	.868	-.015	.089	-.192	.162
Accessibility or travel distance	Equal variances assumed	.035	.852	.494	204	.622	.061	.124	-.183	.305
	Equal variances not assumed			.467	82.554	.641	.061	.131	-.199	.321
Availability of facility	Equal variances assumed	.758	.385	-.049	204	.961	-.003	.070	-.142	.135
	Equal variances not assumed			-.047	83.138	.963	-.003	.074	-.151	.144
Quality of service	Equal variances assumed	.029	.865	-.181	204	.857	-.016	.087	-.186	.155

	Equal variances not assumed			-.182	91.741	.856	-.016	.086	-.186	.155
Affordability (cost or expenses)	Equal variances assumed	.322	.571	-1.761	204	.080	-.186	.105	-.394	.022
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.886	103.374	.062	-.186	.098	-.381	.010
Official documents	Equal variances assumed	.656	.419	-.568	204	.570	-.076	.133	-.338	.187
	Equal variances not assumed			-.600	100.362	.550	-.076	.126	-.326	.174
Other opportunities	Equal variances assumed	.913	.341	-.815	204	.416	-.093	.114	-.318	.132
	Equal variances not assumed			-.836	94.863	.405	-.093	.111	-.314	.128
Attraction, sightseeing, etc.	Equal variances assumed	4.476	.036	-1.447	204	.149	-.150	.104	-.355	.055
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.508	97.719	.135	-.150	.100	-.349	.048
Cultures & local people	Equal variances assumed	4.352	.038	-.562	204	.575	-.061	.108	-.274	.152
	Equal variances not assumed			-.502	75.715	.617	-.061	.121	-.302	.180
Climate & weather	Equal variances assumed	3.449	.065	-.610	204	.542	-.067	.110	-.284	.150
	Equal variances not assumed			-.553	77.250	.582	-.067	.122	-.309	.175
Guest & keynote speakers	Equal variances assumed	.234	.629	-2.362	204	.019	-.223	.095	-.410	-.037
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.612	110.562	.010	-.223	.086	-.393	-.054
Education & networking	Equal variances assumed	4.328	.039	-1.251	204	.213	-.095	.076	-.244	.055



	Equal variances not assumed			-1.214	86.025	.228	-.095	.078	-.250	.060
IC programmes or themes	Equal variances assumed	.155	.694	-.314	204	.754	-.027	.084	-.193	.140
	Equal variances not assumed			-.309	88.324	.758	-.027	.086	-.197	.144

## 5.2.4 Comparison of Means: One-Way ANOVA

### 5.2.4.1 Organising committees and planners' age group

There were not many differences in terms of the perceptions of IC committees and planners in terms of the factor of 'destination image'. Each age group believed that the factor of 'destination image' was significant when selecting the IC destinations. The group means of all of the age categories were over 4.00. Within 'political stability' factor, the IC committees and planners in the age groups of under 40 and from 40-49 both perceived that this factor was significant in terms of site selection (mean = 4.01 and 4.12), while IC committees and planners in the age groups of 50-59 and 60 and over felt quite differently than their younger counterparts (means = 3.94, and 3.95). For 'safety and security', the different age groups had very similar views, only the IC committees and planners in the 50-59 age group (mean = 4.56) considered it to be slightly more important than the other age groups (means = 4.42, 4.39, and 4.37). Again, regarding the 'infrastructure and availability of facilities' within IC destination, the different age groups had very similar views, 60 and over with mean of 4.33, 50-59 with a means of 4.31, and the under 40 age group with 4.22. However, the IC committees and planners in the 40 -49 age group considered this factor to be slightly less important (mean = 4.15).

With regard to the issue of 'affordability, cost', all age groups agreed that this factor was highly significant in terms of selecting an IC. However, the IC committees and planners in the 50-59 and under 40 age groups felt differently about this factor with means of 4.03 and 4.00, respectively.

These two groups felt that affordability, or good value for money was a less important consideration for IC committees and planners aged 60 and over, and 40-49 age groups, with means of 4.17, and 4.27 respectively. According to the official documents, IC committees and planners from every age group, except those under 40, concluded that this factor was highly significant. There were a variety of views regarding the 'Intervening opportunities, such as other conferences, conventions, vacations etc.' The IC committees and planners in the under 40 age group perceived the 'other opportunities' were important in terms of selecting IC destinations with mean of 4.07. The IC committees and planners in the 40-49, 50-59, and 60 and over age groups felt that this factor was of average importance with means of 3.72, 3.66, and 3.56, respectively.

With regard to the factor of 'attractions, entertainment, nightlife, sightseeing', the IC committees and planners in almost every age group ranked it at a fair level of importance, with mean of 3.72. The sole exception was the group of IC committees and planners under 40, who felt that this factor was more significant than their counterparts, with mean of 3.95. With regard to the statistical results, located in Appendix , it was found that there was a significant level of importance between the factor of 'other opportunities' and the age groups that the IC committees and planners belonged to ( $F = 4.71, DF = 3, p < .05, (Sig. = .003)$ ). Similarly, there was a correlation between the importance of the factor of 'attractions, entertainment, etc.', and the age groups that the IC committees and planners belonged to, ( $F = 2.80, DF = 3, p < .05, (Sig. = .041)$ ), as well as the factor of 'guest speaker or keynote person' ( $F = 3.24, DF = 3, p < .05 (Sig. = .023)$ ). More details are presented in the Appendices 8 and Table 5.2.4.1 below.

Table 5.2.4.1: IC organising committee and planners' age group – ANOVA

## Result

ANOVA						
Variables		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Destination image	Between Groups	.289	3	.096	.187	.905
	Within Groups	104.065	202	.515		
	Total	104.354	205			
Safety & security	Between Groups	.876	3	.292	.446	.720
	Within Groups	132.119	202	.654		
	Total	132.995	205			
Political situation	Between Groups	1.386	3	.462	1.307	.273
	Within Groups	71.415	202	.354		
	Total	72.801	205			
Accessibility or travel distance	Between Groups	1.084	3	.361	.599	.616
	Within Groups	121.776	202	.603		
	Total	122.859	205			
Availability of facility	Between Groups	1.155	3	.385	2.009	.114
	Within Groups	38.709	202	.192		
	Total	39.864	205			
Quality of service	Between Groups	.466	3	.155	.525	.666
	Within Groups	59.791	202	.296		
	Total	60.257	205			
Affordability (cost, expenses)	Between Groups	2.619	3	.873	2.001	.115
	Within Groups	88.100	202	.436		
	Total	90.718	205			
Attractions, sightseeing, etc.	Between Groups	1.339	3	.446	.640	.590
	Within Groups	140.996	202	.698		
	Total	142.335	205			
Other opportunities	Between Groups	6.879	3	2.293	4.710	.003
	Within Groups	98.349	202	.487		
	Total	105.228	205			
Official documents	Between Groups	3.503	3	1.168	2.802	.041
	Within Groups	84.167	202	.417		
	Total	87.670	205			
Cultures & local people	Between Groups	.475	3	.158	.343	.794
	Within Groups	93.272	202	.462		
	Total	93.748	205			
Climate, weather, etc.	Between Groups	.555	3	.185	.385	.764
	Within Groups	97.004	202	.480		
	Total	97.558	205			
Guest/keynote speakers	Between Groups	3.390	3	1.130	3.245	.023
	Within Groups	70.343	202	.348		
	Total	73.733	205			
Education & networking	Between Groups	1.227	3	.409	1.824	.144
	Within Groups	45.302	202	.224		

	Total	46.529	205			
IC programmes or themes	Between Groups	.627	3	.209	.744	.527
	Within Groups	56.699	202	.281		
	Total	57.325	205			

#### 5.2.4.2 Organising committees and planners' education levels

According to the factor: 'the image of the destination', IC committees and planners at every educational level agreed on the significance of this factor, but those IC committees and planners with doctoral degrees found it to be of slightly less importance. Similarly, with factors such as the 'political situation' and 'safety and security', those IC committees and planners with doctoral degrees also found these factors to be of slightly less significance than those at other educational levels. Furthermore, those, IC committees and planners with a certificate or diploma felt that the factor of 'accessibility or travel distance to the IC destination' was less important, with a means of 3.67, than other groups sorted by educational levels, with mean of 4.11.

Similarly, those IC committees and planners with a certificate or diploma found that the factor of 'infrastructure and availability of facilities' was less important, with a means of 4.00, than those of other groups, with mean of 4.24. Furthermore, the perceptions of the IC committees and planners with a certificate or diploma were far less concerned with the issue of 'service quality' (mean = 4.00) than those IC committees and planners with a Master's degree (mean = 4.50).

Furthermore, the factor of 'affordability or cost' was given different levels of significance from different groups of IC committees and planners with different levels of education. The IC committees and planners with Bachelor's degrees claimed that 'affordability and cost' was an important consideration in terms of a site selection for an IC destination (mean = 4.60), while IC committees and planners with doctoral degrees found it considerably less significant (mean = 4.12), and those delegates with Master's degrees felt that this factor was even less important (mean = 4.00). The statistics indicated a significant difference between the

education levels of the IC committees and planners, and the related score means of 'networking and education' as  $F = 4.959$ ,  $DF = 3$ ,  $p < .05$  (Sig. = .002). See more details in the Appendices 8 and Table 5.2.4.2(1) below.

Table 5.2.4.2(1): IC committee and planners' education levels – ANOVA Results

ANOVA						
Variables		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Destination image	Between Groups	.517	3	.172	.338	.798
	Within Groups	102.439	201	.510		
	Total	102.956	204			
Safety & security	Between Groups	2.791	3	.930	1.436	.233
	Within Groups	130.204	201	.648		
	Total	132.995	204			
Political situation	Between Groups	2.298	3	.766	2.190	.090
	Within Groups	70.307	201	.350		
	Total	72.605	204			
Accessibility or travel distance	Between Groups	.712	3	.237	.405	.749
	Within Groups	117.707	201	.586		
	Total	118.420	204			
Availability of facility	Between Groups	.951	3	.317	1.641	.181
	Within Groups	38.853	201	.193		
	Total	39.805	204			
Quality of service	Between Groups	.646	3	.215	.728	.536
	Within Groups	59.432	201	.296		
	Total	60.078	204			
Affordability (cost, expenses)	Between Groups	1.170	3	.390	.888	.448
	Within Groups	88.274	201	.439		
	Total	89.444	204			
Attractions, sightseeing, etc.	Between Groups	3.494	3	1.165	1.695	.169
	Within Groups	138.116	201	.687		
	Total	141.610	204			
Other opportunities	Between Groups	1.693	3	.564	1.101	.350
	Within Groups	103.009	201	.512		
	Total	104.702	204			
Official documents	Between Groups	1.180	3	.393	.919	.432
	Within Groups	85.972	201	.428		
	Total	87.151	204			
Cultures & local people	Between Groups	2.548	3	.849	1.875	.135
	Within Groups	91.033	201	.453		
	Total	93.580	204			
Climate, weather, etc.	Between Groups	2.619	3	.873	1.852	.139

	Within Groups	94.776	201	.472		
	Total	97.395	204			
Guest/keynote speakers	Between Groups	2.745	3	.915	2.594	.054
	Within Groups	70.894	201	.353		
	Total	73.639	204			
Education & networking	Between Groups	3.198	3	1.066	4.959	.002
	Within Groups	43.212	201	.215		
	Total	46.410	204			
IC programmes or themes	Between Groups	.622	3	.207	.738	.531
	Within Groups	56.481	201	.281		
	Total	57.102	204			

#### 5.2.4.3 Organising committees and planners' regional country of residence

In terms of 'image of the destination', the average scores among IC committees and planners was 4.17, which means that IC committees and planners believed that the destination image was an important factor in terms of selecting an IC destination. However, the means of the IC committees and planners from the combined African and Middle Eastern in terms of this factor were significantly higher than that of other regions (mean = 4.50). This indicates that IC committees and planners from this region were more concerned with the destination image of IC sites. The means of the IC committees and planners from the Asia-Pacific region were the second-highest with a mean score of 4.33. The mean of the IC committees and planners from the America was the lowest with a mean score of 4.07, which can be interpreted to mean that the American IC committees and planners regarded the image of the IC destination as being less important in comparison with their counterparts from other regions.

With regard to the 'political stability', the mean was 4.00. The highest means of IC committees and planners from the African and Middle Eastern regions were at 4.25%. The modal group in terms of the political situation included the IC committees and planners from the Asia-Pacific region, and the Americas at 4.02% and 4.04%, respectively. The group of IC committees and planners from Europe had the lowest score at 3.93,

which means that the European IC committees and planners believed that the political situation was a less important factor, especially compared to IC committees and planners from other regions.

With regard to 'safety and security', the IC committees and planners believed that this aspect was vital in terms of their decision to choose a particular convention destination, with mean of 4.44. The IC committees and planners from the combined African and Middle Eastern region rated this factor as the most important consideration, with mean of 4.88. The IC committees and planners from the Asia-Pacific region had the second highest group mean of 4.64, while those from the Americas found it less important, with a group mean of 4.48. The modal groups also believed that the aspect of 'safety and security' was important in terms of the site selection as a convention destination. The European IC committees and planners had the lowest group means, but still believed that the 'safety and security' was important, with a group mean of 4.28. According to the statistical results, there were significant differences between the mean scores of the factor of 'safety and security', and the region, or country of residence of these IC committees and planners, as  $F = 4.562$ ,  $DF = 3$ ,  $p < .05$  (Sig. = .004)

Regarding 'accessibility or travel distance to the IC destination', the IC committees and planners from every region rated this aspect quite highly (mean = 4.09). The IC committees and planners from three regions, (Europe, the Americas, and African and the Middle East) had the same high ratings for this aspect, with mean scores of 4.13. The IC committees and planners from the Asia-Pacific region had the lowest rating for this factor (mean = 4.07), indicating that they did not consider this element very important in terms organising ICs.

In terms of the 'infrastructure and availability of facilities', the IC committees and planners felt that this was quite significant in terms of site selection, with mean of 4.25. The highest group mean was for the IC committees and planners from the Americas (mean = 4.29) which could

be interpreted as these respondents being more concerned about this factor than IC committees and planners from other regions. The IC committees and planners from Africa and the Middle East and Europe both rated this factor at mean of 4.25, which could be interpreted as these respondents being more concerned about this factor than other groups. The group means of committees and planners from the Asia-Pacific region were the lowest rated, with mean of 4.16, indicating that they were more concerned with this element than IC committees and planners from other regions. Furthermore, the Post Hoc Tests results revealed no significant differences between the mean scores of other factors and their regional country of residence in terms of both results (Tukey HSD & Duncan.) More details of these are presented in Appendices 10 and Table 5.2.4.3 below.

Table 5.2.4.3: Regional country of residence of IC committee and planners – ANOVA Results

ANOVA						
Variables		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Destination image	Between Groups	2.615	3	.872	1.737	.161
	Within Groups	100.380	200	.502		
	Total	102.995	203			
Safety & security	Between Groups	1.079	3	.360	.550	.649
	Within Groups	130.921	200	.655		
	Total	132.000	203			
Political situation	Between Groups	4.623	3	1.541	4.562	.004
	Within Groups	67.549	200	.338		
	Total	72.172	203			
Accessibility or travel distance	Between Groups	1.063	3	.354	.590	.622
	Within Groups	120.167	200	.601		
	Total	121.230	203			
Availability of facility	Between Groups	.455	3	.152	.772	.511
	Within Groups	39.290	200	.196		
	Total	39.745	203			
Quality of service	Between Groups	.505	3	.168	.568	.636
	Within Groups	59.240	200	.296		
	Total	59.745	203			
Affordability (cost, expenses)	Between Groups	.969	3	.323	.726	.537
	Within Groups	88.967	200	.445		
	Total	89.936	203			
Attractions, sightseeing, etc.	Between Groups	.928	3	.309	.442	.723
	Within Groups					



	Within Groups	140.052	200	.700		
	Total	140.980	203			
Other opportunities	Between Groups	.533	3	.178	.345	.793
	Within Groups	102.977	200	.515		
	Total	103.510	203			
Official documents	Between Groups	.342	3	.114	.267	.849
	Within Groups	85.594	200	.428		
	Total	85.936	203			
Cultures & local people	Between Groups	.136	3	.045	.100	.960
	Within Groups	90.703	200	.454		
	Total	90.838	203			
Climate, weather, etc.	Between Groups	.101	3	.034	.071	.975
	Within Groups	94.526	200	.473		
	Total	94.627	203			
Guest/keynote speakers	Between Groups	1.339	3	.446	1.243	.295
	Within Groups	71.818	200	.359		
	Total	73.157	203			
Education & networking	Between Groups	.246	3	.082	.358	.783
	Within Groups	45.734	200	.229		
	Total	45.980	203			
IC programmes or themes	Between Groups	.464	3	.155	.549	.649
	Within Groups	56.359	200	.282		
	Total	56.824	203			

#### 5.2.4.4 Organising committees and planners' types of Work

The IC organising committees and planners who worked as academics rated destination image as being the most important (mean = 4.21) followed by those in the Sciences or related fields (mean = 4.00), and businesspeople or entrepreneurs (equal mean = 4.00). On the other hand, the IC committees and planners who worked in engineering and related fields rated it as the least important factor (mean = 3.00).

Within 'political stability' issue, the IC committees and planners in the Sciences or related fields had the highest mean score (mean = 4.20), followed by businesspeople or entrepreneurs (mean = 4.00), while those who worked in Engineering or related fields had a more neutral result regarding this factor (mean = 3.00). The average mean score for this factor was 3.99, which indicated that the factor of the 'political situation' was also significant in terms of IC site selection, and only slightly higher than those of the delegates (mean = 3.92).

In terms of 'safety and security', those who worked in Engineering and related fields rated it as a highly important factor (mean = 5.00) followed by businesspeople or entrepreneurs (mean = 4.58); while the academics had the lowest mean score of all the work groups (mean = 4.42). The average mean for the 'safety and security' factor was 4.44, indicating quite a high level of importance. In contrast, the mean score of delegates ranked this factor as being less significant (mean = 4.29). With regard to 'service quality', the IC committees and planners who worked in Engineering and related fields believed that this aspect was crucial in terms of the site selection for IC destinations (mean = 5.00), followed by businesspeople or entrepreneurs (mean = 4.67). The average mean score for the factor of 'service quality' was 4.42, which can be interpreted as being quite important to these respondents.

In terms of the factor of 'affordability or cost', IC committees and planners in Engineering and related fields found that this factor was very important in terms of ICs (mean = 5.00), followed by businesspeople or entrepreneurs (mean = 4.50). In contrast, the academics rated this factor the lowest than other work groups (mean = 4.07), but were still somewhat concerned about the issue. The average means was 4.13, indicating that the factor of 'affordability or cost' was still something that these IC committees and planners considered, especially in comparison to the perceptions of the delegates (mean = 4.06).

The 'keynote speaker' was highly rated by IC committees and planners in Engineering or related fields, who gave this factor the highest level of importance in terms of selecting an IC destination (mean = 5.00), followed by businesspeople or entrepreneurs (mean = 4.58). In contrast, the academics gave this factor their lowest mean score (mean = 4.26). In comparison with the results obtained from the delegates, the IC committees and planners perceived the 'guest speaker or keynote person' as important, with an average mean score of 4.30. This factor was less significant for the delegates, who rated it as being less important with the mean score of 4.14.

Within the 'education and networking', the IC committees and planners in Engineering or related fields rated it much higher than work groups with mean of 5.00. They were followed by businesspeople or entrepreneurs (mean = 4.58), while their academic counterparts rated it as being the least important (mean = 4.31). The mean score for this factor was 4.34.

With regard to the statistical results, it could be concluded that there were significant differences in terms of the types of work done by the IC committees and planners and the factor of 'affordability and cost' as  $F = 3.107$ ,  $DF = 3$ ,  $p < .05$  (Sig. = .028). See more details in Appendices 11 and Table 5.2.4.4 below.

Table 5.2.4.4: Table 5.2.4.4(2): Types of work of IC committee and planners – ANOVA Result

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Destination image	Between Groups	2.586	3	.862	1.714	.166
	Within Groups	97.576	194	.503		
	Total	100.162	197			
Safety & security	Between Groups	1.892	3	.631	.963	.412
	Within Groups	127.103	194	.655		
	Total	128.995	197			
Political situation	Between Groups	.603	3	.201	.556	.645
	Within Groups	70.170	194	.362		
	Total	70.773	197			
Accessibility or travel distance	Between Groups	1.113	3	.371	.616	.605
	Within Groups	116.867	194	.602		
	Total	117.980	197			
Availability of facility	Between Groups	.611	3	.204	1.046	.373
	Within Groups	37.753	194	.195		
	Total	38.364	197			
Quality of service	Between Groups	1.103	3	.368	1.246	.294
	Within Groups	57.261	194	.295		
	Total	58.364	197			
Affordability (cost, expenses)	Between Groups	4.027	3	1.342	3.107	.028
	Within Groups	83.817	194	.432		
	Total	87.843	197			
Attractions, sightseeing, etc.	Between Groups	4.321	3	1.440	2.120	.099
	Within Groups	131.826	194	.680		
	Total	136.146	197			

Other opportunities	Between Groups	.869	3	.290	.555	.645
	Within Groups	101.292	194	.522		
	Total	102.162	197			
Official documents	Between Groups	.748	3	.249	.577	.631
	Within Groups	83.842	194	.432		
	Total	84.591	197			
Cultures & local people	Between Groups	1.157	3	.386	.851	.467
	Within Groups	87.898	194	.453		
	Total	89.056	197			
Climate, weather, etc.	Between Groups	1.262	3	.421	.894	.445
	Within Groups	91.329	194	.471		
	Total	92.591	197			
Guest/keynote speakers	Between Groups	1.909	3	.636	1.776	.153
	Within Groups	69.511	194	.358		
	Total	71.419	197			
Education & networking	Between Groups	1.543	3	.514	2.316	.077
	Within Groups	43.103	194	.222		
	Total	44.646	197			
IC programmes or themes	Between Groups	1.306	3	.435	1.564	.200
	Within Groups	54.012	194	.278		
	Total	55.318	197			

#### 5.2.4.5 Organising committees and planners' position held in organisation

Within 'the image of the destination', the IC committees and planners rated highly, with mean score of 4.17. This means that IC committees and planners perceived 'the image of the destination' as being more important than the delegates did. The IC committees and planners in middle-to-upper management rated this factor the highest (mean = 4.22), while those working as medical doctors gave it their lowest rating (mean = 3.95). With regard to the 'political situation', the IC committees and planners working as medical doctors gave this factor their lowest level of significance (mean = 3.75), while the delegates from lower-management gave it their highest rating (mean = 4.14), with mean score of 3.99. This can be interpreted as the IC committees and planners working as medical doctors believed that the political situation in an IC destination is not an important criterion in terms of organising and planning ICs. With regard to the 'safety and security', IC committees and planners in every position believed that this factor was very important in terms of selecting an IC destination, with mean score of 4.44. The IC committees and planners in

middle-to-upper management gave it their highest rating (mean = 4.48), while once again, the medical doctors gave it their lowest rating (mean = 4.15).

In terms of the 'accessibility or travel distance to the IC destination', lower-management rated it at the highest level of importance (mean = 4.23), while CEOs and upper-management rated it at the lowest level of importance level (mean = 3.89), with the mean score of 4.10. With regard to the 'infrastructure and the availability of facilities', CEOs and upper-management believed it was very important (mean = 4.67), while upper-management felt differently about this aspect (mean = 4.21). However, IC committees and planners in every position believed that the factor of 'accessibility or travel distance to the IC destination' with mean score of 4.24. Similarly, IC committees and planners in every position admitted that the factor of 'service quality' was significant, with mean score of 4.42. The IC committees and planners in middle-to-upper management gave it their highest level of importance (mean = 4.47), while those working as medical doctors gave it their lowest rating (mean = 4.15).

According to the 'affordability or cost', the IC committees and planners working as medical doctors found that it was the most important factor (mean = 4.30), while those in middle-to-upper management gave it their lowest level of importance (mean = 4.08), with mean of 4.13. In terms of 'other opportunities, etc.', the IC committees and planners working as CEOs or upper management gave it their lowest rating (mean = 3.11), while those on lower management gave it their highest rating (mean = 3.82), with mean score of 3.72. With regard to the 'conference programs or themes', IC committees and planners in every position rated this factor as quite important, with mean of 4.47. The IC committees and planners in middle-to-upper management rated this factor at the highest level of importance (mean = 4.49); while those working as medical doctors gave it their lowest rating (mean = 4.30). With reference to the statistical results, there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the availability of facilities, and the positions of these IC committees and

planners as  $F = 3.123$ ,  $DF = 3$ ,  $p < .05$  (Sig. = .027), as well as the factor of attraction, entertainment, nightlife or sightseeing ( $F = 2.833$ ,  $DF = 3$ ,  $p < .05$  (Sig. = .040). Appendices 12 and Table 5.2.4.5 below present more details.

Table 5.2.4.5: Position of IC committee and planners – ANOVA Result

ANOVA						
Variables		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Destination image	Between Groups	1.489	3	.496	.971	.408
	Within Groups	98.643	193	.511		
	Total	100.132	196			
Safety & security	Between Groups	1.765	3	.588	.893	.446
	Within Groups	127.230	193	.659		
	Total	128.995	196			
Political situation	Between Groups	1.928	3	.643	1.810	.147
	Within Groups	68.529	193	.355		
	Total	70.457	196			
Accessibility or travel distance	Between Groups	1.636	3	.545	.905	.440
	Within Groups	116.333	193	.603		
	Total	117.970	196			
Availability of facility	Between Groups	1.773	3	.591	3.123	.027
	Within Groups	36.531	193	.189		
	Total	38.305	196			
Quality of service	Between Groups	1.839	3	.613	2.105	.101
	Within Groups	56.192	193	.291		
	Total	58.030	196			
Affordability (cost, expenses)	Between Groups	1.195	3	.398	.887	.449
	Within Groups	86.633	193	.449		
	Total	87.827	196			
Attractions, sightseeing, etc.	Between Groups	.647	3	.216	.307	.820
	Within Groups	135.475	193	.702		
	Total	136.122	196			
Other opportunities	Between Groups	3.701	3	1.234	2.431	.066
	Within Groups	97.944	193	.507		
	Total	101.645	196			
Official documents	Between Groups	3.547	3	1.182	2.833	.040
	Within Groups	80.535	193	.417		
	Total	84.081	196			
Cultures & local people	Between Groups	1.226	3	.409	.900	.442
	Within Groups	87.678	193	.454		
	Total	88.904	196			
Climate, weather, etc.	Between Groups	1.262	3	.421	.891	.447
	Within Groups	91.184	193	.472		
	Total	92.447	196			

Guest/keynote speakers	Between Groups	1.543	3	.514	1.423	.237
	Within Groups	69.787	193	.362		
	Total	71.330	196			
Education & networking	Between Groups	1.716	3	.572	2.578	.055
	Within Groups	42.812	193	.222		
	Total	44.528	196			
IC programmes or themes	Between Groups	.666	3	.222	.788	.502
	Within Groups	54.370	193	.282		
	Total	55.036	196			

#### **5.2.4.6 Organising committees and planners' years of experience organising ICs (so far)**

Holding a successful conference is a tremendous responsibility that requires good planning, dedication and effort. Hence, the organising committees should hold key positions, experience, dedication, enthusiasm and willingness to complete the tasks. In the preplanning step, the responsibilities will be assigned in either to an individual or a committee for the steps in the process. Crouch and Ritchie (1997) argue that the process of gathering detailed information from a number of possible sites must meet the maximum requirements as defined by certain key site selection factors. All of the information gathered will then need to be digested, analysed, and debated before final recommendations are made. Consequently, recommendations on site selection made by meeting planners or selection committees must be significant due to this consideration of convention site attracting attendees and making a profit or minimizing any loss.

The level of importance of the factor of years of experience organising ICs by IC committees and planners, and the results of the one-way analysis of variance test, both indicated that IC committees and planners with more than 20 years of experience, and counting, of organising ICs gave 'the image of the destination' as being the most important (mean = 4.23), followed by those IC committees and planners with 11-20 years of experience (mean = 4.20), and then those with 2-10 years of experience, with mean score of 4.18. These findings can be interpreted as recognising that the delegates with the most experience of organising ICs are far more

concerned about the factor of 'the image of the destination' than their counterparts. Similarly, IC committees and planners with more than 20 years of experience found that the 'accessibility or travel distance to the IC destination' was important in terms of IC attendance (mean = 4.27), while those with 2-10 years of experience considered this factor to be less important than other IC committees and planners with less work experience (mean = 4.02).

Therefore, the IC committees and planners with more than 20 years of experience claimed that the 'service quality' was also important (mean = 4.50) in terms of ICs, while those with 2-10 years of experience considered it to be less important than other groups (mean = 4.29). On the other hand, the IC committees and planners with 2-10 years of experience considered the 'affordability or cost' of the IC destination as being of the highest level of importance (mean = 4.20), while the IC committees and planners with 11-20 years of experience felt that this factor was less significant than the other groups (mean = 4.07). The mean score was 4.13, which could be interpreted as the IC committees and planners regarding the 'affordability or cost' of the IC destination as being quite important. Similarly, IC committees and planners with more than 20 years of experience maintained that 'conference programs or themes' were very important (mean = 4.54); while those with 2-10 years of experience found it less significant than other groups (mean = 4.39). The mean score was 4.47, which indicates that the 'conference programs or themes' was very important. Appendices 13 and Table 5.2.4.6 below present more details.

Table 5.2.4.6: Years' experience in organising ICs of IC committee and planners (so far) – ANOVA Result

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Destination image	Between Groups	.903	2	.451	.886	.414
	Within Groups	103.452	203	.510		
	Total	104.354	205			
Safety & security	Between Groups	.723	2	.362	.555	.575
	Within Groups	132.272	203	.652		
	Total	132.995	205			



Political situation	Between Groups	.211	2	.105	.295	.745
	Within Groups	72.590	203	.358		
	Total	72.801	205			
Accessibility or travel distance	Between Groups	1.971	2	.986	1.655	.194
	Within Groups	120.888	203	.596		
	Total	122.859	205			
Availability of facility	Between Groups	.448	2	.224	1.154	.317
	Within Groups	39.416	203	.194		
	Total	39.864	205			
Quality of service	Between Groups	1.017	2	.509	1.743	.178
	Within Groups	59.240	203	.292		
	Total	60.257	205			
Affordability (cost, expenses)	Between Groups	.769	2	.384	.868	.422
	Within Groups	89.950	203	.443		
	Total	90.718	205			
Attractions, sightseeing, etc.	Between Groups	1.286	2	.643	.925	.398
	Within Groups	141.049	203	.695		
	Total	142.335	205			
Other opportunities	Between Groups	.180	2	.090	.173	.841
	Within Groups	105.049	203	.517		
	Total	105.228	205			
Official documents	Between Groups	.220	2	.110	.255	.775
	Within Groups	87.450	203	.431		
	Total	87.670	205			
Cultures & local people	Between Groups	.726	2	.363	.792	.454
	Within Groups	93.022	203	.458		
	Total	93.748	205			
Climate, weather, etc.	Between Groups	.626	2	.313	.655	.520
	Within Groups	96.932	203	.477		
	Total	97.558	205			
Guest/keynote speakers	Between Groups	.475	2	.237	.658	.519
	Within Groups	73.258	203	.361		
	Total	73.733	205			
Education & networking	Between Groups	.185	2	.092	.405	.668
	Within Groups	46.344	203	.228		
	Total	46.529	205			
IC programmes or themes	Between Groups	.504	2	.252	.901	.408
	Within Groups	56.821	203	.280		
	Total	57.325	205			

#### 5.2.4.7 Organising committees and planners' frequency of ICs organised per year

The mean groups of factors that were considered important, in terms of the frequency of ICs organised per year, were analysed by one-way

ANOVA tests, as shown in Appendix 14. This demonstrates that IC committees and planners that planned less than 5 ICs per year felt that the factor of 'the image of the destination' was quite important (mean = 4.23); while those that planned less than one a year perceived this factor as being less significant than the other groups (mean = 4.05). The average perception of 'the image of the destination' was that it was quite important (mean = 4.18), and it can be concluded from these results that the 'image of the destination' was perceived as being more important to those IC committees and planners in the highest category, those who plan more than 5 ICs per year. This group also rated the 'accessibility or travel distance to the IC destination' quite highly (mean = 4.27), while those who organised between 3 to 4 per year felt much less strongly about this issue (mean = 3.96). However, this group of IC committees and planners also agreed that this factor was quite significant in terms of the location of their IC site, with mean score = 4.10. They also rated other factors highly, such as 'infrastructure and the availability of facilities', with mean score of 4.24, and 'service quality' with mean score of 4.42. In terms of the 'affordability or cost', the IC committees and planners who planned less than one IC per year were the most concerned with this aspect (mean = 4.20), with mean score of 4.13 among all of the groups. Conversely, the IC committees and planners with 1-2 ICs per year considered this factor to be far less important than any of the other group (mean = 4.05). The statistical results indicated that there were no significant differences in terms of the number of ICs planned annually by the respondents, and the criteria that they felt were the most important in terms of their experience with organising and planning ICs. (See Appendices 14). According to the Post Hoc Tests, the results indicated that there were no significant differences among the group means of these variables, with regard to both the Tukey HSD and Duncan results. See more details in Appendices 14 and Table 5.2.4.7 below.

Table 5.2.4.7: Frequency of ICs organized by IC committee and planners per year – ANOVA Result

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Destination image	Between Groups	.915	3	.305	.595	.619
	Within Groups	103.440	202	.512		
	Total	104.354	205			
Safety & security	Between Groups	.739	3	.246	.376	.770
	Within Groups	132.256	202	.655		
	Total	132.995	205			
Political situation	Between Groups	1.126	3	.375	1.058	.368
	Within Groups	71.675	202	.355		
	Total	72.801	205			
Accessibility or travel distance	Between Groups	2.260	3	.753	1.262	.289
	Within Groups	120.600	202	.597		
	Total	122.859	205			
Availability of facility	Between Groups	.454	3	.151	.776	.509
	Within Groups	39.410	202	.195		
	Total	39.864	205			
Quality of service	Between Groups	1.273	3	.424	1.453	.229
	Within Groups	58.984	202	.292		
	Total	60.257	205			
Affordability (cost, expenses)	Between Groups	.981	3	.327	.736	.532
	Within Groups	89.737	202	.444		
	Total	90.718	205			
Attractions, sightseeing, etc.	Between Groups	1.287	3	.429	.614	.606
	Within Groups	141.048	202	.698		
	Total	142.335	205			
Other opportunities	Between Groups	.361	3	.120	.232	.874
	Within Groups	104.867	202	.519		
	Total	105.228	205			
Official documents	Between Groups	.401	3	.134	.309	.819
	Within Groups	87.269	202	.432		
	Total	87.670	205			

Cultures & local people	Between Groups	1.038	3	.346	.754	.521
	Within Groups	92.710	202	.459		
	Total	93.748	205			
Climate, weather, etc.	Between Groups	.882	3	.294	.614	.607
	Within Groups	96.677	202	.479		
	Total	97.558	205			
Guest/keynote speakers	Between Groups	.480	3	.160	.441	.724
	Within Groups	73.253	202	.363		
	Total	73.733	205			
Education & networking	Between Groups	.185	3	.062	.269	.848
	Within Groups	46.344	202	.229		
	Total	46.529	205			
IC programmes or themes	Between Groups	.591	3	.197	.702	.552
	Within Groups	56.734	202	.281		
	Total	57.325	205			

### 5.2.5 Multivariate Analysis: Factor Analysis

Factor analysis, and Principal Component Analysis or PCA, is a technique used to identify groups or clusters of variables (Field, 2009). It is useful for analysis in this study as it forms the clusters of factors into homogeneous sets as well as showing these variables relatively independent of one another. Consequently, the new variables (factors) are created and allow the new categories to be gained and seen. Field (2009) proposed that this technique can be used in 3 ways. However, for the purposes of this research, it will be used to reduce a data set to a more manageable size, while still retaining as much of the original information as possible.

There were 15 variables which influenced the criteria considered by IC committees and planners, the findings of which are explained below. An analytical technique was employed to identify the patterns underlying the correlations between the variables. Field (2009) argued that the concept of 'factor loading' can be considered as between a factor and a

variable, and is known as a Pearson correlation. This could be utilised as a reliable method of simplifying the relationships between variables, and identifying the common associations or links between groups of factors.

#### **5.2.5.1 Factors of IC destinations selection of organising committees and planners**

The 15 variables, based on the perspectives of the IC committees and planners were clustered around 5 components.

**Component 1** was comprised of 'culture and local people' with FL .910; 'climate, environment or weather' with FL .904; 'intervening opportunities, i.e., other conferences, conventions, vacations etc.', with FL .871; 'attractions, entertainment, nightlife, sightseeing' with FL .857; and 'immigration and visa' with FL .527. Component 1 was identified as '**Destination Environment**'. If any associated places holding a convention that was different to another with the consideration of these determinants, it would make their convention more interesting and attract more attendees.

**Component 2** was composed of 'networking and education' had a FL of .894; 'infrastructure and the availability of facilities' had a FL of .864; while 'guest speaker or keynote person' had a FL of .403; and 'conference programs or themes' had a FL of .432. Due to the fact that this factor appears in both components, it was given the highest factor loading score. Cluster of component 2 was named 'Effectiveness of IC'.

**Component 3** was comprised of 'service quality' (FL = .832); 'conference programs or themes' (FL = .784; and 'accessibility or travel distance to the IC destination' (FL = .659). This component was named '**quality level of the IC**'.

**Component 4** consisted of 'political situation' (FL = .820) and 'safety and security' (FL = .777). Component 4 was named '**security of destination**'.

**Component 5** included 'the image of the destination' (FL = .852); and 'affordability and cost' (FL = -.403), which had a FL score of below .4. Component 5 was identified as '**Destination Cost and Expenses.**' With a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.780, it can be concluded that the questions were both consistent and well-correlated (Field, 2009).

A principal component analysis (PCA) was also conducted on the 15 items with orthogonal rotation (Varimax). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure verified the sampling adequacy of the analysis, with a KMO of .679 (or 'mediocre', according to Field, 2009). Bartlett's test of sphericity  $X^2(105) = 2075.507$ ,  $p < .001$ , indicated that correlations between items were sufficiently large for PCA. An initial analysis was conducted in order to obtain Eigenvalues for each of the components. Five of the components had Eigenvalues over Kaiser's criterion of 1 which is good, and in combination, explained 69.82% of the variance. The Scree plot, as shown in Figure 5.2.4.1 was slightly ambiguous and revealed inflexions that would justify retaining both Components 9 and 11. Given the large sample size, and the convergence of the Scree plot and Kaiser's criterion of five components, a number of components were retained for the purpose of final analysis.

Table 5.2.4.1(1) shows the factor loadings after rotation. The items that cluster around the same components suggested that Component 1 was '**Destination environment**', Component 2 '**Effectiveness of IC Program**', Component 3 '**Quality level of IC**', Component 4 '**Safety and security of destination**', and Component 5 '**Destination Costs and Expenses**'.

Table 5.2.5.1(1): Factor Analysis of the Factors Influencing the Selection of IC Destinations (IC organising committees and planners)

		IC committees and planners			
Cronbach's Alpha = 0.780		Factor	Mean	Std.	Analysis
Factor	Component	Loading		Deviation	N

<b>Factor 1.</b> <b>Destination environment</b>	Cultures & local people	.910	3.41	.676	206
	Climate & weather	.904	3.40	.690	206
	Intervening opportunity	.871	3.72	.716	206
	Attraction & sightseeing	.857	3.72	.654	206
	Official documents	.527	3.85	.833	206
<b>Factor 2.</b> <b>Effectiveness of IC</b>	Education/ networking	.894	4.43	.476	206
	Availability of facility	.864	4.24	.441	206
	Guest or keynote speakers	.403	4.31	.600	206
	*iC programmes or themes	.432*	4.47	.529	206
<b>Factor 3.</b> <b>Quality level of IC</b>	Quality of service	.832	4.42	.542	206
	*iC programmes or themes	.784*	4.47	.529	206
	Accessibility or travel distance	.659	4.10	.774	206
<b>Factor 4.</b> <b>Safety &amp; Security of destination</b>	Political situation	.820	4.00	.805	206
	Safety & security	.777	4.44	.596	206
<b>Factor 5.</b> <b>Destination Cost and expenses</b>	Destination image	.852			
	Affordability* (< .4)	-.403*			

**Note:** Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Table 5.2.5.1 (2): Results of KMO and Bartlett's Test

<b>IC committees and planners</b>	
<b>KMO and Bartlett's Test</b>	
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.679
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	
Approx. Chi-Square	
df	2075.507105
<b>Sig.</b>	<b>.000</b>

**Organising committee or Planners**

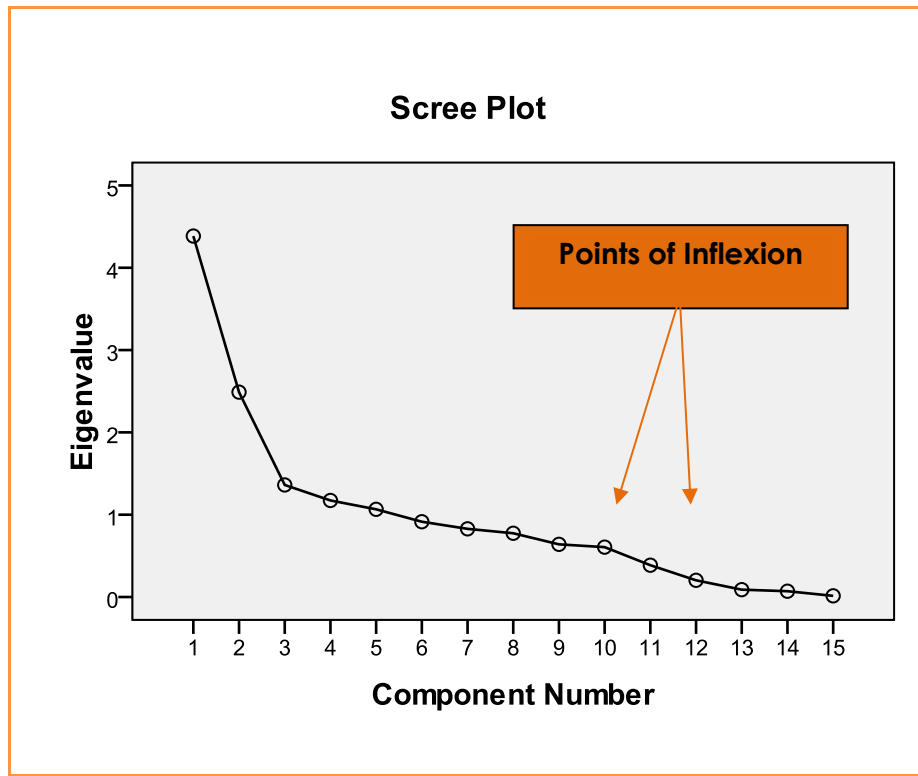


Figure 5.2.5.1: Scree Plots of Factor Analysis (the Factors or Criteria for Organising ICs from the Perspective of IC Committees and Planners)

### 5.3 SUMMARY

The self-completion questionnaire was sent to the IC committees and planners via the web-based survey, SurveyMonkey. The total response rate in terms of questionnaire returns accounted for 41%. The rate of response was not high but acceptable, which is a common problem with online surveys. Nonetheless, the results were adequate enough to perform advanced statistical tests. The results were narrated in both descriptive and inferential analysis.

The **top seven factors** that IC committees and planners believed were the most important in terms of planning and organising an IC, included the following: (1) 'conference programs or themes', (2) 'safety and security', (3) 'service quality', (4) 'education and networking', (5) keynote speakers', (6) 'infrastructure and availability of facilities', and (7) the image of the destination, respectively.



A factor analysis was also conducted in order to analyse and cluster the factors/ criteria that the organising committees and planners considered when selecting the IC site. 15 variables were clustered into **5 components** which included the following: (1) destination environment, (2) management of destination, (3) operation of destination, (4) security of destination and (5) cost and expenses of destination. The calculated factor loadings indicated that the factor of *cultures, festivals and local people* factor had the most influence on the perceptions of IC committees and planners, with a FL of 0.910, followed by the factor of *climate and weather* with a FL of 0.904, then the factor of *education and networking* with a FL of 0.894, next the factor of *other opportunities* with a FL of 0.871, and finally *infrastructure and the availability of facilities* with a FL of 0.864.

To recap, the **factor loading** of variables with the established criteria indicated that the idea of a *destination* included many related aspects, including the following elements: 1) *culture and local people*, 2) *climate and weather*, 3) *education or networking*, 4) *other opportunities*, 5) *infrastructure and availability of facilities*, 6) *attractions, entertainment, nightlife, sightseeing*, 7) *the image of the destination*, 8) *service quality*, 9) *political situation*, and 10) *safety and security*.

The next chapter, Chapter Six presents the factors which leverage and limit the growth of Thailand international convention industry. The findings of this chapter will indicate the potential of Thailand as a MICE destination and an Asian international convention hub in Asian market with respect to the two groups of research sample: convention delegates and IC organising committees and planners.

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## CHAPTER SIX

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### THE FACTORS LIMITATIING THE GROWTH OF THAILAND'S MICE AS AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION DESTINATION IN ASIA

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#### 6.0 INTRODUCTION

The main aim of this thesis is to evaluate the potential of Thailand's MICE as an international convention hub in Asia. The main objective of this chapter is to identify the factors which leverage and limit the growth of Thailand as an international convention hub for the MICE industry in Asia. The findings of this chapter links with the research study aim, which is the potential of Thailand as an international convention hub in Asia. This results also give the answers of the research objective 3. The chapter also investigates the potential of competitor countries in South-East Asia as well as the key benefits that Thailand has to offer as an international convention destination country in Asia. In addition, the factors that limit the growth of the Thai convention industry are also examined. Therefore, in order to know the results, the levels of customer satisfaction among the respondents needed to be assessed.

Hence, the purposes of this chapter are to investigate the following, as this links with the potential of Thailand as an international hub in Asia:

- 1) The quality levels of and operation and management of international conventions held in Thailand regarding the perceptions and experiences of delegates.
- 2) The quality levels of and operation and management of international conventions held in Thailand with respect to the perceptions and experiences of organising committee and planners.
- 3) The potential of competitor countries in Asia and Pacific.

- 4) The potential of Thailand as a destination and a hub in the Asian international convention industry.
- 5) The factors which limit the growth of Thailand as an international convention hub for the MICE industry in Asia.
- 6) The key benefits that Thailand has to offer as an international convention destination for potential customers, from the perspectives of both the end-users (delegates), and the middle-users (organising committees and planners).

Similar to discussions in Chapters Four and Five, there were two groups of research informants: 1) the delegates, and 2) the organising committees and planners. In terms of the quality levels of operation and management, the delegates were asked to rate their satisfaction levels of the ICs held in Thailand from 2009 to 2010. Furthermore, they were asked the potential of possible competition in terms of other countries in Asia and the Pacific, with regard to their own experiences and opinions. The findings obtained from these two groups of research informants were compared, discussed, and displayed in terms of the statistical information. Appendices 1 and 2 contain an illustration of the design of the questionnaire.

In addition, both the delegates and the organising committees and planners were asked about what key benefits Thailand had to offer to both individual customers and the industry in general, including the potential of Thailand as an IC hub in the Asian region. Finally, the factors which limit the growth of Thailand as an international convention hub for the MICE industry in Asia are examined and discussed.

## **6.1 ANALYSIS OF SURVEY RESPONSE**

### **6.1.1 Delegates' Attendance at ICs in Thailand and Length of Stay**

The demographic analysis revealed that almost two-third of delegates (65%) were attending their first IC in Thailand, followed by delegates who were attending for their second time (13.5%). Almost three-quarters of the

delegates (74%) had stayed between 2-7 days, followed by 23.2% who had stayed over a week. More details are displayed in Appendices 15. Figures 6.1.1(1) and 6.1.1(2) below are shown the percentage of variables.

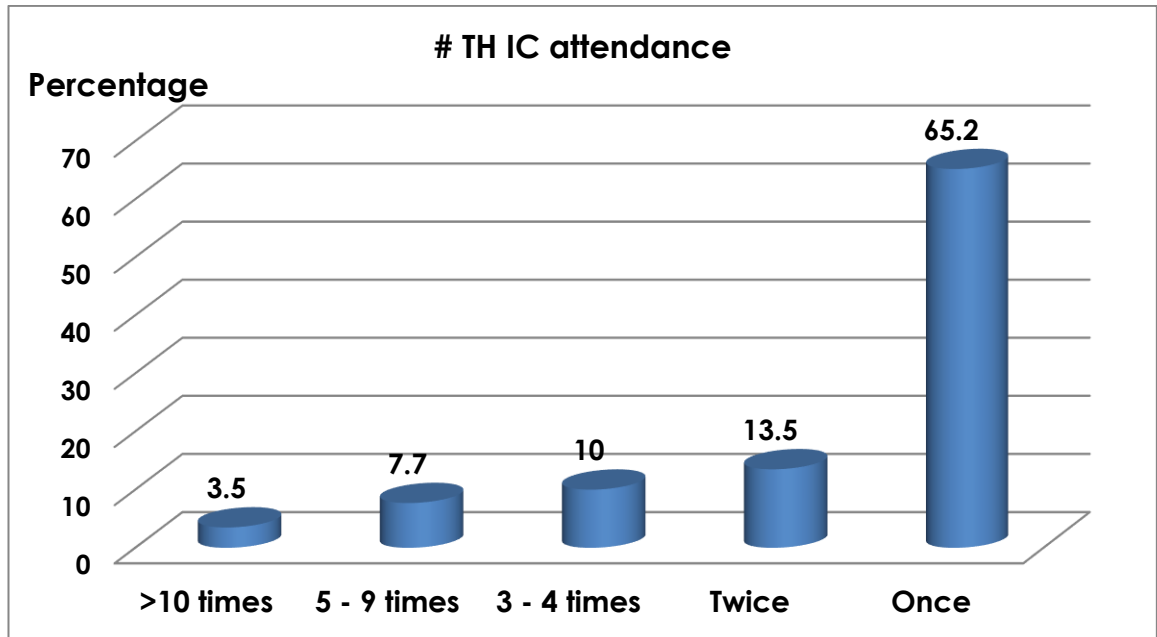


Figure 6.1.1(1): Frequencies of ICs delegate attendance in Thailand

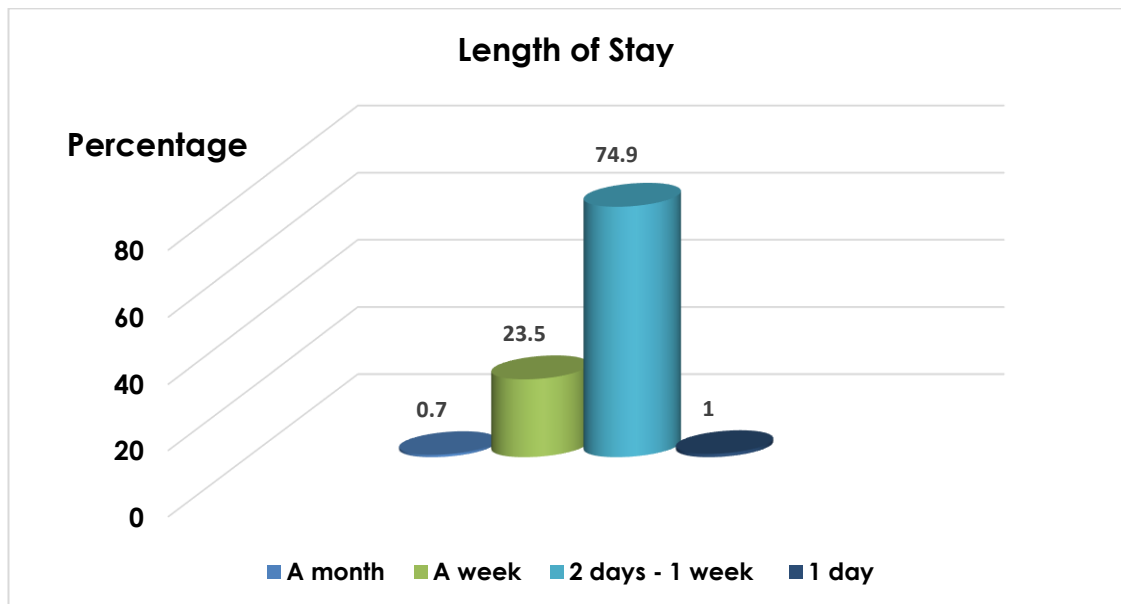


Figure 6.1.1(2): Delegates' length of stay during the ICs in Thailand

### **6.1.2 Analysis on 5-Point Scales: Delegates Satisfaction Levels with ICs Held in Thailand (Descriptive Statistics)**

Customer satisfaction is one of the critical factors for business survival and competitiveness in the service industry. In previous research, the main focus has been on the efficiency and accuracy of measuring service quality because service quality affects customer satisfaction (Ladhari 2008). Thus, in order to evaluate the potential of Thailand as an IC destination, the satisfaction level of delegates who are customers of Thai ICs needs to be investigated.

This section investigates the level of delegate satisfaction regarding the operation, management and quality levels of ICs held in Thailand 31 elements were identified in order to assess the quality levels and the effectiveness of operations and management in ICs, and levels of customer satisfaction. These elements are related to general factors at the destination, as well as the quality of the IC. The descriptive are presented and explained in accordance with the question order on the questionnaire. The results are as follows:

The mean values of the 31 elements, ranged from the highest score of 4.41 to the lowest score of 3.83. Significantly, it can be concluded that the satisfaction levels of these delegates regarding ICs held in Thailand were all nearly at a level of 'Satisfaction'.

Classifying the levels of satisfaction, the top ten factors that the delegates were most satisfied with were 'culture and local people' (M = 4.41); 'cleanliness and comfort of the conference venue' (M = 4.39); 'the taste of the food' (M = 4.37); 'the variety of food' (M = 4.35); the 'cleanliness and comfort of the restaurants in conference venues' (M = 4.34); 'cleanliness and comfort of cafeteria and restaurants at convention venue' (M = 4.34); 'Destination image' (M = 4.32); 'Competence and responsiveness of conference staff' (M = 4.32); 'Quality of service provided in conference' (M = 4.31); 'Quality and sufficiency of food and beverage' (M = 4.31); and 'Attractions, sightseeing & tour programme' (M = 4.30).

Figure 6.1.2(1) below shows the satisfaction level of top ten factors that these delegates with the ICs held in Thailand my mean scores.

On the contrary, there were ten elements that the delegates were less satisfied with for ICs held in Thailand. Classified by the lowest mean scores, these ten factors were 'intervening opportunities (i.e., other convention, vacation)' (M = 3.83); 'accessibility or travelling distance (hrs. on plane to travel to Thailand)' (M = 3.86); 'political stability' (M = 3.89); 'crime rate' (M = 3.91); 'entertainment and nightlife' (M = 3.92); 'comfortable seat' (M = 4.06); 'delegates feel safe when conference staff conducting the services or duty' (M = 4.06); 'weather, climate and environment' (M = 4.06); 'quality of audio-visual equipment of the conference venue' (M = 4.11); and 'sufficiency of public space, recreational amenities of the conference venue' (M = 4.16). The results are presented in Figure 6.1.2(2). The descriptive statistics of the analytical factors are demonstrated with regard to the design of the questionnaire can be seen in Appendices 2. Figures 6.1.2(1) and 6.1.2(2) below are shown the mean scores of variables.

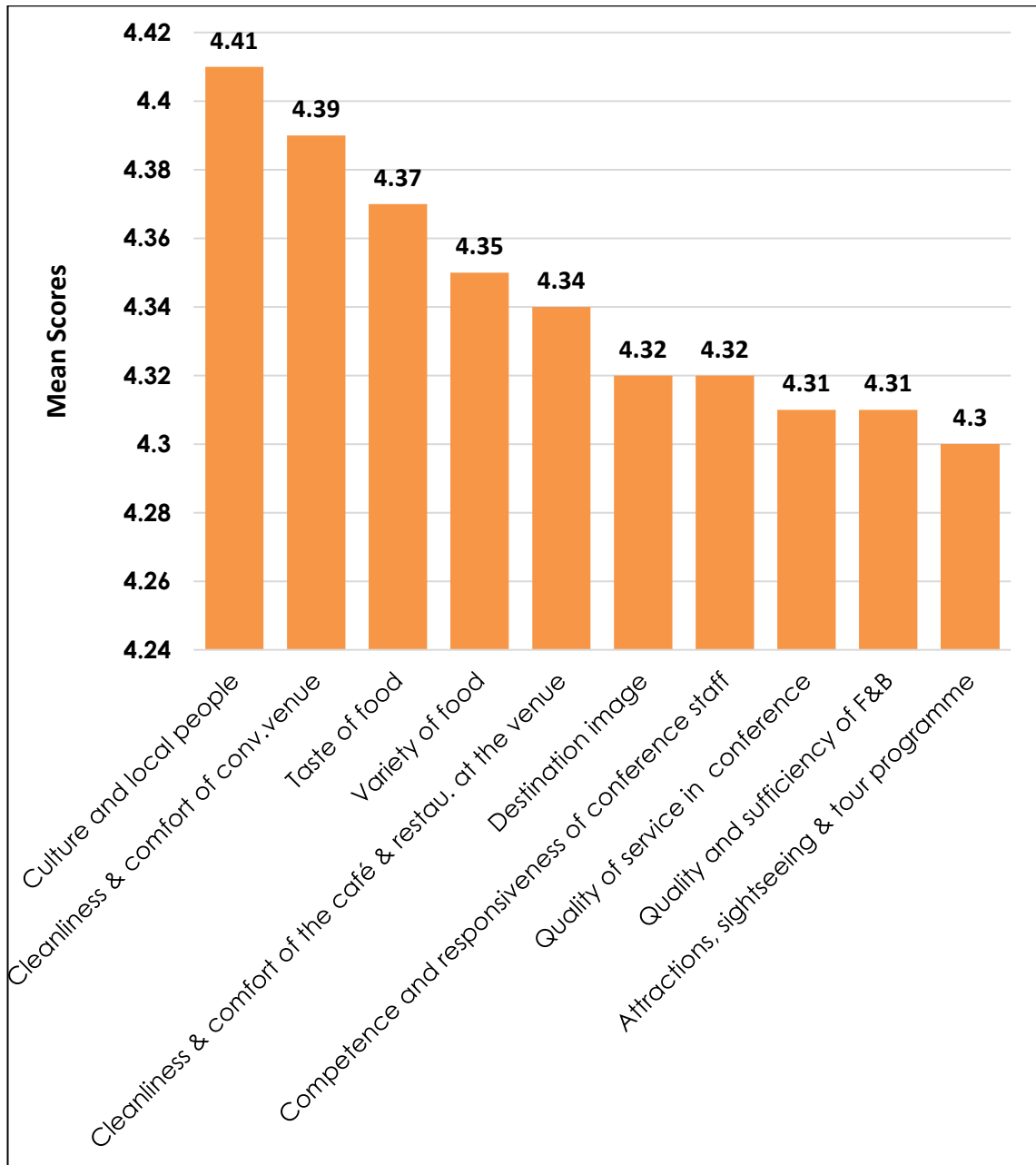


Figure 6.1.2(1): Top most ten factors of delegates' satisfaction with ICs held in Thailand

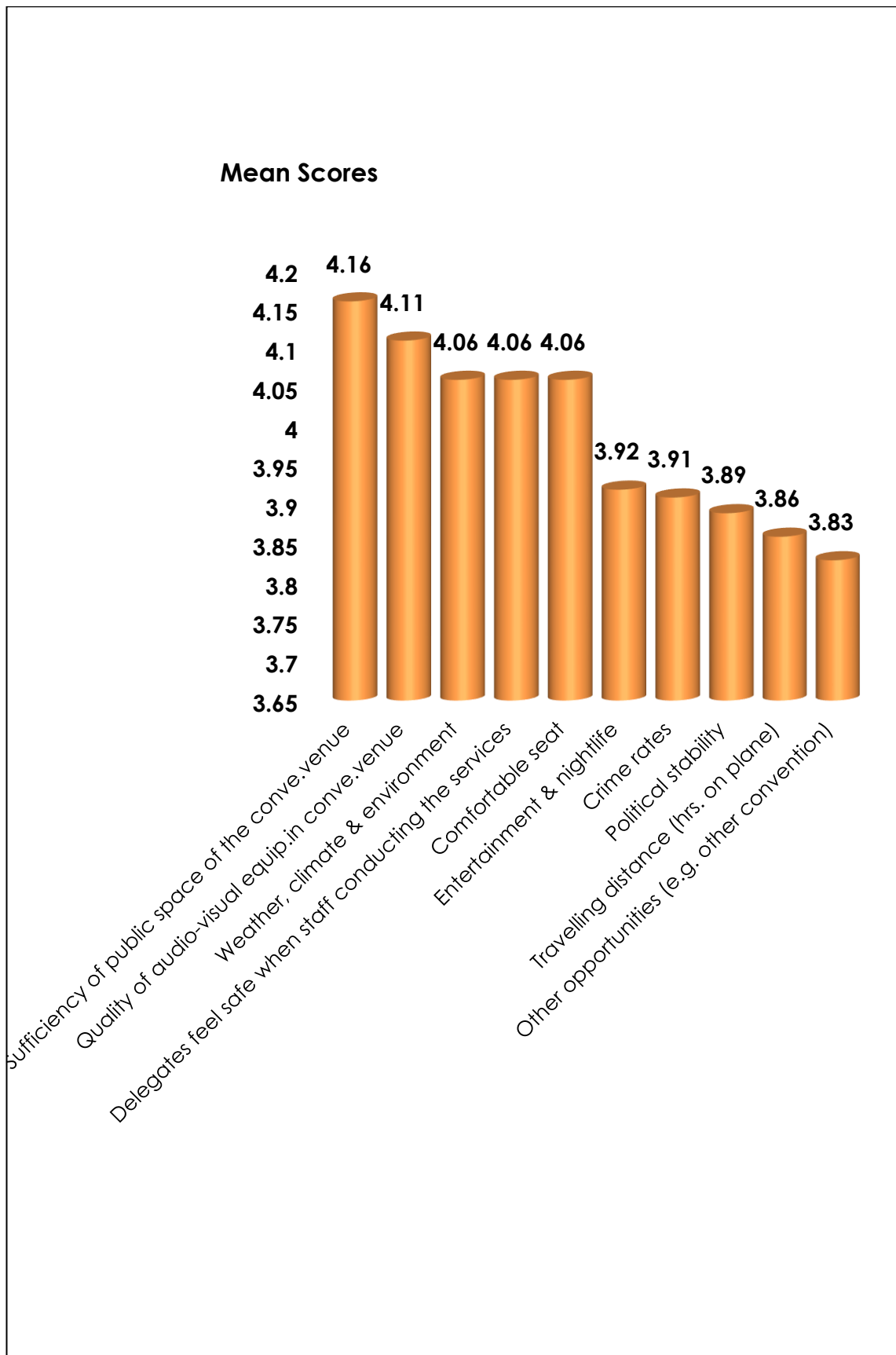


Figure 6.1.2(2): Bottom ten factors of delegates'' satisfaction with ICs held in Thailand



Comparing between the mean scores of factors influencing delegates' IC attendance and the mean scores for satisfaction levels of ICs held in Thailand, the results revealed that the two group means were slightly different. Significantly, while conference programs or themes ( $M = 4.59$ ) was the most influential on delegates' participation, the level of satisfaction with ICs held in Thailand for this factor was much lower ( $M = 4.17$ ). Consequently, if Thailand as a destination wishes to focus on attracting more attendees, the convention programme needs to be the first priority, including the keynote speakers, education and networking with which these delegates expect to engage. Significantly, the delegates perceived Thailand's destination advantages as affordability or cost ( $M = 4.06$  vs.  $4.27$ ); quality of service ( $M = 3.92$  vs.  $4.31$ ); facility and infrastructure ( $M = 3.79$  vs.  $4.23$ ); destination image ( $M = 3.78$  vs.  $4.32$ ), and immigration and visa ( $M = 3.65$  vs.  $4.20$ ). The satisfaction levels for these elements in Thailand ICs were much higher than the level of factors influencing the delegates' IC attendance. Nonetheless, Thailand's political situation must improve if Thailand is to be the hub of the IC industry in Asia. Similarly, when comparing between the mean scores of factors influencing delegates' IC attendance and the mean scores for satisfaction levels of ICs held in Thailand, the mean scores of safety and security of ICs held in Thailand were just under organisers' expectations ( $M = 4.29$  vs.  $4.27$ ). Although, these delegates felt safe and secure in Thailand; the country still needs to enhance the level of safety and security throughout the country, especially the convention cities. Figure 6.1.2(3) presents the comparative mean scores between factors influencing delegates' attendance and the satisfaction levels with ICs held in Thailand.

