



September 2018

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Recommended Citation

Konar, R., & Hussain, K. (2018). Investigating the expenditure and experience of international conference delegates visiting Malaysia. *Journal of Global Business Insights*, 3(2), 27-40. Retrieved from <https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/globe/vol3/iss2/3>

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Revisions

Submission date: Jul. 8, 2018

1st Revision: Sep. 17, 2018

Acceptance: Sep. 17, 2018

Investigating the Expenditure and Experience of International Conference Delegates Visiting Malaysia

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Abstract

A continuous growth of the business tourism in Malaysia has attracted many business tourists towards the MICE tourism. The purpose of this study is to investigate the expenditure patterns of the international conference delegates in micro areas in relation with the experience level measured based on their spending. A quantitative research based approach was employed through survey method in the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre to collect the data based on ordinal-polytomous type survey instrument. 378 international conference delegates were chosen through non-probability convenience sampling. The overall expenditure patterns are measured through descriptive analysis, where the results reveals that major part of the delegates' average expenditure (USD\$ 2,657) were spent on international airfare (21%) as compared to accommodation, conference registration and other spending which amounted nearly 15% in each areas. The expenditure satisfaction response from the delegates were high (4.58 mean value) along with the revisit intention measuring 84%. Consequently, the most positive feedbacks from the delegates were the Malaysian hospitality, marvelous infrastructure and business facility procedures.

Keywords: spending patterns, experience behavior, MICE tourism, spending satisfaction, KLCC

Introduction

Business tourism has gained a huge value and more diversification within it; MICE (Meetings, Incentive, Conference and Exhibition) tourism has taken business tourism to a whole new level reflecting the economic impact value to its host country. The business economic globalization and the fast growing interdependence between countries are proven highly beneficial to the business tourism industry of today, which has changed the patterns of production and consumption, influencing them towards the greater competition. New emerging destinations are the stronghold of different countries, which helped to create new destination marketing plans and the quality of the service and goods standards to compete with the global markets. Growing business tourism has always sought for new trends with combination of modern technology and tourism market strategies focused on destination benefits, specifically economy and destination development. The major improvements have been seen in the trade goods and services, development of the safe and rapid transportation and technological improvements. The current

research focuses on the spending of the conference delegates into the major expenditure areas (micro-areas) in their business trips, along with their experience level from the different commodities of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Stated by Swarbrooke and Horner (2001) there are main four major category of areas where the delegates' of the conferences are most likely to spend; those categories are (1) Accommodation (2) Transportation (3) Destination (4) Venues. The current study attempts to investigate international conference delegates' spending patterns and their visiting experience level within Malaysian MICE tourism, especially in the conference sector. An empirical study would be helpful to identify the level of experience of the business tourists, and to identify the strength and weakness of the business destination spending areas (Wang & Lee, 2011). To identify the strength and the weaknesses of the micro-areas of expenditure this study will also focus on the level of experience and the areas can be improved though the basis of the findings.

Background of the Study

The business tourism requires a strong industrial and tourism development authority's liaison beside the governmental support to enrich the growth in revenue. The conference sector is having leading status like other tourism industry in Malaysia. Conference related business tourists' spending on the accommodation, transportation, food and entertainments brings many economic benefits to the hosting destination (Oppermann & Chon, 1997). The increasing rate of conference delegates helps the overall economy of the country to strengthen up and creates more public relationships in a positive way for the growth of MICE tourism. The MICE sector is consider as an important economic impact generator of tourism expenditure, investment, foreign exchange and employment. To measure the accurate size and value of the MICE tourism is very difficult due the lack of widespread accurate data (Carlsen, 1995).

