

**Attendance of Congress**

**Motivators For Attendance Of Congress/ Conferences**

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Business travel, an emerging segment in the tourism industry, is receiving considerable attention, especially from emerging destinations. Business travel ranges from networking and events to meetings and conferencing<sup>1</sup>. Focusing on the conference tourism element (MCCI - meetings, congresses, conventions, and incentives or MICE - meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions), more and more travel destinations are venturing into this market but struggle to attract a large number of participants to conferences<sup>2</sup>. Understanding factors that influence conference participation can help destinations and organizers attract more participants, bringing more economic and social benefits<sup>3,4</sup>. This literature review will explore the motivational factors of conference attendance.

Oppermann and Chon (1997) derived the first model that evaluated generational motivation factors for potential conference attendees<sup>5</sup>. The model categorized the influencing factors into four broad groups, namely intervening opportunities, destination and location factors, conference factors, and business factors<sup>6</sup>. Zhang et al. (2007) built upon and refined Oppermann and Chon's model, and the improved model revealed four motivational factors for conference attendance: total cost, locations, personal/ business, and conference factors<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> National Department of Tourism. "Business Tourism Sector." National Department of Tourism. Accessed June 10, 2024. [https://www.tourism.gov.za/AboutNDT/Branches1/domestic/Documents/Business Tourism Sector Trends- NDT.pdf](https://www.tourism.gov.za/AboutNDT/Branches1/domestic/Documents/Business%20Tourism%20Sector%20Trends-NDT.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Pavlukovic, Vanja, and Marija Cimbalevic. "Factors Affecting Conference Participation Decision-Making." *Journal of the Geographical Institute Jovan Cvijic, SASA* 70, no. 1 (2020): 31–43. <https://doi.org/10.2298/ijgi2001031p>.

<sup>3</sup> Anas, Muhammad Saufi, Nurul Amirah Maddiah, Nurin Uzma Eizamly, Nardiahtul Aisyah Sulaiman, and Hassnah Wee. "Key Success Factors toward MICE Industry: A Systematic Literature Review." *Journal of Tourism, Hospitality & Culinary Arts (JTHCA)* 12, no. 1 (February 29, 2020): 188–221.

<sup>4</sup> Pavlukovic, Vanja, and Marija Cimbalevic. "Factors Affecting Conference Participation Decision-Making." *Journal of the Geographical Institute Jovan Cvijic, SASA* 70, no. 1 (2020): 31–43. <https://doi.org/10.2298/ijgi2001031p>.

<sup>5</sup> Oppermann, M., & Chon, K.-S. (1997). Convention participation decision-making process. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 24(1), 178–191. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0160-7383\(96\)00049-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0160-7383(96)00049-7)

<sup>6</sup> Pavluković, Vanja, Adam B. Carmer, Miroslav D. Vujičić, Marija Cimbalević, and Uglješa Stankov. "Unveiling the Motivational Factors behind Generation Z's Conference Attendance for Sustaining Future Participation." *Sustainability* 15, no. 18 (September 20, 2023): 13989–12407. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su151813989>.

<sup>7</sup> Pavluković, Vanja, Adam B. Carmer, Miroslav D. Vujičić, Marija Cimbalević, and Uglješa Stankov. "Unveiling the Motivational Factors behind Generation Z's Conference Attendance for Sustaining Future Participation." *Sustainability* 15, no. 18 (September 20, 2023): 13989–12407. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su151813989>.

Later on, Yoo and Chon (2008) introduced a tool to measure factors influencing congress participation<sup>8</sup>. The two identified six broad motivational factors for congress attendance, and they included travel abilities, safety and health situations, academic opportunities, destination and conference factors, and social and professional networking purposes<sup>9</sup>. These convention-participation influences align with those of Oppermann and Chon (1997) and Zhang et al. (2007).

With the location dimension, its attractiveness, accessibility, and accommodation quality play a significant role in congress attendance decisions<sup>10,11</sup>. Also, if the destination is exotic, it can stimulate convention attendance. Also, a potential attendee can prefer a convention near home to save traveling time and costs<sup>12</sup>. Personal factors might include things like one's health; for instance, poor health can act as a deterrence for traveling<sup>13</sup>. As per the cost influences, one's financial situation can influence one's decision to attend a conference, as a lack of funds can be a reason for not participating in a convention<sup>14</sup>. The conference factors influencing attendance range from education and training one can receive from the conference to having a sense of belonging with the other attendees and interaction

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<sup>8</sup> Yoo , Joanne Jung-Eun, and Kaye Chon. "Factors Affecting Convention Participation Decision-Making: Developing a Measurement Scale." *Journal of Travel Research* 47, no. 1 (January 14, 2008): 113–22. <https://doi.org/doi.org/10.1177/0047287507312>.

<sup>9</sup> Yoo , Joanne Jung-Eun, and Kaye Chon. "Factors Affecting Convention Participation Decision-Making: Developing a Measurement Scale." *Journal of Travel Research* 47, no. 1 (January 14, 2008): 113–22. <https://doi.org/doi.org/10.1177/0047287507312>.