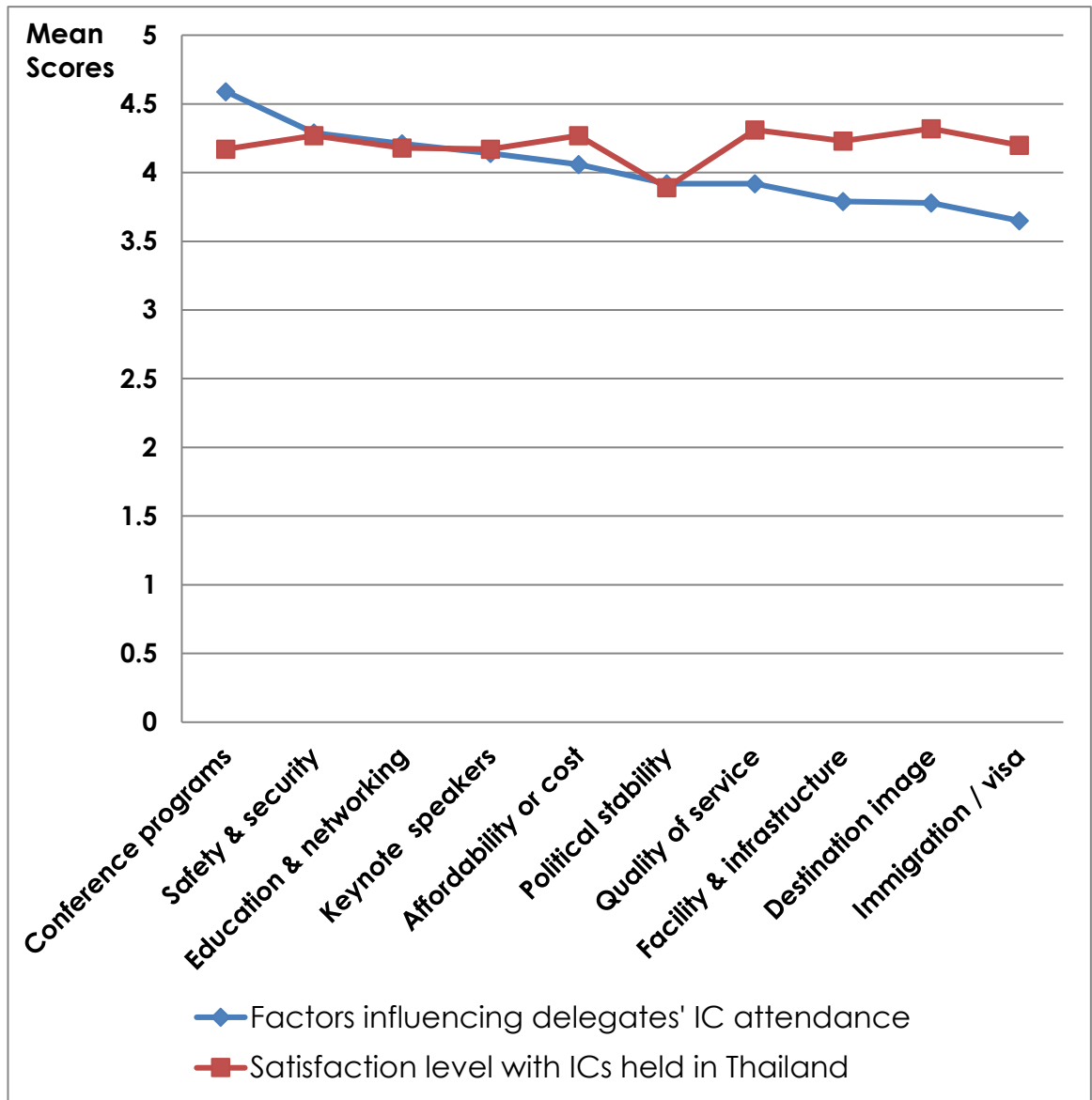


Figure 6.1.2(3): Comparison of mean scores between factors influencing delegates' attendance and the satisfaction levels with ICs held in Thailand

'Local people and culture', received the highest score for satisfaction levels with Thailand as a destination, nearly fifty percent of the delegates (46.9%) reported that they were 'very satisfied' with this factor. In terms of 'Thailand destination image', the delegates were also satisfied which means they were positive towards Thailand as a destination for ICs. The diagram in Figure 6.1.2(4) illustrates the results for destination image, and culture and local people.

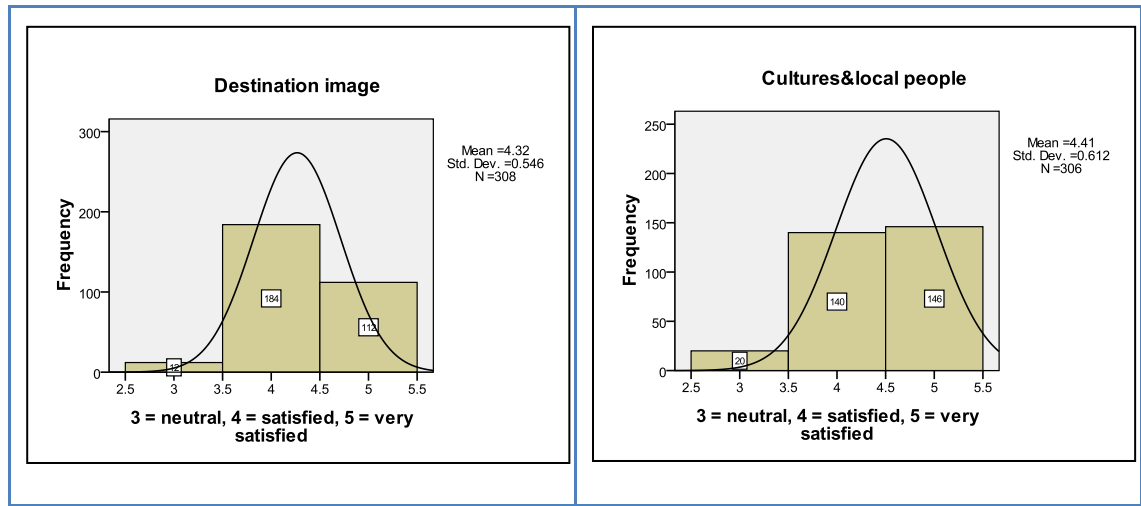
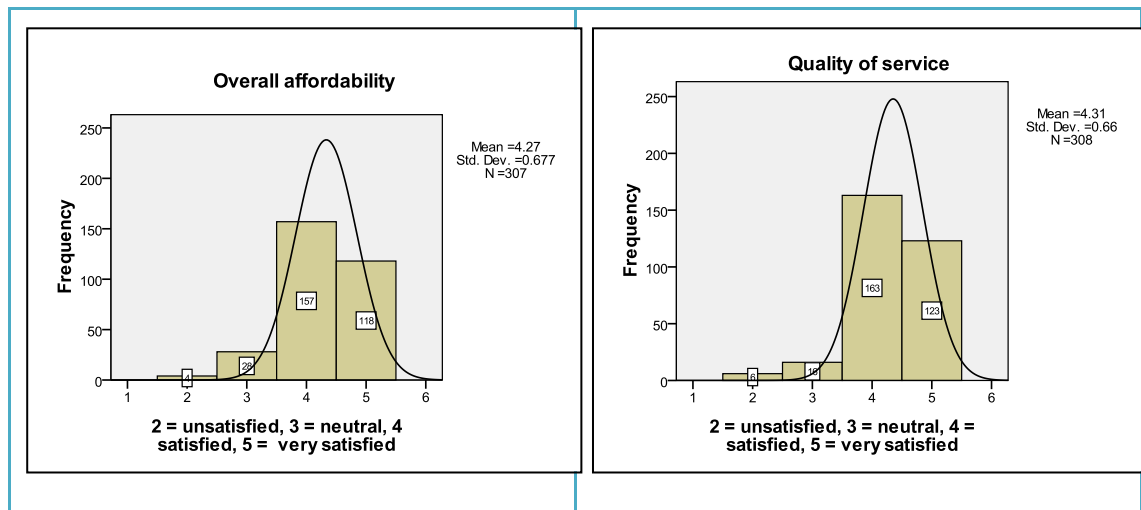


Figure 6.1.2(4).: Histograms of the factors 'Thailand destination image' and 'culture and local people'

'Affordability, cost and value for money', and 'service quality' are other advantages of Thailand as a destination. The level of care and individualized attention provided to delegates by the convention staff was high with more than half of the delegates (51.6%) 'Satisfied', and just over one-third (35.4%) 'Very satisfied' with their ICs held in Thailand. The results are displayed in Figure 6.1.2(5).



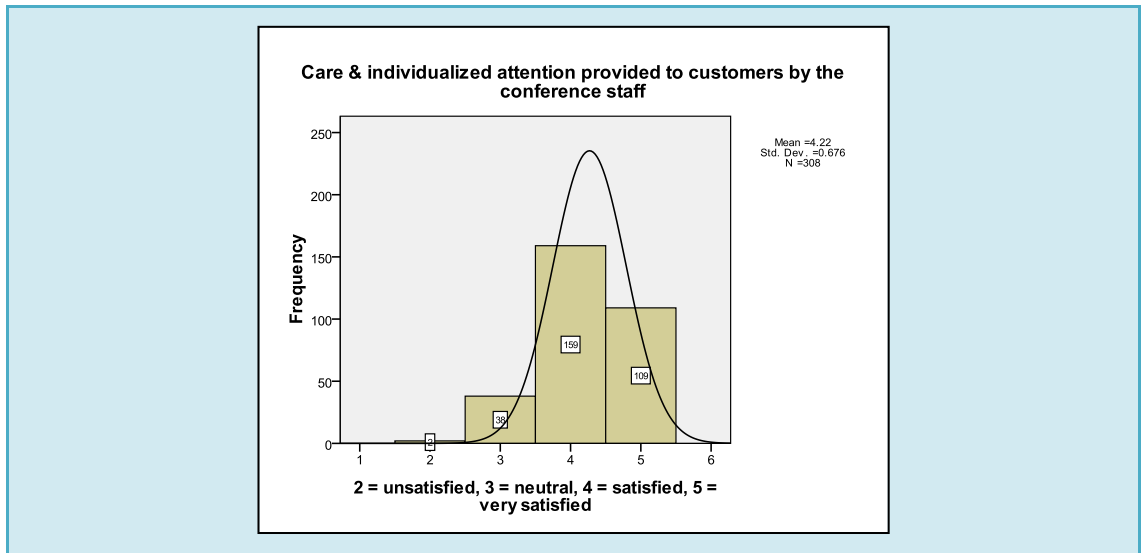
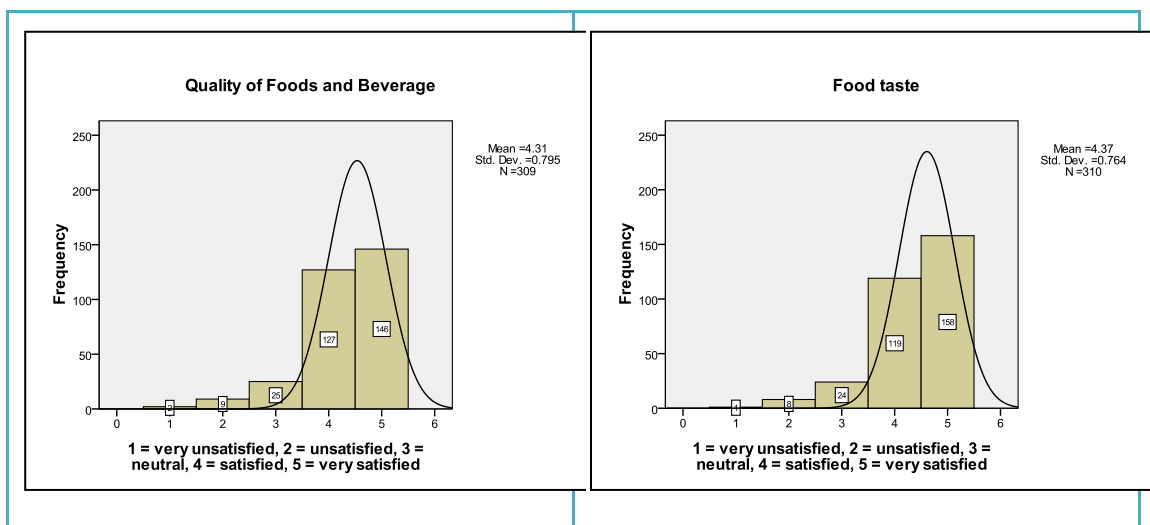


Figure 6.1.2(5): Histograms of 'affordability & cost', 'service quality' and 'the level of care and individual attention' provided to customers by IC staff in Thailand

Another advantage of Thailand as a destination was food, with the 'quality and sufficiency of food and beverages', the 'taste of the food', and the 'variety of food and beverages' provided being perceived positively. A high mean score of 4.31, 4.37, and 4.35 respectively for these factors indicated that the respondents were very happy with the quality and quantity of food and beverage provision. Figure 6.1.2(6) shows the results.



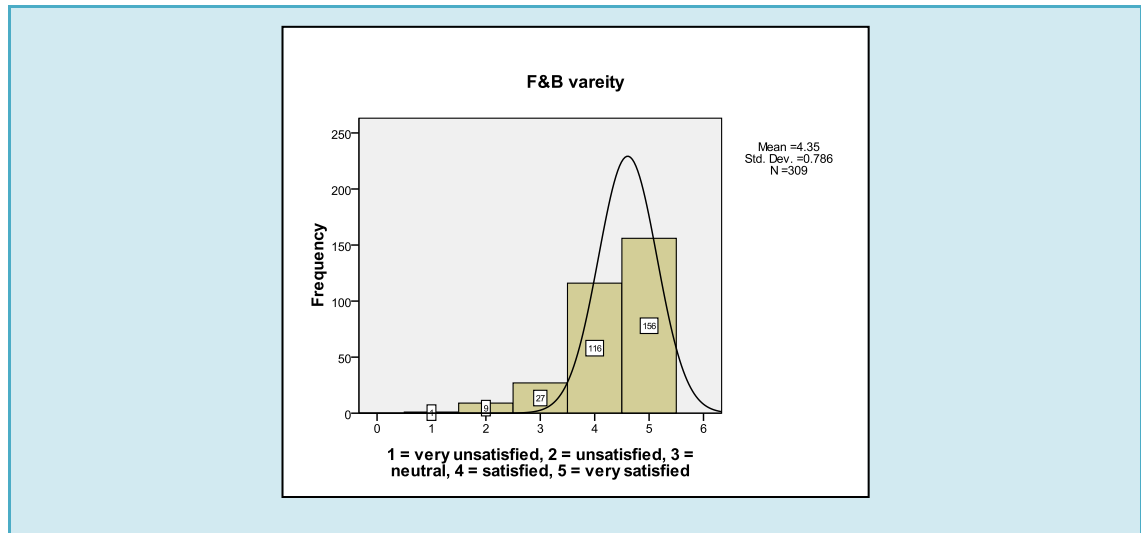


Figure 6.1.2(6): Histograms of 'quality of food and beverages', 'taste of the food', and 'variety of food and beverages'

In summary overall the delegates were satisfied with all of the aspects that were measured for this study. The average mean score, in terms of satisfaction levels, was over 3.83. The factors that the delegates were the most satisfied with, based on frequency and mean score, were as follows: (1) 'culture and local people', (2) 'the cleanliness and comfort of the conference venue', (3) 'the taste of the food', (4) 'the variety of food and beverages', and (5) the 'cleanliness and comfort of the restaurants in conference venues'. Satisfaction levels were highest for element 1, followed by elements 2, 3, 4, and 5 respectively. However, there were some factors that the delegates were not satisfied with, and believed needed improvement, which were as follows: (1) 'other opportunities, etc.', (2) 'accessibility or travel distance to the IC destination', (3) 'political situation', (4) 'crime rate', and (5) 'attractions, entertainment, nightlife, sightseeing'.

### 6.1.3 Multivariate Analysis: Factor Analysis on the Quality and Effectiveness of Thailand International Conventions

Factor analysis can be described as another type of statistical methodology. In order to evaluate of the quality and effectiveness of international conferences and conventions held in Thailand, 31 variables

(elements or factors) related to the management of convention industry were created for this assessment. With its aims in order to reduce the number of research variables into more manageable quantity, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is conducted. EFA is carried out to examine the main dimensions of this evaluation in order to ensure that these elements/factors are independent of each other and not measuring the same thing regarding respondents' agreement. Therefore, 31 variables had been measured to find their correlations.

### 6.1.3.1 Bartlett's test

Principal component analysis (PCA) was used on 31 items with orthogonal rotation (Varimax). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure verified the sampling adequacy of the analysis, with a KMO = .921, as shown in Table 6.1.3.1. According to Field (2009), the reliability level of such data is superb. Furthermore, Bartlett's test of sphericity  $X^2(465) = 5513.027$ ,  $p < .001$ , (see Table 6.1.3.1), indicated that the correlation between the items were sufficiently large enough to require PCA (Field, 2009). Therefore, it can be concluded that there were significant relationships between the variables in this data.

Table 6.1.3.1: KMO and Bartlett's Test

<b>KMO and Bartlett's Test</b>		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		<b>.921</b>
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	5513.027
		7
	df	465
	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>.000</b>

### 6.1.3.2 The Scree test

An initial analysis was run to obtain the Eigen values of each component of the data (Field, 2009). Seven of the components had Eigen values over Kaiser's criterion of one, and in combination, could account for 68.87% of the variance. In terms of the Scree test (Cattell, 1966), and with regard to

the curve, there were no obvious breaks between components with relatively large, and comparatively small Eigen values. The line began to level off after three factors, but then there was another drop-off after six more factors, before a more stable plateau could be reached. This reveals inflexion, (see Figure 6.1.3.2) and justified the retention of Components 4 and 6. A number of components were retained for final analysis, given the large sample size, the convergence of the Scree plot, and the Kaiser's criterion of the seven components were kept. Figure 6.1.3(1) illustrates the figures.

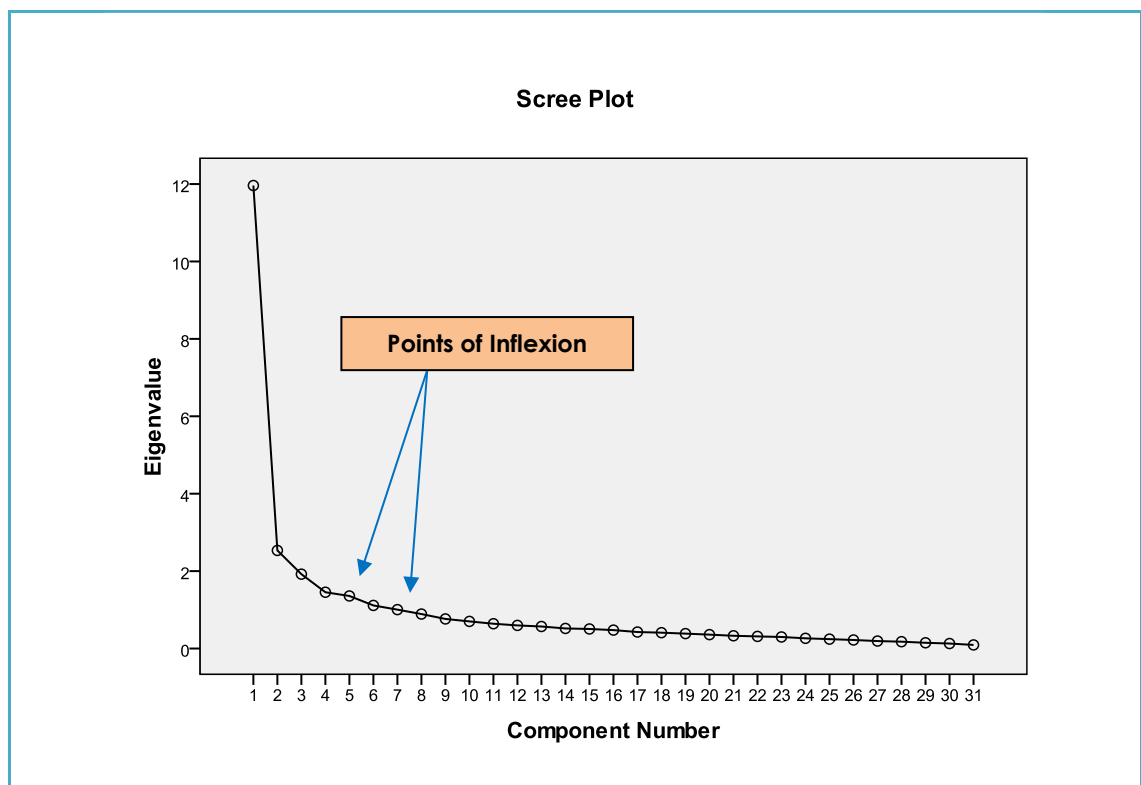


Figure 6.1.3.2: A Scree Test of Eigen Values

### 6.1.3.3 Factor Extraction

Communality can be defined as the proportion of common variance within a particular variable. Prior to extraction, all communalities are at one. Therefore, all of the variance associated with a particular variable can be assumed to be a common variance (Field, 2009). As displayed in Appendices 6.4, 43.5% of the variance associated with Question 1 (regarding the satisfaction levels of the delegates in terms of **'the**

**destination image of Thailand'),** was common or shared variance. Therefore, the level of variance for each variable can be explained in terms of the retained factors, which are represented by communalities, following extraction (Field, 2009). The average level of the communalities was  $21.34/31 = 0.689$ . Following extraction, Kaiser's Criterion may be accurate when the communalities are greater than 0.7. However, the research on Kaiser's criterion recommends its use with much smaller sample sizes (Field, 2009). Nevertheless, Kaiser's Criterion may be accurate if the sample size of the study exceeds 250 and there are more than 30 variables (Field, 2009). As shown in Table 6.1.3.3(1), 16 out of 31 variables had communality values of 0.7 or greater, with the lowest communality value at 0.49 (the satisfaction level of these delegates in terms of the factor of 'official documents, visa, etc. '), and the highest communality value at .895 (the satisfaction level of these delegates in terms of the provision and sufficiency of food and beverages at ICs held in Thailand).

Table 6.1.3.3(1): Communalities

<b>Communalities</b>		
	Initial	Extraction
1. The image of the destination	1.000	.527
2. Safety and security	1.000	.623
3. Political situation	1.000	.695
4. Crime rate	1.000	<b>.737</b>
5. Accessibility and travelling distance	1.000	.519
6. Official documents	1.000	<b>.492</b>
7. Weather and climate	1.000	.551
8. Culture and local people	1.000	.593
9. Attractions and sightseeing	1.000	<b>.737</b>
10. Entertainment and nightlife	1.000	.580
11. Other opportunities	1.000	.569
12. Education and networking	1.000	<b>.708</b>
13. Guest or keynote speaker	1.000	.623
14. Affordability or cost	1.000	.663



15. Accessibility of the venue	1.000	.569
16. The quality of the up-to-date equipment and facilities in the venue	1.000	.690
17. The cleanliness and comfort of the venue	1.000	<b>.784</b>
18. The cleanliness and comfort of the facilities in the restaurant(s) in the venue	1.000	<b>.758</b>
19. The amount of public space and the amenities in the venue	1.000	.617
20. The service quality provided by the conference staff	1.000	<b>.764</b>
21. The competence and responsiveness of conference staff	1.000	<b>.781</b>
22. The ability to the conference staff to perform their duties accurately and dependably	1.000	<b>.777</b>
23. The levels of care and individualized attention provided by the conference staff	1.000	<b>.752</b>
24. The level of safety experienced by customers when the conference staff are performing their duties	1.000	.662
25. The size of the conference room	1.000	<b>.738</b>
26. The location of conference breakout room	1.000	<b>.738</b>
27. The quality of the up-to-date AV equipment in the venue	1.000	<b>.736</b>
28. The comfort of the seating in the venue	1.000	<b>.711</b>
29. The provision and sufficiency of food and beverages	1.000	<b>.895</b>
30. The taste of the food	1.000	<b>.891</b>
31. The variety of food and beverages	1.000	<b>.864</b>
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		

As previously mentioned, thirty variables were extracted into seven factors through the method of Principal Component Analysis as a method. With regard to the loading suppression used in this study, all loadings of less than 0.4 were suppressed (See Table 6.1.3.3(2)). As a result, there were blank spaces for many of the loadings. As shown in table 6.1.3.3(2), there were a few questions regarding the elements or factors illustrating the component matrix, containing loadings exceeding .7. These include the following factors: the ability of the conference staff to perform their duties accurately and dependably (.760); the level of service quality provided by the conference staff (.740); the location of the conference breakout room (.720); the quality of the up-to-date equipment and facilities in the

conference venue (.718); the competence and responsiveness of the conference staff (.705); the comfort of the seats (.700). There was only one question, element or factor with a loading lower than .5 (.454), which was the factor of accessibility or traveling distance. See Table 6.1.3.3(2) for more detail.

Table 6.1.3.3(2): Component Matrix

Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>							
	Component						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. The ability to the conference staff to perform their duties accurately and dependably	<b>.760</b>						
20. The service quality provided by the conference staff	<b>.740</b>						
26. The location of the conference breakout room	<b>.720</b>						
16. The quality of the up-to-date equipment and facilities in the venue	<b>.718</b>						
21. The competence and responsiveness of the conference staff	<b>.705</b>						
28. The comfort of the seating in the venue	<b>.700</b>						
27. Quality of audio-visual equipment in the conference hall	.685						
23. The levels of care and individualized attention provided by the conference staff	.684						
19. The amount of public space and amenities in the venue	.683						
17. The cleanliness and comfort of the venue	.677						
24. The level of safety experienced by customers when the conference staff are performing their duties	.660						
15. The accessibility of the venue	.654						
25. The size of the conference room	.651					-.443	
9. Attractions and sightseeing	.631						-.443
18. The cleanliness and comfort of the facilities in the restaurant(s) in the venue	.627					.412	

4. Crime rate	.599						
14. Affordability or cost	.598			.508			
29. The provision and sufficiency of food and beverages	.597	-.422	.576				
3. Political situation	.587					.458	
2. Safety and security	.586						
1. The image of the destination	.584						
6. Official documents	.572						
11. Other opportunities	.565						
12. Education and networking	.531			.528			
8. Culture and local people	.530					-.450	
10. Entertainment, nightlife	.524	.421					
7. Weather and climate	.464	.503					
5. Accessibility and travelling distance	<b>.449</b>	<b>.454</b>					
30. The taste of the food	.569		.629				
31. The variety of food and beverages	.577		.613				
13. Guest or keynote speaker	.463			.508			
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.							
a. 7 components extracted.							

#### 6.1.3.4 Factor Rotation

Factor rotation was performed to rotate the components comprised of the factor loadings of each variable (Field, 2009). The investigated elements were highly loaded and comprised of 7 factors, which were labelled as: Factor 1: 'the quality of facilities and management of convention venue'; Factor 2: 'the appeal of the destination'; Factor 3: 'the quality of the service'; Factor 4: 'the provision and the quality of food and beverages'; Factor 5: 'the security and political stability of the destination'; Factor 6: 'the quality of facilities'; and Factor 7: 'opportunities and networking'. Table 6.1.3.4 presents all of the details.

Table 6.1.3.4: Rotated Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>

<i>Rotated Component Matrix<sup>a</sup></i>							
	<i>Component</i>						
	<b>Factor 1:</b>	<b>Factor 2:</b>	<b>Factor 3:</b>	<b>Factor 4:</b>	<b>Factor 5:</b>	<b>Factor 6:</b>	<b>Factor 7:</b>
<b>Item</b>	<b>The quality of facilities and management of the venue management</b>	<b>The appeal of the destination</b>	<b>The quality of the service</b>	<b>The provision and the quality of food and beverages</b>	<b>The security and political stability of destination</b>	<b>The quality of the facilities</b>	<b>Opportunities and networking</b>
<b>Factor Loadings</b>							
1. The cleanliness and comfort of the venue	.813						
2. The cleanliness and comfort of the facilities in the restaurant(s) in the venue	.799						
3. The quality of the up-to-date equipment and facilities in the venue	.675						
4. The amount of public space and amenities in the venue	.651						
5. The service quality provided by the conference staff	.630		.490				
6. The accessibility of the venue	.566						
7. Attractions and sightseeing		.742					
8. Culture and local people		.702					
9. Entertainment and nightlife		.652					
10. Weather and climate		.563					
11. The image of the destination		.562					
12. The levels of care and individualized attention provided by the conference staff			.726				
13. The competence and responsiveness of the conference staff	.440		.703				
14. The ability of the staff to deliver effective customer service			.692				
15. The ability of the conference staff to perform their duties accurately and dependably			.691				
16. The taste of the food				.886			

17. The provision and sufficiency of food and beverages				.877			
18. The variety of food and beverages				.866			
19. Crime rate					.777		
20. Political situation					.746		
21. Safety and security					.605		
22. Accessibility and travelling distance					.530		
23. Official documents					.488		
24. The size of the conference room						.747	
25. The quality of AV equipment at the venue						.724	
26. The location of the conference breakout room						.683	
27. Comfortable seating						.626	
28. Education and networking							.766
29. Guest or keynote speaker							.712
30. Overall affordability							.687
31. Other opportunities							.521
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.							
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.							
a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.							

In summary, there were 31 variables identified through Principal Component Analysis (PCA), while 7 components were retained and suppressed. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure verified the sampling adequacy of the analysis ( $KMO = .921$ ), and specified that the reliability of the data was of an extremely high standard. The Bartlett's test of sphericity also confirmed a correlation between items or variables that were sufficiently large enough for PCA, and as a result, there were significant relationships among the variables contained in this data. The 31 variables or items from the initial questionnaire were suppressed and retained; while 7 components or factors were composed.

#### 6.1.4 The potential of Competitor Countries in Asia (Descriptive Statistics)

With regard to other destination countries in the Asia, the delegates were asked to provide the names of the countries where they had attended ICs similar to those they had attended in Thailand. The resultant descriptive statistics are displayed in Appendices 17.

With regard to the Asian countries where the delegates most frequently had attended similar ICs to those in Thailand China and Hong Kong (28.6%) were the most popular, followed by Singapore (23.2%) and Malaysia (16.4%). Japan and Korea were in joint fifth place (11.9%). However, significantly, these numbers did not include the number of international conferences and conventions that delegates attended in their own countries. Figure 6.1.4 illustrates the percentage of attendance of these delegates and the rank of the country listed.

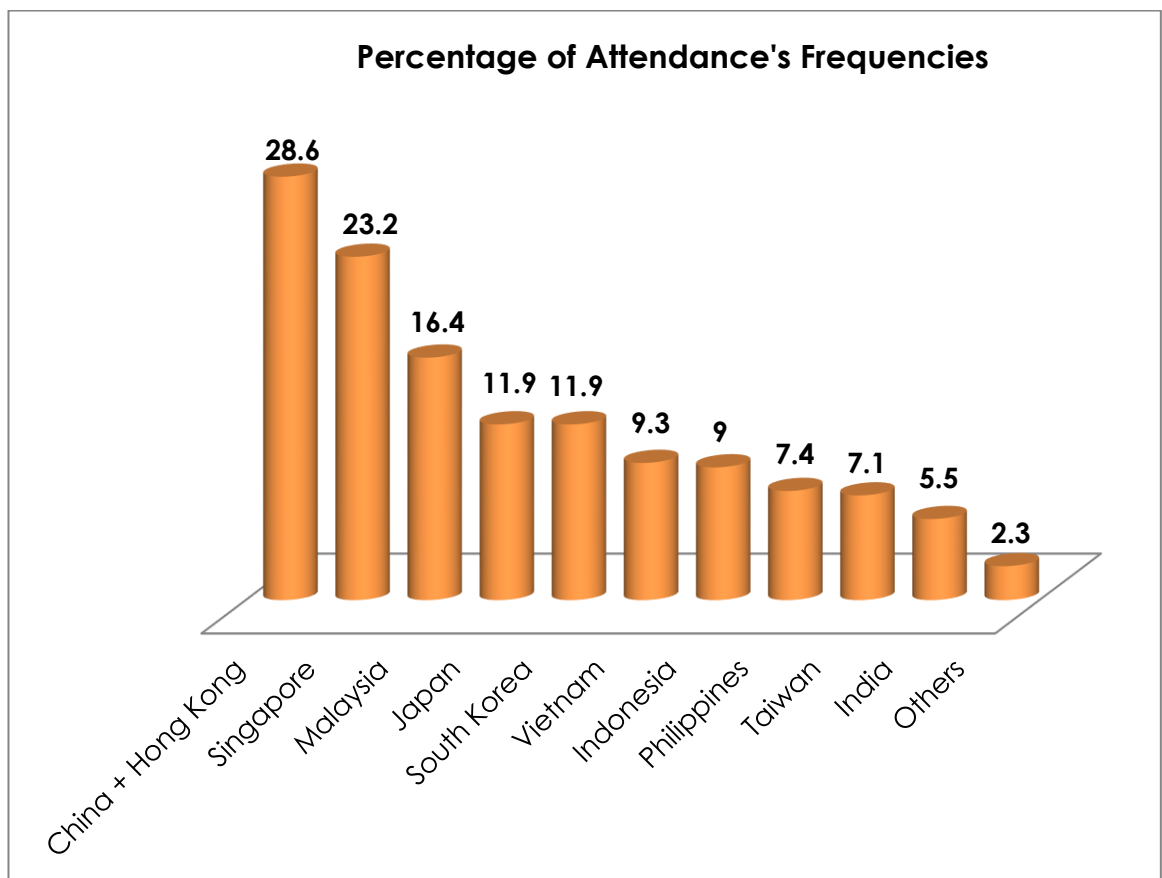


Figure 6.1.4: The countries in Asia that delegates most frequently attended (Descriptive Statistics)

### **6.1.5 The potential of Thailand as a Destination and a Hub in the Asian International Convention Industry (Descriptive Statistics): Perspectives of Delegates and Organising Committees and Planners**

In order to assess the potential of Thailand to achieve a major market share of the IC industry among competing countries in the same region, the delegates were asked to provide their perspectives on this issue. The possible answers consisted of 'yes', 'no', and 'possibly' (see Appendices 1 and 2, for copies of the questionnaires).

More than eighty percent of the delegates (86.4%, 267 out of 309) believed that Thailand had the potential to achieve this goal. Slightly over twelve percent of the delegates (12.3%, 38 out of 309) believed that Thailand could possibly achieve this goal. In contrast, a very small proportion of the delegates (1.3%, 4 out of 309) felt that Thailand had no potential to achieve this goal. There were also two delegates who declined to answer this question, accounting for 0.6% of the total. This information is illustrated in Figure 6.1.5, and Appendices 18.

With regard to the opinions of the organising committees and planners on the same issue, nearly fifty percent answered 'yes' (46.6%, 96 out of 206) to the question of whether or not Thailand had the potential to dominate the Asian IC market; whereas a minority of just over five percent (5.3%, 11 out of 206) replied in the negative. However, nearly half (48.1%, 99 out of 206) answered that it was possibly for Thailand to achieve this goal. The average score was 2.01, which can be interpreted to mean that Thailand may have the potential to gain a major share of the IC market. This information is illustrated in Figure 6.1.5 and Appendices 18.

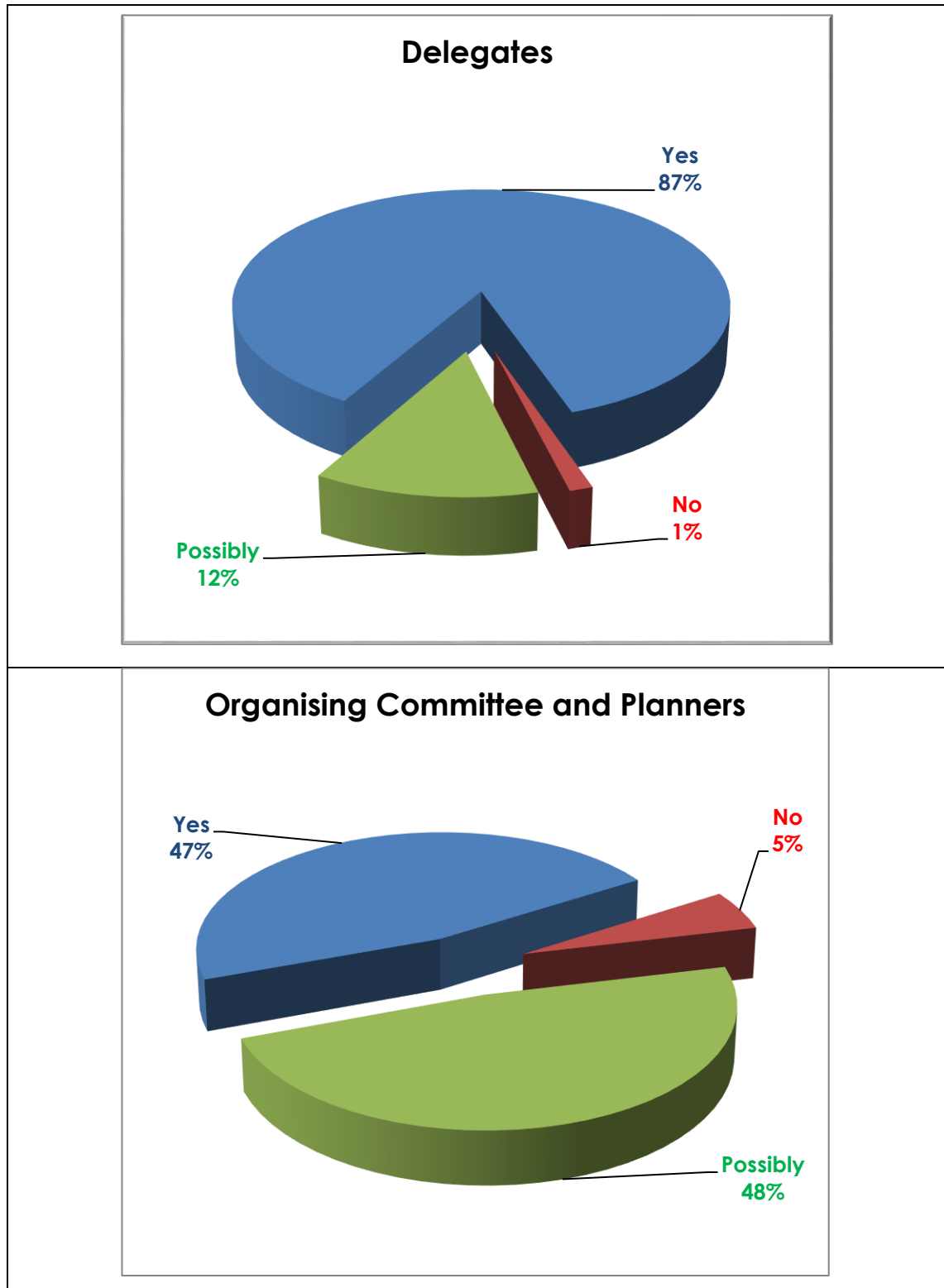


Figure 6.1.5: A Comparison between the perspectives of the delegates and organising committees and planners on the potential of Thailand to be a destination and a hub in the Asian and Pacific international convention Industry.



In summary, a majority of the delegates (87%) believed that Thailand has the potential to dominate the Asian IC industry. On the other hand, the organising committees and planners were more cautious, with less than half or 47% of them in agreement, while just under half or 48% felt that this was just a possibility, as illustrated in Figure 6.1.5.

#### **6.1.6 The Key Benefits that Thailand has to Offer as an IC Destination Country (Descriptive Statistics)**

This section examines the key benefits that Thailand has to offer as an international convention destination for potential customers, from the perspectives of both the end-users (delegates), and the middle-users (organising committees and planners).

Both the delegates and the organising committees and planners were asked for their opinions regarding the key benefits that Thailand had to offer as an IC destination country. They were specifically asked about the advantages Thailand has compared to the regional competitor countries.

The top ten key benefits that Thailand has to offer the convention industry were 1) *'the service quality'*; 2) *'affordability and cost'*; 3) *'attractions, sightseeing, or alike'*; 4) *'culture and local people'*; 5) *'the image of the destination'*; 6) *'safety and security'*; 7) *'the quality of facilities and conference venue'*; 8) *'standard of hotels and accommodation'*; 9) *'the provision and quality of food and beverages'*; and 10) *'immigration and visa'*. (See Appendices 7 for further details). Figure 6.1.6(1) illustrates the results from delegates.

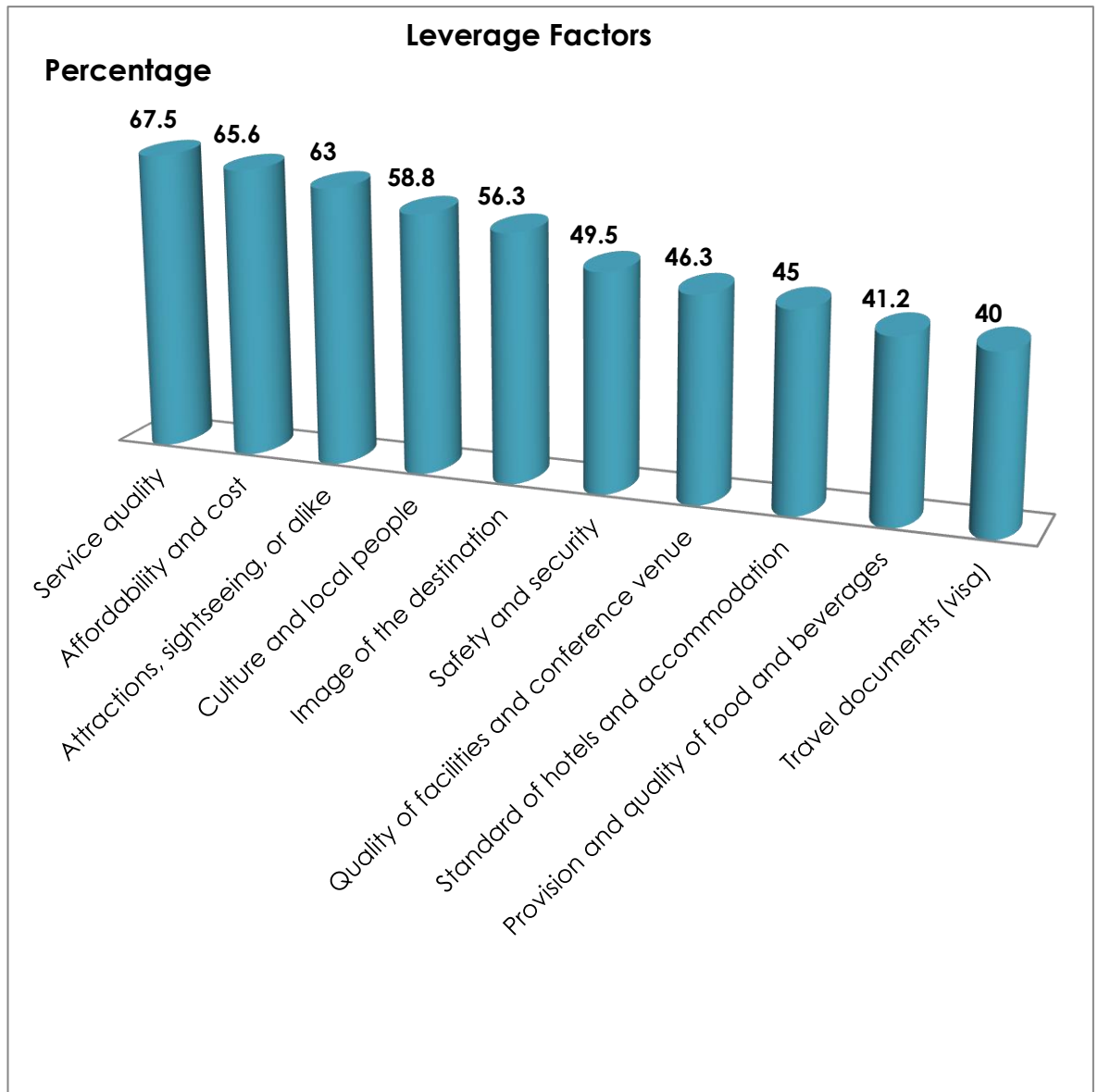


Figure 6.1.6(1): Top ten elements relegating to international conventions' operation and management in Thailand regarding the delegates

Whilst, organising committees and planners perceived that the key benefits that Thailand had to offer as an IC destination, are as follows: 1) 'the image of the destination'; 2) 'attractions, sightseeing, or alike'; 3) 'affordability and cost'; 4) 'culture and local people'; 5) 'the standard of hotels and accommodation'; 6) 'service quality'; 7) 'climate and weather'; 8) 'other opportunities'; 9) 'the quality of facilities and conference venue'; and 10) 'safety and security'. Further details are illustrated in Appendices 7.

Figure 6.1.6(2) illustrates the top ten elements relating to international conventions' operation and management in Thailand regarding the perspectives of organising committee and planners.

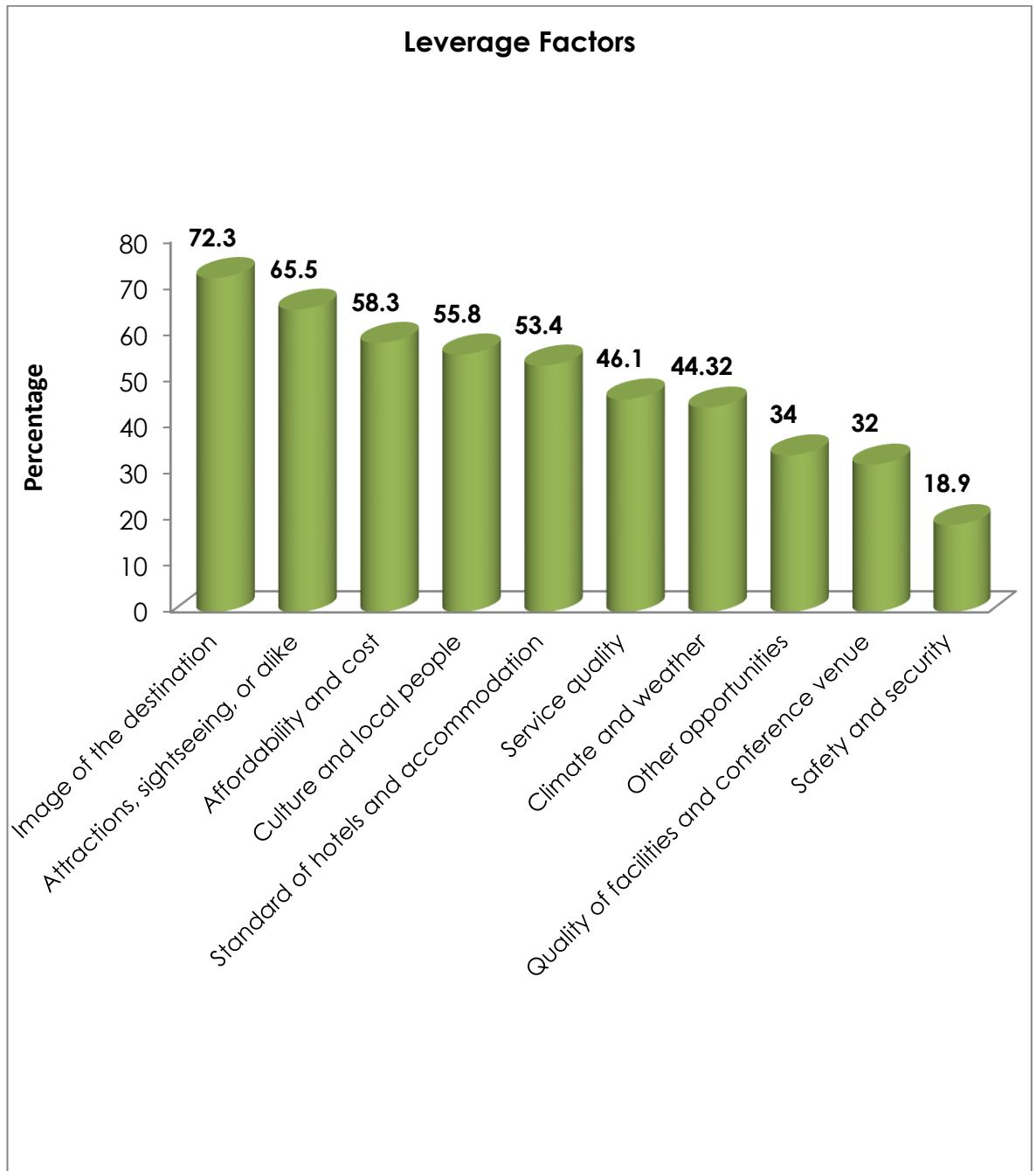


Figure 6.1.6(2): Top ten elements relating to international conventions' operation and management in Thailand regarding the perspectives of organising committee and planners

### **6.1.7 The factors which limit the growth of Thailand as an international convention hub for the MICE industry in Asia**

Further analysis was conducted to ascertain the factors which limit the growth of Thailand as an international convention hub for the MICE industry in Asia or the Pacific region. The results from this analysis meet the objectives 3. That is to seek the factors of leverage and limiting the growth of Thailand as a destination country for the international conference and convention industry, and to position itself as a hub for this industry in Asia.

With regard to the opinions of delegates who had participated in international conventions held in Thailand, the factors which limit growth in Asia are as follows:

These delegates thought that the instability and uncertainty of the '*political situation*' in Thailand was the weakest link of the industry because this issue relates to their safety and security while staying in the country. Only 62 delegates out of 311 (19.9%) were satisfied with this issue. The second weakest factor was the local '*guest or keynote speakers*'. Only 63 delegates out of 311 (20.3%) of the total were pleased with this element, followed by the '*IC content, theme or topics*' which counted for 24.8%, or 83 out of 311 delegates. This aspect is also linked to the use of local keynote speakers. The fourth weakest aspect was '*education and networking*' with responses counting for 26.7%, or 83 out of 311 delegates. Similar to the findings reported in previous chapters, the most important factor influencing these delegates to participate in any international convention was the networking and education factor. These delegates, who hold senior positions in their organisations, mostly are looking for networking opportunities from these international events. The other two weakest aspects were '*intervening opportunities (other convention, holiday)*' which counted for 33.1% (103 of 311); and the '*climate and weather*' which counted for 37.6% (117 of 311) delegates. Some delegates who are from the countries which have different types of

climate and weather may feel uncomfortable with the hot, and humid climate or during the Monsoon season. This is no problem within the convention venue as most of these delegates were satisfied with the climatic conditions inside the venue. However, it may be an issue outside the venue, especially during the hot season when the temperature can reach as high as 40 Degrees Celsius. More detail can be found Appendices 26. Figure 6.1.7(1) demonstrates Thailand's weakest links for international conventions from the perspective of these delegates.

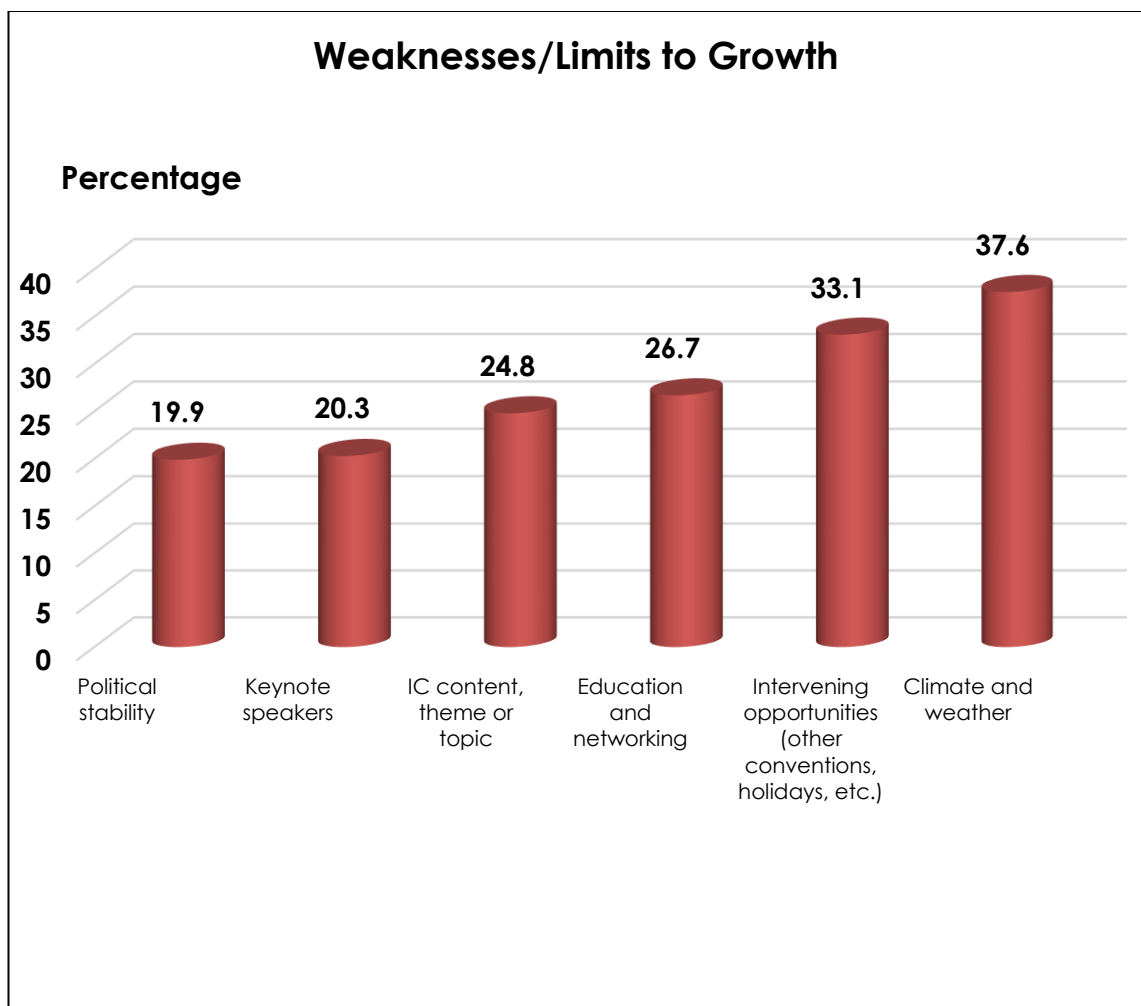


Figure 6.1.7(1): Top six weakest links for international conventions in Thailand.

Similarly, with respect to the organising committee and planners the top six aspects of the weaknesses to international conventions held in Thailand are as follows:

Like the Delegates, the top weakest aspect was the '*political situation*' which was only 6.3%, or 13 out of 206 organising committee and planners. The second and third limitations to growth were '*IC content, theme or topics*', which counted for 8.7%, or 18 out of 188 and '*education and networking*' counted for 10.2%, or 21 out of 206 organising committee and planners. The '*guest or keynote speaker*' (11.2%, or 37) was another of the weakest elements, which is no different from the delegates' perspectives. However, the two least weaknesses were the '*travel documents*' (18%, or 37 out of 169), and '*safety*' which counted for 18.9% (39 out 206) organising committee and planners. Figure 6.1.7(2) shows the top six limits to growth of international conventions held in Thailand with regard to the perspectives of the organising committee and planners.

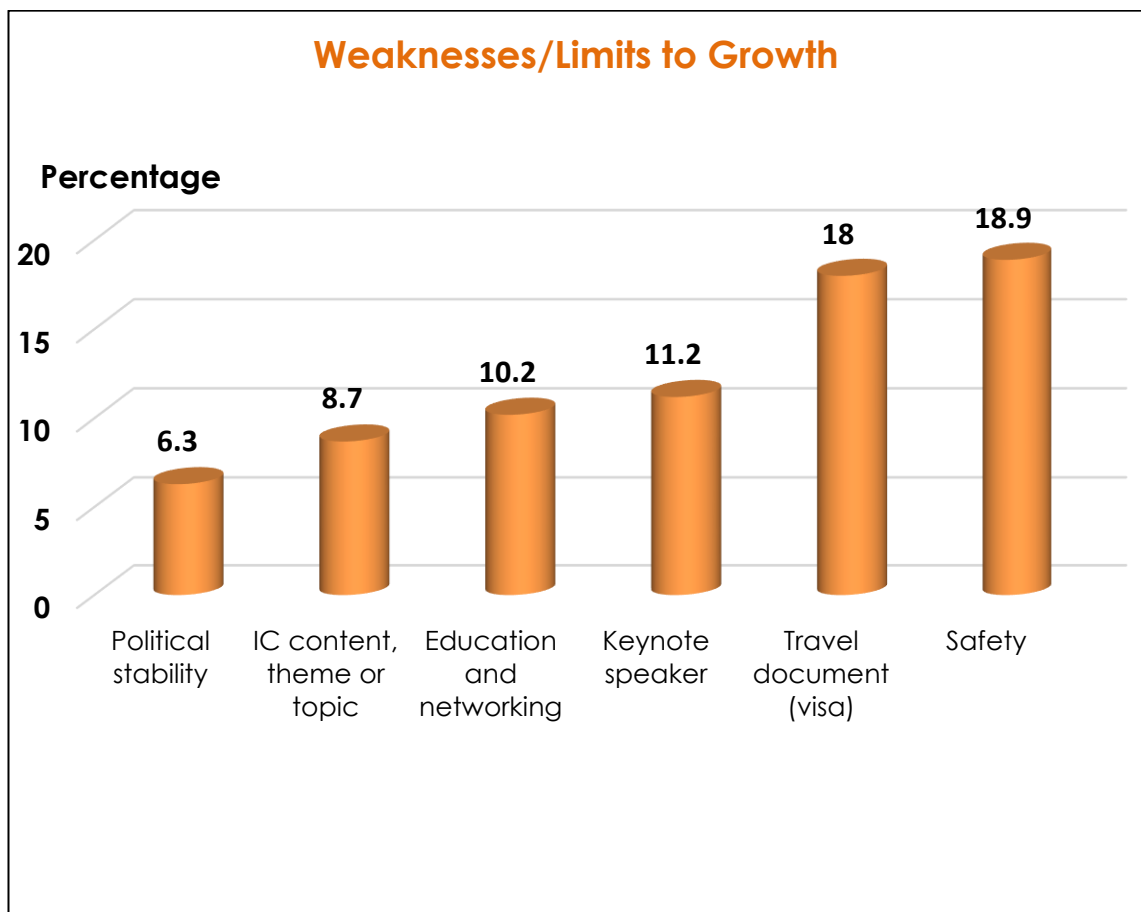


Figure 6.1.7(2): Top six limits to growth of international conventions held in Thailand with regard to the perspectives of organising committees and planners

## 6.2 SUMMARY

The main purpose of this chapter is to investigate the factors which limit the growth of Thailand as a hub in the Asian region for the international IC industry. The results of the study indicate that Thailand has the potential to achieve this goal. 267 out of 309 of the delegates, accounting for 86.4% of the total, agreeing that Thailand had great potential to obtain this goal. There were numerous advantages and positive aspects to Thailand as a destination country for the IC industry, as follows: (1) 'service quality', (2) 'affordability or cost', (3) 'attractions, sightseeing, etc.', (4) 'culture and local people', (5) 'the image of the destination', (6) 'safety and security', (7) 'quality of the facilities and standard conference venues', (8) 'hotel and accommodation standards', (9) food and beverage quality and sufficiency', and (10) 'official documents'. These ten factors were the *top ten aspects* from the perspective of the delegates. The following *top ten aspects* of Thailand in terms of what it had to offer as a destination is from the point of the view of the IC organising committees and planners and include the following:(1) 'the image of the destination', (2) 'attractions, sightseeing, etc.', (3) 'culture and local people', (4) 'affordability or cost', (5) 'food and beverage quality and sufficiency', (6) hotel and accommodation standards', (7) 'service quality', (8) 'weather or climate', (9) 'other opportunities', and (10) 'quality of the facilities and standard conference venues'.

According to the evaluation of the satisfaction levels of the delegates, the *top five aspects* that they were most satisfied with, in terms of the mean scores, include the following: (1) 'culture and local people', (2) 'cleanliness and comfort of the conference venue', (3) 'the taste of the food', (4) 'the variety of food and beverages', and (5) the 'cleanliness and comfort of the restaurants in conference venues'.

However, the delegates also agreed with the idea that Thailand as a destination needs to take the following factors into account: (1) 'other

opportunities, i.e. other conventions, holidays, etc.', (2) 'accessibility or travel distance', (3) 'political situation or instability', (4) 'crime rate', and (5) 'entertainment, nightlife, etc.' The aspect of 'accessibility or travel distance' was particularly relevant for these delegates because most of them resided in either Africa, the Americas, or Europe. The satisfaction levels of the delegates were quite good, as indicated by the fact that the lowest mean score was 3.83.

According to the ANOVA results, the differences in terms of group means had some significant aspects. Nonetheless, the results of the Post Hoc Test, conducted with the Tukey HSD, revealed that the differences were not significant in terms of the group means. Some of the significant differences were marginal; therefore, any significant differences in terms of group means could have occurred by chance. According to the results of the Factor Analysis, and the 31 variables identified by PCA, 7 components were suppressed and retained. These 7 *components or factors* include the following: (1) quality of the facilities and the management of the venue, (2) appeal of the destination, (3) service quality, (4) the provision and quality of food and beverages, (5) the political stability and security of the destination, (6) the quality of the facilities, and, (7) opportunities and networking. However, the level of competition among Asian countries for their share of this lucrative market is very high, and according to the information provided by the delegates, the *top ten Asian countries* where they attended similar ICs to those they had experienced in Thailand, include the following: (1) China and Hong Kong, (2) Singapore, (3) Malaysia, (4) Japan, (4) South Korea, (6) Vietnam, (7) Indonesia, and (8) the Philippines.