Conference Sector

Conference sector is considered as one of the major fastest growing sector under the MICE tourism, while turning the whole tourism of any country into a huge generator of economy for its own economic development at the present era, which is significant in a global scale. Thus, the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA, 2013), has divided the tourism into two different tourism industry, business and leisure tourism industry. Correspondingly, Haven-Tang, Jones, and Webb (2007) and Hankinson (2005), the conference sector of the business tourism is one of the major sector which has been growing in a rapid speed and getting matured as the time passing by. This industry is been well known for the factor that affects the countries' economy with the pulling remunerative factor of direct and indirect effects. As Ladkin (2006) stated, conference tourism is one of the most important component of the MICE tourism. The conference includes planning, travelling and attending the conferences; which also includes the leisure purpose aspect where the delegates often extend their stay for leisure purpose and other activities. The MICE tourism is a diverse industry associated with the different types of events and activities. This sector also includes some common interests of tourism development and destination branding for the economic benefits. According to ICCA data, the growth of MICE market in China was recorded in triple digits growth (195%) in the number of international meeting and conventions events those are hosted between 2008 and 2009, in compare to the 46% international meets and conference hosted by Japan. Asian economic giants have helped to grow the market of the MICE tourism resulting a huge growth was 264% in the number of

international meeting and conference hosted in all over the Asian countries. The overall growth in the world for the business tourism is increasing rapidly where it is expected an extensive growth of conference sector in the Asia-Pacific region. In between 1983-1987 the conference sector business has grown 73% compared with the growth of world 51% for the same period (Hunt, 1989). Several studies have inspected the significance of a destination determinants for the conference delegates and delivering them with the inconsistent findings, where previous researches have found out that the major determinants for the conference delegates are followed by the hotel facilities, safety and security of the delegates, hotel facilities and the tourism attraction of the host destination (Lee & Back, 2007). Major factors that attracts the conference delegates are majorly activities, education benefits, networking with other delegates, product details, opportunities of the conferences; these are major factors those were considered as the deciding factors for the delegates to attend any conference (Severt, Wang, Chen, & Breiter, 2007). There were some significant differences found out in between the perceived importance of the selected sites for the conference organizers, conference directors and sales & marketing team and the actual results demonstrated by the researchers from the delegates' perspectives (Qu, Li, & Chu, 2000). Moreover, a professional business development, technological innovation, and medical advancement created "a huge enhancement to local information and skills in any conceivable discipline" (Rogers, 2008, p. 287). Business and leisure tourism operates on similar infrastructure, but since the business tourism exploits higher quality and greater costs within the finish products, it brings bigger gain to the market (Rogers, 2008).

In conjunction to MICE tourism economic activities, the conference delegates' personal preference and experience also may influence their expenditure nature in the host destination (Murphy, 1985). The personal preferences are based on the experience of the delegates have received from the starting day to the time before purchasing in the conference hosted country, which will always influence their spending nature as well as their individual personality (Murphy, 1985). The conference delegates coming from different regions of the world may have different likings, which influence their personal preference to make expenses of money in the hosting country of the conference. Apparently, cultural gap of the different inbound delegates will always influence their distinctive selections. The economic benefits, convention industry offers plenty of further advantages, as an example, social, cultural and environmental advantages. Conferences' bring businesses along with individuals to exchange ideas, effective practices, business contacts, and increase their visibility (Davie, 2009; Sangpikul & Kim, 2009).

Spending Patterns

Conference sector in Asia, (Hunt, 1989) stated that conference business in South Korea, where the delegates "spent twice as much as the average visitor and stayed an average of ten days instead of six" (p. 63), it was assumed that the expenditure of the delegates were based on a daily average. One of the research in Hong Kong shows that the "conference and incentive travel visitors stays as long and spend three times as much as the average visitor" (Hunt, 1989, p. 63). Considering the results, this sector has the potentiality to generate more revenue, as a result different tourism organization frequently tend to highlight these high expenditure and the longer stay in their statistical report as the positive economic impacts in tourism revenue indicators. Previous researches has been done through the descriptive statistics which was intended to focus on the business travelers' and organizing committees' expenditure, where they were being asked questions related to their business travel, such as; size of the business trip party, travelers' origin,

length of their business trip stay and other useful quantitative data. As the researches were mainly focused on the expenditure patterns, not many qualitative data were gathered from them apart from the satisfaction level and major issues they faced in the hosting countries. The results of these expenditure research surveys were tend to focus on the economic contribution from the business travelers towards the hosting countries. The delegates spending compromises of pre and post business trip spending activity, the length of the stay in the business event hosting country and the patterns of the business delegates' expenditure, which allows to forecast more accurately and planning for the growth of the business industry. Regular data collection, monitoring activities, and through destination based surveys on a yearly basis, which will allows to keep the track of the time series data.

