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FACTORS AFFECTING ASSOCIATION CONVENTION PARTICIPATION DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

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CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY

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_____ (Signed)

Joanne Yoo
_____ (Name of student)

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents for their love and support through the years.

Abstract

Factors Affecting Association Convention Participation Decision-Making Process

by

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The primary objectives of this study were to examine factors affecting the association convention participation decision-making process and to develop a measurement scale to assess the process. In addition, the study was extended to investigate relationships between convention participation decision-making factors and the participation decision and to examine longitudinal changes in the relationships.

By integrating attitude theory and a paradigm of cognitive decision-making, a measurement scale was developed which provides an original contribution to a better understanding of the association convention participation decision-making process and offers a new approach to expand prior research on convention tourism. The measurement scale was derived from extensive literature review and from personal

interviews, and then purified by using data collected through a web survey of selected education association members in the field of hospitality and tourism. A total of 558 usable responses were collected and the data was subjected to exploratory factor analysis and subsequent confirmatory factor analysis. The scale that was developed met rigorous criteria for both reliability and validity tests. A theoretically sound and reliable measurement scale of the association convention participation decision-making process was established. The scale consists of five underlying dimensions: destination stimuli, professional and social networking opportunities, educational opportunities, safety and health situation, and travelability.

Subsequently five constructs from the scale were used as the independent variables to test Hypothesis 1 postulated in this study. Testing of hypothesized relationships between convention participation decision-making factors and the participation decision revealed that the decision-making factors of professional/social networking opportunities, travelability, and destination stimuli significantly influenced the convention participation decision.

After the measurement scale had been established, subsequent longitudinal study was conducted to investigate whether or not potential attendees' attitude towards association convention participation decision may change over time. For this part of the

study, the study panel was selected from a specific education association members and they were repeatedly surveyed at two separated times. The first administration of the survey (Time 1) occurred in February 2004 and the second survey (Time 2) was conducted in May 2004. The time lag between the two administrations was thus three months. Among the total pool of 153 study panel participated in the first-time survey, 107 re-participated in the second-time survey with panel retention rates of 70%. A total of 107 paired data sets were used for the subsequent data analysis. A comparison of the importance of the convention participation decision-making factors in influencing the participation decision over three-month period showed that there had been significant changes in importance, especially in the decision-making factors of networking opportunities, safety and health situation, and travelability.

The study guided much needed empirical research on convention tourism, which had not been subjected previously to rigorous investigation. Built upon works from several disciplines including consumer behavior, cognitive psychology, marketing and tourism, this study has established a comprehensive conceptual framework to capture important aspects of association convention participation decision-making from the attendees' perspective. There has been a compelling need in tourism literature for a sound and reliable measurement scale to assess the association convention participation

decision-making process, and the study has contributed to the existing body of knowledge in serving as a starting point for more directed research needs of future researchers.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Throughout human history there have been meetings. People have a desire to meet together and discuss communal interests, which is a major purpose of meetings and conventions. However, until the latter part of the twentieth century the business of meetings and conventions was not regarded as an industry but as a secondary branch of the hospitality industry (Chon & Sparrowe 2000). The development and recognition of meetings and conventions as a distinctive industry is only a recent phenomenon.

The convention industry has experienced a significant growth over the last few decades. The industry accounts for a large share of the international tourism industry, making a considerable contribution to the economies of destinations. The expenditures of convention attendees directly affect the economy of a host destination and surrounding areas of the tourism industry through revenues generated from accommodation, retailing, and transportation services (Getz 1991; Hall 1992). Industry experts agree that the convention industry opens doors for all segments of local and national economies (Chon & Sparrowe 2000). The industry also contributes to a host

destination through a wide range of intangible benefits such as development of business, provision of forums for continuing education and training, exchange of ideas, and social and cultural benefits (Dwyer & Forsyth 1997; Dwyer, Mellor, Mistilis & Mules 2000).

Today the convention industry has become a truly global industry with around 200 countries in the world vying for a share of this very lucrative market. This global trend is well illustrated by figures produced annually by the Union of International Associations (UIA) and the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA). The ICCA 2004 statistics show the USA as a leader in hosting international conventions in 2003 largely owing to the country's high level of market maturity and the professionalism of convention management. European destinations, with France, Germany, and Italy being the top three, were among the leading countries following the USA (UIA 2004). European countries are likely to continue to have the greatest number of international conventions due to the relaxation of border controls and the introduction of the Euro currency. A tremendous growth in convention industry activities has also been witnessed in the Asia-Pacific region since the late 1980s. Rapid economic growth and a booming tourism industry in the region have enabled Asia-Pacific convention destinations to outperform traditional markets such as Europe and North America, mirroring shifts in tourism development in general.

The convention industry continued to gain an impressive growth throughout much of the 1990s and into 2001, and the industry was forecast to show further growth. However, the conventions and meetings market's promising forecasts were deeply affected by the economic recession that begun in early 2001 and the terrorist attacks of September 11 2001, the Iraq War 2003, and the SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) crisis in 2003. Especially immediately after the "9/11" incident, cancellations and postponements of international meetings and conventions occurred worldwide, having a detrimental impact on all sectors of the convention industry. However, the number of conventions and meetings scheduled for 2004 was 16% higher than for the same period the previous year, showing an upturn of the industry from 2004 (UIA 2004). Despite the vulnerable nature of the industry to unforeseen challenges, short-term forecasts suggest that the convention industry is likely to expand further on a global scale, consolidating its status as a key industry in the twenty-first century. Therefore, it is imperative for industry players to secure proactive marketing strategies for the future.

The convention industry is commonly categorized into corporate and association segments (Chon 1991a). These two major segments of the convention industry have several distinctive characteristics. For instance, corporate conventions

tend to be more frequent and smaller, whereas association conventions are larger in size and follow a more regular cycle such as in annual or biannual conventions. Expenditures for association conventions are mostly larger than is the case for their counterparts. Corporate convention delegates generally have little influence on location and time and in most cases they have all their expenses paid by their companies. In contrast to corporate conventions where attendance is compulsory, association convention attendees have a freedom of choice of different conventions in different locations at varying costs and times (Oppermann 1996). They usually have to finance costs of attending a convention for themselves.

Within the convention segments the association convention constitutes the largest sub-segment in terms of direct expenditures (Oppermann & Chon 1997). *Meeting and Convention*'s market report (2004) indicated that association meetings and conventions accounted for 66% of the total $44.7 billion expenditures in 2003 in the USA. Of the $16 billion spent by associations and delegates, almost $3 billion came from associations and $13 billion was contributed by convention attendees.

Associations use conventions as their major income generators. According to the annual market survey of the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) (2003), revenues from conventions, meetings and exhibitions account for one third of

total association income. Furthermore, the number of participants is often an indication of the convention's success. Thus, associations make considerable efforts to increase the number of attendees at their conventions. Shure (2002) described that association managers have three challenges: attendance, attendance, and attendance. Optimizing attendance relies upon a clear understanding of how association members make a convention participation decision and the factors affecting the decision-making process. This should be of great interest not only to associations but also to destinations and to suppliers of the convention industry, especially this is the case in challenging times to reverse decreasing attendance. Clark and McCleary (1995) indicated that the decision can mean millions of dollars, in either direction, to the industry.

Problem Statement

Despite its economic magnitude and significance to the international tourism industry, convention tourism has received surprisingly little research attention. Although an increasing amount of academic research has emerged over the last two decades, most of the studies have focused mainly on two topical areas: economic impacts of the convention industry and convention site selection (Ladkin 2002).

The association, the host location, and the attendees are considered as the three main players in association convention tourism (Oppermann & Chon 1997). A review of literature indicates that the greatest research attention has been devoted to the perspectives of association and meeting planners, especially to issues relating to a selection of the convention location or venue (e.g., Baloglu & Love 2001; Bonn, Ohlin & Brand 1994; Chacko & Fenich 2000; Clark & McCleary 1995; Crouch & Ritchie 1998; Jun & McCleary 1999; Renaghan & Kay 1987; Strick, Montgomery & Gant 1993; Var, Cesario & Mauer 1985). While this is the case, only a handful of studies have explored the perspective of association convention attendees and issues pertaining to their convention participation behavior (Grant 1994; Grant & Oppermann 1995; Grant & Weaver 1996; Ngamsom, Beck & Lalopa 2001; Oppermann 1995, 1998; Oppermann & Chon 1995, 1997; Price 1993). The shortage of extant studies in this area advocates a need to expand research scope to include individual association convention attendees.

In addition, from the theoretical point of view it is worthwhile noting that association convention participation is voluntary (Hiller 1995). That is, an individual has a wide range of choices of different association conventions to attend. In the same manner as a consumer would choose a product that satisfies his/her needs most, a potential attendee is likely to choose a particular association convention that is

perceived to offer the greatest benefits, rather than being required to attend it by his/her employer. Due to this voluntary nature of participation, the participation decision-making process of association convention attendees is likely to have similar patterns to the decision-making process of consumers as well as those of tourists' destination choice.

Researchers from a variety of social science disciplines have long been interested in studying how individuals make a purchase decision. There is general agreement that understanding the decision-making process of consumers is critical to explaining and predicting their choice behavior. Attitude has been one of the most widely used variables in describing how consumers make choices. Borrowed from social psychology, a considerable number of attitude models have been developed in consumer behavior and marketing literature in attempting to measure attitude and its relationship to behavior (e.g., Ajzen 2001; Bagozzi & Warshaw 1990; Fishbein 1963; Fishbein & Ajzen 1975).

The concept of attitude has long been embraced by tourism researchers. A number of studies on travel destination choice have been concerned with exploring the relationship between a tourist's attitude towards a place and his/her preference for the place as a travel destination (Hunt 1975; Um & Crompton 1990; Woodside & Lysonski

1989).

Although various scholars have addressed the research need (Abbey & Link 1994; Pizam 1991; Zelinsky 1994), there has been a distinct lack of studies examining association convention attendees' attitude towards convention participation. Several researchers have investigated some aspects of convention attendees' participation decision-making behavior (Grant 1994; Grant & Oppermann 1995; Oppermann 1995; Price 1993), yet very few theoretical frameworks have been developed to unveil the underlying factors that drive association convention participation decision-making from the attendees' perspective. Oppermann and Chon (1997) made the first attempt to develop a conceptual framework for the convention participation decision-making process, incorporating empirical findings from previous studies in convention tourism literature. The model proposed different factors entailed in the convention participation decision-making process of an individual with predispositions toward attending an association convention. Even though the model shed light on the key determinants of the association convention participation decision-making process, it did not explicitly explain how they were structured in a systematic fashion. Moreover, a comprehensive investigation on all conceptual constructs and variables in the proposed framework have neither been made nor empirically tested to date.

In brief, one of the major setbacks in extant convention tourism research is a lack of a sound and reliable framework to measure the association convention participation decision-making process of potential attendees. This is a prerequisite that needs to be fulfilled if advancement is to be made in an understanding of this phenomenon.

Objective of the Study

The main concerns of the study are to identify factors affecting the association convention participation decision-making process and to develop a measurement scale to assess the process. The intent in developing a measurement scale is to conceptualize potential attendees' decision-making process of association convention participation by integrating attitude theory and a paradigm of cognitive decision-making process. In relation to the primary objective of this study, which is to examine factors affecting the association convention participation decision-making process, the following three specific sub-objectives are identified:

1. To develop a measurement scale to assess the association convention participation decision-making process;

2. To investigate relationships between convention participation decision-making factors and the participation decision; and
3. To examine whether or not if there is a change in the importance of convention participation decision-making factors in influencing the participation decision over time.

This study attempts to answer the following three research questions:

1. What factors do potential convention attendees consider when they make an association convention participation decision?
2. Do convention participation decision-making factors significantly influence the participation decision?
3. Does the importance of convention participation decision-making factors in influencing the participation decision change over time?

Contribution of the Study

There has been a need for the development of a sound theoretical foundation and a reliable measurement scale that would address a research question of how potential attendees make an association convention participation decision. The current study

offers an approach to an understanding of the decision-making process of association convention participation by potential attendees. By incorporating attitude theory, this study provides a deeper insight into convention participation decision behavior.

Convention tourism research is still at an early stage of its development. Consequently, this study will enrich convention tourism literature by providing a theoretical background and empirical findings on the phenomenon of association convention participation decision-making. Furthermore, the study is likely to draw further research interest in convention tourism which, it is generally held, has received inadequate research attention.

Since there has been no study in literature assessing a longitudinal change of potential attendees' attitude towards association convention participation decision, the empirical results of this study can be used as a theoretical base in explaining the attitude change over time. The development of a reliable and valid measurement scale can provide opportunities for monitoring temporal attitude changes.

Due to the rapid growth of the convention industry the need to study convention tourism has become more apparent in recent years. In the wake of this acknowledged growth, the struggle of the industry to attract larger numbers of convention delegates has also grown. Hence, understanding potential attendees' convention participation

decision-making process may not only be a matter purely of academic interest but also be beneficial to the continuing growth and well-being of the convention industry.

From a practical perspective an identification of major factors affecting the association convention participation decision-making process is likely to make a significant contribution to the practice of association convention marketing. Through a comprehensive analysis of the participation decision-making process of potential association convention attendees, this study will provide useful information for marketers of associations, host locations and meeting planners to identify requirements of their ultimate customers. Understanding the underlying dimensions of the association convention participation decision-making process can bring about appropriate marketing strategies and better-designed convention programs to satisfy the needs of potential attendees, thereby leading to higher attendance and profitability for all.

Delimitations

This study delimited the survey population to members of selected education associations in the field of hospitality and tourism. The associations must 1) have members from more than five countries; 2) hold an annual convention; and 3) have a membership directory.

Outline of the Study

Chapter 1 provided a background of the study, the problem statement, and the objectives of the study.

Chapter 2 reviews previous literature relevant to this study and describes major concepts and theories, with reference to the conceptual framework of the study.

Chapter 3 discusses research design, methodology, and scale development procedures while the results of data analysis and hypotheses testing are presented in Chapter 4.

Chapter 5 discusses study findings and addresses implications of the findings for future study.

Definitions of Terms

Convention in this study is defined as an event where the primary activity of the attendees is to attend educational sessions, participate in meetings/discussions, socialize, or attend other organized events (Convention Industry Council 2003).

Association refers to an organized group of individuals and/or companies who band together to accomplish a common purpose, usually to provide for the needs of its

members (Convention Industry Council 2003).

Attitude is defined as an internal state that affects an individual's choice of action towards some object, person, or event (Gagne & Briggs 1974).

Behavior refers to a consumer's actions with regard to an attitude object (Solomon 2003).

Consumer decision-making process represents a model of the stages in the consumer decision-making process and of the factors that influence this process (Blackwell, Miniard & Engel 2001).

Summary

Understanding association convention attendees' participation decision-making process is of a great interest to both tourism researchers and practitioners in developing effective marketing and communication strategies. Yet very little research has explored this particular topic and no measurement scale has been rigorously developed in tourism literature. The primary objectives of this study are to identify factors affecting the association convention participation decision-making process from the potential attendee's perspective and to develop a measurement scale to assess the decision-making process.

This introductory chapter laid the foundations for the present study. It introduced a background context for the study, the research problem, and the study objectives. Then the study was justified, outlined, and definitions were presented. In the following chapter, the related literature will be reviewed, providing theoretical underpinnings of the study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter starts with an overview of previous studies in convention tourism literature, with an attempt to justify the reasons for conducting the present study. This is followed by a review of literature in the broad contexts of consumer behavior and tourism marketing, with particular emphasis on the conceptual development related to the individual decision-making process and attitude models. In the following section an existing convention participation decision-making model, which is used as a fundamental framework for this study, is described. The theoretical background of the study is summarized in the final section.

Previous Studies in Convention Tourism Literature

Despite the significance of the industry, convention tourism has been under-researched. It was only in the mid-1980s that an increasing amount of academic

attention emerged in convention tourism literature. Yoo and Weber (2005) examined 14 hospitality and tourism related academic journals for the period of 1983-2003 to determine progress in convention tourism research. Through content analysis, the authors found that there were, in total, only 115 articles that assessed the phenomenon of convention tourism over the last 20 years. In a reflection on the industry's youthfulness the study clearly shows the paucity of academic research in the area of convention tourism. On the other hand, as Abbey and Link (1994) indicated, this lack of research provides a promising opportunity for future researchers as a large area of convention tourism research remain unexplored.

Within two major segments of convention tourism (i.e., corporate and association), the association convention constitutes the largest sub-segment with regard to direct expenditures (Meetings & Conventions 2004). Especially following a steep falloff in corporation meeting market since 9/11 terrorist attack, association convention has gained a new cachet in recent years and it is regarded as more recession-proof than the deep-pocket corporate segment (Association Meetings 2004). In general, the association convention is categorized into social, military, educational, religious, and fraternal (SMERF) sub-segments (Convention Industry Council 2003). Although those sub-segments share similar characteristics such as voluntary attendance, tight budget,

willingness to book during off-peak times, different types of the association convention market may vary with a wide range of needs and challenges. For example, for social and military groups, what the destination has to offer is very important as members and veterans often turn the reunion into a vacation and they like to bring their families. With budget constraints at many educational institutes affected by the worldwide recession, educational associations become more highly budget-conscious. According to Association Meetings (2004), state and local budget cuts in the USA caused a drastic falloff in pre-registration numbers for the 2003 Annual Expo of the Association for Career and Technical Education. Conversely, unlike educators, religious groups are relatively less fazed by economy and more resilient than other types of association gatherings (PCMA 2002). In particular, in the times of continuing economic slump and a series of disasters, people turn back to their faith looking for answers and the religious meetings carry on.

The associations, the host locations, and the attendees are three major players of the association convention tourism (Oppermann & Chon 1997). An extensive review of literature revealed that a majority of research on convention tourism has exclusively focused on associations, locations, and meeting planners, whereas convention attendees have been left largely outside research attention. As convention attendees are actual

targets of interest for associations, convention destinations and meeting planners, there is a pressing need to expand research scope to include individual convention attendees.

In attempting to lessen the deficiency of research outputs, a handful of academic researchers explored the perspective of the association convention attendees. Price's (1993) study was one of the first studies investigating individual attendees' motivations for attending a professional association convention. Using participants at the annual convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) for the study sample, she identified four attributes that attendees consider when they decide to attend a particular convention of their professional society. They were leadership, networking, education, and professional savvy. With regard to the relative importance among those attributes, leadership was considered most important to a large group of attendees, professional savvy second, education was third, leaving networking in last position. Applying career theories, the author also investigated the relationships between individual preference of certain convention attributes and his/her career stage. Education was found to be the most important attribute to majority (75%) of the survey participants, and for those individuals whose career stages were normally distributed. Those who preferred leadership, professional savvy and networking, more descriptive profiles were drawn up from career stage variables. Price's study, as an initial study in

convention tourism literature, provided empirical foundation for several studies that followed.

Grant (1994) surveyed members of the Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education (CHRIE) who registered for the 1993 Annual Conference and tested whether or not the factors identified in Price's study (i.e., leadership, networking, education, and professional savvy) emerged consistent with another population. The findings of Grant's study showed that the three factors - education, networking, and leadership - were identical to those of Price's study. However, professional savvy was not supported possibly due to different sample characteristics. Items from the unrelated variables amalgamated, representing a variety of attributes for convenience called "potpourri". The variables included in this factor were: "getting away from the office", "satisfying job requirements", and "receiving continuing education credits". Among four attributes, the CHRIE members found the educational attributes most important, followed by leadership, networking, and potpourri.

As a result of Price's (1993) and Grant's (1994) research, three dominant factors (i.e., education, leadership and networking) emerged as attributes that convention attendees use to select a particular association convention to attend. Also emerging were two secondary factors (i.e., professional savvy and potpourri) that may be specific to

various population characteristics.

However, one of the main deficiencies of those two pioneer studies is that they investigated only actual convention attendees' past decision-making behavior, which might have introduced a bias. According to cognitive dissonance theory in marketing literature, individuals have a tendency to minimize any negative attributes of their previous choice by enhancing the evaluation of the chosen alternative (Assael 1998). If asking convention attendees' past participation decision behavior at the convention site, their memory of the participation decision-making process and the evaluation criteria they employed previously might have been blurred or influenced by their satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the final choice of the convention.

In order to explore association convention attendants' participation factors especially in relation to destination preferences, Oppermann and Chon (1995) surveyed attendants at two association conventions: "Environments for Tourism Conference" and "Society of Travel & Tourism Educators (STTE) 1994 Annual Conference", both held in 1994. The analysis of the decision-making variables for the convention attendees revealed a strong emphasis on educational/professional improvement, which could be largely influenced by the type of respondents, many of whom were educators. Also, the study unveiled the prominence of the cost factor in the participation decision and,

especially, its significance as a barrier to attending conventions. Yet a number of limitations are noted in the study. Firstly, only 53 respondents participated in the survey and as a consequence, the results should be treated as exploratory. Another deficiency of their study was the restriction to only a few destinations in the USA.

Using professional association memberships, Oppermann (1995) and Grant and Oppermann (1995) examined convention participation decision criteria for both attendees and non-attendees, which was progress from the earlier studies by Price (1993) and Grant (1994). Both studies revealed similar results with respect to convention attendance patterns and the participation decision criteria. Oppermann (1995) surveyed attendees of the STTE 1994 Annual Conference and non-attending members from the STTE membership directory. For the non-attendees, “costs of the conference” and “a lack of funding” were the primary reasons given for not attending the conference, whereas “timing of the conference” and “schedule conflicts” were the second major inhibitors. The decision variables of attendees revealed a strong emphasis on the aspects of educational and professional improvement leading to competence. The variables such as “keeping up with changes in my profession/field” and “hearing speakers who are respected in the field” achieved the highest score. “Seeing people I know in my field” ranked third, indicating the importance of professional contacts and

networking.

Grant and Oppermann (1995) also investigated both attendees and non-attendees' decision criteria for convention participation, selecting the Travel and Tourism Research Association (TTRA) as a target association. In their study the respondents were divided into attendees and non-attendees based on whether or not they had attended the 1994 TTRA Annual Conference. The attendees ranked "hearing speakers", "seeing people I know", and "keeping up with changes" as important decision variables. On the contrary, the non-attendees ranked "no time", "no travel funding from company", and "transportation cost too high" as the most determinant barriers to their attendance. The researchers further examined similarities/differences between attendees and non-attendees in terms of demographics, convention attendance patterns, and general convention participation decision factors. The findings showed that non-attendees were slightly older than attendees, less active on the convention circuit, and less likely to have their convention expenses funded by somebody else. In addition, compared with attendees, non-attendees were at relatively more mature stage by age and the years in which they first attended an association convention.

Both studies by Oppermann (1995) and Grant and Oppermann (1995) expanded the research span to include the decision criteria of non-attendees, providing initial

insights into general convention participation decision-making. However, the studies simply presented the rankings of the decision variables, failing to unveil the underlying dimensions of the relationships among the variables.

By using the survey instrument developed by Price (1993), Grant and Weaver (1996) surveyed members of CHRIE who registered for the annual conference held in 1993. The factors which surfaced from the study were: networking, education, leadership and destination/recreation/social, confirming the four factor structure identified by the precedent studies of Price (1993) and Grant (1994). A surrogate variable from each factor was selected to represent the factor in the subsequent cluster analysis. The findings showed that there were three homogeneous groups of convention attendees classified by their participation decision criteria. They included “those who enjoy conventions for networking purposes”, “those who enjoy conventions for educational opportunities”, and “those who enjoy conventions for leadership opportunities”. The destination/recreation/social dimension was seen in all clusters. Additionally, the study showed that each homogeneous group of the respondents had distinct demographic profiles. Age and income defined the clusters better than other demographic variables, as each cluster catered to a particular age level or income category.

Oppermann (1998) applied the concept of involvement to the context of convention participation decision-making to examine potential differences among association members who had a different degree of involvement with a specific association. His study used a membership directory of the Association of American Geographers (AAG) to include members who did not attend the annual convention. The study revealed that highly involved members with the association were much more likely to attend the association's annual convention than those with low or medium levels of involvement, signifying involvement as a major determinant of the convention participation decision. The results suggested that associations should consider creating association culture with ensuring high involvement of its members. The researcher also examined both convention participation and non-participation decision variables with respect to the 1994 AAG Annual Conference as well as to conventions in general. Consistent with previous studies in convention tourism literature, professional and cost factors were found to be the most important variables in deciding to participate in a convention. "Keeping up with changes with my profession/field" and "developing new professional relationships" were ranked first and third respectively. "Overall affordability of the convention", "transportation costs", and "hotel room costs" rounded out the top five reasons given by the respondents. The results compare favorably with

Oppermann's (1995) previous study on the STTE membership in which the same decision variables occupied the top ranks albeit in a slightly different order.

More recently, Ngamsom, Beck and Lalopa (2001) examined motivation, inhibitors, and facilitators that influence association members in attending conventions by surveying participants of the 2000 International CHRIE Conference. In their study, convention participation motivation was defined as human needs that motivate association members to attend conventions. Facilitators refer to factors that encourage members to travel to attend conventions while inhibitors are factors that discourage them from the convention participation. The study revealed that "sightseeing", "self-enhancement", and "business and association activities" were underlying dimensions of convention motivations. "Affordability and availability of time", "family/spouse", and "distance and ease of access" were major convention facilitators, whereas "conference and personal constraints" and "distance, time, and money" were key inhibitors. The study made a first attempt in convention tourism literature incorporating concepts of motivation, inhibitors and facilitators to the context of convention participation behavior. However, the study did not investigate the roles of those factors that contribute to the development of the convention participation decision-making process. Moreover, one of the major weaknesses of the study is that the data only represented general decision

variables rather than variables involved in the actual convention participation decision-making process.

All studies reviewed above, in some way or another, examined aspects of the association convention participation decision-making process. Table 1 provides a summary of previous research that examined convention participation decision-making variables/factors. It appears that there are a number of common convention participation decision-making factors in extant studies. However, a review of previous literature indicates that very few studies focused on the structure of the association convention participation decision-making process. Although many important determinants of association convention participation decisions were identified, very few studies to date have investigated rigorously the underlying dimensions of the association convention participation decision-making process. Oppermann (1998) suggested a more holistic future studies that can account for various aspects of the association convention participation decision-making process of potential delegates. Furthermore, there is still a distinct lack of the measurement scale to assess the actual process of association convention participation decision-making, which is a prerequisite that needs to be fulfilled to advance an understanding of association convention attendees' participation decision behavior.