In conclusion, this chapter has shown that from the perspectives of delegates, the limitations to the growth of Thailand for the international convention industry are *political stability, local keynote speakers, IC content, theme or topics, education, connection and networking, intervening opportunities, i.e., other conventions, holidays, etc.,* and



*climate and weather*. According to the organising committees and planners, the limitations to growth are political instability, IC content, theme or topics, education, connection and networking, local keynote speakers, immigration and visa and safety and security.

The next chapter, Chapter Seven, presents the qualitative analysis of the potential of Thailand as an Asian MICE industry hub for international conventions. The analysis is particular focused on marketing strategies for potential and growth.

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## CHAPTER SEVEN

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# QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS ON FACTORS INFLUENCING INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ATTENDANCE OF DELEGATES AND ELEMENTS OR CRITERIA OF ORGANISING COMMITTEES AND PLANNERS WHEN SELECTING INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION DESTINATION

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### 7.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the results of the qualitative analysis. Qualitative data were collected from three approaches: interviews, focus group and open-ended questions from the questionnaire survey. The research methods used to collect this qualitative data were through face-to-face interview, online interview, self-completed and online questionnaire survey, including using the secondary data of focus group which was organised by TCEB, a governmental organisation of Thailand. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the qualitative data. The findings of this chapter yield the answers of research objectives 1 and 2 with regard to qualitative approach. 7.1 presents nodes and code creation. 7.2 presents factors influencing participation at international conventions.

### 7.1 NODES AND CODES CREATION

With the facilitation of NVivo 10, data derived from interviews, focus group and open-ended questions from the questionnaire survey was uploaded on the computer software programme. Then, this qualitative data was examined and identified with nodes and themes in accordance with the thematic analysis guideline created by Attride-Stirling (2001). The nodes were examined and clustered in terms of similarity to identify themes. These node clusters are presented in Figure 7.1 below.

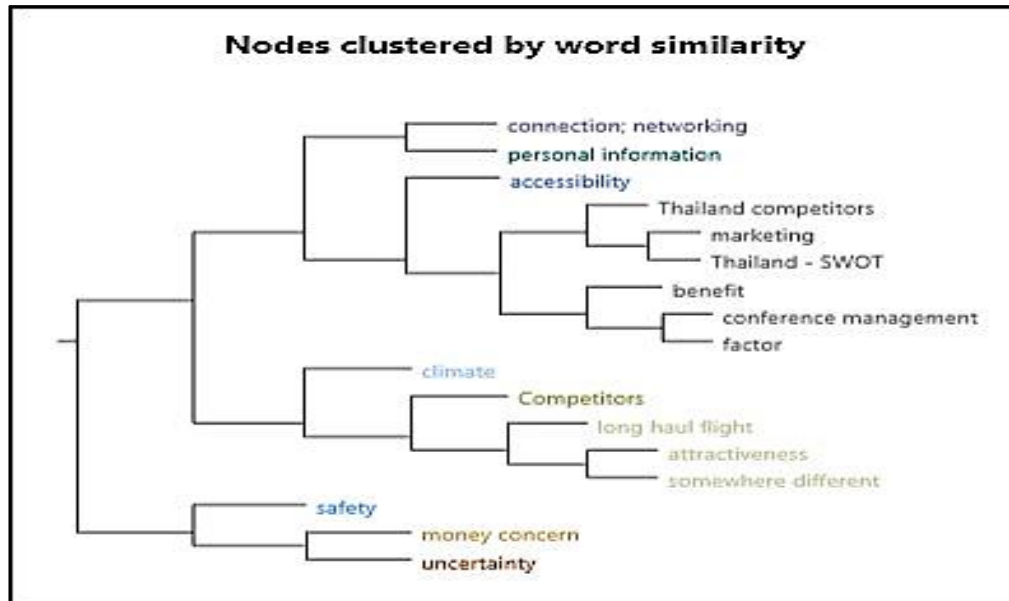


Figure 7.1: Nodes Created by NVivo10 (clustered by word similarity)

## 7.2 FACTORS INFLUENCING INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ATTENDANCE

By examining the data, themes emerge from the information that demonstrates what influences delegates' decision to attend an international convention. The themes identified are presented in table 7.2 below.

Table 7.2: The Identification of Nodes, Codes and Themes

<b>Nodes</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Themes identified</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Networking and making connections</b></li> <li>• <b>Benefits and intervening opportunities</b></li> <li>• <b>Money issue</b></li> <li>• <b>Safety issue</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>1) Personal and business factor</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1.</b> Advanced technology does not prevent professionals from participating in international conferences.</li> <li><b>2.</b> Keeping up-to-date and networking or making connections are the main purposes of participating in international conferences.</li> <li><b>3.</b> Benefits and other intervening opportunities from IC destination is one of factors attracting</li> </ol>

		<p>delegates' attendance.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Affordability and good value for money in the destination country is a vital consideration.</li> <li>5. Safety and security are one of the main concerns of the delegates.</li> <li>6. Familiarity reduces uncertainty and insecurity.</li> <li>7. Cons or scams make delegates feel unsafe and can create bad reputation to the IC destination.</li> </ol>
<b>Nodes</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Themes identified</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Accessibility</b></li> <li>• <b>No-time consuming; Long-haul Flights</b></li> <li>• <b>Visa issue</b></li> <li>• <b>Uncertainty</b></li> <li>• <b>Infrastructure and facilities</b></li> <li>• <b>Logistics and transportation</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>2) Location and Destination factor</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The location and accessibility of the conference destination country is another key factor for delegates considering participation in an IC.</li> <li>2. Accessibility of conference venue and accommodation of delegates is closed and easy to reach one another.</li> <li>3. The factor of long-haul flights do not matter that much to the delegates; the main issues were great experiences, and other opportunities in the destination country.</li> <li>4. The infrastructure and transportation systems in the destination country are fundamental facilities of international conferences.</li> <li>5. Delegates prefer tourist visas</li> </ol>

		<p>to business visas.</p> <p>6. Political instability affects to delegates' decision as this matter relates to their safety and security.</p> <p>7. Language and cultural barriers are related to delegates' uncertainty.</p>
<i>Nodes</i>	<i>Codes</i>	<i>Themes identified</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Attractiveness</b></li> <li>• <b>Somewhere Different</b></li> <li>• <b>Exchange rate</b></li> <li>• <b>Climate</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>3) Location stimuli</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The theme of the IC was a key issue, but the factor of the destination country was also influential.</li> <li>2. The attractiveness of the destination country is also influential the travellers.</li> <li>3. Attractiveness of the surrounding area, including culture also the key factor attracting delegates' decision.</li> <li>4. The attraction of big cities and/or capital cities.</li> <li>5. A favorable currency exchange rate is another way to attract delegates to participate in international conferences.</li> <li>6. Delegates from cold countries normally attend conferences in the winter.</li> </ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Effectiveness of IC operation and</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>4) Convention factor</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The conference centre and the accommodation for the delegates must be easily accessible from one another.</li> </ol>

<p><b>Management</b></p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. The conference centre and facilities need to meet international standards.</li> <li>3. Conference content is also important attribute for delegates' decision.</li> <li>4. The traditional or formal conference structure was considered to be too passive for delegates</li> <li>5. Extra activities and tours are needed to make the IC programs more attractive to delegates.</li> <li>6. Conferences should be organized with the combination of conference activities and local, cultural activities.</li> <li>7. Service quality and its delivery is the significant element that the organising committees and planners need to pay attention to.</li> <li>8. Little Things Make a Big Difference.</li> <li>9. English communication skills are essential for convention industry.</li> </ol>
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### 7.2.1 Codes: Personal and Business Factors

**Theme 1: Advanced technology does not prevent professionals from participating in international conventions.**

Currently, the world is inundated with information and telecommunications technology, such as the Internet, mobile phones, social media, as well as advanced mobile phone applications. Some

people who work in the MICE industry are concerned about the negative influence of technology on participation in the industry. However, the research analysis revealed that technology does not have a negative influence on the decision making-process of potential IC delegates, and visitors to international exhibitions.

*"I think Saigon's mentioned at the very beginning, that using technology is not as good as face-to-face meetings, and I totally agree with that. I do believe as well though that our industry is way too confident with that as you just mentioned, there will be a change, we certainly sit on that argument that no matter what happens in the outside world, nothing is going to replace a good convention or a good meeting, which is true, which does not mean that we do not need to adopt the new technologies."* (Focus group: MICE Specialist 1)

**Theme 2: Keeping up-to-date and networking or making connections are the main purposes of participating in international conventions.**

The main factors that drive the attendance levels at international conferences are: (1) the IC theme, topic, or content, and (2) opportunities for networking, or making new contacts.

**(1) Content and Junior Participants**

The factor of the IC theme, topic, or content is one element that attracts junior or younger professional participants to attend international conferences:

*"In my experience it is not the country that will bring me back for another conference - it is the conference subject and program. This is more often dictated by the relevant discipline structure and the organising committee."* (Questionnaire for delegates: Open-ended question 37)

**(2) Networking and Senior Participants**

As previously mentioned, the senior or older professional participants were less interested in the factor of the IC theme, topic, or content, and more

motivated by the factor of networking as they are already familiar with the content. They are more focused on making connections with new business contacts. Another key factor motivating their attendance is that they also want to remain up-to-date in their professional field. These results were similar to the findings of a similar study that one of participants of a focus group:

*“Our research shows that our two main reasons, one of them was the content, the other was the networking. It wasn't surprising that for doctors over the age of 45, their only reason is networking. Why? Because they already know it, and even if they don't, they will only come to a few sessions. The nature of networking is not coming into a room and seeing a load of familiar faces, the challenge is the fact that I don't know anyone, and this is where people see that this is not hype, but a tool, and the meetings last three days. People want to come for those three days and take advantage of it.”* (Focus group: Specialist 3)

**Theme 3: Benefits and other intervening opportunities from IC destination is one of the factors attracting delegates' attendance.**

Despite the fact that many delegates focus on the topic and theme of the IC, the destination country of the conference is another key sub-factor that potential participants take into consideration before making the decision of whether or not to attend an international conference. If there are other opportunities or fringe benefits associated with this destination by the delegates, such as the opportunity to go on holiday after the conference is over, the aspect of a long-haul flight does not even slightly influence their decision-making process. The elements of other intervening opportunities are among the wide variety of sub-factors which have the most influence on the decision making-process of potential IC attendees. Some international conference attendees, especially the guest speakers, will plan to have their holidays in that conference destination country after their conferencing. They will look for what other opportunities or benefits they can have from that destination country after the conference.



*"...especially if you are travelling a long distance, the other opportunities, tourism, for example, immediately became more important. So for me, it took 19 hours to get from Vancouver, and I believe that it was really important that there was an opportunity for us to see other things."*  
(Interview: Organising committee 4)

**Theme 4: Affordability and good value for money in the destination country is a vital consideration.**

The issue of cost and affordability are also highly influential in terms of the decision-making process. Therefore, if the costs in the destination country are affordable, it makes it easier for a potential participant to decide in the affirmative. While some delegates had their conference or convention expenses paid for by the organisations they worked for, others had to pay all of their own expenses out of their own pockets. Furthermore, some delegates also paid extra for their spouses or partners to attend the convention with them or to go on holiday with them after it. Additionally, if the rate of exchange is favorable for the potential participants, this will also influence their decision of whether to attend an IC. Moreover, if the destination country provided benefits other than affordability, it may influence their decision to return to the same destination country for another IC or other purpose:

*"Well, I think you have to take costs into account. Costs are very important."* (Interview: Delegate 3)

*"The most important factor is the subject of the conference and then can we afford it? It was paid for by my company, so basically they just had to make sure I agreed to go."* (Interview: Delegate 1)

**Theme 5: Safety and security are one of the main concerns of the delegates.**

The elements of safety and security in the destination country are another significant factor that has a major influence on the decision-making process of the delegates. Apart from their own personal safety and the

security of their belongings, other typical issues of concern include the aspects of a different culture, language, and religion. Therefore, the destination countries must have a good public image as a safe country, with a low crime rate. In other words, the kind of place that everyone can feel safe visiting.

*“In 2003, the venue was undergoing remodeling and the hotel was too. It looked very bad. I stayed about 11 stories up in the hotel and often the elevator was not working. There were electrical outages often, so I was afraid to take the elevator anyways. The remodeling and frequent power outages left a bad impression. The destination country would only matter if it was unsafe to travel.”* (Interview: Delegate 1)

*“The main concern for delegates at conferences in Thailand continues to be security. Outsiders are concerned by the protests or demonstrations by supporters of political parties. Even if they do not feel their lives are in danger, the threat of travel delays, etc., are sufficient to deter many visitors. Clearly, security is an overriding issue.”* (Interview: Organising committee 8)

While many potential delegates may be fearful about international terrorism, there are other factors which they take into consideration, such as diseases or illnesses, impure drinking water and food poisoning:

*“So, I think people are concerned about personal safety. I think people are concerned about getting sick from some disease that does not exist in their own country.”* (Interview: Organising committee 4)

*“The country destination would only matter if it was unsafe to travel. I would not go to a conference in Iraq or Afghanistan right now for example.”* (Interview: Delegate 1)

Similarly, if the destination country is also a popular tourist destination, potential delegates feel safer and less fearful. Significantly, some IC committees have a tendency to avoid visiting countries which have more

significant cultural differences than just a language barrier, such as countries which hold anti-Western beliefs.

**Theme 6: Familiarity reduces uncertainty and insecurity.**

All of the delegates were concerned about their personal safety; and were careful not to do anything dangerous that might put their lives at risk. They were also warned about being conned or scammed when they first arrived at the airport. The fact that Thailand had an unfamiliar language and culture also made the delegates more cautious. However, more often than not, the delegates visited the same location as it became more familiar and less threatening.

Although, the more frequently delegates travelled to a particular destination; the more safe and familiar they felt, this was noticed even if the country is experiencing internal turmoil, civil unrest, or their embassy has issued a travel warning.

**Theme 7: Cons or scams make delegates feel unsafe and can create bad reputation to the IC destination.**

Cons or scams at the airport, in which the victims are overcharged or coerced into buying something, have caused negative reactions among both delegates and tour operators, as well as damage the image and the reputation of the destination country.

*"Warn people about the scams at Bangkok's international and other potential safety and crime issues!"* (Questionnaire for Delegate: Open-ended question 40).

*"Perhaps more reliable and honest tour operators. Also not to be forced to visit certain stores, and badger you when you have booked a tour package."* (Questionnaire for Delegate: Open-ended question 26)

## 7.2.2 Location and Destination Factors

**Theme 1: The location and accessibility of the conference destination country is another key factor for delegates considering participation in an IC.**

The location of the destination country is also important to them, albeit to a slightly lesser extent. In other words, the destination should be easily accessible, and they should not have to spend too many hours on a plane. However, if they can derive other benefits or opportunities from the destination country, the amount of hours that they have to spend on the plane will not matter as much to them.

*"The logistics, if all your conference attendees are based in America, then you will probably have your conference in America. But if all your attendees are in Europe then you will have it in Europe, it is a kind of criteria." (Interview: Delegate 3)*

**Theme 2: Accessibility of conference venue and accommodation of delegates is close and easy to reach.**

The accessibility of the accommodation from the conference or convention centre or venue is also a significant factor. The proximity of the accommodation and IC venue should not be too far, and if the IC is being held in a hotel, then their accommodation should naturally be at the same hotel. The proximity of these two locations is also important because of the factor of the traveling time from one place to the other. For example, if the traffic is particularly bad during rush hour in the destination country, this means that the delegates may have considerably less time for leisure, including entertainment and nightlife, or sightseeing and tourist attractions. Furthermore, if the delegates are prevented by traffic or other factors from participating in these typical tourist activities, then there may be a ripple effect. In other words, local businesses and service providers may suffer from a decrease in income. In addition, an increased amount

of expenditure by tourists will also increase national revenue for both the people and the government of Thailand:

*“The conference venue was good. It was a little strange it was above the mall and separate from the hotel, and we had to walk through a garage to get to the meeting, but it was clean, comfortable, and large enough. The food and meeting area for posters and networking was very good. It would be nice to have a hotel with a conference venue in the same building. Maybe Thailand has, but for the two conferences I attended this was not the case.”* (Interview: Delegate 1)

*“Less travelling from and to the meeting venue to the hotel..”*  
(Questionnaire for Delegate: Open-ended question 60)

The delegates considered that their accommodation, and the IC centre or venue must be either located closely to each other, or at least be easily accessible.

*“The two conferences I attended did not have a hotel with everything together, the rooms, and the conference venue. It would be nice to have it all together without crossing streets, parking lots, etc.”* (Interview: Delegate 1)

**Theme 3: Long-haul flights do not matter that much to the delegates; the main issues were great experiences, and other opportunities in the destination.**

The factor of long-haul flights mattered to some of the respondents; however, this factor became increasingly less significant if the destination country offered some benefits or other opportunities.

The great expectations of the delegates regarding having a great experience while in the destination country is a sub-element that potential participants consider before making a decision about whether or not to attend an international conference. Apart from the most prominent factors – the topic, theme, or content of the conference, and an opportunity to network or make connections – providing delegates with a

memorable trip, exotic experiences is an element of the trip that at least some of the participants expected to receive. Therefore, adding some touches to the conference that evokes aspects of the destination country, as well as some vivid local color makes the conference seem more attractive, exciting, or interesting. Perhaps reminding the participants that they are somewhere else, somewhere different to their home country, which helps them to appreciate and remember the unique qualities of the destination country long after the conference is over.

*"I mean Thailand is a long way, from here it is 14 hours. Do I think it's too far? Well for the people going to conferences or conventions, you have got to understand, they are not paying. So they just look at the benefits of the place, they don't really consider the cost of the flight; they don't really consider the time. Generally "they are on holiday", and they are off with their wives or partners or whatever and so they are going for a good time" (Interview: Delegate 3)*

*"I did both; I went to the conferences and also had a holiday in between, so I paid for myself and my University paid for some." (Interview: Delegate 7)*

*"Great experience and would return anytime there is an interesting conference. Would also like to come on vacation at some time in the future." (Questionnaire for Delegates: Open-ended question 62)*

#### **Theme 4: Infrastructure and transportation in the destination country is one of the fundamental facilities required for ICs.**

The infrastructure and transportation in the destination country is a fundamental facility for ICs, as they need function to facilitate the production of goods and services, in terms of meeting the needs of their customers. For example, the delegates must have access to technology such as the telephone, the Internet, Wi-Fi, etc., and in terms of transportation, the standards of both land and air travel should be high. With regard to air travel, there are plenty of selective flights and airlines for international conference-goers to choose from, in terms of both direct or

transit flights. Therefore, the international airport must not be located too far away from the city centre, or if it is, there should be an airport link to the city providing convenient and rapid transport for tourists. With regard to land travel, the conditions of the roads should be of an acceptable international standard, and feature a variety of domestic transportation links.

*"Their infrastructure, their transport systems are very very good, and in both cases the airport is very close to the city." (Interview: Delegate 3)*

*"Bangkok is very good in terms of fundamentals for the MICE industry: infrastructure, know-how, experience and accessibility." (Interview: Organising committee 4)*

*"Hong Kong and Singapore are more expensive, but they're slightly more sophisticated. Also, logistically, they're probably easier to get to. Virtually every major airline flies to Hong Kong and Singapore. Their infrastructure and transport systems are very, very good, and in both cases the airport is very close to the city. In the case of Suvarnabhumi you're about an hour from town." (Interview: Delegate 3)*

*"In Malaysia, the airport is a long way out, but they've got this fast train there. Pretty similar to Thailand!" (Interview: Delegate 2)*

*"Improve road safety. Should be easier to get receipts. Tsunami safety and other kinds of safety. Good deals for partners are a draw card." (Questionnaire for delegates: Open-ended question 2)*

Similarly, there should be convenient transportation both within the city centre and in the wider metropolitan area. In the case of the cities which experience heavy traffic, especially during rush hour, such as Bangkok, there should be a variety of convenient, easy-to-use forms of public transportation provided. For example, Bangkok offers both an underground subway system, or the MRT, and an elevated monorail known as the Sky Train or the BTS. Furthermore, the information regarding public transportation should be adequate to meet the needs of tourists.

*“Traffic is always a problem in Bangkok. The expansion of the Sky Train line will be good.”* (Questionnaire for Delegate: Open-ended question 54)

The infrastructure of the destination country must also be good or at least acceptable by international standards. For example, the standard rate for an international phone call should not be too expensive. Also, hotels should provide the delegates with free wireless Internet, both in the conference centre or venue and their hotel rooms:

*“Expensive telephone fees and internet use is not very convenient.”* (Questionnaire for Delegate: Open-ended question 29)

*“Free Internet at hotels.”* (Questionnaire for Delegate: Open-ended question 51)

*Internet connections are terrible in hotels.”* (Questionnaire for Delegate: Open-ended question 66)

### **Theme 5: Delegates prefer tourist visas to business visas.**

The type of visa is another issue that delegates are often concerned about as it takes both time and money to apply for a visa; therefore, the delegates preferred to make the process as easy as possible. In Thailand, for some nationalities, a tourist visa was available on arrival. However, some travellers' experience of obtaining a visa has a significant impact on their perception of the destination country and their level of satisfaction. The delegates are business travelers who will stay in the destination for a short period of time; the visa application process needs to be made as easy as possible for potential delegates. Most of the delegates mentioned a preference for a tourist visa over a business visa for a number of reasons, including expense and convenience:

*“Getting a business visa was expensive, especially when I don't need one when I'm there as a tourist.”* (Questionnaire for Delegate: Open-ended question 17)



*“Allow conference attendees to enter on tourist visa rather than business visa.” (Questionnaire for Delegate: Open-ended question 63)*

**Theme 6: Political instability affects to delegates' decision as this matter relates to their safety and security.**

The political situation or the level of political stability is also a very significant factor in terms of the choice of destination country. An increased level of political stability indicates an increased national level of security and personal safety:

*“Political situation has to be improved.” (Questionnaire for Delegate: Open-ended question 3)*

*“Don't ever allow the international and domestic airports to be closed again by force.” (Questionnaire for Delegate: Open-ended question 78)*

*“No occupation of airports or other public places. Punishment of the guilty as terrorists!” (Questionnaire for Delegate: Open-ended question 82)*

However, the more frequently those delegates attend ICs in the same destination country, the more familiar and safe it seems to them. In this case, the uncertainty of the political situation has a much less significant influence on their decision-making process on the choice of destination country or IC participation:

*“I have been traveling to Thailand on and off for more than thirty years, and over that time there have been many political crises and they are not normally a major problem. I mean, the worst things that seem to happen to foreigners are delays or maybe they got stuck at the airport, something like that. I don't know; it's very rare for foreigners, except in the very south of Thailand, to be in danger. So, that was not a great concern.” (Interview: Delegate 7)*

**Theme 7: Language and cultural barriers are related to delegates' uncertainty.**

The elements which influence the decision-making process of the delegates are the aspects of culture, faith and language. Ever since Western countries, such as the United Kingdom and the United States of America, were attacked by Muslim extremists, people from these and other Western countries have become increasingly concerned about their personal safety when traveling, especially to Muslim countries:

*"Where I worked with the conferences, in Penang, there was some religious conflict because Penang is Muslim, Hindu and Christian. I think other parts of Malaysia are more of an issue, Buddhist and Marxist. But Penang was very good." (Interview: Delegate 1)*

Significantly, some IC committees have a tendency to avoid visiting countries which have more significant cultural differences than just a language barrier, such as countries which hold anti-Western beliefs.

*"In Canada, we are very nervous about going to a Muslim country. Many Canadians will not go because it's Muslim, and that is important. Thailand has a bit of an advantage because it isn't Muslim, and people don't see any danger in Thailand, so that is important." (Interview: Delegate 6)*

*"There are some things that often cannot be seen by board members. They do not submit requests to hold meetings that often; there are some exceptions to the rule for some countries, but for most, I think that this is the case. In a minute, we will cover why, but there are language and cultural barriers, there are rules to these things and in Asia we have yet to learn what they are, so many times this is a challenge, this is what we see as the old order." (Interview: Organising committee 2)*

### 7.2.3 Location Stimuli

**Theme 1: The theme of the IC was a key issue, but the factor of the destination country was also influential.**

The two main factors motivating people to participate in any international convention are the factors of the IC topic and theme, and the destination country.

**Theme 2: The attractiveness of the destination country is also a magnet for tourist.**

Some of the participants thought that the destination country was an equally important factor.

*“Well, I think the destination is a factor, but not the only factor, because I think these things need to be weighed up. Sometimes the destination is the main factor because for other reasons you may wish to be in that place, whether it is for work or for pleasure. But other times the topic is what drives it, and because the topic is so important you will go anywhere, or almost anywhere, for a conference on that topic because you know that the world's leading researchers will be there, and I have been to conferences where that was the case.” (Interview: Delegate 7)*

**Theme 3: Attractiveness of the surrounding area, including culture also influences the delegates' decision.**

The factor of the attractiveness of the destination country was also influential, as were tourist attractions which might attract delegates to participate in ICs. The attractiveness of the cultures of that destination country also motivates people to participate in ICs.

*“The first thing is an attractive destination, secondly, it has to have easy transport to use, a harbour, and third, for my business it has to have many universities, so there are a great number of academics and researchers working there, and I guess the fourth factor is that Thailand is reaching out*

*to the international community, so it is very welcoming.” (Interview: Delegate 2)*

*“They also have the river which is quite attractive to some people.” (Interview: Delegate 3)*

*“I think the main concern people have when they go to a foreign country is about things that they do not necessarily experience at home.” (Interview: Organising committee 3)*

**Theme 4: The attraction of big cities and/or capital cities is also considered by delegates.**

The fact that larger cities or capital cities also be a factor in terms of influencing people to attend international ICs. The attractiveness of big cities or capital cities is another point of interest for the conference or convention participation. There are a lot of fun activities to do; as well as a lot of sightseeing opportunities and tourist attractions in the capital city, and some of the larger cities outside the capital.

*“People like to go to conferences in big cities because there are other things they can do while they're not at the conference. People would like to go to capital cities like Bangkok. So, if you would like to extrapolate that to Europe, people would like to go to London, Paris, Venice is attractive, they like New York. Frankfurt probably, I don't know. Hanover is quite attractive, Madrid is attractive, you know capital cities, and Rome. Italy is attractive generally.” (Interview: Delegate 2)*

**Theme 5: A favourable currency exchange rate is another way to attract delegates to participate in international conventions.**

Another factor that delegates may find influential in terms of whether or not to participate in ICs is the factor of the exchange rate. For example, if their currency provides a favorable rate of exchange. This means that they will have to pay less in terms of conference costs, for example, conference fees, air tickets, accommodation, souvenirs, or even tips or gratuities for the staff.

*"I think Thailand does very well with conferences. Thailand is relatively cheap compared to other countries, not as much as it used to be, what is it now? 50 Baht to the pound? OK, 51. It used to be 60 baht, that was wonderful, but now it's not as cheap as it used to be, but it is still cheap. Thailand is attractive because it's cheap, if it's not cheap it becomes much less attractive, and this is something they have got to watch."*  
(Interview: Delegate 3)

**Theme 6: Delegates from cold countries normally attend conventions in the winter.**

Climate and weather is also an issue for delegates from countries in the Northern hemisphere, such as Canada, Europe, and North America who often prefer to attend conventions in their winter time as it means they will be able to attend ICs in countries with warmer weather. Another ideal time recognised by delegates from these countries to attend international ICs is in their spring (April and May) and summer (June-August):

*"I go about three or four times a year. This is the first time this year, and its only January as yet. I normally go in the winter at some point, and then I will probably go in April or May and probably again, sometime during the summer."* (Interview: Delegate 3)

*"I normally go in the winter at some point and then I will probably go in April or May and probably sometime in the summer."* (Interview: Delegate 3)

*"....And in the winter time in Canada it is very cold and Thailand is warm, so that is good."* (Interview: Delegate 6)

**7.2.4 Convention Factors**

**Theme 1: The convention centre and the accommodation for the delegates must be easily accessible from one another.**

The accessibility of the accommodation from the conference or convention centre or venue is also a significant factor. The proximity of the

accommodation and IC venue should not be too far, and if the IC is being held in a hotel, then their accommodation should naturally be at the same hotel. The proximity of these two locations is also important because of the factor of the traveling time from one place to the other is another important aspects that delegates should keep in mind. Another word, the delegates preferred to spend less time traveling from their accommodation to the IC centre or venue. For example, if the traffic is particularly bad during rush hour in the destination country, this means that the delegates may have considerably less time for leisure, including entertainment and nightlife, or sightseeing and tourist attractions. Furthermore, if the delegates are prevented by traffic or other factors from participating in these typical tourist activities, then there may be a ripple effect. In other words, local businesses and service providers may suffer from a decrease in income. In addition, an increased amount of expenditure by tourists will also increase national revenue for both the people and the government of Thailand:

*"The conference venue was good. It was a little strange it was above the mall and separate from the hotel, and we had to walk through a garage to get to the meeting, but it was clean, comfortable, and large enough. The food and meeting area for posters and networking was very good. It would be nice to have a hotel with a conference venue in the same building. Maybe Thailand has, but for the two conferences I attended this was not the case."* (Interview: Delegate 1)

*"Less travelling from and to the meeting venue to the hotel"*  
(Questionnaire for Delegate: Open-ended question 60)

## **Theme 2: The conference centre and facilities need to meet international standards.**

The facilities at the convention centre or venue need to meet the international standards. Inside the convention venue, such elements as the furniture and air-conditioning should also meet international standards. Furthermore, the location of the break-out rooms must be

convenient for the delegates, and other elements such as the plenary hall, the stage, the acoustics, and screens for visual presentations, should also meet international standards in terms of service and quality:

*"I think this was a nice meeting. I think the meeting hall acoustics could be better. It seems a large somewhat cavernous place but having the dining facilities right next door allows you to feed 250 people and get them back into the session quickly, that sort of thing. It's very easy to fly here, the hotel is very nice."* (Interview: Delegate 2)

**Theme 3: The conference content is also important attribute for delegates' decision.**

The conference is very important for some delegates, especially for the younger professional person. The aspect of opportunities to network and make connections also plays an important role in attracting people to the IC. While a younger, and more professional generation find the traditional conference and convention format of the keynote speakers lecturing a passive audience limited, and would prefer to skip ahead to the Q&A session, or approach other people in the room, exchange business cards, and start a conversation.

*Our research shows that our 2 main reasons, one of them is the content the other is the networking...* (Focus group: Specialist 3)

*In my experience it is not the country that will bring me back for another conference - it is the conference subject and program. This is more often dictated by the relevant discipline structure and the organising committee. It is also important to note that in my field (science) it is seen amongst my colleagues that international meetings are shared around the world to allow greater involvement by different parts of the 'science community'. So Thailand would not be chosen as a destination for some of these associations only because it had already been a host country within a short history.* (Questionnaire for Delegate: Open-ended question 37)

**Theme 4: The traditional or formal convention structure was considered to be too passive for delegates.**

Some of the delegates were opposed to the traditional conference and convention format, with the speaker taking a more active role, and the audience playing a more passive role. While IC content is important for junior delegates; networking and making connection is more important for senior delegates.

*"The people want to come for those three days and take advantage of it. You mentioned before that we are still sitting in a formal meeting, but the meetings are still very traditional, the speaker comes and talks and everybody listens, it's very passive, that's going to change." (Focus group: Specialist 3)*

**Theme 5: Extra activities and tours are needed to make the IC programmes more attractive to delegates.**

It was also noted that intensive conference programs, for example, in the scientific field there is too much for delegates, who are required to sit in a conference room for 3 to 4 days.

*"We had a session yesterday, which was a bit clumsy; we had to move 8 busses of people around. It's a combination of being able to see some local culture, I think that's important. Just to make you feel you are actually somewhere else, because many people at international conferences fly in and then fly straight out again, and never feel that they were anywhere different. So I think that one of the important things is to tag your conference with a sense of place, and then there is the appreciation of yes we had a good conference and yes we were in Thailand. Because sometimes you can have a good conference but you can't remember where it was. So I think this idea of going on a trip tonight to have a cultural show, they tried very hard with the dinner, I don't think the entertainment really worked, but it was a nice idea. I think that all helps. It helps to identify the place you go to rather than just the scientific quality of the meeting." (Interview: Delegate 2)*



**Theme 6: Conventions should be organised with the combination of convention activities and local, cultural activities.**

Another consideration for organising committees and planners is to combine the conference activities with elements of the local culture. Conference programs are also important because these activities are something that most of the delegates take part in. Apart from the content, theme, or topics of the academic aspect of an IC, adding an element that evokes a sense of place, and can often create a favorable impression of the destination country to the delegates. Therefore, ICs may benefit greatly from special programs, such as cultural or sightseeing tours, dinner banquets etc. If an IC is run with elements of the local culture, or local color, it may add to the sensation that the delegates are no longer in their home country, and also provide them with a positive impression of both the IC in particular and the destination country in more general:

*“Great experience and would return any time there is an interesting conference. Would also like to come on vacation at some time in the future”* (Questionnaire for Delegate: Open-ended question 62)

*“I think they are good ideas. I think yesterday – I don’t think it worked terribly well to tell you the truth – but the Princess opens. Last year, it was a massive conference centre. They have a very good conference centre there, with hotels nearby, but it doesn’t quite have the character that this one does.”* (Interview: Delegate 2)

**Theme 7: Service quality and its delivery is the significant element that the organising committees and planners need to pay attention to.**

The elements of service quality and delivery were something that organising committees and planners also paid a great deal of attention to. If the levels of service quality and delivery are high, the satisfaction levels of the delegates will also be high as a result:

*“....but I really believe that in this part of the world, the service, the quality of service and the standards of service are just so high. And I think this is*

*partially due to the fact that it is cheaper to employ people here than in Europe. So, therefore you can have more people, which of course helps. So, I think that's one thing.*" (Interview: Organising committee 6)

### **Theme 8: Little things make a big difference.**

Some of the small factors, or little things, can often make a big difference, as well as a big impression on the delegates, and include aspects like acquiring visas, booking flights, dealing with the immigration department, personally assisting the delegates, etc.:

*"The conference organizers were very helpful with everything and helped me with a few personal issues so I could attend the conference."*  
(Interview: Delegate 1)

*They already do a great job with the ease of entering the country – visas, flights, immigration – and the airport is great."* (Interview: Delegate 1)

### **Theme 9: English communication skills are essential for convention industry.**

The English communication skills of all staff at the hotel and the venue should be of a high standard. For this reason, the staff should have high enough levels of English proficiency to be able to effectively and successfully communicate with IC participants:

*"People working in hotels and the incentive management industry should improve their language skills and the quality of the service."*  
(Questionnaire for Delegate: Open-ended question 58)

*Language has been a bit of a problem. I don't speak Thai. Some people tried to report that we had lost a slipper (my wife left one behind) and I had to talk to 3 people so that one of them could understand. (Did you find it?) Not yet, I reported it. The person was very polite as usual and tried to listen but didn't understand.* (Interview: Delegate 2)

With regard to the presenters, they should also be able to communicate in English with a high level of proficiency, and effectively enough that their audience can clearly understand them.

*“The conference that I attended was disappointing. Papers of extremely low quality were presented by people who could not speak adequate English.”* (Questionnaire for Delegate: Open-ended question 31)

### **7.3 SUMMARY**

This chapter presents the qualitative analysis, with data obtained from interviews with the eight attendees, nine members of organising committees, or MICE industry specialists, one focus group, and one cluster of comments obtained from the open-ended questions on the questionnaire surveys. The nineteen sources of qualitative data were then uploaded to NVivo 10, and 14 Nodes were created, and 5 clusters of Codes were created from the 14 Nodes. 5 clusters of Codes are as: (1) Personal and business factor; (2) Location factor; (3) Location stimuli; (4) Convention factor; and (5) An evaluation of Thailand for Asian IC destination hub – SWOT Analysis. Then, 35 themes emerged were discussed (See Table 7.2).

Codes in cluster 1 were related to the personal and business factor of the delegates. 3 Nodes were as networking and making connections, benefits and intervening opportunities, money issue and safety and security of the delegates. Codes in cluster 2 were about the location factor. 5 Nodes were created and 7 themes were identified and discussed. 5 Nodes or themes were related to accessibility, no-time consuming, long-haul flights, visas, uncertainty, and infrastructure and transportation. Code in cluster 3 was about the location stimuli. 4 Nodes were created and 6 themes were identified and discussed. Themes included attractiveness, somewhere different, exchange rate and climate. Code in cluster 4 was related to convention factor which comprised of effectiveness of IC operation and management. 8 Themes were identified and discussed.

In the next chapter, Chapter Eight, a discussion on the research findings will be presented.

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## CHAPTER EIGHT

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### DISCUSSION

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#### 8.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss and conclusion the research findings with regard to the quantitative and qualitative results obtained from questionnaire surveys and qualitative thematic networking (Attride-Stirling 2001). Also examined in this chapter is the feedback and comments from both the delegates and the organising committees and planners on the open-ended questions to the questionnaire surveys, and the panel and group discussions. This chapter begins with a brief overview of the research objectives, and methods chosen, before discussing the findings in relation to the academic theories.

A SWOT analysis evaluating Thailand as a destination for Asian IC hub through the views of delegates and organising committees and planners.

#### 8.1 RESEARCH REVIEWS

##### 8.1.1 Research Objectives

The main aim of this dissertation was to examine and evaluate the potential of the Meeting, Incentive, Conference, and Exhibition (MICE) industry in Thailand, as well as to understand how Thailand could be positioned the hub of the IC industry. The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. to examine the factors which influence conference delegates to participate in international conventions
2. to investigate the elements which organising committees and planners consider when selecting the international convention destination

3. to seek the potential of Thailand's MICE industry to position itself as a hub for international convention hub in Asia

Furthermore, the study also develops a model of best practice and/or specifically implements marketing strategies, as well as make recommendations for Thailand in order for it to be a sustainable hub of international convention industry in Asia.

In addition, the study also develops the guidelines for marketing strategy, including the development policies to boost Thailand's MICE industry if it fails to achieve the goal of hub in Asia. Recommendations for Thailand's MICE also have been made in order to make the industry sustainably grow and have more chances to become the hub of international convention industry in Asia.

### **8.1.2 A Summary of the Research Findings**

These findings are presented in the same sequence as the research objectives, as follows:

#### ***A Summary of the Findings by Research Objectives***

***Research objective 1: 'To examine the factors influencing the delegates to participate in international conventions' and has been achieved by questionnaire survey.***

***Research objective 2: 'To investigate the elements which organising committees and planners consider when selecting the international convention sites' and has been achieved by questionnaire survey.***

The results of the quantitative research revealed the top ten factors that the delegates perceived as the most important factors in terms of influencing their decision of whether or not to participate in an IC in any destination, were as follows: (1) the conference content, theme, and topic; (2) safety and security; (3) education and networking; (4) keynote speakers; (5) affordability or cost; (6) the political stability; (7) the service

quality; (8) infrastructure and the availability of facilities; (9) the image of destination; and (10) the travel documents (visa).

On the other hand, the five factors that the delegates believed were the least important in terms of influencing their participation in ICs in any destination were as follows: (1) accessibility, hours on a plane or travel distance; (2) other opportunities, (3) the local culture and people; (4) attractions, entertainment, nightlife, sightseeing, etc.; and (5) climate and weather, respectively.

The ten criteria, elements, or factors which the organising committees and planners believed were the most important in terms of organising an IC were as follows: (1) the conference content, theme, and topic; (2) safety and security; (3) the service quality in the destination country; (4) education and networking; (5) keynote speakers; (6) infrastructure and the availability of facilities; (7) the image of destination; (8) affordability or cost; (9) accessibility, hours on plane or travel distance; and (10) the political stability.

On the other hand, the five criteria, elements, or factors which organising committees and planners believed were the least important in terms of organising an IC, were as follows: (1) travel documents (visa); (2) other opportunities; (3) attractions, entertainment, nightlife, sightseeing, etc.; (4) the local culture and people; and (5) climate and weather.

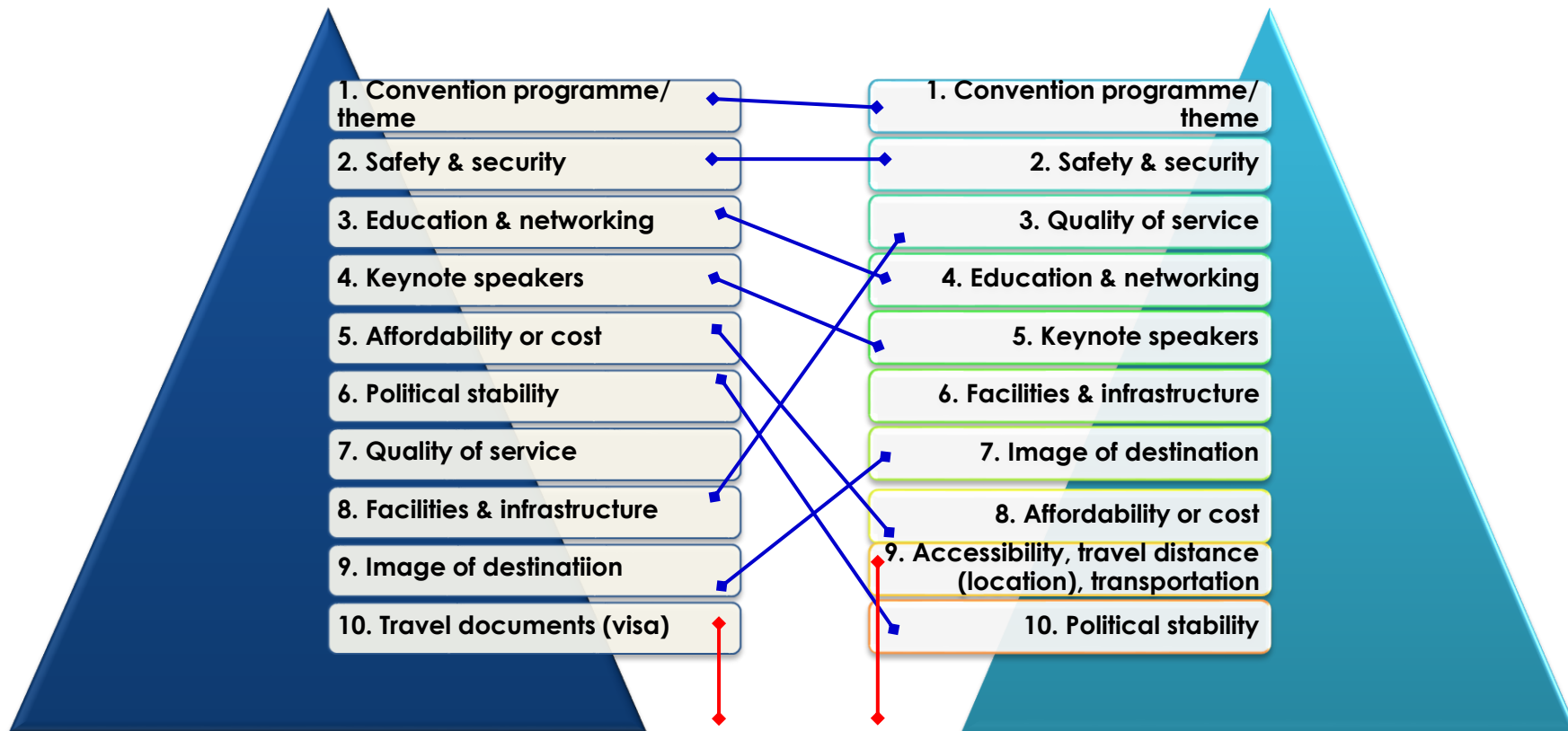
International convention delegatesInternational convention organising committees & planners

Figure 8.1.2(1): A comparison of the factors influencing the decision-making process of IC delegates on whether or not to attend an IC, and the most important criteria, elements, and factors for organising committees and planners when selecting an IC destination



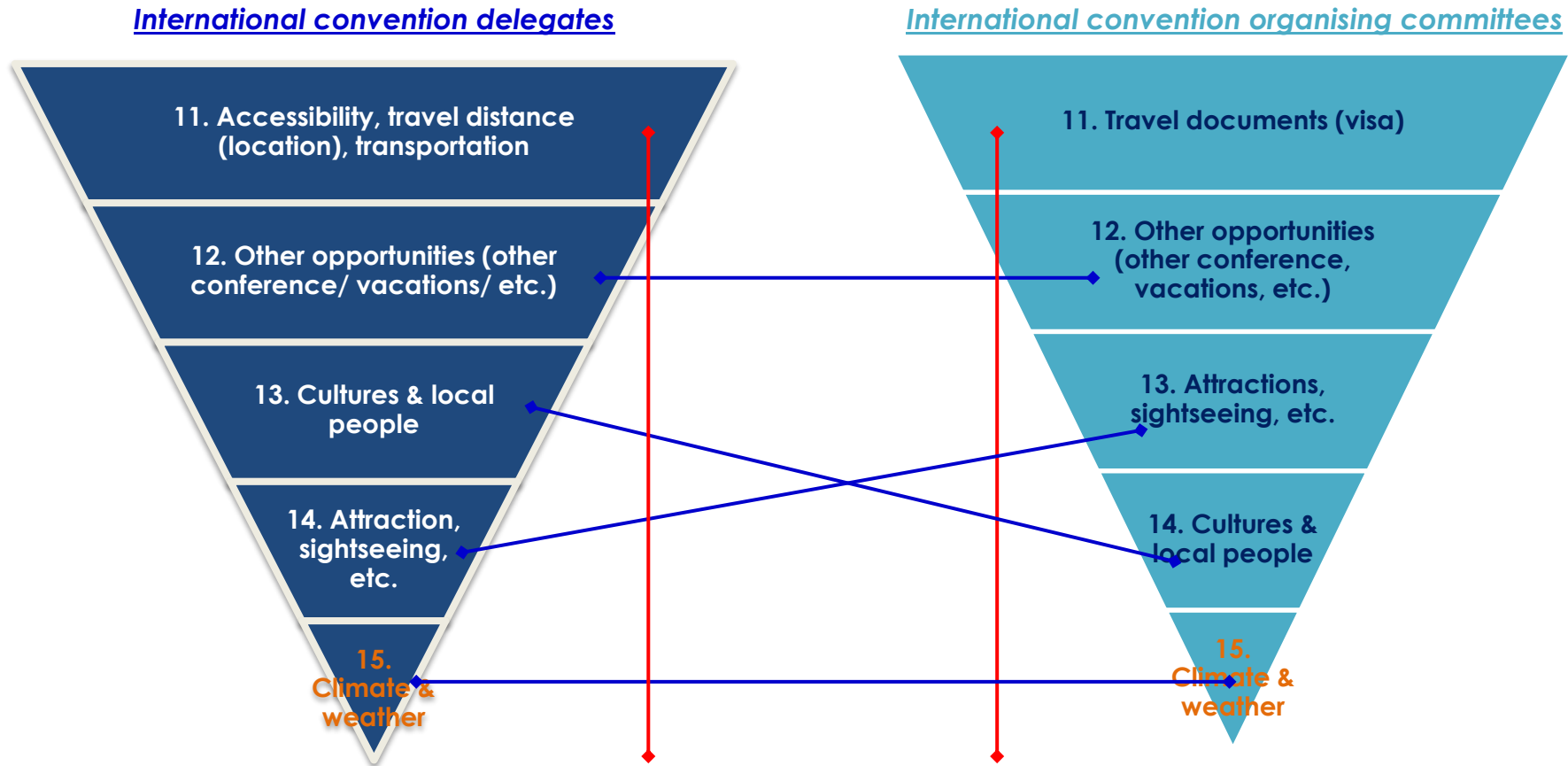


Figure 8.1.2(2): Comparison of factors less influencing on delegates' international convention attendance and factors/criteria less important for organising committees when selecting an international conference destination.

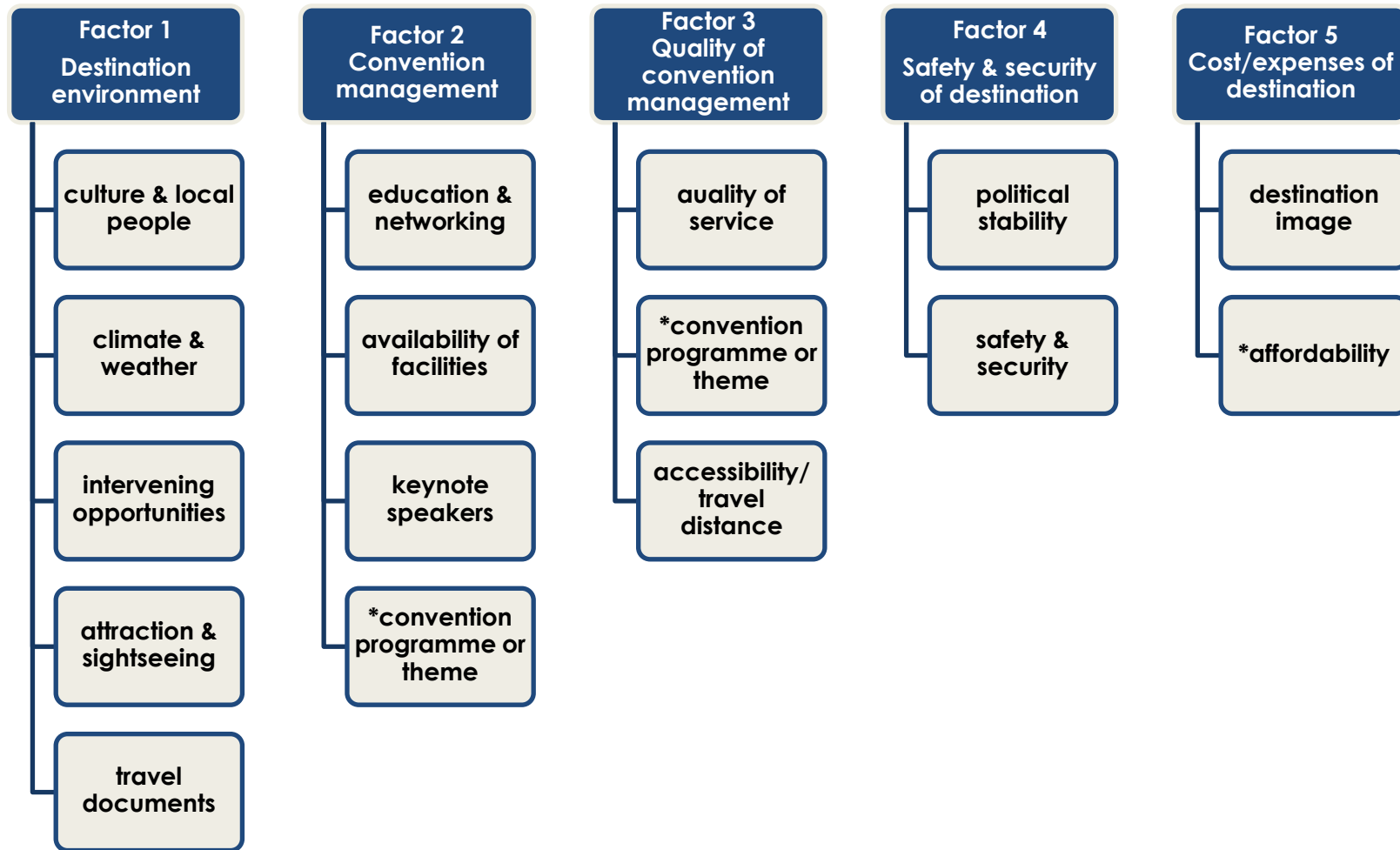


Figure 8.1.2(3): Factors analysis on factors influencing on delegates' international convention attendance

In contrast, an analysis of the qualitative research revealed that there were eleven main factors or elements influencing delegates whether or not to participate in ICs are as follows: (1) networking for the senior attendees; (2) IC content, theme, or topic for the junior attendees; (3) the other opportunities available in the destination country during or after the IC; (4) the attractiveness of the destination country; (5) the fact that a capital city or a larger city is preferable to a smaller city or town; (6) affordability, costs and good value for money in the destination country in terms of both the convention expenses and the money spent on personal needs on the destination country; (7) the preference of the delegates to feel that they have been somewhere different, as well as having a great experience in the destination country; (8) a good climate and warm weather for delegates from the cold countries; (9) the aspects of safety and security in the destination country and the stability of political situation; and (10) the preference of the delegates for a tourist visa rather than a business visa, and 11) the aspects of a different faith, language, and culture were significantly considered to be barriers of participation. This information is displayed in figure 8.1.2(4).



Figure 8.1.2(4): The Elements or Factors Influencing the Participation of Delegates in an IC

**Research objective 3: 'To seek the potential of Thailand's MICE industry to position itself as a hub for international convention hub in Asia**

With regard to the main aim of this research, the study is focused on the evaluation of the potential of Thailand's MICE industry to be the hub of international convention industry in Asia. The results of the quantitative research revealed that almost ninety percent of the total samples (86.4%, or 267 out of 309), believed that Thailand had the potential to achieve this goal. Thailand also had a lot to offer the IC industry as a destination country, and the top ten advantages or benefits from the perspective of the delegates are as follows: (1) service quality; (2) affordability and cost;

(3) attractions, sightseeing, etc.; (4) culture and local people; (5) the image of the destination; (6) safety and security; (7) the quality of the facilities and standardization of the conference venue; (8) the standardization of hotels and accommodation; (9) the provision and sufficiency of food and beverages at the convention; and (10) travel documents (visa). This information is illustrated in Figure 8.1.2(5).

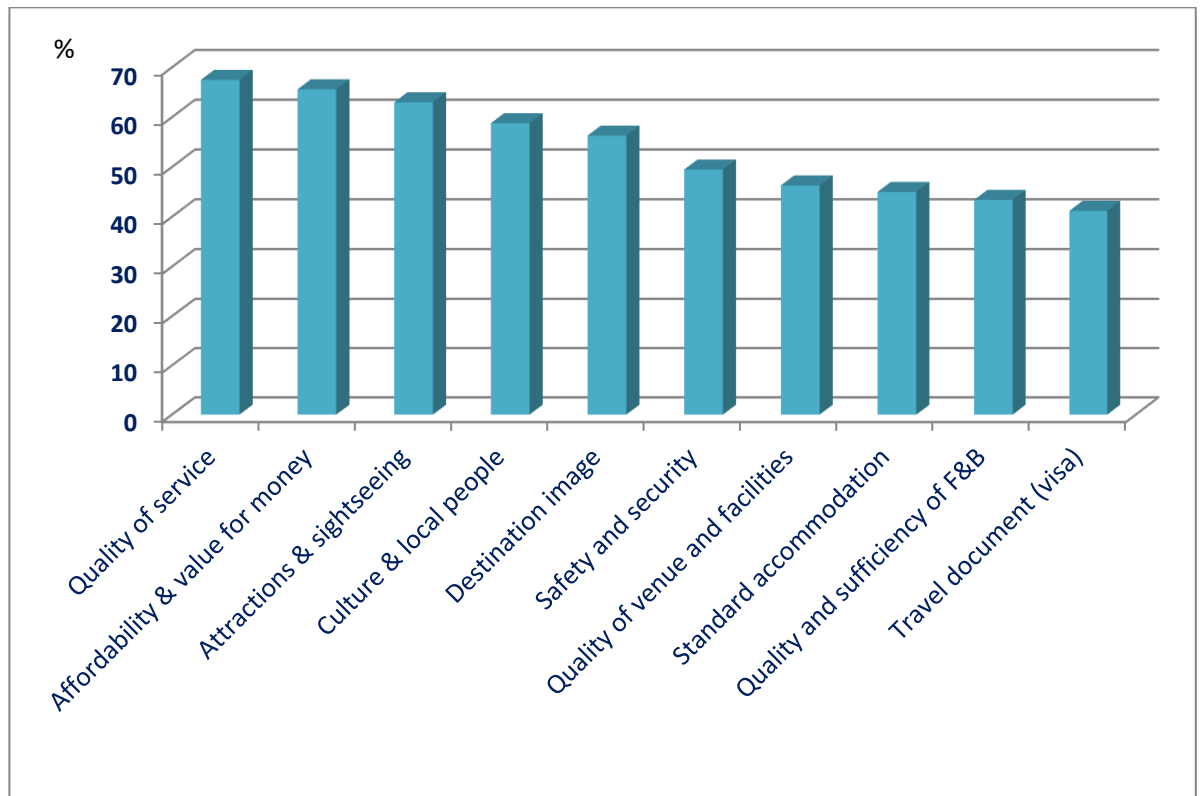


Figure 8.1.2(5): The Top Ten Advantages or Benefits that Thailand Offers as an IC Destination Country from the Perspective of the Delegates

Nonetheless, Thailand MICE industry market has unstable growth due to the fact that there are several weaknesses or limitation with regard to the factors relevant to the destination itself as well as the effectiveness of MICE operation and management. Hence, this research study attempts to identify further how Thailand is perceived as a MICE destination and what the factors and/or weaknesses to its current strategy may be. After that, the study creates marketing strategy guidelines, including the development policies to boost Thailand's MICE industry if it fails to achieve

the goal of hub in Asia. The recommendations for Thailand MICE have been made in order to make it growing sustainably.

With regard to the perspectives of the organising committees and planners, the top ten advantages or benefits that Thailand had to offer as an IC destination country include the following: (1): the image of the destination; (2) attractions, sightseeing, etc.; (3) culture and local people; (4) affordability and cost; (5) the provision and sufficiency of food and beverages at the convention; (6) the standardization of hotels and accommodation; (7) service quality; (8) climate and weather; (9) other opportunities (i.e., other conventions, holidays, good deal for spouse); and (10) the quality of the facilities and standardization of the conference venue. The information is illustrated in Figure 8.1.2(6).

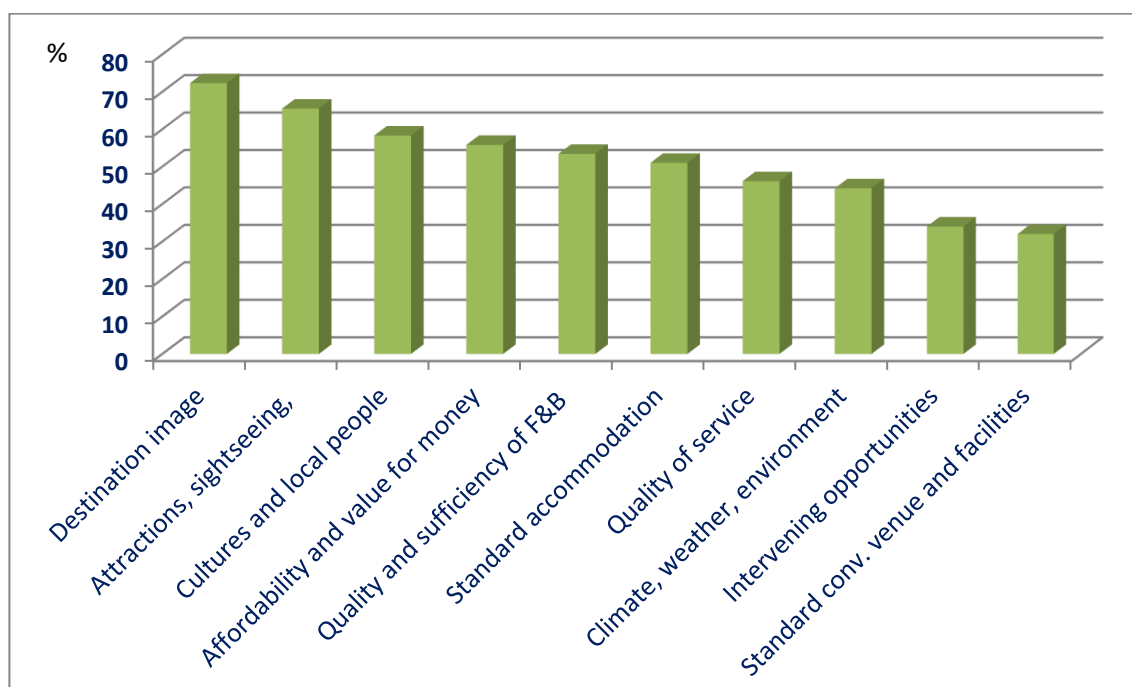


Figure 8.1.2(6): The Top Ten Advantages or Benefits that Thailand Offers as an IC Destination Country from the Perspective of the Organising Committees and Planners

The top five factors that delegates were most satisfied with, according to the mean scores, were as follows: (1) 'culture and local people', (2) 'cleanliness and comfort of the convention venue', (3) 'the taste of the

food', (4) 'the variety of food and beverages', and (5) the 'cleanliness and comfort of the restaurants/cafeteria in convention venues'. The information is displayed in Figure 8.1.2(7).

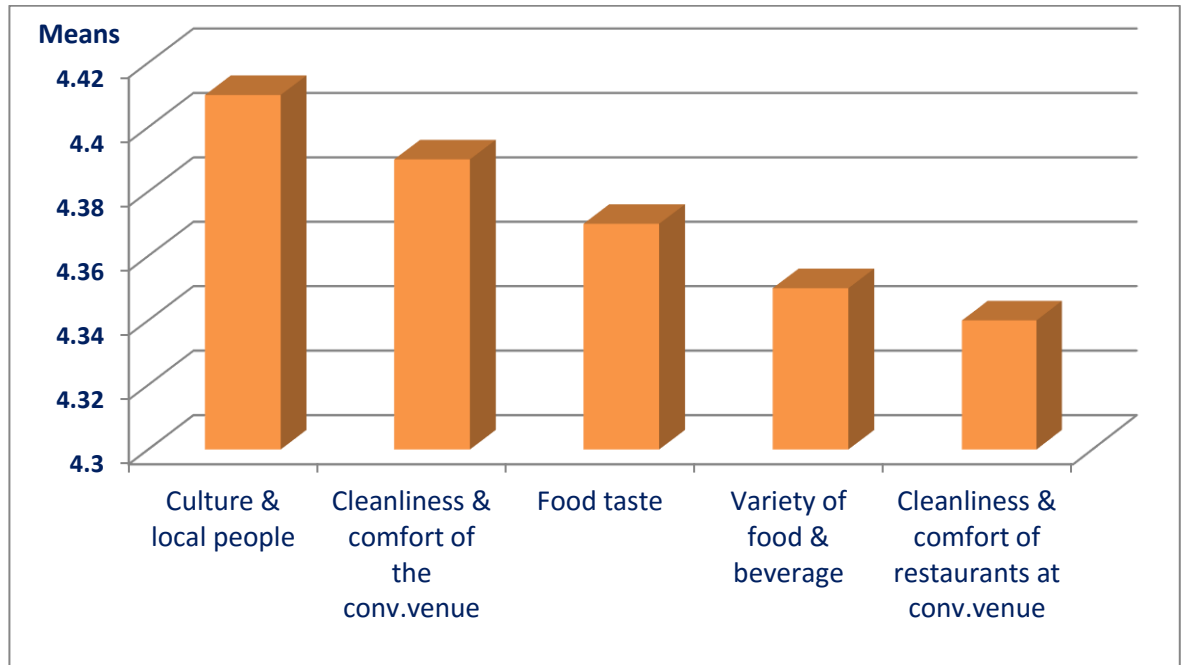


Figure 8.1.2(7): The Top Five Advantages or Benefits that Thailand Offers as an IC Destination Country from the Perspective of the Delegates

After rerunning the analysis using orthogonal rotation (Varimax) in terms of factor analysis, a rotated component matrix was created. A rotated component matrix is a matrix of the factor loadings of each variable of each factor (Field, 2009). There were 31 components clustered in 7 factors, including the following: (1) the quality of facilities and the management of the venue; (2) the appeal of the destination; (3) the service quality (4) the provision and quality of food and beverages; (5) the security and the political stability of the destination; (6) the quality and standard of the facilities at the convention venue; and (7) opportunities and networking.