Assessing the areas of expenditure of the business travelers is difficult, as there is no simple measure to identify exact areas that the business travelers will spend and which amount of money they will spent. As stated by Lovejoy (2003, p. 7) "the best way to measure the impact of visitor spending is to use surveys to determine the amount and type of goods that travelers tend to purchase, and then to estimate the portion of output visitors support in key industries". To measure the amount of money the travelers are spending in the different areas of their business trip, the primary requirement is the area where the travelers are tend spend, as there are many areas where the travelers may be spending unknowingly and which does not comes under the consideration of economic impact research. As per the previous surveys there are many studies has been done to identify the areas of travelers' expenditure, there can be expenditure categories ranging from 4 to 20 where the travelers are most likely tend to spend, depending upon the environment, location, experience of travelers and other influencing factors.

There are four major categories that have been illustrated by Swarbrooke and Horner (2001), in general situation the travelers often spend in these areas. The details and accuracy of the expenditure can be determine through the number of category been used by the travelers, the proper expenditure categories can be useful to determine the economic impact modelling (Walsh, 1986). Recently Stynes (1998) has defined in brief of the visitor spending from the technical aspect point of view. Considering the expenditures of the business travelers, it clearly depend on the location of the study as the influencing variables may differ from location to location and which helps to define the number of categories should be implement for the study. As Walsh (1986) also stated that measuring too many categories (example: 20) may lead to the confusion in the output of the results as it is difficult to find out the major categories than has the most impact in the economic developments and many unpopular categories may come in the results, which leads to biasness. In detailed measurement there are 7 categories that can be used for a good measurement of the travelers' expenditure, and these categories represent 85% of the overall expenditure (Moisey, Yuan, & McCool, 1990). For this study there four major areas that has been adopted from the study of Swarbrooke and Horner (2001), to understand the business trip expenditure for MICE purpose. In the four majors accommodation, destination, venues and transportation; each of the section are categorized into sub-categories which elaborates most the areas, where the business travelers are tend to spend.

Spending Experience

A limited study has been done to understand, how the business travelers consume experiences in the MICE sector as the numbers of the conference tourist arrivals in Malaysia are growing.

Despite of the economic contribution of the conferences and the rapid growth of this industry understanding spenders' experience has gained some opportunity in the researchers attention (Yoo & Weber, 2005). Revamping the conference delegates' experience has considered a key strategy for different country to improve their economies due to its long-term high economic impact. The MICE tourism flow goes through the man-made artificial environment (hotels, convention center, airports, restaurants, etc.) where the business delegates experiences the facilities, environment, service qualities by the hosting country. For the conference delegates the activities they do during their conference visits are solely related to the four major areas (1) Accommodation (2) Transportation (3) Destination (4) Venues, where the most of the delegates experience are related. To generate an intension of the business travelers to revisit to the business destination, the tourism developing organization for a destination are trying to develop the areas for the business tourist according to their experience in the major four areas through the marketing organization. Wong and Wan (2013) mentioned that, identifying the strength and weaknesses of a business destination can improve the attraction and the effectiveness, however which is not be possible without empirical data. The four major areas are the primary areas, where the business tourists have the lot of expectation from the hosting country and the motivational factors that could attract business tourist to the country. Designing activities for the best conference delegates would definitely requires a destination developing plan and activities that would generate an interest in revisit intension in the delegates for the future.

Methodology

An explanation of the methodology is preferred to enlighten how the data was collected to achieve the aims and objective of this paper. Several authors in the field of refined tourism research methods have criticized the methodologies of similar studies on business tourism. A particular topic may enlighten from different sources, including future recommendation by other researchers, social interest or may be adaption of different researches (Dixon, Bouma, & Atkins 1987). This current research problem or issue was identified through the gaps in the previous studies in the field of tourism of Malaysia's MICE tourism, particularly Malaysia's conference sector. The brief literature review helped to form the research aim and objectives, observing further into these research objectives, three research questions are identified to proceed with the research process. The four research questions are stated as

- What are the spending patterns of international conference delegates in the micro areas of conference visit?
- What are experience level of the international conference delegates in the micro areas of conference visit?
- What are satisfaction level of the international conference delegates with their spending?
- Are the international conference delegates willing to re-visit Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in future?