<sup>10</sup> Var, Turgut, Frank Cesario, and Gary Mauser. "Convention Tourism Modelling." *Tourism Management* 6, no. 3 (September 1985): 194–204. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0261-5177\(85\)90036-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/0261-5177(85)90036-6)

<sup>11</sup> Rittichainuwat, Bongkosh Ngamsom, Jeffrey A. Beck, and Joseph Lalopa. "Understanding Motivations, Inhibitors, and Facilitators of Association Members in Attending International Conferences." *Journal of Convention & Exhibition Management* 3, no. 3 (September 2001): 45–62. [https://doi.org/10.1300/j143v03n03\\_04](https://doi.org/10.1300/j143v03n03_04).

<sup>12</sup> Oppermann, M., & Chon, K.-S. (1997). Convention participation decision-making process. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 24(1), 178–191. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0160-7383\(96\)00049-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0160-7383(96)00049-7)

<sup>13</sup> Oppermann, M., & Chon, K.-S. (1997). Convention participation decision-making process. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 24(1), 178–191. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0160-7383\(96\)00049-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0160-7383(96)00049-7)

<sup>14</sup> Oppermann, M., & Chon, K.-S. (1997). Convention participation decision-making process. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 24(1), 178–191. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0160-7383\(96\)00049-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0160-7383(96)00049-7)

with diverse people<sup>15</sup>. Intervening factors may include other competing conferences, making potential attendees choose one and fail to participate in another.

Networking is a further motivational dimension<sup>1617</sup>. Interaction with like-minded individuals and exchanging and learning new skills can convince an individual to partake in a particular conference. Jago and Derry (2005) state that most delegates at a convention are time-constrained, and therefore, conferences offer them a networking opportunity to look for new business dealings and collaborations<sup>18</sup>. Studies like Karya (2022) show that participating in MICE leads to an increase in market and sales development<sup>19</sup>, and this can be attributed to the networking and learning of new professional skills. It is clear that networking plays a vital role in participants' decision to attend a convention. Thus, any investigation on motivation factors for conference participation should include a networking reference<sup>2021</sup>.

Looking at existing literature, it is evident that the motivational factors for conference attendance are similar among various studies. Mair and Thompson (2009) investigated the motivational factors of convention attendance among UK citizens and identified six influences, namely time, location, networking, cost factors, and professional and personal development. Malekmohammadi et al. (2011) study on conference attendee motivations also

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<sup>15</sup> Oppermann, M., & Chon, K.-S. (1997). Convention participation decision-making process. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 24(1), 178–191. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0160-7383\(96\)00049-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0160-7383(96)00049-7)

<sup>16</sup> Oppermann, M., & Chon, K.-S. (1997). Convention participation decision-making process. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 24(1), 178–191. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0160-7383\(96\)00049-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0160-7383(96)00049-7)

<sup>17</sup> Witt, Stephen F, Alan M Sykes, and Mireille Dartus. “Forecasting International Conference Attendance.” *Tourism Management* 16, no. 8 (December 1995): 559–70. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0261-5177\(95\)00079-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0261-5177(95)00079-8).

<sup>18</sup> Jago, Leo K., and Margaret Deery. “Relationships and Factors Influencing Convention Decision-Making.” *Journal of Convention & Event Tourism* 7, no. 1 (April 14, 2005): 23–41. [https://doi.org/10.1300/j452v07n01\\_03](https://doi.org/10.1300/j452v07n01_03).

<sup>19</sup> Dwi Arseto, Dedy, and Hermanto Hutagalung. “Analysis of the Impact of the Implementation of MICE (Meeting, Incentive, Convention and Exhibition) on Increasing Sales and Market Development for MSME Players in Tebing Tinggi City in the Era Industrial Revolution 4.0.” *International Journal of Economic, Business, Accounting, Agriculture Management and Sharia Administration (IJEAS)* 2, no. 5 (October 12, 2022). <https://doi.org/10.54443/ijeas.v2i5.395>.

<sup>20</sup> Severt, Denver, Youcheng Wang, Po-Ju Chen, and Deborah Breiter. “Examining the Motivation, Perceived Performance, and Behavioral Intentions of Convention Attendees: Evidence from a Regional Conference.” *Tourism Management* 28, no. 2 (April 2007): 399–408. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2006.04.003>.

<sup>21</sup> Mair, Judith, Leonie Lockstone-Binney, and Paul A. Whitelaw. “The Motives and Barriers of Association Conference Attendance: Evidence from an Australasian Tourism and Hospitality Academic Conference.” *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management* 34 (March 2018): 58–65. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2017.11.004>.

concur with the findings of Oppermann and Chon (1997), Yoo and Chon (2008), Mair and Thompson (2009) and Zhang et al. (2007), as the influences for convention participation decision-making included conference, destination, pleasure-seeking, and professional factors<sup>22</sup>. The pleasure-seeking factor includes aspects like seeking new experiences, visiting new places, and getting away from the norm of home life<sup>23</sup>. Other studies' findings, such as Tanford et al. (2012), Mair et al. (2018), and Aktas and Demirel (2018), also align with the earlier studies' findings on the motivational influences for conference attendance<sup>24,25,26</sup>. With the upsurge in corporate events like team building, product launches, and brand promotions, this sector is booming<sup>27</sup>, and attracting more attendees is critical to the continued growth of this sector.

