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The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

School of Hotel & Tourism Management

UNDERSTANDING CONVENTION ATTENDEES' SATISFACTION AND RETURN INTENTION

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Philosophy

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Xiao Shi WANG

Abstract

Understanding Convention Attendees' Satisfaction and Return Intention

by

Xiao Shi Wang

Chief Supervisor: Professor Kaye Chon

The main purpose of this study was to develop a conceptual framework to understand convention attendees' evaluation of convention experience, in order to better understand their satisfaction and return intention. Specifically, the evaluation of convention experience was investigated through three constructs, namely perceived convention performance, perceived attractiveness of destination and perceived value. Multiple regression analysis was used to assess the impact of convention evaluation constructs on the satisfaction and return intention of convention attendees. The increasingly fierce competition among associations and host locations suggests the need to understand the satisfaction and return intention of convention attendee as the ultimate customer, which incurs great impact on the financial benefits of both associations and host locations.

Based on the extensive literature review of convention tourism, tourism and hospitality, and general marketing research, constructs of interest were identified and the hypothetical relationships were established for testing.

Before the main stage of data collection, a pilot study was conducted in order to fine-tune the survey instrument and test the self-developed online survey system which was used as the media for data collection. Two conferences, the Council for Australian University Tourism and Hospitality Education (CAUTHE) 2008 Conference and the Seventh Asia Pacific Forum for Graduate Students' Research in Tourism (APF) were selected for data collection. A total of 156 usable questionnaires were received which included 109 copies from CAUTHE 2008 and 47 copies from APF 2008. Multiple regression analysis was applied to data collected.

To test hypotheses 1 to 3, three convention evaluation constructs were included as independent variables while convention satisfaction was included as the dependent variable. Research findings showed that perceived convention performance, perceived attractiveness of destination and perceived value, had a significant positive impact on convention satisfaction. Therefore, hypotheses 1 to 3 were supported.

To test hypotheses 4 to 7, three convention evaluation constructs and satisfaction were included as independent variables while return intention was included as the dependent variable. Results from the multiple regression analysis suggested that perceived convention performance and satisfaction had a significant positive impact on return intention, whereas perceived attractiveness of destination and perceived value had no significant direct impact on return intention. Consequently, hypotheses 4 and 7 were supported whereas hypotheses 5 and 6 were not. The mediating roles of satisfaction between post conference evaluation constructs and return intention were tested by following Baron and Kenny's (1986) three-step-approach. Results indicated that the relationship between perceived performance and return intention was partially mediated by satisfaction, while the remaining two sets of relationships were totally mediated by satisfaction. As a result, hypotheses 8 to 10 were fully supported. Beta coefficients reflected that perceived performance was the strongest predictor of convention satisfaction (β=.457, p<.001), followed by perceived attractiveness of destination (β=.259, p<.001) and perceived value for money (β=.192, p<.01).

This study is one of the first attempts to understand post convention evaluation, satisfaction and return intention by convention attendees.

Based on the analysis of specific background of convention industry and existing literature, a model to represent the phenomenon was proposed, tested, and confirmed. The research findings also provide meaningful information for associations, host locations, and meeting planners allowing them to identify factors influencing conventions attendees' satisfaction and return intention. Obviously, this information will help there groups create better conference programs and those more appropriate marketing strategies.

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Chapter 1   Introduction

1.1   Background to the Study

The history of convention tourism derives from ancient time. Montgomery and Strick (1995, p.4) suggest that 'for as long as there have been people, there have been meetings'. However, the modern convention industry has only developed during the past two centuries, particularly the United States and Europe (Spiller, 2002). Moreover, only the past few decades saw the recognition of convention tourism as a distinctive industry rather than a second branch of the hospitality industry (Chon & Sparrowe, 2000).

As a 'high-yield' tourism market and an important generator of foreign exchange and income and employment, as well as a means of growth for in-house conference facilities (Dwyer, 2002), the convention industry is globally recognized for its valuable economic contribution to tourism destinations. Moreover, it is widely accepted that convention attendees are among the highest-spending visitors to these destinations (Davidson, 2003; Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Zhang, Leung, & Qu, 2006). The convention tourism market generates the highest revenue per customer compared to the hospitality industry in general.

Furthermore, convention attendees usually stay longer at the destination than other tourists because they are inclined to combine business with a vacation, especially within attractive destinations. Last but not least, conventions provide the destination with high-volume demand during the shoulder seasons (Oppermann & Chon, 1997) as most corporate and association meetings take place during the spring and autumn, this being the traditional low season for many tourist areas. The Annual Meeting Market Survey from the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) (2007) indicates that three-fifths of associations reported that the economic value of their largest meeting to the host destination was US$1 million or more in 2006, while more than one-fifth reported the value at US$5 million or more.

The convention industry has experienced tremendous growth and national global extension during the past few decades. The Union of International Association (UIA) reports that 218 countries and territories and 1,468 cities held conventions in 2005. Table 1 shows Europe and North America still playing the leading role in the world convention market in terms of quantity of annual meetings, whilst Asia has shown stronger-than-average growth since the 1960s.

Table 1.1 International Congress by Continent 1954-2007

(% of total market share)

	1954	1968	1974	1982	1992	1999	2002	2005	2006	2007
Europe	74	70	65	65	61	57	57	57	59	54
North America	11	13	14	14	14	16	17	20	19	19
South America	8	5	5	5	6	5	5			
Asia	4	8	9	11	12	13	14	15	15	20
Africa	3	3	4	3	5	5	5	5	5	4
Australasia/ Pacific	1	1	3	3	2	4	4	3	3	3

Source: Partly adopted from Spiller, 2002; UIA, 2002, 2005, and 2007

Similar results reached when we look at the top ten countries and cities that held international congress. Those top ten countries and cities were mostly from America such as USA and Europe such as France, UK, Germany and Italy. A few Asian cities such as Singapore, Hong Kong and Seoul begin to play an important role in the world market as time goes on.

Table 1.2 Top Ten Countries for International Congress, 1997-2007

1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
USA	USA	USA	USA	USA	USA	USA	USA	USA	USA	USA
France	France	France	France	UK	France	France	France	France	France	France
UK	UK	UK	UK	France	UK	Germany	Germany	Germany	Germany	Germany
Germany	Germany	Germany	Germany	Germany	Germany	Italy	UK	UK	Netherlands	Singapore
Italy	Italy	Italy	Italy	Italy	Spain	UK	Spain	Italy	Austria	Japan
Netherlands	Netherlands	Netherlands	Australia	Spain	Italy	Spain	Italy	Spain	Spain	Netherlands
Spain	Australia	Australia	Netherlands	Belgium	Belgium	Switzerland	Switzerland	Netherlands	UK	Italy
Belgium	Belgium	Spain	Spain	Australia	Australia	Belgium	Belgium	Austria	Finland	Spain
Australia	Spain	Belgium	Belgium	Netherlands	Canada	Austria	Austria	Switzerland	Italy	Austria
Switzerland	Austria	Austria	Switzerland	Switzerland	Netherlands	Netherlands	China *	Belgium	Singapore	UK

* Including Hong Kong & Macau

Source: UIA International Meeting Statistics: 1997-2007.

Table 1.3 Top Ten Cities for International Congress, 1997-2007

1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Paris	Paris	Paris	Paris	Paris	Paris	Paris	Paris	Paris	Paris	Singapore
London	London	Brussels	Brussels	London	Brussels	Wien	Wien	Wien	Wien	Paris
Brussels	Brussels	Wien	London	Brussels	London	Geneva	Brussels	Brussels	Singapore	Vienna
Wien	Wien	London	Wien	Wien	Wien	Brussels	Geneva	Singapore	Brussels	Brussels
Geneve	Amsterdam	Singapore	Singapore	Singapore	Singapore	London	Singapore	Barcelona	Geneva	Geneva
Singapore	Singapore	Berlin	Sydney	Geneva	Kobenhavn	Singapore	Kobenhavn	Geneva	Helsinki	Barcelona
Amsterdam	Geneva	Amsterdam	Berlin	Berlin	Barcelona	Barcelona	Barcelona	New York	Barcelona	New York
Kobenhavn	Berlin	Kobenhavn	Amsterdam	Seoul	Geneva	Kobenhavn	London	London	London	Tokyo
Washington	Kobenhavn	Sydney	Geneva	Kobenhavn	Berlin	Berlin	Berlin	Seoul	Amsterdam	Seoul
Hong Kong	Lisboa	Washington	Kobenhavn	Sydney	Sydney	Roma	Seoul	Kobenhavn	New York	Amsterdam

Source: UIA International Meeting Statistics: 1997-2007.

1.2   Problem Statement

The convention industry brings significant economic benefit to both the host location and association but has received very little research attention, although an increasing number of research studies have been seen within this area during the past two decades.

However, research topics mainly focused on the site selection process (e.g., Crouch & Louviere, 2004; Crouch & Ritchie, 1998; Grant & Weaver, 1996; Jun & McCleary, 1999), meeting planner issues (e.g., Baloglu & Love, 2001, 2003; Oppermann, 1998a), destination perception and image assessment (e.g., Oppermann, 1996), regional development (e.g., Bauer, Lambert, & Hutchison, 2001; Leask & Spiller, 2002;

Weber and Ladkin, 2003), economic impact (e.g., Kim, Chon, & Chung, 2003; Lee & Back, 2005), and convention center management (e.g., Carlsen, 2004; McNeill & Evans, 2004).

There are three main actors within the convention industry, namely host location, association, and potential attendees (Oppermann & Chon, 1997). Convention literature has paid great attention to issues in relation to host location such as economic impact, regional development, destination image, along with the site selection process for associations. In contrast, there are very few studies reporting from the perspective of convention attendees, who are regarded as the ultimate and most important customers of the convention product. Yoo and Weber (2005) conducted a meta-analysis on convention literature and found 115 articles studying convention tourism from 1985 to 2003 based on the review of 14 journals.

The author of this study conducted similar research, indicating another 52 convention articles were published within the same 14 journals from the year 2003 to April 2007. Surprisingly, from a total of 167 journal papers, only 15 of them analyzed convention attendee related issues, which accounted for less than 10% of total journal articles. Within convention attendee literature, the convention participation decision making

process received most attention (e.g., Grant & Weaver, 1996; Jago & Deery, 2005; Ngamson, Beck, & Lalopa, 2001; Oppermann & Chon, 1997; and Oppermann, 1998b). However, only little research touches on the satisfaction and return intention of attendees (e.g. Severt, Wang, Chen, & Breiter, 2007).

Examination of the link between customer satisfaction and behavioral responses requires further investigation in order to better understand the link between customer satisfaction and financial outcomes of the organization (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996). Moreover, Zahorik and Rust (1992) proposed that by studying behavioral responses to service programs can help managers estimate the financial consequences of customer satisfaction. Reichheld and Sasser (1990) found that when a company retains just 5% more of its customers, profits can increase by 25% -125%.

Intention has long been regarded as an important mediator between behavioral determinants and actual behavior. Although return intention cannot lead to 100% actual return behavior, it is believed to be the most influential indicator of actual behavior (Ajzen, 1988; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). A review of previous studies regarding tourist revisit intention and customer repurchase intention shows that there are different antecedents of intention in different contexts and situational settings.

Most commonly researched antecedents are satisfaction, service quality, perceived performance, perceived value, past experience, destination image, familiarity of destination and source of information (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Baloglu, Pekcan, Chen, & Santos, 2003; Kashyap & Bojanic, 2000; Kozak, 2001; Lee, Graefe, & Burns, 2004; Petrick & Backman, 2002; Um, Chon & Ro, 2006).

Although some scholars addressed the research need within convention literature for analyzing the behavior of attendees, particularly evaluation of the convention experience (Lee & Back, 2005; Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Severt et al., 2007; Yoo & Weber, 2005) there has been a surprisingly distinct lack of studies on this topic.

Severt et al.'s (2007) examined the relationship between convention motivation, performance, satisfaction and behavioral consequences including return intention and communication via word of mouth. These researchers used Importance-Performance Analysis to firstly rate the importance of motivation factors, then evaluating convention performance based on those motivation items. Thereafter, the relationship between performance, overall satisfaction and behavior consequences were tested. However, they chose only a limited number of motivators in their study and

eliminated convention motivation factors in relation to the destination. This was in contrast to what was proven to be very important factors by convention literature.

The current study will differentiate to that of Severt et al.'s (2007). This will be done by not only examining the impact of convention performance, but also the impact of perceived destination attractiveness and perceived value on convention attendees' satisfaction and return intention. Another study was conducted by Danaher and Mattsson (1994). They used the concept of service encounters and divided a one-day conference into four distinct encounters: (1) arrival, (2) coffee-break, (3) lunch and (4), the conference room. The researchers measured convention performance and satisfaction for each service encounter. But convention experience shouldn't be concluded by simply evaluating physical attributes, although they can supplement the value of the conference. For example, a good lunch offered by the conference cannot satisfy the attendee who comes to the conference mainly for education but finds the keynote speaker quite disappointing.

In summary, there is a distinct lack of research with respect to convention attendees' evaluation of their convention experience, satisfaction, and return intention. Thus, there is a need for this type of research to better understand the convention attendees'

behavior. Obviously, the extension of convention literature in this direction will benefit both academia and industry."

1.3   Objective of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to develop a conceptual framework to understand and evaluate the convention experience by attendees in order to better understand their satisfaction and return intention. The current study will examine the relationships between perceived convention performance, perceived destination attractiveness, perceived value, overall satisfaction, and return intention of convention attendees. Specifically, the research objectives are to:

1. Assess the impact of perceived performance, perceived attractiveness, and perceived value for money on attendees' overall satisfaction.

2. Assess the impact of perceived performance, perceived attractiveness, perceived value for money, and satisfaction on attendees' return intention.

3. Determine the relative weights of attendee evaluation constructs affecting satisfaction and return intention.

4. Test the mediation role of satisfaction between conference evaluation constructs and return intention.

1.4   Scope of the Study

There are two main segments within the convention industry, namely corporate meetings and association meetings (Chon, 1991a). These two segments are quite different in terms of meeting size, meeting planning time horizon, site selection process and so on. For example, the corporate meeting is relatively small in size, planned in a short time and usually held in the city of the company headquarters.

In contrast, the association meeting is usually large in size and involves a long planning period and a more complicated site selection process. Opperman and Chon (1997) however, indicate that the main distinction between the two segments appears to be the 'freedom of choice' towards association meetings attendees, while corporate meetings are usually a requirement of employees. Unlike corporate attendees (Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Ngamsom, Beck, & Lalopa, 2001), association members pay their own conference expenses, therefore planners are more concerned with the attendance of their members and attempt to motivate them to participate in annual conventions.

In addition, convention revenue is regarded as one of the major income generators for associations. PCMA (2007) reports that revenue from conventions, exhibitions and

meetings accounted for 33% of the overall income in 2006 by associations, being similar to that of 32% in 2005. Var, Cesario and Mauser (1985) argued that while the overall interests and objectives of convention planners and convention agencies may diverge, there is at least one shared goal— maximization of delegate numbers.

Shure (2002) also suggests that association planners have three challenges: attendance, attendance and attendance, which highlights the need for a better understanding of the behavior of the convention attendee, including their decision-making process and evaluation of the convention experience.

As discussed above, the association meeting is a product in nature, which arouses interest among scholars. The customers, potential convention attendees, pay to the association to attend the conference and in return request the benefits such as new knowledge and networking opportunity. In comparison to other sectors, the association meetings sector is the largest segment in terms of attendee numbers, conventions and meetings. According to Choi (2004), association meetings have contributed to nearly two thirds of industry growth in terms of meeting expenditure. Based on above discussion, the current study will focus on the association meeting

segment rather than the whole convention industry and to have a better understanding

of the evaluation of convention experience by attendees of association meeting.

1.5   Significance of the study

This study brings significance to both theory development and industry practice in the

field of convention tourism. The current study will bridge the research gap in existing

convention literature by examining convention experience and relationships between

related constructs. In addition, the current study is the first attempt to integrate the

destination attractiveness construct and perceived value construct into the evaluation

process of attendees. Destination stimuli is widely accepted as an important factor

influencing the decision making process of convention attendees. Hence, the overall

perception of destination attractiveness could be a vital factor affecting the

satisfaction and return intention of attendees during their stay. On the other hand, the

cost of attending a conference is usually high, which not only includes the conference

registration fee, but also that of corresponding travel costs such as accommodation,

transportation and onsite expenditure. Unlike corporate meeting participants,

association convention attendees have to finance themselves to attend the conference.

Even though some attendees apply for a refund by their employer; the fund could not

be unlimited. Hence, convention attendees often apply a 'trade-off' between various conventions in terms of cost value. In this regard, the perceived value for money may play a role in affecting the satisfaction and return intention of attendees.

From a practical perspective, recent competition in convention industry highlights the need for a better understanding of the behavior of convention attendees. Convention satisfaction and intention to return are directly related to the financial benefits of both association and host location. This study will provide useful information for association, host location and meeting planner to identify factors influencing satisfaction and return intention of convention attendees, which will help them to better design the conference program and choose appropriate marketing strategies.

1.6   Definition of Terms

Convention

A convention refers 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). In the current study, the terms convention, meeting, and conference may be interchanged.

Association

An 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).

Perceived Performance

Perceived performance refers to beliefs regarding product attributes, levels of attributes, or outcomes (Spreng, MacKenzie, & Olshavsky, 1996).

Perceived Destination Attractiveness

Perceived destination attractiveness refers to feelings, beliefs, images and opinions that individuals have about the perceived capacity of a destination to provide satisfaction (Hu & Ritchie, 1993).

Perceived Value

Perceived value refers to the overall assessment by the consumer to the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given (Zeithaml, 1998).

Satisfaction

Satisfaction refers to a function of cognitive and affective responses in which attribute experience can operate through affect to influence satisfaction indirectly (Oliver 1993 & 1996).

Return Intention

Behavioral intention refers to a person's subjective probability that he or she will perform a certain behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). In this study, return intention refers to attendee's subjective probability that he or she will return to the conference organized by particular association.

1.7   Outline of the study

This thesis comprises five chapters. Chapter 1 starts with the research background and problem statement and then the objectives of the current study. The theoretical and practical contribution is also discussed. Definitions of constructs concerned in this study are listed at the end of this chapter.

Chapter 2 reviews relevant literature regarding convention tourism, perceived performance, perceived attractiveness, perceived value, satisfaction and return intention.

Chapter 3 discusses methodological issues within the study including research design, sampling, research hypotheses, instrument development, pilot study, procedures for data collection and data analysis.

Chapter 4 firstly reports the demographic profile of survey respondents. The measurement of each construct is assessed by conducting factor analysis and reliability analysis. This is followed by assessment of the assumptions of multiple regression analysis and overall fit of the model. Finally, research hypotheses are tested.

Chapter 5 discusses research findings. The theoretical and practical implications are addressed. At the end of this chapter, limitations of this study and suggestions for future research are provided.

Chapter 2   Literature Review

2.1   Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of existing literature related to convention tourism and the theoretical constructs of interest of this study. Firstly, previous studies within convention tourism literature from the perspective of attendees are reviewed. This is followed by detailed discussions regarding constructs of perceived performance, perceived attractiveness, perceived value and satisfaction and return intention.

2.2   Previous Studies in Convention Tourism Literature

An extensive review of convention tourism literature reflects that most research attention is devoted to topics concerning association, meeting planner and host destination, such as the site selection process, economic impact and regional development. However, the shared goals of both associations and host destinations are still under-researched.   This is of course, the ultimate customer - the convention attendee.

Among early attempts to explore the perspective of convention attendees, Price (1993) examined the motivation of attendees to attend a professional association convention. Price's study is based on the assumption that individuals who attend professional association meetings perceive that these meetings are both of personal and occupational value. Using attendees at the annual convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) as the study sample, the author identified four factors that influence the decision making process to attend a particular conference, namely leadership, networking, education and professional savvy. Among those four factors, education represented the most important group of attributes, networking the second most important, professional savvy the third and leadership as the least important factor. By applying career theories, the author also investigated the relationship between their perception of the importance of meeting attributes and their career stage. The research findings show that career variables, specifically age, salary, years with current employer and perceptions of change in the industry, have an influence on the perceived importance of meeting attributes. Price's study, as an initial study in convention tourism literature, provided the empirical foundation for future studies on this topic (Yoo, 2005).