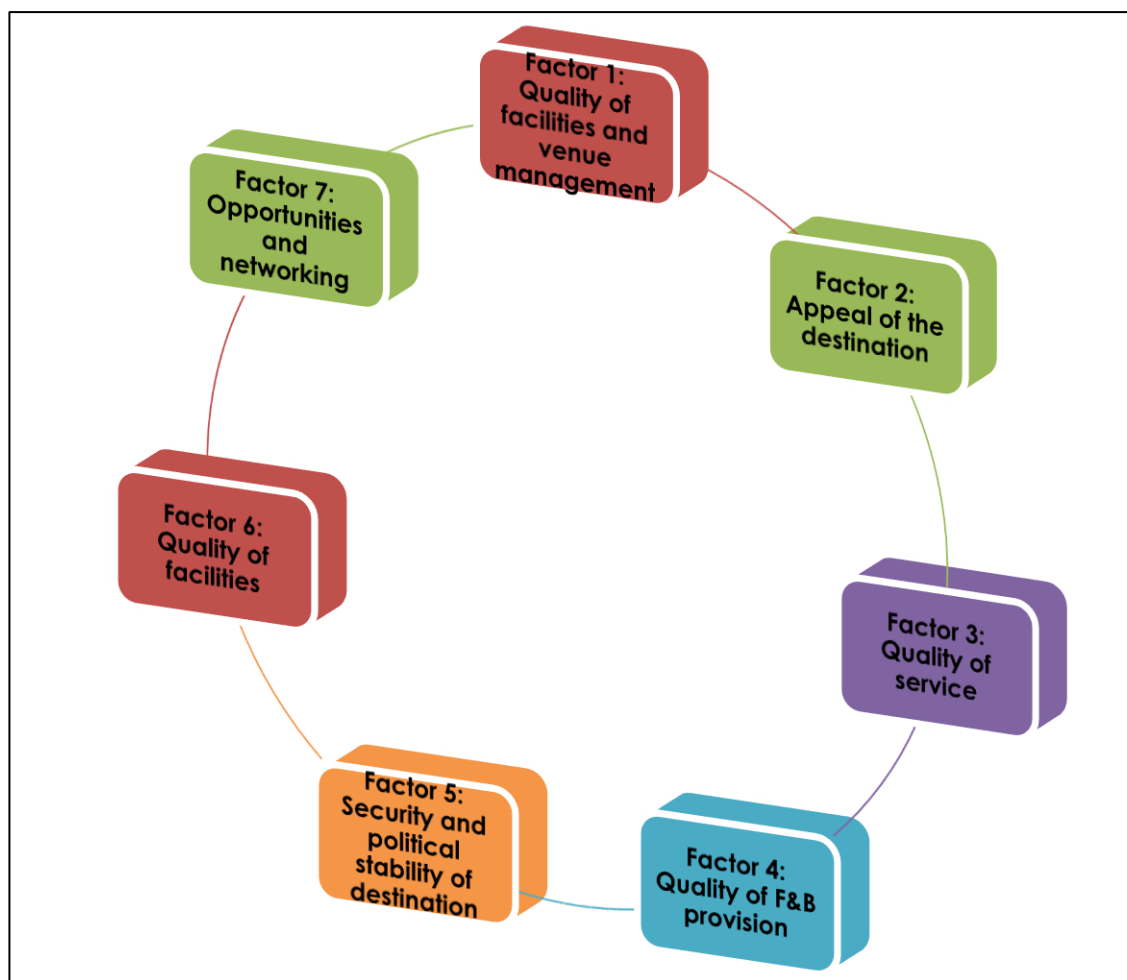


Figure 8.1.2(8): The Key Elements Thailand has to Offer the IC Industry (Factor Rotation Analysis)

The results of the qualitative research revealed that as a destination country, Thailand has the potential to achieve a hub of the Asian IC industry. The top ten key elements or factors which Thailand has to offer the industry are as follows: (1) the satisfaction level with Thai hospitality is quite high; (2) the level of service quality have been described as 'fantastic'; (3) the hotel and its facilities meet an international standards; (4) the convention venue is characteristic of the country in which it is located; (5) the cost of a conference is reasonable; the cost of accommodation and good value for money are strong advantages; (6) running an international conference with a strong Thai 'flavor' make a positive impression on the participants; (7) the potential of the other



opportunities available in Thailand; (8) the potential of the attractiveness of Thailand as a destination; (9) the popularity of Thai cuisine; and, (10) the reputation of Thailand as 'the land of thousand smiles'. The information is illustrated in more detail in Figure 8.1.2(9).

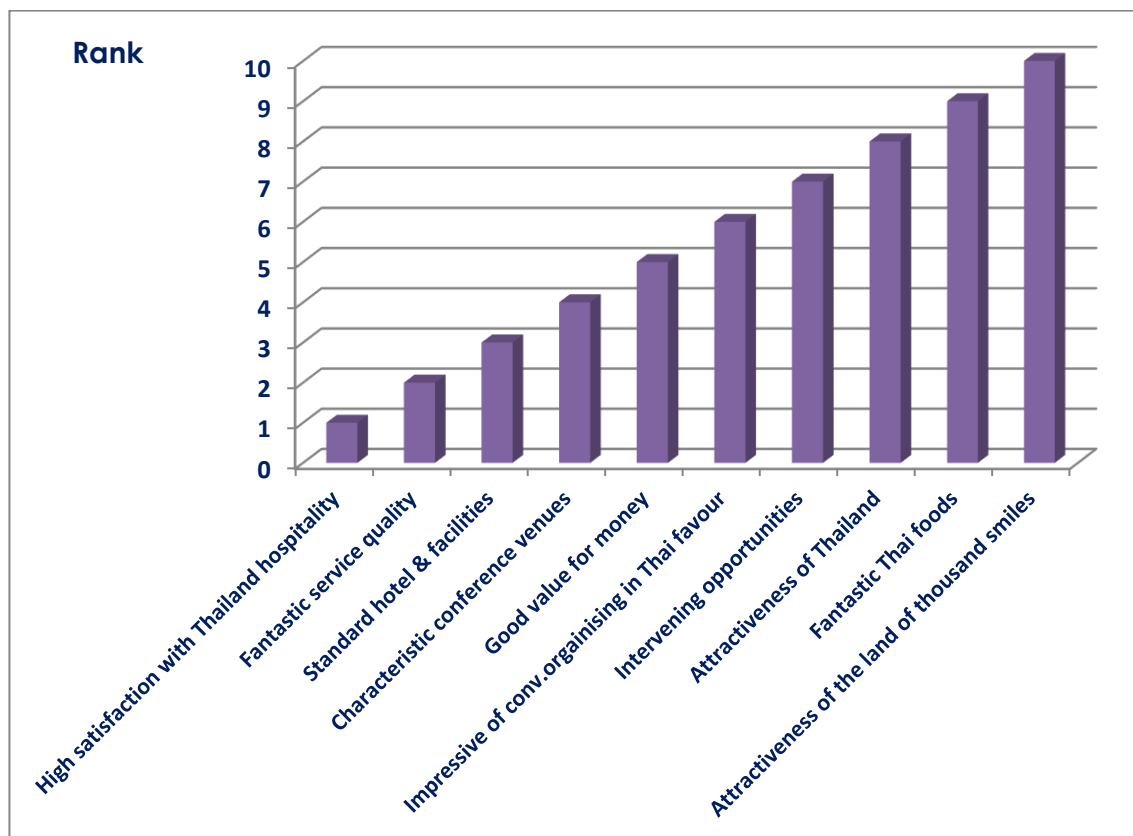


Figure 8.1.2(9): The Top Ten Elements or Factors that Thailand has to Offer the IC Industry

However, according to the research objective, what factors limiting the growth of Thailand's MICE and to position it as an international convention hub for the Asian IC market need to be further investigate. The research results found are as follows:

Factors which limit Thailand to achieve the hub position in the Asian IC market according to the quantitative results, the attributions are as follows: (1) 'other opportunities' (other conventions); (2) 'traveling distance, accessibility or hours on plane'; (3) 'political stability'; (4) 'safety & security

(crime rate)'; and (5) 'entertainment, nightlife, sightseeing, etc.' The details are illustrated in Figure 8.1.2(10).

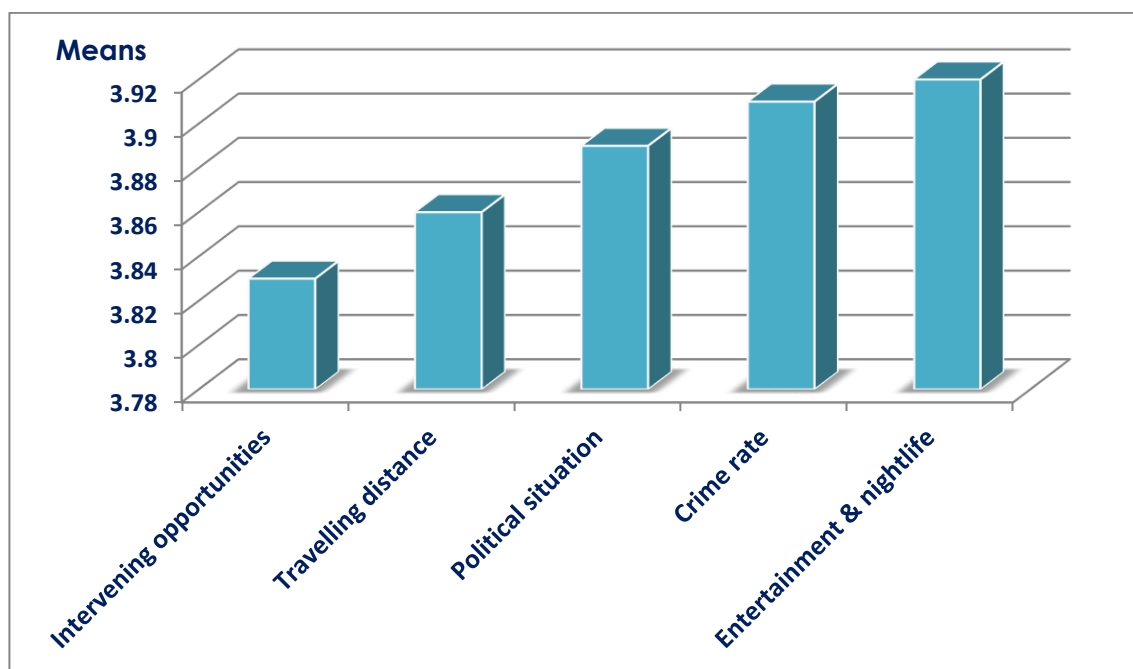


Figure 8.1.2(10): The Bottom Five Weaknesses of Thailand as IC Destination

When the data was triangulated, the results revealed that the following themes emerged in terms of a lack of dissatisfaction and/or negative impact. The following themes were as follows: (1) the Indian delegates were not satisfied with Thai cuisine; (2) many delegates complained about the low level of English communication skills among the Thai staff working in MICE industry; (3) the traffic in Bangkok is notoriously bad and may have a negative influence on the decision making-process of delegates of whether or not to attend an IC in Bangkok; (4) the price gap between inexpensive and starred restaurants is too large; (5) the bad reputation that Thailand has developed needs to be improved, for example, red-light districts, airport scams, etc.; and (6) the factor of political instability is threatening to erode the strong position of Thailand has amongst competitor countries in the same region, namely Singapore, and Malaysia in South-East Asia, and China, Japan, and Korea, in greater Asia.

With regard to the guidelines of marketing strategies which might increase Thailand's changes of becoming a hub in the Asian MICE industry'

The results of the qualitative research revealed that the following elements were the advantages or strengths of Thailand as an IC destination. However, it was stressed that the sustainability of such performance quality should be assessed and some elements should be improved in order to create better conditions. The strengths of Thailand include the following elements: (1) a high level of satisfaction among the delegates regarding Thai hospitality; (2) the high level of service quality in Thailand; (3) Thailand is an attractive tourist destination; (4) Thai food is described as 'fantastic'; it has a good taste and there a wide variety in terms of selection; (5) Thailand is known as the Land of Smiles, based on the friendliness of the local people. The following elements are the advantages that Thailand offers as a destination country: (1) the hotel and its facilities should meet international standards; (2) the IC venue should meet international standards; (3) the cost of the IC, including the accommodation, should be a reasonable price and good value for money; (4) running an IC with a strong Thai cultural aspect; (5) there are numerous other opportunities in Thailand for the delegates, such as taking vacations or going sightseeing; and (6) Canadian visitors in particular reported that they loved the Thai islands and beaches, as well as the cuisine. With regard to the aforementioned results of the qualitative data, it was found that there were several strategies which should be implemented. Firstly, the key individuals in Thai academia and medicine should move up to the 'front lines', and play a more important role in international associations. Therefore, they should be encouraged to become members of the broad committees of international associations. The key factor which these individuals were the most concerned about was failure. Therefore, organizations such as the TCEB, the TAT, etc., must be supported as well as convinced of the fact that they can restart after failure and that they should not be afraid of losing face.

Furthermore, leading hospitals and universities in Thailand may create more connections and networking with other leading hospitals and universities all around the world. The next step would be for the Thai government to provide assistance to the MICE business sector in Thailand in terms of employing a diversity of marketing strategies which go beyond the 7Ps of the marketing mix. The type of marketing should be different, as it is focused on the entire region, rather than a single country. For this reason, Thailand should cooperate with other countries in their region, Asia, and Oceania, including Australia and New Zealand.

Another strategy would be to initiate an intensive advertising campaign promoting Thailand as an IC destination country on leading international news channels. Advertising could also be in print format, including academic journals, newspapers, and magazines, social media with Facebook, Twitter, and phone applications. Furthermore, Thailand could create its own unique events, for example, promoting Thailand as a major international destination for agricultural conferences and conventions. Moreover, Thailand can set itself up as the hub for international agriculture conference destination in the Greater Mekong Region (GMR), which is comprised of Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam. In the future, Myanmar will be allowed to join the GMR. In addition, the business sector of MICE industry can work closely with the local or national MPs as well as BOI. Plus, the stakeholders should pay attention on the young generations. They should be trained in the particular professionals and become the leaders of the region or the world. Finally, someone says 'Keep your friends closer, but your enemies' closer.' As the market changes; several countries in the same region will be changed to only one single market. Therefore, the competitors are not the enemies, but rather they will become business partners. As the ASEAN Economic Community will officially open in 2015; this is an ideal opportunity for the member countries, comprised of ten countries - Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam – to work together to

improve their conditions and compete other countries in other regions, especially Europe, which currently dominates the IC industry.

The summary of the findings of this research with regard to the research objectives presented above is presented in Table 8.1.2 below.

Table 8.1.2: The summary of research findings with regard to research objectives

Objective of Research	Conclusion	How conclusion links with other studies
<b>Quantitative Research</b>		
<p><b>Objective 1:</b>  <i>To examine the factors influencing the delegates to participate in international conventions</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conference content, theme, and topic</li> <li>2. Safety issue</li> <li>3. Education, connection and networking</li> <li>4. Keynote speakers</li> <li>5. Affordability or cost</li> <li>6. Political stability</li> <li>7. Service quality</li> <li>8. Infrastructure and facilities</li> <li>9. Destination image</li> <li>10. Visa</li> </ol>	<p>The findings were similar to the studies of the following researchers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Oppermann (1996)</li> <li>- Oppermann and Chon (1997)</li> <li>- Zhang, Leung and Qu (2007)</li> <li>- Yoo and Chon (2008)</li> <li>- Shen, Park and Wu (2013)</li> <li>- Terzi et al. (2013)</li> <li>- Whitfield et al. (2014)</li> </ul>

Objective of Research	Conclusion	How conclusion links with other studies
<b>Quantitative Research</b>		
<p><b>Objective 2:</b> To investigate the elements which organising committees and planners consider when selecting the international convention destination</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conference content, theme, and topic</li> <li>2. Safety and security</li> <li>3. Service quality</li> <li>4. Education and networking</li> <li>5. Keynote speakers</li> <li>6. Infrastructure and facilities</li> <li>7. Destination image</li> <li>8. Affordability or cost</li> <li>9. Accessibility, hours on plane or travel distance</li> <li>10. Political stability</li> </ol>	<p>The findings were similar to the studies of the following researchers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fortin, Ritchie and Arsenault (1975)</li> <li>- Fortin, Ritchie and Arsenault (1976)</li> <li>- Fortin and Ritchie (1976)</li> <li>- American Society of Association Executives (1991)</li> <li>- Meetings and Conventions (1993)</li> <li>- METROPOLL (1993)</li> <li>- Bonn et al. (1994)</li> <li>- Clark and McCleary (1995)</li> <li>- Var et al. (1995)</li> <li>- Oppermann (1996a)</li> </ul>

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Crouch and Ritchie (1998)</li><li>- Fenich (2002)</li><li>- Go, Govers and Vliegenthart (2002)</li><li>- Crouch and Louviere (2004)</li><li>- Baloglu and Love (2005)</li><li>- Jago and Deery (2005)</li><li>- Kim, Yoon and Kim (2011)</li><li>- Hayat et al. (2014)</li></ul> |
|--|--|--|



Objective of Research	Conclusion	How conclusion links with other studies
<b>Qualitative Research</b>		
<p><b>Objective 1 and 2:</b> To investigate the <i>factors and elements influencing delegates to participate in international convention and organising committees and planners considering when selecting convention destination</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Connection and networking for senior attendees and IC content for junior attendees</li> <li>2. Other opportunities, i.e., other conventions, business connection, holidays, etc. available in the destination country during or after the IC</li> <li>3. Attractiveness, sightseeing and tourist activities available at the IC destination</li> <li>4. A capital city or a larger city is preferable to a smaller city or town.</li> <li>5. Affordability, costs and good value for money in terms of both the convention</li> </ol>	<p>The findings were similar to the studies of the following researchers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Oppermann (1996)</li> <li>- Crouch and Ritchie (1997)</li> <li>- Go, Govers and Vliegenthart (2002)</li> <li>- Crouch and Louviere (2004)</li> <li>- Baloglu and Love (2005)</li> <li>- Jago and Deery (2005)</li> <li>- Zhang, Leung and Qu (2007)</li> <li>- Yoo and Chon (2008)</li> <li>- Kim, Yoon and Kim (2011)</li> <li>- Shen, Park and Wu (2013)</li> </ul>

	<p>expenses and the money spent on personal needs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>6. The preference of the delegates to feel that they have been somewhere different or having a great experience in the IC destination</li><li>7. A good climate and warm weather for delegates from the cold countries</li><li>8. The aspects of safety and security in the destination country and the stability of political situation</li><li>9. The preference of the delegates for a tourist visa to a business visa</li><li>10. The aspects of a different faith, language, and culture were significantly considered to be barriers of participation.</li></ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Terzi et al. (2013)</li><li>- Whitfield et al. (2014)</li></ul>
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Objective of Research	Conclusion	How conclusion links with other studies
<b>Qualitative Research</b>		
<p><b>Objective 3:</b> To seek the potential of Thailand's MICE industry to position itself as a hub for international convention hub in Asia</p>	<p><b><u>Delegates' perspective</u></b> 86.4% (267 out of 309) of delegates believed that Thailand had the potential to position itself as a hub for international convention hub in Asia.</p> <p><b><u>Thailand strengths</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Service quality</li> <li>2. Affordability and cost</li> <li>3. Attractions, sightseeing, etc.</li> <li>4. Culture and local people</li> <li>5. The image of the destination</li> <li>6. Safety and security</li> <li>7. The quality of the facilities and standardization of the conference venue</li> </ol>	<p>The findings were similar to the studies of the following researchers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Campiranon (2007)</li> <li>- Sangpikul and Kim (2009)</li> </ul>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>8. The standardization of hotels and accommodation</li><li>9. The provision and sufficiency of food and beverages at the convention</li><li>10. Travel documents (Delegates from some countries do not need a visa to enter Thailand)</li></ol> <p><b><u>Thailand weaknesses</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Political situation</li><li>2. Local guest or keynote speakers</li><li>3. IC content, theme or topics</li><li>4. Education and networkin</li><li>5. Intervening opportunities (other convention, holiday)</li><li>6. Climate and weather (too warm for delegates from the cold countries)</li></ol>	
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Objective of Research	Conclusion	How conclusion links with other studies
<b>Qualitative Research</b>		
	<p><b><u>Organising committees and planners' perspectives</u></b></p> <p>46.6% (96 out of 206) of organising committees and planners believed that Thailand had the potential to position itself as a hub for international convention hub in Asia.</p> <p><b><u>Thailand strengths</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Destination image</li> <li>2. Attractions, sightseeing, or alike</li> <li>3. Affordability, cost and good value for money</li> <li>4. Culture and local people</li> <li>5. Standard of hotels and accommodation</li> </ol>	<p>The findings were similar to the studies of the following researchers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Campiranon (2007)</li> <li>- Sangpikul and Kim (2009)</li> </ul>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>6. Service quality</li><li>7. Climate and weather</li><li>8. Other opportunities (e.i., other convention, business networking and connection, etc.)</li><li>9. Quality of facilities and conference venue</li><li>10. Safety and security</li></ol> <p><b><u>Thailand weaknesses</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Political situation</li><li>2. The IC content, theme or topics</li><li>3. Education and networking</li><li>4. Guest or keynote speaker</li><li>5. Visa (business visa for MICE travelers)</li></ol>	
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## 8.2 DISCUSSION

In summary, Thailand has potential in terms of its 'positioning' as both a MICE destination and the hub of the IC industry in Asia. However, there are a number of competitors in the South-East Asian region (T of SWOT), that are similarly focused on the 'positioning' of their own countries in terms of obtaining a greater share of the regional IC market. In this context, positioning can be defined as the place that a brand or a service holds in the minds of consumers; in relation to its closest competitor, and relative to the position of other brands and services (Kasper et al., 2006). *Positioning is not what is done to the service, it is what is created in the minds of the target consumers; the service is positioned in the minds of these consumers and is given an image* (Dibb et al., 1994, p. 89). Robinson et al. (2010) suggested investigating the possibility that of that which motivates an individual to attend an IC, in order to more effectively market such an event. The extrinsic motivation of an individual to attend an IC depend on a wide range of external influences, which require analysis from a sociological perspective; while the intrinsic motivation of an individual depends on their personal needs, which require analysis from a psychological perspective.

Business tourism is composed of both tangible and intangible elements. Levitt (1986) proposed that instead of using the terms 'goods' and 'services', it would be preferable to use the 'tangible' and the 'intangible' instead. Products are manufactured, services are performed, and actors are required for the performance of services, including employees, suppliers, shareholders, and stakeholders, including other customers in the service environment (Robinson et al., 2010). Oppermann and Chon (1997) suggested that the three main factors which generate convention tourism were *the associations, the host location, and potential attendees*, which they referred to as the '*Players in Convention Tourism*'. Therefore, any study of convention tourism requires familiarity with these 'players'. Therefore, in order to position Thailand as an Asian MICE industry destination, and an international IC hub, studying the motivation of

potential attendees as carried out in this research provides answers to the question of why individuals choose whether or not to participate in ICs (Kasper et al., 2006).

### **8.2.1 What factors influenced the decisions of delegates of whether or not to participate in an international convention?**

Oppermann and Chon (1997) proposed that there were four main factors which had the most significance: 1) *personal or business factors*, 2) *association or conference factors*, 3) *location factors*, and 4) *intervening opportunities*. All of these factors were influential in terms of the decision making-process of the delegates of whether or not to attend an IC. However, based on the observation of consumer behavior, consumers generally buy and use those products and services which both 'satisfy their needs', and to assist them to 'accomplish their goals', thus 'achieving a level of satisfaction'. The decision made by a consumer to buy a particular product or service is influenced by numerous variables. Satisfaction levels may be ranked to a lesser or greater degree, from 'adequate' through 'desirable' to 'exceeding their expectations' (Williams and Buswell, 2003). 'Customer satisfaction' is achieved when the expectations of the customers are either met or exceeded. The factors which may influence the formation of expectations of customers include 1) *word of mouth*, 2) *personal needs*, 3) *external communications* and 4) *past experience* (Zeithaml et al., 1990). Actual consumer behavior is more determined by factors such as cognition and affects (Kasper et al., 2006). Although various facilities are central to this service, they are not products, *per se*. In other words, the client does not actually purchase these facilities. Rather, they are the physical features of a convention destination, and the ability to deliver a tourism product or services, but do not form part of the product itself (Robinson et al., 2010). In the purchasing of services, the affective factors will probably play a critical role because of the intangible nature of services. A reduction in the level of perceived risk by providing additional cognitive information will not suffice, as service quality is determined to a large extent by factors relating to the social



interaction between the customer and the service provider (Kasper et al., 2006).

The results of the quantitative analysis revealed the top ten factors which influence the decision making-process of the delegates of whether or not to participate in an international convention in a particular destination or location include the following factors are (1) the conference content, theme, and topic; (2) safety and security; (3) education and networking; (4) guest speakers or keynote persons; (5) affordability or cost; (6) political situation; (7) service quality; (8) infrastructure and the availability of facilities; (9) the image of destination; and (10) visa issue. There were also similar *personal or business factors*, which were also influential in terms of IC attendance, such as health, finances, time availability, family, funding, professional advancement and the desire to learn (Oppermann and Chon, 1997).

Similarly, a study by the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA), investigated 1,125 respondents from 76 countries, and revealed that 20% of the respondents claimed that 'content' was the most significant factor in determining the effectiveness of an IC. It further revealed that 13% of the respondents believed that opportunities to interact with delegates and guest speakers or keynote persons were also significant (ICCA). The factors of association with the conference were also likely to be considered important and valuable to individual attendees in terms of their own careers or professional standing, than those of others (Oppermann and Chon, 1997). Some of the crucial attributes of a destination are considered by tourists, including *safety and security* (Oppermann, 1996). The factor of *location* is particularly influential in terms of affecting the decision making-process, when considered in combination with personal and conference factors; for example, the image of the destination image, the cost of transportation, accessibility and traveling distance, the cost of accommodation, climate and weather, previous experience, and pre and post conference activities, etc., (Oppermann and Chon, 1997). In terms of the '*location factors*', the

two factors which had the most influence on the decision-making process of potential delegates were the factors of the 'attractiveness' and the 'accessibility' of the convention destination by Zhang et al. (2007). Similarly, in most cases, the factors which determined the decision-making process of potential delegates, who were members of an organization, on whether or not to attend an international convention at a particular site were the factors of the *accessibility* and the *attractiveness* of the destination. However, the accessibility of the destination site was considered to be more important than the factor of its '*attractiveness*' (Var et al., 1985).

In addition, business tourism and leisure tourism rely on the same, or a very similar, *infrastructure* for their success. Both of these sectors require adequate accommodation (hotels and guest houses), *transportation and communications* (airports, railway stations, good road networks, coach and taxi services, and modern telecommunications links), *entertainment* (bars, restaurants, night clubs, casinos, shopping, and other visitor attractions), as well as *information and advisory services, emergency medical services* and an *attractive, welcoming, safe and secure environment*. However, the business tourism and conference and convention industry have additional infrastructure needs; such as appropriate venues, specialist contractors, including audio-visual suppliers, exhibition contractors, and interpreters, and perhaps most significantly, staff who are trained to be aware of and to respond to the particular needs of both conference delegates and organising committees and planners (Rogers, 2013). Furthermore, the factors of both food and restaurant facilities were also included (Oppermann, 1996).

### **8.2.2 What criteria or elements do organising committees and planners focus on when organising an international convention?**

The results of the quantitative analysis of this research identified the criteria, elements, or factors, as follows: (1) the conference content, theme, and topic; (2) safety and security; (3) 'service quality';(4)

education and networking; (5) guest speakers or keynote persons; (6) infrastructure and the availability of facilities; (7) the image of destination; (7) 'affordability or cost'; (8) accessibility or travel distance; and (9) political situation.

Business and leisure tourism rely on similar, if not the same infrastructure for their success. Both of these sectors also require accommodation, such as guest houses, and hotels; transportation and communications, which require airports, railway stations, good road networks, coach and taxi services, and modern telecommunications technologies. There is also a need for entertainment areas, with bars and restaurants, shopping precincts, night clubs, and other visitor attractions; as well as information and advisory services, emergency medical services and an attractive, welcoming, and secure environment. The business tourism, and conference and convention industry has additional needs, such as the need for appropriate venues, and specialist contractors, for example; audio-visual suppliers, exhibition contractors, and interpreters. Perhaps most significantly, there is a need for well-trained staff, which is aware of and responsive to the particular needs of both the delegates and organising committees and planners (Rogers, 2013).

The provision of services has a range of characteristics; in other words, they require the 'services mix', the people, the process and the physical evidence employed in the effective delivery of the event experience. The characteristics of the services 'mix' can be described as follows: *Intangibility* – the customer cannot see tangible evidence of the product being purchased; *Inseparability* – production and consumption occur at the same time, or an event the customer enjoys as it is delivered; *Heterogeneity* maintaining product consistency is difficult, as every individual has a different experience of the event, which can be influenced by the location, for example, helpful or unhelpful staff, other customers, or their view of the event; *Ownership* – a customer does not usually need to purchase the title of a service, or pay for an event, and take away with them the feeling of being satisfied or dissatisfied;

*Perishability* – the experience of the event cannot be stored, and unused capacity is lost forever (Robinson et al., 2010).

The aspects of the availability of meeting facilities, the quality of the accommodation, and a number of additional destination attributes also play a critical role. A potential convention destination should consider all of the possible factors involved in the selection of a site in order to avoid the pitfall of making the assumption that everything depends on the design and the size of the conference and convention center, its facilities, as well as the quality and the range of the types of available accommodation. For example, the accessibility of the site for the majority of attendees is another important consideration (Crouch and Ritchie, 1998).

Significantly, as this research finding, the factor that the delegates have perceived as being the most important was the visa issue; while the organising committees and planners regarded the factor of accessibility or travel distance as being the most significant. The delegates perceived travel formalities, such as visas, as barriers which may limit or inhibit potential delegates (Crouch and Ritchie, 1998); and in Webber and Chon, 2002). Crouch and Webber (2002) also claimed that the host location was affected to a large extent by an association with a specific convention site, and that it usually considers a few alternatives (Oppermann and Chon, 1997) as customers demand high returns on their investments.

Location has always been one of the key factors in terms of the selection of conference and convention sites. The significance of this factor led to the creation of marketing organizations, with the primary aim of promoting a particular location or 'destination', and operating at national, regional, or metropolitan level (Rogers, 2008). The location factors were also influential, especially when considered in combination with factors such as accessibility and travel distance, accommodation costs, climate and weather, the image of the destination, pre and post conference activities, previous experience, transportation costs, etc., which may affect the

decision making-process of the delegates (Oppermann and Chon, 1997). In terms of the 'location factors', the two factors which had the most influence on the decision making-process of the delegates were 'accessibility', 'attractiveness', and the 'location of the convention destination' (Zhang et al., 2007). In most cases, the determining factors influencing IC attendance at a particular site were the factors of the 'accessibility' and the 'attractiveness' of the destination country. The accessibility of the destination site was even more important than the factor of 'attractiveness' (Var et al., 1985).

According to the results of the factor analysis, the data regarding the perceptions of the organising committees and planners revealed 15 criteria, elements and factors, which were then clustered into 5 groups: (1) the attractiveness of the destination environment; (2) the effectiveness of the conference; (3) the quality of operations and management; (4) the safety and security of the destination country; and (5) the cost or expense of the destination country. The 'attractiveness' of a convention destination is regarded as the 'drawing power' or the 'pull' of a particular event, both in terms of its general appeal or generic benefits, and targeted benefits for specific needs and interests. In the context of economic demand, attractiveness may be equated with 'market potential' and measured in terms of 'penetration rates' (Getz, 2007). The friendliness of the locals was also an influential factor in this respect (Go and Zhang, 1997)

The factor of tourism activities may also play an important part in influencing convention attendance behavior (Rutherford and Kreck, 1994). The scenery, the availability of sightseeing opportunities, and the tourism activities available the destination country were also considered to be important (Oppermann, 1996; Go and Zhang, 1997) including the availability of nightlife (Oppermann, 1996). However, 14% of the delegates claimed that the quality of event organization may also prevent conferences or conventions from being as effective as they could be. The organisers also need to be able to keep up with the industry as it matures

by keeping up to date with new trends. A lack of focus in design could also be seen as another factor hindering effectiveness (ICCA).

When triangulated with the results of the qualitative analysis of this research, the results revealed that *the top 10 factors* influencing the participation of the delegates at ICs include the following factors: (1) education and networking; (2) the conference content, theme, and topic; (3) other opportunities; (4) the attractiveness of the destination country; (5) affordability, and the best value for money; (6) a great experience or a feeling of being somewhere different; (7) good climate and warmer weather; (8) the safety, security, and stability of the political situation, and (9) tourist visas.

Oppermann and Chon (1997) claimed that professionals of a higher rank who are invited to international conferences and conventions, such as 'guest or keynote speakers' are also included in the category of intervening opportunities, which is influential in terms of the decision making-process of a delegate of whether or not to attend an IC (p.186). Besides their level of satisfaction with regard to the intervening factors; the attendees can enjoy the location for relaxation and sightseeing, as well as associate themselves with the image of the location. The spouses of the delegates could also contribute in terms of dictating the importance of the role played by the facilities, amenities, and other attributes of the site that have nothing to do with the MICE industry (Wiswell, 1986; Rogers, 1998). Furthermore, both members and non-members may be accompanied by spouses, and the research indicated that the influence of a spouse was quite important in terms of the decision-making process. Some destinations may be able to achieve a higher rate of spousal turnout based on the attractiveness of the destination, or intervening opportunities, such as shopping (Oh et al, 1993; Oppermann and Chon, 1997).

### **8.2.3 Is there any potential for Thailand in terms of being positioned as a hub for the international conference and convention industry in Asia? If so, what are the strengths and weaknesses of this industry?**

The majority of both delegates and organising committees and planners answered 'yes', that there were many opportunities and possibilities for Thailand as an IC destination country. The reason that they provided was that Thailand had numerous advantages and benefits to offer IC participants. The first factor was the factor was the 'service quality' provided at ICs held in Thailand.

This aspect was also ranked first by the delegates, indicating quite a high level of satisfaction. Ladhari (2008) proposed that 'service quality' affected the levels of customer satisfaction, and was one of the most critical factors in terms of competitiveness in the service industry and survival in the marketplace. The aspect of service characteristics are comprised of the intangible elements of *inseparability*, *heterogeneity* and *perishability* together with the tangible elements (Lovelock, 1992). While satisfaction can be rated to a lesser or a greater degree, from 'adequate' to 'very satisfied'; customer satisfaction is achieved when the perceptions of the consumer have either met or exceeded their expectations (Zeithaml et al., 1990).

The decision a consumer makes to purchase a particular service may be influenced by a number of circumstances, the most important of which will be individual character or the personality of the consumer. In general terms, actual consumer behavior is influenced more by affection and cognition (Kasper et al., 2006). The factors which influence the formulation of the expectations of customers include external communications, past experience, personal needs, and word of mouth (Zeithaml et al., 1990). Consumers buy and use products and services in order to both accomplish their goals, and satisfy their needs, and achieve a level of satisfaction. In terms of purchasing services, affective factors probably play a critical role due to the intangible nature of services. The reduction

of the perceived risk level by providing additional cognitive information was considered insufficient as service quality is determined to a large extent by factors relating to social interactions between customers and service providers (Kasper et al., 2006). An increased level of competition and more demanding customers resulted in more careful consideration being given to the facilities and services provided in meetings, conferences, and training programs. In the case of meetings, in particular, the service attributes are the first factors and weighed more heavily. Moreover, first impressions and memories of their most recent interactions are also weighed more heavily. This is the case with many transactions in the hospitality industry, and the meetings industry also combines intangible services with tangible products and facilities (Hinkin and Tracey, 2003). The avoidance of uncertainty and the perceived risks are both crucial elements in terms of providing services in an international context. However, there are a number of ways to reduce the level of perceived risk, for example, the kind of mood a customer is in, or their perception of time. Emotions are important in terms of the process of evaluating or purchasing services, especially if consumers are dissatisfied with the services on offer. There are many ways in which consumers may express their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a service. Additionally, the image of a service or a service provider may vary between different segments. The positioning of services can also be displayed on a perceptual map, and from these positions, strategic consequences can be drawn and specific targeting strategies can be developed (Kasper et al., 2006).

The second factor noted from the research is 'affordability and good value for money'. Clearly, the financial aspect influences the decision making-process, especially if a large part of the total cost of the conference – accommodation, conference registration, and transportation – has to be paid for by one person, and out of their own pocket (Oppermann and Chon, 1997) as well as the factor of the exchange rate (Zhang et al., 2007). The factor of time cost was identified



as the trade-off made by the participants in terms of choosing not to attend other conferences, or take a vacation (Zhang et al., 2007). Similarly, fluctuations in the value of a national currency may have both positive and negative effects on the conference and convention industry; such as a weakening of the exchange rate and the value of a national currency may attract more international events as the costs for both incoming delegates and organising committees and planners may be lower, and the country may be perceived as good value for money. However, it may be more difficult, and certainly more expensive, for delegates to travel abroad and attend conferences and meetings because of the relative weakness of their own currency. The opposite case is true when a currency is strong in comparison with other currencies (Rogers, 2008). For example, Value – Price has always been, and should continue to be an asset for the hospitality industry, whether it is at the luxury, deluxe, moderate or economy tier (Beauvais, 2008).

The factor of value for money is one of the most significant considerations for both business travelers and MICE organisers. In order to attract more business tourism, countries have constructed venues designed for easy accessibility, feature high-end technology; are also cost-effective and good value for money, massive spaces in which to hold exhibitions, and conferences supported by attractive destinations and surroundings. We may admire those countries with then best facilities for the MICE industry, as they benefit the most from business and MICE travel (Destination MICE Magazine, 2014). The Country Brand Index was created in partnership with BBC World News; based on the work of 3,400 international business and leisure travelers, and covers every continent. The content is also investigated in depth by 14 in-depth global focus groups, consisting of experts in the field. The Country Brand Index identified Thailand as a top ranked destination in terms of the factor of Value for Money, in comparison with seventeen other countries in Asia (Future Brand, 2010).

According to the Tourist Authority of Thailand's survey, it was revealed that many MICE travelers recognize Thailand as a great value-for-money

destination, with Korean tourists commenting that there was no other place in the world that could offer such a high level of comfort for such similar prices. Asian tourists were also fond of the shopping prices and the product quality found in Thailand. The top five reactions to tourism in Thailand were that they were 1) amazed, 2) happy, and 3) excited, and that the local people were 4) friendly and 5) welcoming. The five lowest ranked reactions to Thailand as a tourist destination was that it was 1) too messy, 2) too slow, and 3) too noisy; as well as 4) the visible presence of the sex industry in red-light districts and 5) the shyness of the local people. The most important factor in terms of attracting tourists to Thailand was the factor of *beautiful beaches*, rated at 3.29, and the availability and variety of spas and wellness clinics at 3.13, and the variety of adventure activities at 3.12. (Bangkok Post, 31 July, 2012).

The third factor is 'tourism activities'. Thailand is recognised by travellers for decades as the tourist destination. The diversity of tourism attractions in Thailand ranges from cultural and natural attractions, to entertainment, nightlife, sightseeing, etc. Rutherford and Kreck (1994) claimed that tourism activities also played an important role in terms of influencing convention attendance and behavior. The factors of scenery, sightseeing opportunities, tourism activities in the destination country, as well as the availability of nightlife were also considered to be significant (Oppermann, 1996; Go and Zhang, 1997). The 'attractiveness' of the convention destination is regarded as the 'drawing power' or 'pull' of a particular event, both in its general appeal, or the generic benefits that it provides, as well as targeted benefits for specific interests and needs (Getz, 2007). In terms of classification on the Country Brand Index in 2010, Thailand was ranked fifth among the top twenty five Country Brands. Overall, the scores from a number of attributes determined this ranking; including factors such as 'Attractions', 'Food', 'Resort and Lodging Options' and 'Value for Money' (Future Brand, 2011-2012).

Besides satisfaction, with the intervening factors associated with conferences or conventions; the attendees may also enjoy the benefits of

the location in terms of relaxation and sightseeing, and they can associate themselves with the image of the location. In addition, both members and non-members may be accompanied by their spouses or partners, who according to the research are important in terms of their participation in the decision making-process. Some destinations may be able to achieve a higher rate of spouse or partner turnout, based on factors such as their attractiveness, or intervening opportunities, such as shopping (Oh et al., 1993; and Oppermann and Chon, 1997).

The fourth factor recognised in the research was hospitality. Thai hospitality is well known worldwide, as well as the friendliness of the *local people*, including their *unique culture and traditions*. While in 2014, the number of visitors to Thailand decreased to 24.78 million, or -6.66% or arrivals decreased by 10%, and 28% in the first three-quarters of 2014. By the end of 2014, arrivals had increased in comparison to the previous year. The rate of international arrivals to Thailand from 2000 to 2014, and showed a significant rise from 2000 onwards. If the year 2000 is taken a benchmark, with 10 million visitors, Thailand had 26.74 million visitors in 2013, an increase of 167%. However, arrivals decreased by 6.66% in 2014, a year of massive political demonstrations, followed by a military coup. However, there was a recovery in the final quarter of the year (thaiwebsites.com, 29<sup>th</sup> April, 2016). Obviously, Thailand has a great deal of potential and there are many opportunities for Thai tourism and business tourism in particular to grow in international terms. All of the sectors and stakeholders also have great potential. In addition, Thailand's economic development may increase over the coming year, due to improvements in the infrastructure, and attempting to meet international standards in order to support the creation of the ASEAN community, and cooperation between ASEAN member countries. In terms of culture, the prevalently Buddhist culture and Thai traditional influences are rich, and one of the main reasons that tourists who are looking for a unique travel experience flock to Thailand every year. In the land of smiles, the perception of the majority of the population is that they are helpful and kind (Beauvais, 2008).

The fifth factor noted in the research was the 'image of the destination'. As Kasper et al. (2006) explain, the image of a destination can be defined as the total impression that a single customer or a group of customers has about a particular object, a service or a service provider, or an organization and its employees. This kind of impression is based on more than mere facts. Along with facts, attitudes, customs, expectations, and feelings, as well as all of the associations that a person or group can make, all contribute to the final image formation. An image can be based on either a quick first impression, or a thorough analysis and evaluation of all of the facts and feelings surrounding a particular object. In other words, an image always has a component of subjective evaluation. This subjectivity is not only expressed in terms of the specific position of a service, on relation to other services, but also the range of competitive services, and the ways in which they are deemed to be important to a customer. After all, the customers subjectively determine who and what are viewed as competitors in terms of services. Therefore, it is important to know what customers perceive as competitive services, rather than who a service organization assumes their competitors are. Perceptual mapping is a tool used to visualize the relative positioning of different services on specific attributes.

The sixth element recognised in the research findings was 'safety and security', with Opperman (1996) advising that this was one of the main destination attributes that tourists took into consideration. In terms of the factors of safety and security, on a worldwide scale, Bangkok and the rest of Thailand are safer than most other popular tourist destinations. Thailand also has one of the lowest rates of both violent and nonviolent crime in Asia. Randall Bennett, the Regional Security Officer for the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok claimed that "We don't compile and distribute data on crime, because there are so few incidents each year." (Beauvais, 2008). However, the crime rate has increased over the last few years, particularly in tourist destinations in the South of Thailand.

The seventh aspect recognised from the research is the quality of the facilities and standardization of conference venues. The highest priority a tourist destination requires is tourism infrastructure and critical transport. One major limitation in terms of holding large conferences was the factor of the availability of space, as well as factors such as the 'hotel room rate', 'the availability of large convention centres' and 'the square footage available for exhibition centres' (Qu, et al., 2000). In terms of product revitalization, some of the factors included asset management, facilities development, market segmentation, the use of new technologies and the restaurant sector (Hing et al., 1998). Tourism infrastructure can be defined as the supply chain of transport, with the social and environmental infrastructure collaborating with the destination at a regional level to create the following: (1) transport infrastructure, which provides visitors access from international and domestic source markets to destinations; including airports, major roads, and rail; (2) social infrastructure, or the number of rooms available for visitors, the physical structures required for any services, events, and exhibitions which may attract tourists. In this context, infrastructure also includes all of the convention centres, galleries, hotels, stadiums, and tourist precincts in a destination; (3) environmental infrastructure, which include natural tourist attractions, such as national parks, marine parks, and reserves, including the visitor facilities; (4) Collaborative Infrastructure, which is the network of regional, state and national tourism organizations that market particular destinations and distribution of a tourism product. Such tourism infrastructure is primarily built on private capital, with the private sector accounting for 78% of total investments in tourism. Private infrastructure includes international airports and tourist accommodations, while public infrastructure consists of roads, railways, and seaports. Infrastructure such as convention centres and national parks are public assets, which are provided for according to environmental and social policy objectives or as a result of market failure.

Thailand has some of the finest conference venues in South-East Asia, and the MICE industry is important in terms of the overall development of the

national tourism industry. The MICE industry is beneficial for the tourism industry, because it helps to enhance the quality of accommodations, hospitality, and services that are located in such an exotic location. In addition, it stimulates MICE industry investment in terms of associated facilities and services (CSN and Associates, 1998). An analysis of the performance of the MICE industry in 1996 and 1997 was conducted. The results strongly suggested that Thailand had a strong MICE industry, which should produce substantial economic benefits in the future. Furthermore, as the Thai MICE industry was listed in the national strategic plan for economic development, with the availability of all the infrastructure and facilities, such as Thai culture, tourist attractions, transportation and logistics systems, as well as foreign investment promotion policies, Thailand is in a good position to gain from the development of MICE industry. Convention centres constructed for the purpose of exhibitions and international conferences can therefore be considered a catalyst for the development of the industry in the entire region. It is recognised as a smart national strategic plan that enables sustainable growth (Alford, 2005).

The eighth factor noted from the research was the standardization of accommodation and hotels. Hogan (2008) claimed that hospitality can be defined as providing service to others, as well as demonstrating a consistent level of excellence and quality, but should also profitably provide value at any price level, while still demonstrating unique points of distinction. Most of all, hospitality should be a 'place', somewhere people can still be exceptional individuals, and express their own personality and style. The standard of hotels in Thailand has so far exceeded quality standards, in light of the fact that many hotels offer a distinctive design and service, elegance, and style, which have captured the attention of both Thai and foreign visitors. When it comes to authentic, Thai-style hospitality, hotels may offer visitors a choice of luxury accommodations (Thailand Standard Hotels Directory 2011). Furthermore, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) implemented the 'Thailand Hotel Standards' program to be applied to all hotels in Thailand. The program aimed to

provide a consistent, dependable star rating of one to five for hotels and resorts throughout the country. The standards are classified into 3 aspects: construction and facilities, maintenance, and services (The Thailand Hotel Standard (thailandhotelier.com)).

The ninth factor recognised from the research was the provision and quality of food and beverages at ICs. Thailand offers a variety of excellent food. The rapid spread of Thai restaurants around the world is one of its most effective global ambassadors and a marketing tool that should be utilized more often according to Beauvais (2008). One distinctive aspect of Thai food is the use of fresh herbs and spices, as well as the use of sauces in nearly every dish (TAT, 2015). In Thailand, there are a number of organizations that are responsible for legal food control operations, including the Food and Drug Administration of the Ministry of Public Health, and the Provincial Offices of Public Health (The Food and Drug Administration, The Ministry of Public Health). Therefore, visitors can trust the quality of Thai cooking and food on a national level.

Finally, the tenth factor noted from the research was visas. In terms of their travel documents, many of the delegates were not satisfied with having a business visa, due to the fact that it was much more expensive than a tourist visa, and also took longer to obtain compared to a tourist visa, which may be collected on arrival at immigration.

Another advantage found in the qualitative analysis of Thailand as a destination, is the friendliness of the locals – Thailand is known as *the land of thousand smiles*. Go and Zhang, (1997) proposed that the friendliness of the locals also affected the international convention industry.

#### **8.2.4 What weaknesses or barriers restrain the effectiveness of the Thai international convention industry?**

The quantitative results revealed that other intervening opportunities, such as other conventions contributed to the weaknesses of Thailand as a business tourism destination. Another issue would be the issue of a long

haul flight or the traveling distance, especially for delegates from North America, Europe, Latin America, or the African continent. In addition, political instability is a major threat to the business tourism and IC industry. There have also been new financial and political risks which could slow down the recovery process (TCEB MICE Report, July 2013). However, according to research by Deutsche Welle (2014), the element of political instability hardly affected the image of Thailand as a holiday paradise. Furthermore, experts claimed that the European debt crisis and local political instability will remain as challenges to the development of the Thai MICE industry over the next year. The size of the MICE events from long-haul markets will become smaller as organisers try to save money, and organisers, especially in the exhibitions segment, will remember the political strife of 2008-10 (Bangkok Post, 2012a).

The factors of safety, risk, or crime in Thailand were also regarded by the delegates. The ability to cope with uncertainty, which is an inherent aspect of perceived risk, differs between cultures. Therefore, some barriers to entry may be the result of ethnocentrism. Moreover, the 'country-of-origin' effect may also play a role in accepting services offered by foreign companies. According to Kaspar et al. (2006) all of these factors may have an impact on perceived risks. The Thai government hired an outside consulting firm to find out what tourists really thought about the destination image of Thailand. Despite a comparatively low crime rate, safety was still the biggest concern. Significantly, in the image of Thailand from the perspective of tourists, safety remains the chief concern, according to a survey by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT). The Thailand Destination Image survey Likert 1-5, concluded that safety problems are destroying the image of Thailand as a tourist destination. Furthermore, many foreign tourists perceive that when Thailand is faced with a crisis, it fails to respond to it or manage it effectively. The category of safety received four points, meaning it was of the highest concern to the delegates, with nightlife tours receiving the lowest score of 2.55 and the factor of tourism crisis



management and a 24-hour tourism hotline service being available both rated a score of 2.81 (Bangkok Post, 2012b).

From the research carried out for this thesis, entertainment areas and some tourist activities, such as red-light districts, were considered to be barriers against the development of the quality of IC industry in Thailand. When triangulated with the qualitative results, it is obvious that delegates who originated from India were unsatisfied with Thai cuisine and the taste of Thai food. In addition, the lack of English communication skills among the Thai staff working in MICE industry was a common complaint amongst the delegates. This problem can also be a serious barrier, as the industry requires staff who can communicate with the participants. Familiarity with a *communicative language*, like English, is also important (Sirakaya et al., 1996).

### **8.2.5 An Evaluation of Thailand for Asian IC Destination Hub – SWOT Analysis**

Thailand has a lot to offer as an IC destination, with many strong points in its favour, but is also similar to other IC destinations in the region. However, Thailand also has many weaknesses, and many aspects need to be improved. With regard to the information obtained from both the interviews and the open-ended questions on the questionnaire, the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, a SWOT Analysis of Thailand as a destination country for ICs. The delegates raised issues regarding the advantages and disadvantages of Thailand as an international IC and tourist destination. The delegates provided a lot of compliments about Thailand as an international IC; but also made a number of criticisms. For example, the delegates were especially dissatisfied with the poor English skills of the staff at ICs that they attended in Thailand (as mentioned above). The delegates also made suggestions regarding how ICs could be managed more effectively in order to better meet their needs of their customers. As a result of this feedback, it can be determined that the marketing of ICs must go beyond the 7P's of

marketing. In terms of the delivery of services, the delegates also reported that they were satisfied in terms of staff performance, and noted that in terms of customer service, the smallest thing can make the biggest difference.

Additionally, these comments revealed that the delegates believed that Thailand had the potential to gain a larger share of the market in the Asian IC industry, as relevant tourism resources – both natural and man-made, including people, culture and hospitality – are already in place.

### **8.2.5.1 Thailand Strengths - S**

#### **1) High Standards of Thai Hospitality**

As noted from the findings discussed already in this chapter, the general perception of the standards of hospitality in Thailand is already quite high. The Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) would like to improve this, by making Thailand the number-one destination for ICs in Asia. A belief in such a possibility for Thailand is also shared by the attendees:

*“Based on the NIR-2009 ICNIRS conference Thailand could be regarded as an excellent country in which to hold conferences. The conference was extremely well run and the delegates had high praise for the venue, the city and the people.”* (Interview: Organising committee 7)

*“The particular course was very nice. You were nicely treated; you were looked after and taken care of. I think the facilities in this hotel are very nice.”* (Interview: Delegate 2)

#### **2) Quality of Hotel and Facilities**

The level of satisfaction among the delegates regarding the hotel, its facilities and the conference venue were also quite high; a perception shared and remarked upon by a number of the participants. The IC venue, the hotel and its facilities also meet international standards:

*"I think this was a nice meeting. I think the meeting hall acoustics could have been better. It seemed a large, somewhat cavernous place, but having the dining facilities right next door allowed you to feed 250 people and get them back into the session quickly, that sort of thing. It's very easy to fly here, and the hotel is very nice. I think the facilities in this hotel are very nice. (Interview; Delegate 2)*

*"But, the advantages, I think the hotel and conference sector is quite good and can cope with quite large conferences, and the infrastructure is quite good. I see those as the main advantages." (Interviewee 7)*

However, outside of Bangkok, Thailand's capital and largest city, other cities in Thailand's provinces need to develop their infrastructure to support the IC industry, such as building hotels and convention centres.

*"It is difficult to talk about Thailand as a whole. The standard of hotels and service in Bangkok is well above that found in some regional towns. Regional towns need more infrastructure development to become good venues in the conference market." (Questionnaire for Delegate: Open-ended question 28)*

### **3) Quality of Service**

The level of satisfaction among the delegates regarding the standards of hospitality in Thailand was quite high, evident in the comments made by some of the attendees. There were a number of aspects with regard to service quality which the delegates were particularly satisfied with, including the quality of the service, and the friendliness of both the Thai staff at the hotel and IC venue:

*"The service was fantastic." (Interview: Organising committee 3)*

*"The Thai service was very good on both occasions. The organization was excellent, it was an excellent conference. I liked the speakers, the food, the organising staff and their student helpers, the conference tours and activities, the chance to meet and talk with people, and the personal interest in how you are doing." (Interview: Delegate 1)*

#### **4) Quality of Thai Food**

Thailand is perceived as a good destination for ICs because of another element – its cuisine – which the delegates appreciated and praised in terms of its taste, the selection and the variety of the food, as well as the way in which it was presented:

*“Food was excellent, very good choice”* (Interview: Delegate 4)

*“We love Thai food, yes. It’s very, very nice. (How about spicy?) I like spicy food, yes. We like it very much, there is no problem. We go to Thai restaurants in Canada. There are many Thai restaurants in Canada. (How about your wife? Does she like Thai food?) She loves Thai food as well. Oh no, we love the food in Thailand.”* (Interview: Delegate 6)

While Thai cuisine is popular in some regions, such as many Western countries in North America and Western Europe, it is not to the taste of all of the delegates. For example, many of the Indian delegates were not satisfied with Thai cuisine. For this reason, the variety of the selection of food should be expanded to include both spicy and non-spicy food, as well as options for participants from India, such as curries, which would create a positive impression. Furthermore, if there are any Muslim participants, Halal food must be provided.

*“I think that Thailand is a beautiful country and everything was good, but your food wasn’t good for us.”* (Questionnaire for Delegate: Open-ended question 8)

*“I could do (spicy food), but also I intended to eat, maybe sort of rice [I see] and I had rice that something ahh not too spicy [yah] plenty choice, good choice, yah excellent.”* (Interview: Delegate 3)

*“Halal food for Muslims.”* (Questionnaire for Delegate: Open-ended question 20)

### **5) Quality of International Convention Venues**

The international convention venue is another aspect of the experience with which the delegates reported a high level of satisfaction. However, the participants also mentioned that some of the IC venues were in need of renovation:

*“These convention centres were fairly new and state of the art, with many small and large meeting rooms that could be used at the same time, and they had a very large hall for trade shows.”* (Interview: Delegate 1)

*“The Queen Sirikit Center on the whole is not bad, it's just slightly old-looking, I think. The one up by the airport is pretty awful. It was just run down, the air-conditioning was particularly bad and it looked shabby. It looked tatty, it looked old, and it looked like it needed a good lick of paint. The Queen Sirikit Center is OK, it could be better. Again, the air-conditioning in the Queen Sirikit Center is not very good.”* (Interview: Delegate 3)

Additionally, many of the participants mentioned that the quality of the acoustics in the IC venue needed to be improved, and that temperature in the conference or convention center needed to be set to a recommended temperature of twenty five degrees Celsius:

*“I think this was a nice meeting. I think the acoustics in the meeting hall could have been better.”* (Interview: Delegate 2)

*“Well, most of the meetings I have been to in Thailand have been held in hotels, and sometimes the rooms are not all that good for big meetings. The acoustics, sometimes it's difficult to get them to hear, and sometimes you can't see the screen particularly well.”* (Interview: Delegate 5)

*“The temperature in the conference room should have been controlled better, if possible.”* (Questionnaire for Delegate: Open-ended question 24)

### **6) Friendliness of the Local People**

Apart from members of the service industry, the local people are also known for their friendliness:

*"Kindness of staffs. ISGA X 2009 is my first international conference. This conference satisfied me very much!!! Thank You."* (Questionnaire for Delegate: Open-ended question 32)

*"Interesting places to visit, as well as friendly people"* (Questionnaire for Delegate: Open-ended question 84)

## **7) Attractiveness of the Destination Country**

Thailand is regarded as an attractive country, with a lot of preexisting tourist attractions and infrastructure for tourism, so many delegates want to go sightseeing, or even have a holiday after the convention is over.

*"Yes, I think there is great potential for Thailand. The first thing is it is an attractive destination, secondly, it has easy transport, harbor, and third, for my business it has many universities, so there are a great number of academics and researchers working there, and I guess the fourth factor is that Thailand is reaching out to the international community so that it is very welcoming. (Interviewer: "What about this advantage?") Well I think they have an advantage over many other countries."* (Interview: Delegate 7)

*"One factor was that it was convenient for us to be in Thailand at that time and so you normally organize conferences partly to do with your other travels, secondly, the topic of the conference suited my research, so it was good that that topic, the theme of the conference, because my own research was on political reporting."* (Interview: Delegate 7)

## **8) Destination Image**

Another opportunity that Thailand has is that it has a good reputation in international terms regarding its destination image as a popular holiday or vacation destination:

*"I think myself and most Canadians would prefer a conference in Thailand more than any other country in Asia. I am pretty sure of that. Thailand has a very good reputation in Canada and people would like to visit Thailand so I think you have a big advantage there. There is a very major*

*advantage there. I cannot think of anywhere else in Asia where people would prefer to go to, no I don't think so."* (Interview: Delegate 6)

### **8.2.5.2 Thailand Opportunities - O**

#### **1) Affordability and Good Value for Money**

Thailand is recognised as an affordable country and the currency exchange rate is favorable to tourists from Western countries, so ICs held in Thailand are good value for money. The factor of affordability and cost are both strong advantages for Thailand, as the cost of accommodation, food, and so on are reasonable and affordable, especially when compared to the prices in other countries which are also popular with tourists. Another advantage is the favorable rate of exchange between Thai Baht and foreign currencies:

*"Thailand has very reasonable costs. I attended a conference in Korea in 2008 that was very expensive, the hotel, the food, and so I may not attend a conference in Korea again because of the cost. Thailand is very affordable."* (Interview: Delegate 1)

*"One advantages of Thailand is lower costs and better value for money."* (Interview: Organising committee 7)

*"I think that Thailand should advertise, because people think it's cheaper to go to the southern United States or the Caribbean, but when you get there it's very expensive. So if you pay a little bit more, and stay on the plane a little bit longer, you can go to Thailand and you can stay in very good accommodation get good service, good food, and sun, they all want sun, and it's better value."* (Interview: Delegate 6)

#### **2) International Conventions with a 'Thai Flavor'**

The delegates seemed impressed by the fact that the IC had a strong 'Thai flavor', or employed some of the unique aspects of Thai culture. The local organising committees and planners ran the programs with a combination of academic elements and Thai cultural styles, which also made a positive impression on the participants. The fact that Thai food

was served at lunch (as already discussed), as well as the cultural and sightseeing tours, was also appreciated by the delegates:

*“The thing I liked especially about the venue in Thailand is that although it was an international conference, it had a very strong Thai flavor, the lunch they served was Thai. Thai food and the people were all greeting you in the Thai way and so I thought that you knew you were in Thailand. Just as a comparison, I was in Tanzania, in Africa, just a few weeks ago and there you could be almost anywhere in the world. The meeting was not very African, so I liked the fact that it was really Thai. You knew you were in Thailand.”* (Interview: Organising committee 3)

### **3) The Potential of the Attractiveness of Thailand**

Thailand is an internationally popular tourist destination and has numerous natural and cultural resources, as well as established tourist attractions. Furthermore, Thailand is internationally renowned for its hospitality. The factors of service quality and the friendliness of the local people are also perceived to be at a high level. Therefore, the attractiveness of these elements, as well as the unique characteristics of Thai culture, has the potential to attract more tourists to Thailand:

*“They (Hong Kong and Singapore) are both competitors, but I think what Thailand has is that it is a really attractive place to visit. I think for a tourist it is a lot more interesting than Hong Kong or Singapore. Especially because you (Thailand) have got that wonderful river running through the city, and the culture you see, just by traveling up and down the river. The palaces and the temples and such are just wonderful. So I think Thailand is a much more attractive place to visit. It's much more exciting.”* (Interview: Organising committee 3)

*“Yes, I think it is a possibility. It's quite an interesting place.”* (Interview: Delegate 2)



#### **4) The Land of a Thousand Smiles**

Many visitors to Thailand have described most Thai people as friendly, fun-loving, and helpful. Due to the fact that Thailand is a popular tourist destination; the majority of Thai people are used to foreigners and welcome tourists:

*"The main advantage the island has is the Thai people. The Thai people are great, the "Land of Smiles", I think it's so true. The food, for me, I like it. But I think most people like Thai food. In Thailand there are so many universities, and so many educated people, there should be a good way to advertise that combination."* (Interview: Delegate 1)

*"The Thai market for conferences is, I would have thought, very good. People actually like going to Thailand. They like the service and the friendliness. It's a land of smiles; I've been told there are at least 6 to 7 million smiles in Thailand. They like going to Thailand."* (Interview: Delegate 2)

#### **5) The Potential for Other Opportunities in Thailand**

As Thailand is a tourist destination, there are plenty of opportunities for IC participants to take advantage of the fact that they are in Thailand before, during or after the IC. This is especially true for those delegates who have traveled for many hours by air and want to enjoy a holiday or vacation:

*"Yes, especially if you are traveling a long distance. When the other opportunities, for tourism, for example, becomes immediately important. So for me, it took me 19 hours to get from Vancouver and I believe that it was really important that there was an opportunity to see other things."* (Interview: Organising committee 3)

*"I mean, Thailand is a long way, 14 hours from here. They just look at the benefits of the place, they don't really consider the cost of the flight; they don't really consider the time. Generally "they are on holiday" and they are off with their wives or partners or whatever and so they are going for a good time."* (Interview: Delegate 3)

## **6) A Good Perception and a Positive Attitude Towards of Thailand as a Tourist Destination**

Thailand has other advantages as an IC destination country, as people from many countries around the world have a good perception of Thailand and a positive attitude towards Thailand as a tourist destination. Canadians in particular seemed to love many of Thailand's characteristic qualities, such as the climate, the beaches, the local people and the cuisine.