Conference-attendance decision-making can also be evaluated based on age groups. López-Bonilla et al. (2022) researched the motivation of conference tourism on a sample comprised of 52.5 percent and 47.5 percent men and women. According to the study findings, the motivators are wide-ranging, from networking and leisure to academic and professional development, socialization, and career development<sup>28</sup>. Scott et al. (2020) findings on

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<sup>22</sup> Malekmohammadi, Anahita, Mohamed Badaruddin, and Ekiz H. Erdogan. "An Analysis of Conference Attendees' Motivations: Case of International Conference Attendees in Singapore." *Journal of Travel Research* 11 (2011): 50–64.

<sup>23</sup> Malekmohammadi, Anahita, Mohamed Badaruddin, and Ekiz H. Erdogan. "An Analysis of Conference Attendees' Motivations: Case of International Conference Attendees in Singapore." *Journal of Travel Research* 11 (2011): 50–64.

<sup>24</sup> Tanford, Sarah, Rhonda Montgomery, and Kathleen B. Nelson. "Factors That Influence Attendance, Satisfaction, and Loyalty for Conventions." *Journal of Convention & Event Tourism* 13, no. 4 (October 2012): 290–318. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15470148.2012.728975>.

<sup>25</sup> Mair, Judith, Leonie Lockstone-Binney, and Paul A. Whitelaw. "The Motives and Barriers of Association Conference Attendance: Evidence from an Australasian Tourism and Hospitality Academic Conference." *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management* 34 (March 2018): 58–65. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2017.11.004>.

<sup>26</sup> Aktas, Gurhan, and Banu Demirel. "The Genuine Needs of Conference Attendees: An Analysis by the Modern Quality Function Deployment." *International Journal for Quality Research* 13, no. 1 (March 30, 2019): 13–32. <https://doi.org/10.24874/ijqr13.01-02>.

<sup>27</sup> Wee, Hassnah, Nurul Dafiqah Kamarulzaman, and Muhd Saufi Anas. "Mice Industry Survival: A Systematic Literature Review." *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 12, no. 11 (November 6, 2022): 829–52. <https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarbss/v12-i11/15622>.

<sup>28</sup> López-Bonilla, Jesús Manuel, Sandra Monroy-Rodríguez, Luis Miguel López-Bonilla, and Concepción Granados-Perea. "Motivational Factors to Participate in Conferences and Gender Differences." *Tourism and Hospitality Research* 23, no. 1 (February 27, 2022): 3–16. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14673584221075735>.

millennials' motivations for attending events and conferences concur with those of López-Bonilla et al. (2022), and they included socialization, career development, and timing.

Millennials are not the only generation MICE consumer group, as Generation Z (Gen Z) is also a growing cohort in business tourism<sup>29</sup>. It is essential to be familiar with the motivations for participation by Generation Z members in conference tourism to boost the growth and success of the MCCI-tourism sector and derive maximum benefits from this group's attendance. Pavluković et al. (2023) sought to unveil the motivational factor behind this group's conference participation. The findings showed Gen Z had motivations similar to those named above, such as ease of conference accessibility, conference stimuli, conference costs, and professional and educational factors<sup>30</sup>. One interesting thing about Gen Z is that they had the sustainability aspect as a motivator for conference attendance as they were more attracted to events that incorporate eco-friendly practices like renewable energy to power the conference and waste recycling practices<sup>31</sup>. Above all, this cohort was more likely to attend a digital conference. These results are relevant to stakeholders in the conference tourism sector, including planners, venues, and organizers, at the current time when boosting attendance numbers is no easy task.

To conclude, past literature sheds light on factors that shape motivations for participating in congresses and events. Even though the results are from self-reported data, they can be generalized to the broader population. Future research should consider looking at

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<sup>29</sup> Pavluković, Vanja, Adam B. Carmer, Miroslav D. Vujičić, Marija Cimbalević, and Uglješa Stankov. "Unveiling the Motivational Factors behind Generation Z's Conference Attendance for Sustaining Future Participation." *Sustainability* 15, no. 18 (September 20, 2023): 13989–12407. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su151813989>.

<sup>30</sup> Pavluković, Vanja, Adam B. Carmer, Miroslav D. Vujičić, Marija Cimbalević, and Uglješa Stankov. "Unveiling the Motivational Factors behind Generation Z's Conference Attendance for Sustaining Future Participation." *Sustainability* 15, no. 18 (September 20, 2023): 13989–12407. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su151813989>.

<sup>31</sup> Pavluković, Vanja, Adam B. Carmer, Miroslav D. Vujičić, Marija Cimbalević, and Uglješa Stankov. "Unveiling the Motivational Factors behind Generation Z's Conference Attendance for Sustaining Future Participation." *Sustainability* 15, no. 18 (September 20, 2023): 13989–12407. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su151813989>.

motivations toward conference attendance, focusing on specific geographical regions. All in all, most of the findings demonstrated similar influences on conference attendance.

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