Applying the same framework as Price (1993), Grant (1994) tested whether or not factors identified by Price were applicable in another population based on data collected from the Annual Conference of Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education (CHRIE) in 1993. Grant's study confirmed that education, networking and leadership were three main factors of convention decision making, while professional savvy was not supported by the research. In addition to these three main factors, the research resulted in another factor, potpourri, which represents a group of unrelated attributes such as 'getting away from the office' and 'satisfying job requirements'.

Oppermann and Chon (1995) explored the factors influencing participation of convention attendees, by surveying two association conventions: 'Environments for Tourism Conference' and 'Society of Travel & Tourism Educators (STTE) 1994 Annual Conference' in 1994. The study identified 16 attributes influencing the decision making of attendees. The top three were 'keeping up with changes in my field/profession', 'hearing speakers who are respected in the field', 'developing new business/professional relationships'. Oppermann (1995) and Grant and Oppermann (1995) furthered this topic by investigating decision criteria for both attendees and non-attendees.

These two studies show similar research findings in that education and professional development are perceived as important factors to attendees, while cost and time are two major inhibitors by non-attendees to consider participation.

Another noteworthy study was conducted by Grant and Weaver (1996). Using the identical instrument developed and tested by Price (1993), they surveyed participating attendees at the Annual Conference of CHRIE in 1993. The research findings identified four distinct factors that attendees consider when selecting a conference, namely networking, education, leadership, and destination/recreation/social. Furthermore, the cluster analysis resulted in three homogeneous groups of people formed by selection criteria representing each factor: 'Those who enjoy conferences for networking opportunities', 'Those who enjoy conferences for educational opportunities', and 'Those who enjoy conferences for leadership opportunities'. The destination/recreation/social dimension can be seen in all clusters.

Based on empirical findings of previous studies within convention tourism literature, Oppermann and Chon (1997) proposed a model based on the association convention participation decision-making process.

As shown in Figure 2.1, the model presented four factors entailed in the convention participation decision-making process of an individual with a predisposition towards that of attending an association convention. They are personal/business factors, association/conference factors, location factors and factors associated with intervening opportunities. Firstly, personal/business factors include health, finance, availability of time, family, funding, professional advancement and desire to learn. It is clear that the availability of good health, funding or sufficient financial support and time, will facilitate the decision to participate in the convention. The convention participation decision may also be influenced by the goals of individuals, such as professional advancement and a desire to learn. Secondly, association/conference factors are involvement with the association, peer recognition, professional contacts, personal interaction and 'global community'. Convention literature revealed that factors related to the association and conference had the most influential impact on decision making. Thirdly, association convention involves a substantial leisure element (Davidson 1994). Convention attendees can have simultaneous opportunities to combine business and holiday vacation, especially to long-haul destinations (Price & Becker 2002, Yoo, 2005). Attractive destination, social events and pre-/post convention activities can facilitate the decision making of attendees.

Another influencing factor can be that of previous experiences by potential attendees within the convention location. The influence of past experiences on future destination choice has been approved (George & George, 2004; Mazursky, 1989; Sonmez & Graefe, 1998). With favorable past experiences of a particular convention location, attendees are more likely to return to that site. Last but not least, other competing conventions may exert a compelling influence on the participation decision by potential convention attendees. This may not only be from another competing convention, but possibly another product category, such as holidays. As the total cost of attending a convention may be substantial, a potential attendee with finance 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.

Figure 2.1 Association Convention Participation Decision Making Process
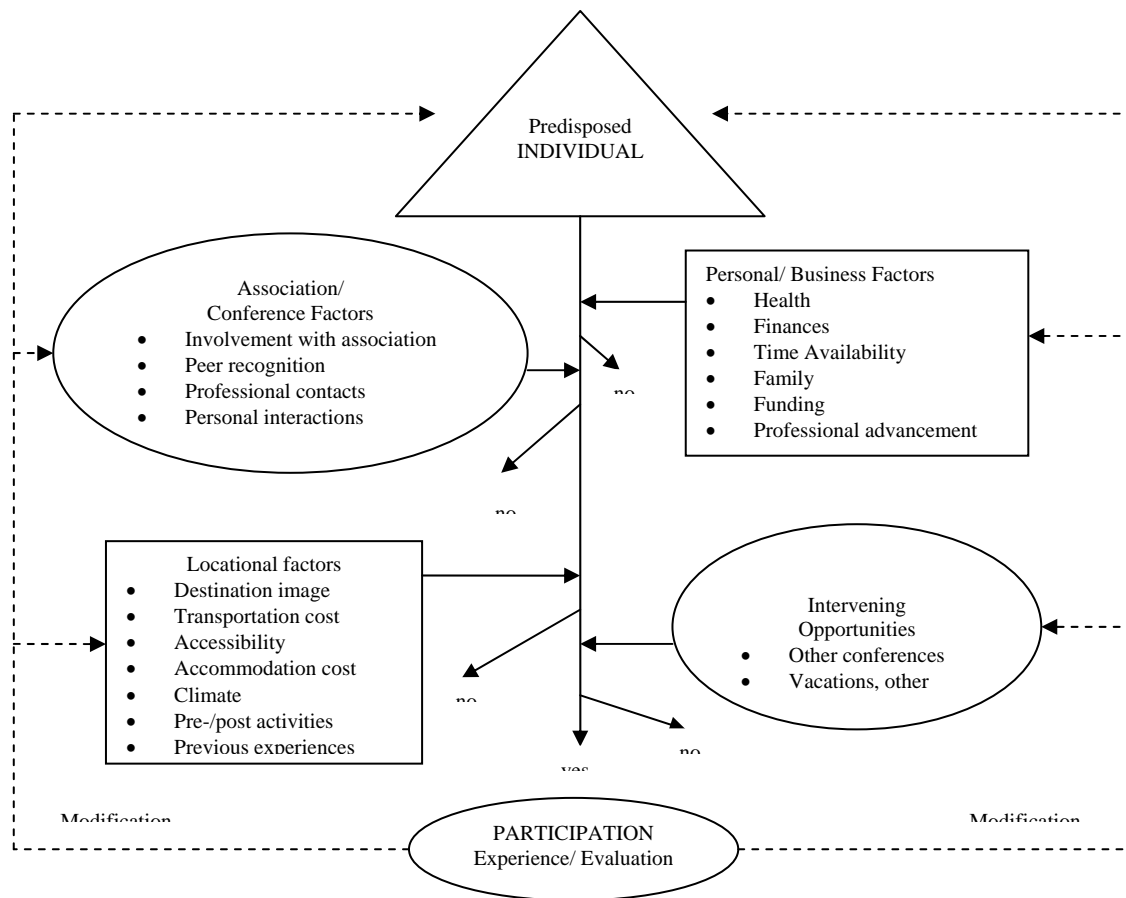
Source: Oppermann & Chon (1997)

Other studies regarding convention participation decision making process can also be found in Oppermann (1998b), Rittichainuwat, Beck, and Lalopa (2001). By applying the concept of involvement to the conference participation decision-making process, Oppermann (1998b) examined potential differences among association members who have a different degree of involvement with the association. The data was collected from members of the Association of American Geographers (AAG) by using an e-mail survey.

Oppermann (1998b) classified respondents into three categories according to their involvement with the association. The research findings show that highly involved members were much more likely to attend the annual convention than those with low or medium levels of involvement. Therefore, the author suggested that the association needed to create an 'association culture' which can stimulate and maintain high involvement of association members, consequently ensuring a higher convention participation rate. Rittichainuwat, Beck and Lalopa (2001) examined motivation, inhibitors and facilitators that influence association members in attending international conferences. Participants of the 2000 CHRIE conference were the source of data collection. The research findings reveal that sightseeing, self-enhancement and business and association activities are the underlying dimensions of conference motivation. Conference and personal constraints, distance, time and money are regarded as the underlying dimensions of conference inhibitors. The major conference facilitators are affordability and availability of time, family/spouse, along with distance and ease of access.

Based on Oppermann and Chon' s (1997) model, Yoo (2005) further examined factors affecting the association convention participation decision-making process, from

which a measurement scale was developed to assess the process by integrating attitude theory and a paradigm of cognitive decision-making.

In addition, Yoo's study investigated the longitudinal changes of the decision making process. The scale consists of five underlying dimensions: destination stimuli, professional and social networking opportunities, educational opportunities, safety and health situation and travelability. Among those five dimensions, professional/social networking opportunities, travelability, and destination stimuli significantly influence the convention participation decision. The longitudinal research showed that the importance of convention participation decision-making factors changed significantly over time, especially those of networking opportunities, safety and health situation and travelability.

More recently, Lee and Back (2007b) developed the theory of reasoned action and the theory of planned behavior from human behavioral research and introduced a meeting participation model (MPM). Empirical data collected from 245 members of the CHRIE were used to test the proposed model. Research findings suggested that past behavior and subjective norm had significant power to predict meeting participation intention.

In sum, literature outlining the convention decision making process reveals a consensus of two main factors: education and professional networking. Influence of the destination factor is taken to be increasingly important, both theoretically and practically. Significant impact of the cost factor on the participation decision as an inhibitor is noteworthy (Grant & Oppermann, 1995; Oppermann, 1995; Oppermann & Chon, 1995; Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Rittichainuwat et al., 2001; Yoo, 2005). On the other hand, convention literature demonstrates that research from the perspective of attendees is mainly focused on the pre-conference stage rather than consumption-and post-conference stage. Based on the assumption that attendees have satisfaction requirements when attending professional meetings (Price, 1993), the current study will evaluate convention performance by using factors that influence the participation decision making process of convention attendees.

2.3   Perceived Performance

2.3.1   Overview of Perceived Performance

Perceived Performance is defined as beliefs regarding the product attributes, levels of attributes, or outcomes (Spreng, MacKenzie, & Olshavsky, 1996). From consumer

behavior literature, perceived performance is generally included in the Expectancy Disconfirmation Paradigm as the only referent against which expectations are compared. Most prior research in satisfaction has not included performance as a direct antecedent of satisfaction (e.g., Bearden & Teel, 1983; Cadotte, Woodruff, & Jenkins, 1987; Oliver, 1980; Oliver & DeSarbo, 1988; Westbrook, 1987; Westbrook & Reilly, 1983). Oliver (1989) stated that examination of the direct effect of performance failed to identify the mechanism by which performance was converted into a psychological reaction by the consumer. Any direct effect of perceived performance on satisfaction is mediated by both expectations congruency and desires congruency (Spreng, MacKenzie, & Olshavsky, 1996).

Some scholars within the study of leisure argue, however, that recreation product attributes are ambiguous in their character (Barsky, 1992); therefore the performance of a leisure product may be a more crucial determinant of future purchase intentions and positive word of mouth, than expectations or disconfirmation (Levitt, 1981; Olshavsky & Miller, 1972; Whipple & Thatch, 1988). It was further suggested by LaTour and Peat (1979) that evaluation of product attributes themselves by consumers may account for more variability in satisfaction than confirmation or disconfirmation of expectations regarding those attributes (Petrick, Morais, & Norman, 2001).

Therefore, this stream of research treats perceived performance as the direct antecedent of satisfaction and findings suggest a strong relationship between them (Anderson, Fornell, & Lehmann, 1994; Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Churchill & Surprenant, 1982; Tse & Wilton, 1988).

2.3.2 Dimensions of Product Performance

Assuming that a limited set of salient product performance dimensions for which the compared standards are fulfilled results in consumer satisfaction, the central concern for marketing analysis is to identify salient performance dimensions. While product performance dimensions may appear to be 'natural' attributes of products, they are limited by consumer perceptions and conceptions (Swan & Combs, 1976). Thayer (1968) argued that product performance dimensions were a property of human experience and thought. Quite a number of researchers have engaged in the development of product performance dimensions.

Instrumental and Expressive Dimensions

Swan and Combs (1976) conducted an empirical study examining the influence of physical and psychological dimensions of product performance on consumer

satisfaction in the context of the clothing industry. They proposed two categories of salient product performance dimensions regarding clothing, namely instrumental performance and expressive performance. Instrumental performance refers to the means to a set of ends, which would correspond to the performance of a physical product. For instance, the durability of an item of clothing would be an instrumental performance. On the other hand, expressive performance is that which the individual considers to be an end in itself, related to a psychological level of performance.

For instance, Horn and Gurel (1981) suggested that clothing performs five major functions: modesty and/or enhancement of sexual attraction, protection from the environment, aesthetic and sensuous satisfaction, indication of status and an extension of one's own self. The findings of Swan and Combs' (1976) study shows that satisfaction and dissatisfaction are linked to different types of qualitative performance outcomes. These outcomes form a hierarchy in that instrumental requirements must be satisfied first before satisfaction can occur.

Utilitarian and Hedonic Dimensions

Another approach to categorize product performance dimensions is utilitarian and hedonic performance (Mano & Oliver, 1993). Utilitarian performance means that the

product is seen as performing a useful function, while products valued for their

intrinsically pleasing properties are considered to be that of hedonic performance.

This two-dimensional approach is frequently typified as one of thinking versus feeling.

Batra and Ahtola (1991) proposed an operational approach to product evaluation

based on the utilitarian and hedonic view. Findings suggest that the attitude of

consumers towards the product have at least two distinct components in relation to

product attributes and characteristics, these being hedonic and utilitarian.

2.3.3   Measurement of Perceived Convention Performance

Swan and Combs (1976) argued that consumers tend to make implicit assumptions

regarding certain dimensions of product performance. Myers and Alpert (1968)

further claimed that only a limited set of attributes, namely 'determinant attributes',

have a crucial impact on decision making between alternatives.   This is supported by

convention literature, in that the major functions of a conference are education and

networking.

Research of literature reveals that there are only two papers from convention literature

studies that investigate convention performance. One was conducted by Severt et al.,

(2007) and another by Danaher and Mattsson (1994).   Severt et al., (2007) suggested that convention performance could be measured based upon items of convention motivation. Their study produced a total of nine items for investigation: educational purposes, educational information at exhibits, networking opportunities, interesting conference program, products available for purchase at exhibits, business activities, association-related activities, career enhancement and self-esteem enhancement. Respondents were asked to evaluate those items using a 5-point Likert scale, with '1' indicating poor and '5' indicating excellent.

The study by Danaher & Mattsson in 1994 used the concept of service encounters to measure convention performance. This was carried out by dividing a one-day conference into four distinct encounters: (1) arrival, (2) coffee-break, (3) lunch and (4), the conference room.   All encounters had four items allocated to them. Three of them evaluated quality through three dimensional value: emotional, practical and logical and one for overall satisfaction. For example, the four items for coffee-break were: 'How satisfied are you now?' 'Is it a pleasurable environment?' 'Are they good coffee and pastries?' 'Are they the right types of pastries?'

The current study will adopt the method of Severt et al.'s (2007), but includes more comprehensive motivational factors which influence the decision making process of attendees.

2.4   Perceived Attractiveness

2.4.1   Overview of Perceived Attractiveness

As one of the three major components of the convention industry, host destination plays a vital role to the success of a convention. An appealing destination will help the association attract more attendees and therefore increase the attendance and generate more revenue (Opperman & Chon, 1997). Convention literature shows that destination stimuli has a significant influence on the decision making process of convention attendees. Mayo and Jarvis (1981) also suggest that perceived attractiveness is believed to relate to the decision making process of the traveler and special benefit is derived from them. For the host destination, convention attendees bring expenditure on accommodation, transportation, food and beverage, shopping and recreation.

As a result, for both practical and theoretical significance, the convention site selection process received the most research attention within available convention literature. However, research focusing on selection of the convention site and destination image comes from the perspective of meeting planners (e.g., Advert authors), while perceived attractiveness of the destination receives scarce attention from the point of view of convention attendees.

Understanding the concept of the tourism destination is the pre-condition to discussing the perceived attractiveness construct. According to Hu and Ritchie (1993), a tourism destination is a 'package of tourism facilities and services, which, like any other consumer product or service, is composed of a number of multidimensional attributes that together determine its attractiveness to a particular individual in a given choice situation' (p.26). Hu and Ritchie further defined perceived attractiveness as 'feelings, beliefs and opinions that an individual has regarding the perceived ability of a destination to provide satisfaction in relation to his or her special vacational needs' (p.25). This definition unveils the fact that perceived attractiveness is a result of interaction between the tourist (perception) and destination (ability). Rugg (1973) suggested that tourists do not derive utility from possessing travel destinations, rather than being in a particular destination for some period of time.

Hence, perceived attractiveness is regarded by many scholars as an evaluating construct occurring at the post-consumption stage (Kim, 1998; Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Um, Chon, & Ro, 2006). Um et al. (2006) investigated the relationships between perceived attractiveness, perceived quality of service, perceived value for money, satisfaction and revisit intention, based on data collected via leisure tourists in Hong Kong. The research findings show that perceived attractiveness is the strongest indicator of satisfaction as well as the most influential antecedent to revisit intention. Similar results are confirmed by Kozak and Rimmington (2000). Their study explored the destination attributes critical to the overall satisfaction and revisit intention of tourists visiting Mallorca in Spain, during the winter season. Among the four factors measuring satisfaction, the destination attractiveness factor is found to be critical in explaining overall satisfaction and an important predictor of revisit intentions.

Another arguable issue concerning perceived attractiveness is related to the destination image construct. Some scholars have used these two constructs as a pair of synonym (Kim, 1998) while others argued that they are two different constructs (Um et al., 2006). One possible reason for this debate could be the similar operation method used to measure these two constructs.

Both the perceived attractiveness and destination image are very often measured

based on evaluation of the destination attributes (e.g., Baloglu & Mangaloglu, 2001;

Baloglu & Love, 2005; Chon, 1991b; Formica, 2002; Hu & Ritchie, 1993; Hsu, Wolfe,

& Kang, 2004; Kim, 1998).

Nevertheless, Um et al. (2006) pointed out that image is at the pre-purchasing stage

while perceived attractiveness is formed at the post-purchasing stage. 'Perceived

attractiveness measured at that stage could be regarded as a cognitive evaluation of

destination attributes which are performed on site……If image is a key factor in

destination choice to first-timers, perceived attractiveness could be a key factor for

repeaters' (p.1146 and p.1152).

2.4.2   Dimensions of Perceived Attractiveness

From a conventional point of view, Gearing, Swart, and Var (1974) categorized

destination attractiveness into five dimensions: (1) natural factors, (2) social factors,

(3) historical factors, (4) recreational and shopping facilities, and (5), infrastructure,

food, and shelter. Another way to construct destination attractiveness was offered by

Hu and Ritchie (1993).

According to this research, in order to determine the salience of touristic attributes, destination attractiveness could be divided into two dimensions: universally important attributes and special attributes. Some attributes have universal importance in influencing tourists' evaluation of attractiveness, such as scenery, climate, and price. On the other hand, the importance of some touristic attributes in contributing to the destination attractiveness still depends on the type of destination and the vacation experience.   Destination attributes analyzed by previous studies are summarized in Table 2.1.

Convention tourism literature suggests that the attributes of a convention destination with more focus on meeting facilities are, to some degree, different to the traditional tourism destination and have been defined mostly from the perspective of meeting planners. Table 2.2 summarizes previous research into the convention destination image perceived by meeting planners.