The conceptual framework is developed from the study, where the theory is used to support the guiding framework to help the researcher explanation and understand the research findings. The theory and the empirical study are linked with each other through the research process (Bryman, 2004). Research therefore requires a theoretical framework.

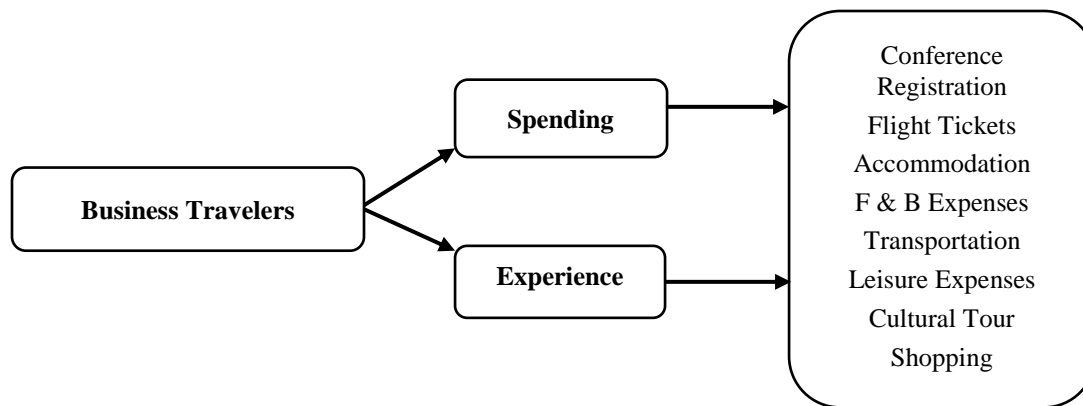


Figure 1: Conceptual framework developed for this study

Sampling

The respondents were directed with the non-probability convenience sampling technique for the most accurate results (Aaker, Kumar, Day, & Leone, 2010). The most practical method to collect the data for the study is approached based with full authority of the respondents' information to be used in this study. The method was non-probability sampling; which were selected based on the judgment sample procedure, where the samples were selected based on the non-residential status. Samples were all international conference delegates, three conference venues were selected to collect the sample of (n=378). Combining the total three venues targeted the total population was 3300. The data were collected between November to December 2013. After the overall response from the population of 3300, 378 replies were considered as valid, giving an overall response rate of 11.5%. The participants were asked to fill up the questionnaire by themselves. Based on the further information about the visitors' expenditure and subjective opinions about the Kuala Lumpur city as conference town and additional information from the international delegates. The Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre is the major hosting of conference in all over Malaysia, the conference venues are been chosen based on the number of international conference delegates were registered with conference event.

Survey Instrument

The questionnaire was ordinal-polytomous type, with self-administrated questions structured in four parts (1) travel information (2) expenditure (3) experience and (4) demographics. Wilton and Nickerson (2006) claimed that in order to understand the visitors' spending fully, it is important to understand the detailed expenditure types. In addition, income level of the delegates also influences the expenditure of them. Conference tourist most likely get financial support from their organization in the procedure of per diem allowances for covering expense, organizations make distinct packages. Social demographic variables such as, age; gender; income level; country of residence were analyzed. A Likert scale was to understand the experience questionnaire that describe the respondents their degree of support and rejection of that particular variable in those areas, through the use of terms such as strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, no opinion (Likert, Roslow, & Murhpy 1970). Travel information, section was given to gather basic information about the conference delegates; likewise, duration of stay, which airlines class did they fly, etc.