Table 1: Previous Studies on Convention Participation Decision Variables/Factors

Author(s)	Sample	Decision Variables/Factors Identified
Price (1993)	468 attendees at the 1993 Annual Conference of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)	1. Education 2. Networking 3. Professional savvy 4. Leadership
Grant (1994)	135 attendees at the 1993 Annual Conference of the Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education (CHRIE)	1. Education 2. Leadership 3. Networking 4. Potpourri
Oppermann & Chon (1995)	53 attendees at 1) the Environments for Tourism Conference, and 2) the 1994 Annual Conference of the Society of Travel & Tourism Educators (STTE).	1. Keeping up with changes in my field/profession 2. Hearing speakers who are respected in the field 3. Developing new business/professional relationships * Total 16 decision variables were identified.
Oppermann (1995)	72 respondents: 1) 36 attendees at the 1994 Annual Conference of the Society of Travel & Tourism Educators (STTE) 2) 36 non-attending members of the STTE	• Attendees' decision variables (Total 16 variables) 1. Keeping up with changes in my profession 2. Hearing speakers who are respected in the field 3. Seeing people I know in my field • Non-attendees' decision variables (Total 15 variables) 1. No travel funding from my organization 2. No time 3. Schedule conflict with another conference
Grant & Oppermann (1995)	181 members of the Travel and Tourism Research Association (TTRA)	• Attendees' decision variables (Total 15 variables) 1. Hearing speakers who are respected in the field 2. Seeing people I know in my field 3. Keeping up with changes in my profession • Non-attendees' decision variables (Total 14 variables) 1. No time 2. No funding from my company 3. Transportation cost too high

Table 1: Continued

Author(s)	Sample	Decision Variables/Factors
Grant & Weaver (1996)	135 members of the CHRIE association registered for the 1993 CHRIE Annual Conference	1. Education 2. Leadership 3. Networking 4. Destination/recreation/social
Opperman & Chon (1997)	A review of previous studies in convention tourism literature	1. Personal/Business factors 2. Association/Conference factors 3. Locational factors 4. Intervening opportunities
Oppermann (1998)	244 members of the Association of American Geographers (AAG)	1. Keeping up with changes in my profession/field 2. Overall affordability of conference 3. Developing new professional relationships * Total 23 general decision variables were identified.
Ngamsom, Beck, & Lalopa (2001)	231 members from the list of the 2000 CHRIE Annual Conference participants	• Conference motivators 1. Sightseeing 2. Self enhancement 3. Business, conference activities • Conference facilitators 1. Affordability, availability of time 2. Family/Spouse 3. Distance and ease of access • Conference inhibitors 1. Conference and personal constraints 2. Distance, time, money

Oppermann and Chon (1997) made the first attempt to develop a model for the association convention participation decision-making process (See Figure 6 on page 61). Based on findings from previous studies, the model highlighted the major factors that potential attendees consider when they select a particular association convention to attend. The variables include personal/business factors, association/conference factors, locational factors, and factors associated with intervening opportunities. Each of the factors will be discussed in greater detail in the later part of this chapter. Whilst the model presented the dynamics of the association convention participation decision-making process, it only proposed a conceptual framework for further study without explicitly explaining how the decision-making process was formulated. Moreover, comprehensive investigations into all conceptual constructs and variables in the framework have neither been made nor empirically tested to date.

In order to comprehend the association convention participation decision-making process of potential attendees, it is essential to have solid theoretical underpinnings that can offer insights into the development of the individual decision-making process. Unfortunately, previous studies in convention tourism literature have limitations in their conceptual foundations. Therefore, as a way of building the conceptual underpinning for this intended study, relevant literature in the areas of

consumer behavior and tourism marketing will be reviewed in the following section.

Individual Decision-Making Process

The study of the consumer decision-making process has been a focal point of interest among consumer behavior researchers for almost 40 years (e.g., Howard & Sheth 1969; Nicosia 1966). The cognitive paradigm has been a dominant tradition, which assumes that a consumer has a capacity for handling and understanding quantities of information as well as for evaluating and classifying them in a rational way.

A large number of consumer behavior researchers have developed cognitive consumer decision-making process models, depicting the process by which consumers make decisions. One of the earliest models was developed by Howard and Sheth (1969) that highlighted the importance of stimulus inputs to consumer choice behavior and showed ways in which a consumer orders these inputs before arriving at a final decision. The contribution of the model is to offer a conceptualization of how a consumer narrows down a number of alternatives to reach a final decision.

Another earlier model by Nicosia (1966) focused on consumer purchase decision for a new product. The model used a dyadic approach in describing interactions between a marketing firm and a consumer. The model divides the consumer decision-making

process into four fields. Field 1 starts with a firm's attempts to communicate with a consumer to achieve a lead to the consumer's attitude. Field 2 involves the consumer in a search evaluation process influenced by his/her attitude. The act of purchase occurs in Field 3 while Field 4 constitutes the post-purchase feedback process. In this model the consumer decision-making process was conceptualized as a process of narrowing down of alternatives, and the final purchase emerged from a funneling process.

The earlier grand models are instrumental in identifying and defining components of the consumer decision-making process and the nature of relationships among them, providing a conceptual basis for future consumer behavior models. The central component of those models is subsequently transformed by cognitive processing into attitude and intention, which determine purchase behavior and brand choice (McGuire 1976). This school of thought will be further reviewed in a later section of this chapter.

There is general agreement among scholars that the level of involvement is crucial in determining the types of the decision-making process that consumers undertake. Hawkins, Best and Conney (1995) proposed different types of the consumer decision-making processes by the degree of involvement with purchase situations. The high level of involvement suggests that a consumer will engage in active information search and careful evaluation of alternatives before making a final purchase decision. On the other

hand, where a consumer demonstrates a low level of involvement, less effort will be given to information searching, limited comparisons will take place and the consumer is more likely to purchase on impulse.

According to Assael (1998), a typology of consumer purchasing decision is based on two dimensions: the extent of decision-making and the degree of involvement in the purchase decision. As shown in Figure 1, complex decision-making takes place when two conditions are met: a decision-making process requiring extensive information processing and a high degree of consumer involvement with a product. When a consumer makes a decision under a low involvement condition, it is characterized by limited decision-making in which information search is limited and few brand alternatives are evaluated. In reality, however, complex or limited decision-making does not always occur when a consumer purchases a brand. Consumers sometimes make a purchase with little information processing for alternatives, probably because they have a strong commitment to a particular brand (brand loyalty), or they feel it is not worth the time and trouble to search for an alternative (inertia).

Figure 1: Consumer Decision-Making

	High-Involvement Purchase Decision	Low-Involvement Purchase Decision
Decision Making (information search, consideration of brand alternatives)	Complex Decision-Making	Limited Decision-Making
Habit (little or no information search, consideration of only one brand)	Brand Loyalty	Inertia

Source: Assael (1998)

In brief, cognitive models of consumer behavior commonly conceptualize the decision-making process as a funnel-like process of narrowing down choices among alternatives. Although every consumer behavior researcher employed slightly different terminology, cognitive decision-making theory is central to all consumer behavior models. The theory states that the consumer decision-making process involves five main stages: 1) problem recognition, 2) information search, 3) alternative evaluation, 4) choice/purchase, and 5) post-purchase evaluation. During the stages of information search and alternative evaluation, consumers identify available alternatives, evaluate them on salient features or criteria, and make a purchase from the viable alternatives.

Several researchers suggest that consumers' decision criteria, alternatives and

preferences may vary and evolve with time, with new inputs of information and changes in the psychological states of the consumers (Park & Lutz 1982; Spiggle & Sewall 1987; Wright & Kiewall 1980). Two major reasons can be attributed to the temporal changes. First, it is usually difficult for a consumer to identify and process various salient criteria effectively at any given time and situation due to the complex array of alternatives. Second, the decision is not likely to be in a state of routinized decision-making with a high degree of stability over decision states (Howard & Sheth 1969). As consumer decision-making has become an extremely complex process, there have been shifts in understanding the decision-making process from a simple stimulus response model to a much more complex decision-making perspective (Turley & LeBlanc 1993).

The consumer behavior literature suggests that purchasing services can be distinguished from purchasing consumer goods. Kotler and Armstrong (2004) clarified differences between goods and services by identifying four characteristics of service: intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity, and lack of ownership. These distinct characteristics of service have a considerable impact on the consumer decision-making process, which leads to a high involvement in the decision-making causing a great amount of time and efforts in information search and alternative evaluation.

Since the nature of tourism requires a significant amount of time and financial resources from a consumer, it is regarded as a product or service that necessitates a high involvement in the decision-making process (Chon 1990a). According to Laws (1995), tourists experience a high degree of involvement in choosing their destination due to the following four aspects of holidays: 1) holidays are expensive, 2) holidays are complex both to purchase and experience, 3) there is a risk that the destination will not prove satisfying, and 4) the destination reflects the holidaymaker's personality. Because of this distinct nature, tourists are highly involved when they make a holiday decision and go through the complex decision-making process.

In tourism literature, a considerable number of researchers studied the decision-making process of the individual tourist, especially focusing on the destination choice (Crompton 1977, 1979, 1992; Crompton & Ankomah 1993; Um 1987; Um & Crompton 1990, 1992; Woodside & Lysonski 1989; Woodside & Sherrel 1977). Many of those studies were based upon the grand models of consumer behavior that offered substantial conceptual and empirical supports to understand the tourists' destination choice process.

Behavioral and choice-set approaches have been widely adopted by tourism scholars in explaining the decision-making process used to purchase tourism services. The main purposes of behavioral models are to identify the decision stages that tourists

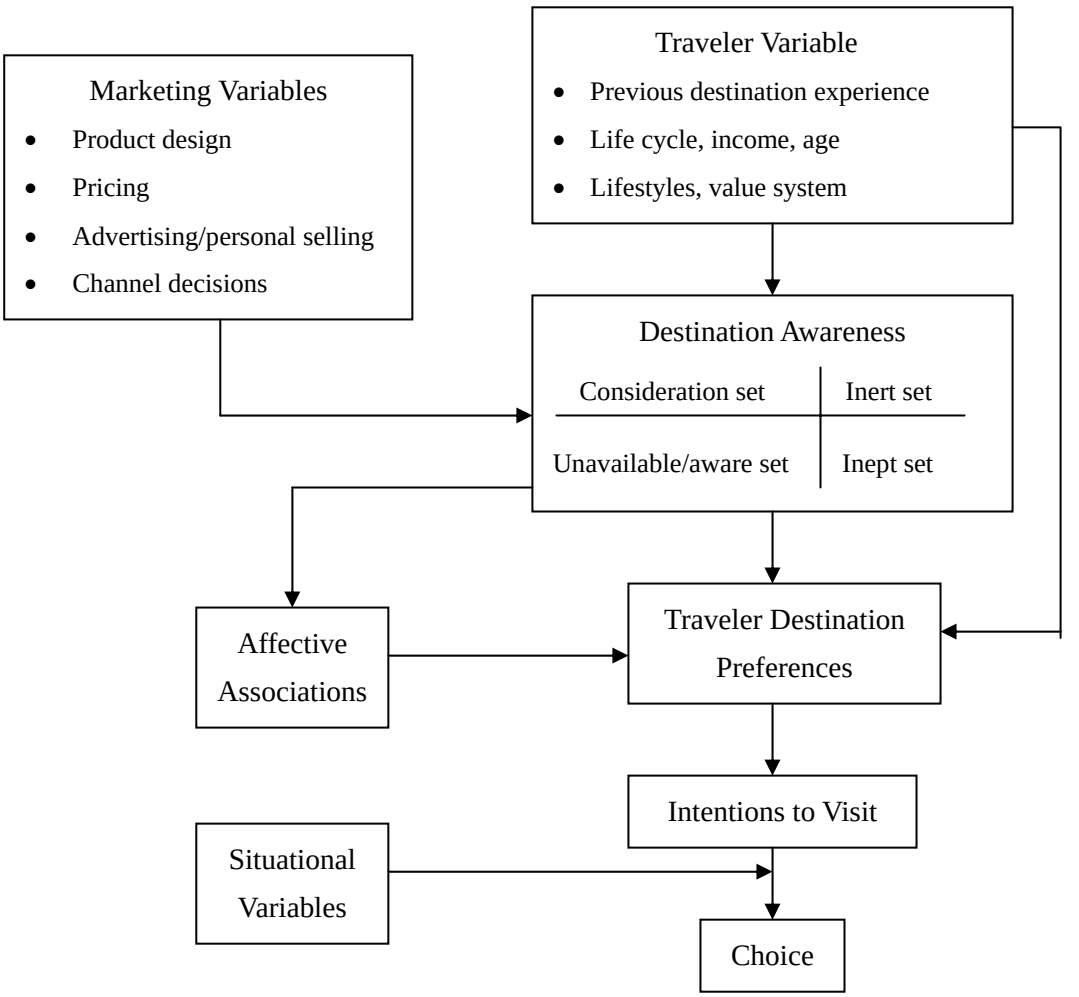
pass through and to illustrate the stages by identifying factors that influence the process. Choice-set models suggest that decisions are sequential in nature, comprising sets. That is, a potential tourist is likely to generate a series of choice-sets and to keep eliminating alternatives in a funneling process until a final destination is selected.

Research focusing on the tourist destination choice process commenced with an article by Woodside and Sherrel (1977) that operationalized the destination choice-sets and estimated the number of destinations within each set. The study was followed by Woodside and Lysonki (1989) with a general model of traveler destination choice (Figure 2), using the choice-sets that placed emphasis more on the factors influencing the final choice. The researchers proposed a path model that presented the decision process of a traveler as a categorization process of destinations from preferences, intentions, and the final choice. According to the model, destination awareness is seen as the mental categorization process between consideration set (spontaneously evoked destinations), inert set (destinations that are not actively considered), inept set (rejected destinations), and unavailable/aware set. The model also includes important variables such as affective associations (specific feeling linked with a specific destination by a traveler), traveler destination preferences, intentions to visit, and situational variables.

The arrows in Figure 2 indicate how the variables are connected to each other. Destination awareness is influenced by both marketing mix and traveler variables. The study revealed that affective associations worked positively for the destinations in the consideration set but negatively for those destinations in the inept set. In addition, the research empirically supported that traveler destination preferences were the positive function of the rank order of those destinations in tourists' consideration sets. Finally, choice was found to be a function of intention to visit a destination where situational variables acted more as moderator between intention and the choice.

Crompton (1979) presented a two-stage model of the tourist destination choice process with a special reference to perceived pragmatic constraints (time, money and travelability) and destination image. The first stage of his model conceptualized a decision on how to use available vacation time. Once the decision is made in favor of going on vacation, then the concern is thought to be shifted to the process of selecting a specific destination in the second stage of the model.

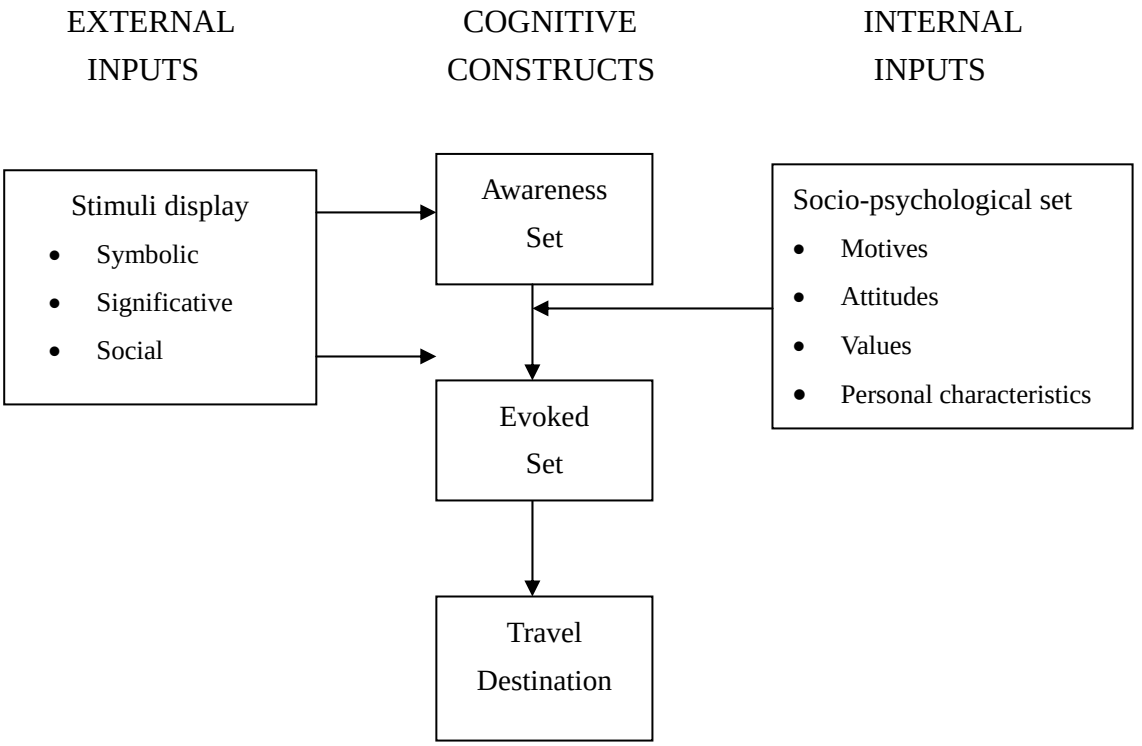
Figure 2: Woodside and Lysonski's Model of Traveler Leisure Destination Awareness and Choice



Source: Woodside & Lysonski (1989)

Um and Crompton (1990) developed the second phase of Crompton's model on the basis of the concept of the evoked set. As shown in Figure 3, the model integrates five processes: 1) the formation of subjective beliefs about destination attributes of each alternative in the awareness set of destinations through passive selective perception, 2) a decision to undertake a pleasure trip (initiation of a destination choice process), 3) evolution of an evoked set from the awareness set of destinations, 4) the formation of subjective beliefs about destination attributes of each alternative in the evoked set of destinations through active solicitation of information, and 5) selection of a specific travel destination. In addition, the researchers used the two-stage choice-sets approach in explaining the travel destination choice process: 1) the evolution of the evoked set from the awareness set, and 2) destination selection from the evoked set. The approach is unique in a sense that it assessed the role of attitude in the actual decision-making process, operationalizing attitude as the difference between perceived facilitators and inhibitors. They argued that attitude was influential in determining whether a potential destination was selected as part of the evoked set and in selecting as a final destination.

Figure 3: Um and Crompton's Model of Travel Destination Choice Process



Source: Um & Crompton (1990)

As reviewed in the earlier section, the most widely accepted model of consumer decision-making is presented as a five-stage process: 1) problem recognition, 2) information search, 3) alternative evaluation, 4) choice/purchase, and 5) post-purchase evaluation. A common feature of the consumer choice models lies in the conceptualization of the decision-making process as a funneling process of narrowing

down of alternatives to selection of a single final choice (Howard & Sheth 1969; Nicosia 1966).

This cognitive decision-making theory has been widely applied by tourism researchers (e.g., Chen 1997; Chon 1990b, 1991b; Clawson & Knetch 1966; Gunn 1972), and it has been central to all foundational destination choice models (Crompton 1977, 1992; Um & Crompton 1990; Woodside & Lysonski 1989; Woodside & Sherrel 1977). Common agreement on the choice-sets models in tourism literature is that the funneling process consists of three main stages: 1) the development of an early consideration set (or early evoked set) of the destinations, 2) discarding of most of these destinations to form a smaller late consideration set (or late evoked set), and 3) then a final destination is selected after a great deal of information processing and evaluation. Crompton (1992) suggested that the traditional five-stage model of the consumer decision-making process should be extended to include the notion of choice-sets and the acceptance in tourism of three major stages (stages 3-5) within the funneling process. Consequently, the six stages of the tourist's destination choice process are: 1) problem recognition, 2) passive internal search, 3) formulation of an early consideration set, 4) active external search for evaluation and formulation of a late consideration set, 5) active external search for evaluation and selection of a destination, and 6) post-purchase

evaluation.

Several process-related implications emerged from this six-stage model. A key implication is on whether or not the process used to formulate the late consideration set from the early consideration set is similar to that used to make a final choice form the late set (Crompton 1992). As the funneling process is dynamic, changes in the process are likely to occur. In this regard, Crompton and Ankomah (1993) suggested a longitudinal approach rather than cross-sectional design for the study of the decision-making process, arguing that a longitudinal study can reveal better the dynamics of the decision-making process and types of the determinant factors at different stages of the process. According to Menard (2002), there are in general two major important advantages of longitudinal data: 1) the ability to study dynamic relationships, and 2) to model the differences among subjects.

In tourism literature, several researchers adopted a longitudinal approach to study image change (e.g., Gartner 1986; Kim & Morrison 2005; Perry, Izrael & Perry 1976), perception change (e.g., Lee, Kim & Kang 2003), and attitude change (e.g., Um & Crompton 1990, 1992). Perry et al. (1976) studied the image change of Canada as a holiday destination at two points in time as a result of an advertising campaign by surveying a same group of people over 5 month period. The study concluded that the

image of the country could be modified by advertising efforts. Gartner (1986) also conducted two mail surveys to the same sample over 3 month period to find that temporal influences on the respondents' image change were probably attributable to seasonal differences and changes of environment. On the other hand, he pointed out possible problems with the research design utilized in the study, as the sampling periods were determined by practical constraints (i.e., contractual obligations). A longer time span might have affected the research results differently.

Utilizing a longitudinal approach, Um and Crompton (1990, 1992) repeatedly surveyed college students over 3 month extended period offering empirical evidence that there were changes in evaluation criteria at each stage of the holiday destination choice process. A key conceptual differentiating element between the two stages was a period of time elapses between them (i.e., a three month split), which was considered sufficiently long to enable the respondents to evaluate and reduce their list of destinations from a broad set of possible holiday destinations to a narrower set of probable holiday destinations. However, using the sample of college students is arguably one of the major weaknesses of their study, as the decision-making processes of the student group may be atypical of those used by general population. However, even though the study findings may not be generalized, the study with the longitudinal

research design shed light on an understanding of how holiday decisions are made at different stages of the destination choice processe.

Attitude and Behavior

Howard and Sheth (1969) argued that the consumer decision-making process differs by the strength of attitude towards available brands in a product class. Consumers do not choose goods themselves but rather attributes that are possessed by the goods by using perceptions of the attributes as input factors to evaluate utility (Lancaster 1966). Attitude is seen as an indication of a person's position towards an issue or object along an evaluation continuum (Fishbein 1967; Petty & Cacioppo 1981, 1986).

Attitude has been one of the most frequently used variables in marketing and consumer behavior literature to understand and predict consumer behavior. There is agreement that attitude has three components: cognitive component (belief), affective component (evaluation), and conative component (behavior). The relationships between these three components have been key concerns of researchers as well as marketers. While all three components of attitude are important, their relative importance may vary.

To explain the relative impacts of the three components and their sequence in the consumer decision-making process, researchers developed the concept of the hierarchy of effects. The hierarchy of effects paradigm is based upon the cognitive psychology perspective that consumers are rational and their decision-making process has a certain sequence. This perspective is conceptualized to follow the five steps within the three components of attitude: 1) antecedents, 2) beliefs, 3) attitudes formation, 4) intention to act, and 5) behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen 1975). Krugman (1965) argued that this rational cognitive-affective-conative sequence is applicable under the condition of high involvement.

There have been conceptual supports for this paradigm of the hierarchy of effects in the leisure and recreation contexts (Iso-Ahola 1980; Murphy 1975; Reid & Crompton 1993). For example, Murphy (1975) argued that a potential recreational boater's attitude towards a site played an important role in site selection, illustrating the cognitive-affective-conative sequence. Reid and Crompton (1993) assumed a hierarchy of effects in the context of leisure participation, stating "there appears to be sufficient evidence to conclude that in high involvement situations, the cognitive-affective-conative hierarchy of effects model is likely to reflect accurately the decision process of a proportion of leisure participants." (1993: 189-190)

For the last few decades, numerous psychological theories have explained consumers' perception and social cognition, and the expectancy-value model is one of the most popular theories of conceptualization of attitude (Ajzen 2001). According to the model, each belief associates the object with a certain attribute and an individual's overall attitude towards an object is determined by the subjective value of the object's attributes in interaction with the strength of the associations. The expectancy-value attitude model is expressed in a general equation as follows:

$$A_{obj} = \sum b_i e_i$$

where A_{obj} is one's attitude towards an object (e.g., product, service, person, place, and idea), b_i and e_i are beliefs and evaluations, respectively, about attributes of the attitudinal object, and the multiplicative products of beliefs and evaluations are summed over the number of attributes. In other words, one's global attitude towards an object equals or is a function of, the sum of the products of one's beliefs that the object possesses certain attributes and one's evaluations of how important those attributes are for the consumer.

As an initial model of the expectancy-value model, Fishbein (1963) proposed the multiattribute model of attitude, describing an attitude formation as a function of consumer beliefs about the attributes and benefits of a brand. According to the model, a consumer starts with an evaluation of certain attributes and then forms beliefs as to

whether an object has the attributes. The evaluation of those attributes results in attitude towards an object and attitude towards the object is the sum total of beliefs and values for all relevant attributes. Consequently, Fishbein's multiattribute model can be linked to the traditional hierarchy of effects as it stated a linkage between brand evaluations and behavior.

In an attempt to explain better relationships between attitude and behavior, Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) proposed the theory of reasoned action by modifying Fishbein's multiattribute model and introduced two social influencing elements: normative beliefs and motivation to comply with them. The most important modification in the model was a realization that the attitude measurement should be based on attitude towards behavior of purchasing a brand, not attitude towards the brand itself (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975). Consistent with the concept of the hierarchy of effects, the theory of reasoned action also places attitude within a sequence of linked cognitive constructs: beliefs, attitudes, intentions and behavior. Consumer behavior can be predicted on the assumption that consumers are rational and purchase decisions are the outcome of logical and predictable steps. They encompass a sequence of 1) problem recognition, 2) information search, 3) alternative evaluation, 4) choice/purchase, and 5) post-acquisition evaluation. The evaluation of alternatives is thought to be influenced by

a consumer's attitude and responses to the attitude.

In the expectancy-value models, behavioral intention is suggested as a central factor that correlates highly with actual behavior, and a better prediction or explanation of intention may lead to a better understanding of behavior (Ajzen & Driver 1992). Several consumer behavior models were built upon the theory of reasoned action, emphasizing behavioral intention as an immediate antecedent to actual behavior (Howard & Sheth 1969; Fishbein & Ajzen 1975).