Table 2.1 Selected Previous Studies on the Attributes of Destination Attractiveness in
Tourism Literature

Researchers	Destination Attractiveness Attributes
Hu and Ritchie (1993)	Climate, availability/quality of accommodation, sports/recreational opportunities, scenery, food, entertainment, uniqueness of local people's life, historical attractions, museums and cultural attractions, communication difficulty due to language barriers, festivals and special events, accessibility, shopping, attitude toward tourists, availability/quality of local transportation, price levels.
Kozak and Rimmington (1998)	*Attractions*: Scenery/natural resource, climate, culture, food, history, ethnicity, accessibility. *Facilities and services:* accommodation, airports, bus/train stations, sport facilities, entertainment, shopping centers, food and beverage facilities. *Infrastructure:* water systems, communication networks, health care, power sources, sewage/drainage areas, streets/highways, security systems. *Hospitality:* friendliness, helpfulness, responsiveness to complaints. *Cost:* value for money, accommodation prices, food and beverage prices, transportation price, shopping prices.
Kim (1998)	Seasonal attractiveness, uniqueness of the place, plenty of fun and sightseeing, cultural experience and historical sites, quiet and peacefulness, cleanliness and sanitation, natural environment of fresh air and clean water, price level, availability and quality of lodging/accommodation, resting and relaxing facilities, variety of types of foods and beverages, suitability to families with children, safety on the place, site reputation and famous image, convenient traffic and location, night life and evening entertainment, scenery and landscape, sports and recreational opportunities.
Kozak and Rimmington (2000)	Quality standard of accommodation, level of service at accommodation, feelings of safety and security overall, attitude of staff working in tourism, natural environment, overall value for money, atmosphere in the resort overall, quality and variety of food, responsiveness to customer complaints, cleanliness of beaches, hygiene and sanitation overall

Table 2.2 Previous Studies on Convention Destination Attributes

Researchers	Convention Destination Attributes
Bonn, Ohlin, and Brand (1994)	Direct flights, price-value, hotel room supply, ground transportation, staff attitude, exchange rate, quality service, check-in/out ease, staff attitude, assistance with customs clearance, assistance with pre-immigration clearance, friendliness of locals, security and safety, rental cars, charter services, tax laws, ability to use U.S dollars, distance of trip, passport requirements, hotel proximity to meeting site, sailing, diving, windsurfing, fishing, shopping, sightseeing, historical/cultural, scenic beauty, golf, tennis, climate, beaches, swimming.
Oppermann (1996)	Meeting room facilities, hotel service quality, attractive location, safety/ security, air transportation access, food and lodging costs, affordability, city image, transportation costs, restaurants, exhibit facilities, tourist attractions, climate, nightlife
Go and Zhang (1997)	Accessibility, attractiveness, equipment availability, entertainment, accommodation, meeting facility, climate, hotel/conference center service, local hospitality, transportation, city image, food & beverage service, costs, tourist attractions/sightseeing
Go and Govers (1999)	Meeting room and hotel facilities, accessibility, service, affordability, location image, climate, entertainment, tourist attractions
Baloglu and Love (2001)	Local restaurants, shopping facilities, ease of local transportation, accessibility, meeting facilities, number of sleeping rooms, union labor requirements, climate, number of hotels within walking distance to convention center, spouse appeal, local attractions, city reputation, safety and security, CVB services and sponsorship.

2.4.3 Measurement of Perceived Attractiveness

The body of literature covering destination attractiveness reveals that the major concern of researchers and practitioners is not related to theoretical investigation of the attractiveness concept itself but in finding a universal method to measure it (Formica & Uysal, 2006). Kaur (1981) suggested that destination attractiveness is that of a drawing force generated by the overall attractions existing in a given place at a

certain time. Therefore, the most common way to measure destination attractiveness is based on the evaluation of destination attributes. In the multi-attribute approach, perceived attractiveness is evaluated through a battery of attributes assessed by means of a Likert scale or a semantic differential scale, obtaining the overall attractiveness as an average or sum of the attribute scores.

In contrast to the traditional tourist destination in which the tourist is the only decision maker of site selection, convention destination is normally assessed from different angles by both meeting planners and convention attendees. For meeting planners, business related attributes such as meeting and hotel facilities, CVB services and sponsorship are weighted as important leisure attributes. Convention attendees pay more attention to leisure opportunities provided by the destination in a safe and pleasant environment. Grant and Oppermann (1995) examined the decision criteria of both attendees and non-attendees towards participation of an annual convention by a professional association. Their study shows that destination attributes such as air transportation and highway access, dining/entertainment, facilities/opportunities, availability of recreation facilities in hotel, scenery/landscape, city image and climate, can influence the decision making process of attendees.

Ngamson and Beck (2000) studied motivation and inhibitors and facilitators of association members when attending international conferences. Their research suggested that destination related attributes included visiting historical spots, tasting local cuisine, participating in water sports, sightseeing, shopping, climate, safety, accessibility and available destination activities for family members. Another research conducted by Lee and Back (2007a) investigated the role of destination image in relation to association meeting participation and measured destination attributes by accessibility, available hotel facilities, tourist attractions, desirable weather, good food and safety/security.

In sum, from the perspective of convention attendees, city image, destination leisure opportunities, accessibility and climate and safety, are major attributes to the convention destination.

2.5   Perceived Value for Money

2.5.1   Overview of Perceived Value

Consumer behavior literature suggests that service quality and satisfaction are the two most important topics receiving most attention from scholars (Baker and Crompton, 2000). Only in recent years has perceived value been recognized as a very important construct to study consumer behavior (Oh, 1999; Petrick & Backman, 2002; Petrick, 2004; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001; Woodruff & Gardial, 1996). Woodruff (1997) argued that 'if consumer satisfaction measurement is not backed up with in-depth learning about customer value and related problems that underlie their evaluation, it may not provide enough of the customer's voice to guide managers as to where to respond' (p.139). Oh (2000) proposed that customer value may unveil deep-seated driving forces of purchase decisions and brand loyalty. Empirical research further supports that perceived value is the most important indicator of behavioral intentions (e.g., Gallarza & Saura, 2006; Lee, Yoon & Lee, 2007; Parasuraman & Grewal, 2000).

Lee et al. (2007) examined tourist value concerning war-related tourism. They investigated the relationships between perceived value, satisfaction and recommendation, based on data obtained from visitors in the Korean Demilitarized

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Zone (DMZ). The results suggested that all underlying dimensions of tourist's

DMZ-perceived value have a significant effect on DMZ tour satisfaction. Um, Chon

and Ro (2006) studied antecedents of the revisit intention of visitors to Hong Kong.

This research also confirmed that perceived value was a significant predictor of revisit

intention as well as satisfaction.

The value concept is quite complex because it is extremely abstract and polysemous

in nature (Gallarza & Saura, 2006). Different people may hold different opinions

about value, which results in an amorphous concept of value construct within

marketing research. Consequently, measurement issues regarding perceived value

receives many debates (Bojanic, 1996; Oh, 1999, Grewal, Krishnan, Baker, & Borin,

1998; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). Gallarza and Saura (2006) proposed that the term

perceived value should be understood as synonymous of consumer value.

2.5.2   Definition of Perceived Value

The most acknowledged and frequently cited definition of perceived value is given by

Zeithaml (1988). The author claimed that 'perceived value is the overall assessment

by the consumer on the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given' (p.14).

This definition is synthesized from four groups of consumer values derived from exploratory research: (1) value is low price, (2) value is whatever I want in a product, (3) value is the quality I get for the price I pay, and (4) value is what I get for what I give.

Woodruff (1997) defined customer value as 'a customer's perceived preference for and evaluation of those product attributes, attribute performances and consequences arising from use that facilitates (block) achievement of the customer's goal and purpose in use situations.' Although this is broader than the definition focusing primarily on 'give-versus-get' type customer evaluations (Zeithaml, 1988), it is difficult to translate into an effective operational definition to construct a general scale for measuring customer value (Parasuraman, 1997).

Holbrook (1999) went beyond the utilitarian perspective of value and defined consumer value in a more comprehensive way as an 'interactive relativistic preference

experience'. In his proposal, customer value was divided into eight categories, namely

efficiency, excellence (quality), play, aesthetics, esteem, status, ethics and spirituality.

A three-dimensional paradigm was also introduced: consumer value being extrinsic or

intrinsic, active or reactive and finally self-oriented or other-oriented.

The current study adopts Zeithaml's definition of perceived value because this

definition focuses on the utilitarian perspective of the value construct and is proven to

be relatively easy to operate within empirical research. More importantly, Zeithaml's

definition is widely accepted across both marketing and tourism literature.

2.5.3 Dimensions of Perceived Value

A number of scholars have spent much effort in investigating the multi-dimensional

nature of the perceived value construct. Amongst this research, two studies are

notably worthwhile. Grewal et al. (1998) proposed two dimensions of perceived value,

namely perceived acquisition value and perceived transaction value. Perceived

acquisition value is defined as the perceived net gains associated with the products or

service acquired. Hence, it is positively influenced by the benefits received, while

negatively influenced by the money paid. On the other hand, perceived transaction

value is 'the perception of psychological satisfaction or pleasure obtained from taking advantage of the financial terms of the price deal' (p.48). In other words, transaction value is the difference between the internal reference price of the consumer and the price offered within the context of a special deal. The authors believed that upon examining the financial terms of the price offer, the customer might perceive additional value beyond that provided by acquisition value should they find that the actual price is less than what they expected to pay. Sweeney and Soutar (2001) developed the PERVAL scale and divided perceived value into four dimensions.

Table 2.3 Sweeney and Soutar's Four Dimensions of Perceived Value

Emotional value	The utility derived from the feeling or affective state that a product generates
Social value (enhancement of social self-concept)	The utility derived from the ability of the product to enhance social self-concept
Functional value (price/value for money)	The utility derived from the product due to the reduction of its perceived short term and longer term costs
Functional value (performance/quality)	The utility derived from the perceived quality and expected performance of the product

Source: Sweeney and Soutar, 2001

The current study evaluates the functional perspective of perceived value by operating the construct as perceived value for money and only assessing the acquisition value dimension. There are three reasons for this operation. Firstly, the author of this study

agrees with Zeithmal's (1988) definition of perceived value which compares the gain and cost. The concept of value is too broad and complex when relating to every aspect of life. If too wide a concept is included within any research, it is quite easy to overlap with other constructs of interest. For instance, in Sweeney's scale, the evaluation of performance, being a single construct of this study, was also included in the perceived value construct. Secondly, within the convention industry, the registration fee is decided and paid before the opening of the conference. Although 'early bird' prices and special student rates are available, they are not taken as promotional strategies but rather than that of operational convenience. Moreover, Al-Sabbahy, Ekinci, and Riley (2004) tested the conceptualization of perceived value as consisting of two dimensions: acquisition value and transaction value in the hotel and restaurant context. This study adopted the two-dimensional scale developed by Grewal et al. (1998). Although the findings prove the scale to be reliable and the dimension of acquisition value is found to be valid, transaction value shows poor validity.

Consumer behavior and tourism literature, suggest the perceived value for money construct is very often measured by a single-item scale which asks respondents to rate the value for money of product or service. However, the limitation of this single-item scale, in that it could not capture the perceived value construct, has been recognized

(e.g., Oh, 1999; Al-Sabbahy et al., 2004). Hence, the current study uses the four items

value for money scale under PERVAL developed by Sweeney and Soutar (2001) to

measure the perceived value for money construct.

2.6   Satisfaction

2.6.1   Overview of Satisfaction

Satisfaction is classified by marketing specialists as post-purchase behavior and

recognized to be of great importance to the firm because of its influence on repeat

purchases (Berkman & Gilson, 1986, pp.507-508; Heung, 2000; Pizam & Milman,

1993; Yüksel & Yüksel, 2002). Given the vital role of customer satisfaction, one

should not be surprised that a great deal of research has been devoted to investigating

the process by which customers form judgments about a service experience.

As a result, customer satisfaction has been one of the most frequent topics in

consumer behavior research.

The early 1970s saw the emergence of consumer satisfaction as being a legitimate

field of inquiry. The index of Consumer Satisfaction by The U.S. Department of

Agriculture was the first study to report direct information on consumer satisfaction to the policy maker (Churchill Jr & Surprenant, 1982). Three studies, Olshavsky and Miller (1972), Anderson (1973), and Cardozo (1965), are believed to form the foundation to consumer satisfaction research. After 1970, a great number of researchers became devoted to this research area and developed numerous theoretical frameworks which attempt to examine and measure the satisfaction construct.

The majority of satisfaction theories concur that satisfaction is a relative concept which is always judged in relation to a standard. However, Yüksel and Yüksel (2002) suggested that the selection of an appropriate standard of comparison which should be used within research represents a dilemma for researchers. This is partly because there is no sufficient research evidence available to answer precisely what comparison standard consumers use in different situations. On the other hand, the understanding of whether the use of different comparison standards yields different results in terms of satisfaction is limited.

The following section begins with examining the definition and dimension of consumer satisfaction, followed by research antecedents and outcomes of consumer

satisfaction based on available literature. Last but not least, the measurement of consumer satisfaction found within this study is provided.

2.6.2 Definition of Satisfaction

The debate on definition of the satisfaction construct concentrates on the cognitive or affective nature of satisfaction. Some researchers conceptualize satisfaction as a cognitive construct. Day (1984) defined satisfaction as a response by the consumer to the evaluation of perceived discrepancy between prior expectations (or some other norm of performance) and the actual performance of the product as perceived after its consumption.

Others argue that satisfaction is affective or emotional in nature. For instance, Woodruff, Cadotte, and Jenkins (1983) argued that consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction is an emotional feeling in response to confirmation/ disconfirmation.

Mano and Oliver (1993, p465), however, suggested that 'the satisfaction response is not easily tied down. It does not respond as a pure affect nor does it exist in the

absence of feeling. It is apparently a complex human response with both cognitive and affective components. Therefore, a combination of cognitive and affective dimension could better examine satisfaction construct.' According to Oliver (1993 & 1996), customer satisfaction is 'a function of cognitive and affective responses in which attribute experience can operate through affect to influence satisfaction indirectly'. Cognitive response refers to objective evaluation of product/service attributes, while affective response refers to the subjective psychological feelings/emotions of the consumer during the consumption process. Operationally, satisfaction is similar to attitude in that it can be assessed as the sum of satisfaction with various attributes of the product or service. However, satisfaction is different to attitude in that satisfaction is a post-decision construct while attitude is a pre-decision construct (Churchill & Surprenant, 1982).

This study adopts Oliver's (1993 & 1996) definition and views satisfaction as an emotional response to the cognitive evaluation of the consumption process.

2.6.3 **Dimensions of Satisfaction**

Information satisfaction, Attribute satisfaction & Overall satisfaction

Spreng, MacKenzie, and Olshavsky (1996) introduced three dimensions of satisfaction, namely information satisfaction, attribute satisfaction, and overall satisfaction. Information satisfaction is defined as a subjective satisfaction judgment of the information (e.g., promotions, salespeople, or manufacturer) used in choosing a product. Attribute satisfaction is 'the subjective satisfaction judgment by the consumer resulting from observations of attribute performance' (Oliver, 1993, p.421). Overall satisfaction is based on the overall experience, not just individual attributes. Although attribute satisfaction is the direct antecedent of overall satisfaction (Spreng et al., 1996), overall satisfaction and attribute satisfaction are distinct, though related, constructs.

Overall satisfaction is a much broader concept implying the holistic evaluation of consumption experience (Fornell, 1992) and not the sum of individual assessments of each attribute. This study evaluates the overall satisfaction of convention attendees' based on their overall participation experience.

2.6.4 Antecedents and Consequence of Satisfaction

Expectancy disconfirmation paradigm introduced by Oliver (1980) is a widely accepted framework to assess customer satisfaction. Prior to purchase and use of a brand, the consumer forms expectations of its performance in a particular use situation. These expectations are predictions of the nature and level of performance the user will receive. After consumption, the consumer compares perceived actual performance with expected performance. Confirmation is the result of when the two performances match. Disconfirmation arises from discrepancies between prior expectations and actual performance. There is a lack of consensus in regard to the nature of expectations involved in consumer judgment (Rodriguez del Bosque, San Martin, & Collado, 2006).

Therefore, previous studies have proposed 'predictive' expectation, 'idea' expectation, 'desired' expectation or 'experience-based norms' as comparison standards within consumer satisfaction judgment. Expectation is influenced by the past experience, and explicit and implicit service promises.

A broad review of customer satisfaction literature reveals that performance can influence customer satisfaction not only by indirect input into the disconfirmation comparison but also by direct customer observation of good and bad performance.

For example, Churchill and Surprenant (1982) demonstrated that, for the durable product tested in their study (a VCR) performance appeared to impact on customer satisfaction directly. The findings of Tse and Wilton (1988), Bolton and Drew (1991) also support this notion.

Consumer behavior literature proves that customer satisfaction has a strong effect on customer behavior intentions (e.g., Athanassopoulos, Gounaris, & Stathakopoulos, 2001; Gronholdt, Martensen, & Kristensen, 2000; Lee, Yoon, & Lee, 2007; Oliver, 1980; Olorunniwo & Hsu, 2006). Oliver (1996) discussed two categories of consequence in satisfaction, namely short-term consequence and long-term consequence. Short-term consequence includes word of mouth communication (positive or negative) and complimenting or complaining, while attitude change and loyalty is regarded as long-term consequence.

Customer loyalty is often operated by four dimensions: the intention to repurchase, intention toward cross-buying (buy another product from the same company);

intention to switch to a competitor; and intention to recommend the brand/company to other consumers (Gronholdt et al., 2000). This study focuses on the intention of the customer to repurchase. This is whereby the intention of the convention attendee is to return to the same convention organized by the same organization in the future.

2.6.5 Measurement of Satisfaction

As to the nature of measurement, convincing evidence reported by Cronin and Taylor (1992, 1994) suggests that researchers are better off when measuring perceived customer satisfaction directly instead of attempting to estimate it as a result of the gap between consumer expectations and consumer perceptions (Athanassopoulos et al., 2001).

The satisfaction construct has been operated by using a variety of measures, the scales of which have ranged from single to more elaborate and multi-dimensional. However, it remains difficult to argue how satisfaction should be best measured. The application of single measurement to overall satisfaction is very common in satisfaction research (e.g., Bowen & Chen, 2001; Um, Chon, & Ro, 2006; Yüksel and Yüksel, 2002). Respondents will usually be asked one question such as 'considering your experiences

of the product/service, how satisfied are you in general?' However, it has been argued that the single measurement of satisfaction may not be able to precisely capture this construct.

Oliver (1980) proposed a 6-item Likert scale to measure the satisfaction construct. All items are emotional in content and include references to the respondent's outright satisfaction, regret, happiness and general feelings regarding their purchase decision. This measurement scale was adopted by Olorunniwo and Hsu (2006) by reducing three items (2, 4, and 6) and adding one item, 'I feel that my experience with this bank has been enjoyable'.

Table 2.4 Oliver's (1980) Six-Item Measurement of Satisfaction

1. I am satisfied with my decision to get or not to get a flu shot.
2. If I had it to do all over again, I would feel differently about the flu shot program.
3. My choice to get or not to get a flu shot was a wise one.
4. I feel bad about my decision concerning the flu shot.
5. I think that I did the right thing when I decided to get or not to get the flu shot.
6. I am not happy that I did what I did about the flu shot.

Source: Oliver, 1980

By using the concept of service encounter, Danaher and Mattsson (1994a, 1994b) developed a model to assess the actual hotel service process and how cumulative satisfaction levels impact on each others' service encounters over time.

Table 2.5 Danaher and Mattsson's (1994) Satisfaction Measurement

Step1	
Overall satisfaction	Current satisfaction at breakfast encounter
	Current satisfaction at room encounter
Step 2	
Satisfaction after check-in encounter	Nice treatment at check-in
	Correct booking at check-in
Satisfaction after room encounter	Cosy room
	Room furniture and equipment easy to use
	Value for money for the room
Satisfaction after restaurant encounter	Value for money in the restaurant
	Nice atmosphere in the restaurant
Satisfaction after breakfast encounter	Calm atmosphere at breakfast
	Abundant and easy to get food at breakfast
Satisfaction after check-out encounter	Correct bill at check-out
	Quick check-out

Source: Danaher and Mattsson, 1994

Spreng, et al. (1996) argued, however, that overall satisfaction is a summary evaluation of the entire product use experience, not that of cumulative satisfaction. Moreover, as satisfaction involves two dimensions: valence and intensity, the measurement of satisfaction should be designed to measure both high and low-intensity reactions. Therefore, they proposed that overall satisfaction should be

measured using four 7-point scales, anchored as 'very satisfied/very dissatisfied,' 'very pleased/very displeased,' 'contented/frustrated,' and 'delighted/terrible'. Spreng et al.'s (1996) measurement is used in the present study because it captures underlying dimensions of satisfaction and is proven to have good validity and reliability.

2.7   Return Intention

2.7.1   Overview of Return Intention

The theory of reasoned action and planned behavior suggests that behavior can be predicted from intentions that correspond directly (in terms of action, target, context, and time) to that behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Considerable intention research conducted within social science demonstrates that correspondent intentions are very accurate predictors of most social behaviors when they are properly measured (Baker & Crompton, 1999; Fishbein & Manfredo, 1992).