Analysis and Findings

Understanding the spending patterns of the conference delegates as a mandate a descriptive analysis is preferred to understand the patterns, followed by mean values describes the spending in the each categories of expenditure areas or micro areas. The Table 1 shows there is almost double figure amount of male and female delegates responded towards the research. The table below elaborates the number of male (64.3%) and female (35.7%) delegates. The age group of the conference respondents, as majority were between 31 years to 40 years (32.3%) followed by 41 years to 50 years delegates (32.0%), Below 30 years (8.5%) delegates were least. The income level of the delegates the majority of the delegates were having an income level between 4001 and 5000 (32.3%) followed by 2001 to 3000 (22.5%) income level group, the least income group were in the *less than 1000* (9.0%) category. The type of delegates participated in the research survey were majorly the international (72.8%) followed by Regional (ASEAN) (27.2%). In concern to the nationality of the delegates (n=378) top 10 countries' participants are being sorted in the table, the rest are in the appendices. The majority of the delegates were from United States of America (9.0%) belongs from the North American Region, within a slight difference the delegates from India (8.5%) Asian Region were next to the top, in the third position the European delegates were from United Kingdom (5.3%). At the 10th position the delegates belongs from Singapore (3.7%) from the Asian region.

Table 1: Demographics

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	135	35.7
Male	243	64.3
Total	378	100
Age		
Below 30	32	8.5
31-40	122	32.3
41-50	121	32.0
50 or above	103	27.2
Total	378	100
Monthly income (USD \$)		
Less than 1000	34	9.0
1001-2000	64	16.9
2001-3000	85	22.5
3001-4000	63	16.7
4001-5000	122	32.3
5001 or above	10	2.6
Total	378	100
Type of participants		
International	275	72.8
Regional (ASEAN countries)	103	27.2
Local	0	0.0
Total	378	100
Nationality (top 10 countries' delegates)		
United States of America	34	9.0
India	32	8.5
United Kingdom	20	5.3
China	19	5.0
Indonesia	19	5.0
Australia	16	4.2
Thailand	16	4.2
Germany	15	4.0
Philippines	14	3.7
Singapore	14	3.7
Others (59 different countries)	179	48.2
Total	378	100

Travel Information

This section elaborates the basic information of the travel information of the delegates. As mentioned in the Table 4.3, all the delegates were international so in respect to that, the mode of the travel that those delegates travelled through *air* (100%). In the concern to the airlines used by the respondents were listed in the table below, as top 10 airlines used by the delegates, where the majority of the delegates has travelled through the Malaysian Airlines (40.7%) which belong the Asia region followed by Emirates Airlines (8.5%) of Middle East, North Africa, and Greater Arabia region where at the tenth position airlines of Sub-Saharan Africa region Ethiopian Airlines (2.1%). In respect to the travel class of the delegates majority of them travelled by *economy class* (84.7%) and followed by *business class* (15.3%) as no other class being used by any of the delegates.

Table 2: Travel Information

		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Mode of Travel			
Air		378	100
Land		0	0.0
Sea		0	0.0
Others		0	0.0
Total		378	100
Airlines (Top 10 Airlines used by delegates)			
	Rank		
Malaysian Airlines	1 st	154	40.7
Emirates Airlines	2 nd	32	8.5
Thai Air	3 rd	22	5.8
Qatar Airways	4 th	21	5.6
Singapore Airlines	5 th	20	5.3
KLM Royal Dutch Airlines	6 th	20	5.3
Cathay Pacific Airlines	7 th	18	4.8
Air Asia	8 th	17	4.5
China Airlines	9 th	16	4.2
Ethiopian Airlines	10 th	8	2.1
Others		50	13.4
Total		378	100
Travel Class			
Economy class		320	84.7
Business class		58	15.3
First class		0	0.0
Others		0	0.0
Total		378	100
Choosing Particular Airlines			
None		25	6.6
Low cost		73	19.3
Good package		53	14.0
Trusted airline		104	27.5
Recommended by company/conference Organizer		78	20.6
Loyalty programme benefits		13	3.4
Others		32	8.5
Total		378	100
Mode of Flight			
None		1	0.3
Transfer		23	6.1
Connecting flight		133	35.2
Direct flight		221	58.5
Total		378	100