The aforementioned attitude models served as the foundation for many of destination choice models (e.g., Tybout & Hauser 1981; Um & Crompton 1990; Woodside & Lysonski 1989). The common element of those models is a progression from problem recognition to intent and behavior, and a causal relationship between attitude and behavior. Tybout and Hauser (1981) argued that the tourist decision-making process constitutes three distinct but sequential tasks. Firstly, for each of the opportunities in a destination choice set, there are objectively measurable features that yield beliefs concerning the attributes present at destination alternatives. A physical attribute need not lead to a unique belief but the belief may be multifaceted. Secondly, potential tourists integrate their beliefs regarding each attribute into attitude towards an alternative destination. Attitude was viewed as the effective outcome from aggregation

or combination of beliefs, not physical attributes, which is consistent with Fishbein's multiattribute model. The researchers regarded this stage of elicitation of a set of beliefs as the most important step in the attitude development. At the third stage, choice of an alternative destination is made by a function of attitude towards the alternatives.

Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory of reasoned action proposed that for predicting a behavior more accurately, it is important to determine a person's attitude towards the behavior rather than towards the object of behavior. This approach has been consistently verified by empirical studies reported in tourism literature. Um and Crompton (1991) emphasized that the attitude measurement should be based upon attitude towards the action of traveling to a specific destination, instead of attitude towards the destination. In their study, attitude was formulated at both the evoked set and the destination selection stages, and operationalized as the difference between magnitude of perceived facilitators and perceived inhibitors at both stages of the destination selection process (Um & Crompton 1992).

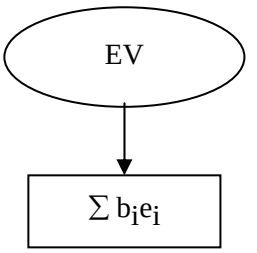
While the choice of an alternative destination is regarded as being a function of attitude towards the alternatives, the predictive relationship between favorable attitude towards a destination and behavior of actually visiting that destination is often relatively low due to the influence of situational factors. One of the most important findings that

emerged from attitude research is a realization that situational constraints should be integrated into the attitude construct (Um 1987). In Woodside & Lysonski's (1989) traveler destination choice model, situational variables and choice criteria were integrated into the development of the underlying dimensions of attitude, and actual destination choice was considered to be affected by both intention to visit and situational variables. In the destination choice model developed by Um and Crompton (1990), the evolution of the evoked set and a final selection of a destination was characterized as being an outcome of the interactions between attitude toward alternative destinations and situational constraints.

In brief, much of the evidence in literature confirmed a causal relationship between attitude and behavior. The acceptance of this attitude-causes-behavior explanation has been apparent in the contexts of leisure and tourism.

One of the most widely accepted models in attitude literature is the expectancy-value model and it has received considerable empirical supports across many disciplines. As shown in Figure 4, the expectancy-value models assume that attitude is a unidimensional construct defined as the sum of the product of beliefs and evaluations (Fishbein 1980).

Figure 4: Traditional Expectancy-Value Model



However, this traditional approach has met with several challenges (Bagozzi 1981, 1982; Oliver & Bearden 1985; Shimp & Kanvas 1984). Several researchers argued that the one-dimensional expectancy-value models understate the fact that individual beliefs or evaluations may lose their meaning, as different beliefs and evaluations can give the same overall summation of attitude. Given the content of beliefs and evaluations typically used in attitude research, some sub-sets of product items are likely to have unique and shared variance (Bagozzi 1982). In that regard, viewing attitude as a unidimensional construct is likely to hamper an understanding of attitude structure and its behavioral consequences.

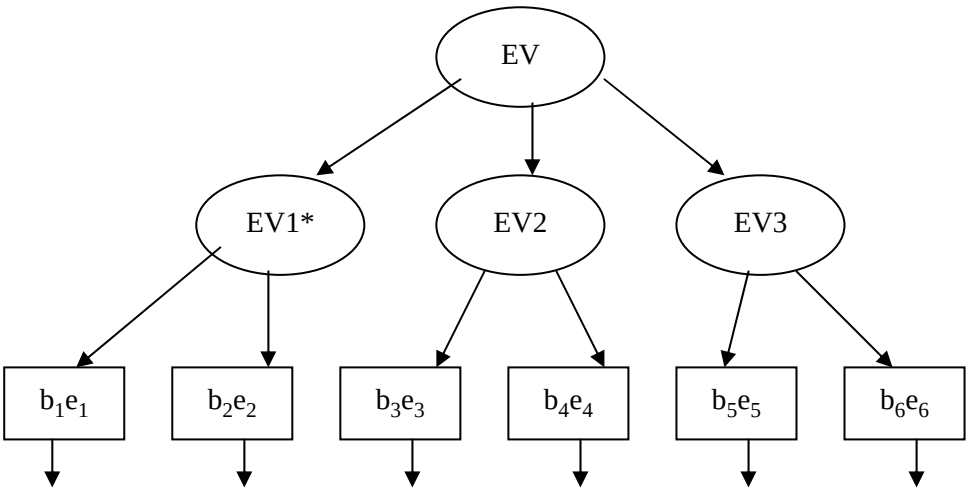
Bagozzi, Gürhan-Canli and Priester (2002) argued that the expectancy-value model lumps all beliefs together in an undifferentiated whole, clouding the explanatory power of the model by failing to pinpoint the relative effects of beliefs. Moreover, they asserted that the unidimensional expectancy-value model, being a singular

agglomeration of beliefs and evaluations, provides little guidance on which beliefs or evaluations to target, because it has nothing to say about interrelations or sequences among beliefs (Bagozzi 1981).

Indeed, various researchers suggested that attitude should be represented as a multidimensional construct, rather than collapsing it into a single summary value, in order to retain information about the distinct structures. As presented in Figure 5, the multidimensional model treats each expectancy-value measure as a separate indicator of a latent variable, but it permits dimensionality so that different subsets of belief-times-evaluation attributes ($b_i e_i$) serve as indicators of sub-dimensions (EV*n*).

In a study of giving blood, Bagozzi (1981, 1982) presented three independent belief dimensions: immediate external pain, immediate internal sickness, and delayed costs of means-end variety. He argued that people experienced a multidimensional depiction of the consequences of giving blood in their minds, rather than forming a singular expectancy-value attitude.

Figure 5: Multidimensional Expectancy-Value Model



* The EV*n*'s, *n* = 1, 2, 3 indicate sub-dimensions of EV attitude

In support of Bagozzi's view, Shimp and Kavas (1984) challenged the assumption that expectancy-value components aggregate into a single cognitive unit. They stated, "…if indeed consumers maintain relatively separate cognitive-representations for positive and negative behavioral consequences, then adding all consequences together in typical Fishbein-Ajzen fashion amounts to little more than mixing apples and oranges" (1984: 806). The researchers further argued that beliefs about the consequences of behavior are likely to be qualitatively different, therefore the beliefs are organized into different categories having separate influences on attitude. In

their modified attitudinal model, beliefs and evaluations are grouped into separate expectancy-value components to present the multidimensional cognitive components of attitude.

Expanding Ajzen's (1985) theory of planned behavior, Bagozzi and Warshaw (1990) developed the theory of trying to explain goal-directed behaviors. The theory suggested three distinct dimensions of attitude and each dimension is modeled as a function of its own expectancy-value reactions, influencing the decision-making concerning goal-directed behaviors. The dimensions include attitude towards success, attitude towards failure, and attitude towards the process of goal pursuit. Various researchers have adapted this model for such topics as regulating hypertension (Taylor, Bagozzi & Gaither 2001), losing weight (Bagozzi & Edwards 1998), and achieving goals in experimental tasks (Hinsz & Ployhart 1998).

In a study of the adoption of computer technology, Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw (1992) found that three fundamental beliefs governed users' attitude towards new programming technologies. Rather than measuring beliefs and evaluations as specified under the traditional expectancy-value model, the researchers asserted that consumers appraised the utilitarian, experiential, and enjoyment related consequences of adopting a product and these, in turn, governed the consumer's overall attitude.

Evidences from the aforementioned literature indicate that an increasing number of studies support the multidimensional structure of attitude. The literature suggests that multidimensional approach can provide a number of advantages over a unidimensional structure. Firstly, it can lead to a better understanding of interrelationships among belief structures and antecedents of behavioral intention (Bagozzi 1982; Shimp & Kavas 1984). Secondly, the multidimensional structure can provide a better guidance for managerial intervention as different elements of marketing mix can be altered to influence each belief structure and its behavioral consequences. Thirdly, a multidimensional approach can also provide diagnostic information for predicting advertising effects on belief change, identifying beliefs that are relatively easy to change yet are related to the intended beliefs (Yi 1989). Sometimes it is necessary to single out a particular belief by attacking another belief more vulnerable or acceptable to change efforts. Persuasive communication can be fine-tuned to influence a specific belief and then indirectly, through another belief, affect attitude. The unidimensional expectancy-value model, being a singular agglomeration of beliefs and evaluations, provides little guidance on which beliefs or evaluations to target because it has nothing to say about interrelations or sequences among beliefs (Bagozzi 1981). As such, multidimensional expectancy-value attitude models can provide a better way to examine complex effects

of advertising on consumer reactions than does the traditional approach.

Attitude change has been one of the important issues in attitude research, and the dominant explanations of the change were based on cognitive factors (Fishbein & Middlestadt 1995). Changing attitude towards some object requires a change in the underlying cognitive structure, that is, in one's beliefs about the object and/or in the evaluative aspects of those beliefs (Ajzen & Fishbein 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen 1975).

Lutz (1975, 1977) has purported to show that a person's attitude towards a brand can be formed and altered by changing a person's cognitive structure. As indicated by the success of the experimental manipulations of beliefs (b_i) and evaluative aspect (e_i), the subjects appeared to translate brand information into subjective product perceptions in a relatively systematic fashion. Furthermore, there was an indication that changes in single cognitive elements can affect cognitive structure and attitude in accordance with theory. The attitude change interpretation of Lutz's studies provides another strong support for the validity of multidimensional attitude models as a vehicle for generating attitude change strategies.

Most of the attitude models reviewed previously are compensatory in that a product's weakness on one attribute can be compensated for by strength on another. The

literature suggests two kinds of decision rules that consumers may use in evaluating alternatives during the decision-making process. One is a compensatory decision rule that requires consumers to evaluate alternatives one at a time across a range of attributes and then to determine the most preferred by summing across those attributes. As the number of alternatives and evaluative attributes increases, compensatory models assume a complex cognitive decision-making process on the part of the decision maker (Nakanishi & Bettman 1974). The multiattribute attitude model of Fishbein (1963) is a good example of this compensatory decision rule.

On the other hand, when the number of alternatives and evaluative attributes increases, especially if consumers lack knowledge and confidence in their choice, non-compensatory decision rules are invoked. That is, consumers evaluate specific attributes across a range of alternatives being considered and eliminate the alternatives if they are not considered to be adequate in those key attributes. This is most likely to happen when a weakness in one product attribute is not compensated by strengths of another. Three types of non-compensatory decision rules were identified in literature. Conjunctive models determine the minimum acceptable performance level of standard for each product attribute, whereas disjunctive models determine the acceptable performance standards for each attribute. In contrast, lexicographic models involve the ranking of

product attributes from most important to least important, usually in situations where the number of alternatives is fixed (Teare, Mazanec, Crawford-Welch & Calver 1994).

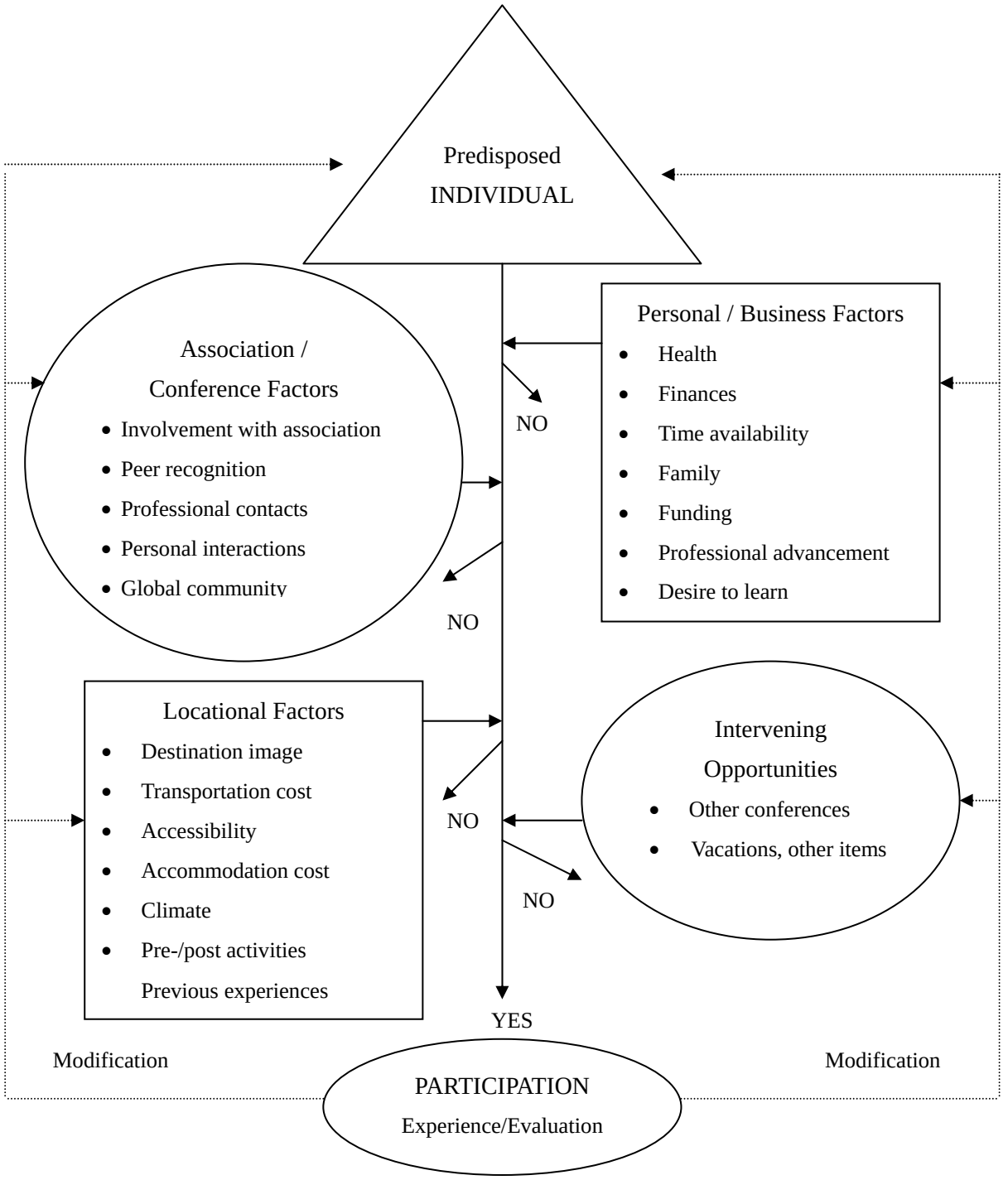
Assael (1998) considered two factors determining the choice of decision rules: the nature of consumer needs and the level of involvement. He argued that the compensatory decision rule is likely to occur when consumers are driven by functional needs and in high involvement situations. Conversely, consumers may try non-compensatory decision rules in less involved situations driven by hedonic needs. Bettman (1981) suggested that overall evaluations are likely to occur under high involvement characterized by brand-organized information, and when there are factors preventing the use of a simple choice process.

Association Convention Participation Decision-Making Process

Of most relevance to the present study is research by Oppermann and Chon (1997) that proposed a conceptual model of the convention participation decision-making process, which is used as a fundamental framework for this study. Oppermann and Chon (1997) developed a model of the association convention participation decision-making process based on empirical findings of previous studies in convention tourism literature. As shown in Figure 6, the model presented four factors entailed in the

convention participation decision-making process of an individual with a predisposition towards attending an association convention. They are personal/business factors, association/conference factors, locational factors, and factors associated with intervening opportunities. Each of the factors will be reviewed in detail in the following section.

Figure 6: Oppermann and Chon's Model of Convention Participation Decision-Making Process



Source: Oppermann & Chon (1997)

Personal and Business Factors

The health status of an individual may affect the convention participation decision, because people in good health are keener to travel to attend a convention. The financial situation of an individual attendee may also influence the participation decision, especially when the attendee may have to finance some or all of his/her travel expenses (Grant & Oppermann 1995; Ngamsom et al. 2001; Oppermann 1995).

Family obligations may be an important decision variable when a special family occasion clashes with the schedule of a particular convention. Funding availability was found to be the most important reason for not attending education association conventions (Oppermann 1995). In a time of tighter budgets, cost and funding variables may have a greater influence on the participation decision-making process. Similarly, time availability is likely to be a major deciding variable for convention participation (Grant & Oppermann 1995; Ngamsom et al. 2001; Oppermann 1995, 1998). A convention participation decision may also be influenced by individuals' goals, such as professional advancement and a desire to learn.

Association and Conference Factors

McCabe, Poole, Weeks, and Leiper (2000) argued that, unlike other tourism segments, the primary activity of conventions and meetings is business. Previous studies

shared common findings that the most influential decision variables of convention participation were association and convention related factors, such as education and professional improvement, professional contacts/relationships and personal interactions. Involvement with association appears to be another influential decision variable for the convention participation decision-making process (Oppermann 1998). Additionally, attending international conventions and interacting with other professionals from all over the world may provide attendees with a sense of global community.

Locational Factors

Association conventions involve a substantial leisure element (Davidson 1994). Convention attendees can have simultaneous opportunities for combining business and holiday, especially in the case of long-haul destinations (Price & Becker 2002). As such, some destinations may achieve higher attendance due to the attractiveness of their tourism products (Hiller 1995). A number of researchers suggested that destination image is a crucial factor in the decision-making process of potential attendees (Grant & Weaver 1996; Ngamsom et al. 2001). In addition, attractive social events and pre-/post convention activities can facilitate attendees' decision to participate in a particular convention, especially should they wish to bring family members to the convention site. Climatic conditions may also have an effect on people's decision in choosing a

convention location, since most people prefer pleasant weather with moderate temperatures and humidity. Another influencing factor can be potential delegates' previous experience with the convention location. In tourism literature, previous travel experience has been thought to influence future destination choice behavior (George & George 2004; Mazursky 1989; Sonmez & Graefe 1998). Potential attendees with favorable past experiences at a particular convention location are more likely to return to the site.

People tend to choose nearer and more easily accessible destinations with short travel times and less cost. For those reasons, many convention organizers hesitate to host conventions at second-tier cities as they are usually less accessible (Grant & Oppermann 1995; Ngamsom et al. 2001; Oppermann 1995, 1998). Accessibility is most often associated with transportation costs, with less accessible locations being associated with high transportation costs. Also, high accommodation costs at a location may be a constraint for the convention participation decision, as it may account for a large share of total outlay for participants.

Intervening Opportunities

Other competing conventions may exert a compelling influence on potential convention attendees' participation decision. According to the American Society of

Association Executives (1994), seven out of ten adult Americans belong to at least one association and one in four is a member of four or more associations. Potential attendees are often faced with the dilemma of having to choose one association convention in preference to other options because one cannot possibly attend all conventions of the association in which he/she is a member. While some conventions are an annual convention of an association, many others are one-off events. Nonetheless both may appear to be attractive to a potential attendee possibly because of the location, the theme of the convention, or for assorted other reasons (Oppermann 1998). Not only other competing conventions but other product categories such as holiday can be convention participation decision variables. As the total cost of attending a convention may be substantial, a potential attendee with financial and time constraints may weigh the benefits of attending the convention against other considerations, such as a vacation, to maximize the benefits to him/her.

By attending a convention, one gains the experience and exposure and then a post-convention evaluation takes place. The evaluation is followed by feedback to all the influencing factors and this feedback may govern the attendee's future decision-making process. For example, if an attendee had a positive experience at a convention at a certain location, he/she might change image of the destination more favorably

(locational factor) and become more involved in activities of that particular association (association/conference factor). Consequently, the possibility of attending the association's next convention is likely to be higher than that of attending other conventions (intervening opportunities) or a special family occasion (personal factors) (Oppermann & Chon 1997).

Theoretical Background of the Study

As considered earlier, convention tourism research is at a relatively emergent stage of its development. As a result, one of the most urgent needs in the literature is the development of a comprehensive framework to explain convention participation decision-making behavior. Although extant studies shed light on some of the important decision variables, they failed to incorporate the evaluation stage to the decision-making process. At the same time they ignored largely those attitudinal aspects of consumer decision-making based on the links between cognitive, affective, and conative components of attitude (Ajzen & Fishbein 1980). Therefore, by integrating disparate streams of research in related disciplines, the current study attempts to develop a conceptual framework to identify factors affecting potential association convention

attendees' participation decision-making process. In doing so, the study can also explore the validity of the model proposed by Oppermann and Chon (1997).

In this study the association convention participation decision-making process is conceptualized by integrating the contributions of the cognitive consumer decision-making models and attitude research. Firstly, the fundamental premise of this study is that association convention participation decision-making is regarded as a rational and systematic behavior. There is general agreement among consumer behavior researchers that when a consumer makes an important decision under the high involvement condition, it is likely to evoke complex cognitive decision-making process, narrowing down of alternatives until the selection of a final single choice. The important decisions are often characterized by higher perceived risks and personal responsibility for the consequences (Bazerman 2001). High investment costs for attending an international association convention and uncertainty about the consequences of the participation can determine that association convention participation decision-making fits the cognitive decision-making process, evolving in rational and sequential steps. In such high involvement situations consumers may use a compensatory decision rule to choose between alternatives. In addition, the study incorporates the notion of the choice-sets, conceptualizing the decision-making process as a funnel-like process. This choice-sets

concept appears to be applicable for conceptualizing how potential attendees choose a particular association convention to attend among a myriad of conventions available and seemingly relevant to them.

Secondly, the association convention participation decision-making process can be explained by the hierarchy of effects paradigm as well as the expectancy-value model. The theory of reasoned action, which is the best-known expectancy-value model, provides a suitable framework for conceptualizing the premise behavior that potential association convention attendees' participation decision is determined by their attitude towards the behavior. According to the theory, individuals are believed to hold attitude as they perceive that desired outcomes are associated with a behavior, and the behavior is driven by intention which can be predicted from attitude towards behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen 1975). Potential attendees may have favorable attitude towards a particular association convention, but this does not necessarily translate into participation in the convention. Adapting the approach of the theory of reasoned action, this study focuses on attitude towards association convention participation rather than attitude towards attributes of the convention.

The two research streams: cognitive decision-making process and attitude theory are not mutually exclusive, but there are rather many parallels (Dabholkar 1994).

Cognitive evaluations on alternatives in the decision-making process are consistent with beliefs about product attributes or consequences of behavior in attitude research. Also, the choice or purchase stage of the consumer decision-making process can be comparable to an individual's intention to behave one over another in attitudinal framework (Dabholkar 1994). This being the case, a model of the association convention participation decision-making process that integrates these two research paradigms should offer a greater understanding of how a potential association convention attendee makes a participation decision, and of the process underlying the decision behavior.

Last but not least, the present study supports a view that attitude should be represented as a multidimensional structure (Bagozzi 1981, 1982; Oliver & Bearden 1985; Shim & Kavas 1984; Yi 1989). Rather than treating the attitudinal structure of association convention participation decision-making as a single number consisting of the summation of expectancy-value products, each expectancy-value component is to be treated as a separate indicator of attitude. It was believed that this approach could provide a deeper understanding of attitude formation and attitude change in the association convention participation decision-making process.

Summary

This chapter focused on the review of literature, with particular emphasis on the conceptual development related to the consumer decision-making process. Firstly, a review of previous research in convention tourism literature was made with an attempt to identify research gaps and to justify the reason for conducting the present study. The review indicated that the topic of the association convention participation decision-making process has been under-researched and lacks conceptual underpinnings.

Next, an extensive review of literature was carried out in the broader contexts of consumer behavior and tourism marketing, revealing that the central constructs of the consumer decision-making process models have been well tested and widely accepted in the literature. A common feature of cognitive models of consumer choice behavior is the conceptualization of the decision-making process as a funneling process of narrowing down of options to a final choice. This concept has been generally embraced in tourism literature, becoming a central concept of the destination choice process.

The review further focused on attitude research as attitude has been regarded as one of the most important variables for understanding how consumers make choices. There has been agreement that a causal relationship exists between attitude and behavior. Evidences in literature indicated that attitude models serve as a conceptual foundation

for various foundational destination choice models. Subsequently, the expectancy-value attitude model, one of the most widely accepted attitude models, was introduced and the multidimensional expectancy-value models were further reviewed.

In the last part of this chapter, the existing model of the convention participation decision-making process by Oppermann and Chon (1997) was presented. Although the model guided the current study, it only presented a conceptual framework for further study. Comprehensive investigations of all conceptual constructs and variables in the model have neither been made nor empirically tested.

In the literature which has been reviewed in this chapter, the absence of a sound and reliable framework integrating the central concepts in related disciplines is one of the major limitations in advancing knowledge of association convention participation decision behavior. Therefore, the primary objectives of this study are to bring the aforementioned streams of research together to explore factors that influence the association convention participation decision-making process and to develop a valid and reliable measurement scale to assess the process.

This chapter laid theoretical foundations for the current study. On these foundations, the thesis proceeds with a detailed description of the methodology used to investigate the research questions of the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The current chapter details the methodology used in this study to achieve the study objectives formulated in Chapter 1. The chapter begins with a discussion of the research questions and the research design employed in the study. The following section provides an explanation of survey design, sample selection, and data collection for both main and longitudinal studies. This is followed by a description of the measurement scale development procedures. The research hypotheses and data analysis methods are addressed in the final section of the chapter.

Research Questions

The examinations of previous studies that have attempted to measure the association convention participation decision-making process are rather inconclusive and there is little known about constructs and variables of the process. Due to lack of comprehensive information on this particular topic, a need arose to develop a

measurement scale to assess the association convention participation decision-making process. The primary objectives of this study are to identify factors that influence the association convention participation decision-making process and to develop a valid and reliable measurement scale to assess the process. After the scale is established, the following research questions can be answered and specific research hypotheses related to the questions can be advanced:

1. What factors do potential convention attendees consider when they make an association convention participation decision?
2. Do convention participation decision-making factors significantly influence the participation decision?
3. Does the importance of the convention participation decision-making factors in influencing the participation decision change over time?

The research hypotheses of the study are presented and discussed in the later part of this chapter.