Revisit or repurchase intention is regarded as one of the behavioral consequences of the post-consumption phase. Oliver (1996) divided the behavioral intentions into short-term intentions and long-term intentions (see Table 2.6). On the other hand,

Zeithaml et al. (1996) categorized behavioral intentions into five dimensions (see Table 2.7). Revisit or repurchase intention is a most representative dimension of customer loyalty (Gronholdt et al., 2000). Research related to customer satisfaction and behavior intention arouses much interest to both scholars and service providers alike. The reason for this huge interest is that those constructs directly relate to re-visit/purchase and financial outcome.

Table 2.6 Behavioral Intentions: Oliver, 1996

Short-term Intentions	Long-term Intentions
Word of mouth communication (positive/negative)	Attitude change
Complimenting/ complaining	Loyalty

Source: Oliver, 1996

Table 2.7 Behavioral Intentions: Zeithaml et al., 1996

Behavioral Intentions:	Loyalty
	Switch
	Pay More
	External Response
	Internal Response

Source: Zeithaml et al., 1996

2.7.2   Antecedent of Return Intention

A review of studies concerning tourist revisit intention and customer repurchase intention shows that there are different antecedents of intention within different contexts and situational settings. Most commonly researched antecedents are satisfaction, service quality, perceived performance, perceived value, past experience, destination image, destination familiarity and source of information (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Baloglu, Pekcan, Chen, & Santos, 2003; Heung, Wong, & Qu, 2002; Kashyap & Bojanic, 2000; Kozak, 2001; Lee, Graefe, & Burns, 2004; Petrick & Backman, 2002; Um, Chon & Ro, 2006).

It is universally acknowledged that satisfaction leads to repeat purchase in the post-consumption phase. Söderlund (1998) pointed out that the effects of customer satisfaction on repurchase intention are different depending on the level of satisfaction. A low degree of satisfaction may signal that the supplier should be replaced, whereas a high level of satisfaction may signal the benefits in strengthening the relationship between customer and supplier. On the other hand, an intermediate level of satisfaction may not signal a need for any practical change.

Jones and Sasser (1995) further supported this notion by arguing that the relationship is non-linear, in that it is subject to different patterns depending on the product in question. One of the patterns is in respect to the number of alternative suppliers available to the customer. They summarize that when the number of alternatives is large, such as the automobile market, the satisfaction repurchase link is strong when customers are satisfied and weak when satisfaction is low. On the other hand, when the number of alternatives is small, such as airline choice, the link is weak when customers are satisfied and strong when satisfaction is low. Nowadays, it is fairly common for potential convention attendees to have membership of various associations. This indicates that there may be several choices of conference alternatives available to attendees. Therefore, based on the above literature reviews, the author of this study proposes that when satisfied with the conference experience, attendees are more intent on returning the following year or vice versa.

This relationship is also supported by tourism research. Ross (1993) suggested that when the tourist has a more enjoyable experience than expected, he or she is more likely than others to have plans to return in the future. Research findings conducted by Juaneda (1996) in the Balearic Islands also demonstrate that positive opinions had by tourists regarding their holidays are likely to increase the probability of return.

Baker and Crompton (1999) investigated relationships between quality and satisfaction and behavior intention in relation to festival participation. The research reveals that performance quality has a significant direct effect on visitor satisfaction, while both quality and satisfaction have significant direct effects on behavioral intentions of visitors. Rust, Zahorik and Keiningham (1995) stated that customer satisfaction and service quality have a measurable impact on customer retention, market share and profitability. Petrick, Morais, and Norman (2001) examined the relationship between the intentions of holiday makers pursuing entertainment to revisit and their satisfaction with, perceived value of, and past behavior regarding the destination. The results confirmed that past behavior, satisfaction, and perceived value can be used to correctly predict their intentions to revisit the entertainment destination.

Research of the revisit intention also addresses the relationship between destination image and revisit intention. Bigné, Sánchez and Sánchez (2001) investigated the relationship between tourism image, perceived quality, satisfaction and intention to return. The study was carried out in two major Spanish tourism towns in the Valencia region. The analysis indicates that destination image has a positive effect on behavioral variables as well as the evaluation variables.

The empirical study conducted by Court and Lupton (1997) regarding the image of

New Mexico also confirms this relationship. Therefore, the revisit intention of tourists

could be enhanced by improvement to the overall image of a place.

While the major stream of studies concerning the intention to revisit a destination

pays a lot of attention to past experience and satisfaction and service quality, they tend

to ignore the systematic effects of constructs on revisit intention, such as

attractiveness and customer value (Um et al., 2006). Um et al. (2006) proposed a

model of evaluation constructs including satisfaction, perceived attractiveness,

perceived quality of service, perceived value for money, and revisit intention. They

examined the relative weights of evaluation constructs affecting revisit intentions to

Hong Kong as a leisure destination by tourists.

The research findings indicate that perceived attractiveness is the strongest indicator

of satisfaction as well as the most influential antecedent of revisit intention. Perceived

value for money is found to be a significant predictor of both revisit intention and

satisfaction. However, perceived quality does not significantly affect revisit intention

although it is a very important antecedent of satisfaction.

In sum, the antecedents regarding intention to repurchase a product or revisit a destination could be different within a different context. There are some constructs universally acknowledged as having a significant influence on repurchase or revisit intention, such as satisfaction or past experience. Therefore, a careful examination of different combinations of constructs to suit the particular context of convention tourism is critical in need.

2.7.3   Measurement of Return Intention

Although some scholars argue that multiple-item measurement would be more effective from a psychometric perspective (Conner & Sparks, 1996), a direct measurement of return intention with a single question 'I intend to ….' is widely used in both consumer behavior literature and tourism literature (e.g., Baker & Crompton, 1999; George & George, 2004; Hui, Wan, & Ho, 2007; Petrick et al., 2001; Kozark, 2001; Rittichainuwat, Qu, & Mongknonvanit, 2002; Tsiotsou, 2006; Um et al., 2006) . Therefore, this single-scale measurement is adopted in the current study.

2.8 Summary

In this chapter, the author carefully reviewed previous studies concerning the perspective of convention attendees in relation to convention tourism. The review suggested that the topic of satisfaction and return intention of convention attendees is under-researched. Therefore, it provides a substantial research gap for the current study to fill.

Moreover, the constructs of perceived performance, perceived attractiveness, perceived value and satisfaction and return intention, were extensively discussed. This forms the conceptual framework of the study. To provide this research with a solid theoretical foundation, the author summarized existing literature regarding definition, dimensions, antecedents and consequences, and measurement of each construct. The review showed that perceived performance, perceived attractiveness and perceived value, have been studied individually as antecedents of customer satisfaction and return intention. Nevertheless, there is no research available that has investigated the relationship between those constructs within the convention tourism context. Therefore, the current study aims to give new direction to convention tourism research by exploring factors that influence the satisfaction and return intention of convention attendees.

Chapter 3   Methodology

3.1   Introduction

Methodological issues are discussed in this chapter. Firstly, the research design

provides the fundamental base and outline of the current study, followed by the unit of

analysis, time dimension and essential research procedures. Thereafter, research

hypotheses are established for testing. Following this section, the author further

discusses the instrument development of all constructs of interest for data collection.

Finally, the pilot study results are discussed followed by the description of data

collection procedures and data analysis techniques.

3.2   Research Design

According to de Vaus (2001, p9), 'the function of research design is to ensure that the

evidence obtained enables us to answer the initial question as unambiguously as

possible'.

The purpose of this study, from the perspective of convention attendees, is to understand the relationships between perceived convention performance, perceived destination attractiveness, perceived value for money and satisfaction and return intentions. Bordens and Abbott (2002, p.130) suggested that ''when the researcher is interested in delineating the important variables associated with the problem, it is called a correlative, that is explanatory, study'. Therefore, the current study is explanatory in nature. In order to probe the relationships between the research constructs, survey data will be collected and used to empirically test the proposed model.

3.2.1 The Unit of Analysis

Sekaran (2000) suggested that it is crucial for researchers to decide on the unit of analysis as it guides the data collection methods, sample size, and even the variables included in the framework. The unit of analysis is defined as 'the level of aggregation of data collected during the subsequent data analysis stage' which comprises five levels, namely individuals, groups, organizations, industry, and country (Sekaran, 2000).

As the current study focuses on the evaluation of convention experience and return intention of convention attendees, data is gathered from each individual and the response from each attendee is treated as an individual data source.

3.2.2   The Time Dimension

Research can be divided into two groups regarding time dimension: cross-sectional and longitudinal studies. According to McTavish and Loether (2002, p84-85), 'a cross-sectional study is one in which data is collected at one point in time and an answer to the research question applies only to the phenomenon at the particular time it is studied'. On the other hand, 'a longitudinal study involves data collection at different points in time in order to answer the research question of how the phenomenon evolves rather than to determine the state of the phenomenon at one point in time'. Therefore, the current study is cross-sectional in that it collects data at one point in time and measures differences between groups rather than change.

Figure 3.1 Essential Research Procedures

Step 1
Take a comprehensive review of existing literature to specify the domain of constructs: Perceived Performance, Perceived Attractiveness, Perceived Value for Money, Satisfaction, and Return Intention

Step 2
Formulate a well-structured theoretical framework concerning linkage between constructs of interests

Step 3
Generate certain hypotheses to test conjectural correlations

Step 4
Develop research instrument and design questionnaire

Step 5
Conduct pilot study to test the length, format, clarity, and scale reliability of questionnaire

Step 6
Pilot study analysis and finalize the questionnaire

Step 7
Data collection for the main study

Step 8
Data Analysis by using Multiple Regression

Step 9
Deduce the study and apply findings both theoretically and practically

3.3 Research Hypotheses

Previous studies show that the constructs of perceived performance, perceived attractiveness, perceived value and consumer satisfaction, are individually related to the intention of the consumer to repurchase a product or intention of the tourist to revisit a tourist destination. However, the relationships between intention to return to the conference and satisfaction, perceived performance, perceived attractiveness and perceived value, receive little attention by convention attendees. The purpose of this study is to examine this group of relationships based on literature discussed in chapter 2, of which the conceptual framework and hypothesis are provided as below.

Figure 3.2 Conceptual Framework
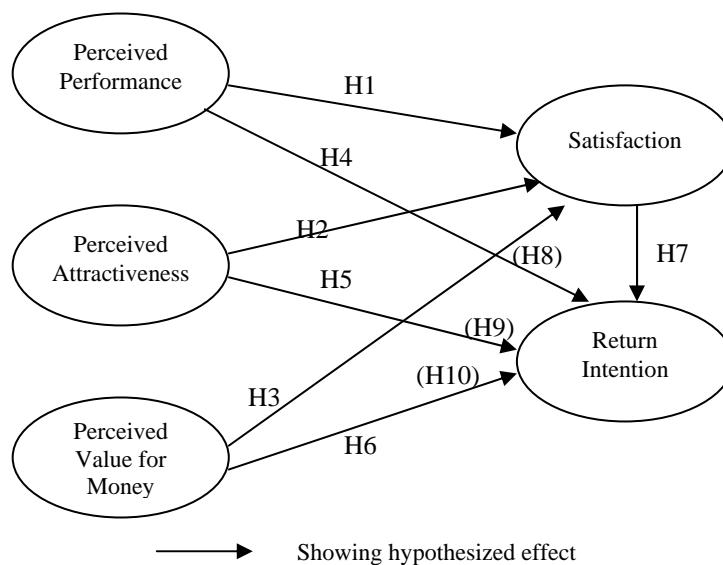
Research Hypotheses:

H1: Perceived performance of a convention has a direct positive effect on convention attendees' satisfaction of convention experience.

H2: Perceived attractiveness of a convention destination has a direct positive effect on convention attendees' satisfaction of convention experience.

H3: Perceived value for money of the total cost of attending a convention has a direct positive effect on convention attendees' satisfaction of convention experience.

H4: Perceived performance of a convention has a direct positive effect on convention attendees' return intention.

H5: Perceived attractiveness of convention destination has a direct positive effect on convention attendees' return intention.

H6: Perceived value for money of the total cost of attending a convention has a direct positive effect on convention attendees' return intention.

H7: Convention attendees' satisfaction of convention experience has a direct positive effect on their return intention.

H8: Perceived performance of a convention has an indirect positive effect on convention attendees' return intention, mediated by satisfaction.

H9: Perceived attractiveness of convention destination has an indirect positive effect on convention attendees' return intention, mediated by satisfaction.

H10: Perceived value for money of the total cost of attending a convention has an indirect positive effect on convention attendees' return intention, mediated by satisfaction.

3.4   Instrument Development

A preliminary version of the questionnaire using three sections was designed to measure all constructs. Section I includes measurements of perceived performance, perceived attractiveness and perceived value for money. Section II includes measurements of satisfaction and return intention. Section III includes questions

which aim to obtain demographic profiles of the respondents. Items within the preliminary questionnaire were subjected to further modification after the pilot study.

3.4.1 Measurement of Perceived Performance

Attributes of convention performance are derived from Yoo's (2005) scale of the association convention participation decision-making process, which is confirmed to have good reliability and validity. In Yoo's scale, a total of 17 items were identified to influence the convention participation decision-making process. This scale measures five dimensions of the decision-making process: *destination stimuli, networking opportunities, educational opportunities, safety & health situation, and ease of travel,* therefore the current study has only selected items concerning the convention perspective to measure convention performance. Items 1, 2, 3, 12, and 13 are related to destination, while items 14, 15, 16, and 17 are personal constraints not related to convention performance. As a result, eight items (items 4 to 11, presented in Table 3.1), closely relating to convention performance were extracted from Yoo's scale to measure convention performance. The items were assessed using the 7-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree.

Table 3.1 Yoo's Scale of Association Convention Participation Decision-Making
Process

1. Opportunities to visit the convention destination
2. Extra opportunities available at the destination
3. Attractive image of the destination
4. Seeing people I know in my field
5. Personal interactions with colleagues and friends
6. Developing professional network
7. Involvement with the association
8. Keeping up with changes in my profession
9. Listening to respected speakers
10. Topic of the convention
11. Fulfill my desire to learn
12. Safety/security situation at the convention destination
13. Hygiene standards at the convention destination
14. My health conditions for travel
15. Time required to travel to the convention destination
16. Total cost of attending the convention
17. My personal financial situation

Source: Yoo, 2005

3.4.2 Measurement of Perceived Attractiveness

In both tourism and convention literature, destination attractiveness is usually measured based on the evaluation of destination attributes. Therefore, the current study followed this approach. A comprehensive review of literature studying convention destination attributes from the perspective of convention attendees, unveiled five main attributes.

These were city image, leisure opportunities (sightseeing, shopping, dining, and entertainment) available at the destination, accessibility, climate and safety (e.g., Grant and Oppermann, 1995; Lee & Back, 2007a; Ngamson & Beck, 2000).

In this study, perceived attractiveness was measured by a 7-item Likert scale which ranges from 1= strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree.

Table 3.2 Perceived Attractiveness Scale

The conference destination is very attractive
The conference destination has a safe environment
The conference destination has offered me good sightseeing opportunities
The conference destination has offered me good shopping opportunities
The conference destination has offered me good dining and entertainment opportunities
The conference destination has been highly accessible
The climate of the conference destination during the conference was very good

3.4.3   Measurement of Perceived Value for Money

The literature review revealed that the perceived value for money construct is very often measured by a single-item scale which asks the respondent to rate the 'value for money' of that product or service.

However, the limitation of the single-item scale, being unable to capture the perceived value construct has been recognized (e.g., Oh, 1999; Al-Sabbahy et al., 2004). Hence, the current study used four items of the 'value for money' scale under PERVAL, developed by Sweeney and Soutar (2001) to measure the perceived value for money construct. The 7-point Likert Scale, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree was adopted.

Table 3.3 Perceived Value for Money scale

1. is reasonably priced
2. offers value for money
3. is a good product for the price
4. would be economical

Source: Sweeney and Soutar, 2001

3.4.4 Measurement of Satisfaction

Satisfaction is usually measured directly by a single-item scale ranging from 'very dissatisfied' to 'very satisfied', (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). However, Baker and Crompton (2000) argued that a multi-item scale for measuring satisfaction might be more effective. The current study adopted a 3-item semantic differential scale derived from the study conducted by Spreng et al. (1996). Spreng et al.'s scale has been widely cited because of the ability to capture underlying dimensions of satisfaction.

The original four sets of bi-polar terms are 'very satisfied/very dissatisfied', 'very pleased/very displeased', 'contented/frustrated', and 'delighted/terrible'. In the current study, the first three sets of terms were adopted and arranged into a 7-point Likert Scale.

3.4.5   Measurement of Return Intention

As a widely acknowledged measurement of return intention, a direct measurement with a single item such as 'I intend to attend this convention again' was adopted in the current study.

3.4.6   Measurement of Respondents' Demographic Profile

As is common practice, the demographic profile of respondents is always included in the last part of a questionnaire. It provides researchers with valuable information regarding the study group. Within some research, demographic variables even serve as constructs of interest. In this study, questions to respondents covering gender, age, nationality, professional career, membership of association, frequency of attending conventions and funding, were listed in this section of the questionnaire.

3.5   Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted before the main stage of data collection for two purposes. First of all, the pilot study helps fine-tune the survey instrument by testing the length, format, clarity and scale of reliability, of the questionnaire. Furthermore, it attempts to test the self-developed online survey system.   This was designed using Dreamweaver CS3 software to ensure fluent application of the survey system at the main data collection stage.

The pilot study was administered to attendees of the 2008 International Convention & Expo Summit which was held on 12-14th February in Singapore. Martin (1994) stated that survey participants having a high interest were almost twice more likely to respond to a particular questionnaire than those with low interest.   As the topic of 2008 ICES was that of convention tourism, an assumption was formed that conference attendees were more likely to have a high interest in this study topic, therefore more willing to help and give suggestions due to its relevance to them. To increase the response rate, survey questionnaires were distributed and collected both on site and online. The response rate was 58% (44 out of 76). Out of all returned questionnaires, 20 were collected on site while 24 were received by the online survey system. The

screening of pilot study data revealed the problem of missing values, particularly by

questionnaires received through the online survey system. Therefore, at the later stage

of data collection for the main study, a 'check' function was added to the online

survey system to avoid the problem of missing values.

After data screening, reliability analysis was conducted to measure the internal

consistency and dependency of the measurement scale. Results of the reliability

analysis are summarized in Table 3.4.

This Table shows that Cronbach's alpha for researched constructs were .884 for

perceived performance, .938 for perceived value, .848 for perceived attractiveness

and .864 for satisfaction. Cronbach's alphas were all above .80, which showed

satisfactory levels of internal consistency to the measurement scales. In addition,

Cronbach's alphas were all greater than corresponding alphas if all items were deleted,

except the value of item 1 (.912>.864) of the satisfaction construct. A value which is

greater than the overall alpha suggests that the deletion of that item improves

reliability. However, this value is slightly influenced by the sample size (Field, 2005).

Due to the small sample size used for the pilot study, the author decided not to delete

item 1. The reason for this is that it has been comprehensively used to measure

satisfaction within the literature reviewed, therefore another reliability analysis would need to be conducted on the data set collected for the main study. The value of Corrected Item-Total Correlation indicates that the relationship between each item, total measurement scale and a reliable scale requires that all items correlate with the total. Field (2005) suggested that the value of the correlation coefficient above .3 is considered to be acceptable. Table 3.4 shows that all correlation coefficients were above .3 which thus supported the reliability of the measurement scale.