The delegates were being asked to give the reason for selecting the airlines, majority of them responded as the airlines company is as trusted airlines (27.5%) to travel, where *recommended*

airlines by company/conference organizer (20.6%) comes after it, as very least of the delegates opted the airlines which have loyalty benefit programmes (3.4%). Concerning the travel mode of the delegates to Malaysia, majority of the delegates availed the *direct flight* (58.5%), where another (35.2%) of delegates came through the *connecting flight*, a (6.1%) of delegates came through the transfer flight. In respect to the travelling with the travel party majority of the respondents has travelled alone (52.9%), another (33.3%) travelled with friends and colleagues. Majority of the business delegates did not extended their stay (85.2%) in Malaysia, and (14.8%) of the minority of delegates travelled different destination of Malaysia. The most chosen accommodation hotels were *traders* (12.4%) followed by *Renaissance* (11.4%), where most of the delegates stayed during their conference events. The majority of the conference delegates stayed for *4 nights* (27.8%) followed by *5 nights* (19.8%) and *6 nights* (19.3%) respectively.

Spending Patterns in Micro Areas

In this section of the spending areas there are ten independent spending areas are been identified as *conference/meeting registration fee(s)*, *cost of international airfare*, *cost of domestic airfare*, *cost of hotel/accommodation*, *cost of local cultural tours*, *other spending*, *spending on shopping*, *spending on food and beverage*, *spending on local transportation*, *spending on leisure activities* and *other spending*. the spending patterns were being analyzed and ranked according to the *mean of total spending in each areas*. The delegates has spent the most in cost of international airfare (1) followed by conference/meeting registration fee (2), cost of hotel/accommodation (3), other spending (4), cost of domestic airfare (5), spending on shopping (6), spending on food and beverage (7), spending on local transportation (8), spending on leisure activities (9), cost of local cultural tours (10). In the expenditure table of the individual areas, the means of the total expenditure were calculated through the average formulas.

Table 3: Spending's in Micro Areas

Areas of Spending	Ranking
Cost of International Airfare	1
Conference/Meeting Registration Fee(s)	2
Cost of Hotel/Accommodation	3
Other Spending	4
Cost of Domestic Airfare	5
Spending on Shopping	6
Spending on Food and Beverage	7
Spending on Local Transportation	8
Spending on Leisure Activities	9
Cost of Local Cultural Tours	10
Total Average Expenditure of the Delegates in the Conference Events (USD \$)	
Areas of Spending	Means (USD \$)
Conference/Meeting Registration Fee(s)	\$660.36
Cost of International Airfare	\$926.43
Cost of Domestic Airfare	\$354.68
Cost of Hotel/Accommodation	\$657.94
Cost of Local Cultural Tours	\$220.98
Spending on Local Transportation	\$125.47
Spending on Food and Beverage	\$229.92
Spending on Shopping	\$316.40
Spending on Leisure Activities	\$198.29
Other Spending	\$634.29
Mathematical Average Spending per Delegate	\$2,657.64
Total Net Spending	\$1,004,589.00

Accumulating all the micro area's expenditure (USD \$ 1,004,589.00) and the average expenditure of each delegate was USD\$ 2657.64, considerably the most average money was

expended in ‘Cost of International Airfare’ (USD\$ 926.43) whereas, the least average money was spent by the conference delegates in ‘Local Transportation’ (USD\$ 125.47).

Delegates Experience of the Micro Areas

Table 4 demonstrate the conference delegates experience towards the different micro areas, this section has been divided in ten different areas to measure the experience level of the conference delegates, there areas are, (1)conference venue, (2) international airline company, (3)domestic airline company, (4) point of entry/customs/immigration, (5) hotel/accommodation and other logging services, (6) local/cultural tours and tourism products, (7)local transportation, (8)restaurants, (9)shopping facilities, (10)leisure activities and (11)conference organization. The conference delegates were asked to rate the experience level of them in these areas. The table below demonstrates *level of experience* which will help to find out the areas where the improvement is required in Malaysia. There were three levels in the areas of the level of experience (H, Mean $\geq 4:00$), Moderate (M, Mean $> 3.00 < 4:00$) and Low (L, Mean ≤ 3.00). In the mentioned dimensions there are two areas where the experience level were at the *high level*, which were *conference venue* and the *conference organization*; whereas the *low* experience level areas were *domestic airlines company* and *local/cultural tours and tourism products*; rest of the areas were in the *moderate* level. In the further analysis the weightage of the each areas were being analyzed and demonstrated in the table.