Research Design

As presented in Figure 7, this study employed a three-stage research design combining exploratory research and descriptive research. As much about possible

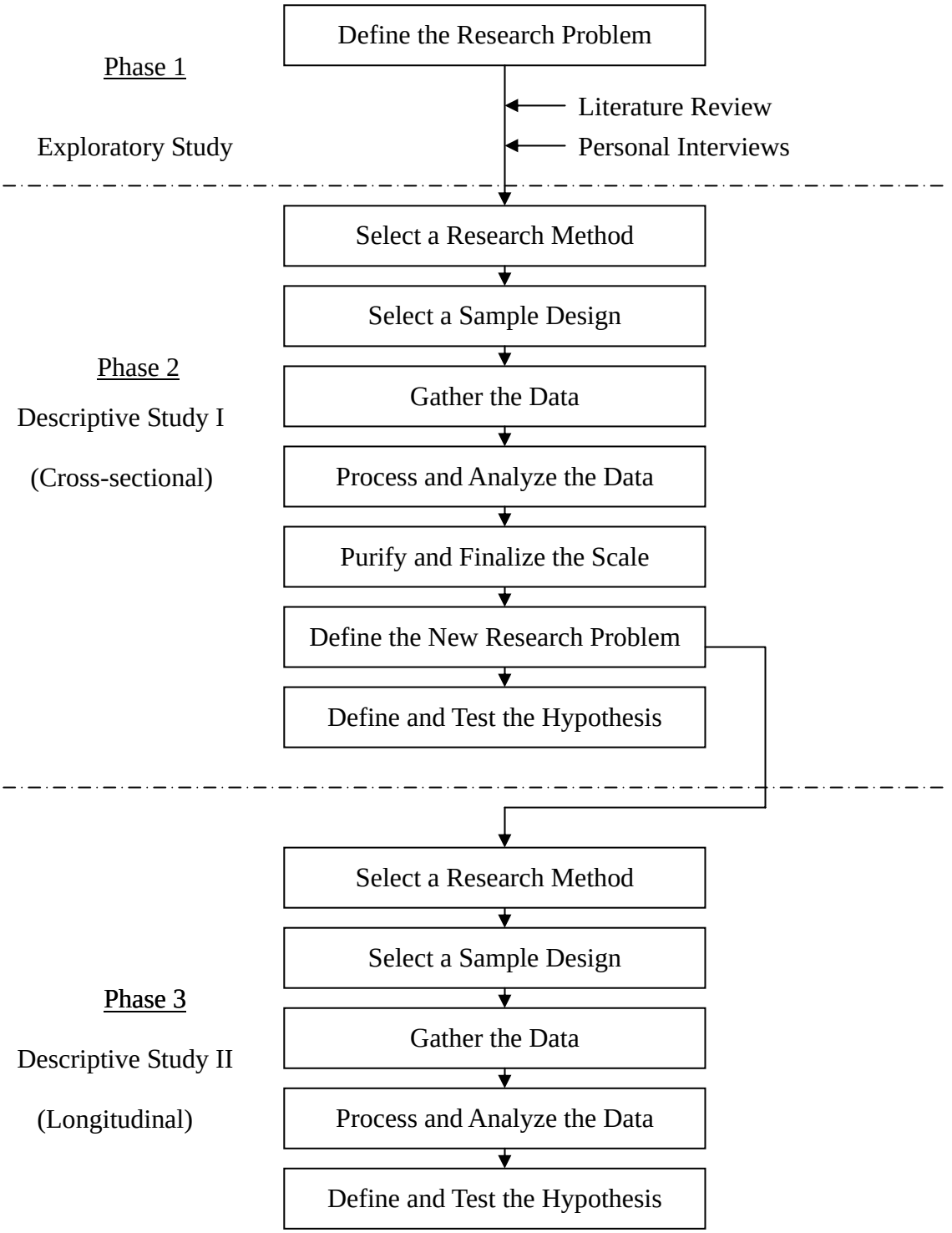
causes of a problem situation were not known due to the lack of extant studies on the topic of this study, it was difficult to predict the research problems at the initial stage (Cooper & Emory 1995). Several researchers suggest that exploratory research is particularly useful for defining a set of investigative questions that can be used as a guide to a detailed research design (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Lowe 1991). In this study exploratory research was conducted as a separate first stage (Phase 1), with a purpose of clearly defining the research problem. The procedures of this initial stage included: first, the review of the relevant literature and, second, interviewing people identified with the variables of interest.

After defining the major dimensions of the research problem at the first exploratory stage, a descriptive research design was subsequently employed. A descriptive study can be longitudinal or cross-sectional in design. Cross-sectional studies are carried out once, representing a snapshot of the study of phenomena at a given point in time. In contrast, longitudinal studies are repeated over an extended period, providing a moving picture of changes over time (Charreire & Durieux 2001). In the first empirical part of this study (Phase 2), a cross-sectional study with a self-administrated questionnaire was used to collect data. The survey method was selected because it is relatively less time-consuming, inexpensive, and easy to administer

(DeVellis 1991). Then, empirical data were gathered to purify and finalize the measurement scale. In the next step, concern shifted to hypothesis defining, that is, to giving a provisional trail to the ideas formulated and to examining relationships among the variables that have been derived from the scale (Bauer 1963). The scale that was established may subsequently provide a direction for developing specific research hypotheses about possible causes of a problem situation.

The research question (Q3) - “whether or not the importance of the convention participation decision-making factors in influencing the participation decision changes over time” - was investigated by employing a longitudinal research design in Phase 3. A set of the study panel was set up and surveyed twice over three month period. Several researchers suggested a longitudinal study for a better understanding of the decision-making process, as the longitudinal approach has an advantage over cross-sectional design in revealing the dynamics of the decision-making process (Crompton & Ankomah 1993; Woodside & Lysonski 1989). Based on those recommendations, a longitudinal design was considered to be adequate for the subsequent study in order to track attitude change over time.

Figure 7: Overview of Research Process



Source: Adapted from Zikmund (2003)

Survey Design for the Main Study

For the purpose of deriving domains and items to include in the scale of the study, Fishbein's (1963) attitude model was applied. Fishbein (1963:237) argued that "a significantly better estimate of attitude is found by taking both belief and evaluative aspects of an object into account". Accordingly, the dimensions of the association convention participation decision-making process were measured using a Likert scale on two aspects of each phenomenon: belief component and evaluative component.

The belief component was measured by asking respondents to rate the extent to which they believe a specific association convention would provide each attribute, using a five-point Likert scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. The beliefs were elicited in the form of statement: "Attending this convention will help me gain recognition from peers" as an example. In measuring the evaluation component, respondents were asked to rate their level of importance to each item on a five-point rating scale where 1 = not important and 5 = very important. Calculation of a measure for each item using a multiplicative function enables the salient belief of each item to be measured in terms of direction and evaluation given by the respondent.

The final survey instrument used for data collection contains a cover page and three major parts (See Appendix D). The cover letter provides a general introduction to

the survey and invitation to participate. The first section of the questionnaire begins with asking respondents how important each of 30 decision variables is in influencing their association convention participation decision in general. The second section includes a list of education association conventions in the area of hospitality and tourism held in 2004. According to Woodside and Lysonski (1989), the intention of behavior is significantly associated with actual behavior provided that the intention question is related to a specific time period and situation. Respondents were asked to choose one specific convention from the list which they would like to attend the most. This question was followed by a global measure of the respondents' likelihood of attending the chosen convention on a seven-point Likert scale with a continuum of 1 (very unlikely) to 7 (very likely). It was decided to set the time frame (i.e., year 2004) for this question because it is difficult for participants to express their behavioral intention without a specific time indicated.

In the next part of the questionnaire, Likert-type scale items using five points "strongly disagree-strongly agree" were presented to measure the subjective probability of each item's association with a particular convention that potential delegates have chosen. An additional sixth point was placed as a category for the "not applicable" response. To avoid order effects, 30 belief attributes were presented in a different order

from those of the evaluation part in the first section. The last section dealt with demographic questions including gender, age, country/territory of residence, profession, previous experience in convention attendance, number of association membership, and travel funding availability.

Sample Selection for the Main Study - Original Sample

A number of considerations were given to determine sample selection. Considering the theoretical aspect of this study, the most important criterion in selecting sample was not to ensure that the sample is representative of a population but to increase validity of the collected data. Crompton and Ankomah (1993) argued that, even though findings from a particular sample may not be generalized, generalization will evolve over time as results from different subjects accumulate. Dillman (1978) asserted that a purposive sample is most desirable when certain important segments of a target population are internationally represented. Taking all these views into consideration, it was decided to use a purposive sample for the current study.

Additionally, different levels of the study interest and study relevance were also considered in selecting the study sample. Martin (1994) experimented the impact of interest level on response rates, showing that survey participants in high interest

condition were almost twice more likely to respond to a particular questionnaire than those in low interest condition. This consideration led to the choice of membership of international education associations in the field of tourism and hospitality as a target sample for this study. This was based on the assumption that members of those associations could be considered as potential convention attendees, and moreover they are more likely to have high interests in the topic of this study due to its relevance to them.

The sample used for the main study consisted of members of three selected education associations including the International Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education (CHRIE), the Travel and Tourism Association (TTRA), and the International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators (ISTTE). Email addresses of the association members were drawn from each association membership directory.

One of the most important issues in sampling is sample size. However, there is in general no correct sample size in the absolute sense, and larger samples are always preferable (Charreire & Durieux 2001). The determination of the sample size largely depends on statistical estimating precision required for data analysis. As a factor analysis technique would be employed to analyze the data in this study, the number of subjects needed for undertaking the factor analysis would depend on the number of

items that were to be included in the research instrument. Nunnally (1978) suggested that a sample of at least 10 subjects per variable/item is necessary for conducting factor analysis in order to reduce sample error. Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) advocated at least 300 cases for factor analysis as a general rule of thumb. Consequently, in order to achieve the main objective of this study, which is to develop a measurement scale for the association convention participation decision-making process by employing factor analyses, a usable sample size of 300 was targeted for the main study.

Data Collection for the Main Study

Data were collected via a web survey using email as the communication medium, as it can substantially reduce survey cost and time and eliminate geographical limitations (Dillman 2000). Also, the majority of the target sample's email addresses were available from the selected association membership directories. In addition to those efficiencies, a web-based survey can be more effective for identifying and reaching online virtual community members, as people may find this new type of survey more interesting compared with other traditional survey methods. The feedbacks from some of respondents in this web survey are attached in Appendix K.

First, using HTML (Hyper Text Mark-up Language) forms, the research instrument was constructed on a website of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. The survey questions were designed in a fixed format with an intention to make the questionnaire appear same for all respondents. Prior to the actual survey, using a small convenience sample of 40, the research instrument was pre-tested to ensure readability and to detect any logical errors of questions when answering on the net (See Appendix A).

The administration of the survey was conducted following Dillman's (2000) four-time-contact email survey strategy: 1) a pre-notice, 2) the questionnaire, 3) a thank-you/reminder, and 4) a replacement questionnaire. The contact sequence began with a pre-notice, as people tend to discard messages especially if they appear long (Dillman 2000). The pre-notifying email (Appendix B) was sent to the target sample 3-4 days prior to sending out the actual questionnaire. As many professionals were assumed to hold multiple association memberships, each membership directory was carefully cross-checked to identify those members whose names were listed in more than one directory in order to minimize duplication.

In the next step, members were invited via email to participate in the survey, providing them with the website address where the survey questionnaire was loaded

(See Appendix C). By simply clicking on the address contained in the email, they were transferred to the survey site. Email was prepared as an individual message to each potential respondent as several researchers suggested that personalization is important for achieving a high response rate (Salant & Dillman 1994).

Two weeks after the initial mailing, a thank-you/reminder email (Appendix E) was sent with a replacement questionnaire. Respondents were informed of alternative ways to return the completed questionnaire such as by fax, post, or email attachment.

The survey was carried out from January 6 until January 31 2004. Of 1,583 emails sent out, 422 emails were bounced back due to invalid address and they were excluded from further process of data collection. As shown in Table 2, a total of 558 usable responses were collected from 1,161 members with a valid email address, representing a net response rate of 48.1%.

Table 2: Survey Response Rate for Main Study

	Number	**%**
Total target population	1,583	100
Undelivered emails	422	26.7
Total survey population with valid email address	1,161	100
Total responses	581	50.0
Unusable responses	23	2.0
Total usable samples	558	48.1*

***** Total usable samples = 558/1161

Survey Design for the Longitudinal Study

The survey used for the subsequent longitudinal study was administered at two different times, three months apart. For this part of the study, a particular education association convention was selected and the questions in the survey were specifically designed in reference to the Second Asia-Pacific CHRIE Conference and the "Sixth Biennial Conference on Tourism in Asia" held in Phuket, Thailand on May 27-29 2004.

The questionnaire was divided into two sections (See Appendix H). First, a likelihood that respondents would attend the specific association convention was assessed by using a seven-point scale where 1 = very unlikely and 7 = very likely. Then, respondents were asked to indicate the level of importance of each convention participation decision-making factor in influencing their decision to attend, or not to attend, the particular convention on a five-point bipolar scale with "not important" and "very important" as end points. Demographic questions were presented in the last part of the questionnaire. For the second-time survey (Appendix J), the demographic questions were not included because the same respondents were repeatedly surveyed at two different times.

Sample Selection for the Longitudinal Study – Longitudinal Sample

The separate sample for the longitudinal study included members of the Asia Pacific Travel Association (APTA) and previous convention delegates at the First Asia-Pacific CHRIE Conference and the "Fifth Biennial Conference on Tourism in Asia". Email addresses of APTA members were drawn from the association membership directory, whereas the database of two conferences' delegates was sourced from the conference organizer.

To answer the research question 3 (Q3) - whether or not the importance of the convention participation decision-making factors in influencing the participation decision changes over time - a particular set of the study panel needed to be repeatedly contacted over a period of time, and the agreement to participate in the repeated surveys required a high level of commitment. According to Menard (2002), a key drawback of a longitudinal research design is the difficulty in designing the sampling scheme to reduce the problem of subjects leaving the study prior to its completion, which is known as attrition. As the same subjects are to be contacted over time, non-response typically increases through time. Churchill (1976) argued that, depending on the type of cooperation needed, the non-response rate might run as high as 50%. Considering these

longitudinal aspects of the research design, the targeted sample size set at 100. This approach is consistent with previous studies by Um and Crompton (1990) as well as Crompton and Ankomah (1993).

Data Collection for the Longitudinal Study

For the longitudinal part of the study, data were collected at two separate times from the same study panel, also using a web survey. Taris (2000) noted that survey participants in a longitudinal study are usually asked to provide information about their behavior and attitude regarding the issues of interest on a number of separate occasions in time. Therefore, a strong commitment should be established at the beginning stage in order to follow the sample over period of time. With a specific attention paid to these longitudinal aspects, firstly, an invitation email was sent to the target population, seeking their agreement to participate in the survey as a study panel (See Appendix F). The first questionnaire included in the email (Appendix G) was sent in February 2004, only to those who accepted the invitation to participate in the panel survey.

Respondents were directed to the questionnaire when they click on the website address contained in the email. An individual identification number was assigned to

each study panel, allowing the researcher to identify and pair the same panel in the second survey. At the first round of survey, a total number of 153 responses were collected among 173 who agreed to participate in the survey as a study panel.

In May 2004, approximately three months after the first-time survey, the second survey was directed to 153 respondents who completed the first-time survey (See Appendix I and J). Of 153 initial survey participants, only 107 re-participated when the second survey was administered representing 70% panel retention rates. Thus, the size of total sample for the longitudinal study decreased from 153 to 107, and a total of 107 paired data sets were used for the subsequent data analysis.

According to Menard (2002), longitudinal data collection periods can be short consisting of a few hours, or long such as several years. The principal difference between longitudinal and cross-sectional data collection is that for longitudinal research, data are collected on each variable for at least two different periods and the time elapse between the periods may vary depending on each case. In this study, data were collected at two separate times with a three month split, which considered as the sufficient time for the study panel to make or change their convention participation decision.

Scale Development

Due to lack of comprehensive information on the measurement of the association convention participation decision-making process, the need arose to investigate the domain of the decision-making process and to generate a scale that allows for its measurement. The development of the scale would permit further study of the construct as well as its relationship with other key constructs in the context of association convention participation decision-making.

The scale development procedures employed in this study followed the guidelines set by Churchill (1979) and Netemeyer, Bearden and Sharma (2003). Basically, according to these researchers, the scale development process is comprised of the following four steps: 1) developing a research instrument, 2) collecting data, 3) purifying measurement, and 4) finalizing the measurement. An outline of the procedures followed in the scale development is shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Steps in Scale Development

Developing a Research Instrument	Step 1-1: Literature Review and Personal Interviews ➢ Define constructs of the association convention participation decision-making process ➢ Generate items to represent the constructs' domain Step 1-2: Content Validity Test ➢ Assess the preliminary items by expert judges ➢ Refine, change or remove unclear items Step 1-3: Pre-test ➢ Initial item analyses ➢ Receive feedback and revise the instrument if necessary Step 1-4: Pilot Test ➢ Test the research instrument using small convenience sample ➢ Analyze items and delete problematic items
Collecting Data	Step 2: Collection of Data with the Initial Scale ➢ Collect data using a web survey ➢ Randomly divide dataset into two halves
Purifying Measurement	Step 3: Scale Purification ➢ Perform exploratory factor analysis ➢ Derive an initial factor structure – dimensionality and theory ➢ Remove problematic items to obtain non-trivial factors
Finalizing the Measurement	Step 4: Finalization of the Scale Representing the Constructs of the Association Convention Participation Decision-Making Process ➢ Perform confirmatory factor analysis ➢ Test the theoretical factor structure and model specification ➢ Examine overall fit and parameter fit on the modified scale ➢ Assess reliability and validity for the final scale

Source: Adapted from Churchill (1979) and Netemeyer, Bearden and Sharma (2003)

Step 1: Developing a Research Instrument

The first stage of the scale development began with a thorough literature review to define clearly constructs and content domain under examination. First, an extensive review of literature was conducted in the broad contexts of convention tourism, consumer behavior, marketing, cognitive psychology, and tourism studies to reveal prior attempts that measured the targeted construct and strengths/weaknesses of such attempts. The review indicated that none of the existing scales was exactly appropriate for reapplication in the context of the association convention participation decision-making process. Therefore, it was decided to construct a new scale which can capture the targeted construct more accurately and efficiently (Haynes, Richard & Kubany 1995). During the literature review and the theory development processes, a list of items was generated that specified the constructs of the association convention participation decision-making process and those items were developed into statements.

Another procedure recommended for generating an initial pool of scale items is to conduct personal interviews with knowledgeable subjects on the topic under investigation (Ap & Crompton 1998). This type of exploratory approach is particularly useful at the starting point of the instrument development as little is known about constructs of convention participation decision-making behavior, strengthening the need

to use this method as a prerequisite to the scale development. In this part of the instrument development process, 20 personal interviews were carried out to delineate major dimensions of the association convention participation decision-making process. All of the interview participants had at least one-time experience in attending an international association convention. Each unstructured interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes and the interview process was audio-taped. Interviewees were broadly asked to identify factors that they consider when they make association convention participation decisions. Additionally, the items that had been identified from the literature review were shown to interview participants to see whether previous ideas and concepts were applicable for a given different context. The interview process provided some new decision variables which were not listed in the statements extracted from previous studies. Frequently mentioned statements from the open-ended descriptions were converted to statements and included in the item pool. Following development of the set of statements, items were screened to eliminate redundant, ambiguous, and leading statements. Based on the literature review and interview responses, a total of 42 items was generated for the initial pool.

In the next step, content validity of those preliminary items was examined by a panel of five expert judges. Content validity represents the degree to which elements of

a research instrument are relevant to and representative of the targeted construct for a particular assessment purpose (Haynes et al. 1995). For this study, five tourism professors were selected as panel members based on their research and consulting activities in the area. The judges were asked to review the pool of items in terms of clarity of the items, specificity of the items, and likelihood of the items being objectionable to respondents. Using a priori decision rule in which at least four of five judges had to agree that an item was representative of the domain and facet of the construct, this process reduced the number of items to 37. The judges were further requested to identify elements of the items that need to be refined, changed, or deleted. The process resulted in the slight wording changes of two items and the removal of one item.

The remaining 36 items were pre-tested by using data collected through a web survey from a convenient sample of 40 individually comprised academic staff and graduate students in the tourism and hospitality discipline. The emphasis at this early stage was to enhance readability and clarity of the questions as well as to improve content validity of the items in the emerging scale. Moreover, a pre-test was necessary to reduce the number of scale items that remained after the judges' assessment of content validity to a more manageable size (DeVellis 1991).

The assessment of Cronbach alpha or coefficient alpha provides a measure of the internal consistency of the set of items, and Churchill (1979) strongly advocated that Cronbach alpha should be the first measure one may calculate to assess the quality of a research instrument. Accordingly, Cronbach alpha was computed and items with a low coefficient alpha were deleted. Respondents were asked for qualitative feedback on the items. Based on their comments, the items were modified to improve both their reliability and parsimony by deleting troublesome items and rewording items that showed promise but were regarded as confusing to the respondents. This process reduced the number of items from 36 to 34, which represented a reasonable measure of the construct under examination. In addition, the respondents were encouraged to provide comments and suggestions about the web survey format in terms of ease of use, and easy-to-read instructions, since the ultimate application of the scale would be done using a web-based survey tool. Such suggestions were taken into consideration in the revision of the survey instrument.

Prior to the final instrument development, the retained 34 items were subjected to a pilot test to assess the content adequacy of the items. As the research instrument would be subjected to further sample for refinement, a pilot study could reduce the number of items that did not meet certain psychometric criteria (DeVellis 1991). Given

that one of the purposes of pilot testing was to reduce the number of items to a more manageable number for the larger development studies, it was preferable to use a sample from a relevant population of interest (Netemeyer et al. 2003). For this study, a pilot test was conducted at the First Asia-Pacific CHRIE Conference held in Seoul, Korea on May 21-23 2003 where a total number of 86 convention attendees participated in the survey. The major goal of the pilot study was to determine the number of variables that was present in the set of items to be used to measure the association convention participation decision-making process. The pilot test can provide support for construct validity as it allows the deletion of items that may be conceptually inconsistent (DeVellis 1991). Churchill (1979) explained that items which possessed near zero correlations and those which produce a substantial drop in the item-to-total correlations would be recommended for removal. Via item analyses (e.g., inspection of inter-item correlations, corrected item-to-total correlations, item means and variances), 30 items remained for the final study instrument.

Step 2: Collecting Data

The thirty-item survey instrument was given to 1,583 selected education association members in the field of hospitality and tourism from January 6 throughout

January 31 2004. A total number of 558 usable responses were collected from 1,161 members with a valid email address, representing a net response rate of 48.1%. The collected data were then randomly split into two halves to accomplish two factor analyses for further development of the measurement scale. One half (n = 279) of the data were used to perform exploratory factor analysis for the purification of the scale, and subsequently the other half (n = 279) of the data were used to conduct confirmatory factor analysis for the finalization of the scale.

Step 3: Purifying Measurement

In purifying the measurement scale for the association convention participation decision-making process, exploratory factor analysis by using PROMAX oblique rotation was performed with the first half of data (n = 279) collected from members of the selected education associations. Numerous studies illustrate the use of exploratory factor analysis for trimming and retaining items for the final form of a scale.

To determine the proper number of non-trivial factors to be extracted, items with loadings of lower than 0.40 or of 0.40 higher on more than one factor were eliminated and dropped from further analysis. Also, the minimum eigenvalue of 1.0 criterion and scree plot was used for the purpose of factor extraction. Cronbach alpha coefficient was

computed separately for each dimension to improve alpha values of the dimension.

After several runs, data yielded five clean factors explaining 60.07% of overall variances. Table 3 displays the domain descriptions, factor loadings, eigenvalues, percentages of variance, and Cronbach's alpha values. During the factor extraction process, 25 out of 30 decision attributes were retained, with each factor containing three to six items. The five factors showed Cronbach coefficients scores ranging from 0.70 to 0.76, indicating that the variables exhibited moderate correlation with their factor groupings and thus can be regarded as internally consistent and stable. The five factors were labeled as destination stimuli, professional and social networking opportunities, educational opportunities, safety and health situation, and travelability.

Factor 1, named "Destination Stimuli", contained six items with the greatest individual explained variance (20.05%) and the highest eigenvalue (5.42). The variables that were included in this predominant factor were "extra opportunities available at the convention destination", "opportunity to visit the convention destination", "attractive image of the convention destination", "getting away from my routine work/schedule", "weather at the destination", and "participating in the social/recreational programs".

Factor 2, which accounted for 13.55% of overall variance with an eigenvalue of 3.66, was termed "Professional and Social Networking Opportunities". Its retained

variables were “developing professional network”, “personal interactions with colleagues and friends”, “gaining recognition from peers”, “seeing people I know in my field”, “presenting a paper”, and “involvement with the association”.

Factor 3, named “Educational Opportunities”, explained 11.28% of the variances with an eigenvalue of 3.05. Four items loaded on this factor included “keeping up with changes in my profession”, “listening to respected speakers”, “fulfilling my desire to learn”, and “topic of the convention”.

Factor 4 was labeled as “Safety and Health Situation” and contained the following three items: “safety/security situation at the convention destination”, “hygiene standards at the convention destination”, and “my health conditions for travel”. The factor explained 8.35% of overall variances and had an eigenvalue of 3.05.

Factor 5 was termed “Travelability”, describing an influence of pragmatic constraints such as monetary cost, travel time, personal financial situation, and accessibility. Six items loaded on this factor, accounting for 6.84% of the variance with an eigenvalue of 1.85. They were “total cost of attending the convention”, “time required to travel to the convention destination”, “my personal financial situation”, “easy access to the destination”, “financial support availability from my organization”, and “time availability”.