Table 3.4 Reliability of Measurement of Major Constructs in Pilot Test

Item	Description	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted	Cronbach's Alpha
	Perceived Performance			**.884**
PP1	I have been able to see people I know in my field during the conference	.624	.872	
PP2	The conference has enabled me to interact with colleagues and friends	.625	.872	
PP3	The conference has offered me opportunity to develop my professional network	.731	.861	
PP4	The conference has enhanced my involvement with the host organization	.665	.868	
PP5	The conference has enabled me to keep up with changes in my profession	.559	.878	
PP6	I have been able to listen to respected speakers during the conference	.630	.871	
PP7	The topic of the conference was relevant to me	.718	.862	
PP8	Attending the conference has fulfilled my desire to learn	.660	.868	

Table 3.4 Continued

Item	Description	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted	Cronbach's Alpha
	Perceived Value			**.938**
PV1	The conference registration fee was reasonably priced	.761	.948	
PV2	The total cost (including registration fee, transportation, and accommodation) of participating in the conference was value for money	.930	.893	
PV3	The conference was a good value for money	.887	.910	
PV4	The total cost of participating in the conference was economical	.843	.922	
	Perceive Attractiveness			**.848**
PA1	The conference destination is very attractive	.503	.842	
PA2	The conference destination has a safe environment	.448	.847	
PA3	The conference destination has offered me good sightseeing opportunities	.646	.821	
PA4	The conference destination has offered me good shopping opportunities	.683	.817	
PA5	The conference destination has offered me good dining and entertainment opportunities	.758	.801	
PA6	The conference destination has been highly accessible	.752	.807	
PA7	The climate of the conference destination during the conference was very good	.502	.843	
	Satisfaction			**.864**
S1	Very Dissatisfied --- Very Satisfied	.649	**.912**	
S2	Very Displeased --- Very Pleased	.788	.767	
S3	Very Frustrated --- Very Content	.816	.754	

Furthermore, based on comments and suggestions from respondents, the survey instrument was finalized for the main stage of data collection.

3.6   Data Collection Procedure

3.6.1   Sample Selection for the Main Study

The attendees of two conferences, the Council for Australian University Tourism and Hospitality Education (CAUTHE) 2008 Conference and the Seventh Asia Pacific Forum for Graduate Students' Research in Tourism (APF), were selected as samples for the main study. Another noteworthy issue in the sample selection process is sample size. There is in general no correct sample in the absolute sense of the matter. Some researchers suggest that larger samples are always preferable (Charreire & Durieux, 2001). Others, however, argue that a large sample is no guarantee of accuracy (Balnaves & Caputi, 2001). Too large a sample will imply a waste of resources; too small a sample is likely to produce an estimator of inadequate precision (Barnett, 2002). As multiple regression analysis was used in the current study, the sample size was decided based on the requirement of different tests of multiple regression analysis. The number of cases is associated to the number of independent

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variables in the regression model. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2001, p117), a rule of thumb for testing b coefficients is to have N >= 104 + m, where m = number of independent variables. Another popular rule of thumb is that there must be at least 20 times as many cases as independent variables. A rule of thumb for testing R-square is N >= 50 + 8*m. Where m>=N, regression gives a meaningless solution with R=square = 1.0. In general, a larger N is needed when the dependent variable is skewed. In the current study, four independent variables are identified and therefore more than 108 cases should be collected. The current study therefore aimed to collect a usable sample size of 120.

3.6.2   Data Collection for the Main Study

The survey instrument was administered to reach the target sample by using the self-developed online system located on the website of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. There are two reasons for using the self-developed online survey system as the data collection tool. Firstly, international conference participants usually come from all over the world. Therefore, the online survey which is in operation 24 hours a day seven days a week, can sharply reduce the cost of data collection and reach the target sample much faster than that of the conventional mail type survey. Secondly, a

self-developed online survey system grants the author more control over the system and therefore can better protect the privacy of respondents compared to other solutions provided by online survey agencies. To enhance the response rate, the respondents were offered an incentive in that 'US$1 will be donated to one of the following three charities (Care for Children, Health Unlimited, and World Wide Fund for Nature) of his or her choice for each returned and completed questionnaire.'

The permissions to conduct survey research and attendees' email addresses of both conferences were obtained from the organizers after the conferences were completed. 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.

Data collection for the main study started in late May to mid July of 2008. After receiving the email addresses of attendees from convention organizers, an invitation email was sent out to each one to request his or her participation in the survey. This invitation email included information regarding the research objective, instruction of survey, incentive for contribution, confidential assurance of data and author contact details. The URL link was also included in the email to direct the respondents to the

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designed online survey system. One week after the first invitation email, another

reminder email was sent out to all attendees. Data collection attained response rates of

50.7% (109 out of 215) from the CAUTHE 2008 conference and 52.2% (47 out of 90)

from the APF 2008. As a result, a total of 156 usable questionnaires were collected in

readiness for data analysis.

3.7   Data Analysis

To achieve the research objectives of this study, multiple regression analysis was used

for data analysis.

Multiple regression analysis can establish the fact that a set of independent variables

can explain a proportion of the variance in a dependent variable at a significant level

(through a significance test of R^2), and can establish the relative predictive importance

of independent variables (by comparing beta weights).

3.7.1   Data Screening

Prior to formal analysis, data collected from the two conferences were screened to ensure the appropriateness for further analysis. All variables within the survey instrument were measured by the 7-point Likert scale. A summary of descriptive statistics showed that all variables, with the exception of the demographic variables, had 156 valid observations ranging from 1 to 7, which indicated that the data set had no problems regarding missing value or outliers.

Among the demographic variables, question 6 (How many professional associations in your field are you a member of?) and question 8 (On average, how many conferences do you attend per year?) were re-coded to those answers from previously open-ended questions. Answers were categorized as '0, 1-2, 3-4, and 5 or above' and 'Rarely, 1-2, 3-4, 5 or above' for questions 6 and 8 respectively.

3.7.2   Method of Regression

The stepwise method was adopted for multiple regression analysis. There are two methods used within stepwise regression, namely the forward method and the backward method. According to Field (2005), the backward method is preferable to

the forward method due to the suppressor effects. In other words, the forward method

runs a higher risk of missing a predictor that actually predicts the outcome. Therefore,

the backward method was used for regression analysis.   This is achieved by entering

all predictors of the model onto the computer and thereafter calculating the

contribution of each predictor by examining the significance value of the t-test. If a

predictor meets the removal criterion, it will be removed and the model will be

re-estimated using the remaining predictors.

Based on the proposed model and hypotheses, two regression models were generated

for hypotheses testing.   These are Regression Model I and H1, H2, and H3.

Figure 3.3 Regression Model I

Showing hypothesized effect
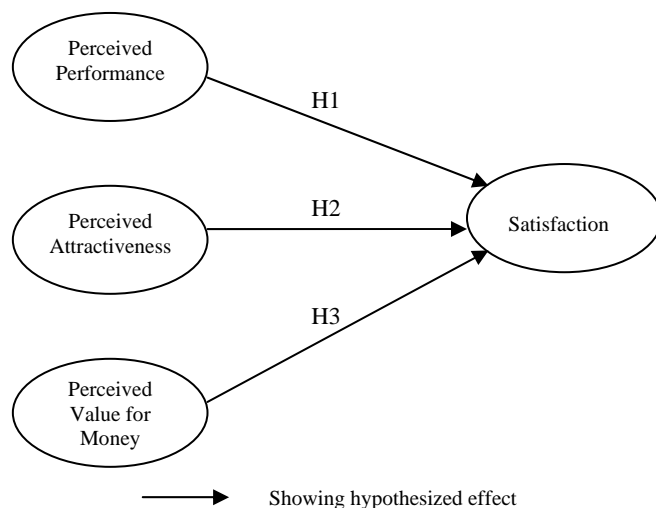
Regression Model I was to test H1, H2 and H3 and investigate the relative impact of

perceived performance, perceived attractiveness and perceived value for money on the

satisfaction of convention attendees. In this model, perceived performance, perceived

attractiveness and perceived value for money were included as independent variables

and satisfaction as the dependent variable. The regression equation is expressed in the

following format:

$$S = a + b1 (PP) + b2 (PA) + b3 (PV)$$
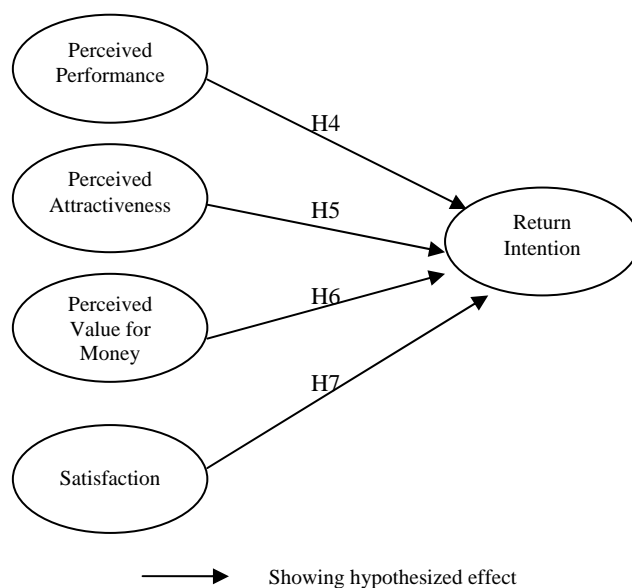

Where, S is the satisfaction of convention attendees

a is a constant term

b1, b2, and b3 are standardized regression coefficients for PP, PA, and PV respectively

PP, PA, and PV are perceived performance, perceived attractiveness and perceived value for money, respectively.

Regression Model II and H4, H5, H6, and H7

Figure 3.4 Regression Model II

Showing hypothesized effect

Regression Model II was to test H4, H5, H6, and H7 by investigating the relative impact of perceived performance, perceived attractiveness, perceived value for money and satisfaction on the return intention by convention attendees. In this model, perceived performance, perceived attractiveness, perceived value for money and satisfaction were independent variables, while the dependent variable was the return intention by convention attendees.

The regression equation is expressed in the following format:

$$RI = a + b_1 (PP) + b_2 (PA) + b_3 (PV) + b_4 (S)$$

Where, RI is the return intention by convention attendees
a is a constant term
b_1, b_2, b_3, and b_4 are standardized regression coefficients for PP, PA, PV, and S respectively
PP, PA, PV, and S are perceived performance, perceived attractiveness, perceived value for money and satisfaction of convention attendees, respectively.

H8, H9, and H10

In respect to testing the mediating role of satisfaction by convention attendees, the current study adopted the method suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986) which has been comprehensively applied in behavioral research. Baron and Kenny (1986)

suggested that three regression equations should be estimated in order to test for mediation: first, regressing the mediator on the independent variable; second, regressing the dependent variable on the independent variable; and third, regressing the dependent variable on both the independent variable and mediator. Separate coefficients for each equation were estimated and tested.

3.8   Summary

In sum, the current study aimed to investigate the relationship between constructs of interests: perceived performance, perceived attractiveness, perceived value for money, satisfaction and return intention. To achieve this purpose, the author employed a positivist approach through the implementation of a cross-sectional quantitative method. Attendees of the CAUTHE 2008 Conference and the Seventh APF for Graduate Students' Research in Tourism were selected as the target sample for data collection. A self-developed online survey system was used to collect data. The gathered data was analyzed statistically by the use of multiple regression analysis based on which the findings and discussion could be addressed.

Chapter 4   Results

4.1   Demographic Profile of Respondent

Descriptive statistics were used to profile the demographic characteristic of the respondents which are summarized in Table 4.1. The number of female respondents is equal to the number of male respondents. Around 95% of respondents were between 21 and 60 years of age, with an even spread of ages across the four decades between them. The respondents came from 27 countries, living in 19 countries and cities in Asia, Europe, North America, and Australia. As both target conferences were those of associations, the primary professions of participants were educator (53.2%) and student (41.0%), along with a small amount of industry and other professionals (5.8%). In terms of association membership, around half of respondents were members of one or two international associations, while more than one fifth held three to four different association memberships. When asked when they first attended an international conference, most respondents (84%) were found to have participated after 1990. In terms of the number of conferences attended each year, more than half of respondents (63.5%) attended one or two per year, while a quarter of respondents (25%) usually participated in three to four each year.

Not surprisingly, around half of respondents (49.4%) received full financial support

by their organizations, while nearly 40% were partially funded. Only 12.2% of

respondents paid their own conference fee and travel costs.

Table 4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Characteristic	Valid N	Percentage
Gender (Valid N = 156)		
Male	78	50
Female	78	50
Age (Valid N = 156)		
21-30	42	26.9
31-40	43	27.6
41-50	29	18.6
51-60	34	21.8
61 or above	8	5.1
Nationality (Valid N = 156)		
Afghanistan	1	.6
American	4	2.6
Australian	59	37.8
Bangladeshi	1	.6
Bhutanese	2	1.3
British	20	12.8
Bulgarian	1	.6
Burmese	1	.6
Canadian	1	.6
Chinese	12	7.7
Dutch	3	1.9
Finish	1	.6
German	3	1.9

Table 4.1 Continued

Irish	1	.6
Italian	1	.6
Japanese	1	.6
Malaysian	8	5.1
Maldivian	1	.6
New Zealander	4	2.6
Norwegian	1	.6
Scottish	2	1.3
South Korean	3	1.9
Sri Lankan	2	1.3
Swiss	2	1.3
Taiwanese	9	5.8
Thai	9	5.8
Vietnamese	2	1.3
Others	1	.6
City/ Country of Residence (Valid N = 156)		
Australia	73	46.8
China	3	1.9
Hong Kong SAR	12	7.7
Japan	1	.6
Macau SAR	3	1.9
Malaysia	7	4.5
Myanmar	1	.6
New Zealand	6	3.8
Norway	1	.6
Scotland	2	1.3
South Korea	2	1.3
Sri Lanka	2	1.3
Switzerland	2	1.3
Taiwan	9	5.8
Thailand	15	9.6
The Netherlands	2	1.3
UK	11	7.1
United Arab Emirates	1	.6
USA	3	1.9

Table 4.1 Continued

Primary Profession (Valid N = 156)		
Educator	83	53.2
Student	64	41.0
Industry Professional	5	3.2
Other	4	2.6
Association Membership		
None	31	19.9
1-2	77	49.4
3-4	35	22.4
5 or above	13	8.3
Time to Attend First International conference (Valid N = 156)		
Before 1970	2	1.3
1970 - 1979	4	2.6
1980 – 1989	19	12.2
1990 – 1999	34	21.8
2000 – 2008	97	62.2
Time to Attend First International conference (Valid N = 156)		
Before 1970	2	1.3
1970 - 1979	4	2.6
1980 – 1989	19	12.2
1990 – 1999	34	21.8
2000 – 2008	97	62.2
Average No. of Conference Attended per Year (Valid N = 156)		
Rarely	9	5.8
1-2	99	63.5
3-4	39	25.0
5 or above	9	5.8
Financial Resource (Valid N = 156)		
Fully paid by myself	19	12.2
Fully paid by my organization	77	49.4
Partially paid by myself and partially paid by my organization	60	38.5

4.2   Measurement of Constructs

4.2.1   Factor Analysis

To have a better understanding of the structure of constructs and overcome multicollinearity problems in later regression analysis, principal component analysis with VARIMAX Rotation was conducted at this stage upon perceived performance, perceived attractiveness, perceived value and satisfaction. According to Kaiser's suggestion (1960), all factors with values greater than 1 were retained. Another rule of thumb suggests that items with a loading below .40 on any factor and items with a .40 or higher loading on multiple factors should be removed.

Five extracted factors, which explained 75.70% of the total variance, were identified by the principal component analysis without deleting any item. Item 'the conference has offered me an opportunity to develop my professional network' loaded onto two factors had a factor loading of .411 and .737 respectively. As these two factors were that of dimensions of perceived performance, the above mentioned item was retained. The Kaiser-Meryer-Olkin Measure (KMO) of sampling adequacy was .888 which was great.

The chi-square value of Bartlett's test of sphericity was 2683.173 and highly significant (p < .001). As a result, a confident conclusion was reached in that factor analysis was appropriate for this data. Factor analysis confirmed that there were two dimensions of perceived performance, namely Education and Network. Meanwhile, perceived attractiveness, perceived value and satisfaction were one-dimensional. Each item successfully loaded onto corresponding factors which indicated that the measurement scale of each construct had a different dimension. Therefore, multicollinearity would not be a problem for future multiple regression analysis.

Table 4.2 Exploratory Factor Analysis of Predicting Constructs

Factor/Item	Loading	Eigen-value	Variance Explained (%)
Factor 1: Perceived Attractiveness		**4.217**	**19.167**
PA1: The conference destination is very attractive	.814		
PA3: The conference destination has offered me good sightseeing opportunities	.786		
PA5: The conference destination has offered me good dining and entertainment opportunities	.765		
PA4: The conference destination has offered me good shopping opportunities	.729		
PA6: The conference destination has been highly accessible	.708		
PA2: The conference destination has a safe environment	.701		
PA7: The climate of the conference destination during the conference was very good	.573		

Table 4.2.1 Continued

Factor 2: Perceived Performance – Education		**3.784**	**17.201**
PP7: The topic of the conference was relevant to me	.842		
PP8: Attending the conference has fulfilled my desire to learn	.829		
PP5: The conference has enabled me to keep up with changes in my profession	.804		
PP6: I have been able to listen to respected speakers during the conference	.760		
PP4: The conference has enhanced my involvement with the host organization	.646		
Factor 3: Perceived Value		**3.454**	**15.698**
PV4: The total cost of participating in the conference was economical	.897		
PV1: The conference registration fee was reasonably priced	.886		
PV3: The conference was a good value for money	.824		
PV2: The total cost (including registration fee, transportation, and accommodation) of participating in the conference was value for money	.813		
Factor 4: Satisfaction		**2.629**	**11.949**
S1: Very Dissatisfied --- Very Satisfied	.831		
S3: Very Frustrated --- Very Content	.800		
S2: Very Displeased --- Very Pleased	.789		
Factor 5: Perceived Performance – Network		**2.571**	**11.686**
PP2: The conference has enabled me to interact with colleagues and friends	.869		
PP1: I have been able to see people I know in my field during the conference	.863		
PP3: The conference has offered me opportunity to develop my professional network	.737		
Total			**75.701**

KMO = .888

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: Chi-square = 2683.173, $p < .001$

4.2.2 Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis was conducted on the data set again, to test the internal consistency and dependency of the measurement scale. The results of the reliability analysis are summarized in Table 4.3. As shown in this Table, Cronbach's alpha for researched constructs were .895 for perceived performance, .937 for perceived value, .879 for perceived attractiveness and .947 for satisfaction. Cronbach's alphas were all above .80 which showed a satisfactory level of internal consistency to the measurement scales. Furthermore, Cronbach's alphas were all greater than those corresponding Alphas if Item Deleted including the value of item 1 (.940<.947) within the satisfaction construct. By not deleting that item for the pilot study, it proved to be the right decision. The values of Corrected Item-Total Correlation were all above .3 which supported the reliability of the measurement scale.

Table 4.3 Reliability of Measurement of Major Constructs in Main Study

Item	Description	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted	Cronbach's Alpha
	Perceived Performance			**.895**
PP1	I have been able to see people I know in my field during the conference	.573	.891	
PP2	The conference has enabled me to interact with colleagues and friends	.600	.889	

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Table 4.3 Continued

PP3	The conference has offered me opportunity to develop my professional network	.698	.881
PP4	The conference has enhanced my involvement with the host organization	.698	.880
PP5	The conference has enabled me to keep up with changes in my profession	.742	.876
PP6	I have been able to listen to respected speakers during the conference	.728	.878
PP7	The topic of the conference was relevant to me	.703	.879
PP8	Attending the conference has fulfilled my desire to learn	.688	.881
	Perceived Value			**.937**
PV1	The conference registration fee was reasonably priced	.811	.931
PV2	The total cost (including registration fee, transportation, and accommodation) of participating in the conference was value for money	.845	.920
PV3	The conference was a good value for money	.877	.910
PV4	The total cost of participating in the conference was economical	.873	.911
	Perceive Attractiveness			**.879**
PA1	The conference destination is very attractive	.727	.853
PA2	The conference destination has a safe environment	.596	.871
PA3	The conference destination has offered me good sightseeing opportunities	.726	.853
PA4	The conference destination has offered me good shopping opportunities	.702	.858
PA5	The conference destination has offered me good dining and entertainment opportunities	.717	.855
PA6	The conference destination has been highly accessible	.679	.860
PA7	The climate of the conference destination during the conference was very good	.526	.881

<center>Table 4.3 Continued</center>

Satisfaction			**.947**
S1	Very Dissatisfied --- Very Satisfied	.868	.940
S2	Very Displeased --- Very Pleased	.905	.912
S3	Very Frustrated --- Very Content	.898	.917

4.2.3 Descriptive Statistics of Each Construct

Descriptive Statistics were calculated for the items by measuring each construct using SPSS. Means and standard deviations are reported in Table 4.4. Three items used to measure network dimension of perceived performance were all above 5, suggesting that respondents generally enjoyed the network function of the conference. Meanwhile, items in the education dimension of perceived performance received mean values from 4.46 (PP4) to 5.27 (PP6), which were slightly below the network dimension. Items measuring the perceived value had almost the lowest mean scores, being around 4 for all items. This may suggest that monetary value of the conference received neither good nor bad evaluation. The mean score of items measuring the perceived attractiveness varied from 3.72 (PA4) to 5.54 (PA2), while satisfaction had the most consistent mean scores (3.13, 3.14, 3.15). The highest mean score belonged to return intention. Generally speaking, the standard deviations of all items were relatively high which indicated a varied level of conference experience held by each participant.