*"I think that in Canada we have a positive view of Thailand. It's not negative, and so that helps, and in the winter time in Canada it is very cold, and Thailand is warm, so that is good. So, the two main things are that Thailand is a stable country without big problems, and it's sunny, and a nice place to be. So, that's important." (Interview: Delegate 6)*

There are a lot of opportunities for Thailand in terms of its potential as a popular destination country for ICs.

## **7) Attractive Climate**

Thailand is also a particularly attractive destination to people from certain countries, particularly those delegates who come from the colder parts of the world. The warm climate, along with access to beaches is very appealing to delegates from colder regions, such as Canada and the Scandinavian countries:

*"I think that in Canada we have a positive view of Thailand, it's not negative, and so that helps. And in the winter time in Canada it is very cold and Thailand is warm, so that is good. So, the two things are, Thailand is a stable country without problems, and it's sunny and a nice place to be. So that's important." (Interview: Delegate 6)*

## **8) Positive Perceptions of Buddhist Countries in the West**

Following 9/11, and numerous other terror attacks across the globe, Western people that were interviewed seemed nervous about traveling

to so-called 'Muslim' countries, especially North Americans and Western Europeans who have lived with acts of terror in their own countries:

*"The other thing too, in Canada, we are very nervous about going to a Muslim country. Many Canadians will not go because it's Muslim, and that is important. Thailand has a bit advantage because it isn't Muslim and people don't see there is any danger in Thailand, so that is important.....that's the reason, and many people would be frightened to go to a Muslim country."* (Interview: Delegate 6)

### **8.2.5.3 Thailand's Weaknesses - W**

#### **1) Political Instability**

A factor which threatens to erode Thailand's strong position as a regional hub for the IC industry is that of political instability. An aspect, which contributes to the element of political instability, is that of systematic corruption; from the lowest to the highest ranks, from police officers to local and national political figures. Thailand has an unfortunate reputation as a corrupt nation, as well as an unstable government. This has become a more serious issue recently, with two major coup d'états in a relatively short period of time. The resulting civil unrest led to the cancellation of many international conferences and conventions. Many people believe that this negative perception of Thailand could take years, even decades to recover from.

*"However, the global economic downturn and the adverse publicity from recent political events are threatening to erode Thailand's strong position."* (Interview: Organising committee 6)

*"Yes, I think its (Thailand) a possibility; it's quite an interesting place. You currently have a little bit of instability in the background."* (Interviewee 2)

*"The main concern for delegates to conferences in Thailand continues to be security. Outsiders are concerned by the protests or demonstrations by supporters of political parties. Even if they do not feel their persons are in danger, the threat of delays to travel etc., are sufficient to deter many*

visitors. Clearly, security is an overriding issue.” (Interview: Organising committee 8)

“The U.S. State Department issued a travel advisory for Thailand around December 2008. I think the travel advisory was still in effect by the time of the conference (June 2009) since there were further protests and some political instability. Since the airports were open, the protests or the travel advisory had no effect on my decision to travel to Thailand” (Interview: Delegate 1)

“Political stability is very important.” (Questionnaire for Delegate: Open-ended question 80)

Fortunately, for the people who did not know anything about the Thai political situation and Thai internal affairs, the coup d'état did not have any negative influence on their decision of whether or not to participate in international conferences held in Thailand.

“I was never worried about safety in Bangkok. We walked on the streets and everything, and there was never a problem. But on that issue, I know the demonstrators sat in the airport for a number of weeks, but that was before the meeting happened and it didn't worry me that much at all. It might have worried me if it was happening at the time, but I didn't ever get the feeling that Thai people were likely to become violent or that the demonstrations were likely to become violent. So I was not worried too much about that at all. Well, I heard the warnings and I knew about it, but as I said, it might have been an issue if it was actually happening at the time I was in Thailand, but, because it had all finished before then, it wasn't a problem for me at all.” (Interview: Organising committee 3)

“I have been traveling to Thailand on and off for more than 30 years, and over that time there have been many political crises, and they are not normally a major problem. I mean, the worst that seems to have happened to foreigners have been delays, maybe they get stuck at the airport, or something like that. I don't know. It's very rare for foreigners, except in the very south of Thailand, it's very rare for foreigners to be in any danger. So, that was not a great concern.” (Interview: Delegate 7)

*"I watched the political coverage, and in fact a Canadian was killed in Phuket a month before I went there, but that didn't affect my decision. I knew about the politics because the airport had been closed. But my view is when you hear about these disturbances, the safest time to go is after a disturbance when everything is calmed down, because it usually doesn't happen again for a while. So, that was my view. But, most Canadians don't know anything about Thailand, they don't know the news about Thailand, all they know is that it is a nice place to go, and they don't follow the news. There is not much Thai news in Canada. In the newspapers, you do not see much about Thailand in the papers, except for when the Canadian tourist was killed in Thailand, in Phuket. That may have affected some people, but it didn't affect me. Thailand is OK. Many Canadian tourists are being killed in Mexico, so Thailand is OK, I guess. It didn't bother me at all, because I know there are about 60 million people in Thailand, and very few are bad people." (Interview: Delegate 6)*

However, if these delegates were better informed about the political situation in Thailand, it seems that the so-called crisis would not have any influence on their decision of whether or whether not to attend an IC in Thailand:

*"There is divorce between politics and business in Thailand and this is what people outside don't understand. You can have political upheaval, but business goes on as normal. So you don't need to worry about it, but people don't see that. If they understand the Thai system and they know how Thai politics works then that doesn't worry them, but the majority of people don't. The majority of people worry about these things. I think it will take a couple of years to recover from it." (Interview: Delegate 2)*

## **2) Traffic in Bangkok**

Unfortunately, Thailand had numerous weaknesses which require improvement. While some of these weaknesses can be improved in a short period of time; some may not be as easy to solve, as they are external factors, which cannot be solved by industrial or even political means. There were three elements in particular that delegates

complained about, including traffic conditions, especially in Bangkok. It is the element that many of the delegates made complaints about were the heavy traffic in the Bangkok metropolitan area. As logistics and transportation is an important element in terms of the development of the MICE and tourism industry, it is crucial that the traffic problems in Bangkok is dealt with effectively. The factors of road congestion and unpredictable transportation could have a negative impact on the delegates in terms of delaying their arrival or departure, or giving them a negative impression of the city. In addition, alternative modes of transportation both above and below ground are required in order to combat the problem of traffic in Bangkok.

*“Traffic is always a problem in Bangkok. The expansion of the sky train will be good.”* (Questionnaire for Delegate: Open-ended question 54)

*“Yes, I mean, there are two comments I would make about it. The first one, is of course, that the traffic in Bangkok can be unpredictable. It’s a lot better if you can use the sky train, of course, or the subway, and that makes it much easier. With the traffic, sometimes it’s no problem, other days you don’t know.”* (Interview: Delegate 5)

*“The traffic situation needs to be improved.”* (Questionnaire for Delegate: Open-ended question 65)

### **3) Problems with English Communication Skills**

One of the biggest complaints made by delegates, was the lack of English communication skills among local staff. While the delegates found that the staff were always willing to help, they often lacked the skills to successfully communicate in English with the participants.

*“That is a problem, their lack of English, that is a problem in Thailand, and my Thai is not very good, its zero.”* (Interview: Delegate 6)

*“Language has been a bit of a problem. I am not a linguist, I don’t speak Thai. Some people tried to report that we had lost a slipper – my wife left one behind - and I had to talk to three people before one of them could*

*understand. They were very polite, as usual, and tried to listen, but didn't understand."* (Interview: Delegate 2)

*"The conference staffs were primarily student helpers and they were excellent. There were very few problems with communication."* (Interview: Delegate 1)

*"I think one of the big problems is the lack of English. I think Thai people want to serve, but sometimes they just don't get it right, because we speak English. This is a lack of communication, there is no unwillingness."* (Interview: Delegate 3)

*"Clearly the fact that English is still not as widely spoken as it is in some other countries and that might be a disadvantage"* (Interview: Delegate 7)

*"The conference staff was primarily student helpers and they were excellent. There were very few problems with communication. They were well organized and hard working."* (Interview: Delegate 1)

*"Well, I think they have an advantage over many other countries. Clearly, the fact that English is still not as widely spoken as in some other countries might be a disadvantage."* (Interview: Delegate 7)

*"Well, I can honestly say that service in Thailand is always very good, no, that's not strictly true, but they're always very willing. I think one of the big problems is the lack of English. I think Thai people want to serve, but sometimes they just don't get it right, and this is a communication problem, not unwillingness."* (Interview: Delegate 2)

*"Communication in the streets or with taxi drivers is very difficult, so maybe a simple guide with the most useful terms and how they are written in Thai would be advisable."* (Questionnaire for Delegate: Open-ended question 36)

#### **4) Price Gap and Cost of Stay**

Another common complaint made by the delegates is that the cost of living is too expensive in areas which are popular, international tourist attractions, such as the island of Phuket. As many of the delegates plan

to travel further following the IC, many of their destinations will also be tourist attractions. However, the room rate in hotels and the cost of meals in restaurants in these tourist destinations were described as being too expensive for their means. They also complained about the price gap between small, family restaurants and two-or-three star restaurants, which often cost double or triple the price of Thai restaurants in their country.

*"I think outside of Phuket, I think Phuket is a tourist area, and they charge much more for everything. In restaurants, but also in Thailand, you have a problem, you have very, very good restaurants, then you have the normal restaurants, and the very, very good restaurants charge prices three times higher than they do in Canada."* (Interview: Delegate 6)

### **5) The Element of Crime**

Some of the delegates complained about or were concerned about the issue of crime, in particular being conned or scammed at the airport, or being taken advantage of by tour operators:

*"I think they see the farang as somebody who they should take as much money from as they can. There are many people on the street ... traders, and the taxi drivers; many people who think the farang are there just to have all of their money taken away from them."* (Interview: Delegate 3)

*"Many Canadian tourists are being killed in Mexico, so Thailand is OK, I guess. It didn't bother me at all, because I know there are about 60 million people in Thailand, and very few are bad people."* (Interview: Delegate 6)

*"Unfortunately one of my bags was opened illegally in Bangkok airport and one of my electrical devices was lost. Of course, other travelers like me complained about this problem. This case affects the situation."* (Questionnaire for Delegate: Open-ended Question 9)

### **6) Rise in the Cost of Stay in Tourist Destinations**

While in general terms, Thailand is quite an affordable country; especially for those tourists from countries with currencies with a favorable rate of



exchange; however, some tourist destinations are becoming much more expensive and much less affordable than they used to be:

*“The affordability is OK in Northern Thailand; in Phuket it's very expensive. That was expensive, but in the North it's much cheaper, and very affordable. I think Phuket is a tourist area and they charge much more for everything; the very, very good restaurants charge prices three times higher than in Canada. You have a very low price and a very high price, but not many in the middle.”* (Interview: Delegate 6)

#### **8.2.5.4 Thailand's Threats - T**

##### **1) Bad Reputation**

While Thailand may have received many compliments from these delegates in terms of its potential as an IC destination, it also has a 'bad reputation' internationally. This is due to Thailand's reputation as a destination for sex tourism:

*“Yes, I think it is a possibility, it's quite an interesting place. You currently have a little bit of instability in the background. It also has a reputation for other things, and you have to be careful how you say that. But I think it's well known, it's very easy to reach.”* (Interview: Delegate 2)

*“Thailand has a big reputation of being a very private place. Sometimes the conference organisers don't take it as seriously because of that. But I'm not sure actually. I guess I don't necessarily think it is a bad thing. I often wonder because of that reputation, I think a lot of the reputation is not deserved.”* (Interview: Delegate 1)

Another factor which contributes to negative perceptions of Thailand abroad are unreliable or corrupt taxi drivers and tour operators, who take advantage of and defraud tourists, adding to Thailand's 'bad reputation' and damaging the image of Thailand as a tourist destination.

*“I think that they see the farang (westerner foreigner) as somebody who should take as much money as they can from. There are many people,*

*street traders, taxi drivers; many people who think the farang are there just to have all their money taken away from them.” (Interview: Delegate 3)*

## **2) Uncertainty about the Future Monarch**

The uncertainty surrounding the future of the Thai Monarchy is another threat to the country, the tourist industry, and other local industries. This may also destabilize the government, which in turn would affect business growth. This factor could also have a negative effect on the hospitality industry:

*“The thing that would put people off a little bit would be the situation at the moment. I’ve got to say I think it’s going to be worse in the future.”*  
(Interview: Delegate 5)

## **8.3 SUMMARY**

Chapter Eight presents the discussion of the research study and demonstrates how the research findings have answered the research objectives given. The results found that some attributes have supported by other research carried out on the subject area; but some attributes are different. According to ‘An evaluation of Thailand for Asian IC destination hub by SWOT analysis from interviews and focus-group, there were 3 main themes found with regard to Thailand strengths and opportunities. These themes were: (1) there is potential of Thailand to be the hub of the Asian IC industry. (2) Thailand received many compliments, but also many complaints. And (3) when running ICs in Thailand there is a need to pay attention to the small things as they make a big difference. 4 themes were identified in terms of Thailand’s weaknesses and threats. They comprised of (1) Political instability and unrest can directly impact on the growth of Thailand IC industry. (2) Problematic levels of English literacy levels affect Thailand IC effectiveness. And (3) Thailand has developed a bad reputation, which needs to be improved.

The next chapter, Chapter Nine, will present the conclusion and recommendations for the future study.

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## CHAPTER NINE

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### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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#### 9.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to conclude the research study. This will be separated to a total of four sections: 9.1 gives a brief overview of the study using triangulation of the results of the quantitative and qualitative research. 9.2 illustrates the original contributions to the existing body of research on this topic, and in 9.3 a model of the best practice for Thailand as an international convention destination is presented. 9.4 explains the limitations of the research, possible approaches to overcome these limitations and gives suggestions for further research.

#### 9.1 TRIANGULATION OF THE RESULTS

The following discussion relates to the research objectives, and represents a *contribution to the body of knowledge* on the MICE industry, particularly in Thailand as a MICE destination in Asia. The investigation began with an examination of the factors influencing delegates' decision of whether or not to participate an international convention (objectives one). The findings of the study are revealed with regards to the sequence of their importance as follows:

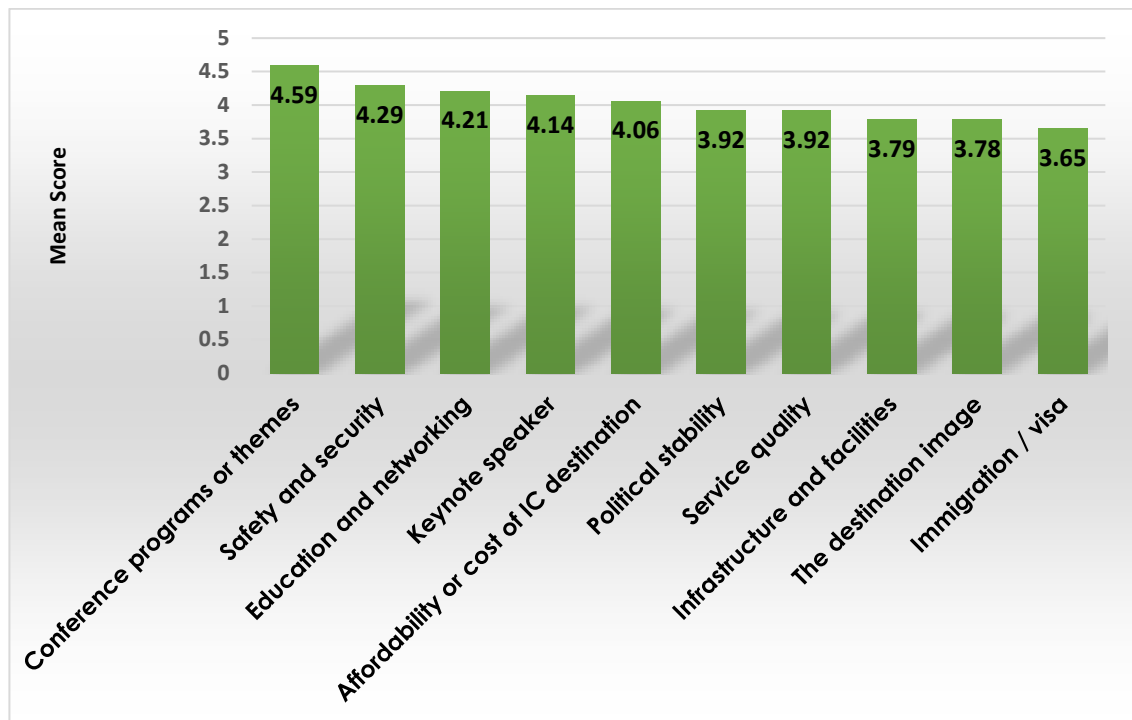


Figure 9.1(1): Top ten important factors influencing delegates' decision to participate in an international convention

The second research objective was set to investigate the elements which planners or organisers consider when selecting the international convention sites. The top ten criteria or elements are found as follows:

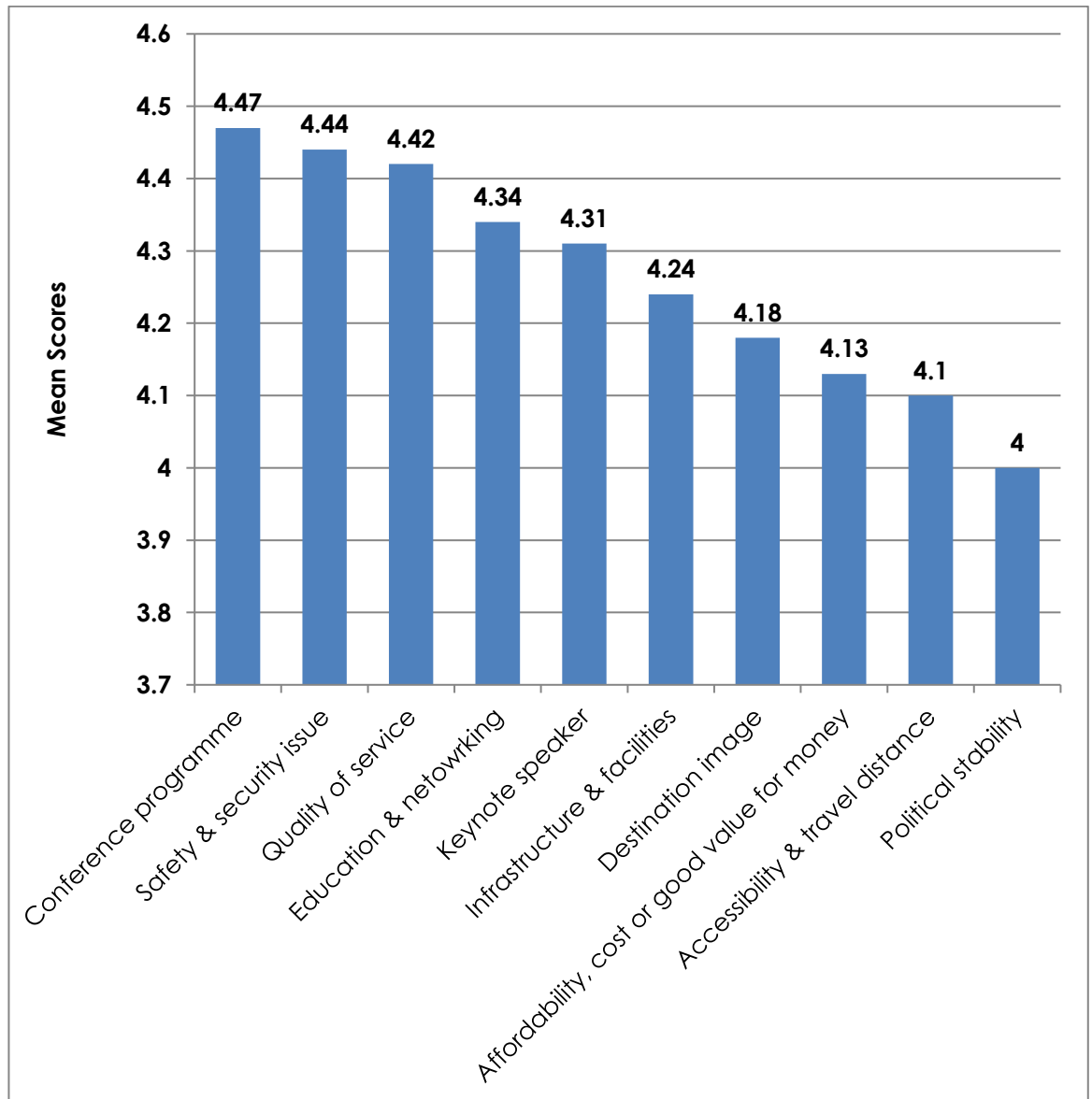


Figure 9.1(2): Top ten important criteria influencing organizers and planners' decision to organize an international convention in any destination

The third research objective aimed to identify the factors which limit the growth of Thailand international convention hub for the MICE industry in Asia. With regard to the questionnaire for delegates, the research findings are revealed as follows:

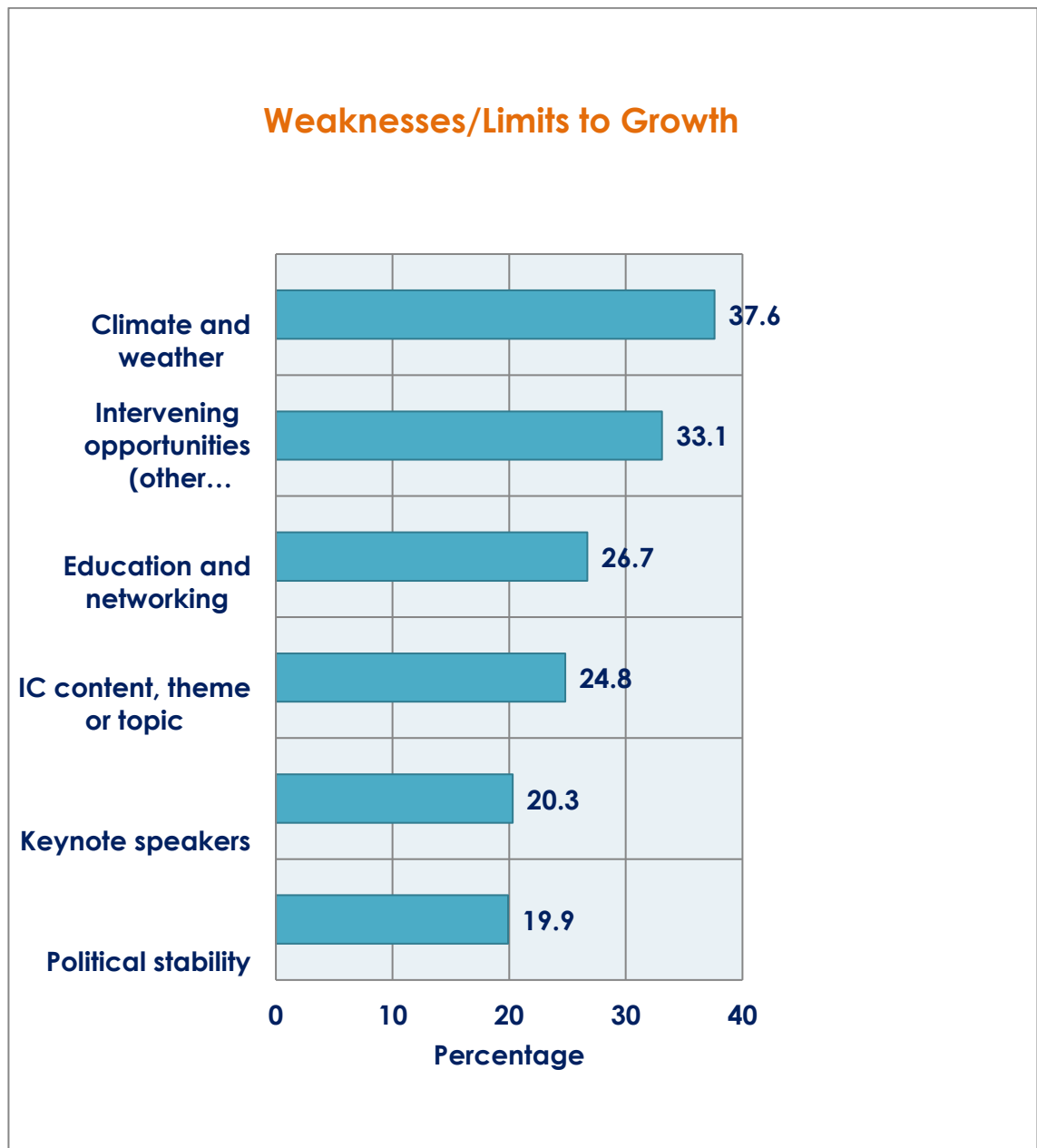


Figure 9.1 (3): Most top weaknesses of Thailand as international convention destination in Asia regarding the delegates

Similarly, with respect to the organising committee and planners the most top weaknesses to international conventions held in Thailand are as follows:

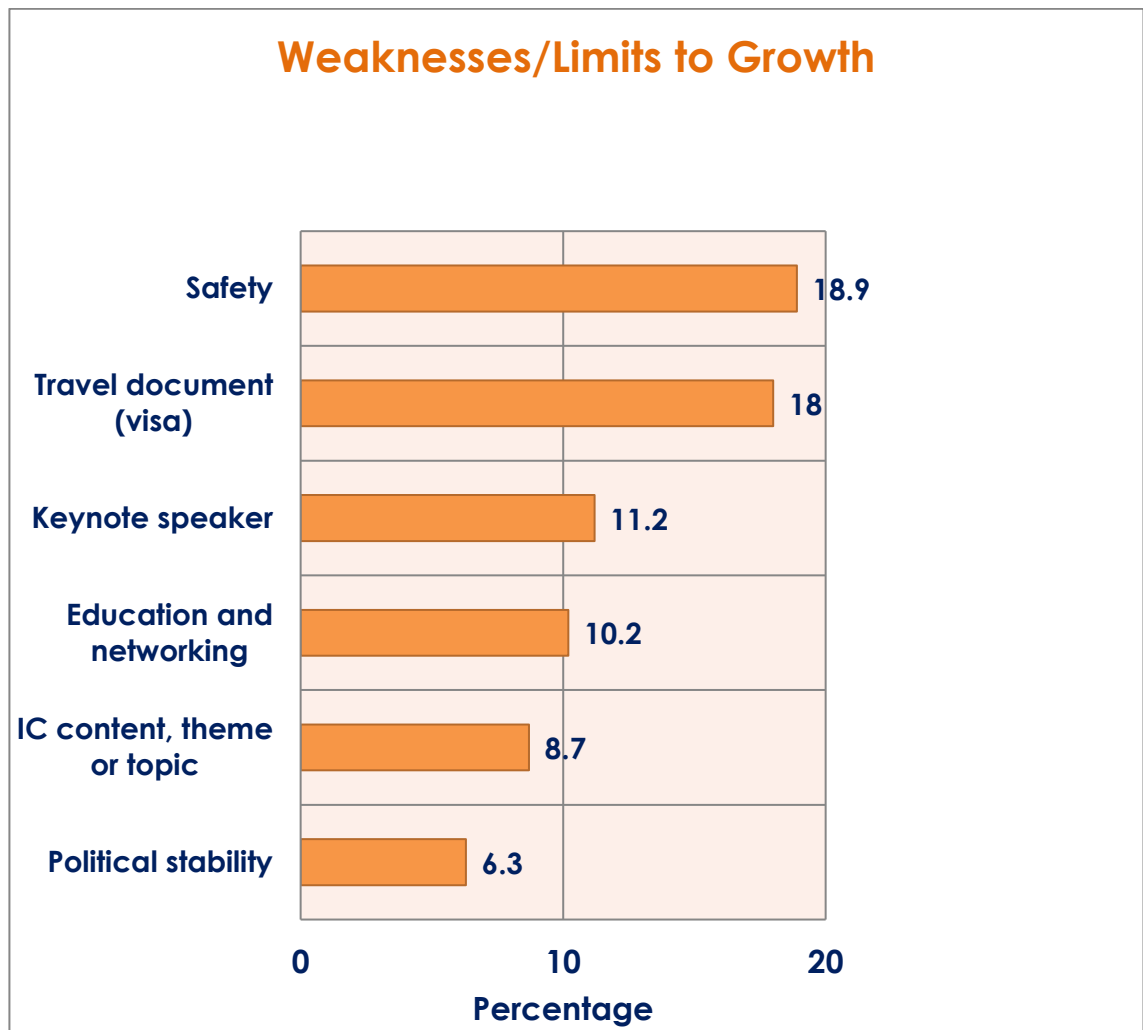


Figure 9.1(4): Most top weaknesses of Thailand as international convention destination in Asia regarding the organising committees and planners

When further investigating with qualitative methods which were interviews, focus group, and responses to open-ended questions within the questionnaire, the results were revealed as follows:

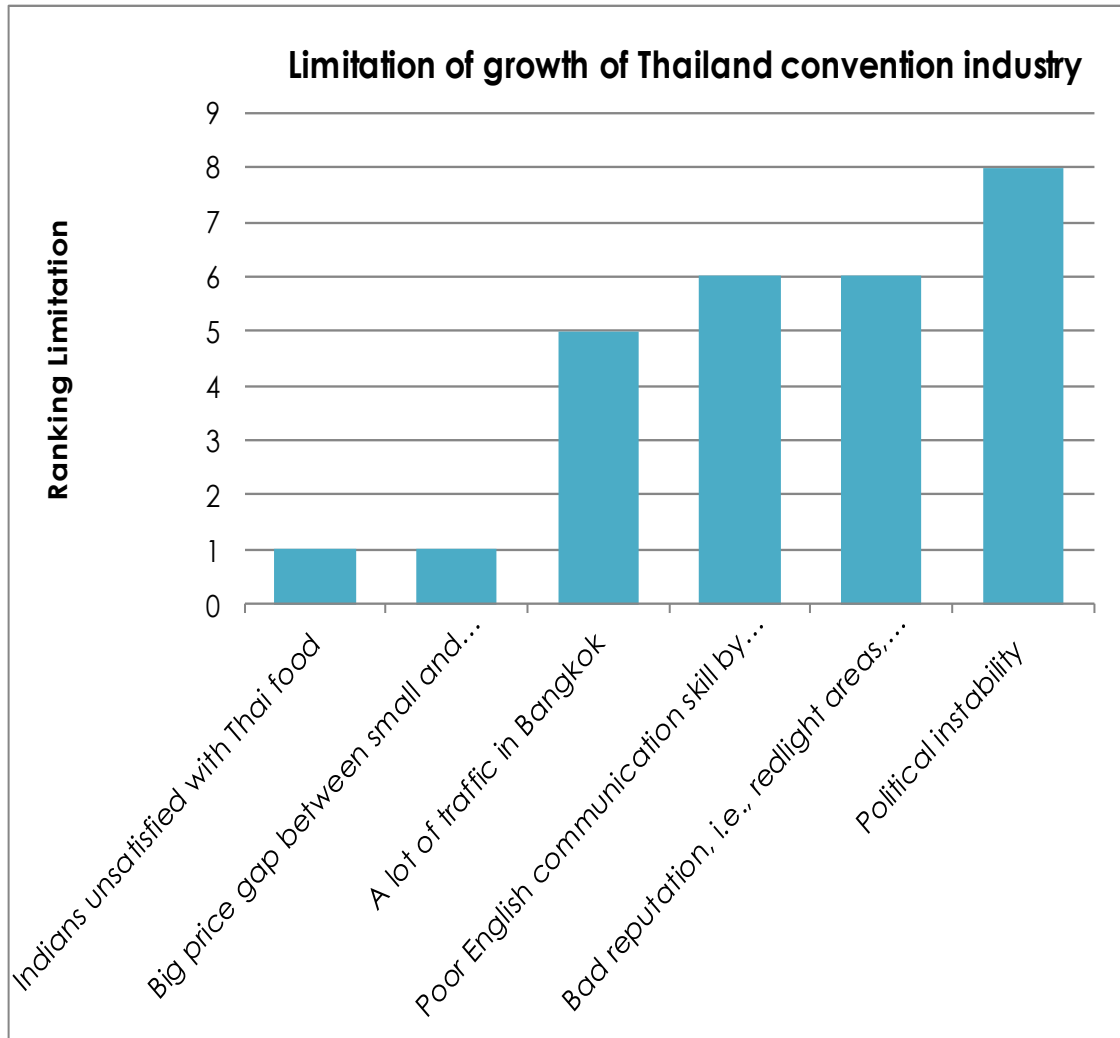


Figure 9.1 (5): The Weaknesses or limitations of Thailand as an international convention in Asia regarding qualitative analysis

When triangulating the findings from quantitative research to the findings from the qualitative research, the answers of what factors limit the growth of Thailand international convention hub for the MICE industry in Asia are merged are as follows:



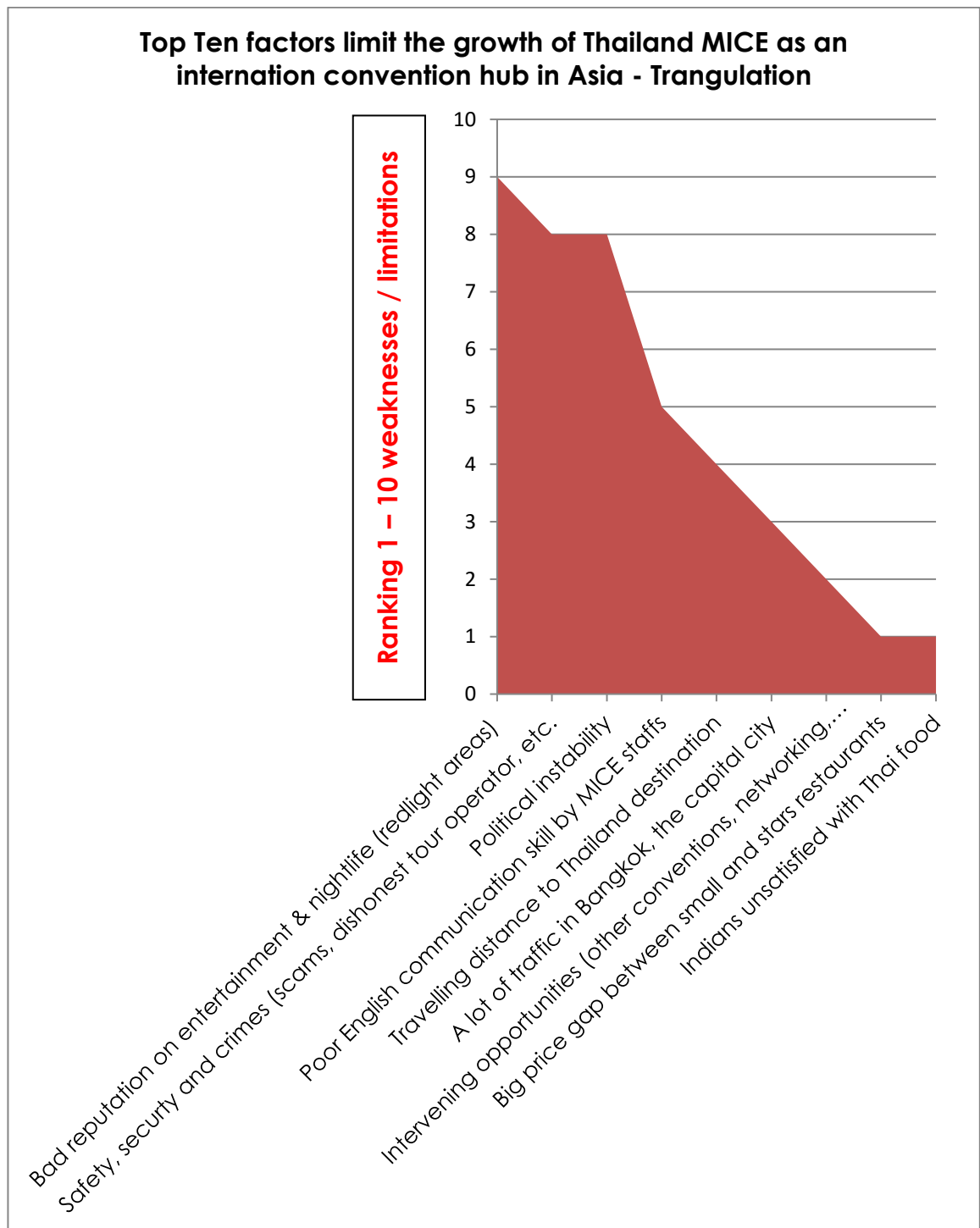


Figure 9.1(6): The triangulation between quantitative and qualitative research findings for weaknesses/limitations to growth of Thailand as an international convention in Asia

Apart from the MICE industry stakeholders, especially Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB), the government bureau, cooperating with Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and Thai government have to solve the problems or limitations presented above, the fourth objective of this research is set to explore the development policies which could be used to improve the MICE industry of Thailand and to position Thailand as a hub of the Asian international convention industry. The research results found regarding the qualitative research study are as follows:

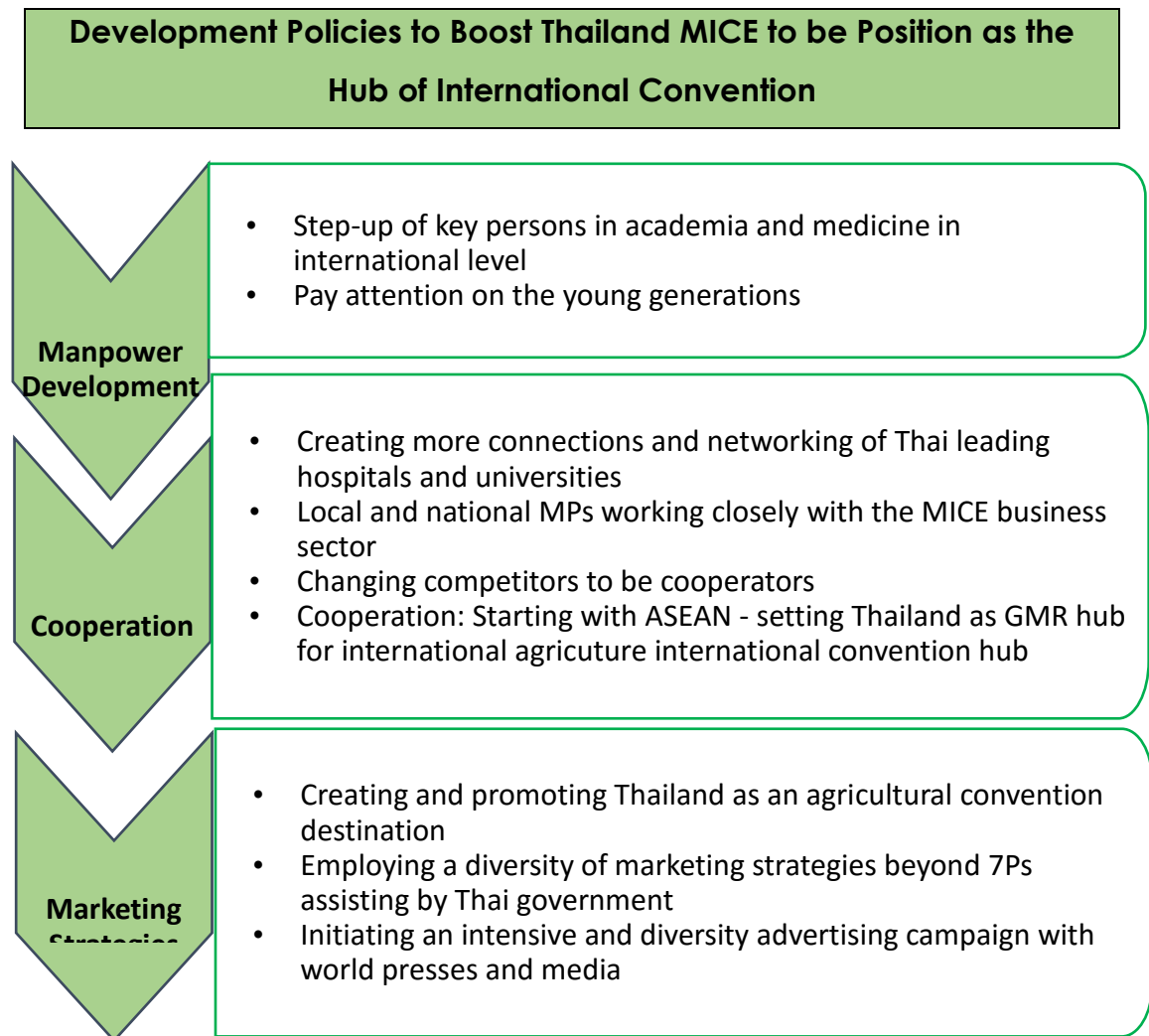


Figure 9.1(7): Strategies or development to boost Thailand MICE to be position as the hub of international convention

## 9.2 ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

This research study provides a number of useful outcomes for the Thai MICE industry, in particular for the international conference and convention industry. These benefits can also be useful to the Tourism Department at the Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep (RMUTK), which provides the training for tourism sector staff. Furthermore, since there has been very little written about the MICE industry in Asia, South-East Asia in general, and in Thailand in particular the research results provided by this study also enables further benefits for the national economy, such as providing a significant amount of employment and income from recognition of how Thailand has the potential to become the hub for the MICE industry in Asia.

In addition, this dissertation has value because of its originality; it is the first piece of academic research on the potential of Thailand in terms of the MICE industry, particular an evaluation of Thailand MICE as an international conference and convention hub in Asia. Such knowledge of Thailand's strengths and weaknesses as a destination country would be beneficial to both the government and the private sector, with regard to strategies to enhance operations in the industry. For this reason, a knowledge of Thailand's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, as well as the identification of regional competitor countries reveal the factors limiting the potential growth of Thailand as an IC destination and as a hub of the Asian IC industry. The model of the best practice in order to develop the conference and convention industry is also crucial in terms of the Thai industrial and economic sector.

Therefore, findings from the quantitative and qualitative research analysis will help to develop, and implement the best possible strategic plan, including the type of marketing strategies which will allow Thailand to capture a significant proportion of the entire market of South-East Asia and Asia as the needs of the audience (delegates) are now better understood. This will provide a significant advantage for the Thai

government and business sector; allowing them to keep Thailand at the forefront of this sector and industry, and therefore providing more secure employment for those working in this industry in Thailand. Finally, this research could also assist in the production and development of a model of best practice, as well as recommendations for the Thai MICE industry of Thailand which can be followed as part of a long term strategy. This research study can therefore be considered worthwhile, if it can make any contributions to the maintenance or the development of the capital market of this industry and in this region.

The aim of this dissertation was to evaluate and examine the potential of Thailand as a MICE (industry hub in the Asian region, in particular the international convention industry. This study will also provide valuable information for the academic and government sectors, as well as MICE industry stakeholders, in particular the TAT and TCEB, who wish to develop Thailand as a 'globally-recognized and preferred MICE destination in Asia'.

This research enabled a more profound understanding of the characteristics of the Thai MICE industry, as well as the ebb and flow of the other factors influencing this industry. Furthermore, as this research is a pioneering study on this topic in the context of Thailand, it can be considered to make an original contribution to the entire body of knowledge regarding the MICE industry in Thailand.. Additionally, this research can be considered to have made the following contributions to the Thai tourism industry, as follows:

- 1) This study developed strategic evaluation criteria in order to more accurately assess the quality of MICE services. The criteria were developed based on information based on the experiences, and the perceptions of both IC delegates and organising committees and planners.
- 2) This study provided a more profound understanding of the topic which it examined, prioritized, and ranked, in addition to the factors

which influenced the decision-making process of the participants, in terms of whether or not to attend an IC. From the research findings there will be systematic criteria developed for organising committees and planners in order to select the most appropriate site for an IC.

- 3) This study provided a model of best practice of strategy and policy for development of the Thai MICE industry, which could be implemented in terms of IC management. According to the findings, a model of best practice could be created in order to develop and enhance the Thai tourism industry; in particular, the improvement of the MICE industry, and the creation of policies which would allow Thailand to achieve its potential as the IC industry hub in South-East Asia, Asia, and the Asia-Pacific region.

### **9.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THAILAND MICE INDUSTRY**

What strategies and policies will allow the MICE industry in Thailand to develop and achieve the status of an Asian international convention hub?

Although, Thailand has a number of advantages or strengths as a MICE destination, the sustainability of its effectiveness and the quality of its performance is more challenging. Therefore, all stakeholders in both the private and public sectors should co-operate in terms of working together in order to increase the value and significance of the MICE industry in both Thailand and in Asia. The most appropriate strategies and policies may stimulate industry growth, as well as the sustainable growth of the industry. From the results of the quantitative and qualitative analysis, several strategies and development policies can be created and implemented to boost Thailand MICE to be positioned as the hub of international conventions in Asia. These strategies and development policies are as follows:

## ❖ Policy 1: Facility and Infrastructure Development

### ○ Decentralized development to four regions of Thailand

#### ➤ Code of Practice

- Set the major convention-host city in every region of Thailand, such as Bangkok as the major MICE city of the country, Chiang Mai as the major MICE city for the north, Khon Kaen as the major MICE city for the northeast or Isan region, Ayutthaya as the major MICE city for the centre region, Phuket as the major MICE city for the south.
- Decentralize the administration to the major MICE cities in four regions by setting the Convention and Visitor Bureau (CVBs) in that region. The regional CVBs co-work with the regional Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), and others relevant departments.
- Build more convention halls in regional areas which meet international standard as well as the convention hotels invested by private sectors.

## ❖ Policy 2: Manpower Development

### ○ Stepping-up of keypersons in academia and medicine to international level

#### ➤ Code of Practice

- Gain more key persons in Thailand's academic and medical industry to step up their role in events of an international level by becoming members of committees of international associations.
- With assistance by Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB), these key persons would be able to bid for more international conventions to be held in Thailand. Set a training course system which meets the criteria of

international standards. These training courses would focus on know-how of international convention organization and foreign languages.

- **Paying attention to the young generation**

- **Code of Practice**

- TCEB needs to cooperate with the private sector by paying attention to the youth market, who will be trained in particular professions, and become the future leaders of the region by pushing more Thai universities to run undergraduate programme related to the MICE industry, in order to directly train those students who are willing to work in the MICE industry.
    - TCEB to run more free and accredited training courses to advocate and teach about MICE to lecturers.
    - TCEB to create an education camp about MICE that is free of charge.
    - Thai universities to assist with TCEB in running more free training courses to the students from other programmes, such as hotel or languages students who are interested in working in the MICE industry.
    - TCEB to run more competitive programmes in MICE.
    - TCEB to give more grants to more students to advocate and train them overseas to learn about MICE, especially in Europe.
    - TCEB high school students to be advised about opportunities in the MICE industry

- ❖ **Policy 3: Cooperation with other Organisations**

- **Creating more connections and networking**

- **Code of Practice**

- **National Cooperation**

- Tourism and Sport of Thailand makes a policy to ensure that connection and networking becomes a national policy.
  - TCEB, TAT, and MICE business private sector to work closely with local and national MPs.
  - For governmental policy, local, national MPs, the board of BOI, TAT, and provincial governor be appointed as committee board members at TCEB.
  - As the two main players involved in the planning process of international conventions are 1) international convention associations, and 2) professional conference organizers, should be appointed as committee board members at TCEB.
  - These committee board members will hold meetings often to discuss how to steer forward the MICE industry in Thailand.
- **International Cooperation**
    - Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand to work closer with the tourism ministry in other countries. This can be starting from ASEAN countries.
    - Thai universities and hospitals to have a closer connection and more networking opportunities with other leading universities and hospitals in other regions, particularly in regions that have more buying power in international conventions.
- **Changing 'competitors' to be 'cooperators'**
    - **Code of Practice**
      - As the market changes, multiple countries in a single region will evolve into a single market; as a result, former competitors of Thailand in ASEAN or Asia will need to become business partners in joint ventures.
      - Thailand should become the main destination for MICE due to its geography, cultural heritage and tourist attractions amongst the AEC member countries. Thailand should work collectively with other regions to steer the regional market of



South East Asia to be in a position to compete with other countries.

- Create alliance and share knowledge in MICE operation and management with potential competitors, such as Singapore and Malaysia.

### ❖ **Strategy 3: Marketing strategy**

- **Employing a diversity of marketing strategies beyond 7Ps that is assisted by the Thai government**
  - **Code of Practice**
    - A Convection and visitor bureau (CVB) is positioned overseas. The CVB of MICE can share an office with TAT as Thailand has a TAT office in every continent. However, the organizational structure of VCBs can be varied in terms of the characteristics of the continents, destination countries, and so forth.
    - CVBs can be either private, public, nonprofit or profit organizations; and will need to intensively focus on the associations who run conferences and conventions regularly, by helping the Thai board committee to bid for those events.
    - TCEB to focus on committee board members who are the decision makers for their associations. These committee members will be invited to Thailand for a tour that will familiarise them with MICE operation and management in Thailand.
- **Initiating an intensive and diverse advertising campaign with world press and media**
  - **Code of Practice**
    - This will need to be supported by the Thai government, TCEB will initiate an intensive and diverse advertising campaign with the world's most well-known newspapers and magazines, as well as with world famous media groups.

- Broadcasting slogans will need to be created which reflect a positive image of Thailand and can be easily remembered.
  - Directors of MICE in Thailand to present themselves in international magazines for the benefits of gaining potential customers.
  - Articles need to be written about the readiness of Thailand as a MICE destination in term of its facilities and infrastructure to be published in international business magazines/journals.
  - TCEB to carry out roadshows. Focus of these will be potential customers that are the decision makers for associations.
  - Present Thailand as the 'best value for money' destination by comparing the cost of international conventions held in Thailand with ones from other ASEAN or Asian countries. Launch promotion programmes that also offer a good deal for spouses.
- **Promote Thailand as an agricultural convention destination**
    - **Code of Practice**
      - TCEB to create and promote Thailand as an international conference destination for agriculture, for example, the destination for conventions on rice and aquatics.
      - Market Thailand as the destination for Asian foods.
  - **Starting with ASEAN – set Thailand as Greater Mekong Region (GMR) hub for international agriculture convention**
    - **Code of Practice**
      - Thailand needs to establish itself as the hub for agricultural international conventions among the Great Mekong Region (GMR), consisting of Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam.

- Regional TCEB and regional TAT pay attention on these three countries by bidding more agriculture events to be held in the major MICE city of northeastern or Isan region, Khon Kaen.
- Leading Thai universities in northeastern region, namely Khon Kaen University, Udon Thani Rajabhat University, Suranari University, need to seek cooperation by signing the Memorandum of understandings (MOUs) with the leading universities in these three countries - Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar (Burmar – which will soon join the GMR).

## **9.4 LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY**

### **9.4.1 The Limitations of the Study**

There were a number of limitations related to this research study, which include the following: Firstly, the period of time in which the data, especially the quantitative data, collated from questionnaire surveys were collected, which was during 2009 and 2010. At this time, Thailand was in the midst of a serious political crisis, there were numerous political conflicts, including the Red and Yellow Shirt protests in Bangkok, followed by a period of civil unrest. This eventually led to the coup d'état, and the introduction of martial law. As a result of this turmoil, several international associations canceled upcoming international conferences. Furthermore, a number of embassies issued warnings about the dangers of traveling to Thailand. The questionnaires were distributed during the captive group surveys, populated by IC participants at conference venues, and held during and after the global economic slowdown crisis. This factor was clearly reflected in the results of the questionnaires, which is likely to have impacted on the emphasis of the negative rather than the positive aspects of Thailand; including such disadvantages as the instability and uncertainty caused by the political situation, which contributed to negative results, such as participants fearing for their personal safety when traveling in Thailand. With this in mind, the responses to the questionnaires may be slightly less valid due to the fact that they were collected during

a time of crisis for Thailand, which may have unduly influenced their opinions to the negative. In other words, if the questionnaires had been collected during a more stable time in terms of the political situation, the results may have been quite different. Another limitation was the size difference of the international conferences; which ranged from large, with over 500 participants, to relatively small, with less than 150 participants. The size difference of the ICs could have contributed to differing levels of satisfaction with the operation and management of ICs held in Thailand. Furthermore, the satisfaction levels of the delegates may also fluctuate with regard to the location of the IC; for example, ICs held in Bangkok may have a higher standard in terms of operations and management than those held in smaller and provincial cities or towns.

#### **9.4.2 Recommendations for Future Studies**

The following recommendations were made with regard to recommendations for changes, and recommendations for further studies.

**A. Further studies:** The research could focus on two other key sectors of the Thai MICE industry, the aspects of incentives or exhibitions. Additionally, the location of the international convention venues can be extended to those outside of Bangkok.

**B. Recommendations for changes:** With regard to the recommendations for changes, there were several components which needed to be modified. Firstly, in terms of the objectives, the three main objectives include the following: (1) the potential of Thailand in terms of capturing the capital market share in the Asian IC market, including the strategies required for Thailand to achieve this goal, including a model of best practice; (2) IC venues in Bangkok should be surveyed in terms of their capacity; and (3) the number of delegates should be optimized, for example, in a medium to large sized IC with between 500-600 delegates. In terms of the time period of the research study, it should not exceed three to four years in order to maintain the reliability of the findings.

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## II. APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Questionnaire for Attendees

#### *Thailand to Become the MCs Hub in Asia (Attendees)*



### AN EVALUATION OF THE POTENTIAL OF THAILAND AS A MICE\* INDUSTRY HUB FOR INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION INDUSTRY IN ASIA

**\* (MEETINGS, INCENTIVES, CONVENTIONS, AND EXHIBITIONS)**

#### QUESTIONNAIRE PURPOSES

This questionnaire aims to evaluate the potential of Thailand international meeting/ conference/ convention (MC) industry to become the hub of MCs in Asia. Please help by answering this questionnaire survey. Completion would take approximately 15 minutes. Your time and your help would very much appreciate as your answering would support this research and very assist to the study.

Please note all data collected will remain confidential and will not be passed to any third parties.

Thank you for your help.

*s. akkhaphin*

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**SECTION ONE: GENERAL INFORMATION**

## 1. Gender

- Male                       Female

## 2. Marital status

- Married                       Single–never married  
 Widowed/divorced/ separated

## 3. Age range

- Over 60                       50 - 59                       40 - 49                       Below 40

## 4. Education

- Bachelor degree                       Master degree  
 Doctorate                       Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

5. Country of residence \_\_\_\_\_

6. Country of origin \_\_\_\_\_

## 7. Type of work

- Sciences/Related to Scientific field  
 Medical doctor/Dentist/ Veterinary  
 Academics/ Education  
 Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

## 8. Position hold in organization

- Senior administrative                       Upper management  
 Middle management                       Lower management  
 Lecturer/Researcher/Scientist/Operational  
 Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

## 9. Times in a year to go abroad for MCs

- More than 5 times a year  
 Between 1-5 times per year  
 Less than once a year

## SECTION TWO: FACTORS INFLUENCE ON DECISION-MAKING TO ATTEND INTERNATIONAL MCs

1. How are these factors important for making a decision to attend international MCs in any destination?

Factors	Very Important	Important	Neither important nor unimportant	Unimportant	Very unimportant
Destination image	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Safety/ security	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Political situation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accessibility/ hour on plane	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Availability of facility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Affordability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attractions/entertainment/nightlife/scenery/ sightseeing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Intervening opportunity (other conferences/ vacations/ etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Official documents (visa/ border pass/ travel document/ immigration)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cultures/ local people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Environment/ weather	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guest speakers/ keynote persons	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Education/ networking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conference themes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



### SECTION THREE: PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES TOWARDS INTERNATIONAL MCs HELD IN THAILAND

1. How many times have you had attended international MCs held in Thailand?

- More than 10 times       5 - 9 times  
 3 - 4 times       Twice       Once

2. In what years have you attended international MCs in Thailand?

- Before 2006       2006       2007  
 2008       2009

3. What is typical length of stay at those MCs?

- More than a week       Between 2 days and 1 week  
 Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

4. Regarding international MCs held in Thailand, how satisfied are you with these factors?

Factors	Very Important	Important	Neither important nor unimportant	Unimportant	Not important at all
Destination image	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Safety/ security	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Political situation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Crimes/ crime statistics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Legitimate travelling distance/ hours on an airplane	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Official documents (visa/ border pass/ travel document/ immigration)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Environment/ weather/ climate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cultures/ local people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attraction/ scenery/ sightseeing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Entertainment/ nightlife	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Intervening opportunity (other conferences / vacations/ etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Networking/ Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guest speakers/ keynote persons	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall affordability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conference venue accessibility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conference venue facility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cleanliness and comfort of conference venue	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Clean and comfortable restaurant facility of conference venue	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sufficiency of public space/ recreational amenities of conference venue	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conference service quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The competence and responsiveness of staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reliability in performing the service dependably and accurately	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Empathy, the individualized attention provided to customers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Security staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conference room size	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Location of the conference breakout room	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of audio-visual equipment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comfortable seat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Food and beverage quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Food taste	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Food variety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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## SECTION FOUR: THAILAND MICE COMPETITORS IN ASIA

1. What other countries in Asia and Pacific countries that you had had attended similar MCs?

- |  |                                      |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Australia                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Japan       | <input type="checkbox"/> Singapore   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> China + Hong Kong           | <input type="checkbox"/> Malaysia    | <input type="checkbox"/> South Korea |
| <input type="checkbox"/> India                       | <input type="checkbox"/> New Zealand | <input type="checkbox"/> Taiwan      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indonesia                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Philippines | <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnam     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)_____ |                                      |                                      |

2. Has Thailand have potential to be international MCs hub in Asia?

- Yes                       No                       Possibly

3. What advantages does Thailand have?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Affordability                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Guest speaker or keynote person   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attractions, entertainment, nightlife, sightseeing | <input type="checkbox"/> Intervening opportunity, i.e. other conferences, vacations              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conference theme                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Official document, i.e. visa, border pass, travel document, immigration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Culture and local people                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Quality of service  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Destination image                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Safety and security   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education and networking                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Standard hotel and accommodation  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facility and standard conference venue             | <input type="checkbox"/> Weather, environment and natural resources                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food and beverage quality                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)_____   |

4. What other things could have been done to satisfy you and what can be done to draw you back?

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Thank you for your help!

*s. akkhaphin*

	Faculty of <b>Education, Community and Leisure</b>
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## Appendix 2: Questionnaire for Organising committees/Planners

*Thailand to Become the MCs Hub in Asia  
(Committee)*



### AN EVALUATION OF THE POTENTIAL OF THAILAND AS A MICE\* INDUSTRY HUB FOR INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION INDUSTRY IN ASIA

**\* (MEETINGS, INCENTIVES, CONVENTIONS, AND EXHIBITIONS)**

#### QUESTIONNAIRE PURPOSES

This questionnaire aims to investigate the organizers or organizing committee's site selection criteria of the international meeting/conferences/conventions (MCs), including the potential of Thailand's international MCs industry to become the hub of the Asia. Completion would take approximately 15 minutes. Your time and your help would very much appreciate.

Please note all data collected during this survey will remain confidential and will not be passed to any third parties.

Thank you for your help.

*s. akkhaphin*

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**SECTION ONE: GENERAL INFORMATION**

1. Gender

- Male                       Female

2. Age range

- Over 60                       50-59                       40-49                       Below 40

3. Education

- Bachelor degree                       Master degree  
 Doctorate                       Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

4. Country of residence \_\_\_\_\_

5. Position hold in organization \_\_\_\_\_

6. Years (so far) have had experienced with planning/organizing the international MCs?

- Less than 1                       1 to 10  
 11 to 20                       Over 20 years

7. Times in a year that your organization held international MCs?

- More than 5 times                       5-4 times  
 Three times or Twice                       Once

## SECTION TWO: CRITERIA OF SITE SELECTION FOR INTERNATIONAL MCs

1. How these factors influence on selecting the international MC sites?

Factors	Very Important	Important	Neither Important	Unimportant	Not important at all
Destination image	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Safety/ Security	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Political situation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accessibility/ hour on plane	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Availability of facility / Quality of service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Affordability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Intervening opportunity (other conferences/ vacations/ entertainment/ sightseeing, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Official documents (visa/ border pass/ travel document/ immigration)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cultures/ Local people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guest/ Keynote speakers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## SECTION THREE: THAILAND INTERNATIONAL MCs

1. Do you think Thailand has the potential to be the hub of international MC destination in Asia?

Yes

No

Possibly

2. What key benefits does Thailand have to offer for organizing the international MCs? (Can answer more than one choice)

- Destination image
- Safety/ security
- Political situation
- Accessibility/ hour on plane

- Availability of facility
- Quality of service
- Affordability
- Attractions/ entertainment/ nightlife/ sightseeing
- Intervening opportunity (other conferences/ vacations/ other items)
- Official documents (visa/ border pass/ travel document/ immigration)
- Cultures/ local people
- Environment/ weather
- Guest speakers/ keynote persons
- Networking/ education
- Conference themes
- Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

3. (Please help), what should Thailand do to improve the effective organizing of international conferences?

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Thank you for your help.