Table 4: Experience in Micro Areas

Areas of Spending	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level of Experience	Weightage
Conference venue?	4.36	0.93	H	11.90 %
International airline company?	3.52	1.56	M	9.65 %
Domestic airline company?	1.38	1.93	L	3.78 %
Point of entry/customs/immigration?	3.66	1.36	M	10.05 %
Hotel/accommodation and other logging services?	3.76	1.26	M	10.32 %
Local/cultural tours and tourism products? (e.g. sightseeing, visiting historical places/museums, parks and other attractions)	2.62	1.92	L	7.18 %
Local transportation? (rails, public busses & taxis etc.)	3.22	1.48	M	8.85 %
Restaurants?	3.60	1.26	M	9.87 %
Shopping facilities? (such as shopping malls and retail outlet stores)	3.46	1.63	M	9.49 %
Leisure activities? (e.g. pubs, cinemas, adventure sports)	2.74	1.94	M	7.52 %
Conference organization? (for host company)	4.15	1.02	H	11.39 %
			Total	100%

Spending Satisfaction of the Conference Delegates

When the spending satisfaction of the conference delegates were being observed, the average mean value was (4.58), which is considered as high level of satisfaction in spending in different micro areas as the delegates have spent. The results helps to justify that the overall spending satisfaction of the conference delegates that they are strongly agree with their spending(s) in different micro areas.

Table 5: Spending Satisfaction

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Do you think your spending on this particular conference justify your visit/experience (overall satisfaction) in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia?	4.58	1.28

Delegates' Willingness to Re-Visit Malaysia in Future

The Table 6 demonstrates the willingness of the conference delegates to re-visit Malaysia in near future for business trips. The majority of the conference delegates agreed that they would like to re-visit Malaysia in future for business trips in *later, some other time* (43.9%), followed by (39.9%) where the delegates wants to re-visit *within 3 years* of time; (16.1%) of the conference delegates replied with *no opinion* as they are not sure about their re-visit to Malaysia for future business trip. The overall overview of the delegates in respect to the *willingness to re-visit* Malaysia in near future are in a highly positive direction.

Table 6: Willingness to Re-Visit

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Planning to revisit		
No opinion	61	16.1
Within 3 years	151	39.9
Later, some other time	166	43.9
Total	378	100

Travel Expenditure and Experience Comparison

The table 7 below compares the expenditure and experience through the method of actual to expected ratio (A/E Ratio) (Rubin, 2000), the expenditure of the delegates explained through the weightage of their average expenditure in different micro areas of spending, similarly the experience of the delegates were measured in according to the value of the weightage. Each expenditure and experience areas are compared through the method of 'actual to expected ratio' (AER), which states what is ratio between conference delegates expenditure according to their experience or what is ratio of the delegates experience according to their expenditure. The ratio output below the value of (1.00) is considered as lower level of experience in compared to delegates' expenditure, and vice-versa above the ratio value of (1.00) considered as good level of experience.

Table 7: Comparisons Between Expenditure and Experience

Micro Areas of Spending	Expenditure (Weightage)	Experience (Weightage)	Actual to Expected Ratio (AER)
Conference/Meeting Registration Fee(s)	15.27%	11.90%	1.28
Cost of International Airfare	21.42%	9.65%	2.22
Cost of Domestic Airfare	3.20%	3.78%	0.84
Cost of Hotel/Accommodation	15.21%	10.32%	1.47
Cost of Local Cultural Tours	5.11%	7.18%	0.71
Spending on Local Transportation	2.90%	8.85%	0.33
Spending on Food and Beverage	5.32%	9.87%	0.54
Spending on Shopping	7.32%	9.49%	0.77
Spending on Leisure Activities	4.58%	7.52%	0.61
Other Spending	14.67%	11.39%	1.29