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There is one possible reason to explain this phenomenon. The nature of the conference experience is really interactive and highly involved. The motivation of attendees to participate in a conference along with their feedback, generally predicted their way of behavior and evaluation. Therefore, unlike usual products, evaluation of conference experiences varied to a large degree.

Table 4.4 Means and Standard Deviations of Items Measuring Each Construct

Item	Description	Mean [a]	Std. Deviation
	Perceived Performance		
PP1	I have been able to see people I know in my field during the conference	5.54	1.379
PP2	The conference has enabled me to interact with colleagues and friends	5.85	1.325
PP3	The conference has offered me opportunity to develop my professional network	5.43	1.260
PP4	The conference has enhanced my involvement with the host organization	4.46	1.651
PP5	The conference has enabled me to keep up with changes in my profession	4.61	1.430
PP6	I have been able to listen to respected speakers during the conference	5.27	1.292
PP7	The topic of the conference was relevant to me	4.87	1.486
PP8	Attending the conference has fulfilled my desire to learn	4.47	1.636
	Perceived Value		
PV1	The conference registration fee was reasonably priced	4.10	1.603

Table 4.4 Continued

PV2	The total cost (including registration fee, transportation, and accommodation) of participating in the conference was value for money	4.19	1.524
PV3	The conference was a good value for money	4.12	1.528
PV4	The total cost of participating in the conference was economical	3.85	1.579

Perceived Attractiveness

PA1	The conference destination is very attractive	4.60	1.799
PA2	The conference destination has a safe environment	5.54	1.302
PA3	The conference destination has offered me good sightseeing opportunities	4.24	1.709
PA4	The conference destination has offered me good shopping opportunities	3.72	1.498
PA5	The conference destination has offered me good dining and entertainment opportunities	4.34	1.596
PA6	The conference destination has been highly accessible	4.74	1.619
PA7	The climate of the conference destination during the conference was very good	4.22	1.773

Satisfaction

S1	Very Dissatisfied --- Very Satisfied	5.15	1.301
S2	Very Displeased --- Very Pleased	5.13	1.357
S3	Very Frustrated --- Very Content	5.14	1.341

Return Intention

| RI | I intend to attend this conference again in the future | 5.64 | 1.180 |

[a] Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree

4.3   Assessment of the Assumptions of Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis is associated with several assumptions that must be met to produce reliable results. Failure to meet the assumptions may result in overestimation or underestimation of significance or affect size. Therefore, several analyses were conducted to assess the assumptions of both regression models.

Normality of Residuals

Assumption of normality of residuals means that the differences between the model and the observed data are most frequently zero or very close to zero, and that differences much greater than zero happen only occasionally (Field, 2005). The histogram of regression standardized the residual and normal probability plot and were produced and examined to assess this assumption (Figure 4.1). A visual inspection of the histograms of both models showed that they appeared to be of normal distribution. The normal plotting of both models revealed that the most observed residuals lay on the line or very close to the line. As a result, the conclusion can be made that the assumption of normality of residuals was met within the two regression models.

Figure 4.1 Histograms and Normal P-P plots of Regression Standardized Residual of

Model I (left-hand side) and Model II (right-hand side)

Regression Model I   Regression Model II

Dependent Variable: Satisfaction

Mean =5.95E-16
Std. Dev. =0.99
N =156

Dependent Variable: Return Intention

Mean =-6.04E-16
Std. Dev. =0.994
N =156

Dependent Variable: Satisfaction

Dependent Variable: Return Intention
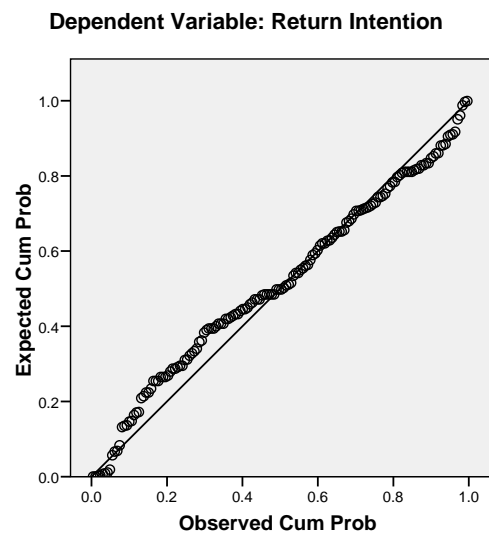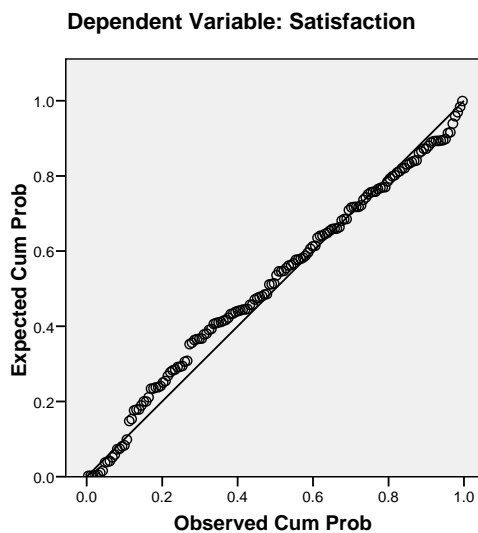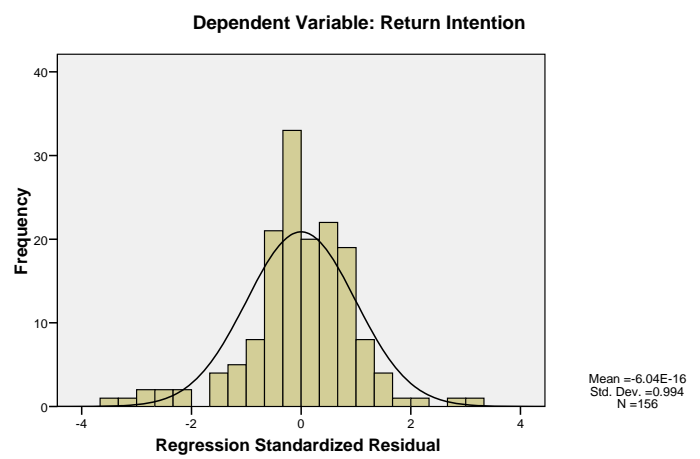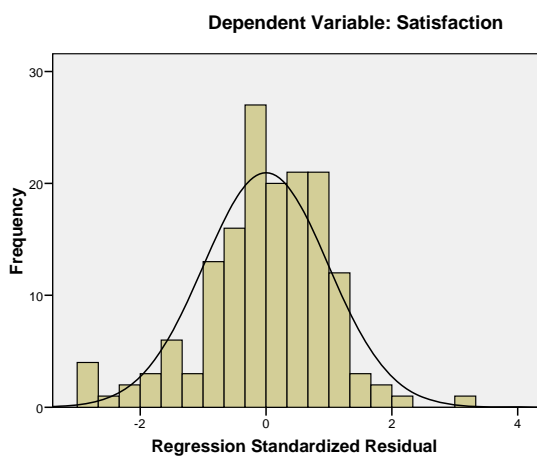
Linearity and Homoscedasticity

The assumption of linearity suggests that the mean value of the outcome variable for each increment of the predictor lies along a straight line which means the relationship we are investigating is that of linear. On the other hand, the assumption of homoscedasticity requires that variance of the residual terms should be constant at each level of predictor variables (Field, 2005). Plots of ZRESID against ZPRED can be used to assess those two assumptions. In the perfect situation, the points are randomly and evenly dispersed throughout the plot. Figure 4.2 shows that these two assumptions are generally accepted in both models.

Figure 4.2 Plots of ZRESID against ZPRED of Model I (horizontal) and Model II (vertical)

Model I

Dependent Variable: Satisfaction

Model II

Dependent Variable: Return Intention
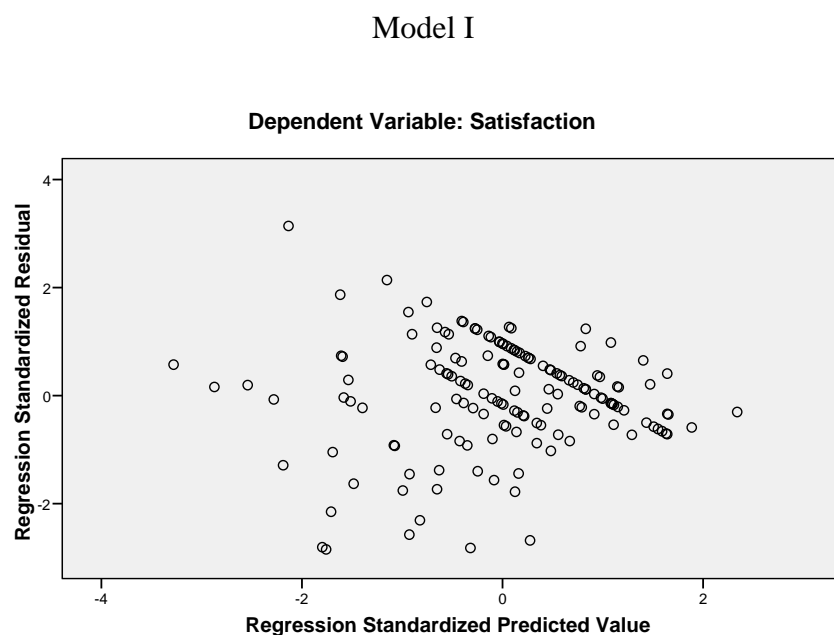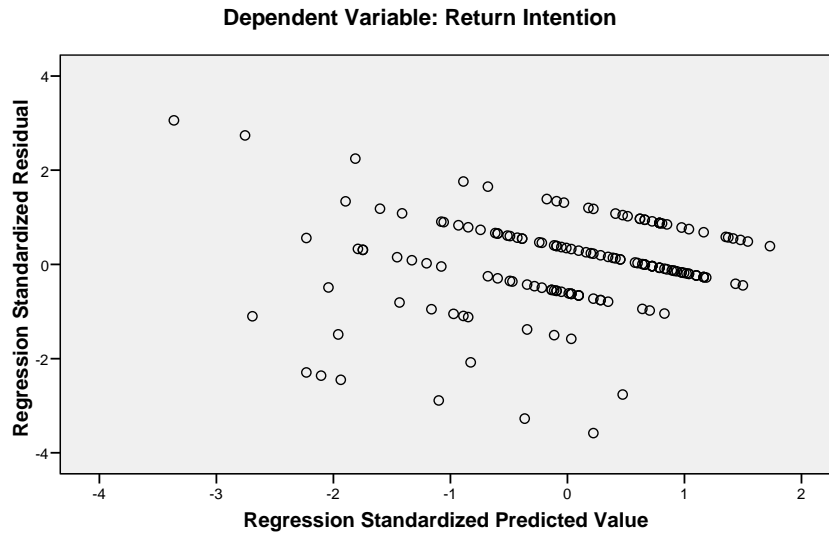
Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity describes a situation in which a predictor is related to one or more of the other predictors within the model. If these relationships are perfect or very strong, the calculation of the regression model and the appropriate interpretation of the results would be affected (Hutcheson & Sofroniou, 1999). In a real-life situation the perfect collinearity is rare. Less than perfect collinearity, however, is virtually unavoidable (Field, 2005). Therefore, it is important to examine the level of relationships between predictors to determine whether they would pose an impact on the model.

According to Hutcheson and Sofroniou (1999), the correlation coefficient of two predictors of around .8 or more indicates a level of multicollinearity that may prove to

be problematic. Another method of estimating multicollinearity is to look at the statistics of the Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). There are no commonly agreed rules to suggest which level could be accepted. Bowerman and O'Connell (1990) claimed that there is cause for concern if the largest VIF is greater than 10 or the average VIF is substantially greater than 1. Menard (1995) supported that tolerance below .2 indicated a potential problem.

Model I

An examination of Table 4.5 shows that the Pearson correlation coefficients were all below .5. Tolerance statistics of three predictors were all above .7 while average value of the VIF was 1.324 which is slightly, rather than substantially, greater than 1. Therefore, the conclusion could be reached that there were no strong multicollinearity and Model I was not biased.

Table 4.5 Collinearity Diagnostics for Model I (N=156)

Predictors	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
	1	2	3	Tolerance	VIF
1. PP	—	.358***	.411***	.795	1.258
2. PA		—	.459***	.755	1.325
3. PV			—	.719	1.390

Model II

The same examination of collinearity diagnostics for Model II revealed that the Pearson correlation coefficients were all below .8. Tolerance statistics ranged from .485 for satisfaction to .684 for perceived performance, and the largest VIF value was 2.062 for satisfaction. Compared to Model I, predictors in Model II possessed a relatively higher level of collinearity. However, the statistics showed that this level of collinearity would not bias the results of the model.

Table 4.6 Collinearity Diagnostics for Model II (N=156)
Correlations Collinearity Statistics

| Predictors | Correlations | | | | Collinearity Statistics | |
	1	2	3	4	Tolerance	VIF
1. PP	—	.358***	.411***	.628***	.592	1.689
2. PA		—	.459***	.510***	.684	1.463
3. PV			—	.499***	.682	1.467
4. S				—	.485	2.062

*** $p < .001$

4.4 Overall Fit of the Model

Regression Model I: $S = a + b1 (PP) + b2 (PA) + b3 (PV)$

The stepwise regression revealed quite a good fit ($R^2 = .515$) of the variance explained by Model I. The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showed that the overall model was significant ($F_{[3, 152]} = 53.826$, $p < .001$). To cross-validate Model I, the

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adjusted R square was examined. This indicated that the portion of variance within the outcome variable would be explained if the model had been derived from the population from which the sample was taken (Field, 2005). Wherry's Equation was used to calculate the adjusted R square, of which the resulting values were .506. Adjusted R square was close to R square with shrinkage of 0.9 which suggested loss of predictive power should the model have derived from the population. Table 4.7 shows that all three independent variables, perceived performance, perceived attractiveness and perceived value, are significant predictors to satisfaction. Therefore, the standardized regression equation can be expressed as the following.

$$S = .573 + .457 (PP) + .259 (PA) + .192 (PV)$$

Where, PP, PA, PV, and S are perceived performance, perceived attractiveness, perceived value for money, and the satisfaction of convention attendees, respectively.

Table 4.7 Backward Stepwise Multiple Regression Coefficients of Model I (N = 156)

Variable	B	$SE\ B$	β
Constant	.573	.372	
PP	.530	.074	.457***
PA	.266	.067	.259***
PV	.171	.059	.192**

*$p<.05$, ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$

Regression Model II: $RI = a + b1 (PP) + b2 (PA) + b3 (PV) + b4 (S)$

Table 4.8 summarizes the results of backward stepwise multiple regression analysis for Model II. All predictors were entered into the first step and accounted for 22% of variance of the dependent variable ($R^2 = .22$, $F [4, 151] = 10.645$, $p<.001$). Variables of perceived attractiveness and perceived value were removed from the model in turn, during step two and step three (probability of F-to-remove >=.100). Therefore, the resulting model in step three explained 21.8% variance of the return intention ($R^2 = .218$, $F [1, 155] = 21.313$, $p<.001$). The adjusted R square of the resulting model in step three was .208.

Perceived performance and satisfaction were significant predictors to return intention while contributions of perceived attractiveness and perceived value to the model were not statistically significant. Therefore, the standardized regression equation of the resulting model in step 3 can be expressed as follows.

$$RI = 2.991 + .277 (PP) + .243 (S)$$

Where, RI, PP and S are Return Intention, perceived performance and satisfaction of convention attendees, respectively.

Table 4.8 Summary of Backward Stepwise Regression Analysis for Variables
Predicting Return Intention (N = 156)

Variable	Df	R^2	ΔR^2	F	ΔF	B	$SE\ B$	β
Step 1	4,151	.220	.220	10.645***	10.645***			
Constant						2.902	.444	
PP						.274	.101	.253**
PA						.051	.083	.053
PV						.000	.072	.000
S						.219	.096	.236*
Step 2	1,151	.218	-.002	14.128***	.371			
Constant						2.983	.423	
PP						.275	.101	.254**
PV						.012	.069	.014
S						.237	.091	.255*
Step 3	1,152	.218	.000	21.313***	.029			
Constant						2.991	.418	
PP						.277	.099	.257**
S						.243	.086	.261**

*$p<.05$, ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$

4.5   Testing of Hypothesis

4.5.1   Direct Effect

Previously, the multiple regression analysis assumptions were assessed and confirmed,

which suggested that results of the current data set were not biased. Two Multiple

Regression models were tested and consequently the direct relationships between

interested constructs were unveiled. The results of testing hypothesis 1 to 7 which

investigated the direct relationships between interested constructs were summarized

and are reported in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9 Results of Testing Hypothesis 1 – 7

Hypothesis	β	t-Value	Result
H1: Direct Effect of Perceived Performance on Satisfaction	.457	7.211***	Supported
H2: Direct Effect of Perceived Attractiveness on Satisfaction	.259	3.977***	Supported
H3: Direct Effect of Perceived Value on Satisfaction	.192	2.890**	Supported
H4: Direct Effect of Perceived Performance on Return Intention	.257	2.792**	Supported
H5: Direct Effect of Perceived Attractiveness on Return Intention	\	\	Not Supported
H6: Direct Effect of Perceived Value on Return Intention	\	\	Not Supported
H7: Direct Effect of Satisfaction on Return Intention	.261	2.835**	Supported

** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$

Hypothesis 1, 2 and 3 posited that there was a direct positive effect between perceived

performance and satisfaction, perceived attractiveness and satisfaction, perceived

value for money and satisfaction, respectively. All beta coefficients ($\beta = .457$, $p<.001$

for PP and S; $\beta = .259$, $p<.001$ for PA and S; $\beta = .192$, $p<.01$ for PV and S) between

these three sets of relationships were positive and significant. Therefore, hypothesis 1,

2 and 3 were all supported. In addition, perceived performance was found to explain

the largest proportion in the variance of satisfaction. In other words, perceived

performance was the best predictor of satisfaction. Meanwhile, perceived attractiveness and perceived value for money were also significant predictors of satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4, 5, 6 and 7 posited that there was a direct positive effect between each of four predictors and return intention respectively. Backward stepwise regression analysis showed that perceived attractiveness and perceived value for money were not significant predictors of return intention and were consequently excluded from the model. As a result, hypothesis 5 and 6 were not supported. On the other hand, perceived performance and satisfaction were tested to be the significant predictors of return intention ($\beta = .257$, $p<.01$ for PP and RI; $\beta = .261$, $p<.01$ for S and RI). Therefore, hypothesis 4 and 7 were supported.

4.5.2 Indirect Effect: Satisfaction as a mediator

In order to test the mediating role of satisfaction, the current study adopted Baron and Kenny's (1986) three-step-approach which has been widely applied within behavior research. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), a variable functions as a mediator when it meets the following conditions:

(a) variations in levels of the independent variable significantly account for variations in the presumed mediator (i.e., Path a), (b) variations in the mediator significantly account for variations in the dependent variable (i.e., Path b), and (c) when Path a and b are controlled, a previous significant relation between the independent and dependent variables is no longer significant, with the strongest demonstration of mediation occurring when Path c is zero.   (p1176)

Hypothesis 8 posited that perceived performance of a convention had an indirect positive effect on the return intention of convention attendees, mediated by satisfaction. Following the method specified by Baron and Kenny (1986), three regression analyses were performed of which the results are depicted in Figure 4.3.