Table 3: Exploratory Factor Analysis Results for Initial Measurement Scale

Dimensions	Fac1	Fac2	Fac3	% Var.	EV	α
Factor 1: Destination Stimuli				20.05	5.42	.758
Extra opportunities available at the destination (A1)	.824					
Opportunity to visit the convention destination (A2)	.796					
Attractive destination image (A3)	.706					
Getting away from my routine work/schedule (A4)	.631					
Weather at the convention destination (A5)	.589					
Participating in the social/recreational programs (A6)	.559					
Factor 2: Professional and Social Networking Opportunities				13.55	3.66	.735
Developing professional network (A7)		.737				
Personal interactions with colleagues & friends (A8)		.720				
Gaining recognition from peers (A9)		.716				
Seeing people I know in my field (A10)		.683				
Presenting a paper (A11)		.599				
Involvement with the association (A12)		.495				
Factor 3: Educational Opportunities				11.28	3.05	.704
Keeping up with changes in my profession (A13)			.783			
Listening to respected speakers (A14)			.758			
Fulfilling my desire to learn (A15)			.716			
Topic of the convention (A16)			.596			

Dimensions	Fac4	Fac5	% Var.	EV	α
Factor 4: Safety and Health Situation			8.35	2.26	.737
Safety/security situation the convention destination (A17)	.802				
Hygiene standards at the convention destination (A18)	.768				
My health conditions for travel (A19)	.710				
Factor 5: Travelability			6.84	1.85	.740
Total cost of attending the convention (A20)		.761			
Time required to travel to the convention destination (A21)		.665			
My personal financial situation (A22)		.652			
Easy to access to the convention destination (A23)		.591			
Financial support availability from my organization (A24)		.581			
Time availability (A25)		.473			

Step 4: Finalizing the Measurement

In Step 4 of the scale development process, the factor structure established by the initial exploratory factor analysis was validated by performing confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) on the second half of data collected (n = 279). A purpose of using CFA for scale development is to confirm priori hypotheses about the relationships of a set of measurement items to their respective factors (Netemeyer et al. 2003). The covariance matrix was used as input data and the maximum likelihood method of estimation was employed, using the LISREL 8.5 package (Jöreskog & Sörbom 1996).

The initial results of the confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the scale was not acceptable for a well-fitting model. The χ^2 / df value of 2.20 fell within a range of acceptable values: 2 to 5 as suggested by Marsh and Hocevar (1985), but it did not reach the less-than-two level proposed by Byrne (1998). Other fit indices (GFI = 0.83, CFI = 0.90, NNFI = 0.89, RMSEA = 0.07) were not particularly good, suggesting that the model needed to be re-specified. Thus, the initial scale was modified based upon results of the goodness-of-fit indices, modification indices, estimated coefficient scores such as t-values and multiple correlations, and theoretical foundations. Firstly, on the basis of modification indices, items having multiple loadings and correlated measurement errors (both within and across constructs) were deleted. Secondly, more

indicators were excluded from further analysis because they had low t-values, high standard error, low explained variances, and relatively less important variables as indicators of respective constructs. In all, eight items were deleted: three from Factor 1 (A3, A4, and A5), two from Factor 2 (A9 and A11), and three indicators from Factor 5 (A23, A24, and A25).

After a series of modifications, the re-specified scale with five constructs and seventeen indicators was estimated. Subsequently, CFA was re-run to estimate whether the collected data fitted the modified model. Firstly, the goodness-of-fit index was examined showing that the Chi-square value was considerably reduced in the re-specified model, and the χ^2 / *df* value of 1.43 met the conservative less-than-two criterion. As other inspections of the model fit, all values of GFI (0.91), CFI (0.96), NNFI (0.96), and RMSEA (0.048) suggested that the modified scale is a good fit of the data. Compared with the initial scale, the re-specified scale produced a clearer factor structure and improvement in all the fit indices, thereby leading to the conclusion that the final measurement scale with the five constructs and seventeen indicators is appropriate in describing the collected data and acceptable as a well-fitting scale for this study. Table 4 presents a summary of the fit statistics for both initial and final scales.

Table 4: Fit Statistics for Initial and Final Measurement Scales

Fit Statistics	Initial Scale	Final Scale
χ^2	584.22	156.08
df	265	109
GFI	.83	.91
CFI	.90	.96
NNFI	.89	.96
RMSEA	.066	.048

Furthermore, as presented in Table 5, the completely standardized factor loadings ranged from 0.50 to 0.87, which were higher than the recommended 0.40 level (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black 2002). Also, all t-values associated with each of the loadings exceeded the critical values for a significant level of 0.05 ($\pm$ 1.96), verifying the posited relationships among the indicators and respective constructs in the model.

As a result, based on the various examinations described above, the proposed measurement scale for the association convention participation decision-making process was tentatively accepted, pending further tests to examine its reliability and validity.

Table 5: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results for Final Measurement Scale

	Construct & Indicators	CSL	t-value	CR	EV
	Destination Stimuli			.807	.59
D1	Opportunity to visit the convention destination (A2)	.82	11.37		
D2	Extra opportunities available at the destination (A1)	.79	10.94		
D3	Attractive image of the convention destination (A3)	.59	8.08		
	Professional and Social Networking Opportunities			.806	.52
N1	Seeing people I know in my field (A10)	.87	13.97		
N2	Personal interactions with colleagues and friends (A8)	.84	13.24		
N3	Developing professional network (A7)	.69	10.26		
N4	Involvement with the association (A12)	.50	6.87		
	Educational Opportunities			.771	.46
E1	Keeping up with changes in my profession (A13)	.80	11.18		
E2	Listening to respected speakers (A14)	.64	8.72		
E3	Topic of the convention (A16)	.58	7.77		
E4	Fulfilling my desire to learn (A15)	.56	7.36		
	Safety and Health Situation			.810	.60
S1	Safety/security situation at the convention destination (A17)	.87	13.00		
S2	Hygiene standards at the convention destination (A18)	.83	12.36		
S3	My health conditions for travel (A19)	.59	8.30		
	Travelability			.706	.45
T1	Time required to travel to the convention destination (A21)	.70	9.22		
T2	Total cost of attending the convention (A20)	.69	9.06		
T3	My personal financial situation (A22)	.68	9.02		

CSL: Completely Standardized Loadings; CR: Composite Reliability; EV: Error Variances

The reliability of the finalized scale was further assessed by composite reliability and the estimated percentage of variance extracted by each construct. The composite score of each construct was generated from completely standardized LISREL estimates and calculated by formula provided by Fornell and Larcker (1981). The construct reliability of all five constructs ranged from 0.71 to 0.81, depicting that each of the indicators was reliably measuring their corresponding constructs. As a complementary measure of the composite reliability, the average variance extracted estimate (AVE) was calculated to explain the overall amount of variance in the indicators accounted for by the respective construct. For a newly developed scale values near the 0.50 (> 0.45) are viewed as reasonable (Netemeyer et al. 2003). For the final scale of the association convention participation decision-making process, the AVE for all five factors ranged from 0.45 to 0.60, which exceeded the threshold level of 0.45.

The construct validity was disclosed through the tests of convergent validity and discriminant validity. Convergent validity demonstrates whether items are able to measure the construct that they are supposed to measure, and it can be detected from the t-value of each indicator. Table 5 shows that all indicators of the final scale have a significant t-value at the level of 0.05 ($\pm$ 1.96), and 17 indicators of completely standardized factor loadings ranged between 0.50 and 0.87. Based on these estimates

the convergent validity of the measurement scale was established.

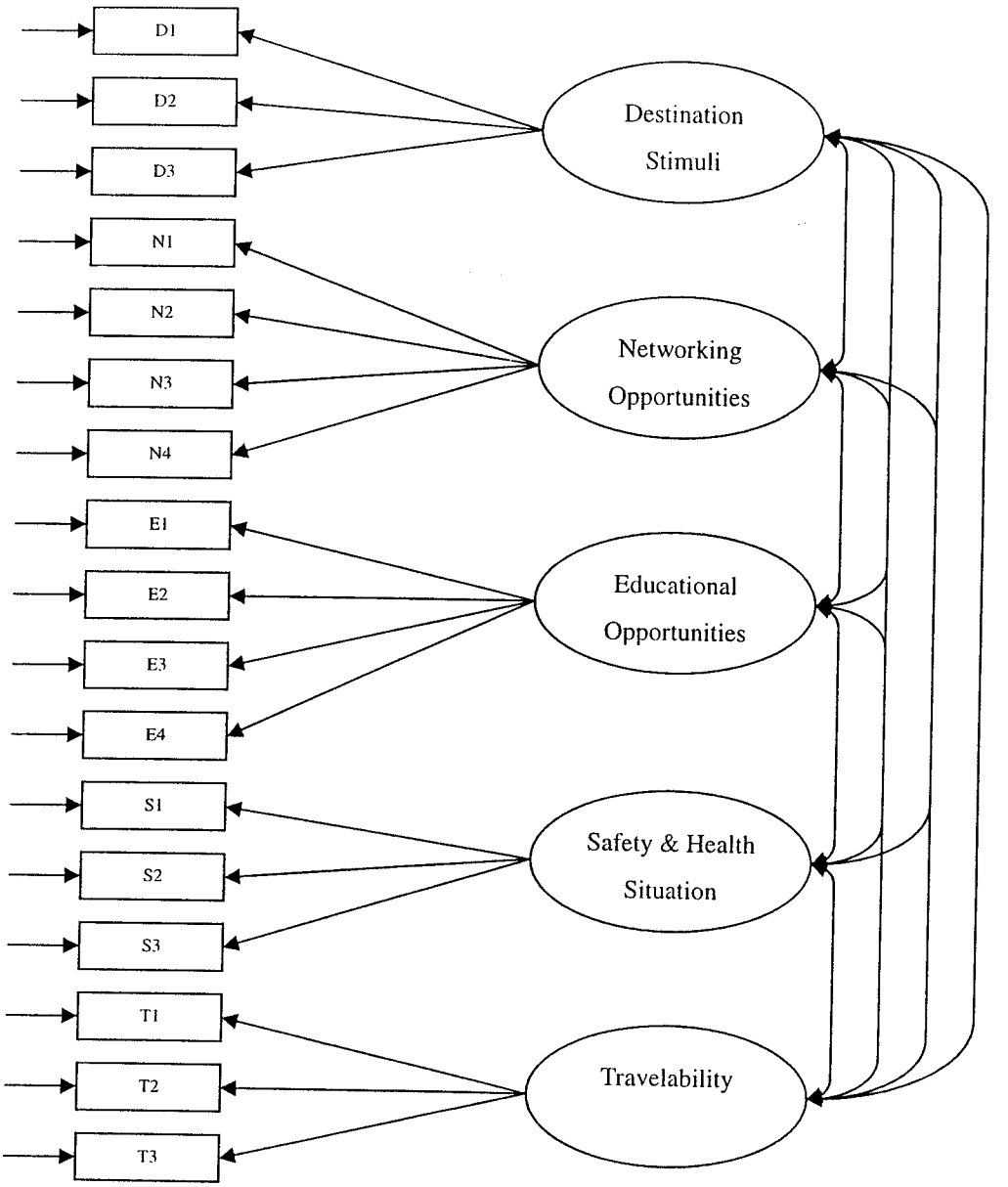
Discriminant validity was assessed by constraining the estimated correlation parameter between every possible pair of constructs to zero and then examining Chi-square differences of the constrained model and unconstrained model. As reported in Table 6, all pair comparisons showed changes in Chi-square statistics between constrained and unconstrained conditions that were significant at levels below $p < 0.001$. This evidence confirmed strong discriminant validity of the final measurement scale of the association convention participation decision-making process.

Table 6: Chi-square Difference Tests for Discriminant Validity

Constructs	$\Delta \chi^2$	Δdf	**p**
Destination – Networking	164.90	1	p < .001
Destination – Education	172.35	1	p < .001
Destination – Safety	198.10	1	p < .001
Destination – Travelability	169.72	1	p < .001
Networking – Education	110.70	1	p < .001
Networking – Safety	198.36	1	p < .001
Networking – Travelability	115.88	1	p < .001
Education – Safety	175.02	1	p < .001
Education – Travelability	177.92	1	p < .001
Safety - Travelability	76.32	1	p < .001

The final scale indicated a good fit of data and each of the indicators showed convergent and discriminant validity and reliability in their respective constructs, which enabled the researcher to move ahead to testing the research hypotheses of the study. The measurement scale of the association convention participation decision-making process that had been established is presented in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Final Scale of Association Convention Participation Decision-Making Process



D1: Opportunity to visit the convention destination; D2: Extra opportunities available at the destination; D3: Attractive image of the destination; N1: Seeing people I know in my field; N2: Personal interactions with colleagues and friends; N3: Developing professional network; N4: Involvement with the association; E1: Keeping up with changes in my profession; E2: Listening to respected speakers; E3: Topic of the convention; E4: Fulfilling my desire to learn; S1: Safety/security situation at the convention destination; S2: Hygiene standards at the convention destination; S3: My health conditions for travel; T1: Time required to travel to the convention destination; T2: Total cost of attending the convention; T3: My personal financial situation

Research Hypotheses

The measurement scale was established and the underlying dimensions of the association convention participation decision-making process were identified. The following research hypotheses emerged based on the factors that were extracted by two factor analyses.

H1: Convention participation decision-making factors significantly influence the participation decision, specifically:

H1a: Destination stimuli factor significantly influences the participation decision.

H1b: Professional/social networking opportunities factor significantly influences the participation decision.

H1c: Educational opportunities factor significantly influences the participation decision.

H1d: Safety and health situation factor significantly influences the participation decision.

H1e: Travelability factor significantly influences the participation

decision.

Many researchers agree that a causal relationship exists between attitude and behavior under the condition of high involvement (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975; Um & Crompton 1990; Woodside & Lysonski 1989). Selecting a particular association convention to attend over options is likely to be a high involvement decision due to risk being involved in the decision. It suggests that convention participation decision-making factors of potential attendees may significantly influence their participation decision. Each of the decision-making factors that had been derived from the measurement scale was treated as a separate independent variable to examine its association with the dependent variable: participation decision.

H2: There is a significant difference over time in the importance of convention participation decision-making factors in influencing the participation decision, specifically:

H2a: There is a significant difference over time in the importance of destination stimuli factor in influencing the participation decision.

H2b: There is a significant difference over time in the importance of

professional/social networking opportunities factor in influencing the participation decision.

H2c: There is a significant difference over time in the importance of educational opportunities factor in influencing the participation decision.

H2d: There is a significant difference over time in the importance of safety and health situation factor in influencing the participation decision.

H2e: There is a significant difference over time in the importance of travelability factor in influencing the participation decision.

Researchers argue that consumers' decision criteria and preferences evolve with time owing to new inputs of information and attitude change (Park & Lutz 1982; Wright & Kiewall 1980). In tourism literature, Um and Crompton (1990, 1992) supported this notion by offering empirical evidence that the decision criteria used to evaluate destination attributes are different by stage of the tourist destination choice process. For a better understanding of the dynamics of the association convention participation decision-making process, it appears to be worthwhile to put this issue to test a longitudinal change of the relationships between convention participation decision-

making factors and the participation decision. This suggested the second hypothesis that there would be a significant difference in the importance of convention participation decision-making factors in influencing the participation decision over a period of time.

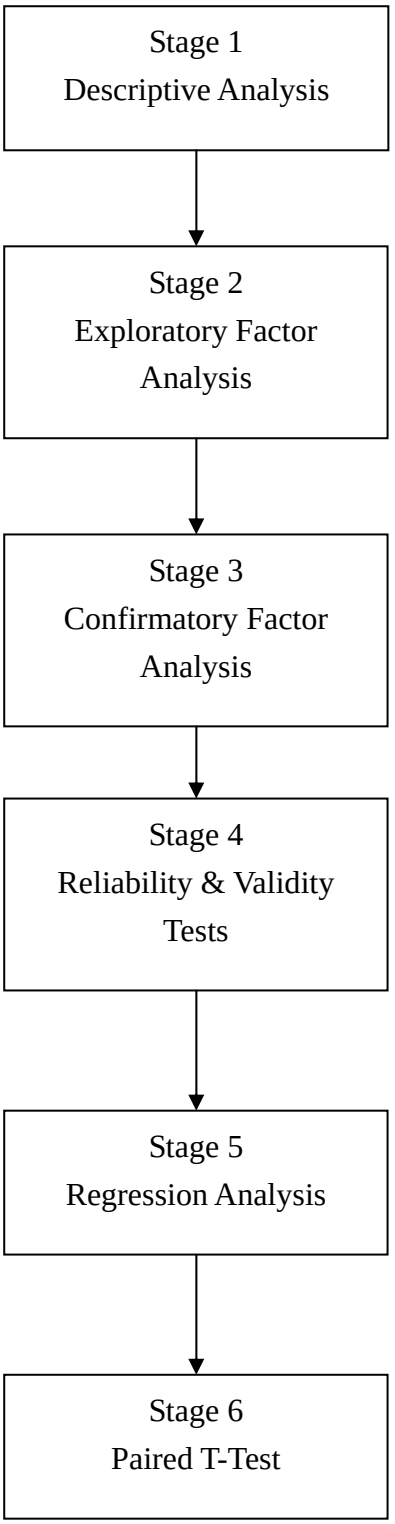
Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study is composed of six stages and the procedures are presented in Figure 10. SPSS and LISREL 8.5 (Jöreskog & Sörbom 1996) were used for data analyses.

Descriptive Analysis

In the first stage, descriptive analysis was performed on attributes of the association convention participation decision-making process as evidenced in survey responses. The descriptive statistics employed include means and standard deviations. Frequency analysis was also conducted to determine the survey respondents' profile on each of the socio-demographic questions presented in the last section of the questionnaire.

Figure 10: Data Analysis Procedure



- Understand characteristics of sample

Scale Development Step 3: Purifying Measurement

- Identify the underlying dimensions of the association convention participation decision-making process

Scale Development Step 4 (1): Finalizing the Measurement

- Confirm the factor structure of association convention participation decision process
- Goodness-of-fit test of the model

Scale Development Step 4 (2): Finalizing the Measurement

- Assess the consistency of the scale
- Assure the scale actually measures the construct which is intended to measure

Hypothesis Testing

- Test of H1 (H1a-H1e): investigate the effects of convention participation decision-making factors on the participation decision

Hypothesis Testing

- Test of H2 (H2a-H2e): examine a difference over time in the importance of convention participation decision factors in influencing the participation decision

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Exploratory factor analysis is particularly useful as preliminary analysis in the absence of sufficient theory about the relationships of the indicators to the underlying constructs (Gerbing & Anderson 1988). Due to insufficient research on the particular topic of this study and the scarcity of developed constructs, EFA was conducted in the third step of the scale development process in order to identify the underlying dimensions of the association convention participation decision-making process. Principal component factor analysis with PROMAX oblique rotation was used. Given that the purpose of employing EFA for the scale development is to look for the degree to which multiple dimensions correlate, oblique rotation methods such as PROMAX can reveal more meaningful theoretical factors than orthogonal rotation forms such as VARIMAX (Netemeyer et al. 2003).

Following Floyd and Widaman's (1995) recommendation, items not meeting any of the following criteria were eliminated to obtain theoretically meaningful factors or components. They included items having a factor loading of lower than 0.40, and items loading on more than one factor with a loading score of equal to or greater than 0.40 on each factor (Hair et al. 2002). Internal consistency was also examined in conjunction with EFA to use in a decision to retain or delete items. Nunnally (1978) advocated a

coefficient alpha of at least 0.70 for a new scale.

Several criteria were used to decide the number of factors to extract. The "eigenvalue-greater-than-1" rule was adapted, as a component with an eigenvalue less than 1 is not considered meaningful (Tabachnik & Fidell 2001). Another guide used for retaining factors was the scree test that can identify the point where inclusion of more factors adds very little to the variance accounted for by the solution (Cattell 1966).

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

The main purposes of confirmatory factor analysis are to verify the factor structure derived in the proposed scale and to explore whether significant modifications are necessary. From EFA results the initial measurement scale was proposed and the scale was validated by performing CFA in the fourth step of the scale development. The method of estimation employed was Maximum Likelihood (MI), which is the most widely used estimation that demonstrates robustness against moderate violation of normality (Hair et al. 2002). In processing CFA, the covariance matrix was used as input data.

The fit of the model to data collected was evaluated by employing a series of fit indices (Sethi & King 1994), including Chi-square statistics, Goodness of Fit Index

(GFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI). Regarding the Chi-square statistics, since a large Chi-square value relative to the degree of freedom indicates that there is a difference between the observed and estimated covariance matrices with a statistically significant value ($p < 0.05$), a low Chi-square value should be desired (Hair et al. 2002). However, it should be noted that Chi-square statistics is sensitive to sample size.

GFI is not affected by sample size. It estimates the relative amount of the observed variances and co-variances accounted for by a model (Hoyle 1995). GFI should be above 0.90 to indicate a good fit of the scale to data. On the other hand, RMSEA index takes into account the model complexity, reporting model error per degree of freedom. RMSEA below 0.05 suggests a close fit; a statistic below 0.08 indicates a reasonable fit while one below 0.10 tells a marginal fit (Hu & Bentler 1988).

Often-used incremental indices of fit based on the null model are CFI and NNFI. Although NNFI can exceed a value of 1, acceptable levels of fit for CFI and NNFI are values close to 1, notably 0.90 and above. More recently, “a value of 0.95 greater” has been proposed for these indices, being an excellent fit of the data (Hu & Bentler 1999).

In order for a newly developed scale to be considered as empirically fit to data, the Chi-square value relative to degree of freedom ratio should be approximately 2:1,

the values of GFI, CFI, NNFI should be greater than 0.90 and the RMSEA should be 0.05 or less.

Reliability and Validity Tests

After examining the fit of the final measurement scale to the observed data, reliability and validity were tested in the last step of the scale development. In assessing reliability of the scale, composite reliability was calculated. Composite reliability refers to a measure of the internal consistency of indicators to the construct, depicting the degree to which they indicate the corresponding latent construct (Netemeyer et al. 2002). The generally agreed-upon lower limit for an acceptable level of composite reliability is 0.60 (Bagozzi & Yi 1988) or 0.70 (Hair et al. 2002). Another diagnostic involved the average variance extracted estimate (AVE), which assesses the amount of variance captured by a set of items in a scale relative to measurement error. A rigorous level of 0.50 or above has been advocated for AVE, yet value near 0.50 threshold (> 0.45) can still be accepted for a newly developed scale (Netemeyer et al. 2003).

While reliability is related to how consistent a set of items is, validity is associated with whether a particular construct is the underlying cause of item covariation (DeVellis 1991). For this study the empirical evidence of validity was

established by convergent validity and discriminant validity. Convergent validity can be achieved if the indicators specified to measure a common underlying factor have relatively high loadings on that factor (Anderson & Gerbing 1988). Discriminant validity is measured by assessing differences in Chi-square statistics for constrained and unconstrained models. The constrained model assumes the correlation between various constructs pairs to be fixed at 1.0. If lower Chi-squared statistic is observed between the unconstrained model and a series of models with a construct pair correlation constrained to 1.0, then high discriminant validity is proven (Byrne 1998).

Regression Analysis

The multiple regression analysis is a general statistical technique used to analyze relationships between a single dependent variable and several independent variables (Aiken & West 1991). To test relationships between convention participation decision-making factors and the participation decision (Hypothesis 1), multiple regression analysis was conducted to the whole sample (n = 558). Due to the presence of multiplicative independent variables (i.e., beliefs-times-evaluations terms), it is not appropriate to perform causal modeling such as Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) for testing the hypothesis (Bagozzi & Warshaw 1990; Bentler 1980). Evans (1991)

suggested multiple regression analysis to investigate if multiplicative components of each independent variable have a significant impact on the dependent variable.

Factor scores from the previous two factor analyses (Stages 3 and 4) were used as input variables for the regression analysis. In this study, the dependent variable was participation decision while standardized factor scores of the underlying dimensions of the association convention participation decision-making process were used as independent variable measures.

Based on the regression coefficient of each independent variable (i.e., convention participation decision-making factors), the effects of each independent variable on the dependent variable (i.e., participation decision) were assessed. In testing the hypotheses (H1a-H1e), if the significance value is less than 0.05, then it can be said that the independent variable is making a significant contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable. Therefore, the hypothesis would be accepted. On the contrary, if the significance value is greater than 0.05, then it can be concluded that the variable does not have a significant influence on the dependent variable. As a result, the hypothesis would be rejected.

In addition, the relative predictive importance of the independent variables can be measured by comparing the beta coefficients. That is, the higher the beta coefficient

is, the more the decision-making factor contributes in influencing the participation decision.

Paired T-test

Data analysis for the longitudinal study was conducted by using paired t-tests. A paired-samples t-test is used when there is one group of people and data are collected from them on two different occasions. A longitudinal change in the impact of the convention participation decision-making factors on the participation decision was measured by the difference between the two separate times' (Time 1 and Time 2) importance scores given for each convention participation decision-making factor. The overall mean scores of those differences for each factor were calculated across sample to see if they were statistically different over 3 month period. For testing of the hypotheses (H2a-H2e), if the probability value of the convention participation decision-making factor is less than 0.05, then it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the two times and the hypothesis would be accepted. Conversely, if the probability value of the factor is larger than 0.05, the hypothesis would be rejected.

Summary

This chapter was devoted to explaining the research methodology used in the study. First, the research questions and the employed research design were introduced. In the following section, the survey design, the sample selection, and the data collection for both the main study and the subsequent longitudinal study were described. The procedures of the measurement scale development were presented thereafter. In the final section, the research hypotheses and data analysis techniques were discussed. The following table summarizes the relationships among research objectives, research questions, research hypotheses, research design, and data analysis methods of the study.

The next chapter presents the patterns of the results and analyzes them for their relevance to the research questions and the research hypotheses.

Table 7: Summary of Research Objectives, Research Questions, Research Hypotheses, and Research Methods

Research Objectives	Research Questions	Research Hypotheses	Research Design/Sample	Data Analysis
To develop a measurement scale to assess factors affecting the association convention participation decision-making process	What factors do potential convention attendees consider when they make an association convention participation decision?	N/A	Exploratory study Descriptive cross-sectional study Members of selected education associations	Qualitative analysis Exploratory factor analysis Confirmatory factor analysis Reliability & Validity tests
To investigate relationships between convention participation decision-making factors and the participation decision	Do convention participation decision-making factors significantly influence the participation decision?	H1: Convention participation decision-making factors significantly influence the participation decision (H1a – H1e)	Descriptive cross-sectional study Members of selected education associations (CHRIE, TTRA, ISTTE)	Regression analysis
To examine whether or not if there is a change in the importance of convention participation decision-making factors in influencing the participation decision over time	Does the importance of convention participation decision-making factors in influencing the participation decision change over time?	H2: There is a significant difference over time in the importance of convention participation decision-making factors in influencing the participation decision (H2a – H2e)	Descriptive longitudinal study (Time 1 & Time 2) Study panel (APTA members + previous delegates at the First APac CHRIE Conference)	Paired t-test

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter reports the results of data analyses. The first section presents the characteristics of the original sample and descriptive statistics on variables used in the main study. In the following section, with convention participation decision-making factors derived from the measurement scale, the first hypothesis postulated in Chapter 3 were tested and the results were presented. The last section presents the profile of the longitudinal sample and discusses the results of the second hypothesis tests.