Recommendation and Conclusion

This research study has achieved its primary aim and objectives through the critical analysis of the expenditure patterns and the experience of the conference delegates within the Malaysia. As the recent days of the competitive nature of the MICE tourism industry, to take hold the ranking

position in the ICCA ranking table Malaysia's MICE tourism entrepreneurs have to rethink their approach strategies towards the incoming business tourist. Creating the new trends and strategic improvements will develop the business tourism of Malaysia in future and will help to generate a revisit intention in business tourists' mind. The Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre eventually has made many positive steps and continuously improving through the quality of service and facilities. The continuously evolving trends throughout the world have prompted Malaysia's conference sector towards improvements based on visitors demand. The findings from this study have shown, delegates spending behavior based is based on the experiences in the individual micro areas. Considering the comparison, the level of experience and expenditure it's recommended that few areas like domestic airlines and tourism products require improvement.

Expenditure and Experience in Micro Areas Affecting Revisit Intension

The findings of the research have stated the expenditure and the level of experience gained by the international conference delegates, one of the co-related factor with the experience level of the delegates is the 'satisfaction' with their spending. While the both positive and negative feedback has opened view towards the delegates' likes and dislikes about the areas of their spending. Understanding them according to their experience feedbacks would be more helpful in improving the services and facilities for the business tourism as well as for the whole MICE tourism to serve the delegates better in their future visits. To understand the linkage between experience and expenditure, the comparison table identifies few areas where delegates' experience level was much lesser than their level of expenditure. The local transportation, food and beverage commodities, leisure activities based in city centre; as mentioned by conference delegates these areas of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia need improvements although these results are not predicted from the table but the open-ended questionnaires were another source to conclude. The positive experience feedback helped to identify areas that Malaysia as a business destination is improving in providing facilities and services to the business tourists. Whereas, the 'least things they like' about Malaysia as a business destination has revealed the unexplored issues especially the areas of logistics, transportation, personal demands and the required financial effort in the areas, services and facilities of the hotels and most likely the availability of business networking opportunity. Therefore, marketing resources should be allocated accordingly to enhance the brand of the Malaysia as a business destination. Special characterized improvements should be taken in consideration; like, immigration facilities, social security for the female travelers, and improvement of electronic information. As the Malaysian business tourism is the part of this world competitive market of business tourism, a continuous improvement and understanding the nature of the future trend would definitely bring more success.

The future intension of the international conference to re-visit Malaysia is uniquely depends on the beliefs and experience towards Malaysia. The experience level acts as a unique indicator based on the satisfaction level of their spending for their future intension towards revisiting Malaysia. Comparing the experience level in different micro areas of their spending, it is been found that the feedback from the delegates are diverse and in- depth. The research by (Kim & Chon, 2009) reveals that there are significance relationship between experience and intension for future revisit, which uniquely depends on the 'cost and accessibility'. The research question 'international conference delegates willingness to re-visit Malaysia' for this research study is to understand the future intension to re-visit Kuala Lumpur for business trips. The analysis results shows that 83.3% of the total delegates are willing to re-visit Kuala Lumpur in near future, when

the results from the two opinions *within 3 years* and *later, some other time* were combined. The future intension for re-visit uniquely indicates that they were satisfied with their spending and provided facilities.

Avenues for Future Research

A recommendation for the future research is to research the whole MICE tourism; in doing so, the whole meetings, incentives and the exhibition sector will be covered, which will give a better opportunity to understand the business tourism industry in Malaysia and help to develop through considering the feedback of the business tourists. The same study can be implemented in the leisure tourism, to understand the spending patterns of the visiting tourists and their valuable feedback to improve the tourism industry of Malaysia. In order to understand the whole tourism industry within Malaysia, a research study like this would more beneficial for the tourism developers to develop the Malaysian tourism industry, as it is one of the major economy generators for Malaysia. This nature of researches will benefit the country for the future understandings of the inbound tourist.

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