The results indicate that in the first regression equation, perceived performance positively influenced satisfaction (F [1, 154] = 100.549, p < .001), explaining 39.5% of the variance in satisfaction. In the second regression equation, perceived performance positively influenced return intention (F [1, 154] = 33.076, p < .001), explaining 17.7% of the variance in return intention. In the third equation, which included both perceived performance and satisfaction, two independent variables positively influenced the return intention by explaining 6.8% and 6.6% of the variance,

respectively. With satisfaction presented, the proportion of variance of return intention accounted for by perceived performance was reduced from 17.7% to 6.8% and the Beta coefficient decreased from .420 to .261, as derived from the second to third equation. The loss of 10.9% of explained variance in return intention by perceived performance was due to the mediation of satisfaction. As the relationship between perceived performance and return intention was still statistically significant (t = 2.792, p < .01), the role of satisfaction was a partial mediator. Therefore, Hypothesis 8 was supported.

Figure 4.3 Results of Testing Hypothesis 8
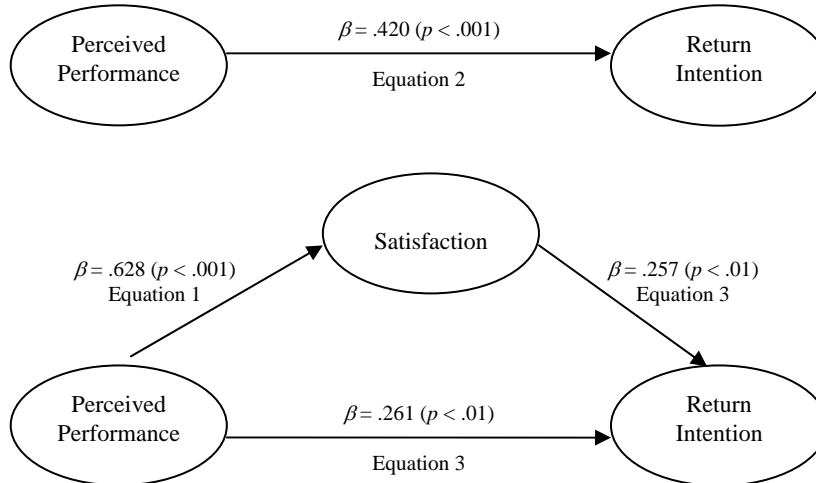
Hypothesis 9 posited that perceived attractiveness of convention destination had an indirect positive effect on the return intention of convention attendees, mediated by satisfaction. Figure 4.4 indicates that in the first regression equation, perceived attractiveness positively influenced satisfaction (F [1, 154] = 54.250, p < .001),

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explaining 26.1% of the variance in satisfaction. In the second regression equation, perceived attractiveness positively influenced return intention (F [1, 154] = 11.528, p < .01), explaining 7% of the variance in return intention. In the third regression equation, satisfaction positively influenced the return intention (t = 4.566, p < .001) while the relationship between perceived attractiveness and return intention became non-significant. These results suggested that the relationship between perceived attractiveness and return intention was completely mediated by satisfaction. Therefore, Hypothesis 9 was supported.

Figure 4.4 Results of Testing Hypothesis 9
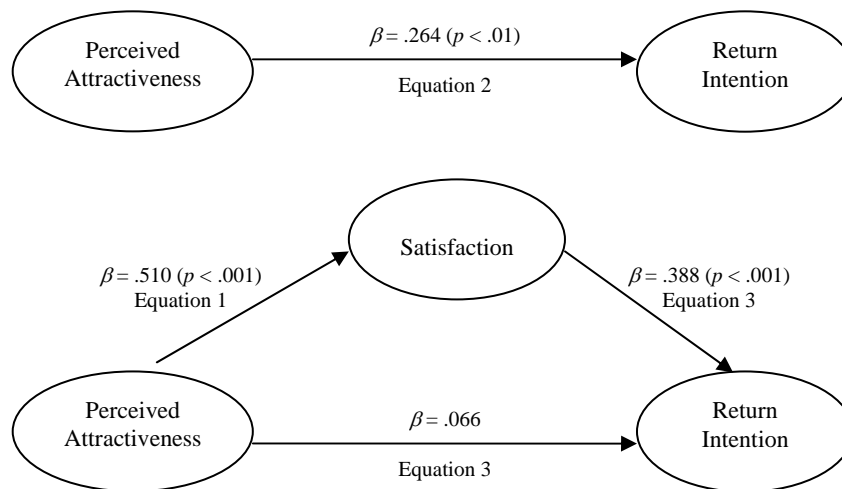
Hypothesis 10 posited that perceived value for money of the total cost of attending a convention had an indirect positive effect on the return intention of convention attendees, mediated by satisfaction. Figure 4.5 reveals that in the first regression

equation, perceived value positively influenced satisfaction (F [1, 154] = 51.058, p

< .001), explaining 24.9% of the variance in satisfaction.

In the second regression equation, perceived value positively influenced return

intention (F [1, 154] = 9.919, p < .01), explaining 6.1% of variance in return intention.

In the third regression equation, satisfaction positively influenced the return intention

(t = 4.715, p < .001) while the relationship between perceived value and return

intention became non-significant.

These results suggested that the relationship between perceived value and return

intention was completely mediated by satisfaction. Therefore, Hypothesis 10 was

supported.

Figure 4.5 Results of Testing Hypothesis 10
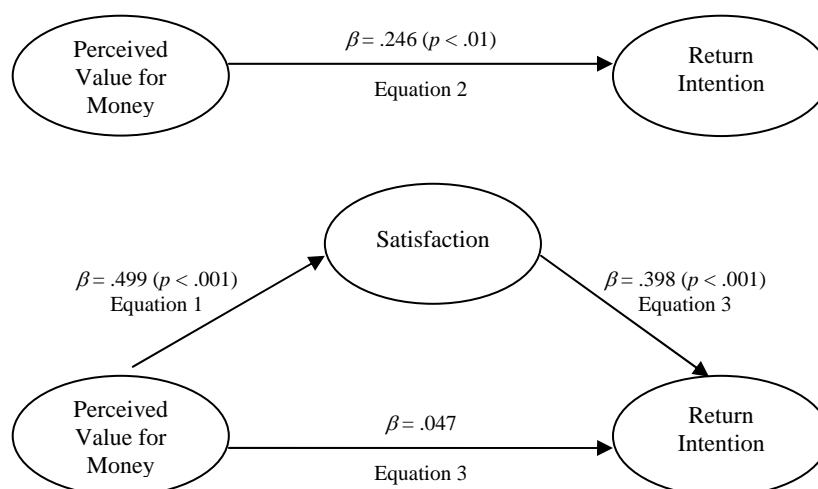
To conclude, the indirect impact of perceived performance, perceived attractiveness, and perceived value on return intention through satisfaction were proven. Therefore Hypothesis 8, 9 and 10 were all supported. Specifically, satisfaction partially mediated the relationship between perceived performance and return intention. Alternatively, within the other two pairs of relationships, satisfaction played the role of a complete mediator.

4.6   Summary

In this chapter, data analysis was conducted and the corresponding results were reported. Firstly, the demographic characteristics of respondents were profiled using descriptive statistics. Secondly, exploratory factor analysis was conducted to comprehend and assess the underlying structure of interested constructs. In addition, another objective of factor analysis was to detect and overcome the potential problems of multicollinearity within multiple regression analysis. Results confirmed that there were two dimensions falling under perceived performance, those being Education and Networking, while perceived attractiveness, perceived value and satisfaction, were one-dimensional. Reliability of the measurement scale of each construct was supported by the reliability analysis that followed. The mean score and standard

deviation of each item are reported at the end of this section. Thirdly, several

assumptions associated with multiple regression analysis were assessed. Thereafter,

the results of multiple regression analysis were presented and finally, proposed

hypotheses were tested.

Chapter 5   Discussion and Conclusion

5.1   Major Research Findings and Discussions

The main objective of this study is to develop a conceptual framework to understand the evaluation of convention experience by convention attendees, along with their satisfaction and return intention. The relationships between evaluation constructs, satisfaction and return intention were examined to reach the major research objective.

5.1.1   Effect of Perceived Performance on Satisfaction and Return Intention

Previous customer satisfaction literature suggested that the relationship between perceived performance and satisfaction were studied under the Expectancy – Disconfirmation paradigm in which perceived performance was used to compare the expected performance of the product, with satisfaction/dissatisfaction being the result of discrepancies between prior expectations and actual behavior (Oliver, 1980). Later research revealed that not only in an indirect way, perceived performance also directly influenced customer satisfaction (i.e. Bolton & Drew, 1991; Burton, Sheather, & Roberts, 2003; Churchill & Surprenant, 1982; Tse & Wilton, 1988).

In this study, results from multiple regression analysis are consistent with later research in that perceived performance had a direct positive effect on both satisfaction and return intention. It was also found to be the strongest predictor of satisfaction. Meanwhile, the effect of perceived performance on return intention was partially mediated by satisfaction. In other words, the perceived performance of a conference not only directly affected the return intention of convention attendees, but also had an indirect impact through satisfaction.

The current study confirms that two dimensions of conference performance, namely Education and Networking, are regarded as two important benefits that convention attendees expect to obtain from the conference (Lee & Back, 2007). Convention attendees participate in the conference to obtain knowledge that will help them in their profession and areas of research. Satisfied by the educational aspect of the conference, attendees will be more satisfied with the conference experience and have a higher degree of intention to return in the future. To ensure the value of education is well delivered to the attendees, it is important to decide what should be taught – 'the content', and how it can be taught – 'the format'.

The quality of content is influenced by the quality of relevant keynote speakers, panel speakers and relevant papers. On the other hand, sessions in different formats such as keynote sessions, panel sessions, breakouts and workshops, help to effectively transform the information. Hilliard (2006) further suggested that as well as the formal learning environment provided by individual sessions, the conference should also facilitate and promote the informal learning environment by integrating communities of practice, which is defined by Wenger & Snyder (2000) as 'groups of people informally bound together by shared expertise and a passion for joint enterprise'. The notion that networking is one of the major functions of the conference has been supported by many researchers (e.g., Grant, 1994; Grant and Weaver, 1996; Price, 1993). Developing professional relationships with peer attendees can bring benefits such as cooperation, career development, share of resource and friendship (Yoo, 2005). Properly designed breaks, meals, social program, and pre/post-convention tours filled with group activities, can create and facilitate networking opportunities among attendees. This is not only for educational purposes. Communities of practice can also help to extend networking opportunities during the convention interval, by associating attendees through an electronic bulletin board or listserv. As a result, the convention previously regarded as a one-off event becomes more of a continuous event.

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Communication and connection between attendees and those of attendees and associations will be strengthened; therefore more attendees are expected to return.

5.1.2 Effect of Perceived Attractiveness of Destination on Satisfaction and Return Intention

The convention product is an integrated package whereby the conference is the center while transportation, accommodation and pre-/post-tour are important components (Smith & Garnham, 2006). To provide an attractive convention package to attendees, the selection of convention destination plays an important role. However, the diversified nature of destination attributes complicates the relationship of the convention destination image and decision making by participating attendees. In Lee and Back's study (2007), perception of the destination by convention attendees are positively associated with their evaluation of the attributes of a particular destination. The destination image also contributes in a positive way, making the favorable intention of attendees to attend the conference. On the other hand, Yoo (2005) found that destination stimuli could be negatively associated with decisions by interviewees to attend the conference.

A further argument made by Yoo was that the long distance of travel to the convention destination sometimes inhibited the participation decision of potential attendees. Nevertheless, these studies demonstrated that convention destination image was significantly associated with the intention of attendees to participate in the convention.

In the current study, multiple regression analysis showed that perceived attractiveness of the destination directly affected the satisfaction of convention attendees. In contrast to previous studies showing a direct relationship, the relationship between perceived attractiveness of destination and the return intention of convention attendees to the next conference was indirect and fully mediated by satisfaction. Arguably, the construct of destination image used in previous research was at the pre-purchasing stage. In other words, the targeted destination was the choice as to where to hold the intended convention. However, the construct of perceived attractiveness within this study was formed at the post-purchasing stage, which was regarded as a cognitive evaluation of destination attributes performed on site. The targeted destination was not necessarily the future convention destination due to the fact that it would normally be held in different destinations each time.

The focus of this study regarding destination was to look at its contributing role in evaluating conference experience rather than regard it as a pull factor.

Research findings proved that perceived accessibility, safety, climate, availability of extra opportunities such as sightseeing, shopping, dining and entertainment, significantly contribute to the satisfaction of convention attendees of the convention experience. Convention attendees usually combine business with leisure by extending their visit to the destination and engaging in tourism or recreational activities as part of their social program during the convention period (Davidsom, 2003). It is also very common in that association attendees are accompanied by their spouses. Therefore, diversified tourism and entertainment activities offered by the destination could give convention attendees a more colorful experience. Meanwhile, a satisfied convention experience is inseparable from a safe, nice weather, and highly accessible destination.

5.1.3   Effect of Perceived Value for Money on Satisfaction and Return Intention

In this study, perceived value for money had a significant positive effect on the satisfaction of attendees, while the indirect link between perceived value for money and return intention was evident.

The effect of perceived value on return intention was completely mediated via satisfaction. Those findings are consistent with previous studies. The role of perceived value as a predictor of customer satisfaction has been widely supported (e.g., Bojanic, 1996; Gounaris et al., 2007; Petrick, 2004; Tam, 2004). Based on Zeithaml's definition (1988), the more that is received compares to that which is given, the higher the value of the product perceived by the customer then greater satisfaction will be generated (Tam, 2004). On the other hand, the relationship between perceived value and return intention is arguable. Oh (1999) claimed that there was a direct relationship in perceived value which was an immediate antecedent to customer repurchase intention by using a sample from the luxury segment of the hotel industry. Alternatively, a study conducted by Patterson and Spreng (1997) found that satisfaction fully mediated the effect of perceived value on intention, which is in line with the current study.

In order to enhance the satisfaction of convention attendees and stimulate them into returning to the conference, meeting planners should carefully design an attractive convention package which can elevate the perception of value to attendees. Lovelock (2001) proposed that the enhancement of perceived value can be reached by either adding benefit to the service or by reducing the cost associated with purchase and use

of that service. Meeting planners need to know what convention attendees value most

by understanding their motivation and thereafter advance the convention performance

to influence the perception of value. Furthermore, in order to participate in the

convention, attendees not only have to buy into the conference by paying for the

registration fee, but also need to spend money on transportation and accommodation.

When the convention is held in a hot tourist spot or destination that is far away from

home, the total expenditure of participation could be particularly substantial.

Therefore, careful selection of the convention destination is vital and has twofold

implications on the perception of value by attendees. An attractive convention

destination with high accessibility would add benefit to the whole convention

experience by attendees. Meanwhile, distance of the destination should be moderate to

the target attendee market in order to balance the cost of transportation.

5.1.4 Convention Satisfaction and Return Intention

The notion that customer satisfaction of a product or service presumably leads to a

repeat purchase has been widely accepted by scholars. Although one could not be

100% sure of actual behavior, intention has long been regarded as its immediate

indicator.

Abundant empirical studies have demonstrated that there is a significant positive relationship between customer satisfaction and repurchase intention (e.g., Bowen & Chen, 2001; Gallarza & Saura, 2006; Gronholdt et al., 2000). The current study confirmed the existence of this relationship and showed that the more satisfied a convention attendee was with the convention experience, the higher degree of intention to return to this convention would be the result. Therefore, a better understanding of satisfaction dimensions is vital for the enhancement of convention satisfaction and consequently return intention.

Athanassopoulos et al. (2001) claimed that customer satisfaction dimensions were industry specific. Factors constituting elements of the service bundle important to customers varies in different industries. This study found that when the convention attendee evaluated the convention experience, perceived convention performance, perceived attractiveness of destination and perceived value for money were significant predictors of convention satisfaction. Perceived performance was tested and found to be the strongest predictor of convention satisfaction (β=.457, p<.001), followed decreasingly by perceived attractiveness of destination (β=.259, p<.001) and perceived value for money (β=.192, p<.01).

Results showed that convention performance, as the central product of the convention package, was valued most by attendees. Meanwhile, enjoying an attractive convention destination and favorable evaluation of value also significantly contributed to the overall satisfaction of convention experience.

Not only by exerting a direct effect on return intention, convention satisfaction also mediated the effect of post convention evaluation constructs on return intention. Research findings showed that the effect of perceived performance on return intention was partially mediated by satisfaction. In other words, how attendees perceive the performance of the convention both directly and indirectly via satisfaction, and how it affects their decision in whether to attend the convention again in the future. Convention satisfaction completely mediated the effects of perceived attractiveness of destination and perceived value for money on return intention. The favorable evaluation of attractiveness of destination and value for money does not directly lead to a higher degree of return intention, but will contribute to overall satisfaction, which in turn influences the return intention of attendees.

Although this study confirmed significant relationships between post convention evaluation constructs and return intention, it is worthwhile to notice that regression

model II only explained 21.8% variance of return intention. This could be explained by the complex nature of the convention decision making process which involves many uncertain influencing factors, such as personal health, finance and time availability, selection of the next convention destination and those of other competing conferences (Oppermann & Chon, 1997). Moreover, the interval between international conferences is relatively long, normally at least one year, which can be subject to change. Therefore, to some degree, the prediction of return intention by convention attendees could not purely be based upon their previous experiences.

Table 5.1 Summary of Major Study Findings

Research Objective	Research Hypotheses	Research Findings
To assess the impacts of perceived performance, perceived attractiveness, and perceived value for money on attendees' overall satisfaction.	H1- H3: Convention evaluation constructs have a the direct positive effects on convention attendees' satisfaction of convention experience	• Perceived performance (H1) : Supported • Perceived attractiveness (H2): Supported • Perceived value for money (H3): Supported
To assess the impacts of perceived performance, perceived attractiveness, perceived value for money, and satisfaction on attendees' return intention	H4- H7: Convention evaluation constructs and satisfaction have the a direct positive effects on convention attendees' return intention	• Perceived performance (H4) : Supported • Perceived attractiveness (H5): Not Supported • Perceived value for money (H6): Not Supported • Satisfaction (H7): Supported
To determine the relative weights of attendee evaluation constructs affecting satisfaction and return intention	N/A	**Impact on Satisfaction**: •Perceived performance: $\beta = .457$, $p < .001$ •Perceived attractiveness: $\beta = .259$, $p < .001$ •Perceived value for money: $\beta = .192$, $p < .01$ **Impact on Return Intention** •Perceived performance: $\beta = .257$, $p < .01$ •Satisfaction: $\beta = .261$, $p < .01$
To test the mediation role of satisfaction between conference evaluation constructs and return intention	H8- H10: Convention evaluation constructs have the indirect positive effects on convention attendees' return intention, mediated by satisfaction	• Perceived performance (H8): Supported • Perceived attractiveness (H9): Supported* • Perceived value for money (H10): Supported*

* Completely mediation

5.2 Theoretical Contributions

The topic of post purchasing evaluation by the customer has received great attention in both general business literature and hospitality and tourism literature. However, this is not the case within convention tourism literature. What factors are to be considered as part of the explanation of satisfaction and return intention by convention attendees? How are they related? Why choose them to explain this dynamic phenomenon? Answers to these questions have not been fully developed. The current study is one of the first attempts to understand post convention evaluation and satisfaction and return intention by convention attendees. Based on the analysis of convention industry specific backgrounds and existing literature, a representation of the phenomenon was proposed by way of a model which was tested and confirmed. Previous research on the behavior of convention attendees has mainly focused on the convention decision making process at pre-purchase stage. The widely acknowledged model of the convention participation decision making process developed by Oppermann and Chon (1997) touched on the impact of evaluation of convention experience on repeat participation by attendees, but did not go further in unveiling the underlying relationships.

The current study complemented Oppermann and Chon's model and tried to complete the understanding of the convention decision making process as a circulating phenomenon. The process of establishing a model to understand convention satisfaction and return intention is to identify elements of the convention tourism product bundle perceived as important by convention attendees. By confirming the constructs of perceived conference performance, perceived attractiveness of the destination and perceived value for money, it significantly contributes to the satisfaction of attendees and in turn affects their return intention. This study supported the notion that the convention tourism product comprises the convention itself and associated accommodation, transportation and pre-/post-convention tour (Smith & Garnham, 2006). An in-depth understanding of the nature of the convention tourism product is the fundamental requirement of theory development and also brings benefit to industry practitioners.

5.3   Practical Implications

Recent severe competition between conventions and destinations calls for a better understanding of the ultimate customer behavior by convention attendees.