*s. akkhaphin*

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### Appendix 3: Demographic Profile of the Sample (Delegates)

Question	Personal information	Categories	Delegate	
			N = 311	Valid (%)
1.	Gender	Male	219	70.6
		Female	91	29.4
		Missing	1	0.3
2.	Age group	60 and over	34	11.0
		50 – 59	70	22.6
		40 – 49	93	30.0
		Below 40	113	36.5
		Missing	1	0.3
3.	Education level	Doctorate	202	65.2
		Master degree	81	26.1
		Bachelor degree	19	6.1
		Others	8	2.6
		Missing	1	0.3
4.	Country of origin	Europe	77	24.9
		Asia & the Pacific	141	45.6
		The Americas	54	17.5
		Africa & the Middle East	37	12.0
		Missing	2	0.6
5.	Types of work	Academia	112	36.2
		Sciences/related to scientific fields	111	35.9
		Medical doctor/dentist/ veterinarian	50	16.2
		Govt./NGO/IT/Engineering	19	6.1
		Business/entrepreneur/ Biz owner	17	5.5
		Missing	2	0.6
6.	Position	CEO/MD/President/ higher mgmt	45	14.6
		Middle-upper mgmt	148	47.9
		Lower mgmt	29	9.4
		Practitioner	87	28.2
		Missing	2	0.6
7.	Numbers of IC attendance/yr	>5 times/yr	48	15.5
		1 – 5 time/yr	194	62.6
		<Once/yr	68	21.9
		Missing	1	0.3
8.	Years' experience in organising ICs (so far)	Over 20 yrs		
		11- 20 yrs		
		2 - 10 yrs		
		Missing		

### Appendix 4: t-test and the Gender of the Delegates (Descriptive)

Variables measured	Group Statistics				
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Destination image	Male	217	3.74	.870	.059
	Female	89	3.89	.804	.085
Safety & security	Male	217	4.24	.788	.053
	Female	90	4.39	.698	.074
Political situation	Male	218	3.90	.851	.058
	Female	89	3.96	.811	.086
Accessibility or travel distance (location)	Male	217	3.49	.918	.062
	Female	89	3.63	.845	.090
Availability of facility	Male	215	3.77	.804	.055
	Female	90	3.86	.842	.089
Quality of service	Male	219	3.86	.716	.048
	Female	90	4.06	.676	.071
Affordability (price, good value for money)	Male	215	4.00	.776	.053
	Female	88	4.20	.681	.073
Attractions, entertainment, nightlife, sightseeing	Male	219	3.22	.934	.063
	Female	90	3.46	.796	.084
Intervening opportunity (other conferences, vacations, etc.)	Male	218	3.39	.841	.057
	Female	90	3.71	.707	.075
Official documents (visa, travel doc.)	Male	217	3.59	.968	.066
	Female	89	3.79	.872	.092
Cultures & local people	Male	217	3.41	.829	.056
	Female	90	3.36	.783	.083
Climate & weather	Male	216	3.21	.794	.054
	Female	89	3.43	.796	.084
Guest speaker or keynote person	Male	217	4.11	.820	.056
	Female	89	4.22	.914	.097
Networking & education	Male	215	4.19	.712	.049
	Female	89	4.26	.762	.081
IC programmes or themes	Male	216	4.59	.555	.038
	Female	90	4.57	.654	.069

### Appendix 5: One-Way ANOVA Result (Descriptive): Delegates' age group

Descriptives									
Variables	Age group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Destination image	Over 60	34	3.88	.729	.125	3.63	4.14	2	5
	50 - 59	69	3.77	.860	.104	3.56	3.97	1	5
	40 - 49	91	3.71	.764	.080	3.56	3.87	2	5
	Below 40	112	3.82	.951	.090	3.64	4.00	1	5
	Total	306	3.78	.853	.049	3.69	3.88	1	5
Safety & security	Over 60	33	4.33	.692	.120	4.09	4.58	3	5
	50 - 59	69	4.36	.747	.090	4.18	4.54	2	5
	40 - 49	92	4.22	.810	.084	4.05	4.39	2	5
	Below 40	113	4.28	.761	.072	4.14	4.43	2	5
	Total	307	4.29	.764	.044	4.20	4.37	2	5
Political situation	Over 60	34	4.00	.739	.127	3.74	4.26	3	5
	50 - 59	68	3.91	.893	.108	3.70	4.13	1	5

	40 - 49	92	3.89	.845	.088	3.72	4.07	1	5
	Below 40	113	3.92	.836	.079	3.76	4.08	2	5
	Total	307	3.92	.838	.048	3.82	4.01	1	5
Accessibility or travel distance	Over 60	33	3.45	.869	.151	3.15	3.76	2	5
	50 - 59	69	3.65	.801	.096	3.46	3.84	1	5
	40 - 49	92	3.46	.831	.087	3.28	3.63	1	5
	Below 40	112	3.54	1.013	.096	3.35	3.73	1	5
	Total	306	3.53	.899	.051	3.43	3.63	1	5
Availability of facility	Over 60	34	3.79	.687	.118	3.55	4.03	3	5
	50 - 59	67	3.96	.767	.094	3.77	4.14	2	5
	40 - 49	92	3.75	.820	.086	3.58	3.92	1	5
	Below 40	112	3.73	.870	.082	3.57	3.89	1	5
	Total	305	3.79	.815	.047	3.70	3.89	1	5
Quality of service	Over 60	34	3.94	.694	.119	3.70	4.18	3	5
	50 - 59	69	4.01	.717	.086	3.84	4.19	2	5
	40 - 49	93	3.94	.656	.068	3.80	4.07	2	5

	Below 40	113	3.84	.751	.071	3.70	3.98	2	5
	Total	309	3.92	.709	.040	3.84	4.00	2	5
Affordability (cost, expenses)	Over 60	33	4.12	.857	.149	3.82	4.43	2	5
	50 - 59	68	4.15	.738	.090	3.97	4.33	2	5
	40 - 49	89	4.02	.738	.078	3.87	4.18	2	5
	Below 40	113	4.01	.750	.071	3.87	4.15	2	5
	Total	303	4.06	.755	.043	3.97	4.14	2	5
Attractions, sightseeing, etc.	Over 60	34	3.41	.925	.159	3.09	3.73	1	5
	50 - 59	69	3.23	.957	.115	3.00	3.46	1	5
	40 - 49	93	3.30	.791	.082	3.14	3.46	1	5
	Below 40	113	3.28	.949	.089	3.11	3.46	1	5
	Total	309	3.29	.901	.051	3.19	3.39	1	5
Other opportunities	Over 60	34	3.59	.821	.141	3.30	3.87	2	5
	50 - 59	69	3.46	.797	.096	3.27	3.66	2	5
	40 - 49	92	3.38	.768	.080	3.22	3.54	1	5

	Below 40	113	3.54	.866	.082	3.38	3.70	1	5
	Total	308	3.48	.817	.047	3.39	3.57	1	5
Official documents	Over 60	33	3.64	.822	.143	3.34	3.93	2	5
	50 - 59	68	3.65	.943	.114	3.42	3.88	1	5
	40 - 49	92	3.54	.988	.103	3.34	3.75	1	5
	Below 40	113	3.74	.943	.089	3.57	3.92	2	5
	Total	306	3.65	.944	.054	3.54	3.76	1	5
Cultures & local people	Over 60	33	3.45	.711	.124	3.20	3.71	2	5
	50 - 59	70	3.37	.783	.094	3.18	3.56	2	5
	40 - 49	91	3.44	.703	.074	3.29	3.59	2	5
	Below 40	113	3.35	.944	.089	3.18	3.53	1	5
	Total	307	3.39	.815	.047	3.30	3.49	1	5
Climate, weather, etc.	Over 60	33	3.33	.777	.135	3.06	3.61	2	5
	50 - 59	68	3.22	.666	.081	3.06	3.38	2	5
	40 - 49	91	3.29	.735	.077	3.13	3.44	2	5

	Below 40	113	3.27	.928	.087	3.10	3.45	1	5
	Total	305	3.27	.800	.046	3.18	3.36	1	5
Guest /keynote speakers	Over 60	34	4.32	.684	.117	4.08	4.56	3	5
	50 - 59	70	4.10	.919	.110	3.88	4.32	1	5
	40 - 49	90	4.26	.787	.083	4.09	4.42	2	5
	Below 40	112	4.03	.885	.084	3.86	4.19	1	5
	Total	306	4.14	.849	.049	4.05	4.24	1	5
Education & networking	Over 60	33	4.21	.696	.121	3.97	4.46	3	5
	50 - 59	66	4.18	.630	.078	4.03	4.34	3	5
	40 - 49	92	4.29	.719	.075	4.14	4.44	2	5
	Below 40	113	4.15	.793	.075	4.00	4.30	1	5
	Total	304	4.21	.727	.042	4.13	4.29	1	5
I/C programmes or themes	Over 60	34	4.62	.551	.095	4.43	4.81	3	5
	50 - 59	68	4.59	.604	.073	4.44	4.73	2	5
	40 - 49	91	4.65	.503	.053	4.54	4.75	3	5

	Below 40	113	4.52	.642	.060	4.40	4.64	1	5
	Total	306	4.58	.585	.033	4.52	4.65	1	5



### Appendix 6: One-Way ANOVA (Descriptive): Delegates' education levels

Descriptives									
Variables	Education levels	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
<b>Destination image</b>	Others	8	3.75	.707	.250	3.16	4.34	3	5
	Bachelor degree	19	3.63	.955	.219	3.17	4.09	2	5
	Master degree	80	3.84	.878	.098	3.64	4.03	1	5
	Doctorate	199	3.78	.842	.060	3.66	3.90	1	5
	Total	306	3.78	.853	.049	3.69	3.88	1	5
<b>Safety &amp; security</b>	Others	8	4.50	.535	.189	4.05	4.95	4	5
	Bachelor degree	19	4.11	.809	.186	3.72	4.50	2	5
	Master degree	81	4.43	.651	.072	4.29	4.58	3	5
	Doctorate	199	4.24	.804	.057	4.12	4.35	2	5
	Total	307	4.29	.764	.044	4.20	4.37	2	5
<b>Political situation</b>	Others	8	4.13	.641	.227	3.59	4.66	3	5
	Bachelor degree	19	3.63	.895	.205	3.20	4.06	2	5
	Master degree	81	3.89	.880	.098	3.69	4.08	1	5
	Doctorate	199	3.95	.821	.058	3.83	4.06	1	5
	Total	307	3.92	.838	.048	3.82	4.01	1	5
<b>Accessibility or travel distance</b>	Others	8	3.50	1.069	.378	2.61	4.39	2	5
	Bachelor degree	19	3.47	.697	.160	3.14	3.81	2	5
	Master degree	80	3.60	.880	.098	3.40	3.80	1	5
	Doctorate	199	3.51	.920	.065	3.38	3.64	1	5
	Total	306	3.53	.899	.051	3.43	3.63	1	5
<b>Availability of facility</b>	Others	8	3.75	.707	.250	3.16	4.34	3	5
	Bachelor degree	19	3.95	.705	.162	3.61	4.29	3	5
	Master degree	81	3.90	.768	.085	3.73	4.07	1	5
	Doctorate	197	3.74	.846	.060	3.62	3.85	1	5
	Total	305	3.79	.815	.047	3.70	3.89	1	5
<b>Quality of service</b>	Others	8	4.00	.756	.267	3.37	4.63	3	5
	Bachelor degree	19	4.11	.737	.169	3.75	4.46	3	5
	Master degree	81	3.99	.642	.071	3.85	4.13	2	5
	Doctorate	201	3.87	.730	.052	3.77	3.97	2	5

	Total	309	3.92	.709	.040	3.84	4.00	2	5
<b>Affordability (cost, expenses)</b>	Others	8	4.13	.641	.227	3.59	4.66	3	5
	Bachelor degree	18	4.11	.832	.196	3.70	4.53	2	5
	Master degree	81	4.23	.712	.079	4.08	4.39	2	5
	Doctorate	196	3.97	.761	.054	3.87	4.08	2	5
	Total	303	4.06	.755	.043	3.97	4.14	2	5
<b>Attractions, sightseeing, etc.</b>	Others	8	3.00	.926	.327	2.23	3.77	2	5
	Bachelor degree	19	3.21	.713	.164	2.87	3.55	2	4
	Master degree	81	3.41	.959	.107	3.20	3.62	1	5
	Doctorate	201	3.26	.892	.063	3.14	3.39	1	5
	Total	309	3.29	.901	.051	3.19	3.39	1	5
<b>Other opportunities</b>	Others	8	3.50	.535	.189	3.05	3.95	3	4
	Bachelor degree	19	3.16	.688	.158	2.83	3.49	2	4
	Master degree	81	3.52	.868	.096	3.33	3.71	1	5
	Doctorate	200	3.50	.814	.058	3.38	3.61	1	5
	Total	308	3.48	.817	.047	3.39	3.57	1	5
<b>Official documents</b>	Others	8	3.75	1.035	.366	2.88	4.62	2	5
	Bachelor degree	19	3.74	.872	.200	3.32	4.16	2	5
	Master degree	81	3.80	.954	.106	3.59	4.01	1	5
	Doctorate	198	3.58	.941	.067	3.44	3.71	1	5
	Total	306	3.65	.944	.054	3.54	3.76	1	5
<b>Cultures &amp; local people</b>	Others	8	3.13	.354	.125	2.83	3.42	3	4
	Bachelor degree	18	3.33	.686	.162	2.99	3.67	2	4
	Master degree	81	3.49	.950	.106	3.28	3.70	1	5
	Doctorate	200	3.37	.779	.055	3.26	3.48	1	5
	Total	307	3.39	.815	.047	3.30	3.49	1	5
<b>Climate, weather, etc.</b>	Others	8	3.13	.354	.125	2.83	3.42	3	4
	Bachelor degree	18	3.33	.686	.162	2.99	3.67	2	5
	Master degree	81	3.46	.909	.101	3.26	3.66	2	5
	Doctorate	198	3.20	.765	.054	3.09	3.30	1	5
	Total	305	3.27	.800	.046	3.18	3.36	1	5
<b>Guest /keynote speakers</b>	Others	8	3.75	.886	.313	3.01	4.49	2	5
	Bachelor degree	18	4.17	.707	.167	3.82	4.52	3	5
	Master degree	80	4.20	.833	.093	4.01	4.39	1	5

	Doctorate	200	4.14	.866	.061	4.01	4.26	1	5
	Total	306	4.14	.849	.049	4.05	4.24	1	5
<b>Education &amp; networking</b>	Others	8	4.25	.707	.250	3.66	4.84	3	5
	Bachelor degree	18	4.44	.616	.145	4.14	4.75	3	5
	Master degree	81	4.27	.775	.086	4.10	4.44	1	5
	Doctorate	197	4.16	.715	.051	4.06	4.26	2	5
	Total	304	4.21	.727	.042	4.13	4.29	1	5
<b>IC programmes or themes</b>	Others	8	4.63	.518	.183	4.19	5.06	4	5
	Bachelor degree	18	4.61	.608	.143	4.31	4.91	3	5
	Master degree	81	4.46	.708	.079	4.30	4.61	1	5
	Doctorate	199	4.63	.523	.037	4.56	4.71	2	5
	Total	306	4.58	.585	.033	4.52	4.65	1	5

## Appendix 7: One-Way ANOVA Result (Descriptive): Delegates' country of origin

Descriptives									
Variables	Regions of country of residence	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
<b>Destination image</b>	Europe	77	3.69	.892	.102	3.49	3.89	1	5
	Asia & the Pacific	139	3.75	.808	.069	3.61	3.88	1	5
	The Americas	53	3.79	.948	.130	3.53	4.05	2	5
	Africa & the Middle East	36	4.11	.747	.125	3.86	4.36	2	5
	Total	305	3.78	.854	.049	3.69	3.88	1	5
<b>Safety &amp; security</b>	Europe	77	4.12	.858	.098	3.92	4.31	2	5
	Asia & the Pacific	140	4.30	.765	.065	4.17	4.43	2	5
	The Americas	53	4.30	.696	.096	4.11	4.49	3	5
	Africa & the Middle East	36	4.58	.554	.092	4.40	4.77	3	5
	Total	306	4.29	.765	.044	4.20	4.37	2	5
<b>Political stability</b>	Europe	77	3.99	.786	.090	3.81	4.17	1	5
	Asia & the Pacific	140	3.88	.852	.072	3.74	4.02	2	5
	The Americas	53	3.89	.824	.113	3.66	4.11	2	5
	Africa & the Middle East	36	3.97	.941	.157	3.65	4.29	1	5
	Total	306	3.92	.840	.048	3.82	4.01	1	5
<b>Accessibility or travel distance</b>	Europe	77	3.47	.912	.104	3.26	3.67	1	5
	Asia & the Pacific	138	3.59	.843	.072	3.44	3.73	1	5
	The Americas	53	3.38	1.078	.148	3.08	3.67	1	5
	Africa & the Middle East	37	3.65	.789	.130	3.39	3.91	2	5
	Total	305	3.53	.900	.052	3.43	3.63	1	5
<b>Availability of facility and infrastructure</b>	Europe	76	3.76	.798	.092	3.58	3.95	2	5
	Asia & the Pacific	139	3.83	.789	.067	3.70	3.96	1	5
	The Americas	53	3.64	.942	.129	3.38	3.90	1	5
	Africa & the Middle East	36	3.94	.754	.126	3.69	4.20	2	5
	Total	304	3.79	.816	.047	3.70	3.88	1	5

<b>Quality of service</b>	Europe	77	3.87	.656	.075	3.72	4.02	2	5
	Asia & the Pacific	141	3.94	.719	.061	3.82	4.06	2	5
	The Americas	53	3.75	.757	.104	3.55	3.96	2	5
	Africa & the Middle East	37	4.19	.660	.108	3.97	4.41	3	5
	Total	308	3.92	.710	.040	3.84	4.00	2	5
<b>Affordability (cost, expenses)</b>	Europe	77	3.96	.751	.086	3.79	4.13	2	5
	Asia & the Pacific	139	4.07	.719	.061	3.95	4.19	2	5
	The Americas	51	3.92	.845	.118	3.68	4.16	2	5
	Africa & the Middle East	35	4.40	.695	.117	4.16	4.64	2	5
	Total	302	4.06	.756	.044	3.97	4.14	2	5
<b>Attractions, sightseeing, etc.</b>	Europe	77	3.16	.859	.098	2.96	3.35	1	5
	Asia & the Pacific	141	3.25	.896	.075	3.10	3.40	1	5
	The Americas	53	3.42	.908	.125	3.16	3.67	1	5
	Africa & the Middle East	37	3.54	.960	.158	3.22	3.86	2	5
	Total	308	3.29	.901	.051	3.19	3.39	1	5
<b>Intervening opportunities</b>	Europe	77	3.29	.871	.099	3.09	3.48	1	5
	Asia & the Pacific	141	3.53	.761	.064	3.41	3.66	2	5
	The Americas	53	3.38	.860	.118	3.14	3.61	1	5
	Africa & the Middle East	36	3.83	.737	.123	3.58	4.08	2	5
	Total	307	3.48	.818	.047	3.39	3.57	1	5
<b>Immigration &amp; Visa</b>	Europe	77	3.49	.955	.109	3.28	3.71	1	5
	Asia & the Pacific	138	3.68	.846	.072	3.54	3.82	2	5
	The Americas	53	3.38	1.113	.153	3.07	3.68	1	5
	Africa & the Middle East	37	4.22	.750	.123	3.97	4.47	3	5
	Total	305	3.65	.942	.054	3.54	3.75	1	5
<b>Cultures &amp; local people</b>	Europe	77	3.43	.834	.095	3.24	3.62	2	5
	Asia & the Pacific	140	3.44	.807	.068	3.31	3.58	1	5
	The Americas	53	3.32	.754	.104	3.11	3.53	2	5
	Africa & the Middle East	36	3.22	.898	.150	2.92	3.53	2	5
	Total	306	3.39	.816	.047	3.30	3.48	1	5

<b>Climate, weather, etc.</b>	Europe	76	3.21	.771	.088	3.03	3.39	2	5
	Asia & the Pacific	139	3.31	.841	.071	3.17	3.45	1	5
	The Americas	52	3.15	.668	.093	2.97	3.34	2	5
	Africa & the Middle East	37	3.41	.865	.142	3.12	3.69	2	5
	Total	304	3.27	.800	.046	3.18	3.36	1	5
<b>Keynote speakers</b>	Europe	77	4.18	.839	.096	3.99	4.37	2	5
	Asia & the Pacific	140	4.15	.873	.074	4.00	4.30	1	5
	The Americas	53	4.02	.888	.122	3.77	4.26	1	5
	Africa & the Middle East	35	4.23	.731	.124	3.98	4.48	2	5
	Total	305	4.14	.850	.049	4.05	4.24	1	5
<b>Education &amp; networking</b>	Europe	76	4.28	.685	.079	4.12	4.43	2	5
	Asia & the Pacific	139	4.14	.763	.065	4.01	4.26	1	5
	The Americas	52	4.31	.755	.105	4.10	4.52	2	5
	Africa & the Middle East	36	4.19	.624	.104	3.98	4.41	3	5
	Total	303	4.21	.728	.042	4.13	4.29	1	5
<b>IC programmes or themes</b>	Europe	77	4.74	.470	.054	4.63	4.85	3	5
	Asia & the Pacific	139	4.47	.629	.053	4.37	4.58	1	5
	The Americas	53	4.68	.613	.084	4.51	4.85	2	5
	Africa & the Middle East	36	4.56	.504	.084	4.39	4.73	4	5
	Total	305	4.59	.585	.033	4.52	4.65	1	5

## Appendix 8: One-Way ANOVA Result (Descriptives): Delegates' types of work

Descriptives									
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
Variables	Types of work					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Destination image	Sciences/Relevant	111	3.61	.844	.080	3.45	3.77	1	5
	Med.Doc/Relevant	50	4.04	.727	.103	3.83	4.25	2	5
	Academia	108	3.92	.822	.079	3.76	4.07	2	5
	Biz/Entrepreneur	17	3.59	.795	.193	3.18	4.00	2	5
	Eng/NGO/Govt/Others	19	3.53	1.172	.269	2.96	4.09	1	5
	Total	305	3.78	.854	.049	3.69	3.88	1	5
Safety & security	Sciences/Relevant	111	4.12	.817	.078	3.96	4.27	2	5
	Med.Doc/Relevant	49	4.47	.544	.078	4.31	4.63	3	5
	Academia	111	4.41	.731	.069	4.27	4.54	2	5
	Biz/Entrepreneur	17	4.41	.618	.150	4.09	4.73	3	5
	Eng/NGO/Govt/Others	18	4.00	1.029	.243	3.49	4.51	2	5
	Total	306	4.29	.765	.044	4.20	4.37	2	5
Political situation	Sciences/Relevant	111	3.88	.828	.079	3.73	4.04	1	5
	Med.Doc/Relevant	50	4.04	.755	.107	3.83	4.25	2	5
	Academia	109	3.91	.856	.082	3.75	4.07	1	5
	Biz/Entrepreneur	17	4.18	.809	.196	3.76	4.59	3	5
	Eng/NGO/Govt/Others	19	3.63	1.012	.232	3.14	4.12	2	5
	Total	306	3.92	.840	.048	3.82	4.01	1	5
Accessibility or travel distance	Sciences/Relevant	110	3.34	.870	.083	3.17	3.50	1	5
	Med.Doc/Relevant	50	3.86	.808	.114	3.63	4.09	2	5
	Academia	110	3.57	.903	.086	3.40	3.74	1	5
	Biz/Entrepreneur	17	3.18	.883	.214	2.72	3.63	1	4
	Eng/NGO/Govt/Others	18	3.83	.985	.232	3.34	4.32	1	5
	Total	305	3.53	.900	.052	3.43	3.63	1	5
Availability of facility	Sciences/Relevant	109	3.56	.844	.081	3.40	3.72	1	5
	Med.Doc/Relevant	50	4.06	.620	.088	3.88	4.24	3	5
	Academia	109	3.87	.840	.080	3.71	4.03	2	5
	Biz/Entrepreneur	17	3.65	.702	.170	3.29	4.01	2	5
	Eng/NGO/Govt/Others	19	4.11	.737	.169	3.75	4.46	3	5
	Total	304	3.79	.816	.047	3.70	3.88	1	5
Quality of service	Sciences/Relevant	111	3.73	.687	.065	3.60	3.86	2	5
	Med.Doc/Relevant	50	4.06	.712	.101	3.86	4.26	2	5

	Academia	111	3.99	.720	.068	3.86	4.13	2	5
	Biz/Entrepreneur	17	3.88	.485	.118	3.63	4.13	3	5
	Eng/NGO/Govt/Others	19	4.26	.733	.168	3.91	4.62	3	5
	Total	308	3.92	.710	.040	3.84	4.00	2	5
Affordability (cost, expenses)	Sciences/Relevant	110	3.95	.722	.069	3.82	4.09	2	5
	Med.Doc/Relevant	49	4.16	.688	.098	3.97	4.36	2	5
	Academia	109	4.14	.787	.075	3.99	4.29	2	5
	Biz/Entrepreneur	17	3.71	.588	.143	3.40	4.01	2	4
	Eng/NGO/Govt/Others	17	4.24	.970	.235	3.74	4.73	2	5
	Total	302	4.06	.756	.044	3.97	4.14	2	5
Attractions, sightseeing, etc.	Sciences/Relevant	111	3.08	.822	.078	2.93	3.24	1	5
	Med.Doc/Relevant	50	3.56	1.013	.143	3.27	3.85	1	5
	Academia	111	3.42	.848	.080	3.26	3.58	1	5
	Biz/Entrepreneur	17	3.06	.899	.218	2.60	3.52	1	4
	Eng/NGO/Govt/Others	19	3.21	1.084	.249	2.69	3.73	1	5
	Total	308	3.29	.901	.051	3.19	3.39	1	5
Other opportunities	Sciences/Relevant	111	3.30	.804	.076	3.15	3.45	1	5
	Med.Doc/Relevant	50	3.66	.823	.116	3.43	3.89	2	5
	Academia	110	3.59	.770	.073	3.45	3.74	2	5
	Biz/Entrepreneur	17	3.47	.943	.229	2.99	3.96	1	5
	Eng/NGO/Govt/Others	19	3.42	.902	.207	2.99	3.86	2	5
	Total	307	3.48	.818	.047	3.39	3.57	1	5
Official documents	Sciences/Relevant	111	3.41	.977	.093	3.23	3.60	1	5
	Med.Doc/Relevant	49	3.84	.773	.110	3.61	4.06	2	5
	Academia	110	3.72	.930	.089	3.54	3.89	2	5
	Biz/Entrepreneur	17	3.88	1.054	.256	3.34	4.42	1	5
	Eng/NGO/Govt/Others	18	3.89	.900	.212	3.44	4.34	2	5
	Total	305	3.65	.942	.054	3.54	3.75	1	5
Cultures & local people	Sciences/Relevant	111	3.28	.741	.070	3.14	3.42	2	5
	Med.Doc/Relevant	49	3.39	.812	.116	3.15	3.62	1	5
	Academia	111	3.48	.903	.086	3.31	3.65	1	5
	Biz/Entrepreneur	17	3.47	.800	.194	3.06	3.88	2	5
	Eng/NGO/Govt/Others	18	3.50	.707	.167	3.15	3.85	2	5
	Total	306	3.39	.816	.047	3.30	3.48	1	5
Climate, weather, etc.	Sciences/Relevant	109	3.06	.736	.071	2.92	3.20	2	5
	Med.Doc/Relevant	49	3.47	.793	.113	3.24	3.70	2	5
	Academia	110	3.36	.864	.082	3.20	3.53	1	5
	Biz/Entrepreneur	17	3.29	.686	.166	2.94	3.65	2	5
	Eng/NGO/Govt/Others	19	3.37	.684	.157	3.04	3.70	2	5
	Total	304	3.27	.800	.046	3.18	3.36	1	5
	Sciences/Relevant	111	4.08	.854	.081	3.92	4.24	1	5



Guest speakers or keynote persons	Med.Doc/Relevant	49	4.31	.652	.093	4.12	4.49	3	5
	Academia	109	4.18	.935	.090	4.01	4.36	1	5
	Biz/Entrepreneur	17	4.06	.827	.201	3.63	4.48	2	5
	Eng/NGO/Govt/Others	19	3.95	.780	.179	3.57	4.32	3	5
	Total	305	4.14	.850	.049	4.05	4.24	1	5
Education & networking	Sciences/Relevant	110	4.14	.829	.079	3.98	4.29	1	5
	Med.Doc/Relevant	49	4.10	.714	.102	3.90	4.31	3	5
	Academia	109	4.29	.643	.062	4.17	4.42	3	5
	Biz/Entrepreneur	17	4.47	.514	.125	4.21	4.74	4	5
	Eng/NGO/Govt/Others	18	4.17	.707	.167	3.82	4.52	3	5
	Total	303	4.21	.728	.042	4.13	4.29	1	5
IC programmes or themes	Sciences/Relevant	111	4.62	.604	.057	4.51	4.74	1	5
	Med.Doc/Relevant	50	4.44	.577	.082	4.28	4.60	3	5
	Academia	109	4.67	.545	.052	4.57	4.77	2	5
	Biz/Entrepreneur	17	4.24	.664	.161	3.89	4.58	3	5
	Eng/NGO/Govt/Others	18	4.61	.502	.118	4.36	4.86	4	5
	Total	305	4.59	.585	.033	4.52	4.65	1	5

## Appendix 9: One-Way ANOVA Result (Descriptive): IC Organising Committee and Planners' age group

Descriptives									
Variables	Age group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Destination image	60 & over	36	4.22	.637	.106	4.01	4.44	3	5
	50-59	62	4.13	.859	.109	3.91	4.35	1	5
	40-49	67	4.18	.673	.082	4.02	4.34	3	5
	Below 40	41	4.22	.613	.096	4.03	4.41	3	5
	Total	206	4.18	.713	.050	4.08	4.28	1	5
Safety & security	60 & over	36	3.94	.754	.126	3.69	4.20	2	5
	50-59	62	3.95	.895	.114	3.72	4.18	1	5
	40-49	67	4.01	.807	.099	3.82	4.21	1	5
	Below 40	41	4.12	.714	.112	3.90	4.35	3	5
	Total	206	4.00	.805	.056	3.89	4.12	1	5
Political situation	60 & over	36	4.42	.554	.092	4.23	4.60	3	5
	50-59	62	4.56	.532	.068	4.43	4.70	3	5
	40-49	67	4.39	.627	.077	4.24	4.54	3	5
	Below 40	41	4.37	.662	.103	4.16	4.57	2	5
	Total	206	4.44	.596	.042	4.36	4.52	2	5
Accessibility or travel distance	60 & over	36	4.03	.845	.141	3.74	4.31	2	5
	50-59	62	4.03	.789	.100	3.83	4.23	1	5
	40-49	67	4.19	.764	.093	4.01	4.38	2	5
	Below 40	41	4.12	.714	.112	3.90	4.35	2	5
	Total	206	4.10	.774	.054	4.00	4.21	1	5
Availability of facility	60 & over	36	4.33	.478	.080	4.17	4.50	4	5
	50-59	62	4.31	.499	.063	4.18	4.43	3	5
	40-49	67	4.15	.359	.044	4.06	4.24	4	5
	Below 40	41	4.22	.419	.065	4.09	4.35	4	5
	Total	206	4.24	.441	.031	4.18	4.30	3	5
Quality of service	60 & over	36	4.50	.561	.093	4.31	4.69	3	5
	50-59	62	4.37	.550	.070	4.23	4.51	3	5
	40-49	67	4.45	.558	.068	4.31	4.58	3	5
	Below 40	41	4.39	.494	.077	4.23	4.55	4	5
	Total	206	4.42	.542	.038	4.35	4.50	3	5
Affordability (cost, expenses)	60 & over	36	4.17	.697	.116	3.93	4.40	2	5
	50-59	62	4.03	.572	.073	3.89	4.18	3	5
	40-49	67	4.27	.617	.075	4.12	4.42	3	5
	Below 40	41	4.00	.806	.126	3.75	4.25	1	5
	Total	206	4.13	.665	.046	4.03	4.22	1	5
Attractions, sightseeing, etc.	60 & over	36	3.86	.899	.150	3.56	4.17	1	5
	50-59	62	3.82	.897	.114	3.59	4.05	1	5
	40-49	67	3.78	.775	.095	3.59	3.97	2	5
	Below 40	41	4.00	.775	.121	3.76	4.24	2	5

	Total	206	3.85	.833	.058	3.74	3.96	1	5
Other opportunities	60 & over	36	3.72	.701	.117	3.48	3.96	2	5
	50-59	62	3.56	.760	.097	3.37	3.76	1	5
	40-49	67	3.66	.686	.084	3.49	3.82	2	5
	Below 40	41	4.07	.608	.095	3.88	4.27	3	5
	Total	206	3.72	.716	.050	3.62	3.82	1	5
Official documents	60 & over	36	3.75	.692	.115	3.52	3.98	2	5
	50-59	62	3.58	.641	.081	3.42	3.74	2	5
	40-49	67	3.69	.633	.077	3.53	3.84	2	5
	Below 40	41	3.95	.631	.098	3.75	4.15	3	5
	Total	206	3.72	.654	.046	3.63	3.81	2	5
Cultures & local people	60 & over	36	3.44	.652	.109	3.22	3.67	2	5
	50-59	62	3.37	.659	.084	3.20	3.54	2	5
	40-49	67	3.37	.648	.079	3.22	3.53	2	5
	Below 40	41	3.49	.779	.122	3.24	3.73	1	5
	Total	206	3.41	.676	.047	3.31	3.50	1	5
Climate, weather, etc.	60 & over	36	3.44	.652	.109	3.22	3.67	2	5
	50-59	62	3.37	.659	.084	3.20	3.54	2	5
	40-49	67	3.36	.690	.084	3.19	3.53	1	5
	Below 40	41	3.49	.779	.122	3.24	3.73	1	5
	Total	206	3.40	.690	.048	3.31	3.50	1	5
Guest /keynote speakers	60 & over	36	4.42	.604	.101	4.21	4.62	3	5
	50-59	62	4.21	.631	.080	4.05	4.37	3	5
	40-49	67	4.21	.565	.069	4.07	4.35	3	5
	Below 40	41	4.51	.553	.086	4.34	4.69	3	5
	Total	206	4.31	.600	.042	4.22	4.39	3	5
Education & networking	60 & over	36	4.47	.506	.084	4.30	4.64	4	5
	50-59	62	4.34	.477	.061	4.22	4.46	4	5
	40-49	67	4.25	.438	.054	4.15	4.36	4	5
	Below 40	41	4.39	.494	.077	4.23	4.55	4	5
	Total	206	4.34	.476	.033	4.28	4.41	4	5
IC programmes or themes	60 & over	36	4.58	.500	.083	4.41	4.75	4	5
	50-59	62	4.42	.529	.067	4.28	4.55	3	5
	40-49	67	4.46	.559	.068	4.33	4.60	3	5
	Below 40	41	4.46	.505	.079	4.30	4.62	4	5
	Total	206	4.47	.529	.037	4.40	4.54	3	5

## Appendix 10: One-Way ANOVA Result (Descriptive): IC Organising Committee and Planners' education levels

Descriptives									
Variables	Education levels	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Destination image	Others	3	4.33	.577	.333	2.90	5.77	4	5
	Bachelor degree	5	4.20	.447	.200	3.64	4.76	4	5
	Master degree	18	4.33	.594	.140	4.04	4.63	3	5
	Doctorate	179	4.17	.730	.055	4.06	4.28	1	5
	Total	205	4.19	.710	.050	4.09	4.28	1	5
Safety & security	Others	3	4.33	.577	.333	2.90	5.77	4	5
	Bachelor degree	5	4.40	.894	.400	3.29	5.51	3	5
	Master degree	18	4.28	.669	.158	3.95	4.61	3	5
	Doctorate	179	3.96	.817	.061	3.84	4.08	1	5
	Total	205	4.00	.807	.056	3.89	4.12	1	5
Political situation	Others	3	4.33	.577	.333	2.90	5.77	4	5
	Bachelor degree	5	4.80	.447	.200	4.24	5.36	4	5
	Master degree	18	4.72	.461	.109	4.49	4.95	4	5
	Doctorate	179	4.41	.605	.045	4.32	4.50	2	5
	Total	205	4.44	.597	.042	4.36	4.53	2	5
Accessibility or travel distance	Others	3	3.67	.577	.333	2.23	5.10	3	4
	Bachelor degree	5	4.20	.837	.374	3.16	5.24	3	5
	Master degree	18	4.06	.639	.151	3.74	4.37	3	5
	Doctorate	179	4.12	.776	.058	4.01	4.24	1	5
	Total	205	4.11	.762	.053	4.01	4.22	1	5
Availability of facility	Others	3	4.00	.000	.000	4.00	4.00	4	4
	Bachelor degree	5	4.20	.447	.200	3.64	4.76	4	5
	Master degree	18	4.44	.511	.121	4.19	4.70	4	5
	Doctorate	179	4.23	.435	.032	4.16	4.29	3	5
	Total	205	4.24	.442	.031	4.18	4.30	3	5
Quality of service	Others	3	4.00	.000	.000	4.00	4.00	4	4
	Bachelor degree	5	4.40	.548	.245	3.72	5.08	4	5
	Master degree	18	4.50	.514	.121	4.24	4.76	4	5
	Doctorate	179	4.42	.549	.041	4.34	4.51	3	5
	Total	205	4.42	.543	.038	4.35	4.50	3	5
Affordability (cost, expenses)	Others	3	4.00	.000	.000	4.00	4.00	4	4
	Bachelor degree	5	4.60	.548	.245	3.92	5.28	4	5

	Master degree	18	4.11	.583	.137	3.82	4.40	3	5
	Doctorate	179	4.12	.676	.051	4.02	4.22	1	5
	Total	205	4.13	.662	.046	4.04	4.22	1	5
Attractions, sightseeing, etc.	Others	3	4.00	.000	.000	4.00	4.00	4	4
	Bachelor degree	5	4.60	.548	.245	3.92	5.28	4	5
	Master degree	18	4.00	.594	.140	3.70	4.30	3	5
	Doctorate	179	3.82	.858	.064	3.69	3.94	1	5
	Total	205	3.85	.833	.058	3.74	3.97	1	5
Other opportunities	Others	3	4.00	1.000	.577	1.52	6.48	3	5
	Bachelor degree	5	4.20	.447	.200	3.64	4.76	4	5
	Master degree	18	3.83	.383	.090	3.64	4.02	3	4
	Doctorate	179	3.70	.741	.055	3.59	3.81	1	5
	Total	205	3.73	.716	.050	3.63	3.83	1	5
Official documents	Others	3	3.67	.577	.333	2.23	5.10	3	4
	Bachelor degree	5	4.20	.447	.200	3.64	4.76	4	5
	Master degree	18	3.72	.461	.109	3.49	3.95	3	4
	Doctorate	179	3.71	.674	.050	3.61	3.81	2	5
	Total	205	3.72	.654	.046	3.63	3.81	2	5
Cultures & local people	Others	3	3.67	.577	.333	2.23	5.10	3	4
	Bachelor degree	5	4.00	.707	.316	3.12	4.88	3	5
	Master degree	18	3.56	.511	.121	3.30	3.81	3	4
	Doctorate	179	3.37	.687	.051	3.27	3.48	1	5
	Total	205	3.41	.677	.047	3.32	3.50	1	5
Climate, weather, etc.	Others	3	3.67	.577	.333	2.23	5.10	3	4
	Bachelor degree	5	4.00	.707	.316	3.12	4.88	3	5
	Master degree	18	3.56	.511	.121	3.30	3.81	3	4
	Doctorate	179	3.37	.702	.052	3.27	3.47	1	5
	Total	205	3.40	.691	.048	3.31	3.50	1	5
Guest /keynote speakers	Others	3	4.00	1.000	.577	1.52	6.48	3	5
	Bachelor degree	5	5.00	.000	.000	5.00	5.00	5	5
	Master degree	18	4.33	.686	.162	3.99	4.67	3	5
	Doctorate	179	4.29	.585	.044	4.20	4.38	3	5
	Total	205	4.31	.601	.042	4.22	4.39	3	5
Education & networking	Others	3	4.33	.577	.333	2.90	5.77	4	5
	Bachelor degree	5	5.00	.000	.000	5.00	5.00	5	5
	Master degree	18	4.56	.511	.121	4.30	4.81	4	5
	Doctorate	179	4.31	.463	.035	4.24	4.38	4	5
	Total	205	4.35	.477	.033	4.28	4.41	4	5
	Others	3	4.33	.577	.333	2.90	5.77	4	5

IC programmes or themes	Bachelor degree	5	4.80	.447	.200	4.24	5.36	4	5
	Master degree	18	4.50	.514	.121	4.24	4.76	4	5
	Doctorate	179	4.46	.533	.040	4.39	4.54	3	5
	Total	205	4.47	.529	.037	4.40	4.55	3	5

### Appendix 11: One-Way ANOVA (Descriptive): IC Organising Committee and Planners' Regional country of residence

Descriptives									
Variables	Regions of country of residence	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Destination image	Europe	85	4.14	.742	.081	3.98	4.30	1	5
	Asia & the Pacific	43	4.33	.566	.086	4.15	4.50	3	5
	The Americas	68	4.07	.759	.092	3.89	4.26	1	5
	Africa & the Middle East	8	4.50	.535	.189	4.05	4.95	4	5
	Total	204	4.17	.712	.050	4.07	4.27	1	5
Safety & security	Europe	85	3.93	.753	.082	3.77	4.09	1	5
	Asia & the Pacific	43	4.02	.801	.122	3.78	4.27	2	5
	The Americas	68	4.04	.871	.106	3.83	4.26	1	5
	Africa & the Middle East	8	4.25	.886	.313	3.51	4.99	3	5
	Total	204	4.00	.806	.056	3.89	4.11	1	5
Political situation	Europe	85	4.28	.683	.074	4.13	4.43	2	5
	Asia & the Pacific	43	4.58	.499	.076	4.43	4.74	4	5
	The Americas	68	4.49	.503	.061	4.36	4.61	4	5
	Africa & the Middle East	8	4.88	.354	.125	4.58	5.17	4	5
	Total	204	4.44	.596	.042	4.35	4.52	2	5
Accessibility or travel distance	Europe	85	4.13	.799	.087	3.96	4.30	1	5
	Asia & the Pacific	43	3.95	.785	.120	3.71	4.20	2	5
	The Americas	68	4.13	.751	.091	3.95	4.31	2	5
	Africa & the Middle East	8	4.13	.641	.227	3.59	4.66	3	5
	Total	204	4.09	.773	.054	3.99	4.20	1	5
Availability of facility	Europe	85	4.25	.460	.050	4.15	4.35	3	5
	Asia & the Pacific	43	4.16	.374	.057	4.05	4.28	4	5
	The Americas	68	4.29	.459	.056	4.18	4.41	4	5
	Africa & the Middle East	8	4.25	.463	.164	3.86	4.64	4	5
	Total	204	4.25	.442	.031	4.18	4.31	3	5
Quality of service	Europe	85	4.36	.553	.060	4.25	4.48	3	5
	Asia & the Pacific	43	4.44	.502	.077	4.29	4.60	4	5
	The Americas	68	4.47	.559	.068	4.34	4.61	3	5
	Africa & the Middle East	8	4.50	.535	.189	4.05	4.95	4	5
	Total	204	4.42	.543	.038	4.35	4.50	3	5
	Europe	85	4.05	.706	.077	3.89	4.20	1	5
	Asia & the Pacific	43	4.14	.639	.097	3.94	4.34	3	5

Affordability (cost, expenses)	The Americas	68	4.21	.659	.080	4.05	4.37	2	5
	Africa & the Middle East	8	4.13	.354	.125	3.83	4.42	4	5
	Total	204	4.12	.666	.047	4.03	4.21	1	5
Attractions, sightseeing, etc.	Europe	85	3.84	.721	.078	3.68	3.99	2	5
	Asia & the Pacific	43	3.77	.841	.128	3.51	4.03	1	5
	The Americas	68	3.87	.960	.116	3.64	4.10	1	5
	Africa & the Middle East	8	4.13	.835	.295	3.43	4.82	3	5
	Total	204	3.84	.833	.058	3.73	3.96	1	5
Other opportunities	Europe	85	3.75	.770	.084	3.59	3.92	1	5
	Asia & the Pacific	43	3.70	.638	.097	3.50	3.89	2	5
	The Americas	68	3.66	.704	.085	3.49	3.83	2	5
	Africa & the Middle East	8	3.88	.641	.227	3.34	4.41	3	5
	Total	204	3.72	.714	.050	3.62	3.81	1	5
Official documents	Europe	85	3.75	.688	.075	3.60	3.90	2	5
	Asia & the Pacific	43	3.65	.650	.099	3.45	3.85	2	5
	The Americas	68	3.69	.629	.076	3.54	3.84	2	5
	Africa & the Middle East	8	3.75	.463	.164	3.36	4.14	3	4
	Total	204	3.71	.651	.046	3.62	3.80	2	5
Cultures & local people	Europe	85	3.38	.690	.075	3.23	3.53	1	5
	Asia & the Pacific	43	3.40	.623	.095	3.20	3.59	2	4
	The Americas	68	3.41	.674	.082	3.25	3.57	2	5
	Africa & the Middle East	8	3.50	.756	.267	2.87	4.13	2	4
	Total	204	3.40	.669	.047	3.30	3.49	1	5
Climate, weather, etc.	Europe	85	3.39	.692	.075	3.24	3.54	1	5
	Asia & the Pacific	43	3.40	.623	.095	3.20	3.59	2	4
	The Americas	68	3.38	.713	.086	3.21	3.55	1	5
	Africa & the Middle East	8	3.50	.756	.267	2.87	4.13	2	4
	Total	204	3.39	.683	.048	3.30	3.49	1	5
Guest /keynote speakers	Europe	85	4.29	.669	.073	4.15	4.44	3	5
	Asia & the Pacific	43	4.44	.548	.084	4.27	4.61	3	5
	The Americas	68	4.22	.542	.066	4.09	4.35	3	5
	Africa & the Middle East	8	4.38	.518	.183	3.94	4.81	4	5
	Total	204	4.30	.600	.042	4.22	4.39	3	5
Education & networking	Europe	85	4.34	.477	.052	4.24	4.44	4	5
	Asia & the Pacific	43	4.30	.465	.071	4.16	4.45	4	5
	The Americas	68	4.38	.490	.059	4.26	4.50	4	5
	Africa & the Middle East	8	4.25	.463	.164	3.86	4.64	4	5
	Total	204	4.34	.476	.033	4.28	4.41	4	5



IC programmes or themes	Europe	85	4.44	.544	.059	4.32	4.55	3	5
	Asia & the Pacific	43	4.44	.502	.077	4.29	4.60	4	5
	The Americas	68	4.51	.532	.065	4.39	4.64	3	5
	Africa & the Middle East	8	4.63	.518	.183	4.19	5.06	4	5
	Total	204	4.47	.529	.037	4.40	4.54	3	5

## Appendix 12: One-Way ANOVA (Descriptive): IC Organising Committee and Planners' Types of work

Descriptives									
Variables	Types of work	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Destination image	Sciences	20	4.00	.562	.126	3.74	4.26	3	5
	Academia	165	4.21	.739	.058	4.10	4.33	1	5
	Biz & Entrepreneur	12	4.00	.426	.123	3.73	4.27	3	5
	Engineering & Others	1	3.00	.	.	.	.	3	3
	Total	198	4.17	.713	.051	4.07	4.27	1	5
Political situation	Sciences	20	4.20	.616	.138	3.91	4.49	3	5
	Academia	165	3.98	.826	.064	3.85	4.10	1	5
	Biz & Entrepreneur	12	4.00	.853	.246	3.46	4.54	3	5
	Engineering & Others	1	3.00	.	.	.	.	3	3
	Total	198	3.99	.809	.058	3.88	4.11	1	5
Safety & security	Sciences	20	4.45	.605	.135	4.17	4.73	3	5
	Academia	165	4.42	.606	.047	4.33	4.52	2	5
	Biz & Entrepreneur	12	4.58	.515	.149	4.26	4.91	4	5
	Engineering & Others	1	5.00	.	.	.	.	5	5
	Total	198	4.44	.599	.043	4.36	4.52	2	5
Accessibility or travel distance	Sciences	20	3.90	.912	.204	3.47	4.33	2	5
	Academia	165	4.13	.761	.059	4.02	4.25	1	5
	Biz & Entrepreneur	12	4.00	.739	.213	3.53	4.47	3	5
	Engineering & Others	1	4.00	.	.	.	.	4	4
	Total	198	4.10	.774	.055	3.99	4.21	1	5
Availability of facility	Sciences	20	4.20	.410	.092	4.01	4.39	4	5
	Academia	165	4.24	.444	.035	4.17	4.31	3	5
	Biz & Entrepreneur	12	4.25	.452	.131	3.96	4.54	4	5
	Engineering & Others	1	5.00	.	.	.	.	5	5
	Total	198	4.24	.441	.031	4.18	4.30	3	5
Quality of service	Sciences	20	4.40	.598	.134	4.12	4.68	3	5
	Academia	165	4.41	.540	.042	4.32	4.49	3	5
	Biz & Entrepreneur	12	4.67	.492	.142	4.35	4.98	4	5
	Engineering & Others	1	5.00	.	.	.	.	5	5
	Total	198	4.42	.544	.039	4.35	4.50	3	5
Affordability (cost, expenses)	Sciences	20	4.35	.671	.150	4.04	4.66	3	5
	Academia	165	4.07	.664	.052	3.96	4.17	1	5
	Biz & Entrepreneur	12	4.50	.522	.151	4.17	4.83	4	5
	Engineering & Others	1	5.00	.	.	.	.	5	5
	Total	198	4.13	.668	.047	4.03	4.22	1	5
Official documents	Sciences	20	4.00	.918	.205	3.57	4.43	2	5
	Academia	165	3.79	.832	.065	3.66	3.92	1	5
	Biz & Entrepreneur	12	4.25	.452	.131	3.96	4.54	4	5

	Engineering & Others	1	5.00	.	.	.	.	5	5
	Total	198	3.84	.831	.059	3.73	3.96	1	5
Other opportunities	Sciences	20	3.80	.616	.138	3.51	4.09	3	5
	Academia	165	3.72	.729	.057	3.61	3.83	1	5
	Biz & Entrepreneur	12	3.58	.793	.229	3.08	4.09	2	5
	Engineering & Others	1	3.00	.	.	.	.	3	3
	Total	198	3.72	.720	.051	3.62	3.82	1	5
Attraction, sightseeing, etc.	Sciences	20	3.75	.550	.123	3.49	4.01	3	5
	Academia	165	3.72	.659	.051	3.62	3.82	2	5
	Biz & Entrepreneur	12	3.58	.793	.229	3.08	4.09	2	5
	Engineering & Others	1	3.00	.	.	.	.	3	3
	Total	198	3.71	.655	.047	3.62	3.80	2	5
Cultures & local people	Sciences	20	3.60	.681	.152	3.28	3.92	2	5
	Academia	165	3.36	.663	.052	3.26	3.47	1	5
	Biz & Entrepreneur	12	3.42	.793	.229	2.91	3.92	2	5
	Engineering & Others	1	3.00	.	.	.	.	3	3
	Total	198	3.39	.672	.048	3.29	3.48	1	5
Climate, weather, etc.	Sciences	20	3.60	.681	.152	3.28	3.92	2	5
	Academia	165	3.35	.679	.053	3.25	3.46	1	5
	Biz & Entrepreneur	12	3.42	.793	.229	2.91	3.92	2	5
	Engineering & Others	1	3.00	.	.	.	.	3	3
	Total	198	3.38	.686	.049	3.28	3.47	1	5
Guest speakers or keynote persons	Sciences	20	4.40	.681	.152	4.08	4.72	3	5
	Academia	165	4.26	.583	.045	4.17	4.35	3	5
	Biz & Entrepreneur	12	4.58	.669	.193	4.16	5.01	3	5
	Engineering & Others	1	5.00	.	.	.	.	5	5
	Total	198	4.30	.602	.043	4.21	4.38	3	5
Education & networking	Sciences	20	4.45	.510	.114	4.21	4.69	4	5
	Academia	165	4.31	.464	.036	4.24	4.38	4	5
	Biz & Entrepreneur	12	4.58	.515	.149	4.26	4.91	4	5
	Engineering & Others	1	5.00	.	.	.	.	5	5
	Total	198	4.34	.476	.034	4.28	4.41	4	5
IC programmes or themes	Sciences	20	4.45	.605	.135	4.17	4.73	3	5
	Academia	165	4.45	.523	.041	4.37	4.53	3	5
	Biz & Entrepreneur	12	4.75	.452	.131	4.46	5.04	4	5
	Engineering & Others	1	5.00	.	.	.	.	5	5
	Total	198	4.47	.530	.038	4.40	4.54	3	5

### Appendix 13: One-Way ANOVA (Descriptive): IC Organising Committee and Planners' Position in their Organisation

Descriptives									
Variables	Positions	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Destination image	CEO/President/Senior mgmt.	9	4.11	.601	.200	3.65	4.57	3	5
	Middle-upper mgmt.	146	4.22	.757	.063	4.10	4.34	1	5
	Lower mgmt.	22	4.09	.526	.112	3.86	4.32	3	5
	Practitioner/ lecturer/ scientist	20	3.95	.605	.135	3.67	4.23	3	5
	Total	197	4.17	.715	.051	4.07	4.27	1	5
Political situation	CEO/President/Senior mgmt.	9	4.11	.782	.261	3.51	4.71	3	5
	Middle-upper mgmt.	146	4.00	.847	.070	3.86	4.14	1	5
	Lower mgmt.	22	4.14	.640	.136	3.85	4.42	3	5
	Practitioner/ lecturer/ scientist	20	3.75	.716	.160	3.41	4.09	3	5
	Total	197	3.99	.811	.058	3.88	4.11	1	5
Safety & security	CEO/President/Senior mgmt.	9	4.44	.527	.176	4.04	4.85	4	5
	Middle-upper mgmt.	146	4.48	.578	.048	4.38	4.57	3	5
	Lower mgmt.	22	4.41	.734	.157	4.08	4.73	2	5
	Practitioner/ lecturer/ scientist	20	4.15	.587	.131	3.88	4.42	3	5
	Total	197	4.44	.600	.043	4.35	4.52	2	5
Accessibility or travel distance	CEO/President/Senior mgmt.	9	3.89	.782	.261	3.29	4.49	3	5
	Middle-upper mgmt.	146	4.12	.787	.065	3.99	4.25	1	5
	Lower mgmt.	22	4.23	.813	.173	3.87	4.59	2	5
	Practitioner/ lecturer/ scientist	20	3.90	.641	.143	3.60	4.20	3	5
	Total	197	4.10	.776	.055	3.99	4.21	1	5
Availability of facility	CEO/President/Senior mgmt.	9	4.67	.500	.167	4.28	5.05	4	5
	Middle-upper mgmt.	146	4.21	.427	.035	4.14	4.28	3	5
	Lower mgmt.	22	4.27	.456	.097	4.07	4.47	4	5
	Practitioner/ lecturer/ scientist	20	4.25	.444	.099	4.04	4.46	4	5
	Total	197	4.24	.442	.031	4.18	4.31	3	5
Quality of service	CEO/President/Senior mgmt.	9	4.44	.527	.176	4.04	4.85	4	5
	Middle-upper mgmt.	146	4.47	.553	.046	4.38	4.56	3	5
	Lower mgmt.	22	4.36	.492	.105	4.15	4.58	4	5

	Practitioner/ lecturer/ scientist	20	4.15	.489	.109	3.92	4.38	3	5
	Total	197	4.42	.544	.039	4.34	4.50	3	5
Affordability (cost, expenses)	CEO/President/Senior mgmt.	9	4.22	.441	.147	3.88	4.56	4	5
	Middle-upper mgmt.	146	4.08	.700	.058	3.97	4.20	1	5
	Lower mgmt.	22	4.23	.612	.130	3.96	4.50	3	5
	Practitioner/ lecturer/ scientist	20	4.30	.571	.128	4.03	4.57	3	5
	Total	197	4.13	.669	.048	4.03	4.22	1	5
Official documents	CEO/President/Senior mgmt.	9	3.78	1.093	.364	2.94	4.62	1	5
	Middle-upper mgmt.	146	3.83	.833	.069	3.69	3.97	1	5
	Lower mgmt.	22	4.00	.690	.147	3.69	4.31	3	5
	Practitioner/ lecturer/ scientist	20	3.80	.894	.200	3.38	4.22	2	5
	Total	197	3.84	.833	.059	3.73	3.96	1	5
Other opportunities	CEO/President/Senior mgmt.	9	3.11	.782	.261	2.51	3.71	2	4
	Middle-upper mgmt.	146	3.73	.736	.061	3.61	3.85	1	5
	Lower mgmt.	22	3.82	.395	.084	3.64	3.99	3	4
	Practitioner/ lecturer/ scientist	20	3.80	.768	.172	3.44	4.16	2	5
	Total	197	3.72	.720	.051	3.62	3.82	1	5
Attractions, sightseeing, etc.	CEO/President/Senior mgmt.	9	3.11	.782	.261	2.51	3.71	2	4
	Middle-upper mgmt.	146	3.73	.657	.054	3.63	3.84	2	5
	Lower mgmt.	22	3.77	.429	.091	3.58	3.96	3	4
	Practitioner/ lecturer/ scientist	20	3.80	.696	.156	3.47	4.13	2	5
	Total	197	3.72	.655	.047	3.62	3.81	2	5
Cultures & local people	CEO/President/Senior mgmt.	9	3.11	.782	.261	2.51	3.71	2	4
	Middle-upper mgmt.	146	3.38	.646	.053	3.28	3.49	2	5
	Lower mgmt.	22	3.41	.796	.170	3.06	3.76	1	4
	Practitioner/ lecturer/ scientist	20	3.55	.686	.153	3.23	3.87	2	5
	Total	197	3.39	.673	.048	3.30	3.49	1	5
Climate, weather, etc.	CEO/President/Senior mgmt.	9	3.11	.782	.261	2.51	3.71	2	4
	Middle-upper mgmt.	146	3.37	.665	.055	3.26	3.48	1	5
	Lower mgmt.	22	3.41	.796	.170	3.06	3.76	1	4
	Practitioner/ lecturer/ scientist	20	3.55	.686	.153	3.23	3.87	2	5
	Total	197	3.38	.687	.049	3.28	3.48	1	5
Guest speakers or	CEO/President/Senior mgmt.	9	4.33	.500	.167	3.95	4.72	4	5

keynote persons	Middle-upper mgmt.	146	4.27	.591	.049	4.17	4.36	3	5
	Lower mgmt.	22	4.55	.596	.127	4.28	4.81	3	5
	Practitioner/ lecturer/ scientist	20	4.25	.716	.160	3.91	4.59	3	5
	Total	197	4.30	.603	.043	4.21	4.38	3	5
Education & networking	CEO/President/Senior mgmt.	9	4.56	.527	.176	4.15	4.96	4	5
	Middle-upper mgmt.	146	4.29	.457	.038	4.22	4.37	4	5
	Lower mgmt.	22	4.55	.510	.109	4.32	4.77	4	5
	Practitioner/ lecturer/ scientist	20	4.40	.503	.112	4.16	4.64	4	5
	Total	197	4.35	.477	.034	4.28	4.41	4	5
IC programmes or themes	CEO/President/Senior mgmt.	9	4.44	.527	.176	4.04	4.85	4	5
	Middle-upper mgmt.	146	4.49	.528	.044	4.41	4.58	3	5
	Lower mgmt.	22	4.45	.510	.109	4.23	4.68	4	5
	Practitioner/ lecturer/ scientist	20	4.30	.571	.128	4.03	4.57	3	5
	Total	197	4.47	.530	.038	4.39	4.54	3	5

### Appendix 14: One-Way ANOVA (Descriptive): IC Organising Committee and Planners' Years' experience in organising ICs

Descriptives									
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Destination image	>20 yrs.	52	4.23	.807	.112	4.01	4.46	1	5
	11- 20 yrs.	113	4.20	.683	.064	4.08	4.33	1	5
	2 - 10 yrs.	41	4.05	.669	.104	3.84	4.26	2	5
	Total	206	4.18	.713	.050	4.08	4.28	1	5
Political situation	>20 yrs.	52	3.98	.828	.115	3.75	4.21	2	5
	11- 20 yrs.	113	4.05	.777	.073	3.91	4.20	1	5
	2 - 10 yrs.	41	3.90	.860	.134	3.63	4.17	1	5
	Total	206	4.00	.805	.056	3.89	4.12	1	5
Safety & security	>20 yrs.	52	4.42	.667	.093	4.24	4.61	2	5
	11- 20 yrs.	113	4.47	.568	.053	4.36	4.57	3	5
	2 - 10 yrs.	41	4.39	.586	.092	4.21	4.58	3	5
	Total	206	4.44	.596	.042	4.36	4.52	2	5
Accessibility or travel distance	>20 yrs.	52	4.27	.660	.092	4.09	4.45	3	5
	11- 20 yrs.	113	4.05	.811	.076	3.90	4.20	2	5
	2 - 10 yrs.	41	4.02	.790	.123	3.77	4.27	1	5
	Total	206	4.10	.774	.054	4.00	4.21	1	5
Availability of facility	>20 yrs.	52	4.21	.412	.057	4.10	4.33	4	5
	11- 20 yrs.	113	4.28	.453	.043	4.20	4.37	4	5
	2 - 10 yrs.	41	4.17	.442	.069	4.03	4.31	3	5
	Total	206	4.24	.441	.031	4.18	4.30	3	5
Quality of service	>20 yrs.	52	4.50	.577	.080	4.34	4.66	3	5
	11- 20 yrs.	113	4.43	.498	.047	4.34	4.53	4	5
	2 - 10 yrs.	41	4.29	.602	.094	4.10	4.48	3	5
	Total	206	4.42	.542	.038	4.35	4.50	3	5
Affordability (cost, expenses)	>20 yrs.	52	4.19	.525	.073	4.05	4.34	3	5
	11- 20 yrs.	113	4.07	.728	.069	3.94	4.21	1	5
	2 - 10 yrs.	41	4.20	.641	.100	3.99	4.40	3	5
	Total	206	4.13	.665	.046	4.03	4.22	1	5
Official documents	>20 yrs.	52	3.94	.802	.111	3.72	4.17	2	5
	11- 20 yrs.	113	3.86	.789	.074	3.71	4.01	2	5
	2 - 10 yrs.	41	3.71	.981	.153	3.40	4.02	1	5
	Total	206	3.85	.833	.058	3.74	3.96	1	5
Other opportunities	>20 yrs.	52	3.67	.648	.090	3.49	3.85	2	5
	11- 20 yrs.	113	3.74	.729	.069	3.61	3.88	1	5
	2 - 10 yrs.	41	3.73	.775	.121	3.49	3.98	2	5
	Total	206	3.72	.716	.050	3.62	3.82	1	5
Attractions, sightseeing, etc.	>20 yrs.	52	3.71	.572	.079	3.55	3.87	3	5
	11- 20 yrs.	113	3.74	.652	.061	3.62	3.86	2	5