Descriptive Analysis for the Main Study

Table 8 presents the description of respondents to the main survey. Respondents consisted of more males (*n* = 354, 63.4%) than females (*n* = 201, 36%), and they were fairly normally distributed in different age groups with most in the 41-60 age group (*n* = 364, 65.2%). Geographically, about two-thirds (*n* = 374, 67%) were from the USA, followed by Canada (*n*=38, 6.8%) and Australia (*n* = 22, 3.9%). With respect

to the primary profession of respondents, the majority were educators (*n* = 449, 80.5%) while 8.5% (*n* = 46) were industry professionals and the other 8.5% (*n* = 46) were students.

In the survey, respondents were asked whether they were a board or committee member of the association, and a majority of them (*n* = 496, 82.3%) did not hold either of those positions. While the number of professional association memberships ranged from 0 to over 9, the vast majority of survey participants (*n* = 508, 91%) reported having more than one membership, with most falling into the category of 1–4 memberships. In addition, about 37% (*n* = 209) of respondents attended their first association convention in the 1990s, followed by 24.9% (*n* = 139) in the 1980s and 12.4% (*n* = 71) in the recent years of between 2000 and 2003.

About one third of respondents (*n* = 182, 32.6%) attend 2 to 2.5 association conventions per year on average and, almost 25% (*n* = 140) attend 1 to 1.5 conventions annually. However, in year 2003, about 29% (*n* = 161) of survey participants did not attend any single convention at all, whereas another 28% (*n* = 158) attended only one convention. This fact probably indicates the detrimental effects of 9/11 and the SARS outbreak which occurred in 2003 on international convention attendance.

In terms of financial arrangements for convention attendance, almost half of

respondents (n = 274, 49.1%) said their travel expenses were partially self-funded and partially funded by their organization. On the contrary, 38.7% (n = 216) of the respondents had all their expenditures paid by their organization.

Table 8: Description of Survey Respondents in the Main Study

	Frequency	**%**
Gender:		
Male	354	63.4
Female	201	36.0
No response	3	0.5
Age:		
Under 20	0	0
21- 30	35	6.3
31- 40	112	20.1
41- 50	173	31.0
51 - 60	191	34.2
Over 60	46	8.2
No response	1	0.2
Country/Territory of Residence:		
Australia	22	3.9
Canada	38	6.8
France	5	0.9
Hong Kong SAR, PRC	8	1.4
Korea (South)	12	2.2
Philippines	6	1.1
Switzerland	11	2.0
Taiwan	6	1.1
United Kingdom	21	3.8
USA	374	67.0
Others	51	9.1
No response	4	0.7

Table 8: Continued

	Frequency	%
Primary Profession:		
Educator	449	80.5
Student	46	8.2
Industry Professional	46	8.2
Others	13	2.3
No response	4	0.7
Committee/Board Member of the Association:		
Yes	94	16.8
No	459	82.3
No response	5	0.9
Number of Professional Association Memberships:		
0	36	6.5
1	83	14.9
2	128	22.9
3	152	27.2
4	53	9.5
5	49	8.8
6	20	3.6
7	7	1.3
Over 8	16	2.9
No response	14	2.5
First Year of Convention Attendance:		
Before 1970	27	4.8
1970 – 1979	69	12.4
1980 – 1989	139	24.9
1990 – 1999	206	36.9
2000 – 2003	71	12.7
Never attended yet	44	7.9
No response	2	0.4

Table 8: Continued

	Frequency	%
Average Number of Convention Attendance Per Year:		
Less than 1	16	3.0
1 - 1.9	140	25.1
2 - 2.9	182	32.6
3 - 3.9	98	17.5
4 - 4.9	33	5.9
5	22	3.9
Over 6	20	3.6
No response	47	8.4
Number of Convention Attendance in 2003:		
0	161	28.9
1	158	28.3
2	121	21.7
3	41	7.3
4	22	3.9
Over 5	9	1.7
No response	46	8.2
Financial Arrangement for Convention Attendance:		
Fully paid by myself	55	9.9
Fully paid by my organization	216	38.7
Partially by myself and partially by my organization	274	49.1
No response	13	2.3

The thirty items used to measure potential attendees' association convention participation decision-making process are shown in Table 9. The third column in the table reports mean scores of convention participation decision-making attributes assessed by a five-point scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree.

Prospective attendees surveyed for the main study showed that the following items were likely to influence their decision to attend the association convention: "developing professional network" (M = 4.53, SD = 0.738), "topic of the convention" (M = 4.47, SD = 0.743), "time availability" (M = 4.42, SD = 0.702), "availability of financial support from my organization" (M = 4.37, SD = 0.897). On the other hand, some items were found to be relatively less influential on their participation decision. They included "family gathering activities scheduled at the same time of the convention" (M = 2.35, SD = 1.233), "chance to visit friends or relatives at the convention destination" (M = 2.59, SD = 1.189), and "weather at the convention destination" (M = 2.84, SD = 1.126).

Table 9: Descriptive Analysis Results for Convention Participation Decision Attributes

	Item	Mean	SD
1	Developing professional network	4.53	.738
2	My personal financial situation	3.50	1.287
3	Fulfilling my desire to learn	4.34	.762
4	Topic of the convention	4.47	.743
5	Extra opportunities available at the convention destination (e.g., shopping, sightseeing, entertainment, etc.)	3.18	1.222
6	Time required to travel to the convention destination	3.62	1.103
7	Previous positive experience at the convention destination	3.56	1.106
8	Total cost of attending the convention (e.g., registration fee, transportation cost, etc.)	4.31	.861
9	Safety/security situation at the convention destination	3.42	1.205
10	Keeping up with changes in my profession	4.39	.769
11	Time availability	4.42	.702
12	Attractive image of the convention destination	3.46	1.048
13	My involvement with the association	3.81	1.016
14	Availability of financial support from my organization	4.37	.897
15	Easy access to the convention destination	3.72	.938
16	Hygiene standards at the convention destination	3.53	1.163
17	Schedule of other conventions	3.47	1.071
18	Gaining recognitions from peers	3.25	1.158
19	Presenting a paper	3.72	1.269
20	My health conditions for travel	3.50	1.247
21	Weather at the convention destination	2.84	1.126
22	Chance to visit friends or relatives at the convention destination	2.59	1.189
23	Listening to respected speakers	4.02	.909
24	Family gathering activities scheduled at the same time of the convention	2.35	1.233
25	Participating in the social/recreational programs as part of the convention	2.92	1.137
26	Personal interactions with colleagues and friends	4.16	.787
27	Getting away from my routine work/schedule	3.00	1.199
28	Reputation of the convention organizer	3.14	1.191
29	Opportunity to visit the convention destination	3.42	1.078
30	Seeing people I know in my field	4.12	.823

* Five-point scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree

As presented in Chapter 3, the measurement scale of the association convention participation decision-making process was developed on the basis of theoretical and statistical soundness of the following constructs: destination stimuli, professional and social networking opportunities, educational opportunities, safety and health situation, and travelability. These constructs derived from the scale were used as independent variables for all the study hypotheses that were tested in the following section.

Regression Analysis - Hypothesis Testing (H1)

The measurement scale with five constructs and seventeen corresponding indicators was established through two factor analyses: EFA and subsequent CFA. The factor scores from the CFA were used as input variables in the regression analysis to test Hypothesis 1 postulated in the study.

Applying Fishbein's (1963) attitude model, the formula for deriving each decision-making factor was $Ao = \sum b_i e_i$, where Ao = attitude towards an object or phenomena, b_i = belief component, and e_i = evaluation component. The multiplicative components of b_i x e_i were summed over the number of indicators included in the corresponding construct to create separate composite factor (i.e., $\sum b_i e_i$ terms) for all five independent variables: destination stimuli, professional and social networking

opportunities, educational opportunities, safety and health situation, and travelability. After that, multiple regression analysis was performed to test how well the dependent variable (i.e., participation decision) is determined by its respective multiplicative independent variables (five convention participation decision-making factors). Based on Hypothesis 1, a hypothesized model was specified in Figure 11 and arrows point to the direction of causal influence between the two association variables.

H1: Convention participation decision-making factors significantly influence the participation decision, specifically:

H1a: Destination stimuli factor significantly influences the participation decision.

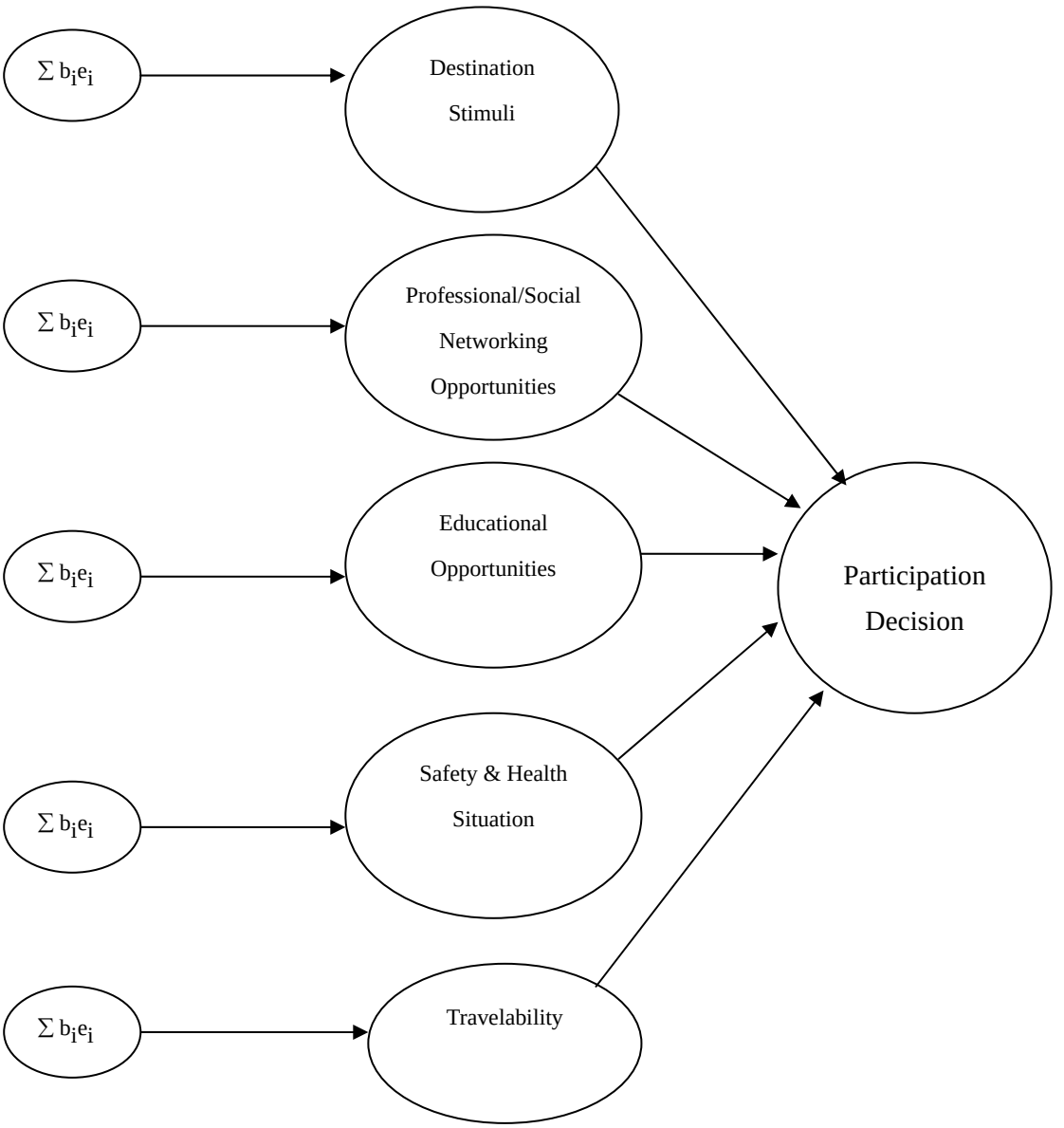
H1b: Professional/social networking opportunities factor significantly influences the participation decision.

H1c: Educational opportunities factor significantly influences the participation decision.

H1d: Safety and health situation factor significantly influences the participation decision.

H1e: Travelability factor significantly influences the participation decision.

Figure 11: Hypothesized Model of Association Convention Participation Decision-Making



Correlations among the independent variables were examined for each regression equation to determine if there were problems of multicollinearity. High correlations among independent variables are regarded as indicators of multicollinearity (Hair et al. 2002). Correlation coefficients among all the five independent variables were lower than 0.40 and both values for the tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) were close to 1. This evidence suggested that multicollinearity was not a problem for the analysis and the regression model was relatively stable.

In testing the hypotheses, relationships between the dependent and independent variables were assessed to determine if the hypothesized relationships were supported. Table 10 presents the regression analysis results of the influences of convention participation decision-making factors on the participation decision. The model indicated that the participation decision was significantly related to three independent variables. The significant explanatory variables in the model were: “destination stimuli”, “professional/social networking opportunities”, and “travelability” while two factors of “educational opportunities” and “safety and health situation” were found to be statistically insignificant at the probability level of 0.05.

The adjusted R^2 of the model is 0.229 explaining that approximately 22.9% of the variation of the dependent variable could be explained by the five decision-making

factors combined. The significant F-ratio (F = 31.453, p = 0.000) indicates that the results of the regression model could hardly have occurred by chance.

Table 10: Multiple Regression Analysis Results

Independent Variables	Beta (ß)	t-value	p-value
Destination Stimuli	-.116	-2.927	.004**
Professional/Social Networking Opportunities	.347	8.468	.000***
Educational Opportunities	-.073	-1.781	.076
Safety and Health Situation	-.057	-1.427	.154
Travelability	.327	8.286	.000***

** indicates significance at the 0.01 level; *** indicates significance at the 0.001 level
Dependent Variable: Participation Decision

One can assess the relative importance of the impact of each independent variable on a dependent variable by comparing the standardized regression coefficients (also refer to beta weights). From Table 10 it could be noted that “professional/social networking opportunities” variable was the most important factor in influencing the participation decision by the subjects of this study. The factor has the highest coefficient value (0.347) as well as the highest t-value (8.468). This was followed by “travelability” (beta = 0.327, t-value: 8.286) and “destination stimuli” (beta = -0.116, t-value = -0.2927) factors. Unexpectedly, the results indicated that the destination variable was

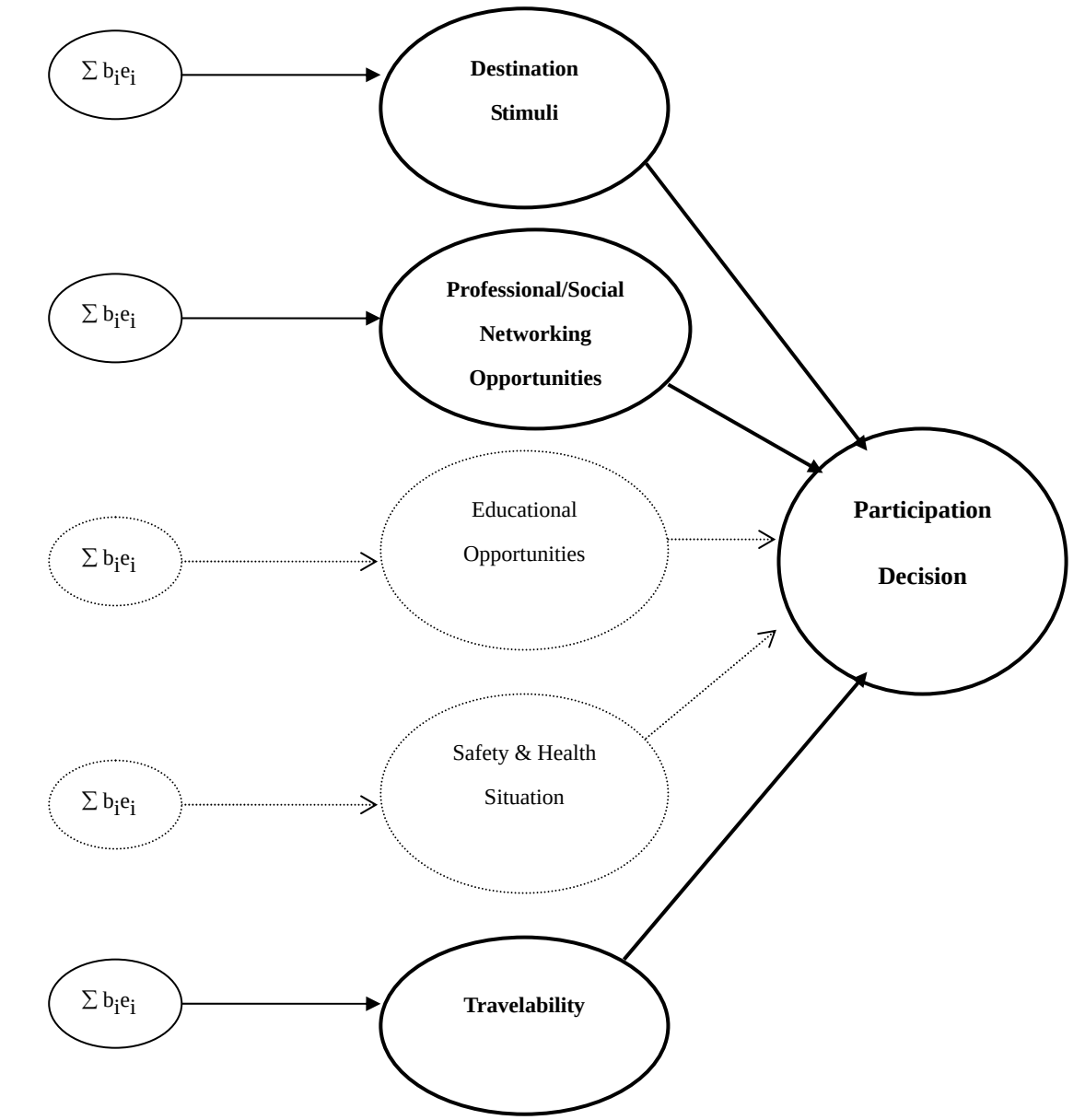
negatively associated with the participation decision. Since “educational opportunities” and “safety and health situation” variables did not turn out to be statistically significant, the coefficient value is of little importance.

In summary, only three convention participation decision-making factors were found to have a significant impact on the participation decision. As shown in Table 11, three out of five sub-hypotheses postulated in Hypothesis 1 were accepted. The accepted sub-hypotheses are Hypothesis 1a, Hypothesis 1b, and Hypothesis 1e. The results are illustrated in Figure 12.

Table 11: Hypothesis Testing Results (H1)

	Hypothesis	**Result**
H1a	Destination stimuli factor significantly influences the participation decision.	Supported
H1b	Professional/social networking opportunities factor significantly influences the participation decision.	Supported
H1c	Educational opportunities factor significantly influences the participation decision.	Not Supported
H1d	Safety and health situation factor significantly influences the participation decision.	Not Supported
H1e	Travelability factor significantly influences the participation decision.	Supported

Figure 12: Model of Association Convention Participation Decision-Making



: Hypothesis supported at the significance level of 0.01

: Hypothesis not supported at the significance level of 0.05

Descriptive Analysis for the Longitudinal Study

Data used in the longitudinal study was collected at two different times from the same study panel members: selected members of APTA and previous delegates to the First Asia-Pacific CHRIE Conference. Detailed information on demographic profiles of the respondents is presented in Table 12. The first administration of the survey (Time 1) occurred in February 2004 and the second administration (Time 2) was in May 2004. The time lag between the two administrations was three months. Among 153 survey participants from the first-time survey, only 107 re-participated in the second-time survey. Therefore, a total of 107 paired data sets from Time 1 and Time 2 were used for the subsequent data analysis.

The study panel consisted of more males (58.9%) than females (39.3%). Age groups between 41 and 50 represented the highest portion of respondents, accounting for 34.6%, followed by 31-40 age categories (31.8%). Geographically, 25% of the panel members were from Hong Kong SAR, followed by the USA (14%), Korea (14%), and Australia (12.1%). Educator (71%) was a dominant profession of the panel members, and 88% of the respondents were neither a committee member nor board member of I-CHRIE or Asia-Pacific CHRIE association.

The majority of respondents had at least one association membership: three or four memberships (25.2%), followed by two (22.4%) and one (15%). Slightly over 40% of respondents first attended an association convention in years between 1990 and 1999, whereas the year 2000–2003 category was second dominant (35.5%).

Respondents indicated their average number of conventions attended per year as two (29.9%), one (25.2%) or three times (12%). In the year 2003, they attended comparatively fewer conventions: one (32.7%), two (25.2) or none (15.9%). More than 70% of the study panel (73.8%) showed their intention to attend the Second Asia-Pacific CHRIE Conference. While 43% of those potential attendees would finance their travel costs partially by themselves and partially by their organizations, 37% would have full funding support for attending the convention.

Table 12: Description of Survey Respondents in the Longitudinal Study

	Frequency	%
Gender:		
Male	63	58.9
Female	42	39.3
No response	2	1.9
Age:		
21- 30	14	13.1
31- 40	34	31.8
41- 50	37	34.6
51 - 60	15	14.0
Over 61	5	4.7
No response	2	1.9
Primary Profession:		
Educator	76	71.0
Student	14	13.1
Industry Professional	8	7.5
Others	7	6.5
No response	2	1.9
Country/Territory of Residence:		
Australia	13	12.1
Canada	2	1.9
China	8	7.4
Hong Kong SAR, PRC	27	25.2
Japan	5	4.7
Korea (South)	15	14.0
New Zealand	2	1.9
Taiwan	6	5.6
Thailand	4	3.7
UK	3	2.8
USA	15	14.0
Others	7	6.7

Table 12: Continued

	Frequency	%
Committee/Board Member of I-CHRIE or APac CHRIE		
Yes	12	11.2
No	94	87.9
No response	1	0.9
Number of Professional Association Memberships:		
0	23	21.5
1	16	15.0
2	24	22.4
3 - 4	27	25.2
5 - 6	12	11.2
Over 7	3	2.8
No response	2	1.9
First Year of Convention Attendance:		
1970 – 1979	3	2.8
1980 – 1989	20	18.7
1990 – 1999	44	41.1
2000 – 2003	38	35.5
Never attended yet	1	0.9
No response	1	0.9
Average Number of Convention Attendance Per Year:		
Less than 1	11	10.3
1	27	25.2
2	32	29.9
3	13	12.1
4	14	13.1
Over 5	8	7.5
No response	2	1.9

Table 12: Continued

	Frequency	%
Number of Convention Attendance in 2003:		
0	17	15.9
1	35	32.7
2	27	25.2
3	10	9.3
4	7	6.5
Over 5	8	7.5
No response	3	2.8
Financial Arrangement for Asia-Pacific CHRIE Convention Attendance		
Fully paid by myself	16	15.0
Fully paid by my organization	29	27.1
Partially by myself and partially by my organization	34	31.8
Will not attend	25	23.4
No response	3	2.8

Paired T-test - Hypothesis Testing (H2)

The paired t-tests were conducted to examine a longitudinal change in the importance of the convention participation decision-making factors in influencing the participation decision.

H2: There is a significant difference over time in the importance of convention participation decision-making factors in influencing the participation decision, specifically:

H2a: There is a significant difference over time in the importance of destination stimuli factor in influencing the participation decision.

H2b: There is a significant difference over time in the importance of professional/social networking opportunities factor in influencing the participation decision.

H2c: There is a significant difference over time in the importance of educational opportunities factor in influencing the participation decision.

H2d: There is a significant difference over time in the importance of

safety and health situation factor in influencing the participation decision.

H2e: There is a significant difference over time in the importance of travelability factor in influencing the participation decision.

Table 13 shows the results of the t-tests. The results revealed a significant difference in the study panel's likelihood of attending the convention on two separate times. Each of the five convention participation decision-making factors was subjected to a paired t-test to see if they were statistically different in its relative importance in influencing the participation decision over time.

Overall, a change in the magnitude between Time 1 and Time 2 was minimal for most of the decision-making factors. Of 5 paired t-tests performed, the longitudinal change in only one factor "professional and social networking opportunities" was statistically significant at 0.01 level of probability.

Further to see whether the study samples' overall evaluations change over time, the mean scores of each decision-making factor in Time 1 were compared with the mean measures of the importance scales in Time 2. As shown in Table 13, the mean score of the importance of three decision-making factors (i.e., destination stimuli, networking

opportunities and educational opportunities) was higher in Time 1 than in Time 2. On the other hand, the mean size of the magnitude of two factors (i.e., safety and health situation and travelability) has increased between Time 1 and Time 2.

Table 13: Paired T-test Results across Sample

Likelihood / Factors	Mean Time 1	Mean Time 2	Paired t-value	P value
Likelihood of attending the convention	3.61	3.06	2.82	.006**
Destination Stimuli	3.86	3.66	1.89	.062
Networking Opportunities	4.37	4.10	2.96	.004**
Educational Opportunities	4.13	4.12	.11	.913
Safety & Health Situation	3.97	4.09	-1.10	.272
Travelability	3.72	3.74	-.16	.871

Seven-point scale: 1 = very unlikely; 7 = very likely

Five-point scale: 1 = not important; 5 = very important

** indicates significance at the 0.01 level

In the next step, the sample was categorized into three different sub-groups based on their likelihood of attending the convention. Respondents who had pointed to the scale end of 1 (= very unlikely) and 2 were grouped as “potential non-attendees” (*n* = 47), while those who had rated 6 and 7 (= very likely) were combined for the group of “potential attendees” (*n* = 32). Panel members who had indicated the middle points of the likelihood scale between 3 and 5 (*n* = 28) were grouped as “hesitant potential

attendees". The paired t-tests were conducted for each sub-group to compare longitudinal changes in the effects of the convention participation decision-making factors on their participation decision.