Research findings of the current study provide meaningful practical implications for both associations and destinations alike. In the case of the association, convention revenue is widely recognized as an important income generator which normally accounts for one third of their total income. To increase the attendance rate is always the shared goal of association and meeting planner. The research findings also support the fact that the satisfaction of convention attendees significantly contributes to their intention to return again in the future. Therefore, a better understanding of the satisfaction and return intention of convention attendees provides a useful reference for better convention program design, destination selection and convention marketing.

Firstly, it is of vital importance that the convention program is designed well enough to capture two important convention functions, education and networking. To fulfill their desire to learn convention attendees expect to listen to respected speakers, have high quality workshops and paper presentations, and participate in developmental discussions. Therefore, great effort should be made on the selection of good speakers and moderators, elaborately designed workshops, and quality control of research papers. To facilitate networking opportunities between convention attendees, a diversified and well organized social program should be offered. As suggested by Hilliard (2006), the formation of communities of practice can constitute a positive education and networking environment.

Destination plays an important role in the success of a convention. A destination with convenient access, safe environment, good climate and colorful tourism opportunities will contribute significantly to the overall satisfaction by convention attendees of the convention experience. Therefore, selection of the convention destination is always one of the most important issues of the association. On the other hand, destinations aiming to develop association convention markets can also develop marketing strategies addressing the above mentioned destination attributes accordingly. However, the price of the destination can also pose impact on the monetary value of the convention package. The comparison of participation costs, including both conference and travel cost, along with perceived value of the convention experience, was proven to influence the satisfaction of convention attendees. Therefore, geographic characteristics of the major attendee market should be taken into account when selecting a convention destination.

5.4   Limitation and Future Research

This study is one of the first attempts to investigate the evaluation of the convention experience and satisfaction and return intention of convention attendees.

As expected in all research, there are some limitations to this study which are addressed in this section. First of all, although this study confirmed the significant relationships between post convention evaluation constructs and return intention, it is worthwhile to note that the regression model II only explained 21.8% variance on return intention. Other factors such as personal health, financial and availability of time should also be considered. Selection of the next conference destination can be included in future research to better understand the return intention of convention attendees. In addition, longitudinal research can also be conducted to test if the return intention of convention attendees changes over time and what the significant factors are those influence their return intention at different stages.

Moreover, Oliver (1996) stated that there were two categories of behavioral intentions after the evaluation of consumption experience, namely short-tem intentions and long-term intentions. Short-term intentions include word of mouth, communication and complimenting/ complaining, while long-term intentions refer to attitude change and loyalty. Future research can go one step further to analyze the impact of the convention experience on different types of behavioral intentions of participants.

As convention participation is regarded as a highly involved experience, the communication between attendees and that of attendees and organizers, could also pose impact on the convention experience. Therefore, future research can also investigate B2C and C2C communication within convention participation and their impact on convention satisfaction.

The current study limited the survey population to attendees of selected educational conferences in the field of hospitality and tourism. The conference must 1) have attendees from more than five countries; 2) be held on an annual or bi-annual basis. As a result, survey respondents were basically from the tourism and hospitality field and mostly either scholars or students. Nevertheless it is believed that convention attendees as consumers share some common requirements towards the product which is convention. On the other hand, the selection of research constructs was not limited to specific field but general consumer behavior constructs. Therefore, it is confident to conclude that the results of the current study can be generalized to other fields in this regard but explained and applied with caution due to their different characteristics to those of tourism and hospitality.

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Appendix

Appendix 1A: Invitation Email for Pilot Study

Dear

We venture to write to you and seek for your help. We know that you have attended the International Convention & Expo Submit 2008 held in Singapore from 14 to 16 February. We are currently conducting a study that investigates factors influencing conference delegates' evaluation of conference experience, satisfaction and return intention. We are contacting you to seek your help to participate in this survey.

If you have already completed this survey during the conference in Singapore, we would like to thank you again. If you haven't done this survey before, please follow the instructions provided below.

This survey will take you **about 5 minutes** to complete. **Please answer the survey questions based on your experience of ICES 2008 in Singapore.** In appreciation of your support and assistance, we will make a donation of US$1 to a charity for each completed survey we will receive.

We guarantee that all information provided in the survey will be kept in strict confidence and will be used only for research purpose.

Please start the survey by clicking the START button below:

START

Or you can enter the survey through the following link:
 http://www.polyu.edu.hk/htm/ICES2008Survey/

Thank you in advance for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Kaye Chon, Ph.D.
Chair Professor & Director of School
School of Hotel & Tourism Management
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Appendix 1B: Reminder Email for Pilot Study

Dear

A web survey to evaluate conference experience has been sent to you last week. If you have done it, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your help. In case you haven't, we would much appreciate if you could spare **5 minutes** to complete it by following the instructions below.

Please answer the survey questions based on your experience of ICES 2008 in Singapore.

Please start the survey by clicking the START button below:

START

Or you can enter the survey through the following link:
 http://www.polyu.edu.hk/htm/ICES2008Survey/

Thank you for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Kaye Chon, Ph.D.
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Appendix 1C: Questionnaire for Pilot Study (ICES 2008)

1. Please indicate your evaluation of the conference experience of the ICES 2008. Please choose one appropriate number using the following scale.

1=Very Dissatisfied	2=Dissatisfied	3=Slightly Dissatisfied	4=Neutral	5=Slightly Satisfied	6=Satisfied	7=Very Satisfied
1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○	7 ○

2. Please indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each of following statements associated with this conference. Please choose one appropriate number using the following scale.

1=Strongly Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Slightly Disagree   4=Neutral   5=Slightly Agree   6=Agree   7=Strongly Agree

		Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1)	I have been able to see people I know in my field during the conference.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2)	The conference has enabled me to interact with colleagues and friends.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
3)	The conference has offered me opportunity to develop my professional network.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
4)	The conference has enhanced my involvement with the host organization.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
5)	The conference has enabled me to keep up with changes in my profession.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
6)	I have been able to listen to respected speakers during the conference.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
7)	The topic of the conference was relevant to me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
8)	Attending the conference has fulfilled my desire to learn.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
9)	The conference registration fee was reasonably priced.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
10)	The total cost (including registration fee, transportation, and accommodation) of participating in the conference was value for money.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
11)	The conference was a good value for money.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
12)	The total cost of participating in the conference was economical.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

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3. Please choose one word that best represents your feeling about this conference(i.e.ICES 2008) by choose one number.

1=Very Displeased	2= Displeased	3=Slightly Displeased	4=Neutral	5=Slightly Pleased	6=Pleased	7=Very Pleased
1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○	7 ○

4. Please indicate your preception of attractiveness of the conference destination of Singapore. Please choose one appropriate number using the following scale.

1=Strongly Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Slightly Disagree   4=Neutral   5=Slightly Agree   6=Agree   7=Strongly Agree

		Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1)	The conference destination of Singapore is very attractive.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2)	The conference destination of Singapore has a safe environment.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
3)	The conference destination of Singapore has offered me good sightseeing opportunities.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
4)	The conference destination of Singapore has offered me good shopping opportunities.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
5)	The conference destination of Singapore has offered me good dinning and entertainment opportunities.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
6)	The conference destination of Singapore has been highly accessible.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
7)	The climate of the conference destination of Singapore during the conference was very good.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

5. Please indicate your return intention to the conference. Please choose one appropriate number using the following scale.

I intent to attend this conference again in the future.

1=Strongly Disagree	2=Disagree	3=Slightly Disagree	4=Neutral	5=Slightly Agree	6=Agree	7=Strongly Agree
1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○	7 ○

6. Which of the following expression best represents your overall feeling about this conference(ICES 2008)?

1=Very Frustrated	2=Frustrated	3=Slightly Frustrated	4=Neutral	5=Slightly Content	6=Content	7=Very Content
1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○	7 ○

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Please provide the following information.

Please remember to press the SUBMIT BUTTON at the end of this page.

1) What is your gender?

○ Female   ○ Male

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 nationality?

[   ]

4) In which country and city do you live?

[   ]

5) Which of the following is your primary profession?

○ Educator   ○ Student
○ Industry Professional   ○ Other (Please specify: [   ])

6) How many professional associations in your field you are a member of?

[   ]

7). When did you first attend an international convention in your professional field?

○ Before 1970   ○ 1970-1979   ○ 1980-1989
○ 1990-1999   ○ 2000-2008

8). On an average, how many conferences do you attend per year?

[   ]

9) In general, who finances your attendance of the conference?

○ Fully paid by myself   ○ Fully paid by my organization
○ Partially by myself and partially by my organization

10) Thank you for your help. We will donate US$1 for each completed reply to whichever charity you select from the list below.
○ Care for Children   ○ Health Unlimited
○ World Wide Fund for Nature

Submit

Thank you for your participation!

1 US dollar will be donated to the charity you selected.

Appendix 2A: Invitation Email for CAUTHE Conference

Dear

We venture to write to you and seek for your help. We know that you have attended the CAUTHE 2008 Conference held in Gold Coast, Australia from 11 to 14 February. We are currently conducting a study that investigates factors influencing conference delegates' evaluation of conference experience, satisfaction and return intention. We are contacting you to seek your help to participate in this survey.

This survey will take you **about 5 minutes** to complete. **Please answer the survey questions based on your experience of the CAUTHE 2008 Conference in Gold Coast.** In appreciation of your support and assistance, we will make a donation of US$1 to a charity for each completed survey we will receive.

We guarantee that all information provided in the survey will be kept in strict confidence and will be used only for research purpose.

Please start the survey by clicking the START button below:

START

Or you can enter the survey through the following link:
http://www.polyu.edu.hk/htm/CAUTHE2008Survey/

Thank you in advance for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Kaye Chon, Ph.D.
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Tel: (852) 3400 3148

Appendix 2B: Reminder Email for CAUTHE Conference

Dear

A web survey to evaluate conference experience has been sent to you last week. If you have done it, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your help. In case you haven't, we would much appreciate if you could spare **5 minutes** to complete it by following the instructions below.

Please answer the survey questions based on your experience of CAUTHE 2008 in Gold Coast.

Please start the survey by clicking the START button below:

START

Or you can enter the survey through the following link:
 http://www.polyu.edu.hk/htm/CAUTHE2008Survey/

Thank you for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Kaye Chon, Ph.D.
Chair Professor & Director of School
School of Hotel & Tourism Management
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Sarah Xiaoshi Wang
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Email: sarah.wang@
Tel: (852) 3400 3148

Appendix 2C: Questionnaire for CAUTHE Conference

1. Please indicate your evaluation of the conference experience of the CAUTHE 2008 Conference. Please choose one appropriate number using the following scale.

1=Very Dissatisfied	2=Dissatisfied	3=Slightly Dissatisfied	4=Neutral	5=Slightly Satisfied	6=Satisfied	7=Very Satisfied
1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○	7 ○

2. Please indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each of following statements associated with this conference. Please choose one appropriate number using the following scale.

1=Strongly Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Slightly Disagree   4=Neutral   5=Slightly Agree   6=Agree   7=Strongly Agree

		Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1)	I have been able to see people I know in my field during the conference.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2)	The conference has enabled me to interact with colleagues and friends.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
3)	The conference has offered me opportunity to develop my professional network.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
4)	The conference has enhanced my involvement with the CAUTHE.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
5)	The conference has enabled me to keep up with changes in my profession.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
6)	I have been able to listen to respected speakers during the conference.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
7)	The topic of the conference was relevant to me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
8)	Attending the conference has fulfilled my desire to learn.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
9)	The conference registration fee was reasonably priced.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
10)	The total cost (including registration fee, transportation, and accommodation) of participating in the conference was value for money.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
11)	The conference was a good value for money.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
12)	The total cost of participating in the conference was economical.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

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3. Please choose one word that best represents your feeling about the CAUTHE 2008 Conference by choose one number.

1=Very Displeased	2= Displeased	3=Slightly Displeased	4=Neutral	5=Slightly Pleased	6=Pleased	7=Very Pleased
1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○	7 ○

4. Please indicate your preception of attractiveness of the conference destination of the CAUTHE 2008 Conference. Please choose one appropriate number using the following scale.

1=Strongly Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Slightly Disagree   4=Neutral   5=Slightly Agree   6=Agree   7=Strongly Agree

		Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1)	The conference destination of Gold Coast, Australia is very attractive.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2)	The conference destination of Gold Coast, Australia has a safe environment.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
3)	The conference destination of Gold Coast, Australia has offered me good sightseeing opportunities.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
4)	The conference destination of Gold Coast, Australia has offered me good shopping opportunities.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
5)	The conference destination of Gold Coast, Australia has offered me good dinning and entertainment opportunities.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
6)	The conference destination of Gold Coast, Australia has been highly accessible.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
7)	The climate of the conference destination of Gold Coast, Australia during the conference was very good.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

5. Please indicate your return intention to the CAUTHE 2008 Conference. Please choose one appropriate number using the following scale.

I intent to attend this conference again in the future.

1=Strongly Disagree	2=Disagree	3=Slightly Disagree	4=Neutral	5=Slightly Agree	6=Agree	7=Strongly Agree
1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○	7 ○

6. Which of the following expression best represents your overall feeling about the CAUTHE 2008 Conference?

1=Very Frustrated	2=Frustrated	3=Slightly Frustrated	4=Neutral	5=Slightly Content	6=Content	7=Very Content
1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○	7 ○

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Please provide the following information.

*Please remember to press the SUBMIT BUTTON at the end of this page.

1) What is your gender?

○ Female   ○ Male

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 nationality?

[   ]

4) In which country and city do you live?

[   ]

5) Which of the following is your primary profession?

○ Educator   ○ Student
○ Industry Professional   ○ Other (Please specify: [   ])

6) How many professional associations in your field you are a member of?

[   ]

7). When did you first attend an international convention in your professional field?

○ Before 1970   ○ 1970-1979   ○ 1980-1989
○ 1990-1999   ○ 2000-2008

8). On an average, how many conferences do you attend per year?

[   ]

9) In general, who finances your attendance of the conference?

○ Fully paid by myself   ○ Fully paid by my organization
○ Partially by myself and partially by my organization

10) Thank you for your help. We will donate US$1 for each completed reply to whichever charity you select from the list below.

○ Care for Children   ○ Health Unlimited
○ World Wide Fund for Nature

Submit

Thank you for your participation!

1 US dollar will be donated to the charity you selected.

Appendix 3A: Invitation Email for the Seventh APF Conference

Dear

We venture to write to you and seek for your help. We know that you have attended the Seventh Asia Pacific Forum for Graduate Students' Research in Tourism held in Shah Alam, Malaysia from 3 to 4 June. We are currently conducting a study that investigates factors influencing conference delegates' evaluation of conference experience, satisfaction and return intention. We are contacting you to seek your help to participate in this survey.

This survey will take you **about 5 minutes** to complete. **Please answer the survey questions based on your experience of the Seventh APF Conference in Shah Alam, Malaysia.** In appreciation of your support and assistance, we will make a donation of US$1 to a charity for each completed survey we will receive.

We guarantee that all information provided in the survey will be kept in strict confidence and will be used only for research purpose.

Please start the survey by clicking the START button below:

START

Or you can enter the survey through the following link:
http://www.polyu.edu.hk/htm/APF2008Survey/

Thank you in advance for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Kaye Chon, Ph.D.
Chair Professor & Director of School
School of Hotel & Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Email: hmkchon@
Tel: (852) 2766 6382

Sarah Xiaoshi Wang
MPhil Candidate
School of Hotel & Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Email: sarah.wang@
Tel: (852) 3400 3148

Appendix 3B: Reminder Email for the Seventh APF Conference

Dear

A web survey to evaluate conference experience has been sent to you last week. If you have done it, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your help. In case you haven't, we would much appreciate if you could spare **5 minutes** to complete it by following the instructions below.

Please answer the survey questions based on your experience of the Seventh APF Conference in Shah Alam, Malaysia.

Please start the survey by clicking the START button below:

START

Or you can enter the survey through the following link:
http://www.polyu.edu.hk/htm/APF2008Survey/

Thank you for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Kaye Chon, Ph.D.
Chair Professor & Director of School
School of Hotel & Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Email: hmkchon@
Tel: (852) 2766 6382

Sarah Xiaoshi Wang
MPhil Candidate
School of Hotel & Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
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Tel: (852) 3400 3148

Appendix 3C: Questionnaire for the Seventh APF Conference

Section A

1. Please indicate your evaluation of the conference experience of the Seventh Asia Pacific Forum for Graduate Students' Research in Tourism. Please choose one appropriate number using the following scale.

1=Very Dissatisfied	2=Dissatisfied	3=Slightly Dissatisfied	4=Neutral	5=Slightly Satisfied	6=Satisfied	7=Very Satisfied
1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○	7 ○

2. Please indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each of following statements associated with this conference. Please choose one appropriate number using the following scale.

1=Strongly Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Slightly Disagree   4=Neutral   5=Slightly Agree   6=Agree   7=Strongly Agree

		Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1)	I have been able to see people I know in my field during the conference.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2)	The conference has enabled me to interact with colleagues and friends.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
3)	The conference has offered me opportunity to develop my professional network.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
4)	The conference has enhanced my involvement with the host organization.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
5)	The conference has enabled me to keep up with changes in my profession.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
6)	I have been able to listen to respected speakers during the conference.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
7)	The topic of the conference was relevant to me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
8)	Attending the conference has fulfilled my desire to learn.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
9)	The conference registration fee was reasonably priced.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
10)	The total cost (including registration fee, transportation, and accommodation) of participating in the conference was value for money.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
11)	The conference was a good value for money.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
12)	The total cost of participating in the conference was economical.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

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3. Please choose one word that best represents your feeling about the Seventh Asia Pacific Forum for Graduate Students' Research in Tourism by choose one number.

1=Very Displeased	2= Displeased	3=Slightly Displeased	4=Neutral	5=Slightly Pleased	6=Pleased	7=Very Pleased
1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○	7 ○

4. Please indicate your preception of attractiveness of the conference destination of Shah Alam, Malaysia. Please choose one appropriate number using the following scale.

1=Strongly Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Slightly Disagree   4=Neutral   5=Slightly Agree   6=Agree   7=Strongly Agree

		Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1)	The conference destination of Shah Alam, Malaysia is very attractive.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2)	The conference destination of Shah Alam, Malaysia has a safe environment.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
3)	The conference destination of Shah Alam, Malaysia has offered me good sightseeing opportunities.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
4)	The conference destination of Shah Alam, Malaysia has offered me good shopping opportunities.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
5)	The conference destination of Shah Alam, Malaysia has offered me good dinning and entertainment opportunities.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
6)	The conference destination of Shah Alam, Malaysia has been highly accessible.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
7)	The climate of the conference destination of Shah Alam, Malaysia during the conference was very good.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

5. Please indicate your return intention to the Asia Pacific Forum for Graduate Students' Research in Tourism. Please choose one appropriate number using the following scale.

I intent to attend this conference again in the future.

1=Strongly Disagree	2=Disagree	3=Slightly Disagree	4=Neutral	5=Slightly Agree	6=Agree	7=Strongly Agree
1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○	7 ○

6. Which of the following expression best represents your overall feeling about the Seventh Asia Pacific Forum for Graduate Students' Research in Tourism?

1=Very Frustrated	2=Frustrated	3=Slightly Frustrated	4=Neutral	5=Slightly Content	6=Content	7=Very Content
1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○	7 ○

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Please provide the following information.

*Please remember to press the SUBMIT BUTTON at the end of this page.

1) What is your gender?

○ Female   ○ Male

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 nationality?

[   ]

4) In which country and city do you live?

[   ]

5) Which of the following is your primary profession?

○ Educator   ○ Student
○ Industry Professional   ○ Other (Please specify: [   ])

6) How many professional associations in your field you are a member of?

[   ]

7). When did you first attend an international convention in your professional field?

○ Before 1970   ○ 1970-1979   ○ 1980-1989
○ 1990-1999   ○ 2000-2008

8). On an average, how many conferences do you attend per year?

[   ]

9) In general, who finances your attendance of the conference?

○ Fully paid by myself   ○ Fully paid by my organization
○ Partially by myself and partially by my organization

10) Thank you for your help. We will donate US$1 for each completed reply to whichever charity you select from the list below.

○ Care for Children   ○ Health Unlimited
○ World Wide Fund for Nature

[Submit]

Thank you for your participation!

1 US dollar will be donated to the charity you selected.