	2 - 10 yrs.	41	3.66	.762	.119	3.42	3.90	2	5
	Total	206	3.72	.654	.046	3.63	3.81	2	5
Cultures & local people	>20 yrs.	52	3.46	.641	.089	3.28	3.64	2	5
	11 - 20 yrs.	113	3.42	.705	.066	3.29	3.56	1	5
	2 - 10 yrs.	41	3.29	.642	.100	3.09	3.50	2	4
	Total	206	3.41	.676	.047	3.31	3.50	1	5
Climate, weather, etc.	>20 yrs.	52	3.42	.696	.096	3.23	3.62	1	5
	11 - 20 yrs.	113	3.43	.706	.066	3.30	3.57	1	5
	2 - 10 yrs.	41	3.29	.642	.100	3.09	3.50	2	4
	Total	206	3.40	.690	.048	3.31	3.50	1	5
Guest speakers or keynote persons	>20 yrs.	52	4.23	.645	.089	4.05	4.41	3	5
	11 - 20 yrs.	113	4.35	.594	.056	4.23	4.46	3	5
	2 - 10 yrs.	41	4.29	.559	.087	4.12	4.47	3	5
	Total	206	4.31	.600	.042	4.22	4.39	3	5
Education & networking	>20 yrs.	52	4.31	.466	.065	4.18	4.44	4	5
	11 - 20 yrs.	113	4.37	.485	.046	4.28	4.46	4	5
	2 - 10 yrs.	41	4.32	.471	.074	4.17	4.47	4	5
	Total	206	4.34	.476	.033	4.28	4.41	4	5
IC programmes or themes	>20 yrs.	52	4.54	.576	.080	4.38	4.70	3	5
	11 - 20 yrs.	113	4.47	.501	.047	4.38	4.56	4	5
	2 - 10 yrs.	41	4.39	.542	.085	4.22	4.56	3	5
	Total	206	4.47	.529	.037	4.40	4.54	3	5



### Appendix 15: One-Way ANOVA (Descriptive): IC Organising Committee and Planners' Frequency of ICs organized per year

Descriptives									
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Destination image	>5 times/yr	52	4.23	.807	.112	4.01	4.46	1	5
	3 - 4 times/yr	27	4.19	.557	.107	3.96	4.41	3	5
	Once or twice	86	4.21	.721	.078	4.05	4.36	1	5
	<Once	41	4.05	.669	.104	3.84	4.26	2	5
	Total	206	4.18	.713	.050	4.08	4.28	1	5
Political situation	>5 times/yr	52	3.98	.828	.115	3.75	4.21	2	5
	3 - 4 times/yr	27	4.07	.616	.118	3.83	4.32	3	5
	Once or twice	86	4.05	.825	.089	3.87	4.22	1	5
	<Once	41	3.90	.860	.134	3.63	4.17	1	5
	Total	206	4.00	.805	.056	3.89	4.12	1	5
Safety & security	>5 times/yr	52	4.42	.667	.093	4.24	4.61	2	5
	3 - 4 times/yr	27	4.63	.492	.095	4.43	4.82	4	5
	Once or twice	86	4.42	.583	.063	4.29	4.54	3	5
	<Once	41	4.39	.586	.092	4.21	4.58	3	5
	Total	206	4.44	.596	.042	4.36	4.52	2	5
Accessibility or travel distance	>5 times/yr	52	4.27	.660	.092	4.09	4.45	3	5
	3 - 4 times/yr	27	3.96	.854	.164	3.63	4.30	2	5
	Once or twice	86	4.08	.800	.086	3.91	4.25	2	5
	<Once	41	4.02	.790	.123	3.77	4.27	1	5
	Total	206	4.10	.774	.054	4.00	4.21	1	5
Availability of facility	>5 times/yr	52	4.21	.412	.057	4.10	4.33	4	5
	3 - 4 times/yr	27	4.30	.465	.090	4.11	4.48	4	5
	Once or twice	86	4.28	.451	.049	4.18	4.38	4	5
	<Once	41	4.17	.442	.069	4.03	4.31	3	5
	Total	206	4.24	.441	.031	4.18	4.30	3	5
Quality of service	>5 times/yr	52	4.50	.577	.080	4.34	4.66	3	5
	3 - 4 times/yr	27	4.52	.509	.098	4.32	4.72	4	5
	Once or twice	86	4.41	.494	.053	4.30	4.51	4	5
	<Once	41	4.29	.602	.094	4.10	4.48	3	5
	Total	206	4.42	.542	.038	4.35	4.50	3	5
Affordability (cost, expenses)	>5 times/yr	52	4.19	.525	.073	4.05	4.34	3	5
	3 - 4 times/yr	27	4.15	.662	.127	3.89	4.41	3	5
	Once or twice	86	4.05	.750	.081	3.89	4.21	1	5
	<Once	41	4.20	.641	.100	3.99	4.40	3	5
	Total	206	4.13	.665	.046	4.03	4.22	1	5
Official documents	>5 times/yr	52	3.94	.802	.111	3.72	4.17	2	5
	3 - 4 times/yr	27	3.85	.770	.148	3.55	4.16	2	5
	Once or twice	86	3.86	.799	.086	3.69	4.03	2	5

	<Once	41	3.71	.981	.153	3.40	4.02	1	5
	Total	206	3.85	.833	.058	3.74	3.96	1	5
Other opportunities	>5 times/yr	52	3.67	.648	.090	3.49	3.85	2	5
	3 - 4 times/yr	27	3.81	.622	.120	3.57	4.06	3	5
	Once or twice	86	3.72	.762	.082	3.56	3.88	1	5
	< Once	41	3.73	.775	.121	3.49	3.98	2	5
	Total	206	3.72	.716	.050	3.62	3.82	1	5
Attractions, sightseeing, etc.	>5 times/yr	52	3.71	.572	.079	3.55	3.87	3	5
	3 - 4 times/yr	27	3.81	.622	.120	3.57	4.06	3	5
	Once or twice	86	3.72	.662	.071	3.58	3.86	2	5
	<Once	41	3.66	.762	.119	3.42	3.90	2	5
	Total	206	3.72	.654	.046	3.63	3.81	2	5
Cultures & local people	>5 times/yr	52	3.46	.641	.089	3.28	3.64	2	5
	3 - 4 times/yr	27	3.52	.849	.163	3.18	3.85	1	5
	Once or twice	86	3.40	.656	.071	3.25	3.54	2	5
	<Once	41	3.29	.642	.100	3.09	3.50	2	4
	Total	206	3.41	.676	.047	3.31	3.50	1	5
Climate, weather, etc.	>5 times/yr	52	3.42	.696	.096	3.23	3.62	1	5
	3 - 4 times/yr	27	3.52	.849	.163	3.18	3.85	1	5
	Once or twice	86	3.41	.658	.071	3.27	3.55	2	5
	<Once	41	3.29	.642	.100	3.09	3.50	2	4
	Total	206	3.40	.690	.048	3.31	3.50	1	5
Guest speakers or keynote persons	>5 times/yr	52	4.23	.645	.089	4.05	4.41	3	5
	3 - 4 times/yr	27	4.33	.555	.107	4.11	4.55	3	5
	Once or twice	86	4.35	.609	.066	4.22	4.48	3	5
	<Once	41	4.29	.559	.087	4.12	4.47	3	5
	Total	206	4.31	.600	.042	4.22	4.39	3	5
Education & networking	>5 times/yr	52	4.31	.466	.065	4.18	4.44	4	5
	3 - 4 times/yr	27	4.37	.492	.095	4.18	4.57	4	5
	Once or twice	86	4.37	.486	.052	4.27	4.48	4	5
	<Once	41	4.32	.471	.074	4.17	4.47	4	5
	Total	206	4.34	.476	.033	4.28	4.41	4	5
IC programmes or themes	>5 times/yr	52	4.54	.576	.080	4.38	4.70	3	5
	3 - 4 times/yr	27	4.52	.509	.098	4.32	4.72	4	5
	Once or twice	86	4.45	.501	.054	4.35	4.56	4	5
	<Once	41	4.39	.542	.085	4.22	4.56	3	5
	Total	206	4.47	.529	.037	4.40	4.54	3	5

**Appendix 16: Delegates` Frequency of Attendance at ICs in Thailand and Length of Stay**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Delegates</b>	
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid (%)</b>
<b># TH IC attendance</b>		
>10 times	11	3.5
5 - 9 times	24	7.7
3 - 4 times	31	10
Twice	42	13.5
Once	202	65.2
Missing (not willing to answer)	1	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Length of stay</b>		
>a week	72	23.5
2 days - 1 week	230	74.9
1 day	3	1.0
>a month	2	.7
Missing (not willing to answer)	4	1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### Appendix 17: Delegates` satisfaction levels with the ICs held in Thailand

No	Factors	Satisfaction Levels					Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Minimum	Maximum
		1	2	3	4	5					
1.	The image of the destination	-	-	12 (3.9)	<b>184</b> <b>(59.7)</b>	112 (36.0)	<b>4.32</b>	.546	.298	3	5
2.	Safety and security	1 (0.3)	4 (1.3)	15 (4.9)	<b>181</b> <b>(58.6)</b>	108 (35.0)	<b>4.27</b>	.640	.410	1	5
3.	Political situation	2 (0.7)	9 (3.0)	62 (20.3)	<b>179</b> <b>(58.7)</b>	53 (17.4)	<b>3.89</b>	.738	.544	1	5
4.	Crime rates	4 (1.3)	1 (0.3)	77 (25.4)	<b>156</b> <b>(51.5)</b>	65 (21.5)	<b>3.91</b>	.772	.595	1	5
5.	Accessibility and travelling distance	3 (1.0)	14 (4.5)	67 (21.7)	<b>165</b> <b>(53.4)</b>	60 (19.4)	<b>3.86</b>	.813	.661	1	5
6.	Official documents	1 (0.3)	8 (2.6)	25 (8.1)	<b>170</b> <b>(55.0)</b>	105 (34.0)	<b>4.20</b>	.718	.516	1	5
7.	Weather & climate	-	12 (3.9)	40 (13.0)	<b>175</b> <b>(56.8)</b>	81 (26.3)	<b>4.06</b>	.740	.547	2	5
8.	Cultures & local people	-	-	20 (6.5)	140 (45.8)	<b>146</b> <b>(46.9)</b>	<b>4.41</b>	.612	.374	3	5

9.	Attractions, sightseeing, etc.	-	5	31	<b>139</b>	134	<b>4.30</b>	.714	.510	2	5
			(1.6)	(10.0)	<b>(45.0)</b>	(43.4)					
10	Entertainment, nightlife, etc.	-	11	79	<b>139</b>	76	<b>3.92</b>	.805	.648	2	5
			(3.6)	(25.9)	<b>(45.6)</b>	(24.9)					
11	Intervening opportunities	1	8	96	<b>138</b>	63	<b>3.83</b>	.792	.627	1	5
		(0.3)	(2.6)	(31.4)	<b>(45.1)</b>	(20.6)					
12	Conference programmes/theme	1	9	39	<b>146</b>	113	<b>4.17</b>	.782	.612	1	5
		(0.3)	(2.9)	(12.7)	<b>(47.4)</b>	(36.7)					
13	Education & networking	-	3	44	<b>156</b>	104	<b>4.18</b>	.701	.492	2	5
			(1.0)	(14.3)	<b>(50.8)</b>	(33.9)					
14	Speakers	1	9	39	<b>146</b>	113	<b>4.17</b>	.782	.612	1	5
		(0.3)	(2.9)	(12.7)	<b>(47.4)</b>	(36.7)					
15	Overall affordability	-	4	28	<b>157</b>	118	<b>4.27</b>	.677	.458	2	5
			(1.3)	(9.1)	<b>(51.1)</b>	(38.4)					
16	Accessibility of conference venue	1	9	23	<b>173</b>	97	<b>4.17</b>	.718	.516	1	5
		(0.3)	(3.0)	(7.6)	<b>(57.1)</b>	(32.0)					
17	Quality and up-to-date of equipment and facilities in the conference venue	-	1	25	<b>169</b>	111	<b>4.27</b>	.619	.383	2	5
			(0.3)	(8.2)	<b>(55.2)</b>	(36.3)					

18	Cleanliness and comfort of conference venue	-	2 (0.7)	14 (4.6)	<b>152</b> <b>(49.5)</b>	139 (45.3)	<b>4.39</b>	.609	.370	2	5
19	Cleanliness & comfort of the cafeteria and restaurants at the venue	1 (0.3)	5 (1.6)	20 (6.5)	<b>146</b> <b>(47.1)</b>	138 (44.5)	<b>4.34</b>	.700	.490	1	5
20	Sufficiency of public space, recreational amenities of the conference venue	-	5 (1.6)	39 (12.7)	<b>165</b> <b>(53.6)</b>	99 (32.1)	<b>4.16</b>	.699	.488	2	5
21	Quality of service provided in conference	-	6 (1.9)	16 (5.2)	<b>163</b> <b>(52.9)</b>	123 (39.9)	<b>4.31</b>	.660	.435	2	5
22	Competence and responsiveness of conference staff	-	5 (1.6)	17 (5.5)	<b>159</b> <b>(51.8)</b>	126 (41.0)	<b>4.32</b>	.654	.428	2	5
23	Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately of conference staff	-	6 (1.9)	29 (9.4)	<b>174</b> <b>(56.3)</b>	100 (32.4)	<b>4.19</b>	.678	.460	2	5
24	Care & individualized attention provided to delegates by the conference staff	-	2 (0.6)	38 (12.3)	<b>159</b> <b>(51.6)</b>	109 (35.4)	<b>4.22</b>	.676	.457	2	5
25	Delegates feel safe when conference staff	-	7 (2.3)	53 (17.3)	<b>162</b> <b>(52.8)</b>	85 (27.7)	<b>4.06</b>	.734	.539	2	5

	conducting the services/duty										
26	Conference room size	-	4 (1.3)	27 (8.7)	<b>157</b> <b>(50.8)</b>	121 (39.2)	<b>4.28</b>	.674	.455	2	5
27	Location of conference breakout room	-	1 (0.3)	33 (10.6)	<b>173</b> <b>(55.8)</b>	103 (33.2)	<b>4.22</b>	.636	.405	2	5
28	Quality of audio-visual equipment of the conference	2 (0.6)	13 (4.2)	31 (10.0)	<b>166</b> <b>(53.7)</b>	97 (31.4)	<b>4.11</b>	.794	.631	1	5
29	Comfortable seat	3 (1.0)	5 (1.6)	42 (13.6)	<b>181</b> <b>(58.6)</b>	78 (25.2)	<b>4.06</b>	.734	.539	1	5
30	Quality and sufficiency of food and beverage	2 (0.6)	9 (2.9)	25 (8.1)	127 (41.1)	<b>146</b> <b>(47.2)</b>	<b>4.31</b>	.795	.632	1	5
31	Food taste	1 (0.3)	8 (2.6)	24 (7.7)	119 (38.4)	<b>158</b> <b>(51.0)</b>	<b>4.37</b>	.764	.584	1	5
32	F&B variety	1 (0.3)	9 (2.9)	27 (8.7)	116 (37.5)	<b>156</b> <b>(50.5)</b>	<b>4.35</b>	.786	.618	1	5

**Note:** 1 = very unsatisfied; 2 = unsatisfied; 3 = neutral;

4 = satisfied; 5 = very satisfied

*Frequency and percentage in italic bold represents the majority of the rating*

### Appendix 18: One-Way ANOVA (ANOVA): Delegates' types of work

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Destination image	Between Groups	.210	4	.053	.177	.950
	Within Groups	89.562	302	.297		
	Total	89.772	306			
Safety	Between Groups	2.654	4	.664	1.628	.167
	Within Groups	123.515	303	.408		
	Total	126.169	307			
Political situation	Between Groups	5.258	4	1.314	2.454	.046
	Within Groups	160.160	299	.536		
	Total	165.418	303			
Crime rates	Between Groups	6.257	4	1.564	2.678	.032
	Within Groups	173.505	297	.584		
	Total	179.762	301			
Trevelling distance	Between Groups	8.931	4	2.233	3.536	.008
	Within Groups	191.342	303	.631		
	Total	200.273	307			
Official documents	Between Groups	3.117	4	.779	1.515	.198
	Within Groups	155.802	303	.514		
	Total	158.919	307			
Weather, climate	Between Groups	5.659	4	1.415	2.701	.031
	Within Groups	158.165	302	.524		
	Total	163.824	306			
Cultures&local people	Between Groups	.494	4	.123	.326	.860
	Within Groups	113.454	300	.378		
	Total	113.948	304			
Attractions, sightseeing	Between Groups	.343	4	.086	.168	.955
	Within Groups	154.969	303	.511		
	Total	155.312	307			
Entertainment, nightlife	Between Groups	.431	4	.108	.167	.955
	Within Groups	192.829	299	.645		
	Total	193.260	303			
Other opportunities	Between Groups	1.608	4	.402	.648	.629
	Within Groups	186.195	300	.621		
	Total	187.803	304			
Edu.&networking	Between Groups	3.687	4	.922	1.953	.102
	Within Groups	142.065	301	.472		
	Total	145.752	305			
Speakers	Between Groups	.467	4	.117	.193	.942
	Within Groups	182.679	302	.605		
	Total	183.147	306			
Overall affordability	Between Groups	.761	4	.190	.427	.789
	Within Groups	134.180	301	.446		



	Total	134.941	305			
Accesibility of venue	Between Groups	.874	4	.219	.419	.795
	Within Groups	154.825	297	.521		
	Total	155.699	301			
Facilities of venue	Between Groups	.394	4	.099	.257	.905
	Within Groups	114.917	300	.383		
	Total	115.311	304			
Cleanli.&comfort of venue	Between Groups	1.072	4	.268	.719	.579
	Within Groups	112.082	301	.372		
	Total	113.154	305			
Clean&comf.restau.faci.venue	Between Groups	3.693	4	.923	1.901	.110
	Within Groups	147.627	304	.486		
	Total	151.320	308			
Public.space&recre.amen.venue	Between Groups	.776	4	.194	.396	.811
	Within Groups	147.752	302	.489		
	Total	148.528	306			
Serv.qual.C/C	Between Groups	1.309	4	.327	.756	.555
	Within Groups	130.672	302	.433		
	Total	131.980	306			
Compe.responsi.staff	Between Groups	1.645	4	.411	.970	.424
	Within Groups	127.675	301	.424		
	Total	129.320	305			
Reliabi.perform.serv.	Between Groups	1.216	4	.304	.679	.607
	Within Groups	135.703	303	.448		
	Total	136.919	307			
Empa.indivi.attn.cust.	Between Groups	1.083	4	.271	.593	.668
	Within Groups	137.855	302	.456		
	Total	138.938	306			
Secur.staff	Between Groups	.668	4	.167	.308	.872
	Within Groups	163.152	301	.542		
	Total	163.820	305			
Conf.room size	Between Groups	.291	4	.073	.158	.959
	Within Groups	139.251	303	.460		
	Total	139.542	307			
Locat..conf. breakout room	Between Groups	1.394	4	.349	.857	.490
	Within Groups	123.641	304	.407		
	Total	125.036	308			
Quali.audio-visual equip.	Between Groups	3.677	4	.919	1.471	.211
	Within Groups	189.346	303	.625		
	Total	193.023	307			
Comfort.seat	Between Groups	4.194	4	1.049	1.963	.100
	Within Groups	161.868	303	.534		
	Total	166.062	307			
Quali.F&B	Between Groups	9.980	4	2.495	4.098	.003
	Within Groups	184.471	303	.609		
	Total	194.451	307			
Food taste	Between Groups	10.336	4	2.584	4.673	.001

	Within Groups	168.117	304	.553		
	Total	178.453	308			
F&B vareity	Between Groups	10.324	4	2.581	4.349	.002
	Within Groups	179.806	303	.593		
	Total	190.130	307			

**Appendix 19: The potential of Competitor Countries in Asia and Pacific**

	<b>Have you ever been to these countries to attend the similar international conventions to Thailand?</b>					
<b>Country list</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of No</b>	<b>% of Yes</b>	<b>Rank</b>
China + Hong Kong	89	222	311	71.4	28.6	1
Australia	77	234	311	75.2	24.8	2
Singapore	72	239	311	76.8	23.2	3
Malaysia	51	260	311	83.6	16.4	4
Japan	37	274	311	88.1	11.9	5
South Korea	37	274	311	88.1	11.9	6
New Zealand	31	280	311	90	10	7
Vietnam	29	282	311	90.7	9.3	8
Indonesia	28	283	311	91	9	9
Philippines	23	288	311	92.6	7.4	10
Taiwan	22	289	311	92.9	7.1	11
India	17	294	311	94.5	5.5	12
Other (Brunei, Cambodia, Laos & Sri Lanka)	7	304	311	97.7	2.3	13
Thailand (Visited more than twice)	Frequency 108	Percent 34.7				



## Appendix 21: The Key Benefits Thailand has to Offer the IC Industry (Descriptive Statistics: Delegates and organisers/planners)

Q: Which key benefits does Thailand have to offer the IC industry as a destination country?									
Aspects	Delegates				Organising committees and planners				
	Not answer	Answer 'Yes'	Percent of 'Yes'	Rank (#chosen)	Aspects	Not answer	Answer 'Yes'	Percent of 'Yes'	Rank (#chosen)
Quality of service provided	101	210	67.5	<b>1</b>	Destination image	57	149	72.3	<b>1</b>
Affordability and value for money	107	204	65.6	<b>2</b>	Attractions, sightseeing, etc.	71	135	65.5	<b>2</b>
Attractions, sightseeing, etc.	115	196	63	<b>3</b>	Cultures and local people	86	120	58.3	<b>3</b>
Cultures and local people	128	183	58.8	<b>4</b>	Affordability and value for money	91	115	55.8	<b>4</b>
Destination image	136	175	56.3	<b>5</b>	Quality and sufficiency of food and beverage provision	110	96	53.4	<b>5</b>
Safety	157	154	49.5	<b>6</b>	Standard hotel and accommodation	105	101	51	<b>6</b>
Quality of facilities and standard venue	167	144	46.3	<b>7</b>	Quality of service provided	111	95	46.1	<b>7</b>
Standard hotel and accommodation	171	140	45	<b>8</b>	Climate, weather and environment	115	91	44.2	<b>8</b>
Quality and sufficiency of food and	176	135	43.4	<b>9</b>	Other opportunities	136	70	34	<b>9</b>

beverage provision									
Official documents	183	128	41.2	<b>10</b>	Quality of facilities and standard conference venue	140	66	32	<b>10</b>
Climate, weather and environment	194	117	37.6	<b>11</b>	Safety	167	39	18.9	<b>11</b>
Other opportunities	208	103	33.1	<b>12</b>	Official documents	169	37	18	<b>12</b>
Education and networking	228	83	26.7	<b>13</b>	Speaker	183	23	11.2	<b>13</b>
IC programmes	234	77	24.8	<b>14</b>	Education and networking	185	21	10.2	<b>14</b>
Speaker	248	63	20.3	<b>15</b>	IC programmes	188	18	8.7	<b>15</b>
Political situation	249	62	19.9	<b>16</b>	Political situation	193	13	6.3	<b>16</b>

**Appendix 22: Interview Transcripts (IC Delegates' Interview)****Delegate 1: Dr. Brad A., age 55, from Hawaii, USA**

Me: *Please introduce yourself.*

Him: *I am Dr Brad.....from Hawaii. I am in charge of research.*

Me: *Seems you travel a lot in Asia, what countries had you been travelled to?*

Him: *On an off, but yes I have travelled quite a bit in Asia.*

Me: *What about Thailand, and what other countries?*

*Well we have worked in Vietnam and India, - indiscrete - and we have also been to Malaysia for conferences and China for conferences.*

Me: *Is it possible for Thailand to have international conference in this region?*

Him: *I would think yes, because Thailand has very friendly people and its not that difficult to get to, compared to the other Asia countries. It's very good.*

Me: *Do you concern about danger? -*

Him: *It will never be an issue in Thailand.*

Me: *Do you think Thailand can complete Hong Kong?*

Him: *I think it's possible. It's not China. Sometimes you go to a new place, but it's very good for the job.*

Me: *Do you think Thailand can complete Malaysia?*

Him: *I found them both very similar because the people in Malaysia are very friendly, the venue was good.*

Me: *How about prices?*

Him: *It may have been a little bit cheaper in Thailand. The one thing you are a little bit afraid of in Malaysia is the political situation. Sometimes it's a little bit less stable than others.*

Me: *Where had you been to in Malaysia?*

Me: *Where I worked with the conferences, Penang, there was some religious conflict because Penang is Muslim, Hindu and Christian. I think other parts of Malaysia are more of an issue, especially Buddhist and Marxist. But Penang was very good.*

Me: *As it as good at conference in Thailand?*

Him: *Oh Thailand, yes. The food was fantastic*

Me: *How about the conference in Singapore?*

Him: *Probably Singapore but I have never spent the night. I have worked in Singapore, but we fly there from Bangkok in the morning and fly back to Bangkok in the evening.*

Me: *The city is very clean, isn't it?*

Him: *I mean when I go to Singapore we have never gone into the city. From what I have seen it is very very clean. I have never seen any place in Asia that is that clean, and you hear it's not very strict. I don't know if I would like that as much.*

Me: *What are the advantages of Thailand?*

Him: *The main advantage the island has is the Thai people. The Thai people are great, the "Land of Smiles", I think its so true. The food for me I like it. But I think most people like Thai food. In Thailand there are so many Universities, so many educated people, there should be a good way to advertise that combination.*

Me: *Their people are more professional, aren't they, especially English?*

Him: *I think Thailand ??? of Asia like when you go to France, some people can speak English but they won't converse with you. Sometimes you see that in Thailand also. But you are in Thailand and I can understand that. I can speak very few words of Thai. Every day I take a taxi ???*

Me: *In term of strategies, what do you think the Government should do to promote Thailand industry?*



Him: Thailand has a big reputation of being a very private place to come. ????  
 Sometimes some conference organisers don't take it as serious because of that.  
 But I'm not sure actually. I guess I don't necessarily think it is a bad thing. I often  
 wonder because of that reputation, I think a lot of the reputation is not deserved.  
 But there is, you take Bangkok ????. You wonder how much they take a  
 conference in Bangkok seriously. Even my friends when I say I'm going to  
 Bangkok /????

**Dr. Brad A. (writing interview)**

Me: Firstly, thank you very much to take part in this research.

**Question 1:** Can you introduce yourself briefly including your job, your position and your company?

Him: Dr. Brad....., Director of Breeding and Genetics for Moana Technologies, a Tiger shrimp breeding company. The company produces selectively bred Tiger shrimp seed for farmers in India, Thailand, and Vietnam.

**Question 2:** Is this conference your first conference in Thailand? If not, can you tell me briefly about those previous conferences?

I had attended a conference in 2003 in downtown Bangkok. It was a general Asian aquaculture conference. Presenters were not to good but the business connections and trade show was very good.

**Question 3:** Do you think Thailand changed since your first conference in the context of conference venues, service quality and/or conference organizing?

In 2009 the conference was much better organized and the venue was also much better. In 2003 the venue was undergoing remodelling and venue hotel was also undergoing remodelling. It looked very poor, stayed about 11 stories up in a hotel and often the elevator was not working. There often was electrical outages so was afraid to take the elevator anyways. The remodelling and frequent power outages left a bad impression. The Thai service was very good on both occasions however.

**Question 4:** Can you tell me how you could join those conferences; how did you know them and why you made the decision to participate them.

The conferences were in my subject area and were advertised in my field. The first conference was Aquaculture in Asia and my company does aquaculture work in Asia. The second conference was Genetics in Aquaculture which is my specific field. This conference is held every three years and this is the 4<sup>th</sup> one I have attended (the past three were in Australia, Chile, and France).

**Question 5:** In your opinion, does the country destination matter your decision making to attend any conferences?

The most important factor is the subject of the conference and then can we afford it? The country destination would only matter if it was unsafe to travel (I would not go to a conference in Iraq or Afghanistan right now for example).

**Question 6:** Regarding to ISGA X 2009, your latest international conference in Bangkok, Thailand, as you knew at that time Thailand was facing the political crisis. There were some riots and chaos took place in particular areas in Bangkok and around the country. Did American ambassador warn you to not come to Thailand during that time? And did that problem affect to your decision making to attend ISGA X 2009?

The U.S. State Department had issued a travel advisory for Thailand. This was after the closing of the airports by protestors. This was cleared up before the ISGA conference so it did not affect my decision to travel to the conference. There were also protests associated with the ASEAN meeting but this had no effect on my decision to attend.

**Question 7:** Regarding to ISGA X 2009, were you satisfied with the overall organising? Which particular aspects or issues that you were satisfied with?

The organizing was excellent and it was an excellent conference. I liked the speakers, the food, the organizing staff and their student helpers, the conference tours and activities, the chance to meet and talk with people, and the personal interest in how you are doing.

Me: How about the conference venue? (How clean it is? Seats are comfortable? Is venue big enough? Did you hear very well? And so forth.

Him: The conference venue was good. It was a little strange it was above the mall and separate from the hotel (and had to walk through a garage to get to

the meeting) but it was clean, comfortable, and large enough. The food and meeting area for posters and networking was very good.

Me: How about staff? (Services were good? Can they communicate with you?)

Him: The conference staffs were primarily student helpers and they were excellent. There were very few problems with communication. They were well organized and hard working.

Me: Were organising committees helpful? Did they facilitate you? If you had any problems, could they help to sort those things out?

Him: The conference organizers were very helpful in everything and helped me with a few personal issues so I could attend the conference. They also took a personal interest in me at the conference which was very nice.

**Question 8:** How about the expense?

Me: Do you think the conference in Thailand can be affordable?

Him: Paid for by my company so primarily just had to make sure they agreed I go. Thailand has very reasonable costs, I attended a conference in Korea in 2008 that was very expensive (hotel, food) and I may not attend a conference in Korea again because of the cost. Thailand is very affordable.

**Question 9:** You might hear about the protesters in Bangkok and somewhere around Thailand during that time, did that situation affect to your decision to participate the conference?

Me: Did your ambassador warn you to go to Thailand at that time?

Him: The U.S. State Department had issued a travel advisory for Thailand around December 2008. I think the travel advisory was still in affect by the time of the conference (June 2009) since there was further protests and some political instability. Since the airports were open, the protests or the travel advisory had no effect on my decision to travel to Thailand.

**Question 10:** Can you suggest that what the present Thai government should support the conference industry?

Him: They already do a great job in ease of entering the country (visa, flights, immigration, airport is great). It would be nice to have a hotel with conference venue all in the same building (maybe Thailand has been the two conferences I attended this was not the case). Cannot think of anything else at this time.

**Question 11:** Let's talk about Thailand competitors in the same region, what other countries in Asia and Pacific that you had participated the similar conferences?

Him: Australia (3 times), South Korea, China (2 times) and Malaysia.

**Question 12:** You said...(the past three were in Australia, Chile, and France). (How about Hong Kong, have you ever been there for conference?

Him: I have never been to a conference in Hong Kong. The past 3 Aquaculture Genetics conferences were held in the 3 countries you listed but I have also attended aquaculture conferences and genetics conferences.

Me: If yes, (my question) what are the advantages of Hong Kong?

**Question 13:** In your opinion, what are the strength and weakness of Thailand?

Him: Strengths- the people very friendly and service is great. The food is great. The culture and the opportunities to sightsee. The costs are very reasonable. Easy to enter the country.

Weakness- the current political instability. The two conferences I attended did not have a hotel with everything together (rooms, conference venue). It would be nice to have it all together without crossing streets, parking lots, etc...

**Question 14:** The last question, do you think Thailand has the potential to become the market hub in Asia and Asia Pacific in term of international conferences?

Him: I have not attended conferences in Hong Kong or Singapore so I cannot compare with them. For the places I have attended I think the answer is yes. Thailand has great people, food, reasonable costs, and a great network of Universities and Scientists to work with and interact.

However, I was thinking more on one question about what more government can do and I was wondering if Bangkok has a large, new, state of the art convention center (I guess it must). The two conferences I attended in BKK were very small (a few hundred people) while other conferences I have attended were thousands of people. To be a hub you would need to attract these large conferences and all of those conferences were held in large convention centers (supported by the government). Good examples are Honolulu, Sydney, and Busan, Korea.

These convention centers were fairly new and state of the art with many small and large meeting rooms that could be used at the same time and had very large hall for trade shows. The IMPACT center comes to mind but it seems to be more for sports matches and large trade shows. I guess BKK must have but I don't know its location (convenient to hotels?) and there should also be very nice convention centers in other locations (Phuket, Pattaya, Chiang-Mai).

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**Delegate 2: Dr. Peter G., age 59, from England but works in Indonesia**

My name is Peter G. I am presently working in Rome for the EGIR Science Council Secretariat, which is another science group for 15 agricultural centres around the world, one of which confirms with fisheries and agriculture, and that is my particular interest. I am here as scientific administrator to keep up with the field and to make sure I understand the issues in the field. I have to deal with a whole range of agricultural research. For the ministry its research management, plan review, proposal review for agricultural research in general. Buy because of my background I have an interest in fisheries and agriculture, so I try to keep up to date by trying to go to a meeting like this every so often.

**Question 1: What do you think about conferences in Thailand or Bangkok?**

Yes, it's suitable for the subject because agriculture is very important in Asia, Asia in general, and Nakka is the capital of AIT, all of the agencies are here so it makes it a sensible place to hold this sort of meeting, and an easy place to get to for many people. I used to live in South East Asia; I used to live in the Philippines and Malaysia, 4 years in the Philippines and 5 years in Malaysia. So I have travelled in

this region. It seems to me that Bangkok for this sort of meeting is one of the sensible places to hold a meeting because of the connection in this field.

**Question 2: Can you tell me about the service quality?**

*I think this was a nice meeting. I think the meeting hall acoustics could be better. It seems a large somewhat cavernous place but having the dining facilities right next door allows you to feed 250 people and get them back into the session quickly, that sort of thing. It's very easy to fly here, the hotel is very nice.*

**Question 3: What about the price?**

*I think if you are hold international conferences international people are used to international prices. What they want is efficiency from a meeting and ability to have great out-meetings, to find their friends, to have poster sessions where they can locate and view the posters more than once rather than have them whisked away and you never see them again. The space is correct; the facilities are good and its close by.*

**Question 4: What are the advantages of Thailand?**

*The particular course was very nice. You were nicely treated; you were looked after and taken care of. We had a session yesterday, which was a bit clumsy; we had to move 8 busses of people around. It's a combination of being able to see some local culture, I think that's important. Just to make you feel you are actually somewhere else, because the number of people at international conferences they fly in and they fly straight out and they never feel that they were anywhere different. So I think that one of the important things is to tag your conference with a sense of place, and then there is the appreciation of yes we had a good conference and yes we were in Thailand. Because sometimes you can have a good conference but you can't remember where it was. So I think this idea of going on a trip tonight to have a cultural show, they tried very hard with the dinner, I don't think the entertainments really worked but they were a nice idea. I think that all helps. It helps to identify the place you go to rather than just the scientific quality of the meeting.*

**Question 5: What do you think about this conference?**

*I think they are good ideas. I think yesterday - I don't think it worked terribly well to tell you the truth - but princess opened. Last year - it was a massive conference centre they have a very good conference centre there with hotels nearby but it doesn't quite have the character that this one does. But for instance they gave us 3 tickets to the aquarium or half price tickets to the aquarium. That was of interest to people who are interested in fisheries, so people went there and went into the town. That's the sort of examples of getting people involved over and above the scientific conference. It was quite good.*

**Question 6: What do you think about language skill of the staffs?**

*Language has been a bit of a problem. I am not a linguist, I don't speak Thai. Some people tried to report that we had lost a slipper (my wife left one behind) and I had to talk to 3 people so that one of them could understand.*

**Did you find it?**

*Not yet, I reported it. The person was very polite as usual and tried to listen but didn't understand. It's changing all the time in different countries which you go to. Anyway, it's one of the things that if you are holding a scientific meeting conference in English you have to be able to talk to the people who you are in conference with.*

**Question 7: Have you ever been to Malaysia conference? How do think about it?**

*The airport is a long way out but they have got this quick train there. Pretty similar. I didn't go to many state conferences; mine were mostly small government related conferences there. We held some ourselves in Penang. Penang is very attractive place and it's easy to entertain people because there is so much going on. Philippines is difficult because of the traffic. People in the Philippines are very similar, very hospitable, they make it very easy to hold meetings and people remember the warmth of the meeting. I think the facilities of this hotel are very nice.*

**How about to compare conference in Bangkok?**

*Yes, I think most people would probably prefer to come to Bangkok . . .*

**So do you think we have the possibility to become the hub of international convention in Asia?**

Yes I think it is a possibility it's quite an interactive place. You have currently a little bit of instability in the background. It also has a reputation for other things here in Thailand, and you have to be careful how you spell that. But I think it's well known, it's very easy to reach. Singapore of course is ... it's a convenient place for people to meet. Singapore is a business place so of course people would think of business, they would think of computers, technical things there probably first. Of course Bangkok doesn't have those things, or Thailand doesn't have those things, but it's a question of how you promote it. As I have said for this meeting fisheries and agriculture is very sensible to those things, and let's face it to have it in Singapore you fall off the plane and you are there. So I would have said Singapore would have been, depending on what international meeting you are trying to promote, is the poorer competitor rather than the 2 that I mentioned.

**How about Hong Kong?**

I don't live in the region anymore unfortunately. I get the impression that Hong Kong isn't thought of as a meeting place. People don't seem to stop in Hong Kong except to change planes. They don't go to Hong Kong just for a meeting. Not in the group I am in. People go to Hong Kong to change planes to go somewhere else. Surely ///

**How could we boost this industry?**

Been advertising, these people have got to know about it, and you have to decide which field you want to propose this for, then you can do it on family planning or you can do it on feel. There is a enormous range of things. People have to know that that's what you want to do. For instance in Rome our television has ??? Adverts >>> more than any other Asian nation. So "Malaysia truly Asia" is becoming a slogan, and whether people actually react to that ... maybe I know it because I know the pictures and I react to it, but it's more obviously advertised as "A place of culture" and a place of opportunity, so rising Thailand. So if you want to sell this commodity you've got to get in people's face and if you want the business end you have got to push this into the economists, the news, BBC, CNN, where the Malaysian population is. What do you want to



know, what do you want to be known for and then you have got to go and tell the groups you want to attract. This is what you have got to do.

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**Delegate 3: Dr. Peter W., age 56, from England**

**So how often do you go to Thailand?**

*I go about 3-4 times a year. This is the first time this year, its only January as yet. I normally go in the winter at some point and then I will probably go April/May and probably sometime in the summer.*

**What do you go to Thailand for?**

*My name is Peter....., I am head of the Marketing Strategy Subject Group at the Liverpool Business School. My background is that I have my first degree in Pharmacy, I then did a degree in MBA or an equivalent of MBA, and then I did a PhD looking at risk taking of my own Doctors. I then worked in the Pharmaceutical industry for a number of years and I have been in Education now for about 30+ years. I travel to Thailand very regularly as I said about 3 or 4 times a year where I teach at Mahasarakham University. That's basically it. I have joined a consultancy for one or two firms out there but that's it really. So I know a little bit of how Thailand works.*

**So according to your experience how do you participate in meeting of conference convention.**

*I begin to teach in Thailand now for the past 5 years. Before that I used to go to Thailand mainly either as recruitment for the University or on conferences. And I have being going there in that role for about 10-12 years. Mainly in Bangkok although I have travelled up to Yakyai I have travelled up to Chiang Mai, but mainly conferences would be traditionally in Bangkok.*

**Can you tell me about the conference venues?**

*I think you have to distinguish between conferences which are held in Hotels and conferences which are held in conference or convention facilities. I have been*

to the Queen Serakit Centre and I have also been once to an exhibition at the one near the Airport, the old Airport - Don Muang. There used to be a big conference centre out there didn't there? I have been to those 2 and I have been to a conference at Plaza Athenae Hotel which is opposite the American Embassy. I have also been to a conference at the Landmark.

**Is the facilities all right?**

I think if you were running a conference in a 5-star or an exhibition. I've been to one of the Sheraton along by See-Am Plaza. I think if you are running a conference in a 5-star hotel you don't have any problems. The 5-star hotels are very good, they provide all the facilities, the food is very good and the accommodation is very good. Conferences which are held in big rooms are different. Queen Serakit Centre on the whole is not bad, its looking slightly old I think. The one up by the airport is pretty awful. It was just a bit run down, the air condition was particularly bad and it looked shabby, it looked tatty, it looked old, it looked like it needed a good lick of paint. Queen Serakit is OK, it could be better. Again the air-con in the Queen Serakit is not very good.

**How was the service?**

Well, I can honestly say that service in Thailand is always very good, no that's not strictly true, it's always very willing. I think one of the big problems is the lack of English. I think Thai people want to serve but sometimes they just don't get it right because we are English, and this communication, there is not an unwillingness. I think they see the ferrang as somebody who should - you take as much money from. There are many people with street ... traders, the taxi drivers, many people who think the ferrang are there to take all you money away from you. Most people are extremely pleasant. Everyone is trying to earn a living. I think you will find many people actually avoid contact with Thais, they prefer to go to the International Hotels, they prefer to go to the International shops etc etc. But I think you can learn more by going to all the local things.

**As you specialise in the marketing strategies, what do you think clients should do to draw many people to Thailand for conference conventions.**

*I think Thailand does very well with conferencing. Thailand is relatively cheap compared to other countries, not as much as it used to be, what is it now 50 Baht to the £ 51.*

*OK 51. It used to be 60, now that was wonderful, but now it's not as cheap as it used to be, but it is still cheap. OK. The Thai market for conferences is, I would have thought, very good. People actually like going to Thailand. They like the service, they like the friendliness. It's a land of smiles, I've been told there are at least 6-7 million smiles in Thailand. They like going to Thailand. I think you would probably cant get many more conferences to go there because there is a limit. With the conference market, people who go to conferences, like to go somewhere different every year. So they will go to Thailand every 5, 6 or 8 years, whatever it is. So you probably cant get that many more because Thailand is used by ... its like dresses, its like fashion. You cant have many more than 5% of the fashion market because when you see Thailand again you go ah yes, when you see somebody who has got the same, so you are never going to get a huge percentage. It's a very attractive ??? but then equally places like New York is attractive, London is attractive, very expensive. The attraction of Thailand is that its so cheap or relatively cheap.*

***Compared to the neighbours in the ranking of the convention conference destination, at the moment Thailand is behind Hong Kong and Singapore, why? How can we come up a bit to Hong Kong and Singapore?***

*Hong Kong and Singapore are more expensive but they are slightly more sophisticated. They also have the river which is quite attractive to some people. Also they are probably easier to get too logistically. Virtually every major airline flies to Hong Kong and Singapore. Not everybody flies to Bangkok, I know Thai International does, and most of the major airlines, but it's not so easy to get to. Their infrastructure, their transport systems are very very good, and in both cases the airport is very close to the city. In the case of Suvarnabhumi you are about an hour into town. Is there a new conference centre at Suvarnabhumi?*

*I am not sure.*

*There is one at Dom Muang. There is one very close to Dom Muang. One of the recommendations is that you actually build a major conference centre at Suvarnabhumi. Why is it losing out. Well I think it is losing out because everybody*

has "done" Thailand. I don't think its any reflection on Thailand I think its just the fact that they have done it.

**Do you think the blockage of the airports is the effect of the conference coming?**

What do you think, come on, obviously it will? I mean if I am going to a conference and I see the airport blocked, what am I going say - whooooo.

**It will affect somebody to make a decision to come to Thailand conference.**

Yes, I mean it will take a year, 2 years, to wear off, for people to forget that situation. But people who know Thailand know that an airport blockage is no big deal. I was there in the last Coup and what happened was the bars closed an hour earlier, end of story. There is divorce between politics and business in Thailand and this is what people outside don't understand. You can have political upheaval but business goes on as normal. So you don't need to worry about it, but people don't see that. If they understand the Thai system and they know how Thai politics works then that doesn't worry them, but the majority of people don't. The majority of people worry about these things.

**So it will take a few years to recover, isn't it?**

I think it will take a couple of years. The best thing that could happen is that the Baht go back to 60 to 70 to the £. Thailand is attractive because its cheap, if its not cheap it becomes very less attractive, and this is something they have got to watch.

**Do you think that many hours on a plain is affecting somebody's decision to come to Thailand?**

I mean Thailand is a long way, from here it is 14 hours. Do I think its too far. Well for the people going to conferences or conventions, you have got to understand, they are not paying. So they just look at the benefits of the place, they don't really consider the cost of the flight; they don't really consider the time. Generally "they are on holiday", and they are off with their wives or partners or whatever and so they are going for a good time. So I don't think its too much of an issue. If you were saying that your competition is Singapore and Hong Kong well that's the same distance, in fact Hong Kong is more. So, no, I don't think it is too big an issue.

**So will you go back to Europe market? Which countries would be attractive to conferences?**

Do you mean which countries in Europe are attractive to conferences?

Yes.

Well let me put it this way. People like to go to conferences in big cities because there are other things people can do if they are not at a conference. So if you are trying to sell me a conference in somewhere like Phuket or Co Samui forget it. People would like to go to Bangkok.

**Capital cities?**

Capital cities like Bangkok.

So if you would like to extrapolate that to Europe people would like to go to London, Paris, Venice is attractive, they like New York. Frankfurt probably, I don't know. Hanover is quite attractive, Madrid is attractive, you know capital cities, Rome, Italy is attractive generally. Because if you are coming from outside of Europe these places are expensive. That's the problem, it's the strength of the Euro, which is the killer. So you are paying €150, £150 per night to stay in a second rate Hotel, whereas in Thailand for €150 you can buy Thailand. No more questions?

**Another of my questions is what factors influence decision making to a conference convention?**

What makes them decide, well? I think you have to take into account costs, costs is very important. I think you have to take into account the history of the conference, where has been in the past because you will always want to have it somewhere different. The logistics, if all your conference attendees are based in America, then you will probably have your conference in America. But if your entire attendees are in Europe they you will have it in Europe, they are the kind of criteria.

**How about what you speak about?**

Well it depends on what your conference is about doesn't it. I can't answer that one can I. If its about plastic surgery you don't want someone coming and

talking about economics do you. The key is to have a speaker which reflects the conference doesn't it. It depends.

No more. Thank you very much.

There are many other people who have been to Thailand on a regular basis so if you want to talk to any of them I am sure they will give you 10 minutes ¼ of an hour or something.

Thank you very much.

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**Delegate 4: Dr. Steve B., age 54, from England**

**Me: Firstly, I would like to say thank to you for your kindness and your cooperation to take part in this research project.**

Him: It's okay.

**Me: And all information you gave me today, we talk today won't pass to any third party.**

Him: You don't put in the Internet.

Me: [laugh] No. Firstly, before we go to interview, I would like to inform you about the research objectives and research title. This research evaluation about the potential of Thailand's MICE Industry to be positioned as a hub of international conventions. Interview themes will seek to evaluate the images, perceptions and experiences of consumers of Thailand MICE Industry, particular at their conferences/conventions and also to examine those strategies employed by Thailand's competitors in Asia and Asia Pacific countries in order to position Thailand as the hub of international conventions in Asia and the Asia Pacific region. Before we start interview, do you have anything to say?

Yeah, that's fine.

**So the first question, can give me your personal information, such as country of origin, or what sort of work is pursued as well as position in organization?**

I am Steve B., senior lecturer in tourism at Liverpool John Moores, and country of origin

**Have you ever attended meetings/conferences in Asia and Asia Pacific countries?**

Yes, I have been to Vietnam. Ah, yes. Four places.

**How about Malaysia?**

I've never been to Malaysia, not for business. I think I've been to Singapore, but not on meetings.

**What principal methods made you make decision to Vietnam?**

I've been representing the organization, representing the university

**Oh!**

So I've been to Thailand four times now. Vietnam once to represent university at education exhibition

**Ah, education exhibition**

Yeah education exhibition.

**So let's to start to the neighbor country first, Vietnam. Yeah. Can you tell me about hospitality, the infrastructure, the hotel, hotel staff and**

I've been to Vietnam once, and it's very interesting in terms of culture differences to the west.

**Ah, I see.**

It's very busy, very busy, busy, busy, very, very busy, Hanoi. Hotels? Were a good standard. Not fantastic, but it's good standard.

**How many stars?**

That's good question actually. I don't know, I think it's four. The big hotel, that is good hotel, good conference and meetings. Errm good conferences, good meetings. Amm good conferences and meetings

**How about staff?**

Staff? Yeah, general. General very good. Yeah, general very good, yeah in Vietnam.

**Most can communicate English?**

English good standard of English Anything else the question in terms of Vietnam? Good service.

**How about food, catering? Can you enjoy?**

I intended a little bit more western food, because it's too spicy for me. I'm not very good at in too spicy.

**So go to Thailand, are you there four times?**

Yes, I've been to Bangkok few times, and Phuket.

**So in Bangkok, can you remember the hotel?**

Yeah, do you need a hotel name or four stars hotel?. I'd stayed two different four star hotels in Bangkok. Those, one American chain hotel, one American compare company. Why I think it's not American company

**However, the standard services in both hotels were excellent. Excellent**

Yeah, excellent, very very good indeed.

**How about staff, services and foods?**

Staff? Service reception's excellent. Food was excellent, very good choice

**Can you try Thai foods or..?**

I could do, but also I intended to eat, maybe sort of rice [I see] and I had rice that something ahh not too spicy [yah] plenty choice, good choice, yah excellent , staff's good, reception's very good, very helpful, hotel's really good, and in both hotels stayed in Bangkok , rooms really good, and the... [about meeting rooms?] right, meeting room is in both hotels, I would say, very good, very good, very well organized, and.....

**Sufficient hotel facilities, meeting facilities?**



Yes, yes, erm, I was, all exhibitions, all meetings in both hotels , the only thing in that hotel , another time in second hotel, we have one exhibition meeting and there's another exhibition meeting as on well

**Ah, I see. So two, there are two**

You meant split, you know, split in the group, in the small...Yes, yes, they are both very well organized, very well organized and...

**The other question, ah, organizer the meeting or hotel?**

The meeting was organized by British Council [I see], British Council organized the meetings, exhibitions, and we are universities go there to exhibit

[walked to the wall and pointed to the picture taken at the exhibition]

Ah, I see.

So these are exhibitions, yeh, [I see], John Moores University [yeah] and that's me these are all John Moores students [I see] yeah, and that's exhibition [I see] you see

And, errmm...ah and how long did you stay per.... [Each trip?] yeah in each trip?

Three or four days [I see, so average], yeh

And do you think what ah, err, factors important to make a decision, I meant general, you know, for every person to make a decision to, important factors to make a decision to attend the meetings.....

**To attend meeting all organizes?**

Ah, yeah. organizes, maybe I see, I I think you need, you need two things, I think you need an interest

**Delegate 5: Professor Anthony W., age 68 from England**

Professor Anthony W. and I am a professor in mycology here. I have actually worked for John Moore's University for 30 years, and I have been very happy hear too. It was my 3<sup>rd</sup> job after I had finished my PhD. My 1<sup>st</sup> job was with NATO as a

post doctorate fellow, partly in this country and partly in Calgary in Canada, and then I spent 6 years in the University of Sunderland, to take part in microbiology, that was in 1978 when I actually came, in January, and it was then Liverpool Polytechnic, which then later of course became Liverpool John Moore's University.

**Ah yes. What do you specialize in?**

I don't work with mushrooms and toadstools. We work with small fungi we call them micro fungi, and we isolate them from wood and leaves and we have a big project now in Chulalongkorn in particular for I think about 12 years, maybe longer, and I have also worked in Malaysia and in China.

**Mushrooms?**

If you know what they are, yes. You don't eat the ones I work with, they are not edible. But they are really delicious, mushrooms. There is one that grows on the termite mound, called the termite mushroom, but I don't think you can get it in ??? its in ??? where you find it.

Yes, it grows on the termite nest, so when the termite leaves the nest and builds a new one the mushrooms then develop.

You know, you get them in November, that is the season.

**You have a lot of .....no doubt you get involved a lot in meeting and conferencing in Thailand?**

Yes, I have been very lucky there with my career, because a long time ago I worked with the Americans and then from then on I did a little bit with the Australians, and in 1989 I went with my family to Australia and we went to Singapore first and spent 2 nights in Singapore for a holiday really. I wanted to go the botanic gardens in Singapore which is very famous, and then I went on to Australia and I did a series of lectures in different Universities and also worked with the research division of the Australian Government CSIRO, and a good friend of mine was the head of forestry there, so we worked together. And finished off by going to Hong Kong and I gave a lecture in the Chinese University in Hong Kong, and then flew to Bangkok. The day we flew out of Hong Kong was the day of the Tiananmen Square massacre, the shooting of all the students in

China in 1989. We stayed in the hotel, the Indra Regent Hotel in Bangkok, and then it was one of the biggest buildings but now it is very small because all the buildings around it are much bigger. I have seen great big changes in Bangkok. At that time I was with the British Mycological Society and I did the general secretarying of the British Mycological Society. Then through that I got to know mycologists from all over the world and got lots of invitations and lots of things and then in 1994 I was president of the Society. That was the year we had a big mycological congress in Vancouver Canada, there were perhaps 1700-1800 people there.

**Can you confirm ??? Guest speaker**

I've been both. I have been a keynote speaker at several major conferences or congresses, and I have been involved on the organisation committee for several including 2 in Thailand. We had a bit meeting here in the year 2000. The British Mycological Society held a meeting here at the University on the topic of Mycology. People from all over the world came to that. Some very famous people came. Also 3 of my former science students came to that meeting. That was really nice.

**Have you ever been an organising committee? How many times??**

Nowhere near as much now. Because I have I suppose been involved in the organisation of perhaps 7, 8, maybe 9 meetings, one or 2 quite big ones. Though we had a big one here, I was also on the organising panel or committee for one in Hua Hin in Thailand organised by Biotech, and I was on the organising committee for that. I have been on the organising committees for several workshops in Thailand funded by the British Council, and also funded by the Universities in Thailand, for example Chulalongkorn and Suranaree, University of Technology. I have attended quite a lot of meetings, let me see, mainly in Britain of course, but I have been to several in Thailand, Malaysia, Japan, China, Canada, America, Norway, Denmark, Portugal, Switzerland, oh Germany as well.

**Australia?**

No, in Australia I didn't actually go to any meetings I did a series of lectures at different Universities. Oh India as well.

**What country are your interests in Europe?**

Oslo, Norway. That was very good as well, which is unusual because it can be quite cold, but it was very hot. The meeting was held at the University and we stayed in a hotel nearby, which was easy to get to. The venue was very good. The biggest problem was that it was very expensive, Norway is a very expensive country. But there were several clients and visitors there, including friends of mine from Thailand, and I also took one of my science students there. In fact I took 3 science students, two were working here then and one had come over from Thailand where she was in the Golden Jubilee. So yes, that was very good. The meetings in Portugal have been very nice as well, nicely organised, but only for 1 day in Portugal. In fact most of the meetings I have been to have been very good, Some small meetings but the one in Oslo was a very good one, there must have been 1,500 people there.

**If you were organising a meeting what do you think are the important factors?**

Well, most of the meetings I have been to in Thailand have been held in Hotels, and the Hotels rooms are not all that good sometimes for a big meeting. You are much better usually with a lecture theatre, a proper University lecture theatre. I think its much better. Its easier to give your presentations, its easier for the audience to see everything clearly. When it's a big banqueting room full of chairs and a big screen at the front, sometimes its not that good. The acoustics, sometimes its difficult to get them to hear, and sometimes you cant see the screen particularly well. When we had the meeting in Vancouver I gave a lecture there in one of the lecture rooms, or big auditorium, which would take perhaps 800 people, and that was easy, well it was a bit scary actually.

I have been to conferences and meetings in Thailand, big conferences in Bangkok, Hua Hin, Phuket. I have been to smaller workshops and conferences in Chiang Mai, Bangkok also, Korek?.

**How about the venue over there?**

Yes, the venues have always been very nice. I went to an educational recruitment fair in the Queen Sirikit convention centre which is an absolutely magnificent building, and I also went to an exhibition on orchids there to celebrate the Kings birthday 2 years ago, which was absolutely wonderful as well. I have been to the British Council Education Fair held in Bangkok, Khon Kaen and Chiang Mai and I have been a speaker at 1 or 2 of them.

**What do you think about Bangkok?**

Certainly no problem at all in Bangkok, and I don't really think I have had any problems in any of the meetings I have been to, certainly not in Phuket or Hua Hin. They have all been very good, being able to look after international visitors. You stick to the bit hotels of course.

**Do you have any comment about it?**

Oh yes. Yes, I mean, there are 2 comments I would make about them. The first one is of course the traffic in Bangkok, that can be unpredictable. It's a lot better if you can use the sky train of course, or the subway, and that makes it much easier. With the traffic, sometimes it's no problem, other days you don't know. So if I have a meeting in Chulalongkorn for example I stay in Sukhumvit so I can get the sky train, and then actually walk to the University from there. But for example if I have to go to Kasetsart University or Ramkhamhaeng, sometimes the traffic you know, you can be sure, you have to leave early to make sure you are there in time.

Especially if you are a speaker, you don't want the extra worry of "am I going to get there in time?". I don't think it's a big a problem as it was now because the sky train has been extended and it works very well, and also there is the ring road.

**What period of time a year you go to Thailand?**

I wouldn't do it in April though.

Well anybody who is going to an International meeting, well it's much easier for me to go to Thailand than for me to go to Australia for example. No, it's not a problem, not really. Some people don't like long flights, but they wouldn't want to fly to any country if they had a flight of 10 or 11 hours maybe, other people don't mind. My colleague, George, he doesn't like long flights, he does them but he doesn't like doing them.

Oh yes.

**Please tell me your experience in Thailand.**

Yes. Well, we have had an association with Thailand since 1964-1965 and that was in Chemistry with Chang Mai University. And then later we started the link ..

*I suppose it started in the early 1990's, 1991 maybe, when I went to Thailand, and I was sent to a meeting in Thailand, I was the keynote speaker there. It was at the Kasetsart University, and the facilities were brilliant, very nice lecture room. The only thing was that there was a power failure, the electricity failed. There had been an explosion in a substation somewhere, I think somebody with a bulldozer had knocked it down by mistake or crashed into it. All the lights went out, the air conditioning ... but we stayed in the guest house at the University - the guest room, and it was so easy, you could just walk across, very easy. That was my first meeting in Thailand. After that we started to develop links with different Universities mainly because we had funding from the British Council and from early dates from Biotech when they were developing their Biodiversity Programme. So that was good. And then, let me see, yes, the Vice Chancellor, Professor Michael Brown, came to Thailand to meet our team out there from the different Universities and also to attend the meeting of the British Council, and he became a member of the Thai UK Universities Committee at that time, and John Moore's was one of the 12 Universities in the group. After that the Vice Chancellor came out to Thailand almost every year, for 5 years now I think, and each year he realised more and more how strong our links were with Thailand, and also we knew that His Majesty had done a great deal for the environment, and he is a great scholar, he's an artist, a musician, engineer, and a good sportsman - boating, yachting, racing, and we just thought that it would be rather nice if we could honour him for his birthday, his 80<sup>th</sup>. So the exhibition, they had to go to the Embassy in London, Ireland, then I had to be interviewed in Bangkok. All the Universities had to make a statement about their connections between them and John Moore's University, and the different links we had. Then we eventually got a letter to say that he would be delight to accept. He got 2 awards, an Honorary Doctorate of Science and the Fellowship of John Moore's University. He asked that his son, the Crown Prince, could accept the award on his behalf, because he wasn't doing too many public appearances then as he was not very well. So it was a year last August that I went out to Thailand with the Vice Chancellor and his wife and we went to the Grand Palace for the presentation to the Crown Prince. Then afterwards we spent about 15 minutes talking to the Crown Prince about Liverpool and Thailand. Actually he was very interesting. He wanted to know why we back Thai students. The Vice Chancellor said oh well Professor Whalley can answer that one. So I said, well they always work very hard, they are always very polite, and I said that if they are ladies they*

can cook nice Thai food. He started laughing. The Royal Chamberlain or the head of his office said afterwards that the Crown Prince doesn't normally say very much *????????????????????????????????* and then it was on Royal Musicals, and when I went back to my hotel I said well I've just been *????????????????????????*

**How about Thai food? Can you eat it?**

Yes, we had a special dinner at the Oriental Hotel and we invited former students and also what we call "friends" of John Moore's University, people we have worked with, people who have helped us a lot and also HSH Prince Bhisatej Rajani, he's the king's cousin and head of the Royal Highland Project in Chiang Mai, he used to sail the boats with the king. Also with the Duke of Edinburgh and the Queen when she made a visit, they were there with the boats.

Yes, and let me see what else. We had dinner in the Oriental and it was extremely nice.

**How about the food?**

The food, yes, expensive though, the Oriental is not cheap.

Ah yes. Attend meeting in Thailand for food *????* Describe please *???*

I like spicy food. Most of the conferences I have been to there is always a choice. There will be *???* and *???*, and in most cases you do have a choice of things. You can have chicken and *???* which is ok if you don't like hot food.

**What about other countries in Asia. You mentioned about attending in India, Malaysia, Hong Kong, China?**

Erm, Hong Kong I gave a lecture at the University not a meeting. In China, yes, I attended a meeting in China and yes very nice. In Beijing now they have built a new centre, it is the Chinese Academy of Sciences Institute of Microbiology, very big and very beautiful. If you go outside Beijing to other cities they have nice facilities yes but not of the same quality, not yet, maybe later, depending on how much money they have. Whereas in Thailand you go to the University of Mahasarakham for example and its all new, very nice buildings.

**- indistinct questioning -**

Oh yes, definitely they have a big medical school now, faculties of nursing, pharmacy, science and technology.

**- indistinct questioning -**

Yes indeed. But on the other hand you have got Khon Khen very nearby and Khon Khen is a big University and well established.

**- indistinct questioning -**

Also you've got SUT and Korat? as well. Suranaree, yes. Make up a big science partner as well. I understand though they have difficulty recruiting students, they still don't have very big numbers.

**- indistinct questioning -**

What does that say, that sticker ??? Well that's when the government wanted to privatise it, and Chula didn't want it. Big row. Big demonstrations in Chula.

**How about Malaysia, Indonesia ...?**

I have not been to either the Philippines or to Indonesia but I have been to Malaysia quite a few times. In fact I was there last August. I didn't go for a big conference I went to the University because I was the external examiner there. But I also gave a research seminar there. Now, again, I know that in the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur you have got very nice facilities. On the whole it's a much smaller scale than you would see in Thailand. They don't have the same size lecture theatres. If you go to Chulalongkorn some of those lecture theatres are as good as anything anywhere in the world. (answers phone) Its my colleague next door, George, and we were together in Thailand in May. - indistinct - who was your supervisor.

Dr. Martin Selby y and the second one is Dr. Bob McClelland.

**- indistinct conversation about Mellwood and Anfield and lunch, etc. -**

To compensate? The thing that would people off a little bit would be the situation at the moment. I've got to say I think its going to be worse in the future. I think when the King dies, there will be massive problems. And there could be a clash between the Crown Princess and the Crown Prince maybe. Do you think



so too? It could happen because I understand that the Crown Prince is quite capable to protect them.

**- indistinct questioning -**

I have never met Princess Siridhorn, I have met the other Princess, Princess Chulabhorn, she opened a conference in Phuket that I went to, and I was presented to her the day before at a dinner, at a party. I was actually quite surprised, she had the shortest skirt on I think I have ever seen, and black tights.

**- indistinct questioning -**

I think unfortunately Mr Thaksin has done a lot of damage, he has divided the country. If Mr Thaksin went back and stood for election he would win, he kept his oath from outside of Bangkok. Most people that I know who have been to conferences in Thailand would definitely go again, but what you need are new people going there. Very often the venues are country hotels in nice places, and some people like that. I think if you are going to have a very important scientific meeting its better if it could be University based. For example in SUT, Suranaree, they have hotels there, where people can stay in the hotels and use the very nice facilities in the Universities for the lectures. However, if it's a big meeting as well you probably don't want everybody to attend one lecture room, you need several running at the same time for a big meeting. So perhaps that's why it would be better having it in a University or associated with a University. Now you can do that with Bangkok because you can do that with Chulalongkorn because there are the hotels very nearby, the Novotel for example in PM square. And then there is the Princess Hotel, and that's only a few minutes, perhaps 10 minutes walk in Chulalongkorn. That would be a good venue I think. On the other hand if you are having perhaps a conference on Tax Efficiency in the Civil Service, then I think Thai's on the whole would prefer to have it in a big hotel, and they have a nice buffet lunch to go with it. Yes?

Yes.

And several of the hotels can cater for that very easily, no doubt about that. But I think if you are having a meeting which contains academics they are probably more interested in having it associated with a University. The first time that I ever gave a lecture in Thailand, I was invited to give a presented in Kasetsart and we

had a very nice little lecture room, traditional Thai style, big oval table and everybody was available to the microphone all the way around. That's the first time I have ever come across it. I suppose because I have a loud voice I speak quietly, the Thais have fantastic hearing they can hear everything.

**- indistinct questioning -**

Akhmed is from Egypt.

**- indistinct questioning -**

You start off with your lecture, then suddenly people come in and put water down and coffee or tea, and cakes to eat and little sweets and desserts, and you are having a nibble between lectures at all these things that came round.

**- indistinct questioning -**

Once you have experienced it it doesn't matter. The other thing that is very strange as well is that people would talk between the lecture and that is something which just doesn't happen here.

**- indistinct questioning -**

You have to get used to it that's all. I have done workshops in Chulalongkorn and they have gone very well, the students are very good. Quite a few of them are very good at presentations.

**English?**

Some do yes. I keep telling them that the best thing to do is, whilst I am there, to come and practice English the whole time, and some of them do. Whilst I'm walking in the lounge they talk mostly to me in English. The girls say "oh no, I'm too shy" and I say no you have got to practice English, because if you want your scholarship, if you apply for your scholarship having got your high score in English you will get a scholarship. A lot of people who apply for scholarships don't get them because they haven't passed the English. If they want a scholarship what they should do is to get the English first and then it's easy.

**Have you ever been to conference in Malaysia?**

Not so much in Malaysia. In the University of Malaya now the quality of the English amongst the Malay, the ??? as we call them, is not particularly good, their English is very poor. If you go to Sarawak its much better because English is in the schools and all the way throughout the system, because they have a very big Chinese population in Sarawak, and also they have the different ethnic groups as well so English is used. Whereas in Kuala Lumpur we noticed its not as good. Now in Thailand, I mean I give lectures to 3<sup>rd</sup> year students in Chula and I would obviously speak slowly and sometimes I would repeat things. You get the clear impression that they do understand most of it. I remember one year I was there and I was to give a lecture to the final year of about 25 students altogether in Microbiology, and I went round and asked them where they from Bangkok and about 2/3 of them said yes, some of them were from outside and I asked him where he was from and he said "Oh you wont know it, Nam". I said I have actually been to Nam. I said what is your nick name, and she said something, I cant remember right now. I said what is that in English, and she said it means beautiful, so I said I thought beautiful was suay. Everybody burst out laughing.

### **How about their English?**

I found that the people, when I have been teaching in Chiang Mai and in Suranaree, yes the English has been OK on the whole.

*Former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra*

*King Bhumipol Adulyadej*

*Queen Sirikit*

*HRH Princess Ubol Ratana*

*His Royal Highness Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn*

*Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Siridhorn*

*Her Royal Highness Princess Chulabhorn Walailak*

*Chitlada Palace in Bangkok*

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**Delegate 6: Professor McGreal, age 60, from Canada**

*Interviewer: My topic of my interview today is to talk about is the potential of international conference or convention here in Thailand to achieve the major conference market of Asia, like a dream, everyone can dream. As I remember you said the conference in Udon Province was not your first, you said you had just been to Phuket, is that correct?*

*Interviewee: Yes, that is correct.*

***Interviewer: So, in Phuket, you attended the conference as well?***

*Interviewee: Yes, I forget the name but it was a new learning conference. Do you need the name because I can check on my calendar.*

*Interviewer: No, I just want to know how many times you actually attended the conferences held in Thailand. Was that your first time?*

*Interviewee: No, the 2<sup>nd</sup> time.*

***Interviewer: So this one is your third time, isn't it?***

*Interviewee: Yes.*

***Interviewer: So you might have the good connection with University in Thailand as well as in Asia, do you?***

*Interviewee: We do have some connections in Indonesia with the open university there. There is an open university in Thailand but we don't have much connections with them.*

***Interviewer: I see.***

*Interviewee: And you know that, we do in Indonesia, India, we do China, Singapore and Malaysia, but not in Thailand. We are an open university. Are you familiar with our university?*

***Interviewer: I'm afraid not sir.***

*Interviewee: It's up on line, we have no students here.*

***Interviewer: I see.***

*Interviewee: Courses are on the Internet. There is one University in Thailand that is like ours.*

**Interviewer: Can you remember its name?**

*Interviewee: It's in northern Thailand somewhere but I don't remember the name but it's an Open University. It's in Northern Thailand, if you do a search on-line you will probably find it.*

*Interviewer: I see, I will do it later. I think firstly so that another kind of Open University here we have an Open University about where students don't go to University but they have exams. So you don't have any learning, the state of learning on line?*

- indiscrete -

**Interviewer: Do you have any plan to connect network in Thailand in the future?**

*Interviewee: No. Maybe there is a conference but at the moment there are no plans. There is a plan for Indonesia next year. Next year there is the International conference for distance education and that is in Indonesia and I will probably go over there.*

**Interviewer: So, can you tell me what factor influenced you to make the decision to attend the conference in any destination?**

*Interviewee: Well, the factor for me was that my research specialty is e-learning, and the conference in Phuket was on e-learning, and I am the associate vice president for research for our university and the conference in Udon was on research in Asia.*

**Interviewer: Yes. So maybe Phuket is more direct?**

*Interviewee: Phuket, well they are both direct, because my research interest is in e-learning but I am also responsible for research for all of our University not just for e-learning, so both were related, and that was the most important consideration. That's why we went to Thailand.*

**Interviewer: Do you think the country destination does matter to make a decision to participate the conference?**

No really. I think that in Canada we have a positive view of Thailand, its not negative, so that helps. And in the winter time in Canada it is very cold and Thailand is warm, so that is good. So the 2 things is - Thailand is a stable country without bit problems, and its sunny and it's a nice place to be. So that's important.

I see.

But the most important is the subject matter of the conference.

**At that time you know we were facing a political crisis, did this affect to your decision?**

No. I watched the politics and in fact a Canadian was killed in Phuket a month before I went there, but that didn't affect my decision. I knew about the politics because the Airport had been closed. But my view is when you hear about these disturbances the safest time to go is after a disturbance when everything is calmed down because it usually doesn't happen again for a while. So that was my view. But for most Canadians they don't know anything about Thailand, they don't know the news about Thailand, all they know is that it is a nice place to go, and they don't follow the news. There is not much Thai news in Canada. In the newspapers, you do not see much about Thailand in the papers, except for when the Canadian tourist was killed in Thailand, in Phuket. That may have affected some people, but it didn't affect me.

I am so sorry about that.

Thailand is OK. Many Canadian tourists are being killed in Mexico, so Thailand OK I guess.

Thank you, you make me feel better. I worry you know, we are a tourist, and we are a tourist destination country. Some people, some organisation in the government tried to campaign to do a lot of marketing to extract people to go to Thailand, but some people destroy, just for little money, they are desperate you know, they grab the tourist, it's a shame. So sorry about that, it makes me disappointed and upset.

No. It didn't bother me at all, because I know there are about 60 million people in Thailand and very few are bad people.

- battery? -

So let's talk about the conference. Are you satisfied with the facility of the conference in Thailand?

Oh yes. Both of them are very nice.

**The conference room?**

Yes, the conference room was nice. In Udon the swimming pool wasn't available, but it didn't bother us too much because it was raining a lot of the time.

Did Phuket have a swimming pool?

Phuket was very nice, very nice facilities.

I see. So how was the service?

Excellent service. In Thailand there was excellent service from people.

**Can they communicate with you?**

That is a problem, their lack of English, that is a problem in Thailand, and my Thai is not very good (its zero).

I think learning English maybe easier than learning Thai. How about food?

We love Thai food, yes. Its very very nice.

**How about Spicy?**

I like spicy food, yes. We like it very much, there is no problem. We go to Thai restaurants in Canada. There are many Thai restaurants in Canada.

**How about your wife? Does she like Thai food?**

She loves Thai food as well. Oh no, we love the food in Thailand.

Sounds great for us. I don't know who is responsible for your expenses when you participating the conference.

*I did both because I went to the conferences and I also had a holiday in between, so I paid for myself and my University paid for some. The affordability is OK in Northern Thailand, in Phuket it's very expensive. That was expensive, but in the North its much cheaper, much, very affordable.*

*I understand that.*

*Very affordable. I think outside of Phuket, I think Phuket is a tourist area and they charge much more for everything. In restaurants, but also in Thailand you have a problem, of you have very very good restaurants and then you have the normal restaurants and the very very good restaurants they charge the prices 3 times higher than in Canada. 3 times higher than Canada, in our very very good restaurants.*

*3 times higher?!!!*

*Yes, but your normal restaurants are bout 3 times less expensive. There doesn't seem to be a middle ground, and it's the same for the hotels. You have a very low price and a very high price, but in the middle not many.*

*I agree. So Canada is many hours on plane, but if you go to Thailand it might be cheaper, how do I say, many hours on plane but cheaper ...*

*I think that Thailand should advertise, because people think its cheaper to go to the southern United States or the Caribbean, but when you get there its very expensive. So if you pay a little bit more, and stay on the plan a little bit longer you can go to Thailand and you can stay in very good accommodation get good service, good food, and sun, they all want sun, and it's a better value. I think so, I would consider going to Thailand more than the Caribbean, because the Caribbean is very expensive and many Canadians go there. We were in the Philippines about 2 years ago and that was very affordable as well, very nice, but the food is not as good as Thailand.*

**Thank you. So you talk about other conferences in other countries in the same region. Have you every attended a similar conference?**

*Yes, I have been to Malaysia, and I have been to China, just north of Thailand in Chengu. I have been to Singapore, India and I would prefer Thailand to any of those.*



*I am very glad. Thank you.*

*The other thing too. In Canada, we are very nervous about going to a Muslim country. Many Canadians will not go because its Muslim, and that is important. Thailand has a bit advantage because it isn't Muslim and people don't see there is any danger in Thailand, so that is important. They feel there might be a danger in Indonesia. In face, because of that the international council for distance education - their conference next year is in Indonesia but they are going to Bali, because Bali is Hindu, its not Muslim, that's the reason, and many people would be frightened to go to a Muslim country.*

*I see, at least Bali is the tourist place.*

*Yes, but is mainly because it isn't Muslim. Its not prejudice against Muslims, its just that people are frightened that because if you are a non-Muslim in a Muslim country that they might attack you. For me I was not worried about that because the chances of being attacked are greater in the United States than in any of the Muslim countries.*

*Not Canada?*

*Canada is OK, its not too bad, but in the United States, if I go there I know it can be very dangerous in the cities. Much more dangerous than in Jakarta or Singapore or Kuala Lumpur or any of those Muslim places.*

*So I think you say that you prefer Singapore and they would have a more effective security.*

*Yes. Singapore is more cosmopolitan in that many people there speak English, so that is a big advantage if people speak English.*

*So is there a big difference between Singapore and Thailand. I mean the effectiveness of the conference organising.*

*In Singapore there probably ... well my experience has been that they are much more effective organisers. They know how to organise things very well, and the service is very good, but in Thailand the people are much friendlier. In Singapore they are very friendly people, but in Thailand they are much friendlier. They are*

not as organised. They are not quite as organised as the Singaporeans - they are very very well organised.

I see. So how about expense in Singapore. Is it cheaper?

Singapore is much much more expensive. It is less affordable in Singapore.

So your conference related to your research field in Singapore and Thailand, where would you prefer to go to.

I think myself and most Canadians would prefer a conference in Thailand more than any other country in Asia. I am pretty sure of that. Thailand has a very good reputation in Canada and people would like to visit Thailand so I think you have a big advantage there. There is a very major advantage there. I cannot think of anywhere else in Asia where people would prefer to go to, no I don't think so.

**Thank you very much. So the last question. What should we concentrate on to improve this industry, to become the major market among other countries in the region?**

I think just advertise and let people know. I think that's a key. I know it is very popular as a tourist destination, but if you want conferences what you need is also to work with your academics and your business people who are on these international organisations and get them to push for Thailand and say "hey I want to host a conference", and that helps enormously. Like they go to an engineers conference in Europe and they say "hey why not have it next year in Thailand?". That's the way you do it. We do that in Canada. When we go to conferences we say ... for example, the conference that was in Phuket ... we say how about next year in Canada? We go there and say "come to Canada next year", and they said well no next year its going to be in the Caribbean somewhere, where is it .. Martinique in the Caribbean, but the year after I think we will get it in Canada, so we will come to Canada. You need people at the conferences who can say hey bring it here, bring it to different places.

I see, so you go to Canada, but you should not go in winter.

A lot of these international conferences they will not stay 2 years in any one country.

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**Delegate 7: Professor Pearson, age 57, from Australia**

*The topic we would talk about is the potential of Thailand to achieve the major conference market of Asia. It's a dream but ... everyone can dream. So the roles of mass media, it's not your first conference in Thailand?*

*No, I have been to - I'm trying to think of other conferences in Thailand. I've been to Thailand many times but that was my first conference, even though I have had many visits to Thailand for other purposes.*

**Where you fine with the organization?**

*Yes, it seemed to be organised very well, the hotel they used was quite suitable and the speakers and the programme seemed to be quite professional, very satisfactory for the topic.*

**You are very kind. At that time we have a political problem, not many people attend. I see other conferences organised better.**

*Also I think it was very brave for them to have a conference on that topic which was reporting during political crises when there was a political crises, so I think that the topic of the conference may have contributed to the smaller numbers.*

**So can you tell me what factors influenced you to make the decision to attend that conference.**

*One factor was that it was convenient for us to be in Thailand at that time and so you normally organise conferences partly to do with your other travels, secondly the topic of the conference suited my research, so it was good that that topic, the theme of the conference, because my own research was on political reporting.*

**I see. So the countries destinations matter for anyone who make the decision to attend any conference?**

*Yes, well I think the destination is a factor, but not the only factor, because I think these things need to need weighed up. Sometimes the destination is the main factor because for other reasons you may wish to be in that place, whether it is for work or for pleasure. But other times the topic is what drives it, and because the topic is so important you will go anywhere, almost anywhere, for a*

conference on that topic because you know that the world's leading researchers will be there, and I have been to conferences where that was the case.

**Political crisis, did it a worry to you at any time when you decided to go?**

No. I have been travelling to Thailand on and off for more than 30 years so over that time there have been many political crises and they are not normally a major problem. I mean the worst that seems to have happened to foreigners has been sometimes delays, maybe they get stuck at the airport or something like that. I don't know, its been very rare for foreigners except in the very south of Thailand, its been very rare that foreigners have been in any danger. So that was not a great concern.

**I see. What other advantage or potential over Thailand you think we have for the conference.**

Yes, I think there is great potential for Thailand. The first thing is an attractive destination, secondly it has easy transport, harbour, and the third for my business it has many universities so there are a great number of academics and researchers working there, and I guess the fourth factor is that Thailand is reaching out to the international community so that it is very welcoming.

**What about this advantage?**

Well I think they give an advantage over many other countries. Clearly the fact that English is still not as widely spoken as in some other countries, that might be a disadvantage. But on advantages I think the hotel and conference sector is quite good and can cope with quite large conferences, and the infrastructure is quite good. I see those as the main advantages.

**We talk about other countries in Asia, what similar conferences have you attended in other countries in Asia?**

Well there was the world Journalism Education Conference held in Singapore last year. That was a much larger conference because it was the first international event for that group. So it is difficult to compare that with the conference I just went to in Thailand. But because it was larger there were much different dynamics involved.

***I see. So what do you think we should do or we should concentrate on the conference market to achieve the bigger market?***

*I am not an expert in the conference market but as a conference goer, a person who attends conferences, I think one thing you should look at is ensuring that the Thai experts in their fields in their ... are you talking about university conferences is that the main thing we are talking about rather than other conferences ... so the leading Thai academics should be encouraged to host conferences in Thailand because they know all the tracts leading academics from other parts of the world. A second thing is to ensure the facilities that you are using are of a suitable standard, and that does not mean the very best necessarily. The particular hotel we used this year was quite good. It does not have to be the big 5-star or 6-star hotels, but if it is not the big hotels and it is not central then I think the challenge for conference organisers in Thailand is to explain carefully which part of Bangkok or elsewhere, which part of the city it's going to be held in so travellers can make their plans accordingly. That particular conference was in a location that was far away from the main part of the city and I don't think that most international visitors would want to stay in that area so they need to know the transport and logistics of getting there.*

***I see. So you talk about Academy. Do you have any Academy connection in Thailand?***

*Yes, well we have had this relationship with UTCC.*

***Just that University, how about other University?***

*No, mainly my own University's closest relationship is with UTCC. We do take students from other Universities of course, but this is the main research relationship in the communication area.*

*I see.*

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## **Appendix 23: Interview Transcribing (IC Organising Committees and Planners)**

### **Organising Committee 1: Steve M., age 54, from Scotland**

***I actually focus on the conferences/conventions. What do you think about the conference in Thailand?***

*Thailand is a fairly established market and I think what happened earlier this year was a bit unnerving for some organisers because what they are is very risk averse and they look at the safety and security aspect of events. I think once they have been successfully addressed and the Thai government is working towards that. I think you will find people will come to Thailand because it has the elements which people want. It is a different exotic destination. The people are warm and friendly and welcoming. There is good connectivity. There is good infrastructure and there is a good price point so all of the elements are there. The only thing where there is a bit of a question mark at the moment, is the area of safety and security.*

***Do you think which one you prefer the big conference halls and stay in the hotel or the big hotel which has the conference venues?***

*Thailand already has a fair degree of large infrastructure and a fairly large number of meeting rooms in the hotels so I think in terms of infrastructure, Thailand is well served already.*

***So how about a price compared to other countries?***

*The price point is very competitive.*

***At the moment, among the countries in Asia. For which country is the most occupied the market?***

*I think the 3 countries in South East Asia which are the most active are Singapore, Thailand and I think Malaysia is fairly active. China will become a lot more active. India in time, when it has more infrastructures, will become a lot more active. Vietnam is already building infrastructure and is working at fast tracking English literacy, that sort of things. Cambodia and Laos are bit further behind. Myanmar*

is that much further behind. Indonesia is improving a little bit. I think there are still some big question marks.

I see. Thank you very much.

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## **Organising Committee 2: Dan, age 45, from Netherlands**

*Moderator: Developing leadership in associating management, which is a core and very dear topic of most of us in this room. I would like to introduce you to Dan.*

*Hello everybody. My credentials are kind of coming from mainly the medical and scientific, this is what the group is focusing on all over the world, so everything that I am going to say today has a few angles. One of them is the medical and scientific, that's my expertise. The second, and in a sense more important, the topic that I was asked to bring forward is that I am not a local as you can obviously see and I think that this topic, looking at it from a Westerners point of view has insignificance because I think this topic is asking "How Can We?" I think myself I would like to be considered a local eventually as we like to work here and we have already started to operate here in Bangkok and Singapore. How can we gain our fair share in the association and international association markets? I think this is a little bit of what we are going to talk about. First, hard to see here on the screen but I'm going to read to you anyhow. It was about a week ago when we were asked, so the first thing we did is a little research into our own data base, we looked into 170 international associations, let's find out how many board members there are from various countries. I'm going to read to you the results. Japan is something about 15, Korean about 10, China less than that, Thailand, even less than that, the UK 100, in Germany about 50 and I could go on and on. But if you compare the population you can surely realise that in Asia, representation in international associations is not that high. On the right graph, this actually shows what we did as we took about 130 Asian associations and also European associations about the same number. In theirs you can see naturally the number of all the neighbours from those very same countries is much higher, each one for their respective, so UK it would be of course for the European associations so you have about a hundred and then suddenly Korea is eighty in Asian associations, so actually one of the topics that I used to say as*

a gut feeling is that we don't see a lot of Asian Doctors or scientists on the boards on the respective International Associations. Now where are the barriers? Now the barriers are not necessarily how to become a board member, but how to make this a tool to bring more business to Asia, to lead the way, now this is where I think Asia should fit in the future.

Here are some things that often cannot be seen to become board members. They do not submit that often for requests to hold meetings; there are some exceptions to the rule for some countries, but most think this is the case. In a minuet we will cover why, but there are language and cultural barriers, there are rules to those things and in Asia we have yet to learn what they are, so many times this is a challenge, this is what we see as the old order. If you go today to the International boards of the *???????* association, you will probably find that there are several Europeans there probably a couple of Americans and then you are going to have one maybe two Asians, so there is an order there that we use to order and play by rules, and the order is let's play the way the Europeans play, let's do exactly what they do to be elected for those boards. Now let's move forward and see how we can play with the same rules to weave the business. I've been thinking there are several, for example, we are literally going to organise the meetings, so we actually advise the committees that a number of funds that I think don't have a chance because they don't understand how to sell what they have, many of those came from Asia, and this is why I say we have to play by the old order, I call it old because I think the future will change dramatically. You the Doctors and the Scientists, these are the ones that will make a difference. What does it take to make the change? First trial and error, I've been told once by a wise one eyed Asian Doctor that the reason that they don't apply is that they are afraid to fail, they do not meet unless they are sure they are going to win, so when I refer to the fact that we have to play by the rules is there are no rules. It is customary many times that you try and fail and then you get it, and then you start to break the notion that if this doesn't happen, then you cannot expect to step into the room and get something for sure. It may be very clear to all of us, but it doesn't happen, and I'm sure that I heard today from a corporate representative that it's not that Asia isn't a lot bigger, you can see that most of the associations they have there are rotation policies, I will give an example that will show the challenge. The International *???? ?* Gallery Association, one of our clients 3 years ago was in Europe, this year was in



3 years from now they will go up to Australia then to Latin America, Europe again, so if you're looking at Asia, the North part of Asia we are talking about 2022, this is when maybe and I say maybe that IPA will go to the northern part of Asia, and with all my respect and love to Australia, for Chinese to travel to Australia and travel to Europe is about the same distance it's a big continent here, so the trial and error here is the network, the network hubs also with the Asian unity. Many times when the wolves' neurology came to Europe, it was clear that they should be in Europe that was part of their patient; all the Europeans decided internally and supported what country, you have never seen something like that in Asia.

### **Dan 3**

If the Asians unite trying together to bring the meetings into trying together to elect and to be elected, that will work. I think you will find that there are a lot of openings there waiting for such an initiation to take place. Next we are talking about Face book, Twitter all the good stuff, the thing with them is that they are not personal, they are great at networking but they are non personal. I've all kinds of people that ask to be my friends, I don't know who some of them are, and when I tweet, there are so many people that follow that, I don't have a clue who they are, I don't know why they follow?? If you want to go and get elected somewhere you need to go out and meet people and this does not happen. We make sure with the rest of the world this does not happen often and this is what we are missing here in Asia, I described earlier and this is like putting to the extreme, but again putting it to the eyes of the Westerner, when I was a kid I still remember that there where tours of organised groups from Asia there was mainly Japan it was the era of the Japanese organised tours of Europe this was very common. The people used to get off the bus with the Japanese tour guides later go back to the bus then back to the hotel that has Japanese channels they have Japanese breakfast, one of my favourites is when I have chance to eat in those hotels. The only nature was they went shopping but then again it's not a personal thing and this networking is what's working, I would dare say that in Asia the networking still needs improvement that will lead to this unity, and unity doesn't mean that you all have to vote one vote, it doesn't happen anywhere, but the people will network enough to gain the power that they need to gain the business to get elected as board members which is part of the elective. So needs to be changed? Here is a summary of we have just talked about

**Dan 4**

First I think and this is expressing my personal feelings. Now if you look at a rotation, so it's one part for America and one part for Asia, now does this look equal to you?? There are two countries in North America usually in those geographic distributions. It doesn't make sense that every two or three years a meeting will rotate where once it's in North America and only once in Asia. Asia should start to be more active and potentially in the future seek to have two slots. It's one continent, true, but it's a very big one. So Asia is still far from retrieving the potential that it has to gain business. To be in meetings, then the first step is to convince the Doctor to be active, active as board members, active scientifically, active in the networking, this is the only way to get the business. There are a lot of other cases that one can show that people are still inactive, for example China, the world today, in my world there is so much pressure to go to China, and they are just looking for that Chinese Doctor that will start the process to try to get to the meetings and invite them and so on to do the whole bidding process, and even this does not happen as much as it could, so there you go, an Asian Doctor needs to join the system and become active, which is what I talked about, but become active and not just be a member, and they have to overcome all those barriers and be active in the international realm. The knowledge is there, the science level is there, all they are missing is the dare to move forward. This is a piece that I took from Gandhi, with the change that you want to see in the world, this change will start from here with the Doctors that I have been talking about, but we need to be busier and be active encouraging the Doctors to step forward, when the authorities have an impact on associations themselves to convince them to move forward, we have seen more of them being active and this is the whole way forward. Asia deserves much more than what it is getting today, Asia can get much more, it all depends on us. Thank you

(Crowd applause)

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**Organising Committee 3: Dr. R Handcock, age 65, from Canada**

**Me: What do you think about the venue in Thailand? Do you think it is international enough?**

Him: Yes. Absolutely. The thing I like especially about the venue in Thailand is that although it was an international conference, it had a very strong Thai flavour so the lunch they served was Thai. Thai food and the people were all greeting you in the Thai way and so I thought that you knew you were in Thailand. Just as a comparison, I was in Tanzania, in Africa, just a few weeks ago and there you could be almost anywhere in the world. It was not very African the meeting, so I liked the fact that it was really Thailand. That you knew you were in Thailand.

**Me: What did you think about the service?**

Him: The service was fantastic.

**Me: How about the food?**

Him: The food was fantastic.

**Me: Thank you. As ISSR 2009 conference was held in March, I think back at that time and some protests are still happening in Bangkok. So do you think this situation affected you or make you hesitate to go to the conference?**

Him: No. that is interesting in some places you are very worried about your safety. I was never worried in Bangkok about safety. We walked on the streets and everything and there was never a problem. But on that issue, I know the demonstrators sat in the airport for a number of weeks. But that was before the meeting happened and it didn't worry me that much at all. It might have worried me if it was happening at the time, but I didn't ever get the feeling that Thai people were likely to become violent and that the demonstrations were likely to become violent. So I was not worried too much about that at all.

**Me: Oh that is very good. I have heard some embassies have warned their people not to go to Thailand at that time. Did the Canadian embassy warn you about this?**

Him: Well, I heard the warnings and I knew about it but as I said, it might have been an issue if it was actually happening at the time I was supposed to be in Thailand. But, because it had all finished before then, it wasn't a problem for me at all.

**Me: Oh That is good. Thank you. So let's talk about other conferences in other countries in the same region, Asia. What other countries have you attended or participated the similar conferences?**

Him: I been to china, Singapore, I was invited to Korea, but I could not go. Hong Kong a couple of times. So I have been to quite a few meetings.

**Me: How about Singapore?**

Him: I've been to Singapore but I have never actually been to a meeting there. I actually lived in Singapore when I was young for three years. I gave a lecture in Singapore, at the university there.

**Me: I see. As my research project, I am also studying about the potential competitors to Thailand like Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia.**

Him: They are all competitors but I think what Thailand has is a really attractive place to visit. I think for a tourist it is a lot more interesting than Hong Kong or Singapore. Especially because you've got that wonderful river running through the city and the culture you see, just by travelling up and down the river. The palaces and the temples and such are just wonderful. So I think Thailand is a much more attractive place to visit. It's much more exciting.

**Me: I see. So can I conclude that when someone goes to a conference, they might not think just about the conference itself, but they might think about the intervening opportunities as well, such as to travel or to see or to.....**

Him: Sorry I missed that your voice is quiet.

**Me: Ok. Sorry. So can I conclude from your saying that when somebody goes to the conference, he or she does not just think about the conference itself, but he or she might think about other opportunities as well like you know sightseeing, travel, or to experience the other things like you just mentioned.**

Him: Yes, especially if you are travelling a long distance. When the other opportunities, for tourism for example becomes immediately important. So for me, it took me 19 hours to get from Vancouver and I believe that it was really important that there was an opportunity to see other things, to be time.

**Me: Do you think number hours on a plane might make somebody hesitate, like delegates from USA or from Latin Americans will not go to Thailand?**

Him: What would make people hesitate to go? I think the main concern people have when they go to a foreign country about things they do not necessarily experience at home. So I think people are concerned about personal safety. I think people are concerned about getting sick from some disease that does not exist in their own society. But I do not think this would usually prevent them from travelling and certainly not to Thailand.

**Me: I appreciate you know as you have a positive thinking about Thailand.**

Him: Sure.

**Me: Can you tell me some other things, disadvantages or which should be improved or what should the government support about the conference industry?**

Him: Ummm, you mean the Thai government?

Me: Yes.

Him: I think they should really do of support. In the first meeting I went to, the Gates Foundation meeting, we actually had the Royal Princess came and gave a talk to us, which was very nice. These are both medical conferences and I know that the Thai family themselves have a very strong medical background, a medical and research background. So I think the authority should support. I think that the main thing is to ensure that when a meeting is held in Thailand, it gives the people of the meeting an exposure to Thai culture.

**Me: I see. So you were invited to speak from your last conference, ISSAR, but I am not sure for other conferences. I may miss your point from the last conservation. So did the 415rganizing committee look after you totally all expenses during you are in Thailand?**

Him: How expensive it was? I think it's a rather inexpensive place to go. I mean the hotel I was staying at was a top world class hotel and so there was not that much difference in cost than any world class hotel in the world class city, in any

city in the world. So they were pretty expensive but I found it fairly inexpensive to eat and I did not find a lot of other things expensive. The cost was good.

**Me: I see. So do you think it is affordable?**

Him: Yes. I think it is affordable.

**Me: Thank you. Sorry, the voice is not very stable.**

Him: Not a problem.

**Me: Thank you very much Dr. Hancock for giving me this opportunity. One very last question, can I have your age please because I have to analyse your age.**

Him: I am exactly 60.

Me: Thank you very much Dr. Hancock. I will email you again to say thank you formally.

Him: Not a problem. Thanks very much.

Me: Thank you very much. Have a good day.

Him: You too. Bye.

Me: Bye by

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#### **Organising Committee 4: Nino, age 32, from Germany**

**Me: You are from Germany**

Him: Yes

**Me: I your Company based in Singapore?**

Him: My Company is based in Singapore, yes. I moved there seven months ago and the show ITBS Asia has been there for almost three years.

**Me: Can you tell me what Singapore has and what Thailand does not have about convention industry and vice versa?**

Him: It is not by saying that someone has something blaming the other one that they do not have. The decision has been made three years ago to move to Singapore and certainly because Singapore makes it very easy for us to organise a show, which is good for us. What is even more important, it is easy for our stakeholders to participate in terms of travel destination. Singapore is a travel hub. Which basically can be reached from any other destination and it is very easy to get access to Singapore in terms of visa. That is what I meant it is easy for the stakeholders and for us, as I mentioned. A language part is something that is easy. It is very international. There are other big players there. A lot of headquarters are based in Singapore so in that way the exposure we get is pretty easy.

**Me: So can you suggest that what should be improved for Thailand to become the hub of the region in convention industry? Everyone has got dreams!**

Him: I think what, are you asking for Thailand or Bangkok?

**Me: For Thailand as the whole country. I know that is very difficult as we much more focus on Bangkok city than the other places. Nowadays we have some big conference halls as well in Chiang Mai and Phuket but Bangkok is the biggest one.**

Him: I think to start with Bangkok. Bangkok has a very good fundament for the MICE industry, in terms of infrastructure, know how, experience and accessibility. Coming from Germany, which is the number one country in the world for exhibitions and conferences. Nine out of the thirteen world's leading exhibitions take place in Germany. I think one of the biggest opportunities for Bangkok and Thailand is to take initiation by starting their own events rather than inviting existing events to come to Bangkok. We have started, for example ITB Asia forty four years ago. Now that's our own brand. It stands for Berlin. It stands for Germany and it got so strong, the Brand, that we were even able to export it to Singapore and to Asia. So if you start your own events and you find the niche for an industry to come to Bangkok. Then you own the network and you own the idea. There are trade shows that travel from one place to another. You might get a medical conference or one of those moving events. But you know for sure that they are going to move on. So you actually use a lot of time to pitch for that. Once you have it, eight years from now a big medical conference. It is

once a year and then you know I'm not going to have it for the next twenty or thirty years. By creating your own event, even though it might start small, there could be potential to grow it and then everyone knows that. ITB brand is based in Berlin. Because we grew it and everyone knows this is where it originated from. So what I would suggest is start your own events. Find a niche for the industries to facilitate them.

**Me: At Phuket they have a good strategy as well. We launch the campaign Thai people travel or organise a conference in Thailand. And another country which is a good example like China. They have their industry and it is growing more and more. So they have a market about this. Let's talk about between Singapore and Thailand.**

Him: Yes. But look at Singapore. Singapore has a market of five million people, which compared to India, to Thailand, to China is very small. So it is not only about where the industry is. You could argue that why are nine out of the thirteen world's leading trade shows happening in Germany. Germany is not a huge market compared to all these Asian markets. It is because that is where it originated. Because someone in Germany had the idea to start....., to start ....., to start....., to start ITB Asia. Now if TCEB or TAT or any private vendor comes up with an idea of a meeting place within the industry, then the world will come to Bangkok. Because they know that they can only find that here in Bangkok. For all these events that you try to acquire, you know once you have them, they are going to move on.

**Me: Yes. Very clever. Very good idea. You are very clever. The last question, countries among countries in Asia, so can you tell me about what destination is most popular and what destination occupies more market, but maybe they decline and what destination or country is more popular?**

Him: Are we talking about MICE or tourism?

Me: MICE

Him: MICE, I hope you understand that as we offer a market what I cannot pinpoint countries and say they are good; they are bad, because we try to stay neutral. But generally in Asia, the big four or five countries, Thailand being one of them, India, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Japan they have a lot of potential.



*But again I think it is more about being an entrepreneur, starting with your own idea of a trade show or of a convention than bidding for events that come once every two decades. They will have generally, speaking for Asia, a lot of potential and a lot of growth. Just find the people that seek information and want to learn.*

*Me: That is very, very useful information. Thank you.*

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### **Organising Committee 5: Oliver, age 35, from Singapore**

*I'm a student from Thailand. Thank you, Oliver (from Singapore).*

*Are you doing research here?*

*Yes. I'm a student. I'm doing research about MICE industry. Can I ask you maybe a little bit sensitive question; if you think it is sensitive, it is, but if you think it is not, it is not?*

*Yes I'll tell you.*

***Can you tell me what Singapore has that Thailand has doesn't have and vice versa. Can you tell me about (laughed).***

*That is difficult.*

*Yes, the advantage of Singapore and the advantage of Thailand.*

*I think that will be very hard for me to understand. The easiest things of the differences; the main differences between the countries.*

*Yes.*

*So for certain part of the MICE industry for example say intensive travel, where people look for different experiences, almost leisure experiences. The difference then would mean that some groups may prefer to go to Singapore or some people to go to Thailand. So that, to me, would probably be the clearer difference. What is an advantage or what is a disadvantage is dependant. I would not be able to say what an advantage is and what a disadvantage is. To me, the culture who love to go to the beach for example and Thailand has really*

*nice beautiful beaches. At Singapore we do not really have very good beaches. That one I can tell you surely.*

*Yes*

*People don't come to Singapore for the sunshine and skiing. So that's ok.*

***So how about the conference venue or the furnished or the .....***

*In terms of venues, I don't know enough about venues to comment. I would, I mean of course you good venues and then brush up our defence. Meeting the groups and looking for. So it's hard for me to give you a straight answer, unfortunately.*

*Yes*

*Yes. Is that a recording?*

*Just recording your voice. Thank you.*

*Oh alright. No worries.*

*Do you want me to*

*No, no it's alright. Just wondering what that was.*

*Thank you very much.*

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**Organising Committee 6: Professor Tom, age 66, from London England,**

*Where are you from?*

*London.*

*I am studying in Liverpool.*

*Are you?*

*Yes.*

*Oh, they do not do very well with football at the moment.*

*No. No. Not good.*

They have gone down and down.

I'm doing the research about the MICE industry. I am focusing on two aspects or two areas: meetings and conference.

What part of that? What are you focusing on?

I'm focusing on the possibility of Thailand to gain more market share among the conference in Asia. How if Thailand become the hub of Asia.

What you need to do, if you have time, is to come to the future leaders. Which will be down there. On Wednesday at 10.30. Where the students will be, let me just show you. Because this actually would be very interesting for you. So it is there you can see at 10.45. A presentation of Thailand MICE conference bid. And what that is, now all the students, you can keep that.

Thank you.

All the students are preparing this on their PowerPoint. And basically it says Thailand, Bangkok, exactly what you're doing. However the global economic downturn and the adverse publicity from recent political events are threatening to erode the strong position. So basically the team, your team, represents the local GMC and TCEB have asked these teams to present their ideas for a highly creative focus for relevant program. To bring a conference.

I see. 1030.

Yes and they'll be about five teams presenting.

Thank you.

And you know, especially with these young students, they come up with all sorts of lovely ideas.

**Can I ask you, some questions, a few questions? In your perspective what do you think the competitive nature of Thailand and how it compares to other countries in Asia, South East Asia.**

One of the things I mentioned this morning. Were you in the session this morning?

Yes.

Was this whole thing about sellers? And I know it's spoken about so much and people always say 'oh you're mentioning this again' but I really believe that this part of the world, the service, the quality of service and the standards of service

are just so high. And I think this is partially due to the fact that it is cheaper to employ people here than in Europe. So therefore you can have more people, which of course helps. So I think that's one thing. All the infrastructure. This building is great. It's a lovely hotel. The hotels are wonderful. You know, you get someone from this part of the world going to London and staying in a five star hotel and they'll be lucky if they get a room this size and they are paying three times.

Yes. Four or five hundred pounds.

Yes and this is where you have a fantastic opportunity. All the infrastructure. This building is great. It's a lovely hotel. Do pay attention to the younger generation and how they are thinking and to their social media. How they use it and that's the future.

Yes.

I know today skypeing and web coming is still relativity in it's infancy in terms of quality and so on. But that is all going to change rapidly.

New media will come

New media. That's the way to do it. A really creative force and the way you operate.

When we talked about the international ?????? airline, Singapore airline compare to Thai international airlines and so from Singapore airlines ???????? So Malaysia or Singapore. They do intensive marketing. And they have a lot so return a lot.

Yes

And they have a lot so return a lot.

Absolutely.

Yes

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### **Organising Committee 7: Graeme Batten, age 60, from Australia**

Dear Suphaphon Akkhaphin,

Firstly I will state who I am. My name is Graeme Batten. I am a Director of a small company called Sea Spec Pty Ltd. I have honorary status at The University of Sydney and at Charles Sturt University.

I am Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Near Infrared Spectroscopy*. This peer review journal arose in 1993 as a result of discussions held at an international conference on near infrared spectroscopy by members of the International Council on Near Infrared Spectroscopy – ICNIRS (<http://www.icnirs.org/>). ICNIRS organises a conference each second year. The last conference was held in Bangkok, Thailand November 7-16 2009. The next conference will be held in South Africa in 2011 (<http://www.nir2011.org/index.php>).

I have attended all but two ICNIRS Conferences and I was a member of the organising committee for the 6<sup>th</sup> ICNIRS Conference which was held in Australia in 1994.

**10<sup>th</sup> March 2010**

#### **Interview Questions for the Conference Planners/Organizing Committee**

**1. How does your organization/association select the site/venue for the international conferences? What are those criteria?**

Response: ICNIRS members from any country may bid to hold a conference. The procedures are set out in the "Regulations of the International Council for Near Infrared Spectroscopy". See item 14 in the attached .pdf .

**2. Who makes the decision to choose the site?**

Response: At each ICNIRS conference a General Meeting is held. Members from each country who are bidding for a future conference have an opportunity to make their bid to all delegates. This usually takes the form of a scientific-travel audio-visual presentation which states where the conference would be held, what makes it a suitable venue, the format of the conference, and likely costs for the conference and accommodation.

Delegates at the ICNIRS Conference then vote for the country which they prefer to hold the conference in 4 years time. The decision will be influenced by confidence in the country (and its committee) to arrange a successful conference, costs, security in

the city or region and general attractions in the country or region which would be of interest to delegates (during and after the conference).

The actual venue for the conference is decided by the local committee and stated at the time the bid is presented to the ICNIRS members.

**3. Is there the term time for that committee, especially the chair, or permanently?**

Response: The key members of the conference committee are selected at the time the bid is initiated. They co-opt additional members, or hire a conference organising company as required to achieve the desired outcome. After the conference there will usually be a role for some members of the committee until the proceedings are published and the financial matters completed. This may take up to 2 years after the conference.

**4. Do you think Thailand has potential to be the major international conference market in the region?**

Response: As I recall, Thailand was selected as the venue for the 2009 conference for the following reasons –

- a. It was a region where ICNIRS had not held a conference.
- b. There was growing interest in the use of NIR in Thailand.
- c. The local committee had experience in organizing large meetings.
- d. The costs were competitive.
- e. The area is reasonably central for many delegates.

Based on the NIR-2009 ICNIRS conference Thailand could be regarded as an excellent country in which to hold conferences. The conference was extremely

well run and the delegates had high praise for the venue, the city and the people.

The main concern for delegates to conferences in Thailand continues to be security. Outsiders are concerned by the protests or demonstrations by supporters of political parties. Even if they do not feel their persons are in danger the threat of delays to travel etc are sufficient to deter many visitors. (See Appendix A).

**5. In your view, what key benefits does Thailand have to offer the organizing of international conferences?**

**Response:**

- a) Good connection to many countries.
- b) Lower costs – better value for money.
- c) Unique culture but understand other cultures.
- d) Weather is usually hot or hot and wet which is OK but the time of year is important.

**6. What should Thailand do to improve the effective organizing of international conferences?**

Response: Clearly security is an overriding issue.

Promotion directly to learned societies.

Promotion through embassies in each country.

Employ organizers of successful conference on future conference committees.

Work through international hotel chains to promote Thailand for conferences.

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**Appendix 24: Focus group transcribing (Specialists in MICE Industry)**

There are 6 specialists altogether. There are specialist 1: Nino, age 32, from Germany, but currently works in Singapore; specialist 2: Professor Tom, age 66, originally from London, England but now works in Asia; specialist 3: Saigon, age 49, from Denmark; specialist 4: Mike, age 45, from Australia; specialist 5: Oliver, age 35, from Singapore; and specialist 6: Dan, age 45, from Netherlands.

**Moderator:** *We have heard from Dan, Nino from exhibitions and Tom you're a director of International relations. Nino, would you start off and talk about what are the challenges of the exhibitions sector.*

**Nino:** *Yes I sure can. Good morning everyone. I think one of the biggest challenges we face, the meetings and the exhibition Industry which is to start off with, there are general problems is how do we sell this, and if I have this pen here and anybody asked me to sell them to any customer like Sabrue, I would take that pen and go to Sabrue's office and try to sell her that pen. Now if I want a hotel destination, if I want to sell you my product what I need to do is to actually bring you to my premises, I need to bring you to my destinations, because I cannot sell you Singapore, Lotzes, Paton without you trying it. Now in our Industry what makes it even more difficult is we do not only have to bring the people to our proprietors, our products only exist for 3 days, 4 days, a year, so we actually need to sell something that does not exist for more than 360 days a year, but once we have the people in our destination, at our venue or exhibition or conference, that is the time when the selling actually begins, so the question is this, I believe if we have mass associations conference here in Bangkok, you actually force people to attend this conference to fly to a destination that they cannot choose, it's the association that chooses the destination, and once you have the delegates here that's when the selling actually starts, for the destination, for the hotel. We were just mentioning Sabrue; you took a picture of the bathroom, right? So this is where the hotel starts to sell, the convention takes place in this hotel and if you would have been here on leisure, you may have ended up in any other hotel, but now they have you here, now that's where the selling actually starts and that's where you have the biggest leverage.*



**Moderator:** I just want to take up a point before we move on to Tom, you said that within the exhibition event, you are basically saying that you sell the whole year and then there is only 3 more days that you can sell, but do you see a new model coming where you can actually sell all year round instead of having a physical event just for a few days, is there a new technology where the buying and selling and communication can actually be in before and after?

**Nino:** Yes there is, I don't have a 3 day job a year, there is more work for everyone throughout the year. To a certain extent I believe technology socially makes sales a lot easier in terms of outreach, but if I look at myself being pretty young yet, I have experience of changing how I communicate, how I get information, and to that extent you could argue that selling your product with the social media are a lot more complicated, because now the question is, the only constant we have had over the last decade is time, we only have 24 hours a day. Now how do you manage to sell your product 24 hours a day if there are now thousands of pages of feeds of fan pages of the old stuff of mailings of telephone acquisitions? And to that extent I believe that it gets a lot more complicated to use all these different tools, we used to have a tool box that had 4 or 5 tools, now if you look at the internet, the verity and diversity of tools has gotten way to big.

**Tom:** Thank you, firstly I would like to say how nice it is to be brought in here. Just on a particular area of exhibitions, I just wonder because of working at IMEX obviously my legions and loyalty is for trade fairs, exhibitions to survive as long as they can. I just wonder though, virtual exhibitions, I can see that happening in the next few years or somewhere down the line as technology becomes more and more sophisticated and you are able to do that. We have a virtual exhibition already, people know and it's up there for the whole year, so the process of selling and promoting continues there. I wonder with this whole thing of footprints whether that's going to be an issue in terms of people attending trade fairs in the future, and I think the expense of attending these trade fairs is getting greater and greater, on the other hand there is no substitute for sitting opposite someone and actually talking with them face to face, and how often do we have that?? Many times, and I still think, for example I was trying to attend a conference in Warsaw not so long ago and it was at the time of the Ash from Iceland and also the weekend indecently that that the President of Poland was being buried, so there was no way that I could get in there and I had various speakers coming in, we did it skyping and using web cams, it worked but not as well, and I think it will

be some years before we can actually go down that line, so I think exhibitions and trade shows are very much here to stay, certainly in my life time and for the foreseeable future, but it will change as new technology becomes ready and more effective.

**Audience:** I just wanted to ask you a question. You were talking this morning about how fast social media has taken off at a consumer rate and a travel rate, have the modern maintenance actually kept up, is it rising as fast as the travel industry??

**Nino:** I think Saigon's mentioned at the very beginning that technology is not as good as face to face and I totally agree with that. I do believe as well though that our industry is way too confident with that lever as you just mentioned, there will be a change, we certainly sit on that argument that no matter what happens on the outside world, nothing is going to replace a good convention or a good meeting, which is true, which does not mean that we do not need to adopt the new technologies.

**Saigon:** There is a survey research that's called convention 21. I do believe that there is an advance on the exhibitions and that meetings are here to stay, there may be some precognitions on that, today there is a hype about social maintenance so everybody knows this. We have tweeters and so on. We actually have to look at our clients and see how fast they act here and feel about that, we also use students who tweet from these sessions, not that many people follow, there is more enthusiasm about let's go tweet, now that's going to change, but the practicality of it is that we have to adopt social networking, but not as a hype but as a tool, for the question as to how many people have followed suit and most people will answer positively, let's use that. Our research shows that our 2 main reasons, one of them is the content the other is the networking, it is not surprisingly Doctors over the age of 45 their only reason is networking, why, because I pursue doctors, they already know it, even if they don't they will come to a few sessions. The nature of networking is not coming into a room and seeing a load of familiar faces, the challenge is the fact that I don't know anyone, and this is where people see that this is not a hype but a tool and this is where you see meetings that last three days. The people want to come for those three days and take advantage of it. You mentioned before that we are still sitting in a formal meeting, but the meetings are still very traditional, the speaker comes and

talks and everybody listens, it's very passive, that's going to change because people want to get to orders so they want to be customised, how will they do that, the convention will already hear the presentation before it even comes to a discussion where they want to express their opinion or they want to ask their own questions and so on, this is going to change and those that do not accept the change will not survive, but the overall is that we all want to come and share physically and that's the only way to create real networking.

**Audience:** *Yoki from China, I am a CEO from the company in Beijing. I have two questions to ask. As you know my company will be your business partner in Beijing for the ICS conference in 2012. In China we do not have enough professionals, that is something we find challenging in China. For the long term strategy of a company in China, do you prefer to have your own company in China or would you like to just have a business, a partnership like with our company or something like that. I want you to be straight forward in answering the question even though it is a bit sensitive, the reason is, a couple of years ago, a big company came to China and came to me to ask if they could buy my company. I told them that my company is a private one and that it is so difficult to have one in China, my company is my dream, and you cannot buy my dream. I want to do something for China, I want to do some exhibitions for the industry in China, so with the help of company's like your selves and MCI. If you need to build a company in the future in China, how do you keep you employees as another company took my employees away? That was my first question.*

**Saigon:** *The usage of what we spoke of before, at the back of the hall my son is sitting and he is my partner and the managing director of....., and he can tell you that we are not here to buy dreams, we are here to share dreams and to create together dreams. If somebody wants to work in Asia, this and I can talk from my own position will always come and find partners, now we will open our office, but its going to be with Harper, so we can then enjoy the standing of the group and the organisation, what's going on around the world, it is so important to have an understanding of the local culture. If there is one thing that I learned throughout my career, different countries that I've worked is to respect local cultures, so if we want to go to China we need to have local partners and that's the only way to work, and I want this partner to work as hard so that it can be a partner not just an employee.*

**Moderator:** Thank you for that, now let's talk about the summit. This summit is about the change and mindset that's needed because the panel to me is like the pivot to our industry. You raised a few points like the Asian of fear of failure; you talked about the lack of unity, Asia one voice. Mike have you seen this? You come from Australia and I think Australia is very competitive, have you noticed the lack of cohesion in Asia or the sort of mentality that people are scared.

**Mike:** Yes. I have started working with Asia and it does take a long time to get into the table of bidding and there is this concern in Asia about we have to be successful, they do not have a full understanding of how to engage. What the industry has to think about is how do we actually help the associations and minimise that fear of failure and there are big issues there, Asia needs to engage more internationally. It does appear in other markets but it does seem to happen more with Asia.

**Moderator:** Now the other thing you talked about is the lack of evidence. Have you got any case study whereby you have gone to a government apartment with some sort of evidence and then they gave you funding?

**Mike:** Most of the evidence that was gathered is from other sources, outside of Asia, there has been research done in certain pockets of Asia from what I can tell, I haven't done extensive research. For those of you who don't already know I currently work in Asia and one of the most important things we are doing is working with the industry over there and it's been very difficult to get benchmarks and the information. You go to one destination that evidence varies as it's very much regionalised. Tom you have some input here.

**Tom:** Yes, it's one of the four points which I very quickly wanted to talk about today. It's the whole of the interaction between government and the industry, I think first of all I once did this politicians forum which we continue to do and we learned 8 years ago that is was really knocking our head against a brick wall trying to get into government up at the top in other words the MP's people like that. It was done at the local level to engage with the local Mayor the city managers or the Deputy Mayor where it became most affective and we now invite these people from around Europe even Australia and Canada to come in and talk with the industry and share their experiences and so on, and it's very effective, during the forum we produce case studies of cities that can actually

demonstrate how this relationship has become very effective, because it's the Mayer that ultimately decides or an equivalent depending on which country, whether a new centre can be built and indeed he can open those conferences, he or she is very important to the success of meetings in a sitting, and those case studies are very good, very clear and they do demonstrate, and the other thing is that it's not just that politicians forum like in Germany and I think this is something that is not easy but I think this part of the world should certainly think about for e.g. Sweden as a country and I tended it this year, they invited 40 local politicians to Guttenberg to coincide with the tur to have a forum and these Swedish politicians engaged with the industry, now again I think that sort of format, that's been extended round the world local politicians forums and I think that's very good because we do need that support off local governments.

**Moderator:** Has anyone in this room ever been assessed? Let's talk about Singapore, how do you engage with the local Politicians.

**Oliver:** We normally have to go through our mainstream to attend this engagement, we raise issues and to try and say what we think and raise our concerns as every now and again we have a mass supplier, this is where we try and engage the politicians and our skill.

**Moderator:** But have you ever had an industry forum where you invite local politicians and really discuss the industry with them, so maybe at the next base will be the Asia for Asia summit, that could be a possibility.

**Mike to Man from audience:** Can I ask you in Singapore how have you engaged the other industries, I think in most of Asia engaging the tourism, it's true that engaging the industries such as health that they understand the importance of advice.

**Man from audience:** We find that we are having to that quite a bit, not just to mention that the US government agencies sitting on those benches because to them I think sometimes once you have scored a certain success this gives confidence and only then can we see the benefits of this coming through; this is where we get other agencies and people interested

**Moderator:** Maybe. Let's talk about industry and engagements as we are all from the industry, maybe Tom and Nino. What are some of your needs in terms of

planning or suppliers whose you are not meeting, what are some of the model that needs to change as you change as your customers demand more things from you?

**Nino:** I think the most important thing is the software for the people, I will even argue that for an exhibition it's not the hall itself is not crucial to the success of the trade show, and I mean it plays an important role, but what's more important is how you fill that hall, with your own team also with your vendors, with your suppliers, with the people you work with on a day to day basis. This includes also that we focus on the fact that it's hard to sell, any exhibition space can say how many square meters they have, how many set ups you can make, it's hard to sell the software to people, it depends on how experienced they are, how long they have been in the industry, but on a day to day basis I think this is what's more important to us when we look for help or when someone anticipates that we need help.

**Moderator:** So the hardware is not as important as the software, is that what you are saying?

**Nino:** Yes

**Tom:** Yes I do want to answer that, I just wanted to raise a line with this and it's quite interesting the engagement or our recognition of the youth of people coming in this so called generation hive and I don't think we should underestimate that, and listening to these people talk about and visualise the future of conferences, trade shows is fascinating, these are the people, the future of our industry and we should be listening to these people and that's why tomorrow there is a future leaders forum here and we set them a challenge and that challenge challenges these bright young people who have not come into our industry yet, they are thinking about it so our mission, our task is to persuade them to come into our industry listening to this challenge when they will talk about the definitive generation wide conference, it will be very interesting to hear what they say and they have incredible ideas in terms of social media, in terms of how it should look and how to get the best out of it.

**Dan:** I think one of the important things, when you mentioned software versus hardware is that we as an industry need to listen to the clients and what they are looking for. If we make assumptions, if we work by assumptions you will be

*surprised at how many times I've seen industries and other parties spending thousands of dollars on assumptions. The world is changing and that means that every one of us needs to check, more so on what needs to be changed. It's very fortunate in a sense and very unfortunate in another but we have to change all the time. What we could support from an exhibition five years ago may not be valued anymore today more important what the associations are looking for is something much more functional what is more consistent with the local culture and also the local community, this is what they are here for this is how they will measure success, not how luxurious the hotel is.*

**Nino:** *I would like to add that listening and learning are the most crucial things.*

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**Appendix 25: Open-ended question responses**

1. What other things could have been done to satisfy you and what can be done to draw you back?
2. *Improve road safety. Easier to get receipts. Tsunami safety and otherwise safety. Good deals for partners a draw card.*
3. *Political situation have to be improved.*
4. *Thank you and good luck.*
5. *Everybody wants to come to Thailand, so you know for sure that there will be plenty of colleagues and other important people. Everybody is great that you can bring your husband/wife along (and into same hotel), and especially that it was not really expensive like some other conferences!*
6. *Availability of better quality local products at value-for-money prices (not exorbitant tourist charges), standardised prices for tour packages.*
7. *Good service.*
8. *I think that Thailand is a beautiful country and all of things was good for us but your food culture was bad for us.*
9. *Unfortunately one of my luggages in the Bangkok airport was opened illegally and one of my electrical devices lost. Of course, other travellers like me complained this problem. This case affects the situations.*
10. *Improve service, safety and facilities.*
11. *Everything was excellent...I liked it very much!*
12. *Satisfied me.*
13. *All perfect.*



14. *Improvement of catering facilities actually at the conference centre. There were plenty in the adjacent shopping centre, but this took some time to reach. The lunch boxes provided were usually only warm and had stood around for a while before distribution.*
15. *Good place to visit.*
16. *No particular comments.*
17. *Getting a business visa was expensive, especially when compared to when i don't need one when I'm there as a tourist.*
18. *Better airline prices.*
19. *I hope that Thailand does not make itself a Conference destination beyond what it is. The reason - the workers will get less money for the job that they are employed to do because to make hotels etc. cheap and competitive the prices will be cut but not for profits of the hotel chain owners or the capitalists but for the everyday workers - cleaners, bartenders etc. I study this topic. Neo-liberalism does not spread or distribute the wealth evenly.*
20. *Halal food for Muslims.*
21. *The symposium was well organized. However, I regretted that numbers of poster presentation were not so many. Thanks very much for your hospitality.*
22. *I'll be back! This was my 4th trip to Thailand and I love the country!*
23. *Many of these are functions of what congress organisers put on not Thailand & should not be on the list. Many of the conference rooms were scattered around venue, offices up odd corridors & hard to find. Better signposting would have made a big improvement!!!*
24. *Well, first of all I would like to thank you for the opportunity, but has I informed you before i did manage to attend this conference*

and also I have not yet been able to attend even a single conference in Thailand and in these Asian countries you mentioned, but according to the knowledge I have about Thailand and the familiarity I gained through attending other conferences, I would like to say that: 1. Try and be accountable to your potential invited participants. 2. You can also improve the quality of your services in terms of conference coverage and media. This is very important and will help bring an impact to the world, it will allow the non-attendee to be connected to the conference either online or by television. It will also bring more attraction for more people to want to become part of the upcoming conferences and in terms of keeping records as well it is very important to do so for the future. Temperature of the conference room should have been controlled better if it was possible.

25. Make visa application more pleasant and easier.
26. Perhaps more reliable and honest tour operators. Also not to be forced to visit certain stores that badger you when you have booked a tour package.
27. Information on public transport.
28. It is difficult to talk about Thailand as a whole - the standard of hotels and service in Bangkok is well above that found in some regional towns. Regional towns need more infrastructure development to become good venues in the conference market.
29. Expensive telephone fee and net is not very convenient.
30. Education courses.
31. The conference that I attended was disappointing. Papers of extremely low quality were presented by people who could not speak adequate English. Workshops among participants had not been organized. The award for best paper went to a member of

*the editorial team of ICLT (unprecedented!!). He had even posted it on his web page before it was announced. Make sure you don't do these things because reputation is everything. Not sightseeing. Thanks and good luck.*

32. *Kindness of staff. ISGA X 2009 is first international conference for me. This conference satisfies me very much!!! Thank You.*
33. *My wife s plantation is located in Nong Khai. More visits to local educators.*
34. *Kindness of the people.*
35. *Keeping Smile.*
36. *Communication in the Taxis or streets is very difficult, so maybe a simple guide with the most useful terms and how they are written in Thai would be advisable.*
37. *In my experience it is not the country that will bring me back for another conference - it is the conference subject and program. This is more often dictated by the relevant discipline structure and the organising committee. It is also important to note that in my field (science) it is seen amongst my colleagues that international meetings are shared around the world to allow greater involvement by different parts of the 'science community'. So Thailand would not be chosen as a destination for some of these associations only because it had already been a host country within a short history.*
38. *Keep the airport open- political stability.*
39. *More conferences with similar themes!!!*
40. *Warn people about the Bangkok International Airport scams and other potential safety/crime issues!!!*

41. *Thailand was a wonderful place to visit and I'd return again if there was an opportunity.*
42. *I would have been delighted to see more nature (not really into big cities). Should the conference have been held in a venue on an isolated island with opportunities to go swimming/diving/fishing/forest with other conference participants, I think that would have given opportunity to strengthen the networking while enjoying oneself.*
43. *In general it was ok and I hope to join further events in Thailand.*
44. *Do a lot more in marketing. Cooperate with academics.*
45. *Conference was well organized. Providing a CD of articles presented in the conference.*
46. *I fall in love with Thailand, I will try to come back only for tourism.*
47. *It was good and there is no specific complain.*
48. *Hold more meetings in Thailand.*
49. *Very satisfied. Effective conference.*
50. *It was good enough.*
51. *Free internet at Hotel.*
52. *Nothing more. I have been looked after extremely well by all of my Thai hosts. I am returning in January to present another keynote and workshop and to attend a conference. I am looking forward to visit again.*
53. *I will be back.*
54. *1- Traffic always a problem in Bangkok 2- expansion of Sky train will be good.*

55. *Thailand is an excellent location for holding workshops in the region. I am more impressed by conferences I have attended in Thailand than other countries.*
56. *Improve road traffic in Bangkok!!!!!!!*
57. *Better conference rooms and video and audio equipment.*
58. *People working in hotels and incentive management industry should improve their language skills and quality of service.*
59. *I was massaged from Thailand people during long times. This is very good for you.*
60. *Less traveling from and to the meeting venue to the hotel. Thailand is very welcoming nations, keep the good work.*
61. *Better services and basic amenities.*
62. *Great experience and would return anytime there is an interesting conference. Would also like to come on vacation at some time in the future.*
63. *Resolve political problems to avoid airport closure. Allow conference attendees to enter on tourist visa rather than business visa.*
64. *Very pleased and have recommended Thailand as a venue.*
65. *Traffic situation needs to be improved.*
66. *Internet connections are terrible in hotels.*
67. *I would come back anyway :-)*
68. *Everything is fine.*
69. *Just keep doing the excellent job they are doing.*
70. *Nothing specific.*

71. *Funding is a big issue. I do not have unlimited funds to support conference attendance and so I need to be selective. An invitation from the organizers with an offer of financial support is, therefore, a big factor in deciding whether I will attend.*
72. *Capability of Hotel and conference facility staff communicating in English.*
73. *Attractions/scenery/snorkelling, weather, security, accessibility, quality of service, affordability, cultures.*
74. *Need to get best value for money.*
75. *Haven't been to Thailand.*
76. *No problems observed.*
77. *It really all depends upon the relevance of the meetings - I loved my visit and the people and facilities.*
78. *Don't ever allow the international and domestic airports to be closed again by force.*
79. *I have never been to a conference in Thailand.*
80. *Political stability is very important. Quality of speakers is very important.*
81. *Cultural Resources.*
82. *No occupation of airports or other public places. Punishment of the guilty as terrorist!*
83. *If I had funds to travel, I'd love to go to Thailand again.*
84. *Interesting places to visit as well as friendly people.*
85. *Nice and kind people.*
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