Table 14: Paired T-test Results for Sub-Sample Groups

Sample Groups	**Factors**	**Mean in Time 1**	**Mean in Time 2**	**Paired t-value**	**P value**
Potential Non-Attendees (*n* = 47)	Destination Stimuli	3.81	3.49	1.98	.054
	Networking Opportunities	4.30	3.94	2.00	.052
	Educational Opportunities	3.98	3.98	.00	1.00
	Safety & Health Situation	4.11	4.09	.11	.910
	Travelability	3.77	3.53	1.377	.175
Hesitant potential Attendees (*n* = 28)	Destination Stimuli	3.68	3.57	.500	.621
	Networking Opportunities	4.46	4.25	2.00	.056
	Educational Opportunities	4.14	4.07	.44	.663
	Safety & Health Situation	3.93	4.29	-2.17	.039*
	Travelability	3.43	3.43	.00	1.00
Potential Attendees (*n* = 32)	Destination Stimuli	4.09	4.00	.53	.598
	Networking Opportunities	4.41	4.22	1.53	.136
	Educational Opportunities	4.34	4.38	-.30	.768
	Safety & Health Situation	3.81	3.94	-.63	.536
	Travelability	3.91	4.31	-2.27	.030*

* indicates significance at the 0.05 level

Table 14 shows that there were only a few significant changes in the importance of the decision-making factor in influencing the participation decision across sub-groups. For the potential non-attendees' group, there was no significant shift in all five decision-making factors over the two time periods. In opposition, a significant importance change was found on factors of "safety and health situation" and "travelability" among the groups of hesitant potential attendees and potential attendees, respectively.

An extensive examination on the sample made it possible to further identify a group of the respondents (n = 36) who had changed their participation decision over the period of two-time survey. That is, some people who had been grouped as "potential non-attendees" at the time of the first survey modified their participation decision later to being classified as "potential attendees" or "hesitant potential attendees" at the time of the second survey, and vice-versa. As reported in Table 15, the results of the paired t-tests on this sub-group revealed that there was a significant longitudinal change in the magnitude of the following decision-making factors in influencing their participation decision: "networking opportunities" and "safety and health situation". Additionally, in terms of their ranking, "safety & health situation" changed to be the most important influencing factor at Time 2 whereas the importance on "networking opportunities"

declined from the first rank to the third position during the second-time survey.

Table 15: Paired T-test Results for Those Who Changed Participation Decision

Factors	Mean in Time 1	Mean in Time 2	Paired t-value	P value
Destination Stimuli	3.78	3.72	.28	.782
Networking Opportunities	4.56	4.19	3.00	.005**
Educational Opportunities	4.22	4.28	-.50	.624
Safety & Health Situation	3.94	4.36	-2.76	.009**
Travelability	3.64	3.81	-.80	.430

n = 36; ** indicates significance at the 0.01 level

In conclusion, three of five sub-hypotheses postulated in Hypothesis 2 were accepted: Hypothesis 2b (by the whole sample and the sub-sample), Hypothesis 2d (by the sub-samples), and Hypothesis 2e (by the sub-sample). That is, the importance of the convention participation decision-making factors such as “professional and social networking opportunities”, “safety and health situation”, and “travelability” significantly changed over time in influencing the participation decision. However, “destination stimuli” and “educational opportunities” factors were exceptions to this trend. Table 16 presents the results of the hypotheses testing: H2a through H2e.

Table 16: Hypothesis Testing Results (H2)

	Hypothesis	**Result**
H2a	There is a significant difference over time in the importance of destination stimuli factor in influencing the participation decision.	Not Supported
H2b	There is a significant difference over time in the importance of professional/social networking factor in influencing the participation decision.	Supported*, **
H2c	There is a significant difference over time in the importance of educational opportunities factor in influencing the participation decision.	Not Supported
H2d	There is a significant difference over time in the importance of safety and health situation factor in influencing the participation decision.	Supported**
H2e	There is a significant difference over time in the importance of travelability factor in influencing the participation decision.	Supported**

* by the whole sample; ** by the sub-sample

Summary

This chapter began with presenting the profile of individuals who participated in the main study survey and the results of the data analyses were reported. The primary objective of this study was to develop a reliable and valid measurement scale which can assess the association convention participation decision-making process. The scale development process, which was presented in Chapter 3, yielded the measurement scale comprising five factors and seventeen indicators. The five factors include destination stimuli, professional and social networking opportunities, educational opportunities, safety and health situation, and travelability. From this scale the five factors were used as the independent variables for all the research hypotheses that were tested in the latter section of this chapter.

The first hypothesis proposed that the convention participation decision-making factors might significantly influence the participation decision. The five factors derived from the scale were used as the independent variables whereas the dependent variable (i.e., participation decision) was operationalized by the likelihood of attending the convention. The results of multiple regression analysis revealed that three decision-making factors – “destination stimuli”, “professional/social networking opportunities”, and “travelability” – were statistically significant explanatory variables.

The second hypothesis tested a longitudinal change in the importance of the effects of the convention participation decision-making factors on the participation decision. The paired t-tests provided evidence that the importance of the factors including “professional/social networking opportunities”, “safety and health situation”, and “travelability” significantly changed in influencing the participation decision between the two time periods of the survey.

The next chapter will provide an overview of the findings and a discussion of the study results. The limitations of the study and implications of the findings will be discussed, and suggestions for future research will be also addressed.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

The previous chapter presented the results of data analyses. In this final chapter, the major findings are discussed, related to the theoretical underpinnings on which this study is based, and implications of the study findings for theory and for practice are discussed. Then the limitations of the study are addressed, and the chapter concludes with suggestions for future study.

Major Findings and Discussions

The primary objectives of this study were to identify factors that are likely to affect the association convention participation decision-making process, and to develop a measurement scale to assess the process. The first research question was to identify what factors potential convention attendees consider when they make association convention participation decisions. In order to answer this question the measurement

scale was developed, which represents a first step in the development of a reliable and valid instrument in convention tourism literature.

The initial scale that was proposed was judged to have content validity, which is concerned with representativeness and adequacy of items in the scale. In developing the scale, a comprehensive list of 42 items was identified from extensive literature reviews and 20 personal interviews. It is believed that major dimensions of the association convention participation decision-making process were captured by the initial item pool. Two subsequent factor analyses confirmed the dimensional distinctiveness of the instrument and its dimensional stability. The initial exploratory factor analysis showed that potential attendees consider 25 different decision-making attributes to be grouped into five dimensions when they make association convention participation decisions. Then the subsequent confirmatory factor analysis revealed that even if each construct retains its original characteristics, some constructs were reduced in the number of indicators used to measure the constructs. The final scale consisted of five factors with seventeen indicators, and the reliability and validity of the scale were further tested.

All of the resultant standardized path coefficients were found to assist significantly in the prediction of their assigned factors, providing evidence of the convergent validity of the proposed indicators. In order to confirm the reliability of the

five factors, composite reliability scores for each of the factors were computed. All reliability scores were deemed acceptable, suggesting that each of the indicators were reliably measuring their respective constructs. Discriminant validity was also established for each of the five constructs.

In summary, this study developed a reliable and valid five dimensional scale for measuring the association convention participation decision-making process, which is a significant contribution to the body of knowledge. The final measurement scale consists of five interrelated but unique dimensions of the association convention participation decision-making process: destination stimuli (Factor 1), professional and social networking opportunities (Factor 2), educational opportunities (Factor 3), safety and health situation (Factor 4), and travelability (Factor 5).

Some of the study findings support previous investigations. The earlier studies agreed that the most influential convention participation decision-making variables were convention-related factors such as education and professional improvement, professional contacts, and personal interactions (Grant 1994; Grant & Oppermann 1995; Grant & Weaver 1996; Oppermann 1995; Oppermann & Chon 1995; Price 1993). The items in Factors 2 and 3 in this study are consistent with past research findings, confirming that the primary activity of conventions is business (McCabe et al. 2000). In

the increasingly time-poor work environment of today, a convention offers a concentrated and convenient occasion for face-to-face discussions, underpinning developments of professional and social networking and contacts. People are also interested in attending conventions to increase their knowledge by listening to speakers, and gathering information that they can use.

Relatively few studies (Grant & Weaver 1996; Ngamson et al. 2001) in convention tourism literature emphasized a destination factor as a convention participation decision criterion. This study indicated that destination stimuli is one of the association convention participation decision-making factors, probably more so when a potential attendee would like to have a simultaneous opportunity for combining business and holiday.

The safety and health situation was highlighted in the study, possibly reflecting the impacts of 9/11 terrorist attack, SARS crisis, and other series of health crises in recent years. The current turmoil in the international environment virtually affecting all tourism sectors including the convention industry has magnified the importance of details on safety and health situation of a particular convention destination, as potential attendees demand extra scrutiny in the current environment. Hence, when organizing a convention, association and convention organizer should convince potential attendees

that the convention destination is safe to travel to by providing them with information about safety and health precautions.

Also, situational factors including finance and travel time emerged as being important in the association convention participation decision-making process. Recent global economic recession has brought tighter budget constraints to forefront for many organizations worldwide. This, in turn, makes difficulties for attendees in obtaining travel funding for convention attendance, especially more so for international association conventions being held overseas. Therefore, affordability of convention and travelability are likely to continue to be major concerns for delegates in deciding association convention participation.

After the measurement scale had been developed, the relationships between convention participation decision-making factors and the participation decision was investigated to answer the second research question on whether or not convention participation decision-making factors significantly influence the participation decision. This second research question was examined by the testing of Hypothesis 1.

Three of the five sub-hypotheses proposed for the first hypothesis were supported. The significant relationships were found between the participation decision and the decision-making factors of destination stimuli, professional/social networking

opportunities and travelability. In terms of their relative importance, professional/social networking opportunities were found to be the most influential determinant of the participation decision, followed by travelability, and destination stimuli.

Networking constitutes individuals attempting to develop and maintain relationships with others who have potential to assist them in their work or career (Forret & Sullivan 2002). As such, developing professional/social relationships is a crucial part of convention participation activities. Successful networking provides various career outcomes such as job opportunities, gaining information, visibility, career advice, friendship, and resources. Particularly, by attending an international convention, individuals can meet and exchange views with other participants from all parts of the world. Today everyone must cope with rapid changes in increased competition and explosions of knowledge and they are advised to form networks with other experienced professionals to support their confidence and ability to adapt to change (Tjosvold 1997).

Oppermann (1997) noted that he personally benefited more from social interactions at conventions he had attended than from educational sessions, encouraging other researchers and academics: “Forget about the presentations, it is worthwhile for the contacts!” (1997: 256). He argued that for the most part the lecture slides and papers from educational sessions can be obtained later, but this is not true in respect of the

unique and personal conversations one can have with other delegates, further emphasizing that a particularly special aspect of attending an association convention is to have opportunities for those interactions. The current study provides empirical evidence supporting his views, in that if a potential attendee is more eager for possible networking opportunities that a particular convention may provide, he/she is more likely to attend the convention.

The relationship between potential attendees' perceived travelability and the participation decision was established. Constraints and perceptions of constraint play a vital role in leisure choices that individuals make. Gilbert and Hudson (2000) argued that financial constraints inhibit travel, even among tourists who may be enthusiastic fans of a sport for which they would travel. Even strong attitude towards attending a specific association convention may not be sufficient to travel to the destination, particularly when long-haul international travel is required.

For a purchase to take place, a person should have an intention to buy the product as well as an ability to buy it. Notani (1997) examined the role of perceptions of affordability in predicting purchase intent and actual purchase. His study showed that affordability perceptions had a direct influence on purchase intention and the effect of attitude and affordability perceptions on purchase intentions was best explained by their

interaction. By including a measure of affordability perceptions in the model, the study increased the prediction of purchase by 4%. Such being the case, if a potential attendee's attitude towards travelability can be successfully manipulated to make the convention appear travelable, there may be a possibility of converting a potential non-attendee to an attendee.

Unexpectedly, the destination stimuli factor was found to be negatively associated with the study sample's decision that they would attend the education association convention. Arguably, destination attractiveness is strongly related to the proximity of destination to a potential tourist. The study noted a complicating issue of the role of distance in a sense that a far-off convention destination may be seen as an inhibiting factor rather than an attracting factor for the potential attendee's participation decision. Crouch and Louviere argued (2004) that a convention site's competitiveness declines significantly when the site requires a greater proportion of convention delegates to travel further, especially when the weighted average flying time exceeds about 2.5 hours.

The tight schedule of most of today's delegates induces them to have the opportunity to spend some free time in the host destination as part of the convention, since they may not be able to spend the time outside the convention itself. The study

finding contradicts Ryan's (1999) view that that remote distance from a delegate's place of residence might be an attracting factor instead of an inhibitor for travel. In opposition to Ryan's argument, an empirical study by Var, Cesario and Mauser (1985) evidenced that accessibility was found to be a far more important determinant of convention attendance than destination attractiveness.

Another possible reason for this negative relationship can be explained by the survey respondents' geographical profile. Almost 75% of the main survey respondents were those resident in North America, whereas the convention destinations listed in the questionnaire included international cities such as Phuket (Thailand), Glasgow (UK), Nagasaki (Japan), Beijing (China), and Hong Kong SAR (China). These long-haul destinations might have been viewed as stimuli for those North American potential attendees, particularly if they had not previously visited those destinations. A study by Mayo, Jarvis and Xander (1988) supported the notion that the attractiveness of a tourist destination would rise as subjective distance increases, all other things being equal. However, one may question whether a potential traveler is actually inclined to make a trip to the far-off destination irrespective of other considerations.

Cohen (1974) argued that professionals who combine work and tourism are more likely to travel-for-work rather than work-for-travel, even though leisure elements

may be one of the motives for attending association conventions. However, he did not argue that the tourism element would be a major motivation for the association convention participation. More recently, Uriely (2001) has suggested that professionals who work while traveling have a tendency to view their job-related traveling only as part of their job incentive rather than a main pull-factor. He argued that those “traveling workers” are usually highly-skilled middle or upper middle-class adults, which is consistent with the sample characteristics of the current study.

This study did not find a significant relationship between educational opportunities and the participation decision, which contrasts with previous assumption. The weak relationship might have been possibly caused by the background of the survey respondents, as majority of this study sample consisted of educators aged between 41 and 60 who are presumed to be more inclined to professional/social contacts at the convention rather than to educational opportunities by “listening to respected speakers”, “fulfilling a desire to learn” and the like.

The decision-making factor of safety and health situation of the convention destination was not significantly related to the respondents’ perceived likelihood to attend a specific association convention. Arguably, the safety and health condition might have been regarded as a “hygiene factor” by potential delegates. They would expect that

the convention destination should be safe, and the safety and health issues would become important only if problems arise. The term “hygiene factor” was proposed by Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (1959), implying that it is essential to one’s ordinary hemostatic health. The factor of “safety and health condition” in the study may be analogous to Herzberg’s extrinsic hygiene factor in that it is perceived to be a necessary pre-requisite or foundation for the convention destination. That is, even if a specific destination is perceived to be safe and hygienic, it is unlikely to lead positive convention participation decision. However, any shortfall in this attribute will undermine the decision.

The third research question was to examine whether or not the importance of the convention participation decision-making factors changes over time in influencing the participation decision. The results of paired t-tests supported previous studies that have suggested attitude can change over time (Crompton 1979; Gartner 1986). A comparison of the whole sample and sub-samples’ importance scores of each convention participation decision-making factor over given two points in time revealed that the study panel had a different level of overall evaluations over time on the factors of professional/social networking opportunities, safety and health situation, and travelability. These results lead to the conclusion that potential attendees’ attitude

towards association convention participation decision may change with passage of time.

Professional and social networking opportunities appear be a major decision-making factor of the convention participation decision, yet the magnitude of this factor is likely to change over time as convention delegates' information is not static but rather constantly evolving. For instance, if a person is seeking out job prospects at a particular convention, he/she might change the convention participation decision depending upon the presence or absence of significant others who have potentials to provide the candidate with opportunities, such as position information, career advice, and interviews at the convention. Similarly, a possiblity of colleagues' or friends' attendance at a specific association convention might create an impact on a potential delegate's participation decision.

The Second Asia-Pacific CHRIE Conference that was chosen for the longitudinal study was held in Phuket, Thailand on May 27-29 2004, and the longitudinal surveys were conducted at two different times: February and May 2004. In March 2004, two months prior to the conference, there was an incident involving a bomb explosion at a Thai-Malaysia border town in the Southern part of Thailand. Again in late April 2004, there were attacks on security forces by Muslim insurgents in 10 locations in the far Southern provinces of Thailand and over 100 people were killed.

Many government advisories worldwide warned travelers to defer non-essential travel to the Southern provinces of Thailand. In response to these incidents, the conference Chairman sent an email to prospective convention delegates assuring them that they should not be concerned about safety and could be confident about their stay at the convention destination (See Appendix L). Nevertheless, it is still possible that potential attendees, especially those who were hesitant about the convention attendance, reacted negatively to the destination safety issue during the second-time period of the survey. This may be a possible indication of the temporal change in the importance of safety condition of the convention destination in influencing the participation decision.

The importance of travelability in influencing the participation decision also changed over time. It is reasonable to expect that a person might confirm his/her decision to attend a specific association convention, or vice versa, because travel funding had, or had not, been secured during the second-time survey, and vice versa. This finding is consistent with a study by Um and Crompton (1992), which showed that the importance of inhibitors (constraints) changed to be more significant in the later stage of the actual choice of the holiday destination.

The major findings of this study are summarized in Table 17.

Table 17: Summary of the Major Study Findings

Research Objectives	Research Questions	Research Hypotheses	Research Findings
To develop a measurement scale to assess factors affecting the association convention participation decision-making process	What factors do potential convention attendees consider when they make an association convention participation decision?	N/A	• Destination stimuli • Professional/social networking opportunities • Educational opportunities • Safety and health situation • Travelability
To investigate relationships between convention participation decision-making factors and the participation decision	Do convention participation decision-making factors significantly influence the participation decision?	H1: Convention participation decision-making factors significantly influence the participation decision (H1a – H1e)	Statistically significant explanatory factors: • Destination stimuli (H1a) • Networking opportunities (H1b) • Travelability (H1e)
To examine whether or not if there is a change in the importance of convention participation decision-making factors in influencing the participation decision over time	Does the importance of convention participation decision-making factors in influencing the participation decision change over time?	H2: There is a significant difference over time in the importance of convention participation decision-making factors in influencing the participation decision (H2a – H2e)	Decision-making factors of which importance were changed over time in influencing the participation decision: • Networking opportunities (H2b) • Safety and health situation (H2d) • Travelability (H2e)

Implications of the Study Findings

The primary contributions of this study are the definition of constructs associated with the association convention participation decision-making process and the development of a multi-item measurement scale for measuring these constructs. The study made the first attempt in tourism literature in incorporating attitude theory to the context of the association convention participation decision, offering a new approach to expanding prior research. Previous studies have neglected to relate the variables specified in describing association convention participation behavior to the existing theory.

By integrating attitude models and a paradigm of cognitive decision-making, five association convention participation decision-making factors were identified and verified, which provides a strong theoretical foundation to a better understanding of the association convention participation decision-making process of potential delegates. It is a priority to discover the decision factors before making any assumptions of their effects on other constructs of interest, thereby making a potential contribution to theory building in this area.

From the academic perspective, the study stimulates much needed empirical research on association convention tourism that had not been previously subjected to

rigorous research. The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge as an extension of Oppermann and Chon's (1997) study, providing a step forward in developing deeper empirical insights into the association convention participation decision-making process. In addition, built upon works from several disciplines including consumer behavior and marketing, travel and tourism, and cognitive psychology, the study provides more comprehensive theoretical underpinnings to understand important aspects of the association convention participation decision-making process. The study can serve as a starting point for more directed research needs of future researchers.

In terms of more practical implications of this study, the findings provide useful information for decision makers and managers of the convention industry. For associations and convention organizers in particular, application of the measurement scale can provide them with detailed information on methods to organize an association convention to meet the requirements of their ultimate customers. By assessing their current marketing practices, association marketers and organizers can adjust their marketing elements and modify communication strategies to improve the effectiveness of marketing activities on given dimensions. At the same time, by measuring convention participation decision-making variables and mapping their relationships, marketers can

identify more efficient methods for allocating valuable promotional resources, thereby attracting expanded convention attendance.

In addition, the study indicated that the impacts of convention participation decision-making factors on the participation decision can be double-edged. This means that not all decision-making factors have the same effects on the participation decision. Therefore, it would be necessary to study the convention participation decision-making factors of target market segments in order to identify the most influential factor to which to appeal for a particular association convention. The research findings suggest that promotional campaigns should include messages stressing professional and social networking opportunities and convention destination information emphasizing affordable costs and traveling time. In addition, aggressive marketing activities should be used to greater effect in facilitating the promotion of a long-haul convention destination.

Since there has been no study in literature assessing a longitudinal change in the effects of association convention participation decision-making factors on the participation decision, the empirical results of this study can be used as a theoretical base explaining how potential attendees' attitude change over time. The development of the reliable and valid measurement scale provides opportunities for monitoring temporal

attitude changes.

Furthermore, from the practical perspective, the measurement scale can be useful when evaluating the impacts of marketing strategies by carefully monitoring changes in the convention participation decision-making variables. The study suggests that, as potential attendees are not homogenous, differentiated promotion and communication strategies should be applied to sub-segment groups to assist in altering their attitude towards association convention participation decision, consequently leading to convention attendance.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study has paved the way for other avenues to be pursed in the future. However, as expected in all research, limitations to this study were found and should be addressed to encourage more sound research in the future. First, the surveyed data was only collected from members of selected hospitality and tourism related education associations. The behavioral decision-making literature suggests that, as decision-making styles are individualistic, it may not be realistic to develop a model that fits all decision-makers and every decision situation (Sirakaya, McLellan & Uysal 1996).

However, it should be noted that the limited scope of this study might have produced different results and conclusions in terms of the elements and relationships of the factors studied. Therefore, the results should be interpreted cautiously and considered tentative until they are tested in other wider settings to be accepted as conclusive.

As noted in Chapter 4, over 80% of survey respondents in this study were educators and members in other types of associations may have different decision-making factors applicable to their convention attendance, which makes it much possible that the convention participation decision-making factors may vary across associations. For example, for social and military association segments, known that members often tend to turn an annual convention into a holiday, the destination factor may be a more influential determinant for their participation decision. On the other hand, medical association usually provides educational seminars at the conventions that allow members to get continuing education credits to keep up their licenses. For this reason, medical association members may find educational opportunities of paramount importance to their convention attendance decision. Therefore, it would be desirable for future research to examine as to whether portions of the multidimensional constructs found in this study can be generalized to other contexts. An application of the measurement scale to other settings will help to produce reliable indicators and to

further validate the constructs, thus producing a more robust and stable measurement scale.

Moreover, continued refinement of the measurement scale can be made possibly by further qualitative study at the initial stage of the scale development. Such fine-tuning may include addition or deletion of items, or a modification of the factor structure. Future researchers are also suggested to reveal new aspects of the association convention participation decision-making process and any such aspects would have to be incorporated in the scale on a continuing basis in order to ensure the valid measure of the association convention participation decision-making process in a given situation.

The study is somewhat limited in terms of longitudinal aspects, which would make it possible to analyze the potential time-lag for the hypothesized relationships. Arguably, a three month split between the two sampling periods may not be sufficient to assess a longitudinal change in the effects of the convention participation decision-making factors on the participation decision. Given a longer time frame, there may be possibly different form of attitude change to affect the research results as external environment is such dynamic. For example, the sudden availability of discounted airfares may cause some destinations that were discarded at an earlier stage to become attractive alternatives. In this case, the destination factor has changed from an inhibitor

to a facilitator. The topic of temporal fluctuations therefore appears to be relevant to further investigations.

In addition to studying the existence of longitudinal attitude change, future study can also examine direction of the change by conducting separate relationship analyses on each of the longitudinal data sets. Testing the change of rankings in beta coefficients values between Time 1 and Time 2 can provide an indication of temporal changes in the relative contribution of each decision-making factor on the participation decision.

As there are relatively few conceptualizations and general models of the association convention participation decision-making process and empirical studies on this particular topic are scarce, further conceptual and theoretical development should be followed to advance this fertile area of study. For example, future studies can apply the measurement scale to determine to the extent potential attendees can be classified based on individuals' convention participation decision-making criteria. Presumably, such analysis would reveal various combinations of segments across the five dimensions of the scale. The cluster solution which is related to demographic and other external variables can provide potential attendees' information to greater extent.

The purpose of many scale development studies is not only to develop a reliable and valid measurement scale but also to build and refine theories. According to

Anderson and Gerbing (1988), the assessment of construct validity is a critical step in theory building. Hence, the resulting scale may serve as a base in theory development when the construct validity of the scale is established. From the theory building perspective, future researchers may further investigate interrelationships between the five constructs derived from this study and those constructs of interest by using causal or structural models. Both academia and industry are likely to benefit from additional research and clearly defined constructs and the robust scale will significantly aid future researchers' investigations on this important topic.

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Appendix A: Pre-test Email

Dear (first and last name):

We wish to ask for your help.

We are currently conducting a large-scale research that investigates factors affecting a potential association convention attendee's participation decision-making process and would like to request your participation in pre-testing the study instrument.

It will be most appreciated if you could take a few minutes from your busy schedule to complete this survey for us. The questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. All you need to do is to **click** on the link below and it will take you right to the survey.

http://www.acad.polyu.edu.hk/~hmweb/joanne/survey_p1.html

We would be much appreciative if you can provide your valuable comments and suggestions on the structure and wording of the questionnaire. Our email addresses and telephone numbers are provided below. We hope that you will fill out and send the questionnaire back to us by May 9 2003.

Thank you very much for your help. We are looking forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,

Joanne Jung-Eun Yoo, Ph.D. Researcher
Kaye Chon, Ph.D., Chair Professor & Head
School of Hotel & Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Email: hmjoanne@ ; hmkchon@
Telephone: (852) 2766 ; 2766

Appendix B: Pre-notifying Email

Dear (first and last name):

Wishing you the best for a very happy New Year!

Within a few days from now you will receive in the email a request to complete a brief questionnaire for an important research project being conducted by School of Hotel & Tourism Management, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. It is part of a large-scale research investigating factors affecting a potential convention attendee's decision to participate in an association convention in the field of hospitality and tourism.

It would be most grateful if you could take a few minutes from your busy schedule to help us with this study. It's only with the generous help of people like you that our research can be successful.

Thank you very much in advance for your time and support. We are looking forward to receiving your response soon.

Yours sincerely,

Joanne Jung-Eun Yoo, Ph.D. Researcher
Kaye Chon, Ph.D., Chair Professor & Head
School of Hotel & Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Email: hmjoanne@ ; hmkchon@
Telephone: (852) 2766 ; 2766

Appendix C: Email for the Main Study

Dear (first and last name):

We are writing to ask for your help in an important research project being conducted by School of Hotel & Tourism Management, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. It is part of a large-scale research that investigates factors affecting a potential convention attendee's decision to participate in an association convention.

You have been randomly selected from a pool of hospitality and tourism professionals who are members of education associations in the field of hospitality and tourism. We guarantee that all information you give will be completely confidential and will be used for statistical purposes only.

It will be most appreciated if you could take a few minutes from your busy schedule to help us with this study. The questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. All you need to do is to **click** on the link below and it will take you right to the survey.

http://www.acad.polyu.edu.hk/~hmweb/joanne/index.html

If you have any questions or comments about this study, we would be happy to talk with you. Our email addresses and telephone numbers are provided below. We hope that you will fill out and return the questionnaire by January 23 2004.

Thank you very much for your support. We are looking forward to receiving your response soon.

Yours sincerely,

Joanne Jung-Eun Yoo, Ph.D. Researcher
Kaye Chon, Ph.D., Chair Professor & Head
School of Hotel & Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Email: hmjoanne@ ; hmkchon@
Telephone: (852) 2766 ; 2766

Appendix D: Questionnaire for the Main Study

Welcome to the survey!

We are currently conducting a large-scale research that investigates factors affecting a potential convention attendee's decision to participate in an association convention in the field of hospitality and tourism and would like to request your participation in this survey.

The questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. We guarantee that all information you give will be completely confidential and will be used for statistical purposes only.

If you have any questions or comments about this study, we would be happy to talk with you. Our email addresses and telephone numbers are provided below.

To begin, please click the Start button below to go to the first question of the survey.

Start

Thank you very much for your participation!

Joanne Jung-Eun Yoo, Ph.D. Researcher
Kaye Chon, Ph.D., Chair Professor & Head
School of Hotel & Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Email: hmjoanne@ ; hmkchon@
Telephone: (852) 2766 ; 2766

School of Hotel & Tourism Management 酒店及旅遊業管理學院

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University 香港理工大學

Section A

1. Please indicate <u>how important</u> the following aspects are in influencing your decision to attend an association convention in general. Please circle ONE appropriate number using the following scale.

1 = Not Important 2 = Somewhat Unimportant 3 = Neutral 4 = Somewhat Important 5 = Very Important

		Not Important				Very Important
1	Developing professional network	1	2	3	4	5
2	My personal financial situation	1	2	3	4	5
3	Fulfilling my desire to learn	1	2	3	4	5
4	Topics of the convention	1	2	3	4	5
5	Extra opportunities available at the convention destination (e.g., shopping, sightseeing, entertainment, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
6	Time required to travel to the convention destination	1	2	3	4	5
7	Previous positive experience at the convention destination	1	2	3	4	5
8	Total cost of attending the convention (e.g., registration fee, transportation cost, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
9	Safety/security situation at the convention destination	1	2	3	4	5
10	Keeping up with changes in my profession	1	2	3	4	5
11	Time availability	1	2	3	4	5
12	Attractive image of the convention destination	1	2	3	4	5
13	My involvement with the association	1	2	3	4	5
14	Availability of financial support from my organization	1	2	3	4	5
15	Easy access to the convention destination	1	2	3	4	5
16	Hygiene standards at the convention destination	1	2	3	4	5
17	Schedules of other conventions	1	2	3	4	5
18	Gaining recognition from peers	1	2	3	4	5
19	Presenting a paper	1	2	3	4	5
20	My health condition for travel	1	2	3	4	5
21	Weather at the convention destination	1	2	3	4	5
22	Chance to visit friends or relatives at the convention destination	1	2	3	4	5
23	Listening to respected speakers	1	2	3	4	5
24	Family gathering activities scheduled at the same time as the convention	1	2	3	4	5
25	Participating in the social/recreational programs as part of the convention	1	2	3	4	5
26	Personal interactions with colleagues and friends	1	2	3	4	5
27	Getting away from my routine work/schedule	1	2	3	4	5
28	Reputation of the convention organizer	1	2	3	4	5
29	Opportunity to visit the convention destination	1	2	3	4	5
30	Seeing people I know in my field	1	2	3	4	5

Section B

2. Below is a list of association conventions in the field of hospitality and tourism scheduled for 2004. Please choose ONE specific convention that <u>you would like to attend the most</u>.

- ❑ Asia-Pacific CHIRIE (Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education) Conference and Biennial Conference on Tourism in Asia
  Phuket, Thailand on May 27-29, 2004
- ❑ Las Vegas International Hospitality & Convention Summit
  Las Vegas, Nevada, USA on June 6-8, 2004
- ❑ Annual TTRA (Travel and Tourism Research Association) Conference
  Montreal, Quebec, Canada on June 20-23, 2004
- ❑ Tourism: State of the Art II
  Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom on June 27-30, 2004
- ❑ Annual APTA (Asia Pacific Tourism Association) Conference
  Nagasaki, Japan on July 4-7, 2004
- ❑ Annual International CHRIE (Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education) Conference
  Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA on July 28-31, 2004
- ❑ Asia Pacific Forum for Graduate Students Research in Tourism
  Beijing, China on September 24-25, 2004
- ❑ Annual ISTTE (International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators) Conference
  Hong Kong, China on September 26-28, 2004
- ❑ Other (Please specify _____)
- ❑ None -> **Please Go to Section C**

3. Please indicate on the scale below <u>how likely</u> you will attend the association convention that you have chosen in Question 2.

Very Unlikely ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Very Likely

4. Please indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements associated with the particular association convention that you have chosen in Question 2.

Please circle ONE appropriate number using the following scale.

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree N = Not Applicable

		Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree	
1	I will be able to visit my friends or relatives at the convention destination if I attend this convention.	1	2	3	4	5	N
2	Attending this convention will help me gain recognition from peers.	1	2	3	4	5	N
3	I believe this convention would be held at an attractive destination.	1	2	3	4	5	N
4	The total cost of attending this convention is likely to be more than what I can afford.	1	2	3	4	5	N
5	I feel that I will have time to attend this convention.	1	2	3	4	5	N
6	The topics of this convention are relevant to me.	1	2	3	4	5	N
7	I am concerned that it would take too long for me to travel to the convention destination.	1	2	3	4	5	N
8	Attending this convention will provide me with an opportunity to visit the destination.	1	2	3	4	5	N
9	I am concerned that my health condition would prevent me from travelling to attend this convention.	1	2	3	4	5	N
10	I will be able to participate in the social/recreational programs as part of the convention if I attend this convention.	1	2	3	4	5	N
11	I have concerns about the hygiene standards at the convention destination.	1	2	3	4	5	N
12	Attending this convention will enable me to listen to respected speakers.	1	2	3	4	5	N
13	My personal financial situation is a major concern for my decision to attend this convention.	1	2	3	4	5	N
14	I would like to attend this convention because I am an active member of the association.	1	2	3	4	5	N
15	This convention appears to provide me with extra opportunities (e.g., shopping, sightseeing, entertainment, etc.) at the destination.	1	2	3	4	5	N
16	Attending this convention will enable me to keep up with changes in my field.	1	2	3	4	5	N
17	I would like to attend this convention because I can see people I know in my field.	1	2	3	4	5	N
18	Attending this convention will provide me with a chance to present a paper.	1	2	3	4	5	N
19	I can develop professional network if I attend this convention.	1	2	3	4	5	N
20	I can get away from my routine work/schedule by attending this convention.	1	2	3	4	5	N
21	I have concerns about the safety/security situation at the convention destination.	1	2	3	4	5	N
22	I expect to enjoy the good weather at the destination if I attend this convention.	1	2	3	4	5	N
23	I had a previous positive experience at the destination and that would influence my decision to attend this convention.	1	2	3	4	5	N
24	The reputation of the convention organizer is one of the reasons for my decision to attend this convention.	1	2	3	4	5	N
25	My decision to attend this convention may change if schedule conflicts with other conventions arise.	1	2	3	4	5	N
26	I will be able to interact with colleagues and friends if I attend this convention.	1	2	3	4	5	N
27	Attending this convention is likely to fulfil my desire to learn.	1	2	3	4	5	N
28	I will be able to get financial support from my organization if I attend this convention.	1	2	3	4	5	N
29	I am concerned about the dates of this convention because they may overlap with family gathering activities.	1	2	3	4	5	N
30	I think this convention destination is easy to access.	1	2	3	4	5	N

Section C

Please provide the following information.

1. What is your gender?
   ☐ Male ☐ Female

2. What is your age?
   ☐ Under 20 years ☐ 21-30 years ☐ 31-40 years
   ☐ 41-50 years ☐ 51-60 years ☐ Over 61 years

3. What is your country or territory of residence? _____

4. Which of the following is your primary profession?
   ☐ Educator ☐ Student
   ☐ Industry Professional ☐ Other (Please specify _____)

5. Are you a committee member or a board member in the association related to the convention that you have indicated (Question 2 in Section B)?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

6. How many associations in the field of hospitality and tourism are you a member of? _____

7. When did you first attend an international association convention?
   ☐ Before 1970 ☐ 1970-1979 ☐ 1980-1989
   ☐ 1990-1999 ☐ 2000-2003
   ☐ Never attended yet **-> Please Go to Q10**

8. On average, how many association conventions do you attend per year? _____

9. How many international association conventions did you attend in 2003? _____

10. In general, who finances or will finance your attendance of an association convention(s)?
    ☐ Fully paid by myself ☐ Fully paid my organization
    ☐ Partially by myself and partially by my organization

Thank you very much for your participation!

Appendix E: Reminder Email

Dear (first and last name):

Wishing you the best for a very happy New Year!

Recently, we have sent you an email with a request to complete a questionnaire for an important research project being conducted by School of Hotel & Tourism Management, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

If you have already completed the survey, please accept our sincere thanks. If you haven't had a chance to complete the questionnaire yet, please visit our survey site at your convenience. The questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. All you need to do is to **click** on the link below and it will take you right to the survey.

http://www.acad.polyu.edu.hk/~hmweb/joanne/index.html

We hope that you will fill out and return the questionnaire to us by this Friday: January 23 2004.

Thank you very much for your support. We are looking forward to receiving your response soon.

Yours sincerely,

Joanne Jung-Eun Yoo, Ph.D. Researcher
Kaye Chon, Ph.D., Chair Professor & Head
School of Hotel & Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Email: hmjoanne@ ; hmkchon@
Telephone: (852) 2766 ; 2766

Appendix F: Invitation Email for the Longitudinal Study

Dear (first and last name):

We are writing to ask for your help in an important research project being conducted by School of Hotel & Tourism Management, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. It is part of a large-scale research that investigates factors affecting a potential attendee's decision to participate in an association convention in the field of hospitality and tourism.

You have been randomly selected from a pool of hospitality and tourism professionals who have participated in association conventions that were previously held in Asia.

We are writing in advance to seek your agreement to participate in the study. If you would accept our invitation, please reply to us at the email address below. If at all possible, we would be most appreciative if you reply to us by February 10 2004.

As this is a longitudinal study, we will contact you two times in total by email: once in February and another in April. It will take approximately 5 minutes for you to complete the questionnaire at each time.

It would be most grateful if you could take a few minutes from your busy schedule to help us with this study. It's only with the generous help of people like you that our research can be successful.

We are looking forward to receiving your positive response soon. Thank you very much in advance for your time and assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Joanne Jung-Eun Yoo, Ph.D. Researcher
Kaye Chon, Ph.D., Chair Professor & Head
School of Hotel & Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Email: hmjoanne@ ; hmkchon@
Telephone: (852) 2766 ; 2766

Appendix G: Email for Longitudinal Study (Time 1)

Dear (first and last name):

Thank you very much for agreeing to help us with this survey that investigates factors affecting a potential attendee's decision to participate in an association convention.

It would be most appreciated if you could take a few minutes from your busy schedule to complete the survey for us. The questionnaire will take approximately 5 minutes to complete. All you need to do is to **click** on the link below and it will take you right to the survey.

http://www.acad.polyu.edu.hk/~hmweb/joanne/index.jsp?surveyee_id=!-COLUMN3-!

If you have any questions or comments about this study, we would be happy to talk with you. Our email addresses and telephone numbers are provided below.

We hope that you will fill out and return the questionnaire to us by February 20 2004. Thank you very much for your help. We are looking forward to receiving your response soon.

Yours sincerely,

Joanne Jung-Eun Yoo, Ph.D. Researcher
Kaye Chon, Ph.D., Chair Professor & Head
School of Hotel & Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Email: hmjoanne@ ; hmkchon@
Telephone: (852) 2766 ; 2766

Appendix H: Questionnaire for the Longitudinal Study (Time 1)

Welcome to the survey!

Thank you for agreeing to help us with this survey that investigates factors affecting a potential attendee's decision to participate in an association convention.

For the purpose of this study, a specific association convention was selected and therefore the questions in the following pages were specifically designed in reference to the Second Asia-Pacific CHRIE (APac CHRIE) Conference and the Sixth Biennial Conference on Tourism in Asia scheduled to be held in Phuket, Thailand on May 27-29 2004.

We guarantee that all information you give will be completely confidential and will be used for statistical purposes only. Should you have any difficulties in responding to the questions, please email us at the address below.

To begin, please click the Start button below to go to the first question of the survey.

Start

Thank you very much for your participation!

Yours sincerely,

Joanne Jung-Eun Yoo, Ph.D. Researcher
Kaye Chon, Ph.D., Chair Professor & Head
School of Hotel & Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Email: hmjoanne@ ; hmkchon@
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School of Hotel & Tourism Management 酒店及旅遊業管理學院

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY 香港理工大學

Section A

1. Please indicate on the scale below how likely you will attend the Second Asia-Pacific CHRIE Conference and the Sixth Biennial Conference on Tourism in Asia scheduled to be held 27-29 May 2004 in Phuket, Thailand.

Very Unlikely ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Very Likely

2. Please indicate how important the following factors are in influencing your decision to attend or not to attend the Second Asia-Pacific CHRIE Conference and the Sixth Biennial Conference on Tourism in Asia.

1 = Not Important 2 = Somewhat Unimportant 3 = Neutral 4 = Somewhat Important 5 = Very Important

	Not Important				Very Important
1 Destination Stimuli	1	2	3	4	5
2 Professional and Social Networking Opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
3 Education Opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
4 Safety and Health Situation at the Destination	1	2	3	4	5
5 Travelability (e.g., travel time, my finance situation)	1	2	3	4	5

Section B

Please provide the following information.

1. What is your gender?

   ☐ Male ☐ Female

2. What is your age?

   ☐ Under 20 years ☐ 21-30 years ☐ 31-40 years

   ☐ 41-50 years ☐ 51-60 years ☐ Over 61 years

3. What is your country or territory of residence? _____

4. Which of the following is your primary profession?

   ☐ Educator ☐ Student

   ☐ Industry Professional ☐ Other (Please specify _____)

5. Are you a committee member or a board member of I-CHRIE or APac CHRIE?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

6. How many associations in the field of hospitality and tourism are you a member of?

   ☐ None ☐ 1 ☐ 2

   ☐ 3 ~ 4 ☐ 5 ~ 6 ☐ Over 7

7. When did you first attend an international association convention?

   ☐ Before 1970 ☐ 1970-1979 ☐ 1980-1989

   ☐ 1990-1999 ☐ 2000-2003

   ☐ Never attended yet **-> Please Go to Q.10**

8. On average, how many international association conventions do you attend per year?

   ☐ Less than 1 ☐ 1 ☐ 2

   ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ Over 5

9. How many international association conventions did you attend in 2003?

   ☐ None ☐ 1 ☐ 2

   ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ Over 5

10. Who will be most likely to finance your attendance to the Second Asia-Pacific CHRIE Conference and the Sixth Biennial Conference on Tourism in Asia?

    ☐ Fully paid by myself ☐ Fully paid my organization

    ☐ Partially by myself and partially by my organization

    ☐ I will not attend the conferences

This is the end of the survey. Please click the button below to send us your answers.

Send

School of HTM
Hotel & Tourism Management
酒店及旅遊業管理學院

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY
香港理工大學

Your questionnaire was sent successfully!

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your help and assistance in providing the information is very much appreciated. If you have any questions or comments about this survey, please feel free to contact us.

Thank you very much!

Joanne Jung-Eun Yoo
Ph.D. Researcher
School of Hotel & Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Email: hmjoanne@
Tel: 852 2766

Kaye Chon, Ph.D.
Chair Professor & Head
School of Hotel & Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Email: hmkchon@
Tel: 852 2766

Appendix I: Email for the Longitudinal Study (Time 2)

Dear (first and last name):

In February, you were kind enough to help us with the survey that investigates factors affecting a potential attendee's decision to participate in an association convention.

At this time, we are following up to see how far your decision has changed. It would be most appreciated if you could complete the survey for us. The questionnaire will take approximately 5 minutes to complete. Please click on the link below and it will take you right to the survey.

http://www.acad.polyu.edu.hk/~hmweb/joanne/index.jsp?surveyee_id=!-COLUMN3-!

If you have any questions or comments about this study, we would be more than happy to talk with you. Our email addresses and telephone numbers are provided below.

We promise you that this is the last survey we will ask for your help. We hope you will fill out and return the questionnaire to us by May 9 2004.

Thank you very much for your continuous support. We are looking forward to receiving your response soon.

Yours sincerely,

Joanne Jung-Eun Yoo, Ph.D. Researcher
Kaye Chon, Ph.D., Chair Professor & Head
School of Hotel & Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Email: hmjoanne@ ; hmkchon@
Telephone: (852) 2766 ; 2766

Appendix J: Questionnaire for the Longitudinal Study (Time 2)

Welcome to the survey!

Thank you for helping us with this survey that investigates factors affecting a potential attendee's decision to participate in an association convention.

For the purpose of this study, a specific association convention was selected and therefore the questions in the following pages were specifically designed in reference to the Second Asia-Pacific CHRIE (APac CHRIE) Conference and the Sixth Biennial Conference on Tourism in Asia scheduled to be held in Phuket, Thailand on 27-29 May 2004.

We guarantee that all information you give will be completely confidential and will be used for statistical purposes only. Should you have any difficulties in responding to the questions, please email us at the address below.

To begin, please click the Start button below to go to the first question of the survey.

Thank you very much for your participation!

Joanne Jung-Eun Yoo, Ph.D. Researcher
Kaye Chon, Ph.D., Chair Professor & Head
School of Hotel & Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Email: hmjoanne@ ; hmkchon@
Telephone: (852) 2766 ; 2766

School of Hotel & Tourism Management 酒店及旅遊業管理學院

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY 香港理工大學

Section A

1. Please indicate on the scale below how likely you will attend the Second Asia-Pacific CHRIE Conference and the Sixth Biennial Conference on Tourism in Asia scheduled to be held 27-29 May 2004 in Phuket, Thailand.

Very Unlikely ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Very Likely

2. Please indicate how important the following factors are in influencing your decision to attend or not to attend the Second Asia-Pacific CHRIE Conference and the Sixth Biennial Conference on Tourism in Asia.

1 = Not Important 2 = Somewhat Unimportant 3 = Neutral 4 = Somewhat Important 5 = Very Important

	Not Important				Very Important
1 Destination Stimuli	1	2	3	4	5
2 Professional and Social Networking Opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
3 Education Opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
4 Safety and Health Situation at the Destination	1	2	3	4	5
5 Travelability (e.g., travel time, my finance situation)	1	2	3	4	5

This is the end of the survey. Please click the button below to send us your answers.

Send

School of HTM
Hotel & Tourism Management
酒店及旅遊業管理學院

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY
香港理工大學

Your questionnaire was sent successfully!

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your help and assistance in providing the information is very much appreciated. If you have any questions or comments about this survey, please feel free to contact us.

Thank you very much!

Joanne Jung-Eun Yoo
Ph.D. Researcher
School of Hotel & Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Email: hmjoanne@
Tel: 852 2766

Kaye Chon, Ph.D.
Chair Professor & Head
School of Hotel & Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Email: hmkchon@
Tel: 852 2766

Appendix K: Emails from the Web Survey Respondents

To: "Joanne Yoo [HTM]" <hmjoanne@ >
Date: Thu, Feb 12, 2004 8:36 PM
Subject: Re: Online Survey by Hong Kong PolyU

Hi Joanne,

Ok, I just took the survey. I want to say, that was the best-designed online survey I have seen. All the boxes and things lined up just right and it worked very cleanly. The flow of information was very good. Can you tell me what software you use to make it, such as Dream Weaver or whatever? Anyway, great job.

Thanks!

Herb

From: Herbert Donovan <donovan@ >
To: "Joanne Yoo [HTM]" <hmjoanne@ >
Date: 2/12/04 9:05PM
Subject: Re: Online Survey by Hong Kong PolyU

Well, frontpage is simple and easy to use but dream weaver is the boss. The learning curve is a little steep but the power and features are amazing. One important thing is cross-browser compatibility and dream weaver is the best for that. I did the survey on a Mac using Safari with no problems at all. I just got dream weaver MX for Mac and it seems they have made it both easier to use and more powerful. If someone hasn't done it already, a paper about how to do a study with online surveys would be good!

Herb

From: "Zhen Lu" <zhen@ >
To: <hmjoanne@ >
Date: Thu, Feb 12, 2004 8:29 PM
Subject: Re: Online Research by Hong Kong PolyU

Hi Joanne,

I've just completed your questionnaire. Just curious, what special software did you use for designing this questionnaire? It looks very professional and easy to fill-in.

Zhen

Zhen Lu, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
The School of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Ryerson University

From: "Vicky L. Seiler" <vseiler@ >
To: <hmjoanne@ >
Date: Mon, Feb 16, 2004 12:36 PM
Subject: Re: Online Research by HK PolyU (Server is now back to normal!)

Hi Joanne!

I just completed my survey. I wanted to share with you a couple of things. First, it was a great survey - very easy to follow and took exactly the amount of time to complete that you said it would (this is pretty rare). My compliments on a job well done! :-)

Second, I wanted to share something that may or may not be relevant to what you are researching with this survey. I would love to go to the conferences mentioned in the survey. In fact, I met you at the one two years ago. I had a wonderful experience at that conference! It was organized well, had great conference activities, was in a great location, and I got to see friends I already knew as well as meet very nice new people! I think many people would like to attend more conferences than they already do (I know I would). The main problem for me in attending is lack of funding from my university. It's possible other people may find themselves in this situation too. I think it is very difficult for individuals to fully fund or partially fund

conference trips out of their own pocket (something that I've had to do in the past). This takes away from the household income and can be a big burden. With limited funds this leaves many of us with the task of picking and choosing a conference. Here all kinds of factors come into play. Location would be a part of the decision making (some wanting an affordable location and others wanting a location that would be very satisfying since they won't get to take many trips). If anyone were interviewing, then they would have to pick a conference where they could interview (even if they were interested in others). It is also hard for people who are interested in multiple research areas to choose which conferences to attend. Another thought is that sometimes it is necessary for an individual to attend a conference that is in their exact teaching area (for example, I have a degree in marketing so it is necessary for me to do some mainstream marketing conferences, yet I also love researching in both travel and tourism and real estate). It becomes very difficult to be able to financially afford to do conferences in all of these areas. Anyway, I'm not sure if that helps or is relevant, but I wanted to share my thoughts just the same. I wish you successful research!

Aloha,

Vicky

--
Vicky L. Seiler, Ph.D.
Hawaii Pacific University
Department of Marketing

From: "Vicky L. Seiler" <vseiler@ >
To: "Joanne Yoo [HTM]" <hmjoanne@ >
Date: Tue, Feb 17, 2004 11:26 AM
Subject: Re: Thank you very much for your support!

You are very welcome Joanne! I would be honored to be in the appendix of your Ph.D. thesis. And thank you so much for your kind words about me. I really enjoyed meeting and spending time with you and hope we can do it again soon! I will look for your email in April. Let me know how your research goes! Aloha, Vicky

Appendix L: Email from APac CHRIE Conference Chairman

To: Participants in 2nd APac CHRIE and 6th Biennial Conference on Tourism in Asia

Dear Participants:

Please be advised that the plan for the 2nd APac CHRIE Conference and 6th Biennial Conference on Tourism in Asia is well under way. The conference will be held on the campus of the Prince of Songkla University in Phuket on 27-29 May 2004 as originally planned. We have more than 150 confirmed registrations to this date and more than 80 papers and posters planned for presentation. In addition, there will be several industry panel sessions which will keep us updated of current issues affecting hospitality and tourism education/management in Asia Pacific.

Some delegates might have wondered if the last week's incident in the Southern provinces of Thailand would have caused any safety and security concerns for travel conditions in Thailand, particularly in Phuket. Please be assured that the incident in Southern Thailand was an isolated incident and Phuket is 300 KM away from the location. In fact I have just completed a visit to Phuket and was again assured that business is as usual in Phuket and conference participants shouldn't be concerned about safety of travel and stay in Phuket.

Concerning the conference schedule, please be advised that the first session of the conference will start at 2:00pm on Thursday, 27 May, and the last session will end around 5:00pm on Saturday 29 May. All conference sessions will be held on the campus of Prince of Songkla University, and bus transportation between Holiday Inn Resort and PSU campus will be arranged on each day of the Conference. On the first day, 27 May, an opening welcome reception will held at the Holiday Inn Resort in the evening of 27th May, which will be a compliment of Siam University, Thailand. On 28th of May, the delegates will be visiting Phuket FantaSea Theme Park for a dinner and show.

Delegates are kindly reminded that Phuket is a tropical resort destination. As such, please expect very warm weather (around 32 degrees centigrade daytime temperature with occasional monsoon rain and high humidity level). Appropriate conference attire

will be "smart casual" - which can be interpreted as something like collared shirts and slacks for gentlemen and sleeved shirts and skirts or pants for ladies.
Finally, Holiday Inn Resort currently has only a small number of rooms still available for booking. If you have not yet booked your hotel room, you are kindly advised to make your reservation immediately.

Sincerely,

Kaye Chon
Chairman, 2nd APac CHRIE and 6th Biennial Conference
Chair Professor & Head
School of Hotel and Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Hung Hom, Kowloon, Hong Kong
Tel: +852-2766- ; Fax: +852-2362-6422
Email: hmkchon@ ; http://www.polyu.edu.hk/~htm/

VITA

Joanne Jung-Eun Yoo

EDUCATION

2005	Ph.D.	Hotel & Tourism Management The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong
1998	M.B.A.	Business Administration (in Tourism Management) Griffith University, Australia
1994	B.A.	German Language & Literature Ewha Womans University, Korea

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATION

2003 Certified Hospitality Educator (CHE), American Hotel & Lodging Association

HONORS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

2001-2004 The Hong Kong Polytechnic University Research Studentship

1996-1998 Australian Government Postgraduate Research Scholarship

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2001-2004 Teaching/Research Assistant, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

2001-2004 Journal Editorial Assistant, *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*

1998-2001 Lecturer, School of Tourism Studies, Tamna University, Korea

1994-1995 In-flight Interpreter, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines