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Convention Attendance: A Gender Perspective

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Abstract

The number of people attending conventions is growing worldwide, yet there are gaps in our knowledge of convention attendee behaviour. The existing studies have sought to explain the drivers of convention attendee decisions, yet have not fully investigated how decisions might vary for different groups of attendees, for example males versus females. In particular, there is still an absence of gender-specific research in the convention attendee travel context. Drawing upon social role theory, the purpose of this study was to identify the role that gender might have in the convention attendance decision as a demographic characteristic for market segmentation. In relation to gender, the focus is on males and females in terms of their biological sex.

Underpinned by the Theory of Planned Behaviour, this study was carried out with a two-phase sequential mixed methods research design. The first phase, Belief Elicitation, involved conducting semi-structured interviews with attendees at an international medical association convention in Melbourne. This phase elicited a pool of behavioural, normative and control beliefs from a sample of attendees to understand the salient beliefs underlying the decision to attend or not to attend a future convention. The findings from the Belief Elicitation phase were then used to develop a self-complete questionnaire that was distributed to attendees at two international medical association conventions. The purpose of the Belief Measurement phase was to quantitatively test the strength and importance of the modal salient set of beliefs that emerged in the Belief Elicitation Phase with a larger sample of attendees and to identify the moderating role of gender with regard to intentions to attend association conventions.

The findings from the structural equation modelling revealed that of the potential predictors of intention to attend the next convention, perceived behavioural control emerged as the strongest predictor of convention attendance intention for all respondents. The convention location had a positive relationship with intention to attend a future convention for both men and women; however there was a stronger relationship between subjective norm and intentions for men. The results provide some insights into predicting convention attendance intentions. There are also marketing implications. For example, convention marketers could address the barriers to attendance such as time, money and travel distance by accentuating other benefits to be gained. For instance, marketing to women could emphasise the networking opportunities and being assured about the safety and security of the destination. Marketing to men could highlight the opportunity to present papers to their peers. These results could help convention marketers attract more attendees by creating targeted messages specific to the needs of men and women.

Statement of Originality

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

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Danielle Ramirez

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank the Lord for my life, for giving me vision and guiding my every step of the way. I have experienced Your guidance and blessing throughout this PhD journey. One passage sums it up perfectly: “Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans. In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps” Proverbs 16:3&9.

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List of Publications

Ramirez, D., Laing, J., Weiler, B., & Mair, J. (2010). *Understanding Intentions to Attend a Convention: A Gender Perspective*. Proceedings of the Global Events Congress IV: Events and Festivals Research: State of the Art. Incorporating the 8th AEME Events Management Educators' Forum. Leeds, UK. Centre for Events Management, Leeds Metropolitan University.

Ramirez, D., Laing, J., & Mair, J. (2012). *Gender Differences in the Outcomes of Attending a Future Convention*. Proceedings of the 22nd Annual Conference of the Council for Australasian University Tourism and Hospitality Education (CAUTHE): The New Golden Age of Tourism and Hospitality. Melbourne, Victoria, La Trobe University.

Ramirez, D., Laing, J., & Mair, J. (2013). Exploring Intentions to Attend a Convention: A Gender Perspective. *Event Management, 17*(2), 165-178.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a background to the study, detail the purpose of the research and articulate the contributions to the literature and the industry. The chapter concludes by outlining the overall structure of the thesis.

There is a theoretical gap in our understanding pertaining to the role that gender plays in convention attendee decision-making behaviour. The focus of this thesis is on convention attendance decisions and the role that gender plays in intentions to attend a convention. Exploring this theoretical gap may help explain whether differences exist between men and women's decisions with regard to convention attendance.

Background

The need for people to gather together to communicate and exchange ideas is a significant part of humanity. Archaeologists have found traces of ruins used by tribal cultures as meeting areas to discuss topics of interest such as war plans, peace negotiations and celebrations (Spiller, 2002). During Roman times, public squares were used for political deliberations, judicial discussions, speeches, festivals and other business (Spiller, 2002). When humans began to build settlements, towns and cities, there would be a central location where people could meet for trade and commerce or to hold public meetings (Fenich, 2005). As such, the convention industry, in various forms, has a long history. Prior to railroads and industrialisation, convention activity revolved around agriculture (Ford & Peeper, 2007). In comparison to conventions held at the present time, attendance numbers were low as people were limited by the time it took to travel to the meeting destination and their ability to hear a public speaker's voice and they had fewer reasons to travel to meet and discuss business (Ford & Peeper, 2007).

Conventions are a subset of the business events sector or meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (MICE). Conventions are a forum to share knowledge, hear eminent speakers, learn new skills, disseminate the latest research results, advance education in the field of interest and to network with peers (McCabe, Poole, Weeks, & Leiper, 2000; Rogers, 2003). The benefits of conventions can be broad and far-reaching for the local host community as they can open up new possibilities for repeat visitation, attract accompanying persons, generate economic wealth and produce export orders (Grado, Strauss, & Lord, 1997; Hiller, 1995; Hoyer & Naess, 2001). It has been long recognised that conventions provide significant economic contributions to the host city and country, which is one of the key reasons governments and the private sector have heavily invested in meetings infrastructure (Jones & Li, 2015; Kim, Chon, & Chung, 2003). Another benefit of conventions is that they are held during off-peak seasons, which means that they can assist in overcoming seasonality issues as local economies are supported when there is low leisure tourist demand (Fawzy & Samra, 2008; Locke, 2010). In particular, given that hotels with meeting facilities are frequently used to hold conventions, such establishments not only profit from having their function space booked, but also benefit from attendees staying overnight, typically spending higher prices for room rates compared to holidaymakers (Malek & Kim, 2016).

Convention attendees bring several benefits to a convention destination which can be classified into the tourism benefits such as expenditure on accommodation, restaurants, catering, transportation, retail trade, attractions, souvenirs and other items (Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Veloutsou & Chreppas, 2015). In addition, the success of a convention is often measured by meeting or exceeding attendance forecasts (Fjelstul, Severt, & Breiter, 2009; Yoo & Zhao, 2010). Convention attendees have only recently received attention in the literature, as they are considered to be important players in the industry (Boo, Koh, & Jones, 2008) and thus worthy of examination within the context of convention tourism. (e.g. authors who have focused on attendees include Breiter & Milman, 2006; Hahm, Breiter, Severt, Wang, & Fjelstul, 2016; Lee & Min, 2013; Lee, Choi, & Breiter, 2010; Robinson & Callan, 2005; Tanford, Montgomery, & Nelson, 2012; Whitfield, Dioko, Webber, & Zhang, 2014).

Convention Tourism and Attendees

Convention tourism is a global industry that has become a highly competitive segment of the tourism sector (Campiranon & Arcodia, 2008; Jones & Li, 2015). The amount of research conducted in this area, however, has not kept pace with the industry's growth. Typically, research to date, has concentrated mostly on the supply side, rather than the demand side (Malekmohammadi & Mohamed, 2010). More specifically, it is recognised that there are three key players in the convention industry: associations/meeting planners, host destinations and association members or attendees (Oppermann & Chon, 1997). Most studies in convention literature have focused on meeting planners and their site selection criteria (for example Crouch & Louviere, 2004; DiPietro, Breiter, Rompf, & Godlewska, 2008; Fawzy & Samra, 2008). Meeting planners are actively involved in the convention site selection process and in their execution and are ultimately responsible for the success of the convention (Park, Wu, Shena, Morrison, & Kong, 2014; Robson, 2011). The role of the convention location has also been examined in the literature, with the views of meeting planners tending to dominate this research inquiry (for example Baloglu & Love, 2005; Kang, Suh, & Jo, 2005; Lee, Lee, & Breiter, 2016; Oppermann, 1996b; Park et al., 2014). Association members or attendees have also received some attention in the literature.

Associations are "member-based organisations focused around a common interest such as an industry, a profession, trade union, political party, religion, cultural interest, recreation or hobby, social interest" (Crouch & Louviere, 2004, p. 118). Associations exist to meet their members' needs, commonly by holding conventions that advances their field of interest and satisfy their educational and networking needs (Toh, Peterson, & Foster, 2007). Other aims include making conventions fun, family-friendly, relaxed, enjoyable and memorable for attendees to grow their social circle which in turn may motivate them to keep on attending (Ngamsom & Beck, 2000; Toh et al., 2007). In some cases, conventions have been affected by external influences such as the global economic crisis and the SARs epidemic, however the association convention market is considered to be a relatively stable one that is least responsive to price changes and these types of conventions are generally held during off-peak leisure seasons (McCabe et al., 2000; Oppermann, 1996a). Whilst arguably association convention attendees are fundamental to the industry, we still know little about them.

What we do know is that association attendees have more volitional control over the decision to attend a convention than other types of attendees (such as corporate or government attendees) because they are often the ultimate decision-maker in choosing whether to attend a convention or not (Lee & Back, 2007b). It is also important to note that for some attendees the decision is strongly influenced by factors such as whether their boss will allow them to attend in work time (Lee & Back, 2007b). It is not unusual for people to hold multiple association memberships that present multiple opportunities to attend conventions. The dilemma of having to choose to attend one convention over the other requires careful selection based on gaining the most value (Weber & Ladkin, 2008). Since attendees have many association conventions to choose from, the main challenge for association marketers is to increase attendance numbers (Yoo & Chon, 2010). Therefore associations and planners need to understand the needs of convention attendees to meet expected attendance projections, which is critical to their financial sustainability (Fjelstul et al., 2009; Yoo & Zhao, 2010). Justification for this research stems from the need to examine association convention attendees, in particular how they decide whether to attend a convention or not.

The motivation to attend a convention is often triggered by a call for papers announcement or from an association newsletter (Mair & Thompson, 2009). People may be invited to attend to present as a speaker or they may have the choice between attending and not attending. Before a potential attendee has decided to attend a particular convention, it is conceptualised that they develop pre-convention agendas regarding the benefits or perceived outcomes they would expect to receive as a result of their attendance (Fox & McCormick, 2009). Such agendas can be work related and/or personal. Some of the perceived benefits of attending, include the educational component, networking opportunities and the attractiveness of the destination (Yoo & Zhao, 2010). There are also intervening factors that may or may not be within a potential attendee's control and may have an impact on the decision to attend or not, such as other conventions, time availability, money, family obligations, safety, health status of individual and travel distance (Lam & Hsu, 2006). If at any stage these factors inhibit an individual to attend, they are unlikely to proceed with their convention attendance. Alternatively, if an individual considers the factors and is still in favour of attending, they are likely to pursue registering for the convention.

A number of studies to date have sought to identify the drivers of convention attendance (for example Lee & Back, 2007b; Yoo & Chon, 2008; Yoo & Chon, 2010), however little research to date has focused on whether the drivers of convention attendance vary for different groups of attendees. Mair (2010a) suggests that it would be valuable for future convention researchers to examine demographic differences between attendees to provide a deeper understanding of this important segment of the industry. Since different attendees have various needs and wants, identification of their needs is a prerequisite for effectively developing successful conventions. Research into understanding how attendance decisions might vary for men and women, in particular, is still lacking (Mair & Frew, 2016; Malekmohammadi, Mohamed, & Ekiz, 2011; Ramirez, Laing, & Mair, 2013).

Justification of the Research

While traditionally men have represented the majority of convention attendees, particularly in the scientific industries, the number of women attending conventions continues to rise. Due to this shift in the profile of attendees over the last decade, consideration needs to be given to the needs of female attendees (Hahm et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2016; Tanford & Montgomery, 2015). This study attempts to fill some of this gap by presenting arguments in favour of research that seeks out differences between men and women in their convention attendance. Based on this premise, this study is grounded on the following conceptual and theoretical frameworks.

Conceptual Framework

The study of convention tourism, like other relatively new fields of inquiry, is an interdisciplinary subject area that touches a wide range of related disciplines (Getz & Page, 2016; Park & Park, 2016). Given that research on conventions is still developing, this study draws upon established theories, methodologies and approaches outside the convention tourism-related literature.

When examining gender, it is important to distinguish between the terms sex and gender. Sex refers to the biology of an individual, whether they are a man or woman with regard to the differences in the organs related to reproduction (Caterall & Maclaran, 2002). On the other hand, gender is a constructed category that is based on one's view of oneself (Kim, Lehtob, & Morrison, 2007). Gender refers to the way in which men and women are socialised into male and female roles that are shaped by a society (Caterall & Maclaran, 2002). According to sociological theories, gender is socially constructed through the roles, behaviours, and actions that a society deems to be appropriate for males and females (Henderson, 1994). It is noted that gender can be broader than just males and females, however this is not the focus of this study. This social constructivist perspective suggests that people learn how to behave from those around them as opposed to their biological origins (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Drawing from social role theory, it is proposed that males and females have different roles in our society that are shaped by the unequal division of labour (Eagly & Wood, 1999). Accordingly, gender is considered to be something one "does" through social interactions and relationships with others (Baber & Tucker, 2006). In this socialisation process, individuals are introduced to certain roles that are typically linked to their biological sex (Putrevu, 2001). Gender roles are based on a set of attitudes, behaviours, cultural norms, values or standards created by society (Priola, 2007; Ramkissoon & Nunkoo, 2012). The process of socialisation occurs at a young age whereby children are encouraged to develop a belief system consistent with other people's expectations and social norms pertaining to gender (Palan, 2001; Strapko, Hempel, MacIlroy, & Smith, 2016). To put it simply, society has shared expectations about women and these expectations help to form female gender roles and vice versa for males (Xie, Costa, & Morais, 2008). Behaviour is therefore strongly influenced by gender roles (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015).

Social role theorists contend that women tend to adopt communal roles which are associated with expressive behaviour, sensitivity, friendliness, unselfishness and the concern of both self and others (Eagly & Wood, 1991; Putrevu, 2001). Men tend to adopt agentic roles that relate to independence, self-focused goals, assertiveness and self-efficacy (Putrevu, 2001). These differences in social roles are used to help explain gender-related differences in a range of consumer behaviour contexts such as shopping behaviour, customer loyalty, responses to promotional activity and risk (Saad & Gill, 2000). It is therefore argued that social role theory could be used as a conceptual framework to help explain gender similarities and differences in the convention tourism context. Social role theory appears to fit well with this study, because it assists in the understanding of gendered beliefs, social norms and attitudes in a society and the expectations that are associated with intentions to perform a particular behaviour.

Theoretical Framework

The study of consumer decision-making has stimulated great interest and has occupied a central role in several research areas, particularly in marketing, social psychology, tourism and services (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). A review of the literature indicates that there are alternative views of the way in which consumers make decisions and subsequently a number of theories have been developed (e.g. cognitive decision-making theory, information-processing theory, see Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). One of the theories that has been useful in explaining and predicting human behaviour is Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behaviour (TPB). The TPB is considered to be an established theoretical model that has been widely applied across a range of disciplines, including tourist behaviour (Sparks & Pan, 2009). It is well received by researchers as it assists in the understanding of the travel decision-making process (Lam & Hsu, 2006).

The fundamental tenet of the TPB is that human behaviour can be predicted by three antecedents of behavioural intention: attitudes (a person's evaluation of engaging in a behaviour), subjective norms (the perceived social pressure on a person to perform or not perform a behaviour) and perceived behavioural control (a person's perception of ease or difficulty, or subjective degree of control, over performing the behaviour) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). These three antecedents are influenced by three salient beliefs: behavioural, normative and control beliefs (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). It is postulated that if an individual has a positive attitude, subjective normative influence and perceived behavioural control, they will carry out the behaviour when given the opportunity.

One area of study that has emerged in the last decade is predicting intentions to attend a future convention (Leach, Liu, & Winsor, 2008; Lee & Back, 2008). This research area is of particular interest to associations, meeting planners and destination marketers, as it could provide guidance on how to maximise convention attendance numbers, which is ultimately their primary goal. Importantly, predicting convention attendance decisions can be performed using TPB as a theoretical framework and therefore is suitable to this study. Although the TPB has proven its robustness in a number of contexts e.g. attendance decisions (Alonso, Sakellarios, & Cseh, 2015); travel decisions (Sparks & Pan, 2009); role of gender (Tsai & Coleman, 2005), it would appear that no research using this theory has investigated whether gender differences exist in predicting

future convention attendance. Thus, it is unknown whether salient beliefs or the relative strength of the TPB constructs would differ in relation to gender for convention attendance decisions. We cannot truly claim to understand convention attendee behaviour without exploring the influence of gender.

Contributions to Theory and Industry

In order to deliver a successful convention that caters to the unique needs of all attendees, convention marketers and planners need to understand any differences between how men and women make attendance decisions. In response to Getz and Page's (2016) call for further research pertaining to gender in event tourism, the present study seeks to contribute to the literature on convention attendance decisions from a gender perspective. This research is important, both theoretically and practically.

On a theoretical level, this research extends the current body of knowledge about convention attendee behaviour by examining gender and the multiple factors that influence intentions. Although there have been some studies that have investigated convention attendees, the empirical research on an attendee's decision-making behaviour is still limited.

This study adopts a social sciences perspective to assist in exploring convention attendance decisions with a gender lens. Drawing from social role theory and gender socialisation, this study will provide a more in depth perspective of gender that the current body of convention tourism literature does not offer to date. In addition to key contributions to the tourism literature, this research will add to the ongoing sociological debate about the similarities and differences between men and women in the convention tourism context. Given that this study is seeking to better understand male and female convention attendees, this requires a specific investigation of consumer decision-making. It is suggested that social role theory and its applications in consumer behaviour studies might provide a theoretical contribution to aid in the explanation of convention attendees' decision-making processes from a gender perspective. In order to complement the conceptual foundations of this study, the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) which is grounded on decision-making beliefs, attitudes, intentions and behaviour, is the theoretical framework used.

On a practical level, the research undertaken in this thesis provides marketers with more insight into international association convention attendees with regard to their intention to attend a future convention. Understanding convention attendees and their travel intentions is important to both convention marketers and host destinations. These results will also produce recommendations that can be employed to better meet the expectations of association convention attendees. Findings of the research also provide insights for various convention tourism stakeholders and allow planners to target their key markets more effectively. Meeting planners could segment their attendee database according to gender to create personalised and targeted messages in the pre-convention marketing material.

Purpose of this Study

A review of the literature reveals that although gender is fundamental to market segmentation purposes, research on gender and convention attendance, in particular, is limited to date (Ramirez et al., 2013). Turning to a cognate area, tourism, the moderating role of gender in the tourism industry has only been a central theme in a few studies and there are even fewer examples of how gender moderates tourist expectations (Wang, Qu, & Hsu, 2016). Although there are exceptions, tourism researchers usually gather data pertaining to gender to profile their sample characteristics, but such data is seldom analysed within the context of their study (Mair, 2010a). Studies that have centred their investigations on gender have largely been in the field of leisure tourism and provide some support for the view that differences exist in relation to gender (for example Collins & Tisdell, 2002; Frew & Shaw, 1999; McGehee, Loker-Murphy, & Uysal, 1996; Meng & Uysal, 2008). Such information is integral to tourism marketing activities for segmentation and product development purposes to ensure that the needs of different genders are met (Collins & Tisdell, 2002; Oh, Parks, & Demicco, 2002). However, research on gender differences in convention tourism behaviour is limited and research that explores gender and its influence on convention attendance decision-making is almost non-existent (Ramirez et al., 2013). The purpose of this study therefore is to identify the role that gender might have in the convention attendance decision as a demographic characteristic for market segmentation.

Thesis Structure

This chapter has presented the background to the research study, indicating the purpose and significance of the research. The theoretical orientation was also identified and the prospective contributions of this research to both theory and practice were highlighted. Chapter 1 has outlined the importance and current relevance of the research relating to gender and the convention tourism sector. The proposed structure of the study to be undertaken and an overall summary finalise this introductory chapter.

Chapter 2 critiques previous studies on convention tourism decision-making undertaken in the tourism field, primarily concentrating on the factors that motivate and inhibit convention attendance. The literature presented demonstrates the research conducted to date, exposing debates and areas of conflict amongst scholars and clearly identifies the limitations and gaps. It identifies a theoretical gap in our understanding of the convention decision-making process with regard to gender.

Chapter 3 reviews the relevant literature on gender, particularly focusing on the approaches used in sociology, consumer behaviour and tourism marketing. The conceptual framework that guides this research, social role theory, is discussed with regard to its applicability to this study. The chapter aims to provide evidence to support the need for future gender research in convention tourism and thereby underlines this study's significance.

Chapter 4 discusses the theoretical framework that forms the basis of the research study. The theory of planned behaviour (TPB) is reviewed with regard to its value as a theoretical framework for predicting and explaining human behaviour, thereby adding to the depth of extant knowledge on convention attendee

decision-making from a gender perspective. The chapter begins with an overview of the TPB and its predecessor, the theory of reasoned action (TRA). Tests and extensions of the TPB, as well as its application as a theory of convention attendance and gender, are then reviewed as well as its relevance in the context of the present study. Finally, the objectives of this research, made explicit by the review of the relevant literature, are introduced.

Chapter 5 provides a description and justification of the research design and methods used in this study. It commences by explaining the rationale for the two phase sequential mixed methods research design to achieve the objectives. The first stage consists of a Belief Elicitation phase which involved conducting semi-structured interviews with attendees at a convention to elicit a pool of behavioural, normative and control beliefs to understand the salient beliefs underlying the decision to attend or not to attend a future convention. The second phase, Belief Measurement, involved quantitatively testing the strength and importance of the modal salient set of beliefs that emerged in the Belief Elicitation Phase.

The purpose of Chapter 6 is to describe the methods and procedures that were used to conduct the Belief Elicitation phase. The chapter begins with an explanation of the principles and measurement considerations when conducting Belief Elicitation research according to the TPB. The recruitment, sampling, research sites, research instrument, administration and data analysis procedures are then described. After presenting the beliefs elicited, the chapter finishes with a discussion of the modal salient beliefs that were identified to inform the hypotheses for the next phase of the research.

Chapter 7 begins with an explanation of the principles underlying Belief Measurement research, including a discussion of key methodological issues. This is followed by a description of the research instruments and the sampling and data analysis procedures. The Belief Measurement results are presented, producing an overall measurement model, then the data is separated into two groups (males and females), to produce two comparative models by gender. The results highlight those beliefs whose strength and importance make them pertinent to the convention attendance decision. The role that gender plays in moderating the convention decision-making is discussed.

Drawing on the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that underlie the current study, a discussion of the entire findings is given in Chapter 8. Findings from both the Belief Elicitation and Belief Measurement phases are discussed in an attempt to synthesise the data and meanings behind the findings.

Finally, Chapter 9 concludes the thesis by drawing together and reflecting on the contribution of this study to the current body of knowledge. The implications for theory and academe are contained in this chapter. Limitations and recommendations for future research are also discussed.

Summary

This chapter provides an introduction to the study to set the scene for proceeding chapters. The background, purpose of research and contributions both theoretically and practically are discussed. Finally, an outline on the thesis structure is given to guide readers through the chapters.

Chapter 2: Literature Review – Convention Tourism

The purpose of this chapter is to present a review of the convention tourism literature that has informed the study. This chapter begins with a discussion on the origins of convention tourism, definitions of convention tourism and an overview of convention tourism research to date, including a discussion on convention attendees. The conceptual models and frameworks developed to help explain the convention attendee decision-making process are examined, followed by an examination of the drivers of convention attendance. The chapter concludes by exposing a theoretical gap in the literature relating to the role of gender in the convention attendance decision.

History of Convention Tourism

The origins of the convention industry stem from North America and Europe, as a result of the growth in industrialisation (Rogers, 2003). Business people and professionals began to recognise the need to convene in meeting facilities for commercial purposes. Additionally, individuals who belonged to interest groups would meet for political, religious or recreational reasons. Thus, professional membership-based associations were created that began to hold regular meetings and annual conferences for their members (Rogers, 2003; Weber & Chon, 2002). The need to communicate for trade and commerce spurred the investment in meeting rooms and convention facilities to accommodate people who regularly congregated with their peers. Heavy investments were therefore made to build convention infrastructure during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Spiller, 2002). As more and more cities became aware of the value in hosting conventions, dedicated sales teams were created to generate convention business for destinations (Rogers, 2003). The continual need to have updated information provides a strong platform for conventions to be used as a vehicle for dissemination of knowledge. Today, convention tourism is a global industry that yields significant contributions to local and national economies with regard to generation of income, employment and investment (Jones & Li, 2015). This has resulted in heightened levels of competition among host destinations as they are vying with each other to garner a major piece of the conventions market (de Lara & Har, 2008; Locke, 2010).

Developments in the USA

The pioneer of the convention tourism industry was the United States and the inception of the sector can be traced back to the first convention bureau in Detroit in 1896 (Ford & Peeper, 2007). Detroit had a combination of local industry interest (from hotels, transport agencies, retailers and others) and organisations with the desire to hold meetings which led to the creation of the convention bureau (Ford & Peeper, 2007). Convention Bureaux were then established by other cities such as Cleveland, Atlantic City, Denver, St Louis, Louisville and Los Angeles mainly due to their accessibility (Rogers, 2003). The United States has been at the forefront of convention centre construction ever since, with at least one purpose-built convention centre in most states having the capacity to host large events. As awareness increased with regard to how convention tourism yields important economic benefits, more destinations began to compete for business within the USA and this has subsequently led to North America holding a sizeable market share of national and international conventions

globally (Carlsen, 1995). Figures released by the Convention Industry Council in 2011 show that the meetings industry contributes $907 billion to the US economy, with 205 million attendees participating in 1.8 million conventions, conferences, congresses, exhibitions, incentive events and corporate/business events (Convention Industry Council, 2011).

Developments in Europe

During the 1960s, the convention industry in Western Europe began to grow as a result of steady infrastructure investment to accommodate conventions. The growth of international associations also influenced industry developments (Spiller, 2002). A number of factors facilitated the development of the convention industry, in parallel to tourism in general, such as the increase in wealth, leisure time and advances in transportation industry and technology (Weber & Chon, 2002). The historical opening of Eastern Europe and the fall of the Berlin Wall had a considerable impact on the convention industry, as more cities in Europe became interested in hosting international conventions. Historically, the primary providers of convention facilities were seaside resorts in the United Kingdom and in the 1980s, purpose-built convention centres began to emerge (Weber & Ladkin, 2003). The United Kingdom was particularly active in sourcing government funding towards the construction of convention centres as a means to boost local economies, because of the decline of seaside resorts, which led to accelerated growth in the industry. In 2016, the UK conference and meetings industry was estimated to be worth £19.9 billion, with local meetings and conventions being the key drivers of economic benefit for venues (Business Visits & Events Partnership, 2016).

Developments in the Asia Pacific

In addition to the investments made to support the convention industry in North America and Europe, large-scale infrastructure developments have also been occurring in the Asia Pacific Region over the last decade (Rogers, 2003). Despite the fragile world economic situation in recent years, the Asia Pacific and Middle Eastern region's international association meetings industry experienced a 3.1% increase in market share in the last 15 years, to the detriment of Europe (International Congress and Convention Association, 2013). According to the International Congress and Convention Association's (ICCA) CEO, Martin Sirk, this is "a testament to the underlying strength of the region's economies, and to its increasing influence as a location for innovation, research and development, and all manner of high-tech creativity" (International Congress and Convention Association, 2011). The Asian convention industry has been successful in leveraging on the leisure tourism sector and through additional government investment has built numerous large scale convention and exhibition centres (Park et al., 2014). There are now a number of world-class convention centres in the region, including the Singapore International Convention and Exhibition Centre (SICEC), the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC), the Queen Sirikit National Convention Centre in Bangkok, Coex Convention and Exhibition Centre in Korea and the Tokyo International Forum (Kim et al., 2003; Qu, Li, & Kei Tat Chu, 2000; Spiller, 2002). The Asian convention industry particularly benefits from high standards of conference facilities, service, administration, technology and innovation and a well-educated English-speaking labour force in addition to an increasing supply of hotel rooms (MacLaurin & Leong, 2000; Spiller, 2002).

Developments in Australia

An overview of the Australian business events industry (or convention tourism industry as it is referred to in other countries) is presented in Figure 2.1. The illustration shows that Australia's business events industry began in the mid-1970s when representatives from the tourism and media sector decided that Australia should recognise the need to enter the global meetings industry which was booming in Europe and the United States (Lloyd, 1997). They subsequently formed the first Australian professional meetings association, known as the Association of Conference Executives (ACE), which set out to develop industry standards, provide education for planners and monitor trends in the size and scope of the industry (Lloyd, 1997). As the convention tourism industry continued to expand worldwide, Australian convention bureaux were formed and industry suppliers including airlines, hotels and tourism operators placed more resources in attracting visitors.

It was not until the 1980s that the first purpose built convention centre was constructed in Hobart (Dwyer & Mistilis, 1999). The convention industry accelerated with convention centres in Adelaide and Sydney, followed by Melbourne and Brisbane (Weber & Ladkin, 2003). However, it is argued that the Australian convention tourism industry was neglected until the early 1990s due to the lack of government support and investment (McCabe et al., 2000).

The industry was recognised in the National Tourism Strategy (1992), which initiated the development of the national strategy for the business events industry in 1995, albeit a change of government led to its withdrawal a year later (McCabe et al., 2000; Weber & Ladkin, 2003). The strategy played a crucial role in identifying key issues in ensuring the long-term growth of the industry, especially in terms of its economic benefits for Australia (McCabe et al., 2000). While the 1990s witnessed further infrastructure growth, the expansion of the exhibition industry and advances in internet and technology competition came from neighbouring countries, particularly in Asia. The Commonwealth Government commissioned a study in the late 1990s to provide an indication on the economic value of the industry in response to the lack of data available. At the time, this study, Meetings Make their Mark (1999), provided the most detailed summation of the sector.

At the turn of the century, convention tourists were becoming recognised for their role in producing tourism export dollars for the nation and the government saw the need to have a more recent assessment of the industry's size and economic contribution. The National Business Events Study (2005) was therefore initiated, which provided a more comprehensive view of the industry compared to the 1995 publication. Not only did the convention and exhibition market grow due to Australia's effort in bidding for more international events, but this decade saw the emergence of the corporate incentive market. During this time, the Federal Government's Tourist Division produced the first paper on the national meetings industry to provide direction for the future of the sectors (Business Events Industry Strategy Group, 2008). The purpose of the Strategy was to address the industry's concerns about how Australia is performing internationally as a result of the global financial crisis, climate change and competition. The Strategy provides recommendations to government to ensure the sustainable development of Australia's business events sector.

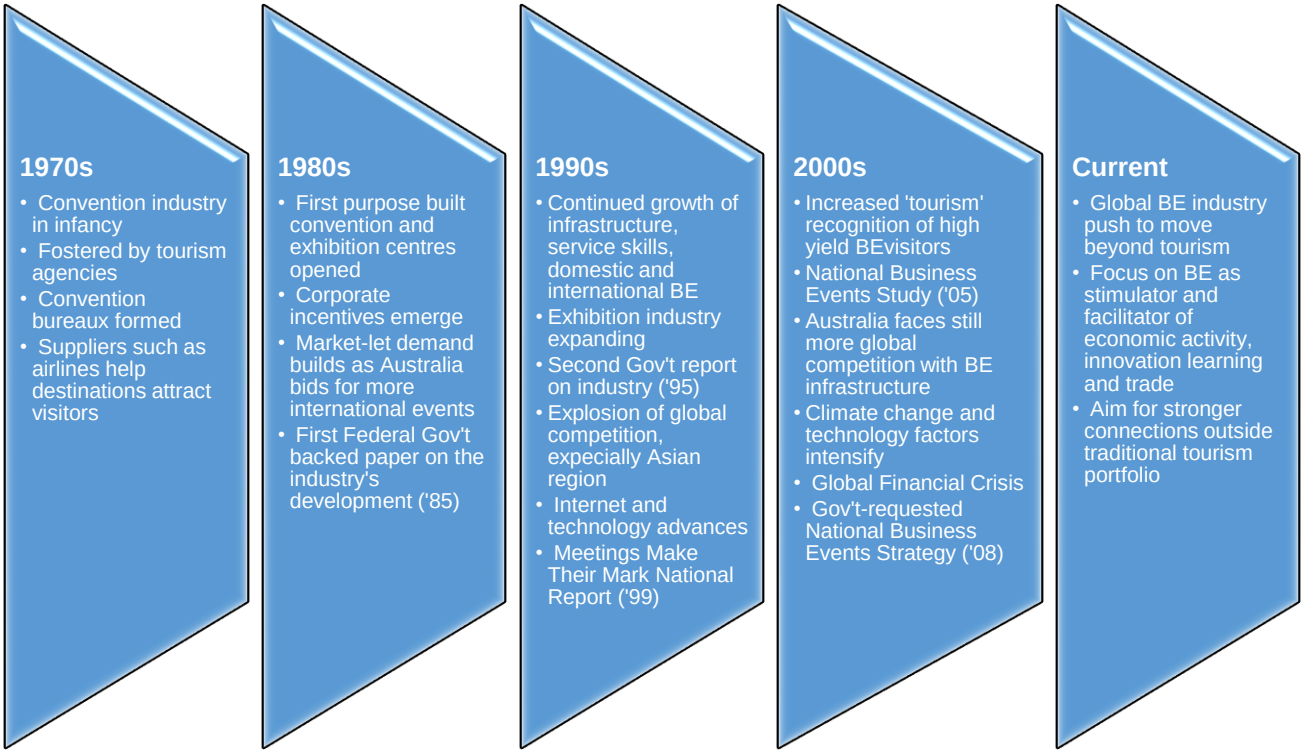


Figure 2.1: History of the Australian Business Events Industry (Jago & Deery, 2010)

Today, Australia has received worldwide recognition for its quality of convention and exhibition facilities and has been successful in attracting millions of attendees (Lawrence & McCabe, 2001). Convention and exhibition centres have been built in regional areas as well as major cities including Darwin, the Gold Coast and Alice Springs (Lawrence & McCabe, 2001). Although Australia's share of international conventions has been declining since 2003 (reported to be at 2.1% in 2012), the number of international association meetings held between 2008 and 2012 was at an all-time high of 1,140 (International Congress and Convention Association, 2013). This growth can be attributed to the increase in the number of inbound visitors attending conventions (Weber & Ladkin, 2003). Specifically, more than 176,400 international visitors attended a convention in Australia during the year ending 31 December 2013, with the primary markets being New Zealand, USA and China (Business Events Australia, 2013).

There is, however, fierce competition from the Asian market, particularly Singapore, Hong Kong, Korea, Malaysia and China, as these destinations are continuing to engage in more aggressive marketing, substantially improved infrastructure and increasing financial contributions towards securing large conventions (MacLaurin & Leong, 2000; McCabe et al., 2000). The business events market in Australia also faces other international impediments, such as being perceived as a long haul destination, considered to be expensive due to the strong Australian dollar and the cost of labour (Business Events Industry Strategy Group, 2008). Essentially, the future growth of Australia's convention industry depends on whether the industry can overcome the challenges and stay competitive by increasing the number of conventions and in turn the number of attendees.

To set the scene for this study, the following section discusses the definitions of convention tourism, the benefits and the types of convention tourism events, with a focus on the associations market.

Defining Conventions and Convention Tourism

There are many variations in how the term 'convention' or 'conference' is defined, however it is said to originate from the Latin word *conferentia* which means to bring together (Spiller, 2002). The majority of definitions describe a convention as a forum to share knowledge, hear eminent speakers, learn new skills, gain accreditation points to keep a professional certification or rating, disseminate the latest research results, advance education in the field of interest and to network with peers (McCabe et al., 2000; Rogers, 2003). The term 'convention' is commonly used interchangeably with conference, symposia, congress and meetings where attendance is the primary purpose of travel (Hiller, 1995; Oppermann, 1996a).

There are a number of ways that industry practitioners and scholars define convention tourism. Generally, convention tourism is recognised to be a subset of the business events sector or meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (MICE) (Campiranon & Arcodia, 2008). According to Oppermann (1996a), convention tourism and business tourism are interrelated, whereby the business component supersedes any other component such as leisure. It must be noted that the body of literature pertaining to business tourism has not been drawn on as this is beyond the scope of this study and the difference between business tourism and convention tourism is acknowledged. In addition to the variations of how convention tourism is defined, the sector itself is referred to by other names in different parts of the world (Locke, 2010). In Australia it is known as the business events sector, in Europe it is called the meetings industry, whereas in North America and Asia it is recognised as the MICE sector (Dwyer, Deery, Jago, Spurr, & Fredline, 2007). Whilst these terms appear to be different, they incorporate the same types of events. Business events has been selected as the most appropriate name to describe the sector for this study as the researcher is Australian.

It is important to note that business events are different to other types of events such as festivals, sporting, cultural and community events that have become major draw cards for destinations (Jago & Deery, 2010). Business events can require convention and exhibition centres or hotels in addition to smaller more private venues, including restaurants or resorts (Getz & Page, 2016). Whilst business events may sometimes be held in conjunction with major events, they operate in a different way, have a different purpose, draw on different resources and produce different outcomes (Jago & Deery, 2010; Sperstad & Cecil, 2011). For instance, festivals and other cultural events are less reliant on venues; as such, they can be held in parks, streets, theatres, concert halls and all other public or private facilities (Getz & Page, 2016). Festivals can be held for public celebrations to create a sense of community pride, involvement, fun, enjoyment and entertainment (Sperstad & Cecil, 2011; Yolal, Çetinel, & Uysal, 2009). Sporting events generally require special-purpose facilities including arenas and stadiums to showcase amateur or professional sport for the purpose of competition and spectator enjoyment (Getz & Page, 2016). The potential outcomes of attending a business event are shown in more detail in Figure 2.2 and will be discussed further on page 29.

Benefits of Convention Tourism

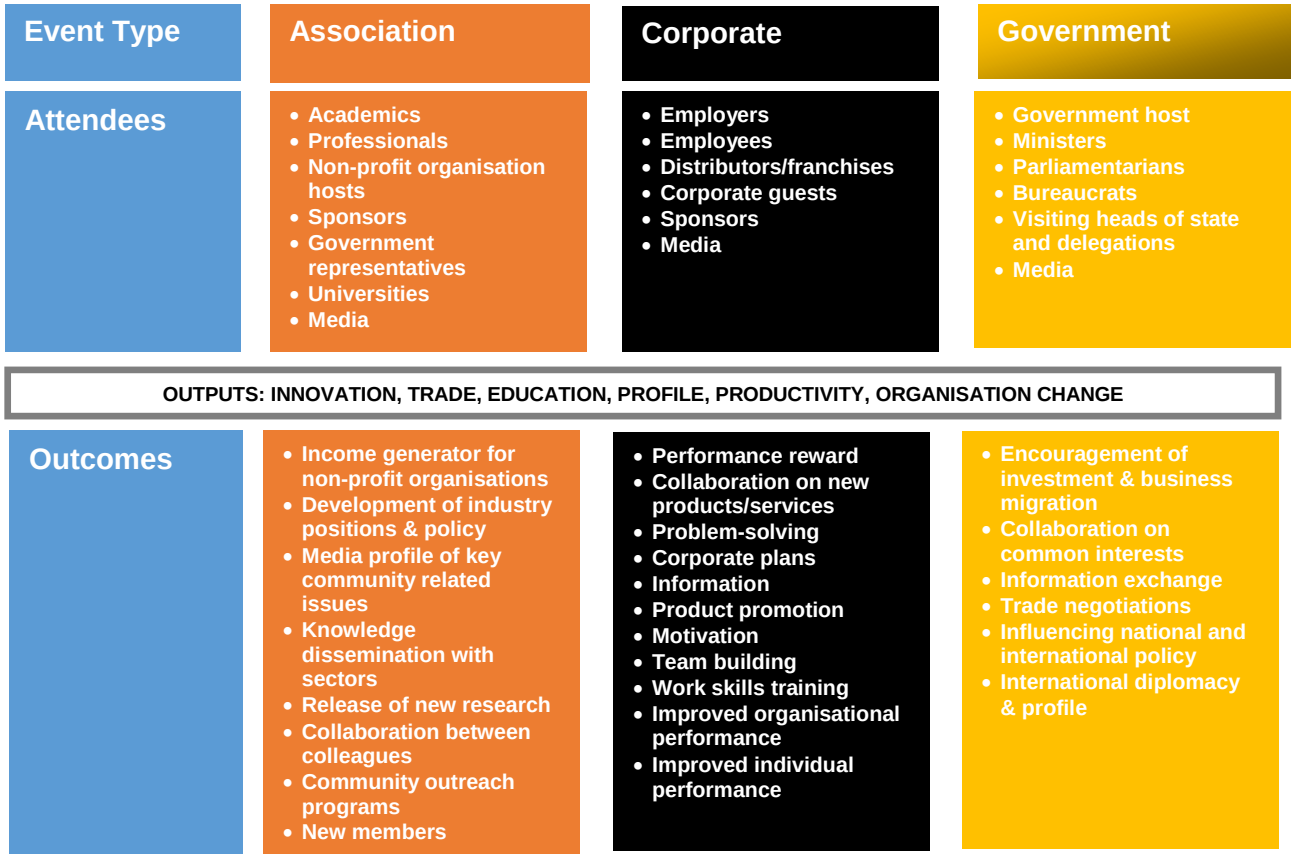


Figure 2.2: Business Events Pipeline (modified from Jago & Deery, 2010)

The NBES2020 (2008) states that business events, including conventions, represent a multi-billion-dollar industry which showcases Australian expertise and innovation, and attracts global leaders, international attendees, and key decision-makers, many of whom are first time visitors and would not have otherwise travelled to Australia. International attendees, in particular, are often regarded as being high yield visitors, due to their high-spending potential; subsequently, they are a desirable tourism segment to any destination (Campiranon & Arcodia, 2008). Attendees bring several economic benefits to the convention destination through their expenditure on accommodation, restaurants, transportation, attractions, souvenirs and other items (Oppermann & Chon, 1997). Benefits can also be felt in surrounding regional areas when attendees undertake a pre or post trip in locations other than the convention destination.

Importantly, given that the majority of conventions are held during off-peak seasons, conventions can assist in overcoming seasonality issues as local economies are supported when there is low leisure tourist demand (Fawzy & Samra, 2008; Locke, 2010). In particular, given that hotels with meeting facilities are frequently used to hold conventions, such establishments not only profit from having their function space booked, but also benefit from attendees staying overnight, typically spending higher prices for room rates compared to holidaymakers (Malek & Kim, 2016). According to the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA), meeting facilities within hotels are the most popular type of venue to host an event, followed by a conference and/or exhibition centre (International Congress and Convention Association, 2013). This trend is

likely to be a result of the improvements in the standard of international hotels and the options they provide in terms of conferencing facilities.

The benefits of conventions can be broad and far-reaching for the local host community as they can open up new possibilities for repeat visitation, attract accompanying persons, generate economic wealth and produce export orders (Grado et al., 1997; Business Events Industry Strategy Group, 2008; Hiller, 1995; Hoyer & Naess, 2001). In fact, it has been long recognised that conventions provide significant economic contributions to the host city and country, which is one of the key reasons governments and the private sector have heavily invested in meetings infrastructure (Jones & Li, 2015; Kim et al., 2003). Whilst the 'tourism impact' of conventions is very important for host destinations, it represents only a portion of the total value of conventions (Grado et al., 1997). Rarely, however are the benefits assessed beyond the tourism perspective, in terms of their ability to deliver innovation and knowledge (Jago & Deery, 2012). Conventions are a catalyst for facilitating international trade and cultural ties, promoting destinations, developing civic pride and assisting in the development of the local industry (Cooper, 1999; Crouch & Louviere, 2004). These key benefits will now be discussed with examples of specific conventions.

Facilitate international trade and cultural ties

Conventions provide opportunities for the local industry to gain exposure to potential international buyers through exhibitions, which form an important component of many conventions in terms of revenue (Deery, Jago, Fredline, & Dwyer, 2005; Rittichainuwat & Mair, 2012a). Through exhibitions and commercial sponsorship, conventions help drive and create new export dollars for host destinations by encouraging trade products and services. In such cases, conventions promote cultural exchanges of information among members and between other professional practitioners and facilitate international trade between countries (Jago & Deery, 2010). According to the Business Events Council of Australia (BECA), the 2009 annual conference of the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association (AAPEA) in Darwin helped lift the Northern Territory's profile in the international oil and gas community. This was important for the positioning of Darwin as hub of oil and gas in the region to both a local and international audience. The Northern Territory Government took the opportunity to meet with key industry stakeholders that were attracted to Darwin for APPEA: these meetings established new relationships and strengthened existing ones. As a result, the conference provided an optimal opportunity for the Northern Territory government to meet with industry stakeholders to discuss investment and to ultimately generate business migration.

Promote destinations

Holding conventions are highly beneficial for destinations not only from a tourism perspective but from an urban development perspective (Jones & Li, 2015). Conventions and exhibition facilities contribute to a destination's infrastructure development at a national and local level, often requiring support from both the public and private sectors (Jones & Li, 2015). Conventions also assist in raising a destination's international profile and prestige in specific professions, trades and industries. Securing major conventions can offer

prestige and media coverage for the association, local organisations/or centres involved and the destination (Foley, Schlenker, Edwards, & Lewis-Smith, 2013). Moreover, by hosting a convention, a destination can demonstrate that it is a key player in the sector, capable of staging large scale conventions and this, in turn, is likely to have a positive impact on the international community in the field. For instance, the Fifth Annual Scientific Meeting of the International Society for Stem Cell Research was held in Cairns in 2007. It was the first time the meeting had been held outside North America and in Australia, attracting 1,900 attendees. According to the NBES (Business Events Industry Strategy Group, 2008, p. 6), "hosting the meeting highlighted Australia's leadership position internationally in this area of research and enhanced collaborative opportunities with other countries particularly in North America and Europe. As a result…extensive international and local media coverage disseminated the latest news on stem cell research".

Assists in the development of the local industry

Conventions can have a positive social impact on the local community such as contributing to employment, supporting infrastructure and facilities increasing the educational standards (Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999; UNWTO, 2014). More specifically, depending on the volume of conventions at any destination, there is a direct impact on retaining the local workforce and creating new jobs that can range from tourism infrastructure construction to hospitality service offerings to transportation (Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999; UNWTO, 2014). As previously mentioned, conventions can also support the local infrastructure such occupying hotel beds, dining at restaurants and visiting attractions that may have been operating at low capacities (Jarumaneerat, Al-Sabbahy, & Jones, 2007). Importantly, given that travel distance can be an inhibitor of convention attendance (Ngamsom & Beck, 2000; Yoo & Zhao, 2010), in some cases, if it were not for a convention being held in a particular destination, participants would not benefit from the exposure of new knowledge being shared that can result in the improvement of educational standards in the scholarly community (Foley et al., 2013). For early career researchers and postgraduate students in particular, it may be quite some time before they're able to travel internationally to attend a convention (unless they receive a scholarship), but when one is held in their home town they can be exposed to new ideas, concepts and recent developments in the industry which in turn improves the quality of education in their discipline (Foley et al., 2013).

Another case study in the NBES (2008) is the 7th World Congress of Neuroscience (IBRO) held in Melbourne in 2007 which was hosted by the Australian Neuroscience Society to address new frontiers in human brain research. The congress attracted 2,289 people and was held at a pivotal period for neuroscience in Australia, which saw the establishment of the Florey Neuroscience Institute in Melbourne through an amalgamation of the Howard Florey Institute, the Brain Research Institute and the National Stroke Research Institute. An additional 20 scientific meetings involving international and Australian speakers were also held at the time in areas including Sydney, Darwin and Cairns.

In order to better understand the convention tourism sector, the following discussion provides a background on the types of events commonly held.

Types of Events in Convention Tourism

There are typically three types of events within convention tourism, each attracting different attendees and producing different outcomes. These consist of association, corporate and government events. Figure 2.2 summarises the types of events, attendees and key outcomes based on the Australian business events industry.

Association events are those attended by members who share a common goal or purpose which has led them to join a society, educational institution or social group (Deery et al., 2005). This group of attendees consist of academics, professionals, representatives from non-for profit organisations, sponsors, members of government, universities and at times media. Association events can produce significant outcomes to progress knowledge in the field of interest, develop industry positions and policies, increase the profile of the field through the media, generate income for non-profit organisations, foster collaboration between attendees, instigate community outreach programs and create new members for the association (Foley et al., 2013; Hahm et al., 2016; Henn & Bathelt, 2015).

Another type of event is a corporate event where employees, partners or shareholders of a commercial operation attend an event that is paid for by their employer, and where attendance is often mandatory (Bonn, Brand, & Ohlin, 1994; Jarumaneerat et al., 2007). Such events are held for different purposes than association events. Corporate events are used to reward staff for high performance levels, allow companies to collaborate on new products or services, foster problem-solving, inform participants about company business plans, provide opportunities for team building, allow for training and development to occur and motivate teams for improved productivity (Deery et al., 2005).

The third type of event, government events, attracts groups of public servants, elected officials and services provided by government departments/entities (Jago & Deery, 2010). Again, the outcomes of attending a government event differ from both association and corporate events. Government events provide a means to encourage investment and business migration, promote collaboration amongst attendees with common interests, facilitate the transfer of information, hold trade negotiations, influence policies at the national and international levels and increase a destination's diplomacy and profile (Jago & Deery, 2010).

Attendance at association, corporate and government events is often difficult to quantify. In Australia, it is estimated that 52% of people attending events are corporate attendees, 29% are association attendees and 19% are government attendees (Deery et al., 2005). Since the focus of this study is on conventions and most conventions are held by an association, (although private corporations may run their own in-house conventions or commercial events), association conventions will be discussed further.

The following section of the chapter will review how convention tourism research has progressed to date, particularly in terms of research on attendees, given that they are a key focus for associations, and will identify gaps in the literature.

Key Players in the Convention Tourism Industry

While globally convention tourism is considered to be a growing and lucrative tourism industry segment, the amount of research conducted in the area has not kept pace with the growth (Crouch & Louviere, 2004; Jarumaneerat et al., 2007; Lee & Back, 2005a; Mair, 2010a; McCabe et al., 2000; Oppermann, 1996a; Yoo & Weber, 2005). Nonetheless, the growing body of convention tourism research is a testament to its importance for academics and practitioners alike (Jago & Deery, 2005; Yoo & Weber, 2005).

Empirically the focus has been on convention site selection (Crouch & Louviere, 2004; Fawzy & Samra, 2008), the economic value of conventions (Dwyer et al., 2007; Hanly, 2012; Kim et al., 2003), the role of destination image (Kang et al., 2005), the evolution of the industry (Spiller, 2002), trends in the industry (Owen, 1992; Weber & Ladkin, 2005), progress in convention tourism research (Lee & Back, 2005a; Mair, 2010b, 2012; Yoo & Weber, 2005), exhibitions (Jung, 2005; Lee & Palakurthi, 2013; Lee & Lee, 2014; Rittichainuwat & Mair, 2012a; Whitfield et al., 2014), tradeshows/fairs (Kang & Schrier, 2010, 2011; Luo & Zhong, 2016; Smith, Hama, & Smith, 2003) and convention bureau operations (Ford & Peeper, 2007; Morrison, Bruen, & Anderson, 1998). While these areas of research are all important to the development of both the field and industry, it is recognised that there are three key players in the convention tourism industry: associations/meeting planners, host destinations and association members or attendees (Oppermann & Chon, 1997). A discussion of the literature on associations will follow, then meeting planners, attendees and later choice of the destination or convention location.

Association Conventions

Associations can be defined as “member-based organisations focused around a common interest such as an industry, a profession, trade union, political party, religion, cultural interest, recreation or hobby, social interest” (Crouch & Louviere, 2004, p. 118). Examples of international association conventions include: The World Forum on Early Care and Education, International Symposium on Bilingualism, International Congress of World Federation of Hemophilia and the International Conference on Nanostructured Materials. Hosting professional association conventions can enhance the profile and reputation of an association, particularly if the convention is held regularly and internationally (Borghans, Romans, & Sauermann, 2010). Associations exist to accommodate the interests and activities of their members (Toh et al., 2007). Some of the objectives for associations include providing opportunities for information exchange, assisting members with educational training and professional development and being a change agency to challenge current thinking and stimulate new ideas to further the industry (Arcodia & Reid, 2003, 2004). Associations also aim to make conventions fun, family-friendly, relaxed, enjoyable and memorable for attendees to grow their social circle which in turn may motivate them to keep on attending (Ngamsom & Beck, 2000; Toh et al., 2007).

Conventions provide the largest proportion of revenue for some operators, particularly convention centres, as almost all associations are constitutionally bound to meet at regular intervals, which make them very attractive to destination marketers (Deery et al., 2005). Most international associations confirm their destination years in advance (some up to four years) and thus are less likely to cancel their meetings compared to corporate or government events (Comas & Moscardo, 2005; Toh et al., 2007). Additionally, the association convention market is considered to be slightly more stable than corporate meetings, which are more likely to be affected by external influences, such as the global economic crisis, that can affect their business operations (Jago, Mair, Deery, & Bergin-Seers, 2008; McCabe et al., 2000).

Association conventions are most frequently viewed as an investment for a given purpose. Since attendees have many association conventions to choose from, the main challenge for association marketers is to increase attendance numbers (Yoo & Chon, 2010). Ultimately, the status of a convention and the association organising the convention is important to attendees due to the positive outcomes of attending (Jarumaneerat et al., 2007). Such benefits include networking with some of the brightest minds impacting their field, receiving constructive feedback about their research or being able to say that their work is of high quality by participating in the convention (Borghans et al., 2010; Jarumaneerat et al., 2007). In essence, association convention planners are charged with meeting the needs of their members by holding a convention that advances their field of interest and satisfies their educational and networking needs. It is therefore imperative that they understand how attendees make participation decisions in order to provide maximum benefits to their association members (Fjelstul, Severt, & Breiter, 2010). It is not enough to simply plan and execute an enjoyable convention. Holding a convention is an opportunity for associations to strengthen their membership base through retaining existing members and recruiting new members (Arcodia & Reid, 2003). Importantly, a convention can generate the largest source of revenue for an association until the next convention (Hahm et al., 2016). Research into the association convention market is thus necessary to ensure that the industry is sustainable.

Meeting Planners

Typically, convention tourism research, to date, has focused on the supply side rather than the demand side (Malekmohammadi & Mohamed, 2010). A examination of convention tourism literature also shows that much of the focus has been on the meeting planner's perspective (Mair, 2012). In Lee and Back's (2005a) review of convention tourism articles published from 1990 to 2003, research on meeting planners dominated the field of enquiry with the key theme being their site selection criteria (Baloglu & Love, 2005; Crouch & Ritchie, 1997; Kang et al., 2005; Severt & Palakurthi, 2008). Meeting planners are actively involved in the convention site selection process, their execution and are ultimately responsible for the success of the convention (Park et al., 2014; Robson, 2011). One of the most extensive investigations was done by Crouch and Ritchie (1997), who formulated a conceptual model of the site selection process. Crouch and Louviere (2003) estimated the effect of 20 different convention attributes on site selection using a choice experiment. The attributes used in the study were based on important attributes identified in convention literature and surveys collected from association meeting planners. The most significant attribute was proximity of the convention, meaning that the

desirability of the site location increases if it is to be held close to where association members' reside. Some of the other important attributes included having on-site accommodation, cost of the convention venue and food quality, all of which were critical to the site choice decision. While the exact criteria differs from study to study, there is agreement on the broad categories of site selection factors consisting of cost, venue facilities, destination factors, reputation for hosting successful events, accessibility, quality of service and safety and security (Comas & Moscardo, 2005; Crouch & Louviere, 2004; DiPietro et al., 2008; Elston & Draper, 2012; Oppermann, 1996b).

It is also noteworthy to mention that scholars have investigated meeting planners in terms of their relationship with destination marketing organisations (DMOs) (Lee et al., 2016), satisfaction with hotels (Hilliard & Baloglu, 2008; Oh, Kim, & Hong, 2009), social responsibility (Aksu, Şahin, Öztürk, & Gültekin, 2016; Han & Hwang, 2016; Rittichainuwat & Mair, 2012b; Tinnisha & Mangala, 2012) and technology (Lee, 2011; Lee & Choi, 2009; Sox, Campbell, Kline, Strick, & Crews, 2016). The role of the convention location has been examined in the literature, with meeting planners tending to dominate this research inquiry (Baloglu & Love, 2005; Kang et al., 2005; Lee et al., 2016; Oppermann, 1996b; Park et al., 2014). One study by Baloglu and Love (2005) found significant differences between association meeting planners' perceptions of five US convention cities and their intentions to recommend them. Although it is beyond the scope of this study to review each of these contributions in detail, overall the literature appears to provide more practical empirical studies about holding conventions as opposed to conceptual examples. As such, there is a dearth of research in this field of enquiry relating to attendees and a paucity of conceptual frameworks in relation to how professional learning occurs at conventions (Fox & McCormick, 2009; Hatcher, Wiesner, Storberg-Walker, & Chapman, 2006). An examination of the literature on convention attendees follows.

Attendees

A convention attendee has been defined by Jarumaneerat et al. (2007) as an individual who is present at a convention, attends the educational sessions and/or visits the exhibition. Corporate and government attendees are generally obligated to attend a convention by their employer (Jarumaneerat et al., 2007). However, association attendees are generally not required to attend a convention to fulfil employment requirements (Jarumaneerat et al., 2007; Ngamsom & Beck, 2000). It must be noted, however, that some association convention attendees may be an active member of the organisation hosting the event (i.e. part of the international scientific committee) and in such cases, attendance at a convention would be expected. Essentially, association attendees are often, although not always, the key decision-maker in deciding whether they should attend an upcoming convention or not (Lee & Back, 2007b). The decision to attend a convention can be difficult for some people who may have vested interests in many associations. Sometimes people simply have to choose between conventions because they overlap with each other or with other commitments. It is not uncommon for people to opt out of attending a convention in order to attend a potentially better one based on gaining the most value (Weber & Ladkin, 2008).

Since the success of a convention is often measured by meeting or exceeding attendance forecasts, association meeting planners are focused on attracting attendees to participate in their convention (Rittichainuwat, Beck, & LaLopa, 2001). Associations are therefore having to become more strategic in marketing their convention to potential attendees in an effort to meet attendance projections, which are critical to their financial operation (Fjelstul et al., 2009; Yoo & Zhao, 2010). Without attendees, it would be difficult to continually hold a convention, generate sponsors, attract exhibitors and obtain the commitment from keynote speakers to present. Convention bureaux and destination marketers have also recognised the importance of helping planners draw local, national and especially overseas attendee visitation for the benefit of the entire sector.

Scholars who have examined attendees have largely focused on association attendees because they are the key decision-maker in choosing to attend a convention. While attendees are arguably vital to the continued existence of the convention industry, they have been one of the most under-researched areas of investigation in scholarly journals (Boo et al., 2008; Fawzy, 2009; Leach et al., 2008; Lee & Back, 2005a; Mair & Frew, 2016; Yoo & Weber, 2005). As observed by Mair and Thompson (2009, p. 400), "it appears that the conference market is being defined primarily from the supply side, with little attention being paid to individual conference delegates and their needs and wants". A review of convention tourism research from 1990 to 2003 found that only eight out of 137 articles focused on convention attendees across this 14 year period, making it the least published research theme out of the five themes identified (Lee & Back, 2005a). Convention attendees have received attention in the last decade, in particular, as they have been recognised to be instrumental to the survival of the industry (Boo et al., 2008) and therefore require more investigation (see for example Breiter & Milman, 2006; Hahm et al., 2016; Lee & Min, 2013; Lee et al., 2010; Tanford et al., 2012; Whitfield et al., 2014).

Most association conventions are highly dependent upon repeat attendees. If the convention fulfils the needs of the attendee, satisfaction and return attendance will generally result (Bauer, Law, Tse, & Weber, 2008; Lee & Back, 2008). It is thought that association meeting planners could gain a competitive edge by seeking to increase engagement, develop a deeper connection between the attendee and the convention and retain frequent attendees by introducing reward programs to facilitate "convention loyalty" which ideally will lead to repeat attendance (Tanford & Montgomery, 2015). Immediate rewards that directly relate to the convention expenses such as deductions from flights, accommodation and/or registration are recommended according to Tanford and Montgomery's (2015) exploratory study. Essentially, without identifying and understanding the factors that might influence people to attend a convention, effective marketing is impossible. As noted by Yoo and Zhao (2010), associations must understand the factors that facilitate convention attendance amongst potential attendees and the rationale for putting a convention on the 'not to be missed' list. Understanding the association convention attendee, how they make decisions and the factors that influence these decisions would benefit conference organisers and meeting planners whose revenue depends on attendance levels (Lee & Back, 2005a). An examination of the available literature in this field supports a focus on association attendees for this study.

The following section of the chapter provides a review of research carried out to date on drivers of association convention attendance and participation decision-making frameworks.

Convention Attendees and Drivers of Attendance

As discussed, the convention tourism research that exists has focused on a relatively narrow list of topics, primarily motivations and barriers to attendance (e.g. Severt, Wang, Chen, & Breiter, 2007). Extant convention attendee research has sought to understand the factors affecting participation decision-making, primarily through the development of models and measurement scales.

Oppermann and Chon (1997) were the first to propose a conceptual framework depicting the factors that influence convention participation decision-making. Their model was based on a review of empirical findings from previous convention tourism literature and illustrates the process from the individual's need recognition stage through to arriving at the attendance decision (see Figure 2.3). They argue that convention attendance decision-making process is very similar to the general tourism destination decision-making process because of the discretionary nature of convention travel, and the 'push' and 'pull' factors that influence attendees (Oppermann & Chon, 1997). In this context the 'push' factor drives an individual to attend a convention perhaps because of the desire to meet like-minded people or the need to escape (Malekmohammadi et al., 2011). By contrast, the 'pull' factors might be the conference topic, previous experience, accessibility, attractiveness of the convention destination or the travel distance (Malekmohammadi et al., 2011).

The convention journey commonly starts with a trigger from external stimuli like an email issuing a call for papers, an advertisement in a journal or through word-of-mouth from a colleague (Mair & Thompson, 2009). This awareness then poses two choices on a potential attendee: whether to attend a convention and if so, which convention to attend. The model asserts that there is a predisposed individual who has recognised the need to travel to a convention. The model identifies variables that impact the convention attendance decision and categorises those variables into four factors: personal factors, association/conference factors, location factors, and intervening opportunities (Oppermann & Chon, 1997). The individual considers the association/conference factors related to the individuals' professional goals and involvement with the association. The other set of factors in the process model are personal and business factors. The health status of individual, financial situation, family obligations, and time availability are all included in the personal factors. A personal agenda may also be to socialise with colleagues informally and engage in dialogue to strengthen existing relationships. The business factors refer to receiving funding to attend and the desire to advance professionally and to learn. A work agenda might be to speak to a particular researcher during the convention about a research interest or collaboration offer or serve as a chair moderator during a session (Ngamsom & Beck, 2000). According to the model, convention location factors are also influential, such as the overall destination image, accessibility, climate, pre and post activities and previous experience. More specifically, the opportunity to participate in leisure activities as part of the program e.g. excursions, pre/post event guided tours) or outside the convention may influence individuals to be in favour of attending certain conventions over others (Tretyakevich & Maggi, 2012). Lastly, intervening opportunities may have an impact on the decision to

attend or not such as other conventions, planned holidays and events that may conflict with the convention dates. If at any stage these factors inhibit an individual to attend, they are unlikely to proceed with their convention attendance. Alternatively, if an individual considers the factors and is still in favour of attending, they are likely to pursue with registering for the convention. However, their model was posed very much as a conceptual one and Oppermann and Chon (1997) did not empirically test or quantify the effect that these factors have on the convention attendance decision.

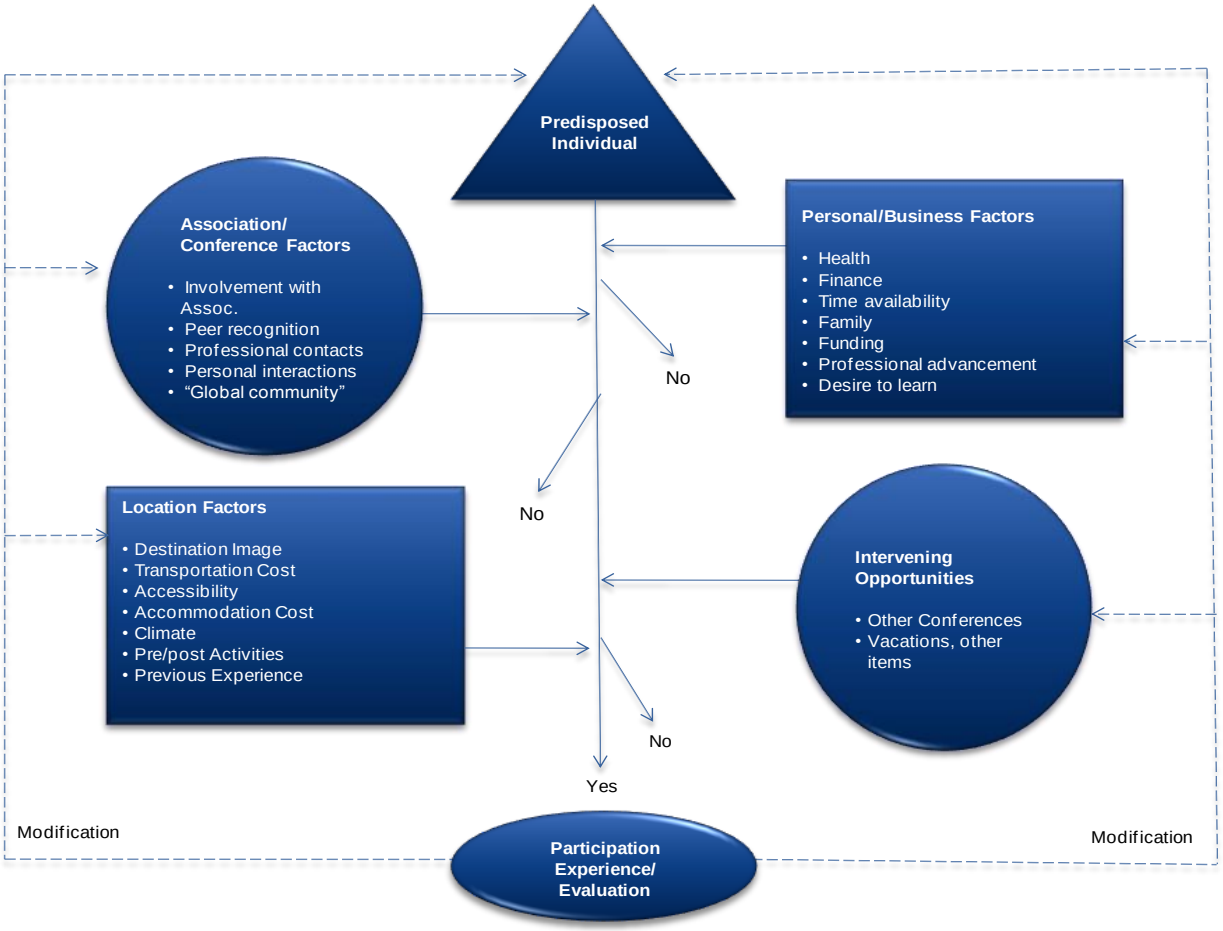
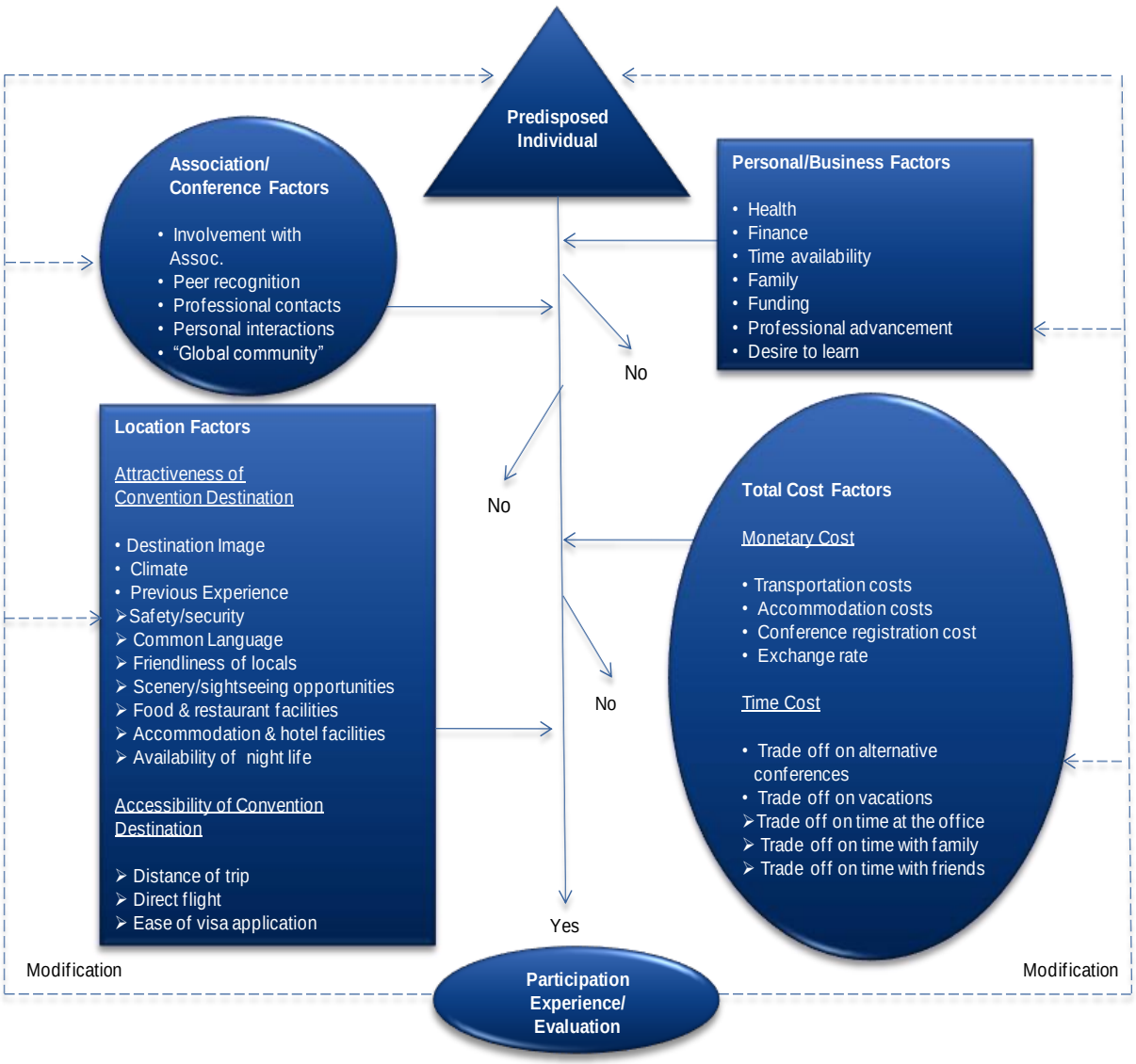


Figure 2.3: Conference Participation Decision-Making Process (Oppermann & Chon, 1997)

Zhang, Leung and Qu (2007) made an attempt to extend Oppermann and Chon's (1997) model. After a review of the literature with a particular focus on overseas convention attendees, they contend that a number of factors were absent in the original model and subsequently refined it (see Figure 2.4). In the revised conceptual model the location factors are separated into two subcategories: attractiveness and accessibility. The model shows that destination attractiveness is evaluated in terms of the safety/security, common language, friendliness of locals, scenery/sightseeing opportunities, food and restaurant facilities, accommodation and hotel facilities and the night life at the destination. The accessibility of the destination is assessed by a potential attendee regarding the travel distance, availability of direct flights and ease of visa application process. The other key difference to the original model is that the intervening opportunities are replaced by total cost factors consisting of monetary cost and time cost. The monetary costs are broken down into transportation costs, accommodation costs, conference registration and exchange rate. The trade-off cost of being out of the office, time away from family members and friends form part of the time cost involved in convention attendance. While this model

provides a more comprehensive view of the convention attendance decision, like Opperman and Chon (1997) it too lacks empirical support.



- Attributes taken from the original Oppermann & Chon Model
- ➢ Attributes taken from other studies

Figure 2.4: Modified Model of the Conference Participation Decision-making Process (Zhang et al., 2007)

The post-convention evaluation is considered to be the final step in the journey of an attendee, which has the potential to affect future attendance decisions. If the convention attendee is satisfied that they achieved professional and/or personal outcomes from the convention, the likelihood of them returning is high. Alternatively, if the convention attendee is dissatisfied with the convention, the opposite is likely to occur (Severt et al., 2007). Notably, the benefits of attending a convention may not be seen until the long-term, such as the development of new connections that might lead to enhanced research outcomes or research grants as a result of attending a convention (Foley et al., 2013).

The main drivers of convention attendance derived from the frameworks discussed and existing studies can be classified into three facilitators: the convention location, networking opportunities and educational opportunities. The four barriers include: safety and security, convention cost, travel distance and time availability. The influence of significant others also requires discussion. Each of these factors is discussed.

Facilitators

Convention Location

As previously mentioned, the destination or convention location is one of the three major influences in convention attendance decisions (Oppermann & Chon, 1997). It also appears that the location or destination of the convention is one of the main factors affecting association convention attendance (Yoo & Zhao, 2010). Amongst the earlier studies, Var, Cesario and Mauser (1985) sought to evaluate the importance of accessibility and attractiveness in the convention attendee decision-making process. They revealed that destination accessibility and attractiveness are central to convention attendance decisions and, in their case, accessibility was deemed to be more important than attractiveness. This notion is supported by the work of Rittichainuwat et al. (2001) who identified that difficulty in accessing a convention destination can be a major factor that can hinder the convention attendance decision. They also identify that sightseeing, outdoor recreation and a change of pace are motivators linked to destination attractiveness. Similarly, Yoo and Zhao (2010) highlighted the dual nature of attractiveness and accessibility with regard to the destination factor in the convention participation decision-making process.

Studies by Witt, Sykes and Dartus (1995) and Yoo and Chon (2008), show that destination attractiveness is very important in the convention decision-making process with regard to sightseeing, destination image, opportunity to visit the destination and weather. According to Grant and Weaver (1996), the opportunity to travel to the location, informal recreation activities, the beauty of the location and potentially visiting friends and relatives are considered to be important destination/recreation/social factors when selecting a convention to attend. The attractiveness of the conference destination was also identified by the respondents interviewed in Jago and Deery (2005) who revealed that the destination played an even more important role in the decision to attend an association conference if they were travelling with accompanying persons. Importantly, the attractiveness of a convention location can affect the number of abstract submissions received by potential attendees wanting to present their work (Borghans et al., 2010).

In some cases, particularly for international attendees, the ‘pull’ of the destination can drive convention attendance as it allows attendees to combine both business and pleasure through pre and post touring around the convention dates (Rutherford & Kreck, 1994; Uriely, 2001). For association attendees, conventions are an opportunity to escape from routine and the daily work pressure to travel to destinations that they may not have visited if it was not for the convention (Hoyer & Naess, 2001; Ngamsom & Beck, 2000; Veloutsou & Chreppas, 2015; Yoo & Chon, 2008). A favourable perception of a destination can positively affect attendance intentions because convention attendees prefer certain destinations over others and delegate numbers will be higher in

some destinations largely due to their perceived image (Lee & Back, 2007a). It is therefore important for meeting planners to consult with potential convention attendees about their destination preferences when deciding on the convention location (Oppermann, 1996b).

Networking Opportunities

Networking is a professional activity that aims to utilise one's social skills with the intention to build relationships that could potentially assist them in their career (Donelan, Herman, Kear, & Kirkup, 2009; Forret & Dougherty, 2004; Singh, Vinnicombe, & Kumra, 2006). It is widely accepted that networking opportunities and socialising are also important drivers of convention attendance decisions. Mair and Thompson (2009) contend that networking opportunities are significant predictors of future convention intentions amongst UK convention attendees. Their study suggests that networking is positively correlated with the likelihood of repeat attendance at the same convention and therefore is a key driver of the decision to attend (Mair & Thompson, 2009). In Yoo and Zhao's (2010) study, networking was deemed to be the most significant factor in the convention decision-making process that positively influenced future convention attendance. The category of networking consisted of the following attributes: professional networking opportunities, feeling a sense of a global community, peer recognition, personal interactions with colleagues or friends, seeking career opportunities and seeing people I know in my field (Yoo & Zhao, 2010). In a study conducted by Severt et al. (2007), attendees at a regional trade association conference rated networking to be the second most important factor when deciding whether or not to attend a future convention. Furthermore, under the category of 'self enhancement', networking was a key convention motivator along with career enhancement, leadership enhancement, self-esteem enhancement and education in Rittichainuwat et al.'s (2001) study. The variables that were grouped into the 'networking' factor by Grant and Weaver (1996) were also similar: establish one's reputation, knowing people in attendance, developing new business/professional relationships, making contacts, pursuing professional success, associating with leaders, seeing people I know and identifying leaders.

In a similar vein, Jago and Deery (2005) note that conventions are convenient place to convene face-to-face with industry professionals to potentially garner new business or instigate future research collaborations. Conventions promote engagement between researchers from different backgrounds, geographic locations and, areas of expertise and foster a supportive environment to maximise knowledge exchange (Foley et al., 2013; Henn & Bathelt, 2015; Louw & Zuber-Skerritt, 2011; Veloutsou & Chreppas, 2015). Potential attendees often evaluate the convention program and are more likely to attend if the time allocated for professional and social networking opportunities is considered to be sufficient for their needs (Mody, Gordon, Lehto, Siu-Ian, & Li, 2016; Yoo & Chon, 2008). Some come with high expectations regarding the social program with the intention of participating in the informal communications at dinner and other types of gatherings during the conference or in the afterhours (Witt et al., 1995).

Whilst new technologies like virtual meetings and video conferencing have revolutionised the way conferences, meetings and events happen today, (Lee, 2011) it is networking that consolidates partnerships, builds trust and loyalty (Foley, Edwards, & Schlenker, 2014). New technology such as videoconferencing may come and go, however, there is nothing more powerful than face-to-face meetings or dynamic conventions for getting messages across as there is no substitute for human contact (Davidson, Alford, & Seaton, 2002). The notation that virtual meetings could replace conventions is unlikely given that in-person social networking is still regarded as a core driver of convention attendance (Tanford et al., 2012). Contrary to early observations about the conventions market "…technological advances have failed to eliminate the need to huddle together periodically and exchange fresh information in a timely and pleasant fashion, and that technology makes the human touch even more necessary, so meetings will remain important in building relationships" (Lee & Back, 2005b, p. 215). Conventions are not about simply meeting people; they are about making the right connections that will be nurtured even after the event has finished. Given that people do business with people and relationship-building matters, the traditional face-to-face interactions are still the most effective form of networking sought after by convention attendees which require direct interpersonal communication (Weber & Ladkin, 2005). There are communication messaging and social cues that cannot be picked up without meeting together in person and these 'peripheral pleasures' are what people are willing to travel for (Davidson et al., 2002).

Attendees want more than visiting a nice destination, they want to be part of a like-minded community of scholars and practitioners (Hahm et al., 2016). They crave a deeper level of connection with other attendees given that networking is an avenue for attendees to mingle and solidify their identity by fitting in with others in a social setting (Ryu & Lee, 2013; Wei, Lu, Miao, Cai, & Wang, 2017). As noted by Ryu and Lee (2013, p. 30), attendees select a particular convention "…that serves as a vehicle to reflect their identity…[and] when they sense a high self-congruity with the convention, that is, the convention has an image or generalised attendee image that is congruent with their self-image, a more favourable attitude and perception toward the convention is likely exhibited, attributable to heightened identity". It is argued that conventions are integral to professional identity because the way in which an attendee views themselves in relation to others can change during a convention (Haley, Wiesner, & Robinson, 2009). In some cases, an attendee is unaware of how highly regarded they are by their peers until they attend a convention and are sought after for their expertise. A respondent in Fox and McCormick's (2009) study received unexpected attention about her research and subsequently she developed a high self-esteem, which helped her establish a strong identity as a senior academic and a role model in her field.

Understanding attendee behaviour from a psychological perspective provides evidence that people desire a sense of belonging and to make emotional connections with fellow attendees (Hahm et al., 2016). Such connections can develop into long lasting friendships that become an important outcome of attending a convention (Foley et al., 2014; Mair & Frew, 2016; Ward, 2003). Friendships and repeat attendance at conventions could be related, according to some researchers, given that the friendships formed at conventions motivate attendees to return (Foley et al., 2014; Small, Harris, Wilson, & Ateljevic, 2011). A convention plays an important role within the lives of attendees both during and outside the life of the actual convention. It is

paradoxical that conventions are short-term shared experiences, yet they can have long-term impacts on attendees through the friendships forged (Fox & McCormick, 2009). It is important to recognise that in the minds of attendees, a convention is one component of a longer-term learning and social journey. From a broader perspective, "…the friendship and sense of community among delegates is likely to contribute to healthy levels of association membership, conference attendance, retention of personnel in the profession, successful research and professional collaborations, and creativity and innovation in the sector" (Foley et al., 2014, p. 62). As Hahm et al. (2016) uncovered in their study, the sense of community could be a better predictor of future intentions to attend an annual association convention than satisfaction.

Conventions also provide opportunities for attendees to form alliances with other researchers and industry partners, which could instigate future collaborative research. Social networks can help attendees move into different circles of people from the wider community of scholars and for some people these networks are used to avoid isolation and exclusion within their field (Edwards, Foley, & Schlenker, 2011; Kim, Lee, & Kim, 2012; Lee & Min, 2013). Additionally, Fox and McCormick (2009) note that developing social networks is not necessarily a personal goal for some attendees. Research has identified that networking on behalf of a colleague who is not present at the convention often occurs. In some instances, people act as a broker to connect their colleagues to 'persons of interest' in their specialised discipline.

The networking element to convention attendance cannot be underestimated as it has been considered to be the most invaluable aspect of the entire experience (Fox & McCormick, 2009). It is a means of building professional relationships and nurturing existing ones in a fun and enjoyable social setting (Borghans et al., 2010; Eskin, 1989). Whether it is during the programmed sessions or at the networking functions, the social interactions allow attendees to connect with people who have expertise in the field of interest to establish networks or perhaps special interest groups (SIGs) (Hilliard, 2006; Tanford et al., 2012). It is also important to note that conventions often leave an educational legacy well after the attendees have departed (Foley et al., 2013). Some conventions promote the creation of SIGs which formally and informally bound people together by shared expertise and passion for a joint purpose. An example is the Critical Approaches in Tourism and Hospitality (CATH) group which was formed out of the Council for Australasian Tourism and Hospitality Education (CAUTHE) conference. The aim of this community group is to promote research in the field of tourism, hospitality and education, provide a forum for collaboration and mentor emerging researchers (Wilson, Harris, & Small, 2008). Such communities of temporary clusters of people may meet at the convention and even in between the next convention to reflect on what has been disseminated during the breakout sessions, discuss how to solve real problems, promote the spread of best practices and develop people's professional skills, (similar to what Hilliard (2006) terms "communities of practice"). Some SIGs go on to hold workshops or seminars to discuss the worldwide status and future directions of the field that could potentially lead to more specialised forthcoming conventions. In sum, networking is integral to convention attendance as it brings a range of benefits for attendees from both an individual and professional level.

Educational Opportunities

Another important driver of association convention decisions identified by existing studies is educational opportunities. The "educational" factor has also been referred to in other studies as encompassing personal and professional development, career enhancement, fulfilling the desire to learn, keeping up with changes in the profession/field, updating knowledge, hearing eminent speakers and learning new skills (Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Ward, 2003). Grant and Weaver (1996) grouped their respondents into three clusters, one related to networking, one to leadership and the third was "those who enjoy conferences for educational opportunities". They maintain that early career researchers with low to medium incomes primarily evaluate the educational component of a convention during their selection process. Consistent with other scholars, Yoo and Zhao (2010) uncovered that education, which consists of learning new skills and/or knowledge and keeping up with the changes in my field, is an important factor in the attendance decision. Further analysis revealed that respondents with less than three years' experience in their profession were more concerned about educational components of the convention than people who have worked up to and greater than 20 years. Amongst the five factors that motivate convention attendance, education benefits was not only important but was identified as a measure of convention performance according to Severt et al. (2007). Notably, in their study, respondents who were content with the educational benefits were more satisfied with the convention and, were more likely to register again for the next convention and speak positively to others about their experience. According to Yoo and Chon (2008), people attend conventions to expand their knowledge by listening to speakers who disseminate information that they could use to improve workplace practices and for career advancement. Attendees have the opportunity to learn and develop knowledge from the densely-packed educational sessions, build personal networks and establish both their role and professional identity in their field (Fox & McCormick, 2009; Haley et al., 2009).

Conventions are seen as an important educational tool, particularly in the scientific and medical disciplines, however it is not always easy for people, particularly students, to attend conventions overseas. Conventions are therefore beneficial for local students, researchers and practitioners who may otherwise not have been able to hear speakers or obtain current best practice information if the convention was held elsewhere (Jago & Deery, 2010). Attending a convention can help people to develop their professional profile in the field and their presence at a convention can provide opportunities to receive invitations to speak at other meetings worldwide.

The opportunity to exchange information and expertise during conventions is important to attendees and such forums offer rich learning environments to express ideas and support one another (Arcodia & Reid, 2003; Louw & Zuber-Skerritt, 2011; Sperstad & Cecil, 2011). The face-to-face contact with other likeminded individuals at a convention is a key method of transferring knowledge, as opposed to communicating through email or other means (Fox & McCormick, 2009; Henn & Bathelt, 2015). Attendees have the ability to share, reflect and question knowledge in a collaborative setting and to learn new practices that can be used to fulfil their work requirements (Edwards et al., 2011). Some organisers facilitate an atmosphere at their convention that encourages attendees to be empowered through active dialogue between young and experienced researchers

(no matter where they are situated in the hierarchical ladder) in the industry, to stimulate career and industry development (Louw & Zuber-Skerritt, 2011). Furthermore, previous research suggests that presenting a paper and attending presentations by senior academics is particularly important for early career researchers to learn how to articulate theory and practice in their field (Jacobs & McFarlane, 2005; Weber & Ladkin, 2008).

Barriers

Safety and Security

No matter how great the educational content is or how stunning the venue, if people do not feel safe travelling to the destination for the convention, nothing else will matter. Safety is a basic requirement for travel, meaning that if it is not ensured, potential attendees may abort their whole decision-making process without further consideration (Lee & Min, 2013b). Attendees therefore generally carefully investigate the safety and security of a destination when selecting a convention, particularly if it is held internationally. Not unlike leisure travellers, attendees have concerns about political instability, civil unrest, disease outbreaks, natural disasters, terrorist attacks, crime, violence and plane crashes (Lee & Min, 2013). In convention tourism literature the "health and security" factor has been emphasised by Mair and Thompson (2009), which consisted of the attendee being healthy enough to travel, the availability of medical facilities and a safe destination. The work of Ngamsom and Beck (2000) showed that the perceived risk of safety, inconvenience, unfamiliarity and insecurity at overseas destinations unfavourably influenced the convention attendance decision. When people have a poor perception toward a convention destination based on negative information or fear of the unknown, they are less likely to attend (Rittichainuwat et al., 2001). Conversely, while safety has been thought to be a deterrent of convention attendance, one study found that amongst other factors such as the location, safety did not appear to influence the decision to attend (Bauer et al., 2008).

Convention Cost

There is an emerging research theme regarding constraints on attendance or participation which requires future research attention (Getz & Page, 2016). An example of a constraint is convention cost, which is another factor that is important to the convention attendance decision (Jones & Li, 2015). Association attendees are often required to pay for their own convention attendance due to the discretionary nature or 'freedom of choice' and some even take annual leave to attend (Jarumaneerat et al., 2007; Yoo & Zhao, 2010). An attendee would need to assess his or her financial situation before deciding to attend a convention and may view the cost as a constraint. Alternatively, attendees may seek financial support or at least some sponsorship from their employer to cover their attendance (Eke, 2011; Fjelstul et al., 2009; Jacobs & McFarlane, 2005). In some cases, a company offers a limited number of places for their employees to attend a convention (Lee & Back, 2007b). Subsequently, many people may apply for financial support, which can often become competitive between colleagues (Lee & Back, 2007b).

As mentioned earlier, Oppermann and Chon (1997) include cost as part of the personal/business factor and associate this with the financial status of the attendee. In an effort to develop their model further, Zhang et al. (2007) argue that financial cost and opportunity cost come under the umbrella of total cost. A recent study by Lee and Fenich (2016), suggests that price plays a significant role in attendees' perceptions of fairness, satisfaction, and behavioural intentions with regard to hotels because after registration, convention attendees spend the most money on accommodation. Rittichainuwat et al. (2001) recognise cost as a determining factor that has an impact on the attendance decision which includes transport costs and funding from employers. Mair and Thompson (2009) classified cost as the cost of accommodation, transport and the registration to the convention. In their study they propose that cost is an underlying dimension that can both facilitate and inhibit attendance. Not only is the total cost of attending the convention and a potential attendee's personal financial situation an important factor, but it has the propensity to affect a potential attendee's convention attendee decision-making process over time (Yoo & Chon, 2010).

A study by Lee and Min (2013) suggests that people who attend a convention for the first time are more likely to assess whether they received 'value for money' for their attendance during the post-convention evaluation stage. This stage is particularly important for first-time attendees because they do not have experience or attachment to the convention beforehand. As Jago and Deery (2010) note, the pressure on companies to carefully review professional development, such as convention attendance, from both an expense and its value to the organisation perspective, is prevalent and it can be challenging for attendees to get approval. Organisations are becoming more interested about receiving return on investment (ROI) from sending their employees to conventions to ensure that acceptable returns are being received and that their contribution towards employee attendance is justifiable from a financial perspective (Sperstad & Cecil, 2011). Nowadays in the "attend versus e-ttend debate", people are faced with the question, is the value of attending the convention so significant that it compensates for travel and accommodation costs, or can it be replaced by a teleconference or virtual meeting? (Davidson et al., 2002). The industry experts surveyed in Litvin's (2003) study said that while videoconferencing can be used as a convenient tool for arranging last minute meetings, they were somewhat pessimistic of their company's decision to substitute the traditional convention with a virtual meeting. More recently, despite the costs incurred as a result of travelling, a study into the information communication technologies used by Generation Y students in comparison to meeting professionals found that both groups prefer face-to-face meetings over video or web conferencing (Severt, Fjelstul, & Breiter, 2013).

Travel Distance

Travel distance has a role to play in the decision to attend an association convention. Yoo and Zhao (2010) not only identify cost as a determinant of attendance, but they group it with travel distance to the convention destination. This view point is shared by Lee, Jee, Funk and Jordan (2015) who note that long-haul travel for international conventions can be associated with more time and financial costs. Not surprisingly, long-haul travellers are faced with different challenges than short or medium-haul travellers such as the cost of airfares, travel time and uncertainty regarding destination attributes (Bianchi, Milberg, & Cúneo, 2017). People have a

tendency to perceive travel distance to be further than it actually is when they are unfamiliar with the destination and this distorted perception can be a hindrance to overseas travel for the purpose of attending a convention (Ngamsom & Beck, 2000). Essentially, when time and costs are central to the convention attendance decision, unless an individual expects that they will have a return on their investment, they are unlikely to travel (Ngamsom & Beck, 2000). The convention location can therefore be an inhibitor to attendance when attendees perceive it to be too far from home (Severt, Fjelstul, & Breiter, 2009).

Time Availability

Attendees are increasingly focused on whether the cost and benefit of attending a convention will produce a favourable outcome. Rittichainuwat et al. (2001) suggest that both affordability and availability of time are considered under the convention cost factor. Participating in a convention away from the normal routine competes with other activities that can conflict with our time such as family and work obligations (Hoyer & Naess, 2001). If the timing of the convention clashes with pre-existing commitments, an individual would be much less likely to attend the convention. Research has revealed that time conflict with work and family is one of the top four reasons that inhibit convention attendance for older Generation Xers and younger Baby Boomers in Severet et al.'s study (2009). In today's time poor society, people want to spend their work-related time efficiently, otherwise they would prefer to stay home and not trade-off family time or time at the office because the workload doesn't reduce while they attend a convention. Other convention tourism researchers have also noted that lack of time is considered to be an impediment to attendance (Mair & Thompson, 2009; Zhang et al., 2007).

Important Referents

One area that has not been examined in much detail is the role of important referents in the attendance decision. It is thought that potential attendees seek out the opinions of their referents about whether they support or oppose them attending a convention (Lee & Back, 2007b). One of the most influential referents is one's spouse. A study of family decision-making in convention participation showed that family members, especially spouses, play an integral role in the potential convention attendee's decision-making process (Oh, Roel, & Shock, 1993). Rittichainuwat et al. (2001) note that an attendee's family/spouse can facilitate convention attendance, as 34% of the respondents in their study stated that their family influences their decision to attend conventions. Similarly, Ngamsom and Beck (2000) report that 37% of their respondents claim that their convention attendance is influenced by their family, whether it is a positive or negative influence.

As mentioned earlier, in some cases obligations to important referents can be a barrier to convention attendance. In other cases, not only can family members influence the decision to attend a convention, but they can be part of the attendance experience. There is growing evidence that some attendees travel accompanied by their family/spouses who assess the tourism activities at a destination (Davidson, 2003; Hoyer & Naess, 2001). According to Yoo, McIntosh and Cockburn-Wootten (2016, p. 2), accompanying partners are defined as "individuals, such as a wife/husband/partner, who participate in conference travel without work-

related purposes, and are in an ongoing committed relationship with the attendee." Approximately 27% of international association convention attendees to Melbourne bring their spouse and some conventions offer a specialised accompanied persons program (Melbourne Convention Delegate Study, 2010). When the convention formalities are completed for the day, the attendee turns into a leisure tourist and can spend time with their accompanying partner exploring the host destination (Kerr, Cliff, & Dolnicar, 2012; Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999). With more and more people being time poor and financially challenged, this form of travel is a convenient way of combining work and/or business interests with the opportunity to go on a holiday with a partner or family member (Yoo et al., 2016). It must be noted that while there is evidence that in most destinations, large international conventions offer accompanying accompanied persons programs, figures on the number of accompanying persons are limited, if not non-existent, due to the difficulty in recording this information.

Attendees can also be influenced by their boss/advisors and colleagues to attend a convention. When attendees of the Commission for Accelerated Programs (CAP) Fifth Annual Conference in 2006 provided post-event feedback, they cited their colleagues to be the most influential source in relation to their attendance decision, more than the convention website, convention brochure and newsletter (CAP, 2006). A study regarding convention attendance decisions by Lee and Min (2013) shows that positive word-of-mouth provides a reliable indication of future convention attendance intentions. This could mean that people are more likely to attend a convention if it has been recommended by previous attendees, such as their colleagues or employer. According to Lee and Back (2007b), employers and peers had a greater influence on respondents attending the International Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education (CHRIE) Conference and Exposition in 2005 than their family/spouse. Possible reasons for this may be that almost all of the respondents were academics who depended on funding from their institution to attend the conference, however this result may be different in other professional association conventions. Nevertheless, this evidence supports the notion that significant others are important to the attendance decision.

There is insight to be gained from existing convention tourism studies, which have sought to identify the factors affecting association convention attendee decision-making. Drawing upon attendee satisfaction literature to predict their behavioural intentions could also assist in gaining a better understanding of convention attendee decisions.

Attendee Satisfaction and Behavioural Intention

A body of research in hospitality and tourism marketing has acknowledged that satisfaction is an evaluation after a service has been provided that can lead to repeat purchase (Choo & Petrick, 2015; Hahm et al., 2016). Research pertaining to satisfaction in convention tourism literature has been applied to attendee satisfaction with the event (Bauer et al., 2008; Lu & Cai, 2011; Tanford et al., 2012). Behavioural intention has also been a topical subject area within convention attendee research (Hahm et al., 2016; Lee & Back, 2007a; Ramirez et al., 2013). As described by Yang, Gu and Cen. (2011) in the festival context, behavioural intention is a stated likelihood to return, to comment positively and to recommend it to others in the future. Notwithstanding the

potential limitations of behavioural intention (to be discussed in a later chapter), the best way to make a prediction with regard to attendance estimates for an upcoming convention is to measure association attendees' future intentions (Hahm et al., 2016).

One of the earliest contributions by Severt et al. (2007) tested satisfaction, word-of-mouth communication and intentions to return from the perspective of the attendees at a regional conference. Two performance factors were identified: activity and opportunity; and educational benefits. The factor activities and opportunities were comprised of: association-related activities, business activities, travel opportunities, visiting friends and relatives, spouse/family/guest programs and self-esteem enhancement. The educational benefits were: educational purposes, interesting conference program, educational information at exhibits and career enhancement. Further analysis revealed that the educational benefits factor was a significant predictor of satisfaction and respondents were more likely to return and tell others to attend when the perceived benefit of the educational component of the convention was fulfilled. Bauer et al. (2008) evaluated attendee satisfaction at a mega-business event in Hong Kong. Their study showed that attendees were most satisfied with the accessibility, safety and security, tolerance of other cultures, quality of the exhibition and cleanliness of the destination. However, the research did not measure the relationship of these factors to overall satisfaction. Further empirical evidence suggests that program satisfaction is a key determinant of intentions to return in the future or switch to a different convention according to Tanford et al. (2012). In a corporate conference setting, Kim, Lee and Love (2009) investigated the role that food functions play on attendee satisfaction and return intention. It was argued that when the quality of food consumed at a conference is satisfactory, the sensory memory is stored and can lead to repeat attendance. Food quality consisted of the following attributes: tasty food, fresh ingredients, right menu, attractive food and availability of utensils was the only significant predictor of overall satisfaction.

While attendee motivation and satisfaction is beyond the scope of this study, behavioural intentions is a focus. In order to extend our understanding of convention attendees beyond the identification of drivers of attendance such as the location, networking opportunities, professional advancement and so on, research pertaining to predicting intentions to attend a future convention is important. As such, the models developed by Lee and Back (2007b) and Leach et al. (2008) will be discussed in detail with regard to this study's theoretical framework in Chapter 4.

Segmenting Convention Attendees

The research that exists with regard to convention attendees has focused on a relatively narrow list of topics, primarily motivations and barriers to attendance as discussed (e.g. Severt et al., 2007). There are a few studies which examine differences in different groups of attendees, and effectively little research to underpin market segmentation based on these differences (e.g. Chiang, King, & Nguyen, 2012). Severt et al. (2009) investigated convention attendance based on three generational cohorts (older Baby Boomers, younger Baby Boomers and Gen X) which showed that career advancement was the top motivating factor for all three cohorts with regard to attending an annual association meeting. The inhibiting factors were also similar, with 'cost too

high due to lack of financial support' being rated as the most influential factor. Fenich, Scott-Halsell, Ogbeide and Hashimoto (2014) examined a large sample of Millennial generation convention attendees relating to their motivations and preferences. Their study categorised participants by their continent of origin and provides some descriptive insights that showed few between-groups differences. Another study by Kim et al. (2012) looked at first-time and repeat attendees to identify whether any differences were apparent in their perspectives of convention quality, value and behavioural intentions. The results showed that first-time attendees valued the educational aspects of a convention most whereas repeat attendees valued the social networking element more. This provides evidence for the notion that the convention attendee market is not homogenous.

The Need for Research on Gender and Convention Attendance Decisions

Not only do planners need to continually attract repeat and potential attendees, they need to adjust their convention marketing strategies to appeal to different kinds of attendees, due to the shift in the types of people attending conventions compared to a decade ago. Weber and Ladkin (2005) note that the changes in attendee profiles, needs and consequently an association's membership base require ongoing attention. One of these important attendee segments is female attendees. The changes in the composition of the workplace, including more women at senior levels, suggest that the number of women attending conventions is rising (Lee & Park, 2002). Women represent a solid and nascent percentage of convention attendees. Recent attendee research reported a majority of female attendance at 52.8% (Tanford & Montgomery, 2015), 58.1% (Hahm et al., 2016) and even 80.1% (Lee et al., 2016). Additionally, Fjelstul et al. (2010), reported that 81% of their respondents from four trade and medical associations were women. Jago and Deery (2005) highlight that given the proportion of female convention attendees is increasing, consideration needs to be given to the needs of women.

As such, there are still gaps in the literature that require exploration in order to predict convention attendance intentions. One gap is in understanding how such decisions might differ according to demographic characteristics, for instance gender. Gender is a key demographic variable that is fundamental to segmentation and targeting customers (Dedeoğlu, Balıkçıoğlu, & Küçükergin, 2016; Lin, Lee, Yeh, Lee, & Wong, 2014; Suki, 2014). A number of studies to date have sought to identify the drivers of convention attendance, yet we cannot truly claim to understand convention attendee behaviour because the influence of gender on these drivers has not been explored. Mair (2010a) recommends that future convention research examine demographic differences in order to provide a deeper understanding of convention attendees. Since different attendees have various needs and wants, identification of their needs is a prerequisite for effectively developing successful conventions. To be successful, marketers need to have an understanding of how men and women process information, evaluate products and behave as consumers, therefore gender continues to be one of the most prevalent ways of segmentation (Putrevu, 2001). Accordingly, in developing a more complete understanding of attendees' behavioural intentions, gender investigations merit attention. This gap in the literature initiated the present study, which seeks to contribute to the literature on convention attendance decisions from a gender perspective. The next chapter of the thesis will explore the literature on the role of gender in a tourism context.

Summary

Chapter two has presented the conceptual foundations for this research on convention attendee attendance decisions. Additionally, it highlights gaps in knowledge that merit a closer investigation. A discussion on the history of convention tourism is provided, the term convention tourism is defined and an overview of convention tourism research to date is given. It was revealed that convention attendee research is a largely neglected area of study and does not yet correspond to the growth in the sector. In particular, we still know little about association convention attendees. The focus on association convention attendees was justified based on both their economic importance to the convention industry and on the gaps in the literature. The key models that have been developed to help explain the convention attendee decision-making process were acknowledged and the drivers of convention attendance were discussed. The existing studies have sought to explain the drivers of convention attendee decisions, yet have not fully investigated how decisions might vary for different groups of attendees, for example males versus females. The need for research on gender and association convention attendance decisions with regard to predicting intentions to attend a future convention was thus identified. This study will attempt to fill this theoretical gap by adding knowledge in and understanding in the field of convention attendance.

The next chapter will explore the literature on gender and travel behaviour, with a particular focus on convention attendance.

Chapter 3: Literature Review – Gender

This chapter reviews the relevant literature on gender to provide background to the research context. It identifies and critiques the theories and previous research that have influenced gender research, particularly in tourism, which underpins this research. Particular attention is given to social role theory and its conceptual application to this study. The chapter provides evidence to support the need for future gender research in convention attendance literature and thereby underlines this study's significance.

The review introduces gender by looking at the ways it has been defined and interpreted in order to specify how the author views the term in the context of this study. A brief discussion on social role theory is presented to demonstrate that this study contributes to broader tourism literature debates centred on gender by building an understanding of convention attendee behaviour. References are then made to gender and behaviour to set the scene for the next section on studies in the fields of leisure travel and business travel behaviour, more specifically convention attendance behaviour. The review highlights the gaps in previous research which need to be filled. The chapter concludes by providing directions for future research to inform the aim and objectives of this research.

Gender

Defining Gender

Before examining gender, it is necessary to define it and to make the distinction between the terms gender and sex, which are frequently used interchangeably by researchers. Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, relationships and behaviours that are acted out according to what society considers to be appropriate for men and women (Henderson, 1994; Kim et al., 2007). The term 'sex', by contrast, refers to the biological, genetic and physiological characteristics that define men and women such as chromosomes, hormones, emotional make-up and brain function (Kim et al., 2007; Putrevu, 2001). Some of the differences observed between males and females can be attributed to biological factors; however, biology may only tell part of the story given that the masculine and feminine attributes assigned to them, may vary greatly (Putrevu, 2001). Gender is arguably a category that a society or culture defines into male and female roles as opposed to our biological make up, which is established at birth (Caterall & Maclaran, 2002). Traditionally, sex and gender were thought to be intertwined, meaning that, men were masculine and women were feminine; however, it has been recognised that some men are increasingly becoming more feminine than masculine and that some women are increasingly becoming more masculine than feminine (Neale, Robbie, & Martin, 2016). Gender is said to be a fluid identity that we can define and redefine over time because gender differences are not a result of nature or biology, but of culture (Caterall & Maclaran, 2002). Gender is influenced by cultural norms, values and beliefs that govern men and women in a society (Ramkissoon & Nunkoo, 2012). In today's postmodern culture, the detachment of gender from sex is even more evident (Palan, 2001). It is important to note here that in this study, the focus is on male and female gender, more specifically, respondents will report on whether they are male or female during data collection.

One could question which came first, biology and genetics or behaviour? For instance, were males born stronger and therefore became the predominant hunter, or were they born with a hunting instinct and later developed the physical attributes required for this activity? Whether it was first biology or behaviour or perhaps they both evolved as a response to environmental factors, the fact remains that men and women have long been considered to be different in terms of some of their cognitive abilities and social behaviour (Schertzer, Laufer, Silvera, & McBride, 2008; Xie et al., 2008). Fischer and Arnold (1994) contend that men and women behave in different ways particularly in terms of their consumption of products and services. It appears that males and females can differ in their attitudes, perceptions, needs, decision-making processes, purchase patterns and activities in relation to various consumer behaviours (Beetles & Harris, 2005). For centuries, male and female roles were quite distinct; traditionally men were the primary income producers and women were expected to be responsible for the home and family (Barnett & Hyde, 2001). Since the 1950s, these distinctions have become more and more blurred in western society, with more women entering into the workforce are advancing in careers, which has led to some men assuming more household responsibilities (Ezzedeen & Ritchey, 2009). Caterall and Maclaran (2002) note that marketers need to be constantly keeping up with cultural changes with regard to whether and how they have an effect on our roles as consumers and the way in which we consume. Even though the roles are changing and men and women are undertaking roles that were traditionally considered to be tasks for the opposite gender, social psychology literature suggests that we still differ in the way we behave (Putrevu, 2001). There are many debates about the nature and nurture of gender roles (Eagly & Wood, 2013). Some scholars believe that these attitudes and behaviours naturally flow from biological sex and personality traits, whereas others see them as social constructions (Archer, 1996). Historically, there have been three schools of thought that attempt to explain gender differences through alternative lenses. These include evolutionary theory, social constructivist theory and social role theory. Each is described briefly below.

Evolutionary Psychology

Evolutionary psychology has been used to account for gender similarities and differences in areas in which humans have faced adaptation problems such as mating preferences, parental investment in children and aggression (Buss, 1995). The theory is based on the notion that males and females developed different survival strategies to maximise their reproductive success (Eagly & Wood, 1999). Evolutionary psychology is focused on how evolution has shaped the psychological mechanisms that have an impact on our brain structures and therefore our problem solving skills, reasoning, emotion, perception and behaviour (Saad & Gill, 2000). One explanation for behavioural gender differences has been attributed to different brain structures and the way in which men and women process information (examples of studies include Hyde, 2007; Kim et al., 2007; Ryu & Han, 2010). Interestingly, evolutionary psychology does not suggest that men and women are psychologically different, instead it uses a theoretical rationale for predicting similarities with regards to their biological make-up (Putrevu, 2001). Critics of this approach claim that evolutionary psychology is based on interpretations that are viewed with a very specific theoretical lens, meaning that it is mainly descriptive and lacks appropriate empirical rigor (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

Social Constructivist Theory

Social constructivists propose that there is no fundamental truth to gender; rather, it is constructed by social expectations and gender performance (Brickell, 2003). Also known as the “doing gender” perspective, proponents maintain that gender it is not fixed or innate, but instead it varies across time and place as one learns from watching and doing (West & Zimmerman, 1987). In fact, gender identities are not considered to be static or intrinsically linked to individuals or their sex. On the contrary, gender is said to be fluid and is continually formed in social interactions according to this view (Baber & Tucker, 2006). For instance, with this line of thinking, it is not innate for men to have skills that make them more superior leaders, but given that they may have more opportunities than women to learn and practice leadership skills, they are more likely to hold a leadership position (Baber & Tucker, 2006). From a social constructivist perspective, people learn about masculinity and femininity from the social and cultural experiences with their important referents (such as their family, peers, community) throughout their life (Courtenay, 2000). This discourse recognises that individuals are actively producing and being a product of their social systems in that they are in control of constructing (and deconstructing) norms of masculinity and femininity (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

While it is important to acknowledge evolutionary psychology and social constructivist theory, in order to seek theoretical underpinning for this study, an examination of social role theory is also necessary.

Social Role Theory

In the context of social behaviour, most gender studies are based on social role theory according to Han, Hsu and Lee (2009). The theory has been used in marketing studies to help explain or account for gender differences in behaviours in a range of contexts such as environmental concern (Saad & Gill, 2000; Strapko et al., 2016). Social role theory proposes that men and women are socialised to undertake different roles in society, based on the historical division of labour into paid employees for men and homemakers for women (Eagly & Wood, 1999). It is postulated that the early socialisation of men and women leads them to acquire agentic (assertive, instrumental and independence) and communal (nurturance, emotional expressiveness and yielding) traits respectively (Saad & Gill, 2000). Men tend to acquire masculine traits and women tend to acquire feminine traits (Saad & Gill, 2000). Each gender is socially trained to value the traits of one's own gender and perform associated behaviours (Putrevu, 2001).

Social role theory assumes that gender differences in social behaviour are somewhat due to the likelihood that people behave consistently with their gender roles as shown in Figure 3.1 (Eagly & Wood, 1991). This means that because men and women have been exposed to different experiences, they would be expected to form different attitudes about certain areas of life and, in fact behave differently in some circumstances (Eagly & Wood, 1991; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). The theory also acknowledges that an individual's past experience of enacting social roles indirectly causes gendered differences, given that these experiences help define one’s skills and attitudes. Furthermore, men and women may hold different attitudes towards certain behaviours to some extent because of gender roles and gender stereotypes within a society (Van Hooft, Born, Taris, & Van

der Flier, 2006). Cultures affirm gender stereotypes and form expectations based on those stereotypes (e.g. aggressiveness and forcefulness from the agentic traits; helpful and sensitive from the communal traits) (Eagly, 1987). Gender differences in social behaviour stem from the normative beliefs that men and women hold about the rules that are considered to be acceptable in a community or society (Eagly & Wood, 1991).

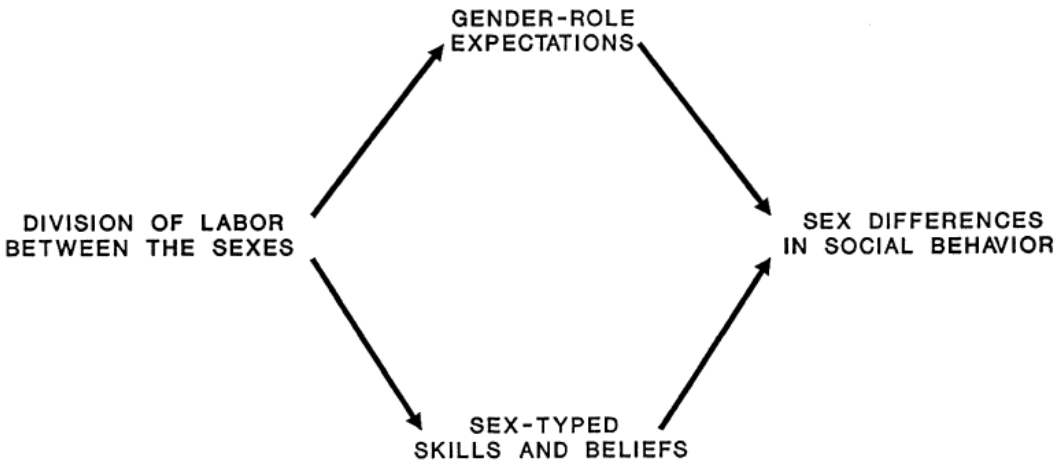


Figure 3.1: Social Role Theory of Gendered Differences in Social Behaviour Eagly & Wood (1991)

According to Eagly (1987), gender differentiated behaviours are either due to conformity or socialisation. Conformity occurs when an individual complies with the gender role expectations such as social standards, attitudes or practices (Xie et al., 2008). To elaborate, men and women perceive that they have different expected roles and therefore alter their behaviour and dispositions to meet those expectations (Archer, 1996). In contrast, socialisation is the process of educating and instructing males and females as to the norms, behaviours and values of group membership in regards to how to behave as men or women through teaching them skills and beliefs that society deems to be appropriate (Xie et al., 2008).

Gender Socialisation

Sociologists and other social scientists attribute many of the behavioural differences generally observed between males and females to gender socialisation (Putrevu, 2001). At a young age, children become culturally socialised, whereby they first identify with a particular gender then seek to develop their belief system about themselves around this gender (Palan, 2001). The gender socialisation process occurs in these early years whereby each gender learns different skills or acquires disparate qualities that will facilitate their social role typically linked to their biological sex (Strapko et al., 2016). During this time, people learn and imitate the culturally defined personality traits that are associated with either being male (masculine traits) or female (feminine traits) (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015). People are socialised differently depending on whether they are male or female and in turn play different roles in our society (Archer, 1996). Socialisation occurs by emulating others through learning and reinforcement (e.g. encouraging nurturing emotions in girls) (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015). The learned skills and beliefs are both applicable to the context in which they are

cultivated and other social situations because of their transferability (Xie et al., 2008). Importantly, differences in gendered behaviour can be influenced by the characteristics of the participants studied and the social context (Xie et al., 2008). Gender socialisation fundamentally guides behaviour in that "societal expectations influence behaviour through social rewards and punishments for conforming or not conforming to roles and may create gender differences that otherwise might not have occurred" (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015, p. 131). This notion suggests that individuals not only try to do what is expected of them or act the way that these roles imply that they should, but they form beliefs about the consequences of their behaviours (Xie et al., 2008). While it is recognised that there are significant biological differences between men and women, it is proposed that the socialisation process is likely to heighten rather than lessen these differences (Putrevu, 2001). Essentially, gender socialisation is directly linked to behaviour and the way in which we make decisions. It is also said that gender socialisation is dependent upon one's socialising agents and that gender norms are learned and either accepted or rejected by a person (Strapko et al., 2016). The four main agents of socialisation consisting of family, education, peer groups and the media can influence an individual's identification of gendered values and the social roles that women and men perform (Strapko et al., 2016).

In a meta-analysis of gender-differences research in psychology science, gender similarities were apparent, therefore it is suggested for researchers to report both gender differences and similarities in order to obtain a balanced view of the two perspectives (Hyde, 2007). Researchers in the field of sociology have pointed out the importance of looking beyond a dichotomous view of gender to not only examine the differences, but recognise that the similarities between men and women with regard to their behaviour may actually surpass the differences between them (Bussey & Bandura, 1999; Gilbert, Burnett, Phau, & Haar, 2010). Notably, gender similarities can be just as interesting as gender differences according to Hyde (2007).

It must be noted that there are limitations to social role theory in that it may not explain all gender differences, especially in relation to mate choice and sexual jealousy, to which evolutionary psychology may be better suited to explain (Archer, 1996). However, social role theory appears to fit well with this study, in that it assists in the understanding of gendered beliefs, social norms and attitudes in a society and the expectations that are associated with intentions to perform a particular behaviour. In addition to making a key contribution to the tourism literature, this research will add to the ongoing sociological debate about the similarities and differences between men and women in the convention attendance context. It is suggested that social role theory and its applications in consumer behaviour studies might provide a theoretical contribution to aid in the explanation of convention attendees' decision-making processes from a gender perspective.

The area of gender and consumer behaviour research has developed over a period of more than 30 years and continues to attract substantial research interest, yet gaps still exist, with a lack of research distinguishing between men's and women's behaviour (Caterall & Maclaran, 2002; Tifferet & Herstein, 2012). The following section presents a brief discussion on what has been found in the areas of gender and consumer behaviour.

Gender and Consumer Behaviour

Early accounts of gendered consumer behaviour research until the 1980s focused on two main areas: how women were represented in advertising and how gender identity could be used to predict future behaviour (Caterall & Maclaran, 2002). These areas are still prominent in the literature, along with many other topics and theoretical perspectives that have received attention (Schertzer et al., 2008). For example, over time, consumer behavioural researchers began to recognise that the subject of gender is more complex than earlier researchers contemplated and that gender-related behaviour may not be solely based on biology, but rather, psychological and experiential factors could help explain variations between genders (Bettany, Dobscha, O'Malley, & Prothero, 2010; Sun & Qu, 2011). The extent to which an individual identifies or perceives themselves as masculine or feminine is what we refer to as gender identity in consumer behaviour research, (Fischer & Arnold, 1994). More than simply a biological classification, both gender and gender identity have been explored as portentous moderators of consumer behaviours (Palan, 2001; Neale et al., 2016). There is therefore both theoretical and empirical support for arguing that gender plays a role in forming behavioural intentions (Barber, Taylor, & Deale, 2010). Although there is recognition that males and females will vary along the continuum of masculinity/femininity characteristics, and their internal attributions of these characteristics, the majority of research studies on gender differences in the tourism marketing context have been based on sex differences in recognition that the majority of both sexes are likely to conform to gender norms. To reiterate, this study will examine sex differences.

From the 1990s, there was a shift in the focus of gender research from exploring pre-purchase and purchase decision-making to an emphasis on the entire purchase experience (Caterall & Maclaran, 2002; Fischer & Arnold, 1994). Scholars wanted to discover the meanings that consumers attach to their purchase decisions in an attempt to conceptualise consumption patterns from a multi-dimensional perspective (Caterall & Maclaran, 2002). Consequently, more qualitative studies featured in the literature as researchers moved away from a reliance on quantitative methods to measure gender and consumer behaviour. A substantial body of research now exists in the marketing field containing examples of studies that have measured sex rather than gender to explain consumers and their behavioural intentions (Barber et al., 2010; Caterall & Maclaran, 2002). Some of the main research domains include online shopping behaviour, customer loyalty and risk aversion (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015). Notably, most researchers measure sex as a variable for segmentation rather than gender (Palan, 2001, Barber et al., 2010).

With regards to online usage and shopping behaviour, the agentic-communal dichotomy appears to exist in that males tend to use the internet for task oriented purposes such as looking up investment data, whereas women tend to use it for social purposes (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015). In the context of consumer decision-making strategies in online auctions, one study suggests that considerable differences exist between males and females (Lai, Wu, & Lin, 2008). Male auction users tend to exert a higher level of risk whereby they purchase more expensive items than females and they also view an auction website as a purchasing channel rather than a form of entertainment as it was perceived by female users (Lai et al., 2008). Additionally, risk has been linked to the agentic characteristics displayed by males in relation to financial decisions, such as purchasing investment insurance, whereas risk aversion is commonly associated with females (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015). Gender differences have also been found in shopping habits, with women more inclined to make impulse purchases, take more time in shopping and generally enjoy shopping more so than men (Tifferet & Herstein, 2012). Some studies have shown that women report higher levels of brand consciousness, loyalty and commitment particularly in relation to luxury brands as some women wear luxury products to display their status in social contexts (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015).

It is common knowledge that products are marketed differently to males and females due to their differing purchase decision-making processes and consumption behaviours (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015). It is important to note here that this study focuses on gender as a demographic characteristic for market segmentation purposes. The process of market segmentation involves identifying and defining market segments or “groups of customers” with similar characteristics who become targets in an organisation’s marketing plan and are used to guide key marketing decisions (Millan, Fanjul, & Moital, 2016). Once a segment has been identified, marketers develop products and or services to satisfy the unfulfilled needs of this segment (Millan et al., 2016). When targeting customers, it is necessary for marketers to be conscious of the differences between men and women because essentially they can respond to different stimuli and at times require different messaging (Kim et al., 2007). Without pursuing gender as a research agenda, marketers cannot fully comprehend the varying needs, wants and behaviours of men and women with regard to their consumption patterns.

One field of research that is of interest to this study is travel behaviour and the role that gender plays on travel decisions. This area of research will be examined from three perspectives: leisure travel, event travel and convention attendance.

Gender and Travel Behaviour

Tourism is considered to be "a process constructed out of gendered societies and all aspects of tourism-related development and activity embody gender relations" (Kinnaird & Hall, 1994, p. 24). Gender and tourism are in fact interrelated, as both are associated with social encounters and cultural relations (Aitchison, 2001; Swain, 1995). Gender analysis is particularly important in travel behaviour investigations, as it helps to understand the possible gender effect on travel decision-making with regard to the similarities and differences between men and women (Cohen, Prayag, & Moital, 2014; Kim, Lee, Lee, & Song, 2012; Wong, Fong, & Law, 2016). Such information is vital to organisations that spend millions on promoting tourism to ensure that the different needs of both women and men are met (Kerstetter & Pennington-Gray, 1999; Wang et al., 2016).

While the study of gender and travel behaviour has gained some interest amongst tourism researchers, rarely has the specific role of gender in the tourist decision-making process been examined (Barber et al., 2010). The tourist decision-making process is considered to be a complex one that involves a number of sub-decisions that are made from the time of deciding 'where to go' through to 'what to do at the destination' (Smallman & Moore, 2010). Although there are exceptions, tourism researchers usually gather data pertaining to gender to profile their sample characteristics, but such data is seldom analysed within the context of their study (Mair, 2010a). Further, if gender is mentioned in an empirical study on tourism decision-making, it is normally referred to as a categorical factor and not the primary focus of the study. While gender differences do exist and gender is captured as a demographic variable in tourism studies, a notable weakness in the early years was that gendered data was not presented in a meaningful way (Carr, 1999; Lin et al., 2014). As Norris and Wall (1994) succinctly state, there is a need to encompass gender perspectives in the study of tourism as without it our knowledge is incomplete. Arguably, gender should be included in every aspect of tourism research. According to Figueroa-Domecq, Pritchard, Segovia-Pérez, Morgan, and Villacé-Molinero (2015, p. 98), "there is an urgent requirement to broaden and deepen tourism gender research as we must know more about existing lines of enquiry and open up new vistas around gendered tourism behaviours…since gender is entwined in every facet of tourism, gender research should encompass every tourism space, experience and embodied encounter." The importance of gender in travel behaviour, while under-researched, cannot be overlooked.

Overall, more needs to be done to address gender perspectives in tourism, given that gender appears to be fundamental in the travel decision-making process (Kinnaird & Hall, 1994; Norris & Wall, 1994; Warnick & Chen, 2008). Criticisms have been made regarding researchers' 'lack of critical theory' in their examinations of gender and tourist experiences, as they rarely draw from knowledge structures across the social sciences and humanities to make references to gender, society and culture in their investigations (Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2015). As a result, analyses have been left incomplete and gender-specific concerns are often absent, which has led to 'gender-blindness' rather than a 'gender-aware' scholarship (Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2015; Pritchard & Morgan, 2000; Westwood, Pritchard, & Morgan, 2000). This bias has given rise to expectations that women's travel behaviour is thought to echo the same patterns of male travellers or even worse, that women are invisible (Moscardo, 2008; Smith & Carmichael, 2006). Other researchers note these shortcomings

in the literature, such as the dearth of gender-specific research in tourism, studies presenting a one-sided empirical focus on men and studies adopting a male bias without theoretical grounding (Meng & Uysal, 2008; Pritchard & Morgan, 2000). This noticeable paucity of analysis pertaining to gender impedes the development of theoretical frameworks in tourism (Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2015). It also weakens our understanding of consumer behaviour in the tourism industry context and the role that gender plays in changing social paradigms (Carr, 1999; Warnick & Chen, 2008).

The study of tourism and gender has received some attention as evidenced by the growing body of literature in the subject area, as both scholars and practitioners have become aware of the value of understanding males and females in attempt to meet their needs (Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2015). Gender based tourism research has recognised that a biological male-female dichotomy for gender distinction exists (Oh et al., 2002) and it seems that much of the literature in this area has been based on this. One of the few studies pertaining to gender and tourist decision-making is that of Mottiar and Quinn (2004). According to their exploratory study of couple dynamics in household tourism decision-making, women generally have a dominant role in the early stages of the process, initiating the discussion, information search and booking. Women are considered to be the gatekeepers of the travel decision (Belch & Willis, 2002). An earlier study that examined female decision-making in tourism revealed that wives who travel for business purposes show similar behaviour when planning a leisure trip (Zalatan, 1998). This finding is in line with literature discussed in Chapter 2, where convention attendance decision-making has been likened to leisure travel decision-making (Oppermann & Chon, 1997). The study also indicated that women tend to be more involved in decisions whilst the family is at the destination, particularly in terms of selecting restaurants and shopping activities.

From a market segmentation perspective using the expectancy-disconfirmation framework, a study of travellers staying at two hotels over a four week period revealed that while male and female travellers had different levels of expectations and perceptions, their disconfirmation, satisfaction and behavioural intention were on par (Oh et al., 2002). Another study sought to examine service quality and word of mouth in the tourism sector according to gender using a sample of travellers staying at a hotel (Sun & Qu, 2011). As hypothesised, women were more influenced by relational service quality when they talked about their service experiences (i.e. building relationships with staff and customers – the communal dimension) than by core service quality, while the opposite was apparent for men (Sun & Qu, 2011).

Overall, tourism and gender studies offer some insight into the differences and similarities between men and women in the tourist context. The tourism literature also contains some research concerning gender in the leisure context. This area of study will now be discussed to provide direction for future gender research in other travel contexts, such as attendance at conventions.

Gender and Leisure Travel Behaviour

Empirical studies of leisure tourism and gender commonly indicate that differences exist in the level and degree to which males and females are able to participate in leisure travel. Jackson and Henderson (1995) point out that since traditionally women are the primary carers of children they can be faced with constraints to participate in leisure activities, not because they are female, but rather because this role is expected of them typically by society (McGehee et al., 1996). Many traditional societies still hold the perception that being a female implies that they need to remain close to home and such societies discourage women from travelling, as opposed to modern societies that support women's travel (Timothy, 2001). According to Harris and Wilson (2007) there are several examples of leisure studies with a focus on women and constraints to travel, suggesting that women tend to be less able to access and enjoy leisure activities. Women travellers can also be constrained due to extreme circumstances where they have a perceived fear of being subject to violence and feelings of being isolated (McNamara & Prideaux, 2010). Studies show that women tend to feel threatened and concerned for their personal safety and wellbeing more so than men while participating in leisure activities (McNamara & Prideaux, 2010). Other examples of constraints to leisure travel include time due to household obligations, money, class, race and other social structures affecting women's daily life experiences (Bartos, 1982; Shaw, 1994).

Unlike other fields of study such as geography, cultural and feminist studies, research concerning women and their travel behaviour is still in its early stages (Aitchison, 2005; Harris & Wilson, 2007). An analysis of gender, women and leisure Henderson (1994) proposes a framework to illustrate the past 40+ years of leisure research as presented in Figure 3.2. Early tourism studies published in the 1940s to 1970s excluded women from their investigations of leisure. This was followed by the 1970s to 1980s where feminist literature emerged. During this era, references to women were made and in some cases, when women were mentioned, it was usually in relation to the family context (Norris & Wall, 1994).

In the 1980s, scholars concentrated on performing descriptive studies that provided more in depth analyses on the differences between men and women in the leisure tourism context. It is important to note here that when gender differences were detected, they were generally mentioned without any detailed explanation as to why they may have occurred (Norris & Wall, 1994). Research conducted during this time, however, was helpful in making women more visible in the literature (Henderson, 1994). The mid 1980s saw the experiences of women as the focus of investigation. This pivotal phase in the development of leisure research opened the way to new ideas, new perspectives of existing theories and enriched our knowledge in previously overlooked areas where gender is relevant. An emerging area of study takes a more empowering view of the solo independent woman traveller (Jordan & Gibson, 2005; McNamara & Prideaux, 2010; Wilson & Harris, 2006). In such studies, women are the primary focus, known as 'women centred research' according to Henderson (1994).

One example of such a study is by Pennington-Gray and Kerstetter (2001) who investigated what university-educated women seek from their leisure travel experiences. Their study shows that women see education through an increased knowledge of different places as an important benefit of travel. This study, among others, suggests that independent travel for women, such as business travel, provides a unique and essential means for boosting women's sense of self confidence and empowerment (Harris & Wilson, 2007). In a study of 235 female business travellers representing a range of industries, three clusters of travellers were formed based on their demographic and psychographic characteristics: the connective, the empowered and the productive (Newth, 2009). The connective cluster was aged 50+ with more than 10 years of travel experience and enjoyed the opportunity to connect with new people and clients. The empowered cluster was in their 40s with between seven to 10 years of travel experience and perceive this form of travel as a sense of freedom and empowerment. The third cluster, the productive, were also in their 40s but have less than six years travel experience and feel productive when they travel for business purposes. Harris and Ateljevic (2003) also reported that women travelling for business purposes perceive it as form of empowerment and independence; however, they are faced with household tensions and societal expectations that can often inhibit them from travel. Work-related travel can allow women to feel a sense of 'indulgence', away from their busy life surrounded by personal and family responsibilities (Wilson & Harris, 2006).

Another notable contribution to women and business travel by Foster and Botterill (1995) in relation to UK hotel stays, showed that women were dissatisfied with the security measures installed, and staff member attitudes and perceived their treatment to be unequal in comparison to male business travellers. A study of business women in the airline industry by Westwood et al. (2000), showed that airlines have a gender-neutral perception of the business travel experience according to the results from 15 telephone interviews. A further 10 depth interviews and two focus groups were conducted with both female and male business travellers to assess perceptions of the airline product, which revealed that several differences were apparent between genders. For instance, women tended to find business lounges uninviting, intimidating and masculine spaces, they preferred healthier in-flight food options and were more concerned with personal space and safety than males. Women also perceived that businessmen received preferential treatment by airline staff which made some respondents feel out of place during their flight experience.

A call for gendered tourist research was made in the mid-1990s to encourage future researchers to incorporate gender in their studies with a particular focus on women travellers, see Kinnaird and Hall (1994) and Swain (1995). It was argued that male and female travellers are different, particularly in relation to their travel motivations and behaviour, and existing assumptions about their travel patterns need to be challenged and reviewed. This resulted in the fifth phase of gender leisure tourism research where interpretations became more necessary to gender scholarship again (see Figure 3.2). A review of the literature suggests that leisure tourism and gender research from the late 1990s to 2000 broadened in scope to include cross-cultural perspectives, the globalisation of gender and family roles (Henderson, Hodges, & Kivel, 2002). From the year 2000 and beyond, this field of research has evolved to consider the complexities associated with exploring gender and women's leisure (Henderson & Gibson, 2013). A recent integrative review of research concerning gender and women's leisure by Henderson and Gibson (2013) uncovered seven themes: resistance and

empowerment through leisure, feminist frameworks, international cultural descriptions, social support and friendships, family, physical and mental health, and social inclusion. While it would be interesting to elaborate on each of these themes, from an overall perspective most emerging research has continued to highlight the meanings of leisure and leisure behaviour for women from various lenses including cultural, theoretical and methodological viewpoints. Notably, research appears to be moving beyond the boundaries of constraint to a focus on empowerment through leisure activities (Henderson & Gibson, 2013).

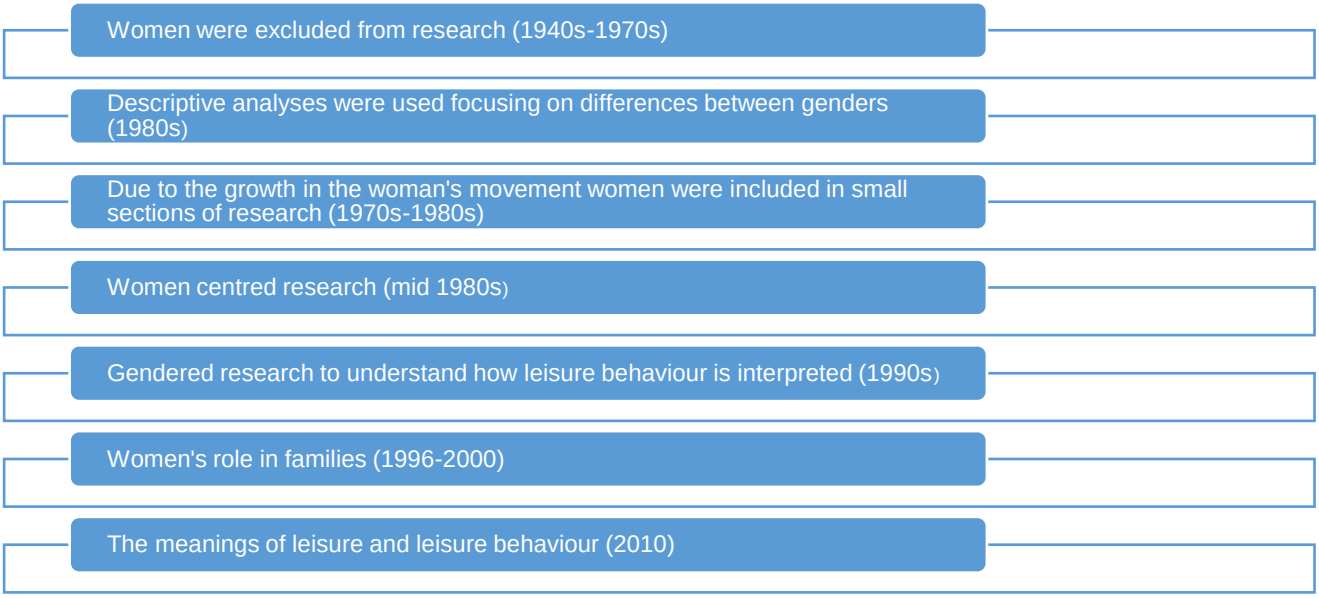


Figure 3.2: Adapted Framework of Gender, Women and Leisure (Henderson, 1994; Henderson & Gibson, 2013)

Researchers that have been exploring the differences between male and female travel behaviour have drawn from varied perspectives (McGehee et al., 1996; Oh et al., 2002). Some studies have centred their investigations on gender, in the field of leisure tourism (for example Collins & Tisdell, 2002; Frew & Shaw, 1999; McGehee et al., 1996; Meng & Uysal, 2008). McGehee et al. (1996) investigated gender difference in travel motivation factors amongst Australian leisure travellers. The results from the interviews identified 32 'push' and 44 'pull' factors which were analysed to determine whether motivational differences exist between males and females. The findings showed that the 'push' factors for women were cultural experiences, family and kinship, and prestige whereas men placed significantly more importance sports and adventure. In regards to the 'pull' factors, women considered heritage and culture, comfort and relaxation, budgetary issues to be more important than men did, however men rated recreation activities more highly than women. Similarly, Frew and Shaw (1999) examined the relationship between personality, gender and tourism behaviour by applying Holland's Personality Theory in an Australian study of tourist attractions. The respondents were interviewed based on previous visits, interests and intention to revisit specific attractions. It was found that significant differences exist when comparing personality types, gender and tourism behaviour. More specifically, males were more likely to be interested in visiting sporting attractions such as the AFL Grand Final and the Formula One Grand Prix. Meng and Uysal (2008) studied destination attributes at a nature-based resort in Virginia, USA. Using a panel sample, telephone interviews were conducted with 409 respondents who were asked to

rank certain destination attributes and motivation items. They discovered that both men and women consider quality and convenience to be the most important destination attributes. This suggests that while women and men are often different in their motivations and travel behaviour, this is not always the case.

To summarise, there is some support for the view that differences exist in relation to gender regarding leisure travel behaviour. When deciding on a holiday, women appear to be more inclined to visit destinations that provide heritage and cultural experiences, opportunities for family bonding, natural scenery, and places to comfortably unwind (Frew & Shaw, 1999; McGehee et al., 1996; Meng & Uysal, 2008; Xie et al., 2008). In contrast, men place greater importance on recreational activities and/or attractions involving sports, such as canoeing, hunting, fishing, visiting sporting museums and attending sporting events, when deciding on holiday travel destinations (Frew & Shaw, 1999; McGehee et al., 1996; Meng & Uysal, 2008). These results suggest that women and men may have different travel preferences, which are likely to influence their decision-making behaviour, although similarities have also been observed.

Not only has gender been treated as a moderating variable in consumer psychology and marketing, but researchers in the field of tourism have also examined the moderating role of gender (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015). A few studies provide examples of how gender moderates tourist expectations (e.g. Wang et al., 2016). In particular, Suki (2014) found that men and women evaluate hotel service attributes differently. While empathy (attention given to guests) and tangibles (the facilities) were the most important aspects of service for men, reliability (the ability of staff members to carry out service) and responsiveness (the willingness of staff to provide assistance to guests) were factors of paramount importance to women. Similarly, Dedeoğlu et al. (2016) hypothesised that gender would have a moderating effect on the relationship between value perceptions (emotional, monetary, price, social and quality value) and re-visit intention to Alanya, Turkey. The results showed that there was a stronger relationship between price value perceptions and revisit intentions for males, whereas the effect of quality value perceptions was stronger for females.

Extant gender and travel behaviour research provides some insight into the understanding of gender differences in leisure tourism. Practical implications for tourism marketers interested in differentiating their female and male market segments have been provided. Existing empirical research advances our theoretical understanding of gender and travel behaviour, however they do not appear to delve deeper to explain why such similarities or differences exist or the underlying meanings behind them (Lin et al., 2014). Therein lies a gap in the literature pertaining to gender, particularly with the use of relevant conceptual frameworks.

Gender and Event Behaviour

The event tourism literature includes a few studies concerning events and gender (e.g. Chen, 2010; Hixson, McCabe, & Brown, 2011; Snelgrove, Taks, Chalip, & Green, 2008; Yolal et al., 2009). One study, in particular, examined gender and sport event tourist behaviour. The findings indicate that men and women have different values about being a sporting fan with regard to loyalty, socialisation, volunteering, self-actualisation and equality. In fact, female participants valued the social interactions with their sporting club members more than the male participants (Chen, 2010). Factors that were most important to males included the actual competition and the success of the team. This study supports the view that socialising and event attendance may be inextricably linked from a women's perspective (communal characteristics), while male attendees can be more focused on achieving goals (agentic characteristics) (Chen, 2010). Another sporting study concerning event attendance motivation that was conducted at the Clipsal 500 V8 car race in Adelaide found some significant differences based on gender (Hixson et al., 2011). Similar to Chen (2010), socialising was a key motivator for female participants, whereas having fun was a primary motive for males (Hixson et al., 2011). It is quite plausible that the reasons for attending certain events differ according to gender for other types of events, such as conventions.

As previously noted, scholars have recognised that gender is fundamental to travel decisions, yet there is an absence of gender-specific research in the convention attendance context. Tourism scholars are still in debate about where convention attendance sits in the business/holiday spectrum as there are mixed-motives at play in this form of travel (Getz, 2008; Small, 2005). However, as mentioned in Chapter 2, ultimately the business component of convention attendance supersedes any other component, such as leisure, because it is the primary purpose of travel (Oppermann, 1996a). Since some of the stages in the leisure and convention attendance decision-making process appear to be different, such as the choice of destination, it may seem plausible that the findings from previous gender travel behaviour studies that are based on leisure travellers may not apply to the convention context. There is therefore a need to investigate convention attendees and the factors that influence their attendance intentions from a gender perspective. The following discussion explores the literature on convention attendees where gender references have been made, in order to show the gaps that exist in our current knowledge.

Gender and Convention Attendance Behaviour

The study of gender and convention attendee behaviour is important for several reasons. First, it is essential to expand the knowledge of the role of gender in convention attendee behaviour because demographically, the attendee profile of conventions has evolved. Traditionally men have represented the majority of convention attendees, particularly in the scientific industries, however the number of women attending conventions globally is said to be rising (Lee & Park, 2002; Mottiar & Quinn, 2004). It is not that women's attendance to conventions has been increasing because there are more women-only conventions being held nowadays; rather, women's participation in the convention industry is growing in its own right (Cohoon, Nigai, & Kay, 2011). In the computing industry for example, the proportion of conference papers written by women increased from 7% in 1967 to 27% in 2009, which according to Cohoon et al. (2011) is partly due to fact that more women are authoring papers and are represented at conventions. Likewise, in the veterinary medicine field, conventions held in North American reported female attendance rates of 66% or more (Tremayne, 2010). In response to this trend, scholars have begun to investigate how the needs of women differ from men with regard to convention attendance (McCleary, Weaver, & Lan, 1994).

Second, women appear to perceive convention attendance to be important for their career more than men. For example, in a study of tourism and hospitality academics, attending conventions was ranked sixth for women and seventh for men as career advancement tools behind getting research articles published, keeping a network of influential contacts, undertaking further study, having long-term career plans and goals and having short-term career plans and goals (Weber & Ladkin, 2008). Prpić (2002) suggests that international convention attendance is a strong predictor of career productivity levels amongst women in the scientific field, given that conventions provide a forum for building international acquaintances that can lead to research collaborations and co-authorship in journals. She goes on to say that the number of papers early career researchers publish in global scientific journals greatly depends on the frequency of their convention attendance, which is where they develop relationships with international colleagues (Prpić, 2002). This notion is shared by Plank-Bazinet, Heggeness, Lund, and Clayton (2016) in the academic medicine and biomedical context, suggesting that large collaborative networks consisting of men and women positively correspond to a high volumes of publication that receive more citations than single gender groups. Furthermore, although attending international conventions is important for the productivity of male researchers, it has been argued that other factors such as their education and conducting peer reviews are more influential to their career success (Prpić, 2002).

Third, because the convention industry has grown considerably, especially over the last decade with regard to the number of events held and the number of people attending events (Jago & Deery, 2010), understanding how males and females make decisions about which convention to attend becomes critical for marketers. The ability to reach potential convention attendees, along with the trend in increased female representation, further justifies the need to understand the effect of gender in the convention attendance decision-making process (Juwaheer, 2011; Kim et al., 2007; Lin et al., 2014). Exploring the role of gender in the convention attendance decision is therefore the focus of this study.

A review of the literature reveals that there is a lack of convention attendee research profiling attendees according to gender. Amongst the few studies concerning gender and convention attendance, Collins and Tisdell (2002) indicate that Australian women travelling overseas for the purpose of attending a convention are generally aged between 35 to 44 years. This form of travel gradually declines after women reach the empty-nest stage of the family life cycle, even though their children no longer live in their household and they have more time to focus on career goals. Collins and Tisdell (2002) explain that while some women re-enter the workforce, they may not be able to claim convention attendance as a form of reward for tenure, which might disadvantage them from participating in convention travel. Conversely, the study shows that outbound convention attendance for Australian men peaks at the age of 45 to 54, towards the later stage of the family life cycle. It may be that men in this age group hold senior roles at their workplace and see convention attendance as an opportunity to share knowledge. This highlights a gap in knowledge that is worthy of future investigation. In an account of women's travel experiences during their 40s, Small (2005) observed that attending a convention was perceived to be a holiday for participants. Due to the changes in the labour market in the paid employment landscape, this form of travel is more available today for women than it has ever been. Furthermore, given that women in this family life-cycle stage can have constraints to leisure (e.g. domestic responsibilities, dependent children living at home), it might be one of their only opportunities to escape on their own (Small, 2005).

An early study by Grant and Weaver (1996) profiled attendees based on their convention selection criteria and demographic characteristics. Attendees were placed into three homogeneous groups. Interestingly, gender was not significant in their study with regard to defining the clusters. The first two groups attend conventions for the networking and educational opportunities and comprised a relatively equal proportion of males and females aged 25-54 years. However, the third group attend conventions for the leadership opportunities, and were predominantly males aged 45-54 years. These examples suggest that attendees potentially have different reasons for attending a convention, depending on their age and gender, which could influence the types of conventions in their consideration set.

A recent study that sought to measure the benefits and outcomes arising from attending an international convention held in Sydney also suggests that convention attendees are not a homogenous group (Edwards et al., 2011). Attendees were not only examined according to the convention they attended but also by gender, age, employment length, employment type and origin to identify whether there were any significant differences between groups. Importantly, the data suggests that male attendees see a convention as a means for establishing research collaborations, while females see them as an opportunity to build knowledge, to gain a renewed sense of purpose and to improve the quality of education in their field (Edwards et al., 2011). In line with previous findings, a segmentation study of attendees from eight conferences held in Loja, Ecuador showed that men were more satisfied with the quality of the conferences compared to women given that women place higher demands on the conference services provided (Martín, Román, & Gonzaga, 2017). Additionally, Mair (2010a) profiled UK and Australian convention attendees based on their attendance motivations and demographic characteristics. Her study involved creating clusters of attendees using age, gender and educational background data. The results reveal a significant difference in the mean scores

between men and women with respect to the statement that “my personal safety seemed assured at the destination”. The study shows that women consider their personal safety to be more important in their convention attendance decision than men do, which lends weight to the suggestion that there may be differences in convention attendance decision-making based on gender.

However, not all studies uncover differences between genders. Yoo and Zhao (2010) sought to determine whether differences exist between the demographic profiles of convention attendees and the underlying factors in their convention participation decision-making process. They point out that the relative influence of networking, travelability (cost, travel distance), destination and educational factors on their convention attendance decision did not differ between males and females. A study by Breiter and Milman (2006) collected demographic information from convention attendees in their investigation into service priorities at a large convention center. The results from the five conventions show that no statistically significant differences were found between male and female respondents regarding the importance of the convention center services and facility features. Another study by Borghans et al. (2010) examined the factors important to economists in the convention attendee decision-making process. The results showed that the majority of participants (89%) attend conventions to obtain feedback on their research and for networking purposes. Interestingly, a smaller proportion (33%) stated that they attend conventions for their enjoyment. These factors did not differ by gender (or other demographic variables such as age), however, a noticeable limitation in their study is that respondents based their preferences on hypothetical instead of actual upcoming conventions. Although these factors are consistent with existing convention attendee literature, there were no statistically differences according to gender.

Another study examined academic convention attendees and the role that multidimensional value plays on their behavioural intentions (Lee & Min, 2013). The study was conducted in Seoul, Korea using intercept surveys with attendees to three conventions. The researchers analysed respondents by psychographics and demographics, but the findings show that no gender differences existed across the low, medium and high multidimensional attendee groups regarding their emotional, functional and social values of the convention. Similarly, a convenience sample of convention attendees from Singapore by Malekmohammadi et al. (2011) examined gender according to four key motivations for attendance. These were: professional and prestige (building professional relationships, meeting like-minded people), pleasure seeking (getting away from home, visiting a new destination), destination factors (image, weather, safety/security, accommodation, facilities, cost, distance), and conference factors (quality, topic, speakers, networking and conference organiser). Interestingly, no significant differences were apparent for any of the demographic characteristics, including gender (Malekmohammadi et al., 2011). It is important to note however, that the findings from this study should be interpreted with caution given that only a small sample size was obtained (n=150). Given there are conflicting findings with regard to this subject matter, this highlights a need for research to better understand the convention attendance decision and how intentions are formed.

Directions for this Study

Although there have been important contributions to the literature pertaining to gender, tourism, behaviour and conventions, further research is needed to examine convention attendance decision-making from a gender perspective. Specifically, in order to develop a more complete understanding of convention attendees, gender-based investigations merit attention. Despite the growing body of literature related to the factors affecting convention attendee participation, little research to date has focused on whether the drivers of convention attendance vary for different groups of attendees. Research into understanding how attendance decisions might vary for men and women, in particular, is still lacking and the research that has been conducted has shown varying results. In order to deliver a successful convention that caters to the unique needs of all attendees, convention marketers and planners need to understand the differences between how men and women make attendance decisions. Accordingly, this study seeks to explore the factors that might influence attendees to attend a convention, the potential role that gender might play on the decision to attend, and the implications of these findings for future convention marketing.

This study adopts a social sciences perspective to assist in exploring convention attendance decisions with a gender lens. Drawing from social role theory and gender socialisation, this study will provide a more in depth perspective of gender that the current body of convention attendee literature does not offer to date. Given that this study is seeking to understand male and female convention attendees more comprehensively, this requires a specific investigation of consumer decision-making. In order to complement the conceptual foundations of this study, the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) which is grounded on decision-making beliefs, attitudes, intentions and behaviour, will be the theoretical framework used (see Chapter 4). Furthermore, although there are studies that have contributed to the identification of convention attendance drivers from a gender perspective, as mentioned earlier, they are primarily descriptive in nature. This study will integrate the drivers (or motivations) into a predictive behavioural intentions model as guided by the TPB framework.

Summary

This chapter has presented a review of the literature pertaining to gender. The definition of gender has been discussed, social role theory and its applicability to this study as well as studies relating to gender and consumer behaviour have been highlighted. An examination of gender in the tourism context was provided, along with a review of gendered leisure tourism studies. The chapter then focuses on gender in event tourism, followed by convention tourism which draws attention to the gaps in our knowledge to date. The chapter concludes by suggesting that further research is needed to understand how convention attendance decisions might vary for men and women.

The theoretical framework used in this study, draws on the convention attendance and gender literature to justify the choice of a particular approach to the research and the research methods. The following chapter will consider the various theories and frameworks that can be used to predict behaviour. In particular, it discusses the foundations of consumer decision-making with particular reference to the development of behavioural travel decision models. An examination of decision-making theories was guided by the call from convention tourism researchers to base future studies on strong theoretical frameworks (Yoo & Weber, 2005). A review of the theory of reasoned action (TRA) and the TPB in the context of providing an appropriate theoretical framework for predicting and explaining convention attendee behaviour is provided.

Chapter 4: Theoretical Framework

The chapter reviews decision-making theories, with a focus on the theory of reasoned action (TRA) and the theory of planned behaviour (TPB). The latter is the theoretical framework selected to predict future convention attendance in this study. A discussion on the application of the TPB is provided, along with challenges to the theory. Next, the Reasoned Action Model (RAM) is discussed, in light of new research methodologies and paradigmatic approaches being adopted. Justifications for using TPB in the present study to predict intentions to attend a future association convention are provided. Finally, the chapter refers to existing literature concerning convention attendance models and notes that future research could explore the role that gender plays in such decisions. The research objectives are then presented.

Decision-making Theories

Every day, individuals are required to make numerous decisions concerning their daily lives. Decision-making is therefore a process that we must all go through to choose what to eat and drink, what clothes to wear, what to buy, where to go and who to spend time with (Nielson, 2001). Individuals are often presented with an abundance of options from which they need to select when making a decision (Nielson, 2001). Consumer decision-making has been subject to extensive research over the past four decades in response to the growth of the product and service industries (McCabe, Li, & Chen, 2016; Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). Understanding consumer decision-making has been a particular focus in social science research (Lam & Hsu, 2004). Decision-making has subsequently occupied a central role in several research areas, particularly in consumer research, marketing, social psychology, tourism and services.

There are alternative views on how consumers make decisions and as a result, a number of theories have been developed (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). Early work in consumer-decision making came from an economic perspective and focused on the act of purchase (benefit from the product vs. the constraints represented by cost) (McCabe et al., 2016). The expected utility theory is one of the most prevalent, which proposes that consumers purchase a product or service based on its ability to be the best choice in producing a certain outcome (Moutinho, 1987). This approach suggests that in order to behave rationally in the economic sense, a consumer would have to be aware of all the available consumption options, be capable of evaluating each alternative and to make the most appropriate decision in a given circumstance (Schiffman, Bednall, Watson, & Kanuk, 1997). Choice modelling is another approach commonly used in economics based on hypothetical scenarios to make inferences on consumer choices. To the author's knowledge, versions of utility theory and choice modelling have been applied to two studies relating to convention tourism by Borghans et al. (2010) and Crouch and Louviere (2004). While such approaches into understanding consumer decisions can be useful to predict how individuals or groups make choices, their weakness lies in the fact that they do not take into account constraints such as lack of time, inadequate information or the means to investigate competitive alternatives. As consumers are often influenced by values, emotions, habit and spontaneity, individuals are described as making satisfactory rather than perfect choices (McCabe et al., 2016; Schiffman et al., 1997). With this line of reasoning, prospect theory and regret theory are some of the theories developed

to help further explain consumer decision-making (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005; Smallman & Moore, 2010). More specifically, prospect theory assumes that individuals make decisions based on perceived gains instead of perceived losses (Rasouli & Timmermans, 2014). Regret theory posits that people anticipate regret if they make a wrong choice, and this feeling is taken into account when making decisions (Rasouli & Timmermans, 2014). It must be noted however, that prospect theory and regret theory are not relevant the current study.

From a cognitive view of consumer decision-making, predicting and explaining a wide variety of human behaviours has been central to many psychological theories (Lee & Back, 2007b). Scholars have sought to identify the underlying determinants of behavioural intention through the development of predictive theories including cognitive decision-making theory, information-processing theory, the theory of reasoned action, the theory of planned behaviour and the reasoned action model (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). Each of these theories are discussed, however the bulk of the chapter will focus on the last three theories mentioned above.

Traditionally, research in consumer decision-making focused on the cognitive paradigm, which assumes that consumers gather information and evaluate various options rationally (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). Cognitive models were first developed in the 1960s when marketing researchers increasingly focused on beliefs and attitudes as determinants of consumer purchasing behaviour (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). According to early models, cognitive consumer decision-making is a funnel-like process where consumers are presented with a number of options that they narrow down to make their choice (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). The cognitive decision-making theory asserts that there are five stages in the process consisting of: problem recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, choice and purchase and post-purchase evaluation. A limitation of this theory, however, is that it assumes consumers are rational, logical, highly involved and undergo complex reasoning to make decisions (McCabe et al., 2016). It may be more likely that consumers are influenced by several factors during the decision-making process, particularly in tourism scenarios where the decision can be complex and can be made over a long period of time (Smallman & Moore, 2010). On the other hand, some tourism decisions are not well planned, low involvement may be present and they can be spontaneous or impulsive, which contradicts the rational argument (Crompton, 1992; Smallman & Moore, 2010). Another concept that must be recognised is attitude-behaviour gap, which is based on the assumption that individuals do what they intend to do and do not do what they do not intend to do (Juvan & Dolnicar, 2014). However, with some behaviours, such as environmentally sustainable tourism behaviour, having a positive attitude about the environment is not necessarily a good predictor of sustainable holiday choices, hence an attitude-behaviour gap can exist (Juvan & Dolnicar, 2014).

One of the grand models of consumer behaviour is the information-processing theory which has been developed and broadened over the years to explain the way in which people comprehend and apply information to their current environment (Moutinho, 1987). The theory proposes five elements in the decision-making process namely: problem recognition (discrepancy between a consumer's desire and their perceived state), information search (influenced by beliefs, motives and attitudes), alternative evaluation and selection (consumer uses decision rules), outlet selection and purchase/post-purchase processes (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). The information-processing theory assumes that consumers are constantly gathering

information and seeking to make better choices to improve their desired state (Decrop, 2006). This more complete view of consumer behaviour has evolved through a number of stages over the past century.

Theory of Reasoned Action

The most influential work in the area of decision-making is by Martin Fishbein who proposed a model of attitude formation that became known as the expectancy-value model (Ajzen, 2012). Drawing from the expectancy-value model, he later developed one of the theories that has been useful in predicting behavioural intentions, the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen, 1991). The theory of reasoned action (TRA) was developed from attitudinal research and expectancy-value models that are based on the assumption that individuals are both rational and systematic in the way they make decisions about engaging in a behaviour (Lee & Back, 2008). The TRA suggests that a person's readiness to perform a given behaviour (or intention) is generally considered to be the antecedent of behaviour. According to the TRA, behavioural intention is a function of two factors: attitude toward performing the behaviour and subjective norm (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010) (see Figure 4.1).

Attitude

Through the course of an individual's life, they engage in a varied number of experiences whereby they acquire many beliefs about products, services, objects and behaviours (Peter & Olsen, 2010). Beliefs can be defined as an individual's assumption or certainty of attaining something that is connected to the object (Lam & Hsu, 2004). These beliefs represent the information people hold about an object, which have associated meanings that are stored in their memory. Given that people's cognitive capacity is limited, only a relatively small number of these beliefs can be activated and considered at any one point in time (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Peter & Olsen, 2010). The accessible beliefs are called salient beliefs and they are thought to serve as a determinant of a person's attitude toward an object or behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010).

The first determinant of intention in the TRA model is attitude, which is derived from a person's expectation about the likelihood of particular outcomes (i.e. behavioural beliefs) and their evaluation of the consequences (i.e. their belief about the value of the outcome). Conceptually, attitudes can be either general or specific. A general attitude refers to the general tendency for an individual to engage in a behaviour, whereas a specific attitude refers to an individual's particular attitude toward a single behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). General attitudes can be used to predict broad patterns or collective behaviours and are likely to influence the formation of an individual's specific attitude toward an object (Ajzen, 2012). Using a university student as an example, while this individual could generally have a positive attitude towards fellow second year university students, a specific attitude could relate to a specific action (e.g., making friends) and target (e.g., a second year student) and often also a specific context (e.g., at university) and time frame (e.g., in the next six months), which is considered to be a relatively strong predictor of actual behaviour. Through understanding behavioural beliefs about specific attitudes, researchers can theoretically gain insights into why an individual holds certain attitudes toward certain behaviours. According to the TRA, when an individual forms an attitude about a particular

behaviour, the attitude influences the formation of behavioural intentions (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). In other words, an individual is more likely to perform a behaviour when he or she has a positive attitude toward it.

Subjective Norm

People are guided by the patterns of behaviour that are considered to be socially acceptable by groups or societies in which they belong (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). They turn to the people around them for their standards of judgments regarding appropriate and inappropriate behaviour (Moutinho, 1987). These people are important social referents or significant others such as a partner, employer, peers, family members or friends (Ajzen, 2012). Perceptions of how an individual's important referents expect them to behave has an impact on their intention to behave in a certain way. As such, any person or group serving as a referent could exert influence on an individual's beliefs and choices because an individual may conform to the guidelines set out by their referent groups. This is called subjective norm, the second determinant of intention in the TRA.

Subjective norm is a social influence. It is defined as a person's perception that most people who are important to them (social pressure) think that they should perform (or not to perform) a specific behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). This component is derived from a person's perceptions of others' opinions about whether they should engage in a behaviour (i.e., normative beliefs) and the extent to which the person wants to comply with their referents (i.e., motivation to comply) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). The TRA stipulates that if an individual holds a favourable attitude towards a certain behaviour and perceives that their significant others approve of them performing that behaviour, they are more likely to form an intention to act.

Intentions

Behavioural intentions are indications that a person is ready to engage in a future action or behaviour (Peter & Olsen, 2010). In the context of the TRA, behavioural intentions are indications of how much effort one is willing to exert in order to attain a goal or perform the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). It is expected that if there is a high probability that an individual will perform a behaviour, it is likely that the behaviour will in fact be performed.

Intentions are a function of two constructs: attitudes and subjective norms (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). A person's intention is created through a process in which behavioural beliefs and normative beliefs are considered when they are faced with a decision about whether or not to perform a behaviour. Together, attitude and subjective norm can explain and predict behavioural intentions more accurately than attitude alone (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). The introduction of behavioural intention in the TRA represented an important step away from the previous notion held by researchers that attitudes were directly predictive of behaviour. If intentions are measured accurately, they are said to provide the best predictor of future behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010).

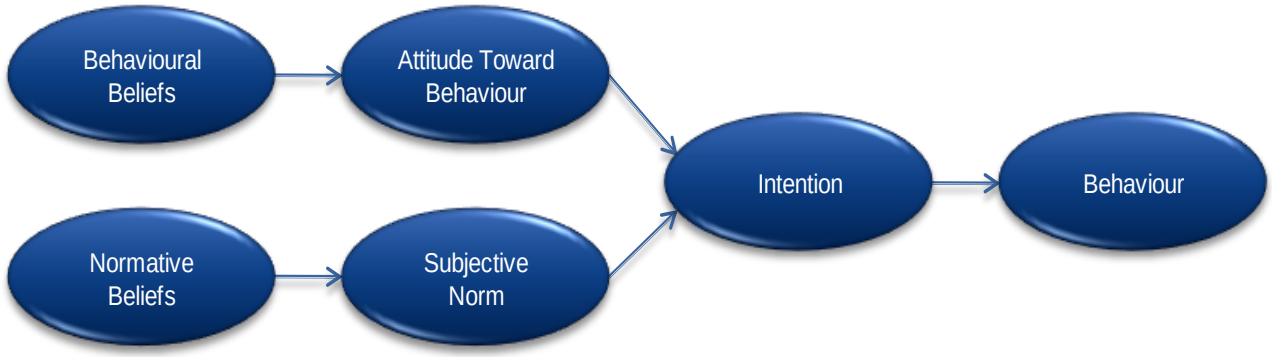


Figure 4.1: The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) Ajzen (1991)

The TRA was well received by researchers, particularly in the1970s and 1980s, because it was a more parsimonious model for explaining behavioural intentions than previous theoretical frameworks (Van Hooft et al., 2006). However, the TRA restricts itself to volitional behaviours that are generally under an individual's control. In some cases, there may be other factors that may prevent a person from carrying out a particular behaviour due to the necessary skills or abilities required. Additionally, potential external constraints could inhibit someone from acting on their intentions. Examples of these factors include technical knowledge, time or resources (Han, Hsu, & Sheu, 2010). The theory of planned behaviour (TPB) was thus developed to strengthen this inherent weakness.

Theory of Planned Behaviour

To account for behaviours that are under the limited behavioural control of the individual, the TPB was proposed as an extension of the TRA, adding the variable of perceived behavioural control (PBC).

Perceived Behavioural Control

The third determinant of intention, PBC, can be described as the perceived ability to perform a given behaviour, or achieve a certain goal that they have control over (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). PBC is derived from a person's perception of whether he/she has the resources required and opportunity to perform a certain behaviour (i.e., control beliefs) and the person's evaluation of the level of control over their behaviour (i.e., perceived power) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Essentially, PBC is the perceived difficulty of performing a behaviour and the perception that a behaviour is under one's control despite known barriers. The TPB posits that the more positive the attitude, normative influence and the greater the PBC, the stronger the individual's intention to carry out the behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). It is then postulated that an individual is likely to perform the behaviour when there is intention to do so, when given the adequate degree of actual control and the opportunity.

The fundamental tenet of the TPB is that human behaviour can be predicted by three antecedents of behavioural intention: attitudes (a person's evaluation of engaging in a behaviour), subjective norms (the perceived social pressure on a person to perform or not perform a behaviour) and perceived behavioural control (a person's perception of ease or difficulty, or subjective degree of control, over performing the behaviour) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010) (see Figure 4.2). These three antecedents are influenced by three salient beliefs: behavioural, normative and control beliefs (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). It is postulated that if an individual has a positive attitude, subjective normative influence and perceived behavioural control, they will carry out the behaviour when given the opportunity.

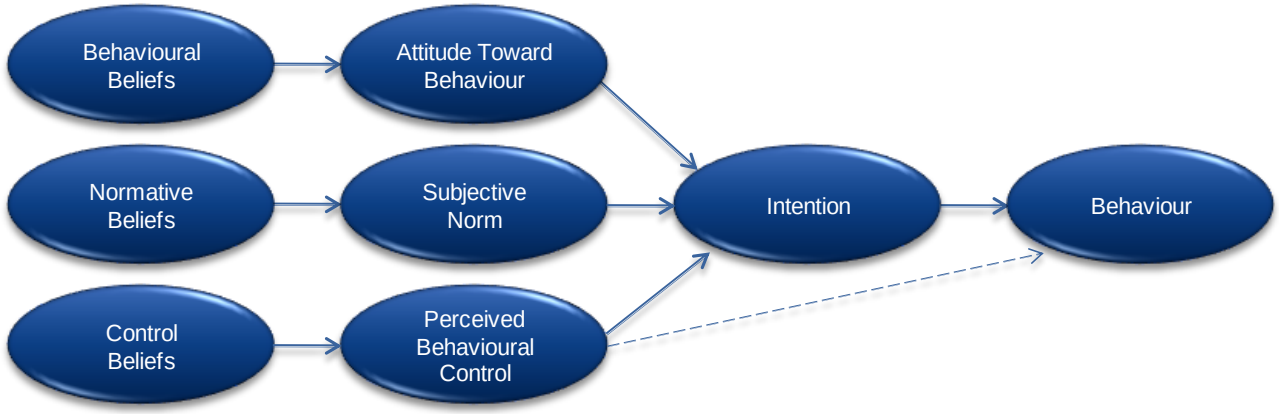


Figure 4.2: The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010)

Direct vs. Indirect Measures

The core of the TPB is three psychological (internal) constructs consisting of attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control (Sparks & Pan, 2009). These constructs can be measured directly and/or indirectly, depending on the aims of the research. Direct measures generally involve asking respondents about their overall attitude, the people who would encourage or discourage a behaviour, their perceived ability to carry out the behaviour and their intentions to actually perform the behaviour when they have the opportunity to do so. Using examples from Fishbein and Ajzen (2010), Table 4.1 provides a selection of direct measure questions concerning an exercising scenario.

Table 4.1: Examples of Direct Measures Based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010)

Measure	Example
Attitude (A)	My exercising for at least 20 minutes, three times per week, for the next three months is: Good _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____Bad
Subjective Norm (SN)	Most people who are important to me think that I should exercise for at least 20 minutes, three times per week for the next three months: Likely _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____Unlikely
Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)	For me to exercise for at least 20 minutes, three times per week for the next three months is under my control: Completely _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____Not at all
Intention (IN)	I plan to exercise for at least 20 minutes, three times per week for the next three months: Agree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____Disagree

It is also possible to gather information about the indirect or underlying measures of the three constructs, which are in turn, influenced by an indirect measure. Indirect measures are based on a set of salient beliefs and evaluations of these beliefs. According to the TPB, an individual's behavioural intention (IN) is determined by their attitude toward a behaviour that is based upon the belief that the behaviour in question will produce a positive/negative outcome. Thus, the indirect measures of an individual's attitude are comprised of behavioural beliefs (BB) and outcome evaluations (OE). Similarly, the subjective norm is a function of a set of beliefs called normative beliefs (NB) and one's motivation to comply with each referent (MC). Likewise, control beliefs consist of two components: control beliefs (CB) and control power (CP). Examples of indirect measure questions are presented in Table 4.2 using the same scenario.

Table 4.2: Examples of Indirect Measures Based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010)

Measure	Example
Behavioural Belief (BB)	If I exercise for at least 20 minutes, three times per week, for the next three months I will build up my physical strength: Likely _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____Unlikely
Outcome Evaluation (OE)	My building up physical strength is: Good _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____Bad
Normative Belief (NB)	My spouse or partner thinks that I should exercise for at least 20 minutes, three times per week for the next three months: Probable _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____Improbable
Motivation to Comply (MC)	When it comes to matters of health, I want to do what my spouse or partner thinks I should do: Agree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____Disagree
Control Belief (CB)	I will have physical strength in the next three months: Likely _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____Unlikely
Control Power (CP)	Having physical strength would enable me to exercise for at least 20 minutes, three times per week for the next three months: Agree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____Disagree

A number of calculations are carried out to predict the intention to perform a behaviour according to the TPB. Specifically, behavioural beliefs and outcome evaluations are multiplied together (i.e. BB x OE) to create an overall attitude score. In order to obtain an estimate of subjective norm, normative beliefs are multiplied by the motivation to comply with each referent (i.e. NB x MC). Each control belief is also multiplied by the control power (i.e. CB x CP) to determine the indirect measure of perceived behavioural control. The result of each multiplication forms a 'cross-product' for each belief, which can then be analysed to identify any statistically significant differences between respondent groups such as men vs. women. Figure 4.3 illustrates the calculations used to measure the constructs.

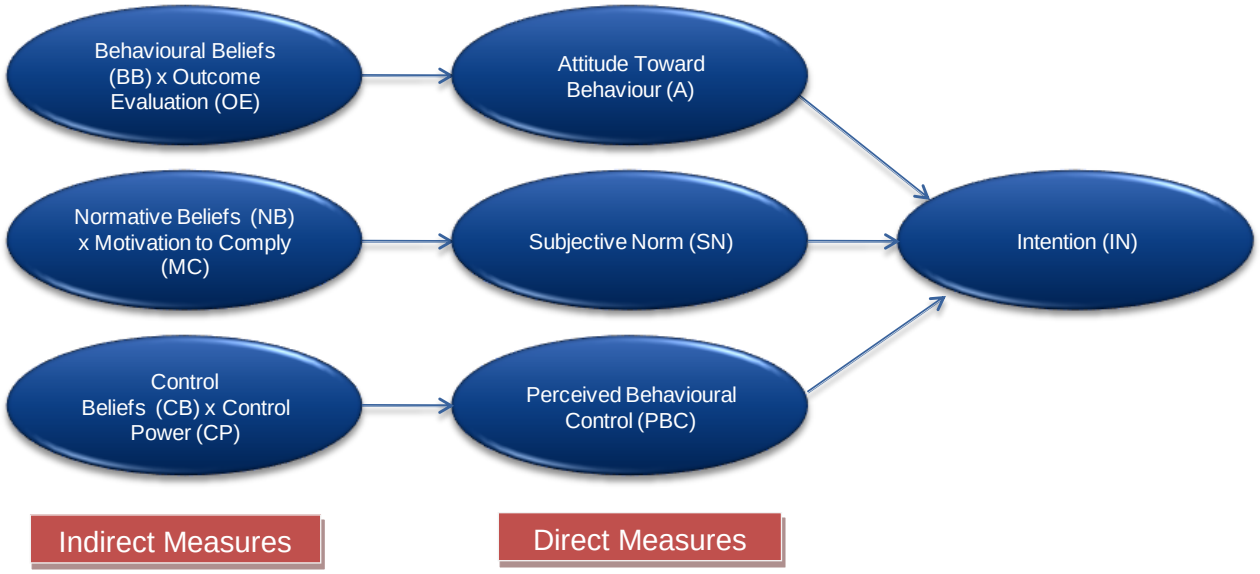


Figure 4.3: Theory of Planned Behaviour Constructs and Measures (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010)

Applications of the Theory of Planned Behaviour

The TPB is an established theoretical model that has been widely tested across a range of disciplines, contexts and behaviours to help predict behaviour (e.g. Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Lee & Choi, 2009; Presley, Damron-Martinez, & Zhang, 2010; Sparks & Pan, 2009). Reviews of the TPB literature have provided empirical evidence that substantiate the predictive utility of behavioural intentions using the framework that is accepted by researchers in the social sciences and beyond (Yuzhanin & Fisher, 2016). For example, in a meta-analysis by Armitage and Conner (2001), the 18 studies they reviewed provided mean intention-behaviour correlations of 0.52, which represent a strong relationship between the variables (Pallant, 2005). Similarly, Sutton (1998) reviewed nine meta-analyses and reported that attitudes, subjective norms and PBC accounted for 40% to 50% of explained variance in intentions. The PBC and intention relationship further accounted for 23% to 34% of explained variance in behaviour. These studies provide evidence to suggest that the three TPB constructs can accurately predict behaviours in a variety of contexts.

In line with the nature of this study, Table 4.3 provides some examples of studies that have investigated travel decisions and attendance decisions. The table also contains examples of some studies that have made gender comparisons. It must be noted that these examples do not constitute a definitive collection, rather they provide an insight into the literature‘s support for the TPB as a model for predicting human behaviour in three areas that relate to the present study.

Table 4.3: Studies Testing the Predictive Utility of the Theory of Planned Behaviour

Travel Decisions	Examples
Participation in wine tourism	(Sparks, 2007)
Visiting Hong Kong and Australia	(Lam & Hsu, 2004), (Lam & Hsu, 2006), (Sparks & Pan, 2009)
Choosing/visiting a green hotel	(Han et al., 2010), (Chen & Tung, 2014)
Hotel customers' eco-friendly decision-making process	(Han et al., 2009)
Meeting planners' intentions and actual use of accommodation websites	(Lee & Choi, 2009)
Predicting Chinese tourists' intentions and actual travel behaviours within Australia	(Chow & Murphy, 2011)
Short and long-haul travellers' intentions to visit Chile	(Bianchi et al., 2017)
Travellers' motivation influences in choosing an international travel destination	(Hsu & Huang, 2012)
Attendance Decisions	**Examples**
Attending breast cancer screenings	(Drossaert, Boer, & Seydel, 2003)
Attending workplace health and safety courses	(Sheeran & Silverman, 2003)
Attending student study sessions	(White, Thomas, Johnston, & Hyde, 2008)
Attending a food and drink fair	(Alonso et al., 2015)
Moderating Role of Gender	**Examples**
Adoption and usage of technology in the workplace	(Venkatesh, Morris, & Ackerman, 2000)
Becoming an entrepreneur	(Leroy, Maes, Meuleman, Sels, & Debrulle, 2009)
Participating in regular recreational activities in Australia and Hong Kong	(Tsai & Coleman, 2005)
Residents' support for tourism	(Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2010)

Many studies have provided support for the use of the TPB in predicting tourist behaviours (Sparks & Pan, 2009). For example, the TPB has been applied to help predict intentions to participate in wine tourism (Sparks, 2007), intentions to visit Hong Kong amongst Chinese mainland travellers (Lam & Hsu, 2004), intentions to visit Hong Kong amongst Taiwanese travellers (Lam & Hsu, 2006), intentions to choose a green hotel (Chen & Tung, 2014; Han et al., 2010), attitudes towards green behaviours in a hotel context (Han et al., 2010), the influence of risk and uncertainty with regard to intentions to visit Australia and understanding Chinese outbound tourists' intentions to visit Australia (Sparks & Pan, 2009), travel intentions of the citizens of Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou (Hsu & Huang, 2012), intentions to travel short and long-haul to Chile (Bianchi et al., 2017),

how travellers' motivation influences intentions and actual behaviours in choosing an international travel destination (Hsu & Huang, 2012) and predicting intentions and actual travel behaviours within Australia by Chinese tourists from a psychographic and demographic perspective (Chow & Murphy, 2011). In the context of convention tourism, the TPB was useful in predicting meeting planners' intentions to use websites for accommodation bookings (Lee & Choi, 2009). These studies demonstrate that the TPB has been effectively used by researchers to help predict travel decisions.

As presented in Table 4.3, some studies have specifically applied the TPB to predict attendance decisions, such as attending breast cancer screenings (Drossaert et al., 2003), workplace health and safety courses (Sheeran & Silverman, 2003), and student study sessions (White et al., 2008). A study by Alonso et al. (2015) examined motivations of people attending a food and drink fair in the United Kingdom using the TPB. Overall the TPB emerged as a useful theoretical framework in helping identify attitude, behavioural control, and intention to attend food related events. In accordance with the TPB, most of these studies show that attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control influence attendance intentions. In line with these studies relating to attendance, it is suggested that the TPB provides a theoretical base for understanding convention attendance decisions.

Moderating Role of Gender

It is further acknowledged that some scholars have used the TPB to understand the moderating role of gender in some contexts. Examples of TPB gender based studies include that of Venkatesh et al. (2000) who investigated gender differences concerning adoption and usage of technology in the workplace. Findings revealed that there were distinct differences between men and women's decisions with regard to the constructs measured. Another example of a gender study is by Leroy et al. (2009), who used the TPB to investigate whether gender accounts for differences in intentions to become an entrepreneur. Their study of Belgian university students found that entrepreneurial intentions differed between men and women with regard to their attitude and perceived behavioural control, yet no differences were apparent concerning subjective norms. Furthermore, Tsai and Coleman (2005) tested the assumptions of the TPB when they examined regular active recreation amongst Australia and Hong Kong university students by gender. While a positive attitude was the strongest predictor of intentions to participate in active recreation, their study shows that no differences between genders were apparent. These differing results suggest there is scope for more research on the moderating role of gender in association convention attendance decisions using the TPB.

In summary, most of the studies presented in Table 4.3 support the notion that attitude toward a behaviour, subjective norm and PBC influence intentions as predicted by the TPB. These examples justify the use of the TPB in this study for predicting intentions towards attending a future convention from a gender perspective. It is therefore suggested that convention attendance intentions can be predicted using the TPB and comparative analyses could be performed according to gender.

Challenges to the Theory of Planned Behaviour

Despite the wide application of the TRA and TPB in research for more than 40 years, the framework has received some criticism with regard to its ability to predict behavioural intentions. The TPB has demonstrated its predictive and explicative ability to understand human behaviour since its inception, yet there is still much debate about the theory's premise (Armitage & Christian, 2003). According to Rise, Sheeran and Hukkelberg (2010), the predictive power is not perfect given that on average, only 28% to 40% of the variance in intention is explained. Critics have therefore voiced their concerns about its sufficiency, the role of self-identity, past behaviour and rationality, the effect of time on future behavioural intentions and its cross-cultural applicability. Each of these areas is discussed.

Sufficiency

Several researchers have questioned the TPB's sufficiency and challenge the notion that the three constructs of attitude, subjective norm and PBC fully capture all of the theoretical determinants of intention (Rise et al., 2010). Researchers have proposed that adding one or more constructs can enhance the amount of explained variance in intentions for particular behaviours (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). In other words, it is possible that other variables may influence a given behaviour in addition to the constructs of attitude, subjective norm and PBC. In principle, the TPB is open to the inclusion of additional predictors providing that they increase the explained variance in behavioural intentions (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010).

Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) propose that the following criteria be used to determine whether an additional construct be included. The proposed variable should be:

- behaviour-specific
- a causal factor that determines intention and action
- conceptually independent of the theory's existing predictors
- applicable to a wide range of behaviours
- able to consistently improve the prediction of intentions.

Self-identity

The measure of self-identity has been proposed as an additional construct to an extended TPB as an important predictor of behavioural intentions (Dean, Raats, & Sheperd, 2011). Self-identity is derived from role and social identity theory and refers to the extent to which performing a behaviour is a salient part of a person's perception of themselves (Conner & Armitage, 1998). It is thought that "people who identify with a certain role or social category are expected to perform, and are more likely to perform, behaviours consistent with that role or category" (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010, p. 290). For instance, if a person considers themselves to be health conscious and sees this as important, they are more likely to engage in healthy eating and regular exercise than a person who does not consider themselves to be health conscious.

Some investigators have argued that self-identity makes an independent contribution to the prediction of behaviour (e.g. Dean et al., 2011). In a recent meta-analysis into the role of self-identity in the TPB, Rise et al. (2010) provide evidence to support that self-identity has a strong correlation with behavioural intention with regard to health, consumer, contraceptive, altruistic and environmental behaviour. Using multiple regression analyses, self-identity improved the prediction of behavioural intention and 6% of the variance in intention was explained by the inclusion of self-identity along with the components of TPB and past behaviour (Rise et al., 2010). However, Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) claim that often measures of self-identity make a small contribution to current knowledge and in most cases the effects do not significantly improve the prediction of intention concerning the behaviour under investigation.

Past Behaviour and Rationality

Of the proposed additions to the TPB, the role of past behaviour has received much attention. Ajzen (1991) points out that past behaviour could be used to test the sufficiency of a model used to predict future behaviour. It has been argued that, with repeated performance, some behaviours may be more influenced by one's past behaviour, rather than the underlying factors of the TPB (Ajzen, 2002). Such behaviours can be described as automatic or habitual behaviours as opposed to behaviours that require conscious cognitive reasoning (Bamberg, Ajzen, & Schmidt, 2003). Essentially it is argued that, when a particular behaviour is frequently performed, such as driving to work, it can become a habit, which can influence behaviour independently of intentions, attitudes, subjective norm and PBC. There is evidence to support the notion that past behaviour should be considered when the behaviour in question is performed repeatedly, as in the case of travel mode decisions (Bamberg et al., 2003).

According to Fishbein and Ajzen (2010), a number of researchers include a measure of past behaviour as an additional predictor of intentions in their extensions of the TPB. For example, the work of Conner and Armitage (1998) that contained a review of 11 TPB studies shows that past behaviour accounts for a 7% variance in intention and 13% in behaviour. Notably however, they did not measure actual behaviour. The tourism literature contains examples of extended TPB frameworks whereby past behaviour is incorporated into models to help explain travel intentions in studies by Lam and Hsu (2004), Lam and Hsu (2006), Lee and Back (2007b) and Ryu and Han (2010).

Further to the discussion of past behaviour, the TPB has received criticism for being too rational and not accounting for spontaneous behaviours that do not require much conscious deliberation (McCabe et al., 2016). However, Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) refute this notion on the grounds that their theory does not suppose that people are rational or that they behave rationally. In their new framework, to be discussed later in the chapter, their theory does not assume that individuals are rational in their decisions to perform certain behaviour, instead it accounts for both intentional and impulse decisions (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). They contend that individuals do not always engage in optimal and considered decision-making where they weigh up the relative pros and cons of every behavioural choice. People‘s beliefs are based on direct experience and they may

instead recall previously formed intentions based on past behavioural choices or can even make “split-second” decisions (Jaccard, 2012).

In the context of this study, the decision to attend a convention is one that could be expected to be largely rational (as opposed to being spur-of-the-moment); however, attendees may not undergo an extensive information search, which traditional consumer decision-making theories assume. It is acknowledged that on occasion, convention attendance decisions may be made at the last minute, on impulse or in response to a person’s employment circumstances. In such cases, a systematic, sequential and in depth decision-making process may not occur.

Temporal Effects

Another observation worth noting is that the link between intention and behaviour is likely to be stronger when there is a short amount of time lapsing between the two. The longer the gap between the measurement of intention and the action is, the greater the likelihood that there will be a change in the behaviour due to unforeseen circumstances (Kah, Lee, & Lee, 2016; Sutton, 1998). In other words, people’s stated intention to do something on-site during an interview at a convention is a strong predictor of their actual behaviour at that time (e.g. registering for the next convention, making plans to take annual leave, preparing a travel itinerary), but is a weaker predictor of behaviour that might happen a month or even a year later. According to tourism literature, an individual’s attitude, perception and preferences can change as time goes by (Yoo & Chon, 2010). While some intentions are stable, others may be based on beliefs that can be easily influenced. New information could change a person’s attitude towards a behaviour or unexpected circumstances could have an impact on intentions such as a natural disaster at the convention location (Kah et al., 2016; March & Woodside, 2005).

Concerning the present study, there is quite a long time between measuring future convention attendance intentions and actual attendance. As Chapter 7 details, there is at least one year between the Belief Measurement phase and the next convention being held in Melbourne. While it would be interesting to measure intentions and the assessment of the behaviour, for practical reasons it is beyond the scope of this study to understand whether respondents actually travelled to Melbourne to attend the convention they were questioned about (similar to Kerr et al., 2012). It is important to acknowledge, however, that factors may intervene in the meantime and beliefs may change, suggesting that actual behaviour one or two years from the time of data collection may be different. A longitudinal study into temporal changes in convention attendance decisions revealed that while networking opportunities were important, the weight given to networking may change over time. This is because attendees may come to know that their colleague may not be attending an upcoming convention. In this case, there is a higher probability that the attendee will change their mind and perhaps not attend (Yoo & Chon, 2010). This does not mean that from a convention organiser’s perspective, it is not worth knowing how beliefs and intentions are subject to change, rather, understanding this aspect of the convention attendance decision could be beneficial. For example, planners and marketers

could use such information to target the key beliefs in an effort to turn non-intenders into intenders, as well as reinforcing to intenders that the convention will deliver on their beliefs.

Furthermore, Sutton (1998) proposes the notion that respondents who complete a TPB questionnaire are not engaging in real decision-making, instead they are basing their answers on a hypothetical scenario that may occur in the future. As noted by Sutton (1998) intentions are captured at one point in time which are not actualised until the distant future i.e. months or years later, meaning that there is a notable gap between the intention formation and the action. It has been noted that, "if intentions change over time and this change is differential (i.e., different individuals change by different amounts), a distal measure of intention (i.e., distal with respect to the behaviour) will be a poorer predictor of behaviour than will a proximal measure of intention" (Sutton, 1998, p. 1326). In relation to the present study, it is expected that intentions to attend an upcoming convention may change due to time since conventions can be held annually, biannually or even further apart. However, planning for the convention is generally conducted well in advance, therefore information pertaining to attendee intentions, whether it be a year or more before the actual convention, ultimately assists marketers in developing pre-convention communication strategies.

Cross-cultural Applicability

Further criticisms of the TPB framework relate to its cultural applicability in that it has been observed that it may not apply to decisions made by people in non-Western cultures (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). It is argued that the TPB does not take into account that some cultures make group-based decisions that are influenced by social factors that might not be in line with individual beliefs or preferences (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). It may be, in fact, that the TPB performs differently when it is applied to different cultures (Hassan, Shiu, & Parr, 2016). However, Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) suggest that their model does have cross-cultural applicability given that the pool of salient beliefs are elicited from the population of interest, which could be made up of people with multiple cultural backgrounds. From their perspective, as long as this step is done correctly, there's no reason why cultural perspectives are not accounted for. Therefore, if the elicitation phase is carried out as per their guidelines, the model is able to predict behaviours regardless of the cultural context. Tsai and Coleman (2005) is an example of a study that applied the TPB to more than one culture (namely in people from Australia and Hong Kong) and found that the model fitted data satisfactorily.

This discussion on the challenges to the TPB has drawn on some of the literature into assessing the predictive utility of the model. It has highlighted some of the criticisms towards the TPB's sufficiency, which needs to be recognised prior to reporting and discussing this study's findings. While the shortcomings of the theory have been noted, the TPB has strong empirical support in the prediction of intentions for a wide variety of behaviours, such as attendance and travel decisions. Subsequently, the TPB appears to be the most appropriate framework to gain a more complete understanding of convention attendee travel decisions and gender in the context of the study.

Measuring Actual Behaviour for Designing Interventions

The TPB was not only formulated to identify salient beliefs associated with a behaviour to predict future actions. The framework was also designed to provide researchers with procedures and methods for understanding and influencing behaviour to effectively generate behavioural change. As Ajzen (2012, p. 22) notes the "exploration of behavioural, normative, and control beliefs allows investigators to identify important determinants of socially significant behaviours, thereby gaining a better understanding of how we might go about modifying behaviour in a desirable direction". The findings from what Fishbein and Azjen (2010) call the formative research phase, could be used to change intentions of the individuals under investigation. In this step, investigators are interested in measuring actual behaviour to guide behavioural change interventions (Sheeran & Silverman, 2003). They rely on respondents to provide self-reports of past behaviour as a measure of actual behaviour or they could observe their respondents in a particular environment (Stead, Tagg, MacKintosh, & Eadie, 2005). Here, researchers turn their attention to developing communication strategies to produce specific messages that persuade individuals or groups to comply with a particular behaviour. Alternatively, certain strategies could be developed to discourage people from performing a behaviour (Sheeran & Silverman, 2003). For example, a researcher may want to conduct a study that explores how visitors to a national park dispose of their rubbish. By using the TPB framework, the researcher would need to identify the salient beliefs specific to the behaviour, and assess the strength of beliefs to validate the prevalence of the behaviour, followed by designing an intervention strategy to reduce the rubbish left by visitors (Curtis, Ham, & Weiler, 2010). The strategy could contain measures to penalise visitors who throw their rubbish on the ground or alternatively to identify where to locate bins that would be convenient for visitors to dispose of their waste.

Importantly, however, Fishbein and Azjen (2010) admit that although the TPB has been applied to hundreds of studies since its inception, it has rarely been used to develop and evaluate behaviour change interventions. There is limited evidence in the literature of well-designed studies that lead to carefully developed interventions (Hardeman et al., 2002). While in an ideal research scenario, it would have been valuable to measure actual behaviour, it was not a component of this study. The researcher, however, made an effort to obtain attendance number records for the conventions, which will be discussed in Chapter 8. Moreover, although behavioural change interventions are a part of the TPB, this study did not set out to design and test an intervention strategy. Interventions are normally initiated to improve serious social problems such as reducing speed (Stead et al., 2005), promoting workplace health safety (Sheeran & Silverman, 2003) and discouraging binge drinking amongst young people (French & Cooke, 2011). Attending a convention is arguably not a socially undesirable behaviour and does not particularly warrant effective behavioural change interventions. Instead, the purpose of the present study was to predict intentions to attend future conventions for the use of marketers, rather than to attempt to change attendance intentions or behaviour.

Reasoned Action Model

More recently, Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) developed the Reasoned Action Model (RAM) in recognition that there are other variables that underlie behaviour not previously considered in the TPB. The RAM is thus a modified and refined version of the TPB. The model stipulates that behavioural intentions are determined by an individual's attitude toward a behaviour, the normative pressure to engage in the behaviour and the PBC to execute the behaviour (see Figure 4.3). This model introduces background factors, replaces the construct of subjective norm to perceived norm and links PBC to actual control. Each of these additions are discussed.

Background Factors

This new framework also acknowledges that human behaviour originates from beliefs that are influenced by background factors that can be classified as individual, social and information factors. The RAM posits that these factors can potentially influence a person's behavioural, normative and control beliefs. These background factors are considered to be potential explanations for variances in beliefs that are echoed in different intentions and behaviours (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Individual factors such as personality traits, mood, emotion, values, stereotypes, general attitudes, perceived risk and past behaviour can explain why certain individuals engage in certain behaviours. Some of these have been referred to earlier in this chapter. Social background factors including age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, income, education and culture could be important to one's belief formation according to the RAM. Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) emphasise that if a particular behaviour is found to be relevant to gender as a variable, researchers should be able to dissect specific behavioural, normative or control beliefs that may be significantly different for males and females. Essentially, the beliefs (as opposed to the background factors), at least in theory, are things that can be influenced or changed by marketers through persuasive communication. Background factors cannot be changed. Therefore, marketers can target males and females differently but cannot actually change what they are. Additionally, information factors can be important to the personal characteristics of an individual, which determines their behaviour. The information factors in the RAM are knowledge, media and intervention. It is thought that each of these information factors can influence an individual's beliefs about certain behaviours. Essentially, researchers can gain valuable insight into their respondents by examining the impacts of background factors on their beliefs and in turn their behaviour, given that such factors are founded on cognitive evaluations (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010).

Notably, the reasoned action framework recognises that the relative predictive power of the attitudinal, normative, and control constructs differs from population to population. It can be adapted to explain different behaviours and can be applied to different people depending on their demographics. It is therefore expected that in some populations, the attitudinal construct may be most important for some behaviours, whereas in others, the normative construct may be most important.

Perceived Norm

According to Conner and Armitage's (1998) review of the TPB, there is evidence to support that the subjective norm construct often appears to be the weakest predictor out of all three constructs. This may be partly explained by the studies they selected to examine as the behaviours under investigation appeared to be influenced more by attitudinal or control factors rather than normative influences. However, critics of the TPB suggest that the subjective norm construct, in its original form, fails to include all of the possible elements of normative influence. In response to this controversy, Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) enhanced the normative beliefs component in their RAM.

The RAM includes two measures: injunctive and descriptive norms. Injunctive norms are perceptions of what others think we should do with respect to a certain behaviour and descriptive norms are perceptions of what other people are actually doing (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Han & Hwang, 2016). It is now acknowledged that perceived social pressure to perform a behaviour not only comes from the belief that individuals are influenced by people who support or disapprove a given behaviour (descriptive norms), but also from the fact that individuals are said to consider whether their important others are themselves carrying or not carrying out the behaviour in question (injunctive norms) (Ajzen, 2012). That is, if more important referents are perceived to approve of the behaviour and if the majority of important referents actually perform the behaviour, a person is said to feel social pressure to also engage in the behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Using the previous scenario, Table 4.3 provides examples of injunctive and descriptive norms.

Table 4.4: Examples of Injunctive and Descriptive Norms Based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour

Measure	Example
Injunctive Belief Strength (IBS)	My spouse or partner thinks that I should exercise for at least 20 minutes, three times per week for the next three months: 1. Probable _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____Improbable
Descriptive Belief Strength (DBS)	After major surgery, my spouse or partner would exercise for at least 20 minutes, three times per week for the next three months: 2. Probable _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____Improbable

The new framework asserts that the normative component includes both the desires and the actions of important referents, whereas the original framework only considered the desires of referents (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). For example, an individual may be more likely to attend a future convention if their colleagues support their decision to attend (injunctive norms) and their colleagues are attending the convention also (descriptive norms). Subsequently, it is theorised that normative beliefs are comprised of injunctive and descriptive norms that produce what is now referred to as perceived norm.

In the context of this study, an individual may consider whether their important others (i.e. colleagues or department head) think that they should attend an upcoming convention and they are also likely to assess whether their referents will be attending the convention themselves. If the individual believes that their respected others would approve of them attending and will be attending, they are more likely to form an intention to attend the convention.

Actual Control

Many behaviours cannot simply be performed by individuals at any given moment. They may require specialist skills, competence, opportunities, resources or the cooperation from others to execute a behaviour successfully. For instance, consider a student who is studying to be a paediatrician. It is unlikely that they will be able to perform paediatric surgery in their first year of study because as they do not have the required skills. The Reasoned Action Model (RAM), shown in Figure 4.4, proposes that while an individual might intend to perform a behaviour, they may be prohibited by their lack of skills or abilities. The presence of environmental factors could also obstruct an individual's behavioural performance. The model suggests that in order to fully predict future behavioural intentions, actual behavioural control needs to be accounted for. Given the difficulty in directly assessing actual behaviour control for most many behaviours, PBC has previously been used as a proxy for actual control in the majority of TPB based studies (Armitage & Conner, 2001). Now that the RAM includes an actual control component, it is recommended that investigators identify both the internal and external barriers that may impede people's ability to engage in certain behaviours.

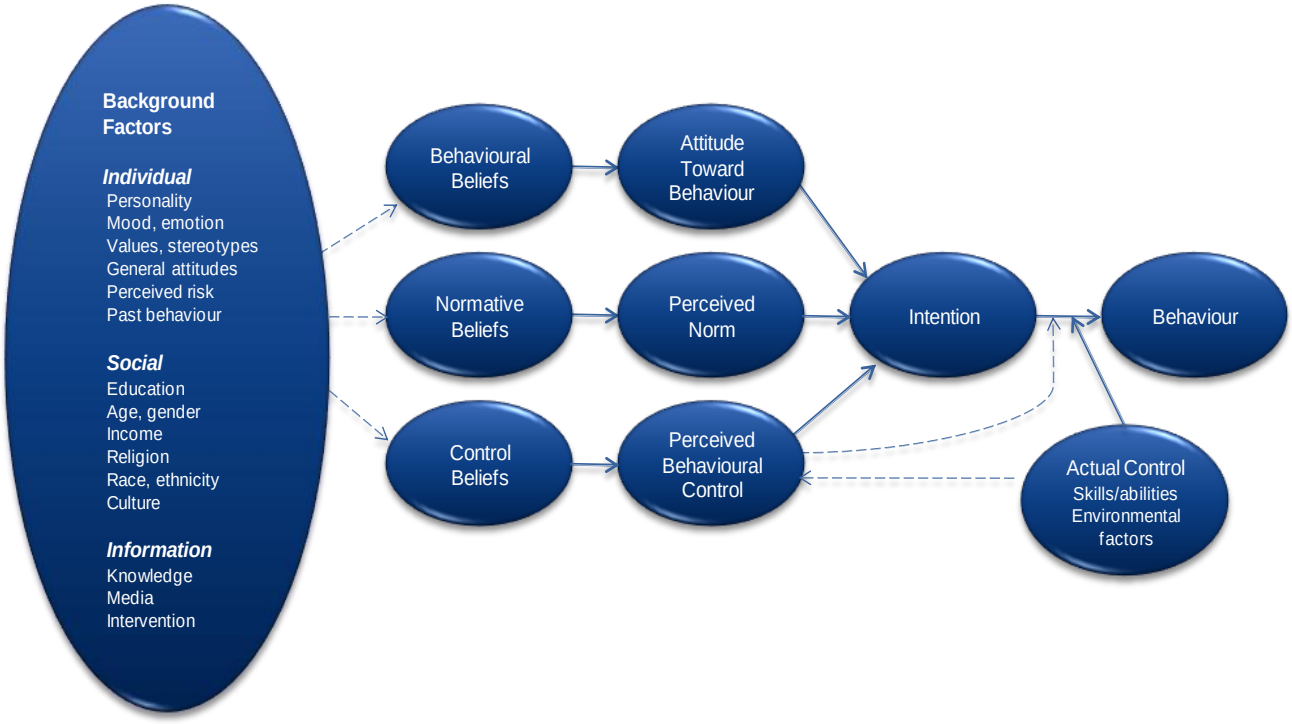


Figure 4.4: The Reasoned Action Model (RAM) by Fishbein and Ajzen (2010)

The author recognises that the RAM illustrates the evolution in Fishbein and Ajzen's thinking with regard to predicting behavioural intentions since the development of the TPB. However, given that this study was designed prior to the most recent publication by Fishbein and Ajzen (2010), its purpose is to test the predictive utility of the TPB based on its original formulation, in line with numerous other studies discussed in this chapter. Given that the RAM is still a new theoretical framework, to the author's knowledge, researchers are yet to extensively test its utility in the field. It was therefore decided that it would be more appropriate to base the present study on a framework that has been used in different settings and applied to a variety of behaviours that is well documented in the literature, namely the TPB.

Convention Decision-Making and Predicting Intentions

The pressure to attract large numbers of attendees at association conventions has become even more challenging for meeting planners (Yoo & Zhao, 2010). Some of the reasons why these challenges have come about relate to the economic downturn, the increase in the number of conventions being held and the shift in the types of people attending conventions nowadays. In response to the need to better understand convention attendees, Yoo and Chon (2008) adopted a cognitive and attitudinal perspective whereby a measurement scale was developed to analyse the factors affecting convention participation decision-making. Their work was based on an underlying assumption that the association convention decision-making process is both rational and systematic and that a potential attendee's attitude affects their behaviour. They distributed an online survey to members of three hospitality and tourism associations. Exploratory factor analysis was performed on the data collected to identify five dimensions of convention participation decision-making. These were destination stimuli, professional and social networking opportunities, educational opportunities, safety and health situation and travelability (see Figure 4.5).

Destination stimuli was comprised of attendee perceptions regarding the opportunity to visit the convention destination, the extra opportunities to undertake pre and post travel at the destination and the attractiveness of the destination. In line with literature presented in Chapter 2, networking opportunities were deemed to be important in the convention attendance decision whereby attendees see people in the same field, have personal interactions with colleagues and friends and are involved with the association. Similarly, educational opportunities were another dimension as a means for attendees to keep up with the changes in their profession, listen to respected speakers, be interested in the convention topic and fulfil their desire to learn. Safety and health was the fourth dimension identified, which relates to the safety, security and the hygiene standards at the convention destination and the convention attendee's health. The final dimension noted was what Yoo and Chon labelled as travelability. This dimension takes into account the time required to travel, the financial situation of the potential attendee and the cost of attending the convention.

Figure 4.5: Scale of Convention Participation Decision-making (Yoo & Chon, 2008)

Previous research into the association convention attendee decision-making process has primarily been descriptive and subsequently there is a lack of theoretical frameworks to provide a comprehensive and empirical evaluation of the process (Lee & Back, 2007b). Although Yoo and Chon's (2008) model is useful in advancing our understanding of convention attendance decisions from a attitudinal stance, researchers have since moved from simply identifying and describing possible antecedents of convention attendance to employing a theoretical model of human decision-making to inform their research (Yoo & Zhao, 2010). One area of study that has emerged recently is predicting intentions to attend a future convention (Leach et al., 2008; Lee & Back, 2008). This research area is of particular interest to associations, meeting planners and destination marketers, as it could provide guidance on how to maximise convention attendance numbers, which is ultimately their primary goal. Importantly, predicting convention attendance decisions can be performed using TPB and therefore is more suitable to this study.

In an effort to extend our understanding of convention attendees beyond merely identifying motivational factors for attendance such as the destination, networking opportunities, professional advancement, etc., Leach et al. (2008) developed a model based on three antecedent variables: attitudes, word-of-mouth and value congruence, in order to explain convention attendance intentions. Their study of attendees and non-attendees from a member-based organisation proposes that intentions to attend a future convention depend on an individual's post-attendance attitude towards the convention, rather than a simple reliance on word-of-mouth.

Lee and Back (2007b) further sought to develop and empirically test a model to explain convention attendance behaviour by integrating existing drivers of attendance. They introduced the constructs of destination image and past experience to the TPB in their Meeting Participation Model (MPM) as shown in Figure 4.6. Data were collected from members of a tourism education association through an online survey. The MPM was assessed using structural equation modelling to both test the hypotheses and determine whether the model fit adequately with the data. They identify that past experience is a strong predictor of intention to attend a future convention, along with the perceived social pressure to attend from employers or colleagues (also known as subjective norms). Research by Lee and Back (2007b) assists in qualifying the relative importance and weight each factor has on predicting future convention attendance using their theory-driven model. However, it must be noted that a key weakness in their model was that they developed a list of beliefs about convention attendance based on existing literature instead of conducting a belief elicitation phase, which is strongly recommended in TPB studies.

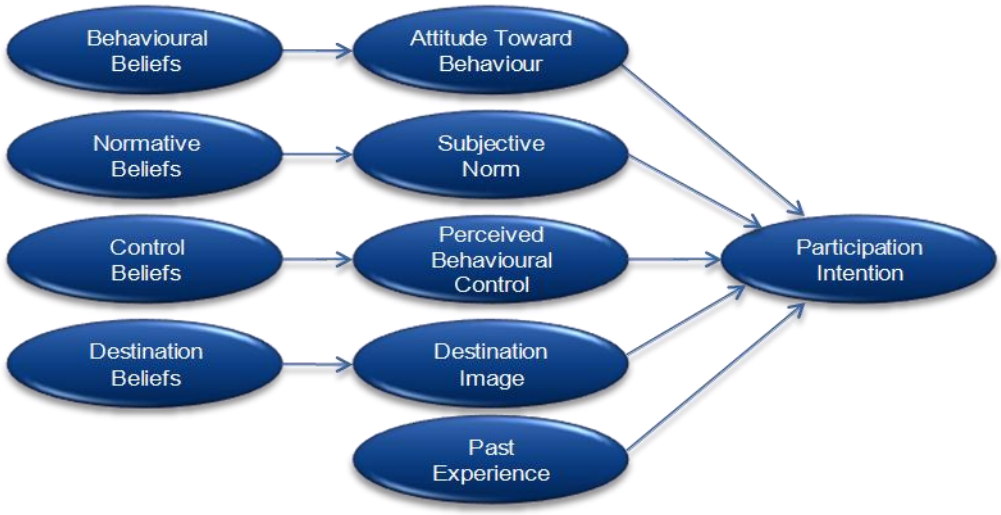


Figure 4.6: Meeting Participation Model (Lee & Back, 2007b)

Although the TPB has proven its robustness in a number of fields, it would appear that no research using this theory has investigated whether gender differences exist in predicting future convention attendance. It is unknown whether salient beliefs or the relative strength of the TPB constructs would differ in relation to gender for convention attendance decisions. As mentioned and presented in Table 4.3, this theory is designed to take into account gender differences and has been used to examine the moderating role of gender in a number of studies. This study therefore advocates the use of the TPB framework to better understand intentions to attend

a future convention. Understanding the salient beliefs according to gender would certainly be beneficial to association meeting planners. Planners could find ways to influence potential attendees to attend a convention by considering the needs of men and women. In this way, planners could more effectively market to attendees and differentiate their conventions from others.

Research Objectives

Based on the discussion presented in this chapter, the TPB was selected as an appropriate theoretical framework to guide the present study. The two bodies of literature presented in Chapters 2 and 3, in addition to the research discussed in this chapter, led to the development of the following research objectives:

1. To explore the possible advantages or disadvantages, key influences and the facilitating and inhibiting factors that would affect the decision to attend a future international association convention.
2. To measure the relative strength and importance of the salient beliefs to predict convention attendance intentions for an upcoming convention in Melbourne.
3. To identify the role that gender might play in the convention attendance decision.

Summary

This chapter provides a brief review on consumer decision-making models. It discusses the TRA and the TPB with regard to their value as a theoretical framework for predicting, explaining and influencing human behaviour. The focus was primarily on the TPB and to justify its relevance in the context of the present study. The chapter suggests that since previous convention attendance studies have generally been descriptive in nature, there is a need to use established theoretical frameworks to provide a more insight into association convention attendance decisions. The literature on predicting intentions to attend a future convention was then discussed. References to the gaps in our current knowledge in this research domain, such as the absence of gender comparisons, were presented. This study therefore attempts to fill some of this gap by developing a more complete understanding of and the capacity to better predict convention attendance decisions according to gender using the TPB. In essence, the study seeks to explore the interactions of attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control on intentions to attend a future convention and to identify the moderating role of gender in the decision to attend a convention. Such information would be useful to associations and meeting planners who rely on high attendance numbers to their conventions for delegate boosting campaigns. The chapter acknowledges the new RAM and provides reasons for using the TPB instead. The research objectives are also presented to convey what is expected to be achieved in this study. The following chapter outlines and justifies the methods and procedures used to conduct this study.

Chapter 5: Research Design and Methodology

The previous chapter provided an examination of the relevant literature that guided the research objectives developed. The purpose of this chapter is to describe and justify the methods and procedures that were used to conduct the study. The chapter begins with a discussion of the research paradigm, followed by the research design and the research strategy employed. The sampling methods are then described, along with a discussion on the ethical considerations relevant to the conduct of the research.

Research Paradigm

Researchers who wish to study a phenomenon are faced with numerous methodological decisions. The choice of method(s) relies on their assumptions about what they are studying, the current state of knowledge in the relevant field and the specific nature of the research problem(s). Selecting the most appropriate research methodology represents more than just deciding on what research methods to employ; rather, it takes into consideration how the researcher views the world, known as the research paradigm.

A research paradigm, or philosophical approach, is a worldview or set of beliefs about how things operate (Jennings, 2005). Research paradigms are generally comprised of three components that denote the researcher's ontological, epistemological and methodological standpoint (Jennings, 2010). Each component has an impact on the entire research process from how a topic is selected to the formulation of research questions, the research design, sampling and the choices of method(s) used (Biber-Hesse & Leavy, 2011). Ontology can be defined as the nature of reality or the belief system about what can be known and how (Biber-Hesse & Leavy, 2011; Pole & Lampard, 2002). Epistemology, on the other hand, relates to the relationship between the inquirer and the participants (Jennings, 2010). Ontology and epistemology are both important elements of the philosophy of knowledge because they create a holistic view of how we see ourselves in relation to this knowledge (Jennings, 2005). The standpoint chosen has some bearing on the methods that a researcher selects for their study.

Methodology refers to the way in which the inquirer conducts the research (Pole & Lampard, 2002). There are three main methodological approaches that inform how a researcher gathers data or information: positivism, interpretivism and pragmatism (Creswell, 2009). Positivists believe that laws or theories govern the world and advocate studying social reality by assessing the causes that influence outcomes through the use of scientific methods (Bryman & Bell, 2007). A positivist researcher is concerned with quantifying variables and testing theory to explain a specific behaviour. By contrast, interpretivists are concerned with engaging in the world in which they live to gain understanding and meaning about the subject(s) studied (Creswell, 2009). As such, a researcher who follows the interpretive social science approach seeks to be subjectively involved in the study to obtain an insider's perspective about a phenomenon (Jennings, 2010). Over time, however, pragmatism (also known as critical realism) has emerged as a methodological approach that advocates the use of multiple systems of philosophy and reality (Creswell, 2009). Pragmatists argue that in many cases research rarely falls into only one philosophical approach, recognising the "importance of understanding people's socially

constructed interpretations and meanings, or subjective reality, within the context of seeking to understand broader social forces, structures or processes that influence, and perhaps constrain, the nature of people's views and behaviours" (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2003, p. 85).

This study is grounded on a pragmatic paradigm, whereby from an ontology perspective, it is believed that there is a reality that can be studied, and that this reality is independent of human thoughts and beliefs (Saunders et al., 2003). The study is also based on the epistemological assumption that worldviews are constructed based on one's own experiences and these experiences can be shared. The pragmatist researcher is not shaped by the traditional positivist and interpretivist stances. Instead, it is believed that the choice of methodological approach relies directly on the purpose of and the nature of the research (Creswell, 2009). In this way, this study will use a mix of research methods, techniques and procedures to test the hypotheses developed, which will be discussed in Chapter 6. It is recognised that the researcher's personal worldviews, social class level and work experience has an impact on what is studied, how it is studied, and the way in which the results are written and presented. The choice of pragmatism enhances the ability of this research to understand how convention attendees make attendance decisions and how this in turn shapes their behaviour. It is acknowledged that given that this study is based on gender, it could adopt a critical feminist paradigm, which is aimed at conducting research on and for women. Feminist research attempts to elucidate bias and inequity in the way women are viewed in various social settings and contributes to filling in the gaps of our knowledge about women. However, the researcher believes that it would be more valuable to study both men and women, not only to provide practical implications for convention marketers, but to obtain a more holistic understanding of convention attendance decisions from a gender perspective. For these reasons, this study embraces a pragmatic paradigm.

Methodology

Research Design

The next stage in the research process, following the selection of a research paradigm, is developing a research design that provides a structure for the data collection and analysis (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Three types of research designs are commonly used in tourism: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods research. In choosing between designs, both the strengths and weaknesses need to be taken into account. The basic tenets of each approach require discussion in order to justify this study's research design, which is based on the mixed methods approach.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is associated with exploring human behaviour to provide rich descriptions of the social world (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Researchers often choose to conduct qualitative research based on its exploratory and interpretative nature to provide in-depth and detailed findings (Creswell, 2009). Exploratory studies are undertaken when little is known about the research problem and there is a need to obtain a better understanding of a phenomenon. Qualitative research typically uses small samples and elicits key themes about the phenomenon under investigation to bring meaning to the data (Jennings, 2010; Veal, 2006). Essentially, the purpose of qualitative research, particularly in the tourism context, is to explore why people make certain decisions and behave in certain ways in minute detail (Creswell, 2009).

Previous reviews of convention tourism literature show that quantitative techniques dominate research designs in the business events industry (Comas & Moscardo, 2005; Mair, 2010b). It appears that the industry's dependence on quantitative data, to guide better practice, develop marketing strategies and other initiatives has overshadowed the contribution of qualitative research. Where qualitative methods have been used, they are usually followed by an in-depth quantitative phase, which has been done in this study (e.g. Jarumaneerat et al., 2007; Severt et al., 2007; Yoo & Chon, 2008). There is merit in conducting further qualitative convention tourism studies to produce meaningful interpretations and provide the story behind the statistics from the data collected. Moreover, adopting a qualitative design allows the researcher to capture the reality of the subjects being studied in their social and cultural environment that quantitative methodologies seldom discover (Chen, 2010). The qualitative component is justified given that the aim of this study is to first explore the attendance decision according to the TPB framework through an elicitation phase. An initial qualitative phase was therefore incorporated to provide a deeper exploration into convention attendance from a gender perspective (Jennings, 2010). This meant that the researcher was able to clarify responses and illuminate otherwise unidentified issues that may have been overlooked with other types of research designs (Creswell, 2009).

Quantitative Research

Quantitative research is concerned with establishing casual relationships between variables using numerical data by testing hypotheses in a structured, systematic and replicable manner (Jennings, 2001). A quantitative research methodology is considered to be objective in nature because the researcher is viewed as an outsider by the study participants. Researchers tend to make generalisations or inferences about populations beyond the study context using statistical procedures (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Jennings, 2010). Quantitative techniques are appropriate when the aim of the research is to make general statements about large populations (Veal, 2006).

As mentioned, convention tourism researchers have generally utilised quantitative research methods in their empirical studies. Specifically, Mair (2010b) identified that of the 144 convention tourism articles analysed for the period 2000 – 2009, 76 exclusively used quantitative methods. While these quantitative methods have helped advance our knowledge in convention tourism, the statistical techniques used have generally been descriptive in nature. Accordingly, it is recommended that future convention tourism researchers conduct more theoretically sound research by employing rigorous quantitative techniques to make predictions (Lee & Back, 2005a; Yoo & Weber, 2005). Since the aim of the present study is to predict future convention intentions using the TPB which is an established theoretical model, a quantitative element is necessary. The data was not solely used to profile the respondents, but to test the TPB model using multiple regression analysis and structural equation modelling (SEM), which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7. This research design was chosen to test the hypotheses developed, similar to previous convention tourism studies (for example Fjelstul et al., 2009; Leach et al., 2008; Severt et al., 2009).

It is important to note that quantitative research is not superior or inferior to qualitative research, rather researchers need to be aware of both approaches when deciding on their research design. Qualitative research is appropriate to answer certain kinds of questions in particular conditions, and quantitative research is appropriate for others. In essence, the choice of approach is dependent on the research context and the research questions and/or existence of hypotheses.

Mixed Methods Research

Qualitative and quantitative approaches do not exist in isolation and are not irreconcilable, as they can both be used in a single study to serve different purposes (Saunders et al., 2003). This type of research design is known as mixed methods research, methodological pluralism, multi-strategy research or multi-methods (Jennings, 2010). By definition, mixed methods research involves combining or associating multiple ways to explore a research problem by mixing both qualitative and quantitative methods (Creswell, 2009). Researchers can employ mixed methods designs to use one approach (i.e. qualitative) to advance understanding then use another approach to explain or build on the results (i.e. quantitative). Researchers who employ mixed methods research designs commonly have a pragmatic worldview, whereby they believe that collecting both qualitative and quantitative data provides a better understanding of a research problem.

Mixed methods research has evolved over time but cannot be traced as far back as qualitative or quantitative approaches. According to Creswell (2009) mixed methods was first used in a study about psychological traits by Campbell and Fisk during the 1950s, which prompted other researchers to use multiple data collection methods in a single study. Researchers have since merged qualitative and quantitative methodologies by drawing from both approaches to gain fuller insights into a phenomenon (Jennings, 2010). Some researchers strongly support the use of mixed methods research because different methods can be used for different purposes in the same study to overcome the biases or limitations of both methods. It further enables the researcher to obtain methodological triangulation, whereby different inquiry strategies are used to explain the research problem in a more holistic manner (Jennings, 2010). The term “triangulation” simply means that the

researcher is able to obtain a better view of a phenomenon by looking at it from more than one perspective (Tracy, 2010).

It must be noted, however, that scholars who are not in favour of mixed methods research believe that "as the two methodologies are founded in specific paradigms with different ontological and epistemological...views, mixing methods results in mixing theoretical world views that are contradictory to each other" (Jennings, 2010, p. 131). Other drawbacks include the fact that mixed methods research can be expensive to conduct, time-consuming and may produce large amounts of data that may be difficult to analyse. The researcher's expertise in collecting and analysing both qualitative and quantitative data is also another factor to consider when designing a study. Ultimately, if a researcher does not have the proficiency to carry out a mixed methods study, the findings may not add theoretical value or be of high quality (Biber-Hesse & Nagy, 2010). Despite these potential problems, one research method alone may not be sufficient to gain a meaningful insight into a subject area, and consequently research is becoming increasingly pluralistic.

Since this research study is guided by pragmatic principles, and employed the TPB, the researcher drew from both quantitative and qualitative assumptions. A mixed methods approach was therefore employed, whereby qualitative and quantitative data was collected, analysed and integrated to better understand convention attendance intentions. This research design was guided by Carlsen's (1995) suggestion for future convention research to employ both methods and Lee and Back's (2005a) emphasis on the importance of taking advantage of using qualitative and quantitative methods simultaneously to strengthen the research rather than dealing with the drawbacks of a singular method. Convention tourism researchers have recognised the value of integrating qualitative and quantitative methods, such as Baloglu and Love (2005), Lee and Back (2007a), Severt et al. (2007), Yoo and Chon (2008), and Lee et al. (2016). The mixed methods research design was used in this study to gain a fuller understanding of the factors that might influence attendees to attend a convention and the potential role gender might play in the decision to attend, using complimentary approaches to data collection and analysis.

Research Strategy

Once the design of the research has been established, it is important for the researcher to select the appropriate research strategy for data collection. In a mixed methods research study, the researcher needs to determine whether to gather the data sequentially (in stages) or concurrently (simultaneously) (Creswell, 2009). In a sequential design, one method is used to inform the other method, whereas, in a concurrent design, the researcher collects both quantitative and qualitative data at the same time, then interprets the overall results (Creswell, 2009). Since the first step in a TPB study involves an elicitation phase to identify a pool of salient beliefs from a sample of the target population, followed by a belief measurement phase measuring the strength and importance of the most frequently mentioned salient beliefs, a sequential strategy was employed (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010).

The sequential strategy can be performed in two ways: explanatory or exploratory. An explanatory sequential design may employ quantitative methods to test theory, followed by qualitative methods to explore the phenomenon in detail with a small number of respondents or groups (Creswell, 2009). The purpose of this type of strategy is to use the qualitative findings to assist in explaining the quantitative findings. Explanatory sequential designs are useful in studies where unexpected quantitative results are uncovered, allowing the researcher to analyse the qualitative results in detail. The purpose of a sequential exploratory strategy, on the other hand, is to qualitatively explore a phenomenon then to generalise and expand on the findings using a broader sample of respondents quantitatively (Creswell, 2009). This type of strategy uses the results from the quantitative phase to assist in interpreting the qualitative phase results as illustrated in Figure 5.1.

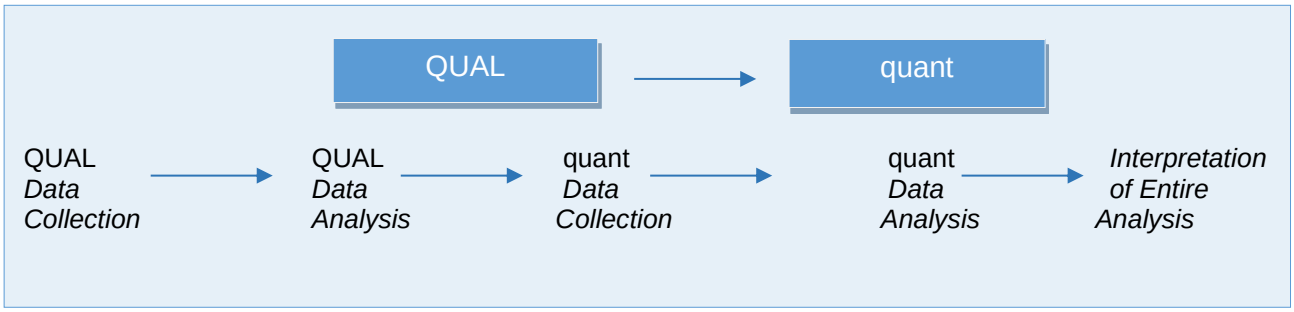


Figure 5.1: Sequential Exploratory Design

After a review of TPB methodological suggestions and previous studies on convention attendees, the researcher chose to employ a sequential exploratory strategy with a qualitative phase followed by a quantitative phase as displayed in Figure 5.2. The intent of this two-phase, sequential mixed methods design was to elicit a pool of behavioural, normative and control beliefs from a sample of international association convention attendees to understand the salient beliefs underlying the decision to attend or not to attend a future convention. This was referred to as Phase One Belief Elicitation, which involved a qualitative exploration of convention attendance from a gender perspective through the use of semi-structured interviews with attendees to an international association convention (see Chapter 5 for a discussion on why interviews were the preferred data collection technique). As previously discussed in Chapter 2, there are few studies in the literature which examine differences in different groups of attendees, and effectively no research to underpin market segmentation based on these differences. Qualitative data were therefore collected initially because there is little guiding theory relating to convention attendees and gender.

The findings from the Belief Elicitation phase were then used to develop a self-complete questionnaire that was distributed to attendees at two international association conventions (see Chapter 7 for a discussion on why questionnaires were selected). The purpose of Phase Two Belief Measurement was to measure the relative strength and importance of the salient beliefs from the previous phase with a larger sample of attendees. This phase was incorporated into this study's research design to predict convention attendance intentions and to identify the role that gender might play in the decision to attend a future convention.

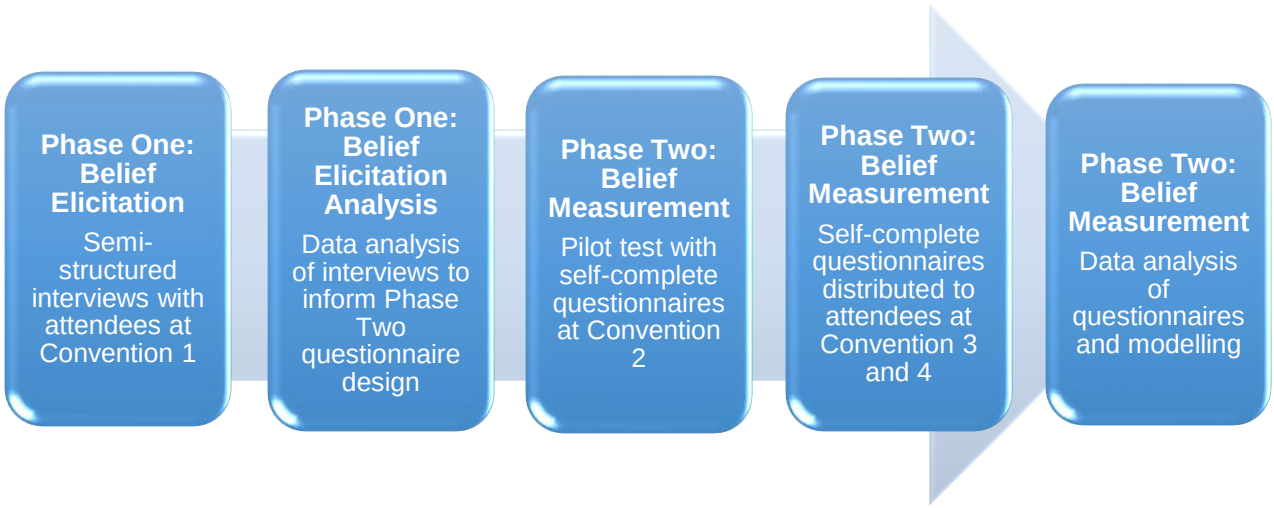


Figure 5.2: Two Phase Sequential Exploratory Research Design for this Study

Following a discussion on the research strategy selected, it is important to describe and justify how the research participants were chosen relating to the sampling approach used in the study.

Sampling

In most studies, researchers need to thoroughly understand the principles of sampling to justify the type, technique and size of the sample(s) appropriate for their study. It is generally impractical to collect and analyse data from all the people, organisations or entities that are the focus of the study due to time, money and often access restrictions (Veal, 2006). Sampling is therefore important to obtain a manageable data set that can be used to interpret a phenomenon being studied or to make inferences about a population (Saunders et al., 2003).

One of the first things a researcher needs to do to ensure that the sample chosen is acceptable, is to identify a suitable sampling frame. The sampling frame is a list of all the possible members or units of a population from which the study's sample will be drawn (Saunders et al., 2003). In this study, the sampling frame includes a list of international professional association conventions. The sample unit is then drawn from the sampling frame, which are the individual subjects or study units (Jennings, 2010). In response to the call for future research to examine convention attendees in sectors other than tourism and hospitality, such as the medical and scientific fields (Ngamsom & Beck, 2000), the sample unit for this study comprises professional attendees at medical and scientific international association conventions who represent the largest proportion of international association convention attendees according to industry type (International Congress and Convention Association, 2010). Very few studies, to the author's knowledge, have collected data from multiple international association conventions (Hahm et al., 2016; Lee & Min, 2013; Ryu & Lee, 2013) and/or within the medical field (Aksu et al., 2016; Foley et al., 2013; Kim et al., 2012). Therefore, this study will add to the incipient body of convention attendee literature in the medical field.

When a suitable sampling frame and unit has been selected, it is then necessary to decide on a sampling technique. The two types of sampling techniques generally used are probability and non-probability sampling (Veal, 2006). Probability sampling implies that each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected, whereas non-probability sampling implies the opposite, in that each member does not have an equal chance of being selected (Jennings, 2001). Non-probability sampling is most commonly associated with qualitative research methods, whereas probability sampling is usually associated with quantitative research methods to ensure that the units in the target population have equal probabilities of being selected (Biber-Hesse & Nagy, 2010). In an ideal research situation, data would be collected using a probability sample to ensure that the findings are representative of the target population under study. However, as Bryman and Bell (2007) and Pole and Lampard (2002) acknowledge, it is often not feasible or practical to systematically select a sample unit due to their geographic distribution, the size of the population and accessibility constraints. It is therefore common for tourism researchers to use non-probability sampling techniques for pragmatic reasons. The nature of this study necessitated the use of non-probability sampling techniques, given the absence of a definitive sampling frame containing a public list of all attendees at all conventions.

There are a range of non-probability sampling approaches including snowball, expert, quota, purposive and convenience sampling. Snowball sampling is where participants provide the contact details of another potential study participant, allowing the researcher to reach another person when there are difficulties in identifying people who meet the selection criteria (Jennings, 2010). Quota sampling involves the researcher selecting participants based on a set of predetermined variables (e.g. age, social class) to obtain respondents from specific groups of the population (Saunders et al., 2003). Purposive sampling, also known as judgemental sampling, requires the researcher to make a decision about who will be involved in the study. The other sampling approach is convenience sampling, whereby participants are selected based on their proximity to the researcher at the time of data collection. Convenience sampling is frequently used in tourism research as researchers tend to gather information from respondents who happen to be accessible (Bryman & Bell, 2007). It must be noted, however, that this sampling approach is not statistically representative of an entire population and the data can be subject to sampling bias.

The non-probability sampling approach that was appropriate for this study, given its context and purpose, was convenience sampling. The convention tourism literature supports this selection, as researchers who have focused on attendees have commonly used convenience samples in their studies (for example Boo et al., 2008; Jung, 2005; Severt et al., 2009). Noticeably, the majority of studies in the area of convention attendance have been conducted with homogeneous samples i.e. one professional association, commonly in the tourism and hospitality sector, which can present a respondent bias (Grant & Weaver, 1996; Lee & Back, 2007a; Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Rittichainuwat et al., 2001; Tanford & Montgomery, 2015; Yoo & Chon, 2008, 2010; Yoo & Zhao, 2010). The results of such studies could possibly vary depending on the population of the study (Lee & Back, 2007a). As noted by Mair (2010a), such studies do not allow for generalisation of the findings in order to broaden our understanding of convention attendees. Lee and Back (2007b) encourage future research to be applied to different professional groups to draw comparisons. This type of approach would help validate research and could better explain association convention attendance intentions. Thus, this study investigated

different professional groups from two international association conventions that attracted attendees from various countries of residence. A discussion about the sample recruitment is provided in Chapters 6 and 7.

Ethical Considerations

The research study was subject to ethical clearance by the Monash University Standing Committee on Ethics in Research Involving Humans, prior to the commencement of data collection. The approval was granted given that the researcher gained consent from the conference organisers and attendees to conduct the study. Explanatory Statements were prepared and distributed to conference organisers and respondents, which outlined the purpose of the research (see Appendix A, B, E and F). The researcher also explained the study to potential respondents when they were approached to participate onsite. The researcher ensured that there were minimal disruptions to attendees' conference activities and commitments.

Respondents were recruited on a voluntary and anonymous basis. No findings, which could identify participants will be reported or published. Only the combined results of all participants will be reported or published. Access to the data was restricted to the researchers and her supervisors. Storage of the data collected adhered to the University regulations. Transcripts and data files were accessible via a password protected computer. Any outputs were kept in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet for five years, following data collection, to ensure the security of the data.

Summary

Chapter 5 describes, explains and justifies the overarching research design and methodology selected for this study. First this chapter provided a discussion on the research paradigm to convey the researcher's values and ideas about social reality that guided the research process decisions made. Second, it described the research design and strategy and, then the sampling procedures used were discussed. Finally this chapter presented the ethical considerations pertinent to the conduct of the study. The next chapter will examine the methods and procedures used in the Phase One Belief Elicitation study component.

The remainder of the thesis will be presented as follows: Chapter 6 will examine the methods and procedures used in Phase One Belief Elicitation study component and present the findings of this stage of the study. Chapter 7 will discuss the principles and methods associated with the Phase Two Belief Measurement study component and the results. Chapter 8 will report on the analysis and results of the entire study and Chapter 9 will provide a discussion, implications and conclusions.

Chapter 6: Belief Elicitation

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the Belief Elicitation phase. The chapter begins with an explanation of the principles and measurement considerations when conducting formative belief elicitation research. The methods are then described and justified, covering the recruitment, sampling, research sites, instrument used, pilot testing, administration, trustworthiness and data analysis. The beliefs elicited are discussed and are compared according to gender. The chapter finishes with a discussion of the modal salient beliefs that were identified, which informed the hypotheses developed for the next phase of the research.

Principles of Belief Elicitation

As noted in Chapter 4, the first research objective was to explore the possible advantages or disadvantages, key influences and the facilitating and inhibiting factors that would affect the decision to attend a future international association convention. In order to achieve this objective, a Belief Elicitation phase was carried out according to the principles of the TPB. Belief elicitation involves identifying the target population's beliefs about a desired behaviour (Curtis et al., 2010). A 'pool' of salient beliefs, which are the most commonly held beliefs the population has about the behaviour under investigation, are obtained (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). This first phase in a TPB study is called 'elicitation' because a representative sample of the population are asked about their beliefs in a free-response format, as opposed to providing a predetermined list of beliefs that they select from (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). It must be noted that not all researchers conduct an elicitation phase. Instead some develop their own list of beliefs about a behaviour, or they generate them from existing literature (e.g. Lee & Back, 2007b). However, Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) argue that each time the TPB is applied in a new context, population and behaviour, a new set of modal salient beliefs must be elicited. The elicitation phase is a critical first step in any TPB study, as beliefs cannot be intuited or assumed to be transferable for different behaviours and populations (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). The importance of the Belief Elicitation phase cannot be underestimated; given that every step following this phase is influenced by the accuracy of the beliefs identified as being salient (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). If researchers were to use existing beliefs without eliciting them from their target population, the results may not be as precise and could affect attempts to influence the population if a behavioural intervention is required. In line with research designs adopted by other TPB studies (e.g. Tsai & Coleman, 2005), an elicitation research phase was therefore undertaken in this study.

Measurement

Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) recommend that eliciting salient beliefs in a TPB study be done in the form of short individual interviews. Interviews can be described as conversations with a purpose (Westwood et al., 2000). They are used frequently in the social sciences to make sense of our sometimes chaotic and unordered world in an informal or formal setting. Qualitative interviews are commonly used to discover things that are difficult to see or hear, such as emotions, feelings or intentions or to provide rich descriptions about a particular topic (Westwood et al., 2000). Respondents are able to express their personal perspective in their own words, allowing researchers to obtain insights into individuals' own subjective stories (Graebner, Martin, & Roundy, 2012). Interviews are said to produce knowledge and authentic accounts of experiences that other methods or techniques may not be able to achieve because other techniques do not allow for probing or clarification (Biber-Hesse & Leavy, 2011).

In some instances, investigators have conducted focus groups to identify a pool of beliefs in their TPB study (e.g. Lam & Hsu, 2004), but because the questioning method involves open-ended responses, Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) recommend that elicitation is generally conducted at the individual level, whereby respondents are able to provide their perspectives in a free-response format. It is therefore best to interview research participants in a face-to-face and one-on-one manner. Guided by these TPB belief elicitation principles, semi-structured interviews were chosen to be the most appropriate method of data collection for this phase. Semi-structured interviews are widely used in qualitative research because they employ the strengths of both structured and unstructured interviews to generate greater understanding about a particular topic from respondents (Saunders et al., 2003). This form of interview structure relies on a standardised set of questions to guide the interview, while allowing respondents to talk freely about their experiences as they would in a general conversation, and interviewers are able to probe in order to obtain further clarification (Biber-Hesse & Leavy, 2011; Saunders et al., 2003). In spite of this, it is important to note that semi-structured interviews require more time to conduct than structured interviews and they require an experienced interviewer to ensure that probing is done where necessary to gather relevant data. Nevertheless, some researchers have used semi-structured interviews to collect exploratory data such as Comas and Moscardo (2005), Jago and Deery (2005) and Severt and Palakurthi (2008). The following section discusses the methods used in this phase.

Elicitation Methods

Recruitment

Convention attendance researchers have primarily conducted studies within their own industry, namely tourism and hospitality, yet conventions are important to the development of most, if not all fields of study. Previous researchers have suggested that convention attendance in sectors such as the medical and scientific fields remains relatively unexplored (Ngamsom & Beck, 2000). It appears that researchers are limiting their understanding of attendees by not drawing from existing literature available in such areas including healthcare (Gumus, Borkowski, Deckard, & Martel, 2009), computing (Cohoon et al., 2011), economics (Borghans et al., 2010) and education (Fox & McCormick, 2009). There is therefore a call to examine attendees with association memberships in other industries such as the engineering and medical fields (Aksu et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2012; Ngamsom & Beck, 2000). In Aksu et al.,'s (2016) study, five national medical meetings in Antalya, Turkey were selected as their sampling unit due to their local and worldwide market potential. According to International Congress and Convention Association (2013), over the last 50 years the most popular subject matter discussed in the international association meetings market has been medical sciences, accounting for 17.2% of all meetings. These types of conventions are a forum for association members to communicate, to actively co-operate, and to achieve consensus on quality standards of medical ethics and professional competence (Eskin, 1989). Eskin (1989) states that the primary purpose of medical conventions is for attendees to improve themselves educationally and strengthen patient care. In order to provide the best care for patients, attendees in the medical profession need to be committed to a lifelong career of learning (Miller et al., 2008; Murphy, Cross, & McGuire, 2006). Association medical conventions can support and stimulate collaborative research, which in turn can engender co-publications and increased numbers of citations in medical journals, and potentially facilitate medical discoveries and breakthroughs (Miller et al., 2008). Surprisingly, it appears that medical conventions have not been a topic of interest amongst scholars to date, (with the exceptions of Aksu et al., 2016; Foley et al., 2013; Kim et al., 2012). In this line of reasoning, a gap in our knowledge has been identified relating to medical association conventions.

As such, the researcher sought support from organisers of an international medical convention to participate in the study. A list of possible conventions to be held in Melbourne was obtained from the Melbourne Convention Bureau (MCB) and some online research was undertaken. Based on the type of convention (international association), industry segment (medical/scientific), the number of expected attendees, location, the timing of the convention and the cooperation of the organising committee, one convention was shortlisted. The biennial 30th World Congress in Internal Medicine (WCIM) was selected as a suitable convention because it attracts attendees comprising of physicians, paediatricians, clinicians, health professionals, educators and medical students who have an interest in both general internal medicine and specialised internal medicine from around the world (WCIM, 2010). A recruitment letter was sent to the Chair of the Organising Committee for the WCIM. The letter provided an overview of the study and requested the assistance from the organisers to conduct interviews at the convention. Permission was granted (see Appendix C) and the study received strong support from the MCB.

Sample

Data were collected from a convenience sample of registered attendees at the WCIM 2010 who were informed about the purpose of the study and gave their consent to participate (see Chapter 5 for sampling procedures). For the purpose of the Belief Elicitation phase, Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) state that a small convenience sample within the target population is appropriate, as long as it captures a broad range of salient beliefs. While there was no quota set, it was important to obtain a mix of males and females, given that the focus of the study relates to gender. It was also important to interview both national and international attendees in an attempt to seek a diversity of views.

Research Site

The 30th WCIM 2010 was held at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre from 20-25 March and there were approximately 2,300 delegates in attendance. The International Society of Internal Medicine (ISIM) hosted the congress, in conjunction with the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) and the Internal Medicine Society of Australia and New Zealand (IMSANZ). The aim of the congress was for attendees to learn about the latest developments in internal medicine.

Elicitation Context

When any new TPB studies are conducted, Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) suggest that researchers need to carefully define the target behaviour for respondents. The goal of the behaviour should be explained in terms of its target, action, context and time (TACT). For the purpose of this Belief Elicitation phase, the TACT specifications are as follows: the next World Congress in Internal Medicine (WCIM) (target), attendance intentions (action), in Santiago (context), in 11-15 November 2012 (time).

The three aims of the Belief Elicitation phase were:

1. To elicit salient outcomes, normative referents and control factors
2. To obtain direct measures of attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control
3. To obtain background information of interest to the behaviour under investigation (e.g. gender).

(Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010).

Interview Instrument

Following a review of the literature, a modified version of Fishbein and Ajzen's (2010) interview instrument was developed. The interview instrument contained three pairs of questions, whereby each pair referred to one of the three categories of beliefs identified in the TPB: behavioural beliefs, normative beliefs and control beliefs (as discussed in Chapter 4). The interview questions were:

Behavioural Belief Questions

- What do you think are the **advantages** or **good things** that could occur by attending the next conference in Santiago, 11-15 November 2012?
- What do you think are the **disadvantages** or **bad things** that could occur by attending the next conference in Santiago, 11-15 November 2012?

Normative Belief Questions

- Who (individuals or groups) do you think would **approve** or think you should attend the next conference in Santiago, 11-15 November 2012?
- Who (individuals or groups) do you think would **disapprove** or think you should **not** attend the next conference in Santiago, 11-15 November 2012?

Control Belief Questions

- What factors or circumstances would **make it easy** or **enable** you to attend the next conference in Santiago, 11-15 November 2012?
- What factors or circumstances would **make it difficult** or **prevent** you from attending the next conference in Santiago, 11-15 November 2012?

Demographic questions were also asked (e.g. age, gender, marital status, country of residence) to generate respondent profiles. Note that this interview structure relies on a standardised set of questions to guide the interview as per the TPB framework, however it allows respondents to talk freely about their experiences as they would in a general conversation, until saturation of the theme is reached (Saunders et al., 2003). See Appendix D for the Elicitation Interview Instrument.

Interview Pilot Test

The interview instrument was pilot tested with five professional association members employed in the business events industry. The aim of the pilot test was to assess the question wording, the interview length and to evaluate how participants responded to the questions (Veal, 2006). As mentioned, each respondent was given an Explanatory Statement that explained what was involved in the interview and gave their consent to take

part. Respondents were asked to consider a convention that they attend regularly. With this convention in mind, they were asked questions to elicit the possible outcomes of attending, the people who would influence their decision to attend as well as the potential facilitators and inhibitors affecting their attendance decision. The interviews were timed to determine the average length, which was approximately eight minutes. After each interview, respondents were de-briefed and were asked how they thought the interview went. The pilot test allowed the interviewer to clarify some of the responses and to practise approaching and building rapport with respondents. The pilot test highlighted the need for the researcher to probe respondents to ensure that they were actually answering the question being asked. Overall, the pilot test confirmed the face validity of the interviews and that the instrument would be suitable for data collection.

Interview Administration

Data collection took place on the last two days of WCIM 2010 to allow attendees sufficient time to form an opinion as to whether they would be attending the next congress. A stand located in the congress exhibition area was set up by the researcher where there was a high level of attendee traffic. Data were collected from a sample of registered attendees who were informed about the purpose of the study and gave consent to participate. Attendees walking into the exhibition hall were invited to participate in a short interview, in return for a small Australian souvenir. Attendees had the opportunity to be interviewed before and after the sessions and during the meal breaks. In doing so, there were minimal disruptions to the congress activities and commitments for attendees.

Figure 6.1: Photo of WCIM 2010 exhibition entrance

Figure 6.2: Photo of WCIM 2010 data collection stand

The interview commenced by asking the interviewee to think about the possibility of attending the next biennial WCIM in Santiago (11-15 November, 2012). Participants were asked to tell the interviewer the thoughts that first came to mind when the questions were asked. The interviewer gave each attendee sufficient time to list his or her thoughts in response to each question and continued to probe until the attendee had nothing more to add. The interviewer wrote down what the attendee said in the attendee's own words. A total of 23 interviews were conducted (with a 5% refusal rate) until the interviewer deemed that theoretical saturation—the point where the data collected are repetitive and no additional new information is being found—was achieved (Jennings, 2010). The interviews were kept short, taking approximately eight minutes to complete, since attendees had a limited amount of free time in the congress program to participate in the study. It is acknowledged that the Melbourne Convention + Visitors Bureau's logo and support may have affected some people's perceptions of the study, but this is likely to be a positive perception given that the study was conducted with an important stakeholder in the convention industry.

Belief Elicitation Trustworthiness

As with all qualitative studies, researchers need to demonstrate that the study has been rigorous and findings and interpretations may be viewed as trustworthy (Jennings, 2010). Trustworthiness is considered to be the qualitative researcher's opportunity to demonstrate the validity of their study by showing that it reflects the perceptions of the participants (Holloway, 1997). Positivist proponents of quantitative research question the merit of qualitative studies as they debate whether the results produced can be relied upon. However, qualitative researchers commonly maintain that traditional measures of reliability and validity in quantitative research are not applicable to qualitative research, due to the nature of the methods and epistemological

assumptions used. Instead, qualitative research is assessed in terms of its trustworthiness in the form of: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

Credibility seeks to ensure that the study measures what it actually intended to measure and that the findings correspond to the perceptions of the participants being studied (Holloway, 1997; Tracy, 2010). Credibility was enhanced in this study using two methods: a peer debriefing was conducted between the main researcher and two supervisors to enhance the accuracy of the interpretations made and previous research findings were examined to assess the degree to which the study's results were congruent with those of past studies. Triangulation of the coders was also achieved in an attempt to rid the data of subjective bias (Tracy, 2010). In qualitative research, the subjectivity of the researcher is inherently present. Subjective values, biases and inclinations of the researcher can affect objectivity (Tracy, 2010). In order to address researcher subjectivity the researcher removed any subjective errors and reduced researcher bias by involving her supervisors in the coding. Transferability is the degree to which the research findings apply or can be transferred to other situations or contexts (Holloway, 1997). The researcher described the interviewing techniques and the questions used in the study to convey how the fieldwork was carried out an attempt to show transferability. Dependability is an assessment of the quality in terms of the consistency and accuracy of the data collection, data analysis and theory generation (Holloway, 1997). Dependability was maintained by carefully documenting the methods and procedures executed to show stability and consistency of the data collection phase. Confirmability is a measure of how well the findings are supported by the data collected and that these findings are not an outcome of researcher bias or subjectivity (Holloway, 1997). Confirmability was addressed by justifying why certain methodological decisions were made and explaining the weaknesses of the techniques employed.

It would therefore be reasonable to conclude that the research design used in this study enhanced the trustworthiness of the data collected.

Generalisability

Given the qualitative exploratory nature of this phase, the researcher did not set out to produce generalisable findings with respect to a larger population. Instead, the aim of this phase was to shed some light on convention attendance decisions from a gender perspective, to point the way towards the design and implementation of the following phase.

Interview Data Analysis

After the interviews were completed, the responses to each question were transcribed. This produced a list of attendees' verbatim responses under the six questions asked (two questions each for behavioural, normative and control beliefs). In order to identify the set of beliefs that were most frequently mentioned by the respondents, Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) recommend that this be done through content analysis. As such, the next step was classifying the responses for each question according to the common or shared meanings

(Jennings, 2010). This type of analysis is commonly used in qualitative research designs for a systematic analysis of the content, whether it be in written, spoken or visual material form (Tharenou, Donohue, & Cooper, 2007). Content analysis involves organising and reducing particular words, sentences or paragraphs that are mentioned in the interviews into codes (Saunders et al., 2003). The codes are then grouped, compared and contrasted to produce themes or patterns that emerge from the data, which bring meaning to the research problem (Biber-Hesse & Nagy, 2010). Three coders were involved in the content analysis of the transcribed responses for the purpose of quantifying the frequency of the coded themes and to establish inter-coder agreement (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Inter-coder agreement involves coders independently assigning each response to one of the universal categories based on their meaning to verify whether the codes are the same or similar for each person (Creswell, 2009). The inter-coder reliability test revealed that the three coders were in agreement with 90% of the cases. The areas where coders did not agree or were unsure were reviewed and some further modification to the codes, themes and explanations derived from the data were made. In an effort to uncover gender-based differences, the key themes that were most frequently mentioned by male and female respondents were compared. Specifically, the responses were reviewed to explore whether females mentioned a certain factor more often than males and vice versa.

Results

Respondent Profile

Table 6.1 provides a summary of the WCIM respondent characteristics.

Table 6.1: Belief Elicitation Respondent Profile

Demographics	Count	%
Gender		
Male	15	65.2
Female	8	34.8
Total	23	100.0
Age		
18-25	0	0.0
26-34	2	8.7
35-44	8	34.8
45-54	5	21.7
55-64	7	30.4
65+	1	4.3
Total	23	100.0
Marital Status		
single, no children	1	4.3
couple, no children	0	0.0
single with children living at home	1	4.3
couple with children living at home	15	65.2
single and children have left home	0	0.0
couple and children have left home	6	26.1
Total	23	100.0
Country of Residence		
Australia	12	52.2
New Zealand	5	21.7
Italy	2	8.7
Mexico	1	4.3
Peru	1	4.3
Indonesia	1	4.3
USA	1	4.3
Total	23	100.0
Association Member		
Yes	15	65.2
No	8	34.8
Total	23	100.0
Number of times Attended this Conference		
None	14	60.9
1-2 times	3	13.0
3-4 times	3	13.0
5 times or more	3	13.0
Total	23	100.0

The attendees interviewed comprised 65% men and 35% women, generally aged between 35 and 64 years old. Respondents came from seven countries, predominantly from Australia and New Zealand. Almost all of the respondents had children either living at home or who had left home. For the majority of respondents, it was their first time attending the convention and most held a membership to the host association. Given that the data were collected from a small convenience sample, these results should be viewed only as a preliminary insight into the profile of the WCIM 2010 attendees.

Discussion

The results of the content analysis uncovered a number of positive outcomes or advantages of attending the next convention to be held in Santiago Chile from 11-15 November 2012. The outcomes that appeared to be dominant were the perceived educational benefits, networking opportunities, opportunity to present papers and the convention location. Opinions of others, funding resources, time availability and existing commitments were also raised by respondents as possible facilitators and/or inhibitors in relation to their attendance decision. As discussed in Chapter 4, the TPB is guided by three kinds of considerations: behavioural beliefs (the likely consequences of the behaviour), normative beliefs (the normative expectations of others) and control beliefs (the presence of factors that may facilitate or impede the performance of the behaviour) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). These themes are discussed and comparisons are drawn between men and women where possible.

Behavioural Beliefs

Educational Benefits

The educational component emerged as a key outcome of attending WCIM2012 for interviewees. Some respondents commented that the next convention would provide them with an opportunity to “keep abreast of what’s new in internal medicine”, “gain professional experience”, “update my scientific knowledge”, “not miss out on new ideas/developments” and to “exchange information and news about medicine”. Consistent with the themes and/or motivators identified in previous empirical studies, respondents expressed the desire to learn and gain professional development in the area of internal medicine which was their area of specialisation (Bauer et al., 2008; Deery et al., 2005; Kim et al., 2012; Mair & Thompson, 2009; Ngamsom & Beck, 2000; Severt et al., 2007; Tanford et al., 2012; Yoo & Chon, 2008; Yoo & Zhao, 2010). This perceived outcome of attending the next convention was cited by both the male and female respondents fairly frequently in this study. It would seem that educational benefits appear to be a main motivator for all attendees.

Networking Opportunities

Participants considered the opportunity to socialise with colleagues to be another positive outcome of attending the future convention. Typical comments about the networking aspect of the convention were: it would be a "good opportunity to get in contact with people in the industry – in clinical research work that I do", travelling to Santiago would allow me "to meet colleagues from other countries" and "meet new faces and make new friends". Again this finding is not surprising, given that the social elements both within and outside the convention program are important drivers of convention attendance decisions according to previous studies (e.g. Bauer et al., 2008; Grant & Weaver, 1996; Jago & Deery, 2005; Lee & Back, 2007a; Ryu & Lee, 2013; Tanford et al., 2012; Weber & Ladkin, 2005).

When analysing the findings from a gender perspective, it appeared that the women who were interviewed, in particular, saw networking as a key advantage of attending the next convention. Given women tend to use networking for social support, whereas men use it as a means to promote their careers according to Singh et al. (2006), this finding aligns with social role theory. It is suggested that women are considered to be more socially skilled, emotionally sensitive and are more concerned with personal relationships than men (Eagly & Wood, 1991). Women tend to be more relationship-oriented in the sense that they are concerned about social aspects of interaction and others' feelings (Van Hooft et al., 2006). This could mean that they place a greater importance on evaluating a convention based on the opportunity to socialise with colleagues and nurture their friendships, as was noted by Mair and Frew (2016) in their study of female convention attendees. It may also be that the women in this study have fewer opportunities to network with industry colleagues outside attending a convention (Mavriplis et al., 2010) or that they value social connections more highly than other components of the convention.

Presenting Papers

For some attendees, the next convention could provide them with the opportunity to share their research with peers by submitting and presenting a paper(s). Common responses about the advantage of attending WCIM2012 were: “being able to do a paper presentation” and “paper presentation – for me to present”. This finding is not dissimilar to previous convention research where presenting papers is a key driver of attendance, particularly in academic conventions, and has been associated with career enhancement or professional development (Chiang et al., 2012; Jarumaneerat et al., 2007; Weber & Ladkin, 2008; Yoo & Chon, 2008). Attending conventions is particularly important for people to present their research because they have the opportunity to receive feedback about their work (Borghans et al., 2010). Presenting papers is possibly seen as a way of advancing professionally, which in some cases is a high priority for attendees in the medical research field. Jacobs and McFarlane (2005, p. 317) identify that “participation in conferences, especially as a contributor, is seen as a sufficiently important element in the development of an academic researcher’s career that even cash-poor universities usually offer some financial support for employees to do this.” Furthermore, as Oppermann and Chon (1997) note, unsurprisingly, an individual might be more likely to choose to attend a convention that they consider to be more valuable to their career where they can present a paper in front of leading experts in their field, rather than a lower status conference attended by less-qualified colleagues.

Although sample sizes are small, four out of the 15 male participants and one of the eight female participants saw presenting papers to be a key advantage of travelling to Santiago for the next convention. As previously mentioned in Chapter 3, social role theory is based on the societal position of women and men with regard to their division of labour into homemakers and paid employees respectively (Eagly & Wood, 1999). There is therefore a tendency for males to develop traits that manifest agentic characteristics such as independence, assertiveness, ambitiousness and self-confidence. In a professional setting such as a convention, men can display agentic behaviours which might include speaking assertively, influencing others and making problem-solution suggestions (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). Presenting a paper allows attendees to display agentic behaviours associated with the male gender role in order to seek status and perhaps be seen as a leader in their field. This finding supports existing research which indicates that men might be more likely to be driven by a desire for career advancement, accomplishments and eminence than women (Venkatesh et al., 2000). More men than women might perhaps attend conventions for the purpose of presenting their work, thereby selecting conventions that would provide them with this opportunity.

Convention Location

The findings reveal that the majority of respondents cited visiting Santiago to be an advantage of attending the next convention. Typical comments included: “Santiago would be a nice place to visit”, “I always wanted to go to that part of the world” and “I have never been to Chile and would love to go”. Previous studies have found that the location or destination of the convention is a main factor affecting association convention attendance (e.g. Ngamsom & Beck, 2000; Rittichainuwat et al., 2001; Yoo & Zhao, 2010) and these findings also support this view. In line with existing literature, the evaluation of the convention location appears to be central to future attendance decisions for both men and women in this study.

Three specific behavioural beliefs relating to the convention location also became evident in the interviews, of which gender appears to play a role in two components. The first relates to travel distance. One international interviewee said that attending the next convention is ideal because “it’s close by, it’s near my country”, while others considered Santiago to be a long-haul destination and the time taken to travel would be a key consideration in their decision whether or not to attend WCIM2012. Travel distance was raised by both men and women interviewees as an impediment to their attendance, rather than a factor that would facilitate their visit to Santiago. This finding is consistent with previous investigations where attendees consider the travel distance in their decision to attend a convention (Ngamsom & Beck, 2000; Rittichainuwat et al., 2001; Severt et al., 2009). It is important to note that in some cases, international association conventions are routinely held only in countries within a certain region, for example Europe. This means that if a convention was to be held in another region, such as the Asia Pacific, attendance numbers could be lower compared to previous years due to travel distance perceptions held by regular attendees. Alternatively, it might facilitate attendance from emerging destinations and gain representation from people who would not normally be in attendance at a convention.

The second behavioural belief that emerged in the interviews when the convention location was discussed was safety and security. One respondent mentioned “I’m concerned with my safety” and another stated that having “security in Santiago” is important to them. Safety and security appears to be a concern for some attendees as other studies have also found (Jago & Deery, 2005; Yoo & Chon, 2008). The issue of attendee safety was noted by industry experts in Weber and Ladkin (2005) to be an important one of increasing concern. Notably, some of the females interviewed in this exploratory study indicated that issues with safety and security at the destination would make it difficult for them to attend the next convention, which is also consistent with previous studies (Jago & Deery, 2005; Mair, 2010a).

Learning about the Host Country

The third behavioural belief uncovered in the interviews when respondents were asked about the positive outcomes of attending the next conference related to how the host destination contributes to their field of study. Comments included: “it would be beneficial to see Chile’s approach to the medical field”, “to see...how they are managing medicine”, and “to be aware of a different country’s medicine”. Perhaps respondents were wanting to experience Chile’s health system firsthand with guided visits to health centres and to have conversations onsite with medical practitioners. Additionally, they may be interested in learning about different concepts of internal medicine, including the health practices of Chile’s indigenous population.

Three of the eight female and two of the 15 male participants raised this factor in the interviews, suggesting that perhaps females are particularly interested in learning about how the host country and/or city is specialising in their field. If we draw on literature relating to interactive learning, more specifically what motivates students to study abroad, we can notice some similarities according to gender. According to a study about college students’ intentions to study abroad, more women participate in such programs at a ratio of 2:1 (Salisbury, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2010). This statistic is evident across a range of disciplines including engineering, business and the sciences (Salisbury et al., 2010). One may assert that women tend to desire diversity-rich experiences that allow them to interact with people from a different culture, to grow and develop personally and to learn new ideas (communal trait) as was reported in another study about students studying overseas by Presley et al. (2010).

Based on the literature to date, this is a new addition to our understanding about the reasons why people attend conventions. This advantage of attending an international medical association convention has arguably not been uncovered in most previous research because the medical convention attendance-related field has been relatively unexplored. Subsequently, this finding is worthy of further investigation to explore whether attendees belonging to other medical or scientific professional associations consider finding out about developments in the host convention destination to be particularly important in their convention attendance decisions.

Normative Beliefs

The decision to attend a convention appeared to be influenced by three reference groups: employer/supervisor, colleagues and family members (i.e. spouse/partner and children). These results are in line with the work of Lee and Back (2007b) who maintain that convention attendance is reliant on the cooperation of the association attendee’s manager/advisors and their colleagues. A study pertaining to career advancement in the manufacturing industry suggests that supervisors have a strong influence on an individual’s growth or lack of performance in the working environment (Thurasamy, Lo, Amri, & Noor, 2011). When an individual has employer and/or supervisor support to advance in the workplace, this can help pave the way to promotions, more responsibility, leadership and development (Thurasamy et al., 2011). Given that convention attendance is affiliated with business factors such as receiving funding to attend and the desire to

learn (see Figure 2.3 and 2.4 in Chapter 2), participation can be influenced by the goals of the organisation and relies on cooperation within the organisation (Lee & Back, 2007b). For some respondents, attending a certain number of conventions per year is a requirement from their employer. A male respondent mentioned “I need to attend at least two conferences a year”, similarly, a female respondent said that “I need to attend a certain number of conferences per year.”

From a comparative perspective, the three influencers identified seemed to be important to both men and women interviewed in this study. However, the literature suggests that women are more likely to be conscious of the opinions of others and feel the social pressure of referent groups compared to their male counterparts (Harris & Ateljevic, 2003; Sparks & Pan, 2009).

Control Beliefs

Financial Resources

Funding and budget considerations were considered to be an important control belief according to respondents. This was mainly due to the fact that attendees sometimes rely on their employer to cover the travel costs. For example, one respondent expressed interest in attending the next convention “if attendance was subsidised”. Other respondents said “gaining financial support from my department and having money myself” and “sponsorship from company” would make it possible to attend the convention. Not receiving funding or not being able to meet the expenses for the convention attendance has also been pointed out by other authors as an impediment to attendance (Mair & Thompson, 2009; Rittichainuwat et al., 2001; Yoo & Zhao, 2010). Further analysis with regard to gender showed that having the financial resources would facilitate attendance for both men and women in this exploratory study.

Time Availability

The timing of the convention was another control belief mentioned by respondents, which was considered to be more of a potential barrier than facilitator. Typical comments were: “depends on my research activity” and “my availability of leave”. The issue of having time availability is not dissimilar to previous convention attendance research where lack of time has been considered to be an impediment to attendance (Mair & Thompson, 2009; Zhang et al., 2007). Again, this finding was consistent for both male and female interviewees who noted that having the time to attend would have a positive impact upon their intentions to attend the next convention.

Work and Family Responsibilities

The final control belief raised by participants was having work and/or family responsibilities. Some of the comments relating to this issue included: “I would attend if I had another doctor to relieve me to cover my workload”, and “a factor that would inhibit attendance is my practice commitment”. Moreover, family responsibilities appeared to be an attendance barrier, with interviewees saying that “time away from family” and “leaving my family” would make it difficult to attend the next convention. This is consistent with a study about work-related travel, gender and family obligations where it was found that to some extent, people manage their travel activities around their current family situation (Gustafson, 2006). For some of the female interviewees, family responsibilities were considered to be one of the main barriers to attending, as was found in a study about women and business travel by Harris and Ateljevic (2003). Some of the male respondents mentioned that having their family accompany them would make it easier for them to attend the next convention, yet this did not appear to be a key factor for women. It is speculated that women may perceive convention attendance to be a time of reflection and empowerment, away from the daily routine, as alluded to in previous studies concerning women and independent travel (Harris & Wilson, 2007).

Elicitation Summary

The Belief Elicitation phase provided some preliminary insights into the beliefs underlying convention attendance for men and women. In line with the existing literature, the data analysis reveals that attendees expressed interest in attending the next convention based on the opportunity to visit an attractive destination, to make new professional contacts and acquire information specific to their field. Intentions to attend depended on receiving approval from employers, colleagues and/or family members as well as having the financial resources and time to attend the next convention. Some factors appeared to be important to all attendees such as the educational component and having the time to attend the convention. However, some factors appeared to be more important to men than women and vice versa. For example, the opportunity to present a paper(s) was an important component for the male participants interviewed, whereas for the female participants, the networking opportunities were seen to be a more positive outcome of attending the WCIM2012.

This phase assisted in gaining a better understanding of convention attendance decisions from a gender perspective. Although some preliminary conclusions have been drawn from these findings, particularly in relation to the existing literature, this phase was only intended to provide a rigorous underpinning for the second phase. The second phase involves building on the factors that emerged in the Belief Elicitation phase with a larger sample of attendees. This way, it would be possible to quantitatively test whether men’s and women’s intentions to attend association conventions differ and, if so, in what way. The following section outlines the hypotheses for the following phase.

Hypotheses Development

When applying the TPB to the convention attendance decision context, it is postulated that a potential attendee is more likely to develop an intention to attend an association convention if they: (1) hold positive attitudes about attending, (2) expect their important referents will approve of them attending, (3) believe they have the resources (e.g. time or money) to attend. Additionally, Lee and Back (2007b) proposed that delegates need a positive destination image and therefore this will be included. Lee and Back (2007b) contend that behavioural, normative, control and destination beliefs correlate with the TPB's direct measure constructs (i.e. attitude, subjective norm and PBC) regarding convention attendance intentions. With this theoretical view in mind, drawing from the conceptual body of work pertaining to gender and the Belief Elicitation findings, each of these constructs are reviewed to develop the hypotheses for this study.

Attitude toward Future Convention Attendance

A key influence in future convention attendance decisions is a person's attitude towards a convention (Leach et al., 2008; Yoo & Chon, 2010). Attitude theory has been applied to convention attendance in a study by Yoo and Chon (2010) who sought to determine whether the factors in the convention attendee decision-making process are subject to temporal changes. A longitudinal approach was adopted using a panel of hospitality and tourism association members. The findings show that the decision to attend a convention is determined by a person's attitude towards attendance. They postulate that the factors attendees deem to be important in the convention attendance decision can change over time. Similarly, Leach et al. (2008) examined attitudes, word-of-mouth and value congruence in the context of association convention attendance decisions. Their results show that for attendees who have a direct experience with the convention, their future intentions to be a repeat delegate are primarily based upon their evaluation of their experience (i.e. attitude) (Leach et al., 2008). Their research indicates that post-attendance attitudes are fundamental in predicting intentions to attend future conventions. They contend that, "when members attend a conference, they develop an attitude that is both highly accessible and diagnostic to their decisions to return to that conference in the future" (Leach et al., 2008, p. 264). This perspective is supported by Lee and Min (2013) who demonstrated in their empirical study that positive word-of-mouth provides a reliable indication of future convention attendance intentions. It is thought that a potential attendee assesses the benefits of attending a convention (such as educational and networking opportunities) and evaluates the outcomes of attending and if they think that attending the convention will provide valuable outcomes, a positive attitude towards attendance is formed. Such advantages of attending a future convention include those discussed in the Belief Elicitation phase results: educational benefits, networking opportunities, presenting papers, convention location and learning about the host country. Thus, it would be reasonable to predict that if an individual has a favourable attitude toward attending a convention, they are likely to form an intention to attend the convention.

Hypothesis 1: Attitude has a positive effect on intention to attend a convention.

According to a study by Edwards et al. (2011), it is thought that men may form intentions to attend a convention based on the likelihood that a particular convention provides opportunities for research collaborations to help them progress professionally. Comparatively, women see conventions as a means to build knowledge and to build the capabilities of young people in the sector (Edwards et al., 2011). This highlights that males may focus more on the outcomes that have a direct benefit to their career (agentic/goal oriented trait) as opposed to women who may be more inclined to see the benefits from a collective perspective (communal trait). Considering therefore, that men may be more individualistic in progressing in their career compared to women, it is expected that attitude toward attending a future convention will be a stronger predictor among men than women with regard to attendance intentions.

Hypothesis 2: Attitude toward future convention attendance will have a stronger positive relationship with intention to attend a convention for men than for women.

Subjective Norm and Future Convention Attendance

The TPB postulates that subjective norm (the perceived social pressure to perform a behaviour) is a determinant of intention (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Based on the work of Lee and Back (2007b), it can be argued that subjective norm plays an important role in forming intentions to attend a convention. Association convention attendees are commonly exposed to normative influences from their advisor/boss, colleagues and family members when deciding whether or not to attend a convention. Potential attendees are thought to seek the opinions of their referents about whether they approve or disapprove of them attending a convention. If a referent thinks that the person should attend and the person responds favourably to their input, they are more likely to attend a convention. To illustrate, suppose an individual believes that their employer thinks that they should attend an upcoming convention due to the knowledge they will gain. This will probably lead to the decision to attend the convention. If the timing of the convention clashes with work commitments and their employer subsequently does not support their attendance, this individual would be much less likely to attend the convention. Other studies that highlighted that important referents are influential on attendance decisions or business related decisions include Ngamsom and Beck (2000), Rittichainuwat et al. (2001) and Giles and Larmour (2000). Therefore, it is postulated that an individual's intention to attend a convention is influenced by the perceived normative expectations from important referents.

Hypothesis 3: Subjective norm has a positive effect on intention to attend a convention.

The literature points out that women tend to be more mindful of other's opinions and can feel pressured to confirm to their referent groups compared to their male counterparts (Harris & Ateljevic, 2003). Evidence of this can be found in a TPB study about the intentions of potential Chinese tourists to travel to Australia by Sparks and Pan (2009). Their research reveals that Chinese women report higher levels of influence than men from their travel agent, friends and particularly their co-workers with regard to future travel decisions (Sparks & Pan, 2009). Another study by Tsai and Coleman (2005) adopted the TPB to examine the factors that underline intention to participate in regular recreational activities. The findings reveal that subjective norm influenced intentions to participate for Australian female respondents. Their study also supports the notion that women are more susceptible to external social pressures when deciding whether or not to engage in a particular behaviour and are more influenced by their referent groups than men. It is therefore hypothesised that subjective norm influences will be a stronger factor for women than men with regard to intention to attend a future convention.

Hypothesis 4: Subjective norm will have a stronger positive relationship with intention to attend a future convention for women than for men.

Perceived Behavioural Control and Future Convention Attendance

Perceived behavioural control (PBC) is concerned with the perceived ease or difficulty of performing a particular behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). In the context of convention attendance, there is evidence to support the contention that PBC is a key determinant of intention because potential attendees are faced with several factors that facilitate or inhibit them from attending a convention (Lee & Back, 2007b). These factors have been discussed, which include time, cost, family obligations, safety and security of the destination and travel distance (Lee & Back, 2007b; Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Yoo & Chon, 2010; Yoo & Zhao, 2010; Zhang et al., 2007). Association attendees are thought to take these factors into consideration when deciding whether to attend a convention (or not). It might be that an individual has a favourable attitude toward attending a convention and experiences social pressure to attend. However, if the individual does not have the financial resources to cover the cost of travel, they are likely to form an intention to not attend the convention. Therefore, it is expected that an individual's PBC influences their intentions to attend a convention.

Hypothesis 5: Perceived behavioural control has a positive effect on intention to attend a convention.

From a gender perspective, Harris and Ateljevic (2003) suggest that household tensions, separation from family members, guilt, fatigue, stress and societal expectations may inhibit women from attending a convention. They note that women who travel for business often feel compelled to perform their domestic responsibilities whilst they are away by contacting loved ones via email or phone calls to ensure their loved ones are cared for (Harris & Ateljevic, 2003). Consequentially, the likelihood for a true escape from the daily domestic responsibilities of the home may be less possible for women travelling for the purpose of attending a convention (Harris & Wilson, 2007). Additionally, early studies into understanding women and business travel in the hotel and airline industries shows that women are concerned about personal space, safety and security when travelling for business (Foster & Botterill, 1995; Howell, Moreo, & Demicco, 1993; Lutz & Ryan, 1993; McCleary et al., 1994; Sammons, Moreo, Benson, & Demicco, 1999; Westwood et al., 2000). It has therefore become more important for accommodation to be within close proximity of the convention venue, due to the growth in the number of women attendees, many of whom have concerns with their personal safety (Jago & Deery, 2005). This issue is likely to become even more important in the future, as more conventions are held in emerging destinations, attracting attendees who could be first time travellers to a city, and may prefer to stay in close proximity to convention centres.

Existing research therefore tells us that, in some cases, women will not form an intention to attend a convention if the situational constraints (such as family obligations or safety concerns at a destination) outweigh the advantages of attending (Ramirez et al., 2013). This may be the case for some men also; however, women are considered to be more sensitive to these travel barriers than men when deciding whether or not to attend a convention. Accordingly, it is theorised that PBC will be a stronger predictor among women than men with regard to future convention attendance intentions.

Hypothesis 6: Perceived behavioural control will have a stronger positive relationship with intention to attend a future convention for women than for men.

Convention Location and Future Convention Attendance

There is a general consensus amongst convention tourism researchers that the “location” or “destination” is a key determinant of convention attendance decisions (Yoo & Zhao, 2010). While the TPB does not explicitly include constructs other than attitude, subjective norm and PBC, it has been argued that its application for destination choice decisions can be useful (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). Further, in this study’s Belief Elicitation phase, respondents considered visiting Santiago to be an advantage of attending the next convention. It was found that the convention location is a fundamental component of attitude towards attending a convention. It therefore appears that attitude toward the convention is formed in two parts: evaluation of the convention itself (e.g. the program and content) and the convention location (e.g. attractiveness and accessibility).

Sparks and Pan (2009, p. 485) advocate the inclusion of a destination construct in TPB tourism studies given that, "developing an understanding of both the importance of destination attributes in general, as well as salient beliefs a target market holds about a specific destination provides potentially useful information in attitude formation". This supports the notion to extend the TPB and include "convention location" as a fourth construct to identify the role that destination attributes play in intentions to attend a future convention. According to Sparks and Pan (2009), attitudes toward destination travel will be established by the destination's attributes Since the respondents in the first phase often referred to the convention location in terms of safety/security and accessibility, when asked what factors would make it easy for them to attend the next convention, it is thought that attitude towards the convention will be influenced by the evaluation of these destination attributes. Furthermore, these were the two most important attributes that potential association attendees identified when Lee and Back (2007a) measured destination attribute strength and evaluation in their study. In light of the notion that previous studies show that convention attendance intentions are influenced by destination attributes, it is predicted in this study that the convention location influences the convention attendance decision.

Hypothesis 7: Convention location has a positive effect on intention to attend a convention.

Given that there is no conclusive evidence in the literature to suggest that the moderating role of gender is related to destination image and intentions, it is expected that the convention location influences both men's and women's intentions to attend a future convention. As such, this study did not develop a hypothesis in relation to convention location and gender.

From Elicitation to Measurement

Following the content analysis of the Belief Elicitation phase data, the next step in the TPB procedure is to record the beliefs most frequently mentioned to create a modal set of salient beliefs (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). The modal set of salient beliefs are used to construct a standardised questionnaire that is applied to a larger sample of the target population, to assess belief strength and evaluation with respect to each construct (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Procedures used for deciding on the final pool of modal salient beliefs vary, however Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) recommend that the beliefs mentioned by approximately 75% of all respondents should be included. As such, this decision rule was adopted in this study. The following beliefs were subsequently chosen:

Behavioural Beliefs

- update my knowledge
- network with colleagues
- present paper(s)
- learn about the host country's approach to my field

Normative Beliefs

- supervisor/employer
- colleagues
- family

Control Beliefs

- money/funding
- travel distance
- time
- having family accompany me

Convention Location Beliefs

- safety/security
- accessibility
- tourist appeal

Note that an explanation as to how each belief was translated into individual questions in the questionnaire will be discussed in Chapter 7.

Summary

The chapter began with a discussion on the Belief Elicitation principles and measurement. It then gave an account of the recruitment criteria used to select study participants, and sample specifications and described the research sites. The instrument used, pilot test, administration and data analysis procedures were then discussed. The Belief Elicitation phase was conducted to explore the behavioural, normative and control beliefs that would affect the decision to attend a future international association convention, as described in research objective one. This involved obtaining a pool of beliefs specific to the target behaviour using semi-structured interviews with convention attendees. Findings from the interviews were presented and references to possible gender differences were made. The hypotheses were then outlined and a list of the modal salient beliefs identified to inform the next phase was presented. The following two chapters report on the Belief Measurement phase, whereby these findings were utilised and tested to measure the relative strength and importance of these salient beliefs and to further identify the role that gender might play in moderating the convention attendance decision. Chapter 7 discusses the principles, design and administration, and then presents the results of the Belief Measurement phase.

Chapter 7: Belief Measurement

The previous chapter discussed the formative elicitation phase which identified the behavioural, normative and control beliefs that are salient to convention attendance decisions. This chapter is based on the proceeding phase which pertains to the principles and methods of Belief Measurement and involves quantitatively testing the strength and importance of the modal salient set of beliefs that emerged in the Belief Elicitation Phase. The measurement phase is discussed, detailing how each of the constructs were measured. Pilot testing, questionnaire administration, issues relating to the reliability and validity of the results, data analysis techniques and finally the results are discussed.

Principles of Belief Measurement

The remaining two research objectives of this study are to measure the relative strength and importance of the salient beliefs to predict convention attendance intentions for an upcoming convention in Melbourne and to identify the role that gender might play in moderating the convention attendance decision. In order to fulfil these two objectives, a Belief Measurement phase was carried out according to the principles of the TPB.

Target, Action, Context, Time (TACT)

In Chapter 4, the Belief Elicitation context was examined according to the target, action, context and time (TACT). The TACT specifications were for Convention 1 were the next World Congress in Internal Medicine (WCIM) (target), attendance intentions (action), in Santiago (context), in 11-15 November 2012 (time). According to TPB literature, in order to maximise the predictive validity of the TPB, behaviour and intentions all of the constructs must be clearly defined using the TACT (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). It has been noted that if one element changes, this has an impact on the behaviour in question (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). For the purposes of this study, it must be highlighted that in the Belief Measurement phase a different TACT was used to the Belief Elicitation phase due to the nature of conventions being a single event at one point in time. Clearly no convention is the same because they predominately rotate to different destinations each time they are held, in different months and have different content each time. For example, if we were to use the World Congress in Internal Medicine (WCIM) for the Belief Measurement phase, the questionnaires would have needed to be administered at the 2012 convention in Santiago with the questions relating to the next convention which was scheduled to be held in Seoul, Korea in 2014. Unfortunately, this was not feasible based on timeframes. In this vein, three different conventions were used in the data collection phase, each with different TACTs these were the pilot test (namely Convention 2) and the two conventions selected for Phase Two (namely Convention 3 and 4). For the Belief Measurement phase, Convention 3 TACT was: International Conference on Low Vision (target) attendance intentions (action) in Melbourne (context) 31 March to 4 April 2014 (time). Convention 4 TACT was: International Society for Magnetic Resonance in Medicine Scientific Meeting & Exhibition (target) attendance intentions (action) in Melbourne (context) 5-11 May 2012 (time). Notably, the contexts in Convention 3 and 4 are the same, whereby the next convention was scheduled to be held in Melbourne.

Measurement

The Belief Measurement questionnaire was developed following procedures described in Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) and Francis et al. (2004). In addition to background questions, the questionnaire contained both direct and indirect measures of attitude towards convention attendance, subjective norm, PBC, attitude towards the convention location and intention to attend a convention. Direct and indirect measures were used in an attempt to be able to explain more variance with regard to convention attendance intentions than if only one type of measure was used.

While it would have been desirable to include both injunctive and descriptive norms for the subjective norm measure as discussed in Chapter 4, questionnaire length and formatting considerations meant that a decision was made to restrict the subjective norm measure to injunctive norms only. Moreover, few studies have incorporated descriptive norms into their investigations to assist in the prediction of certain behaviours according to Fishbein and Ajzen (2010). Importantly, descriptive norms are relatively new to the TPB framework and pose more questions about the appropriate operationalisation of the subjective norm construct (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010) and finally, as discussed previously, this study was designed before the Reasoned Action Model (which saw the addition of injunctive and descriptive norms) was proposed.

Semantic differential scaling was used to construct measures, as most commonly employed in TPB studies according to Ajzen (1991). In addition, a minimum of three items were used to measure each construct to increase the reliability, decrease measurement error and ensure advanced statistical techniques could be used such as structural equation modelling (Kline, 2005). The following section outlines how each of the constructs were measured.

Attitude toward Convention Attendance Measures

The measurement of attitude was predicted by the extent to which a potential attendee evaluates the benefits of attending a future convention. The direct measure of attitude was measured using four statements, as per Table 7.1. Each statement was measured on semantic differential scales, where negative scores reflect unfavourable attitudes and positive scores reflect positive attitudes. Respondents were asked to rate each direct measure item on the likelihood that attending the convention would produce each outcome.

Table 7.1: Attitude toward Convention Attendance Direct Measurement Questions

Attitude toward Convention Attendance Direct Measures
For me attending the next conference in Melbourne would be
Enjoyable _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Unenjoyable
Interesting _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Boring
Job relevant _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Job irrelevant
Career helpful _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Career unhelpful

The indirect measurement of attitude toward convention attendance was measured using four behavioural belief items, shown in Table 7.2. Respondents were asked to evaluate the outcomes in terms of likelihood and importance.

Table 7.2: Attitude toward Convention Attendance Indirect Measurement Questions

Attitude toward Convention Attendance Indirect Measures
By attending the next conference in Melbourne, I will update my knowledge Likely _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Unlikely For me to update my knowledge is Important _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Unimportant
By attending the next conference in Melbourne, I will network with colleagues Likely _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Unlikely For me to networking with colleagues is Important _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Unimportant
By attending the next conference in Melbourne, I will be able to present a paper(s) Likely _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Unlikely For me to present a paper(s) is Important _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Unimportant
By attending the next conference in Melbourne, I will learn about the host country's approach to my field Likely _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Unlikely For me to learn about the host country's approach to my field is Important _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Unimportant

Subjective Norm Influences

The measurement of subjective normative influence was predicted by the extent to which a potential attendee values the opinions of others who may encourage them to attend a future convention. Three normative influences were assessed: supervisor/employer, colleagues and family members. The direct measure of subjective norms was measured using three statements, shown in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3: Subjective Norm Direct Measurement Questions

Subjective Norm Direct Measures
Most people who are important to me think: I SHOULD attend the conference in Melbourne _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:____ I SHOULD NOT attend the next the next conference in Melbourne
Most people whose opinions I value would: APPROVE of me attending the next conference in Melbourne _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ DISAPPROVE of me attending the next conference in Melbourne
Most people in a similar role to me at work would attend the next conference in Melbourne: Agree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Disagree

To assess the indirect measures of subjective norms, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they think their referents would support their attendance the next convention, (refer to Table 7.4). Statements relating to subjective norms were measured on a Likert type scale from -3 to +3. Three items measured normative beliefs, for example: “my supervisor/employer thinks that... I should/I should not attend the next conference in Melbourne”. Similarly, three items measured willingness to comply with the social influences, such as “when it comes to attending conferences...I do/I do not want to do what supervisor/employer thinks I should do”.

Table 7.4: Subjective Norm Indirect Measurement Questions

Subjective Norm Indirect Measures
My supervisor/employer thinks that: I SHOULD attend the next conference in Melbourne_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ I SHOULD NOT attend the next conference in Melbourne When it comes to attending conferences: I WANT TO DO what my what my supervisor/employer thinks I should do _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ I DO NOT WANT TO DO supervisor/employer thinks I should do
My colleagues think that: I SHOULD attend the next conference in Melbourne_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ I SHOULD NOT attend the next conference in Melbourne When it comes to attending conferences: I WANT TO DO what my what my colleagues think I should do____:____:____:____:____:____:____ I DO NOT WANT TO DO colleagues think I should do
My family members think that: I SHOULD attend the next conference in Melbourne_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ I SHOULD NOT attend the next conference in Melbourne When it comes to attending conferences: I WANT TO DO what my what my family thinks I should do _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ I DO NOT WANT TO DO family thinks I should do

Perceived Behavioural Control Measures

The measurement of PBC was predicted by the extent to which intervening opportunities or inhibitors may affect future convention attendance. The direct measure of PBC was assessed with three statements i.e. “attending the next conference in Melbourne is completely up to me” where 1=disagree to 7=agree. Table 7.5 shows the three direct measure questions.

Table 7.5: Perceived Behavioural Control Direct Measurement Questions

Perceived Behavioural Control Direct Measures
Attending the next conference in Melbourne is my decision Agree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Disagree
I am confident that if I want to, I could attend the next conference in Melbourne True _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ False
If I really wanted to, I could attend the next conference in Melbourne Likely _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Unlikely

Indirect measures of PBC were assessed using three control belief statements, i.e. “I expect to have the time to attend the next conference in Melbourne”. Each statement was rated from 1=unlikely to 7=likely. Respondents were then asked to rate the degree to which they had control over the possible constraints or impediments that could affect their decision to attend the convention and their control power over each item, i.e. “having the time would enable me to attend the next conference in Melbourne” where -3=disagree to +3=agree. These questions are presented in Table 7.6.

Table 7.6: Perceived Behavioural Control Indirect Measurement Questions

Perceived Behavioural Control Indirect Measures
I expect to have the money/funding to attend the next conference in Melbourne Likely _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Unlikely Having the money/funding would enable me to attend the next conference in Melbourne Agree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Disagree
I expect that the travel distance to Melbourne will be a concern in my decision to attend the next conference in Melbourne Likely _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Unlikely Travelling far would make it: EASY to attend the next conference in Melbourne _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ DIFFICULT to attend the next conference in Melbourne
I expect to have the time to attend the next conference in Melbourne Likely _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Unlikely Having the time would enable me to attend the next conference in Melbourne Agree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Disagree
I expect that my family (e.g. partner &/or children) will accompany me to the next conference in Melbourne Likely _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Unlikely Having my family accompany me would make it: EASY to attend the next conference in Melbourne _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ DIFFICULT to attend the next conference in Melbourne

Attitude toward Convention Location Measures

Consistent with Sparks and Pan (2009), in order to develop an understanding of the beliefs about Melbourne as a convention location, this study also measured destination image. The direct measure of convention location was assessed with three destination statements used by Lee and Back (2007a)**,** shown in Table 7.7. For instance, “for me the next conference destination, Melbourne, is an ideal meeting place”. Each statement was rated from 1=disagree to 7=agree.

Table 7.7: Attitude toward Convention Location Direct Measurement Questions

Attitude toward Convention Location Direct Measures
For me the next conference destination, Melbourne, is an ideal meeting place Agree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Disagree
I am satisfied with Melbourne being the next conference destination Agree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Disagree
Overall, I have a favourable image of the next conference destination, Melbourne Agree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Disagree

The indirect measures of the convention location were assessed on three belief and outcome statements that referred to the safety/security, accessibility (ease of travel) and destination appeal, depicted in Table 7.8. Respondents were first asked to rate the level of importance assigned to the attributes, for example "how important to you is the safety/security at a conference destination?" where 1=unimportant to 7=important. Then respondents were asked to evaluate the same attribute for Melbourne (that is the degree to which they believe that the destination would offer the attribute) i.e. "Melbourne is a safe/secure destination for a conference" where -3=disagree to +3=agree.

Table 7.8: Attitude toward Convention Location Indirect Measurement Questions

Attitude toward Convention Location Direct Measures
How important to you is the safety/security at a conference destination? Important _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Unimportant Melbourne is a safe/secure destination for a conference Agree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Disagree
How important to you is the accessibility (ease of travel) to a conference destination? Important _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Unimportant Melbourne is a destination that is easily accessible for a conference Agree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Disagree
How important to you is the conference destination's tourist appeal? Important _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Unimportant Melbourne is a destination that has tourist appeal Agree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Disagree

Intention to Attend Convention

In the case of the present study, intention is defined as an individual's anticipation of a future trip to attend a convention in Melbourne. Three statements that measured behavioural intention to attend the next convention were used, shown in Table 7.9. One of the items was worded as follows: "I intend to attend the next conference in Melbourne" (1=unlikely to 7=likely).

Table 7.9: Intentions Measurement Questions

Intention to Attend Measures
I intend to attend the next conference in Melbourne Likely _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Unlikely
I plan to attend the next conference in Melbourne Agree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Disagree
I will make an effort to attend the next conference in Melbourne True _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ False

Scoring Belief Measures

There has been long debate about how to best score the belief-based measures in the TPB, particularly the attitudinal beliefs (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Azjen (1991) points out that while most studies use a 7-point scale to assess belief strength and evaluation, it is also possible to use *unipolar* (e.g., from 1 to 7, or from 0 to 6) or *bipolar* scales (e.g., from -3 to +3). In the absence of clear guidelines about how to score behavioural belief measures, some researchers use bipolar scoring on their questionnaire, then recode their data if necessary (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). The option that produces the best correlation between the direct and indirect measures of attitude is selected.

In terms of scoring the subjective norm measures, while normative belief strength is scored on a bipolar basis from -3 to +3 as a means of registering the direction of social pressure, motivation to comply is scored from +1 to +7 using unipolar scaling (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Francis et al., 2004). The control belief strength construct is scored on a unipolar basis from +1 to +7 and control power is scored from -3 to +3 using bipolar scaling (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Francis et al., 2004). However, whether researchers apply bipolar or unipolar scaling for the belief measures, it is ultimately at their discretion provided that they justify their rationale from a measurement perspective.

The scoring scheme adopted in this study comes from a accepted method documented by Frances et al. (2004) and is outlined in the next section. The scoring decisions were also guided by previous research conducted in a similar context to this study by Lee and Back (2007b). While some studies employ five-point or nine-point scale (e.g. Leroy et al., 2009; Tsai & Coleman, 2005), most use a seven-point scale to measure beliefs (e.g. Han et al., 2010; Quintal, Leeb, & Soutarb, 2010; Venkatesh et al., 2000). Seven-point scales were thus used in this Belief Measurement phase.

It must be noted that the mid-point of zero (-3 to +3) or four (1 to 7) implies that the individual has a neutral evaluation about the belief in question, i.e. attending a convention to network with others would be neither good nor bad. It is also noteworthy that a neutral attitude is still an attitude, although it is most likely to be a weak one (Peter & Olsen, 2010). If respondents were to mark the mid-point, this could also be labelled as "unsure".

Computing Belief Measures

In order to measure belief strength, the belief measures were multiplied to produce a cross-product for each belief. The cross-products were then added together to create a new variable that represented the belief-based measures for each of the constructs. For example:

Where A = total attitude score
1, 3, 5 and 7 are scores for each of four behavioural beliefs
2, 4, 6 and 8 are scores for the four outcome evaluations relating to each behavioural belief
A = (1 x 2) + (3 x 4) + (5 x 6) + (7 x 8)

Using this method:
a ***positive*** (+) score means that the respondent is ***in favour of*** a convention producing the outcome
a ***negative*** (-) score means that the respondent ***does not*** perceive that a convention will produce the outcome

A hypothetical response may look like this:

1. By attending the next conference in Melbourne, I will update my knowledge

Likely	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Unlikely

2. For me to update my knowledge is:

Important	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	Unimportant

3. By attending the next conference in Melbourne, I will network with colleagues

Likely	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Unlikely

4. For me to networking with colleagues is:

Important	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	Unimportant

5. By attending the next conference in Melbourne, I will be able to present a paper(s)

Likely	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Unlikely

6. For me to present a paper(s):

Important	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	Unimportant

7. By attending the next conference in Melbourne, I will learn about the host country's approach to my field

Likely	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Unlikely

8. For me to learn about the host country's approach to my field is:

Relevant	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	Irrelevant

If we presume that a participant has responded by marking the numbers indicated in red font above, the total attitude score is calculated as:

A = (5 x +3) + (2 x -2) + (6 x +3) + (2 x -1)
= (+15) + (-4) + (+18) + (-2)
= +27

Since there are four items, the possible range of total scores is (7 x +3) x 4 = -84 to +84[13]. This means that the attitude score of this respondent reflects a weak to positive attitude towards the convention producing desired outcomes (Francis et al., 2004). Once this is done, all of the cross-products are added together and are divided by the number of respondents who answered that question to obtain the mean cross-product score. This process is repeated for all of the beliefs measured in the instrument and produces mean cross-products, average belief strengths and average evaluation scores for each of the beliefs. It is then possible to test the strength of the relationships between the constructs and to make comparisons, for example by gender. The purpose of creating these cross-product variables was to analyse the indirect measures using t-tests, which will be discussed later in the chapter.

In light of this discussion on scoring belief measures, for this study positive scores reflected favourable attitudes, social pressure to engage in the behaviour, the ease of performing the behaviour and a favourable convention location image. Negative scores reflected unfavourable attitudes, social pressure not to perform the behaviour, difficulty in carrying out the behaviour and a negative image of the convention location. This provided easily interpretable cross-products for identifying the beliefs pertaining to intentions to attend a convention.

Methods

Recruitment

The researcher sought the support from organisers of two international conventions in the medical and scientific field that were scheduled to be held in Melbourne from 2012 onwards. This way, the data collection phase could be conducted in 2011 to identify whether people intend on attending the next convention in Melbourne. The international association bidding process is a lengthy one where some associations decide on the next convention destination often four to five years in advance. Subsequently, with the assistance of the Melbourne Convention Bureau (MCB), two conventions were selected based on the type of conference (international association), industry segment (medical/scientific), number of expected attendees, timing of the conference (i.e. in the first half of 2011) and the cooperation of the organising committee. A letter was sent to the Chair of the two Organising Committees, which provided an overview of the study and sought the cooperation from the organisers to collect data from their delegates. Permission was granted from the two organisers (See Appendix G) and again the study received strong support from the MCB.

Research Sites

The two conventions selected to participate in the Belief Measurement phase were:

Convention 3: 10th International Conference on Low Vision 2011 in Kuala Lumpur

The International Conference on Low Vision (ICLV) is held every three years and attracts delegates and professionals associated with the field of vision impairment. Attendees include scientists, researchers, rehabilitation specialists, ophthalmologists, optometrists, physicists, psychologists, therapists, doctors and clinical health care professionals. The conference is governed and owned by the International Society for Low Vision Research and Rehabilitation (ISLVRR). The 10th ICLV was held from 20-24 February at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, Malaysia. While 800 people were expected to be in attendance, there were approximately 550 attendees at Convention 3.

Convention 4: International Society for Magnetic Resonance in Medicine 19th Scientific Meeting & Exhibition 2011 in Montreal

The International Society for Magnetic Resonance in Medicine Scientific Meeting & Exhibition is held annually and is attended by clinicians, physicists, engineers, biochemists, technologists and students. The conference is organised by the International Society for Magnetic Resonance in Medicine (ISMRM) which is a non-profit, scientific association whose purposes are to promote communication, research, development and applications in the field of magnetic resonance in medicine and biology and other related topics. The 19th ISMRM was held from 7-13 May at the Palais des congrès de Montréal, Canada. The organisers expected 6,000 attendees, which was close to the actual attendance figure of 5,658 people.

Note that the sample will be described later in the chapter.

Instrument Design

In a quantitative research approach, two main data collection techniques are used to gather data: questionnaires and experiments (Saunders et al., 2003). Questionnaires are commonly accepted as reliable research tools as they have the ability to collect a large amount of information in a short period of time, they are convenient for respondents and are relatively cost-effective (Walliman, 2011). According to Tharenou et al. (2007), questionnaires are used when it is necessary to obtain the views of a large sample of people to test research hypotheses. The main purpose of using questionnaires in a quantitative study is to generalise the findings from a sample of the population for the researcher to make inferences about the behaviour of the population under investigation (Creswell, 2009). Furthermore, questionnaires can be an effective way of measuring variables that can be replicated and enhanced by quantifying the data collected. For the purpose of this thesis, questionnaires were used as a means of data collection, as guided by the research objectives.

A review of convention research from 1990 to 2003 shows that the most frequently used data collection method was questionnaires (Lee & Back, 2005a). Questionnaires have been the preferred form of measurement amongst convention researchers to attempt to generalise their findings (e.g. studies by Grant & Weaver, 1996; Lee & Back, 2007b; Yoo & Chon, 2008). Moreover, Ngamsom and Beck (2000) suggest that future convention tourism researchers should combine both interviews and questionnaires in their data collection procedures in order to obtain in-depth understanding of convention attendees. This was done in this study.

There are four main types of questionnaires, each designed to explore different aspects or elicit different responses. These include postal, telephone, online and face-to-face (Saunders et al., 2003). While postal questionnaires are relatively straightforward and cost effective, poor response rates may arise due to their length and respondents may not take the time to send it back (Saunders et al., 2003). Telephone interviews can be an effective means of sampling a large population, as they allow questions to be asked under close supervision and can use a controlled sample drawn from the target population, however they can be expensive (Veal, 2006). Online questionnaires are commonly used nowadays as they are very cost effective, they can reach large groups of respondents who may be geographically distributed, they can be interactive, results can be monitored during fieldwork, they can eliminate interviewer bias or error and data can be analysed quickly (Saunders et al., 2003). Distributing self-completed questionnaires face-to face provides control over the sample, they are quick to administer, do not require an interviewer to be present, the respondent can complete the questionnaire at their own pace and at a time convenient to them and they can be a relatively cost-effective way of collecting data (Jennings, 2001). However, some of the disadvantages in using self-completed questionnaires include: the responses may lack depth, respondents may misinterpret questions and researchers cannot check if the answers are truthful (Tharenou et al., 2007).

After careful consideration of the types of questionnaires available, distributing self-completed questionnaires was deemed to be the most appropriate type of data collection method given that the current study's research design involves testing theory using a large sample of respondents who have a limited time while attending a convention (Tharenou et al., 2007). In order to address any drawbacks in using self-complete questionnaires, the questionnaire was designed knowing that it would be distributed to attendees onsite at the selected conventions, which mean that it needed to be clear, concise and easy to complete (see Appendix H for Convention 3 Instrument). Additionally, providing an incentive (e.g. clip-on koala on a Melbourne branded lanyard) which could be redeemed upon the completion of the questionnaire was suitable for this form of data collection and could potentially increase response rates.

The questionnaires distributed at Convention 3 were also available in two additional versions, Braille and large print, to ensure that the attendees who were vision impaired had the opportunity to participate in the study. Vision Australia identified that there would be a small proportion of attendees who would have otherwise been excluded from the study if these versions were not available. The conversion of questionnaires into Braille was kindly done by Vision Australia and the researcher wishes to acknowledge their generous support with this. Importantly, to the researcher's knowledge, supplying questionnaires in Braille is a world first in convention tourism research. It shows that this study not only provides a significant contribution to the literature and practical implications for the convention tourism industry, but it is a ground-breaking approach to data collection not seen in previous similar research.

In order to test the hypotheses, the self-complete questionnaire contained measurements for each of the constructs that were developed based on the findings from the Belief Elicitation phase. Using existing scales, the four constructs were investigated within the context of convention attendance and are discussed below.

Questionnaire Pilot Test

The XVII International Society for the Study of Hypertension in Pregnancy (ISSHP) World Congress was chosen for the pilot test because it met the criteria used for recruitment. It is an international association medical convention that was held in Melbourne, accessible to the researcher at the time of data collection, hence a convenience sample was used. The congress was held at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, 3-6 October 2010.

Similar to the Belief Elicitation phase, the researcher set up a stand onsite to conduct the pilot testing (see Figures 7.1 and 7.2). The questionnaire contained questions about the next congress which was to be held in Geneva in 2012. An announcement was made by the Conference Chair during the morning plenary session to encourage attendees to participate in the study, which was most helpful as it resulted in 81 completed questionnaires.

Figure 7.1: Photo of ISSHP World Congress 2010 in Melbourne data collection stand

Figure 7.2: Photo of ISSHP World Congress 2010 in Melbourne exhibition area during session break

The aim of the pilot test was to use a small number of respondents to test the appropriateness of the questions and their comprehension and to record the time it took to complete the questionnaire (Veal, 2006). Essentially, the pilot test allowed the researcher to improve the larger study's quality and efficiency by evaluating the questions to ascertain whether they form a questionnaire that flows smoothly (Oksengberg, Cannell, & Kalton, 2007). The researcher therefore conducted a debrief with the respondents to determine whether they understood the questions and to identify whether there were any factors missing that were important to their convention attendance decision. Some of the questions asked included: Are any questions unclear or difficult to answer? Is the questionnaire too long? Are there any questions that could be reworded? Could the formatting of the questionnaire be improved? The pilot test revealed that there were no issues with the logistics, sampling strategy, methods or administration technique used. A slight modification was made to the wording of two questions as a result of the pilot test. For example, Q21 was reworded to make it easier for respondents to understand by removing the double negative from: "I expect it won't be too far to travel to attend the next conference…" to "I expect that the travel distance will be a concern in my decision to attend the next conference in Melbourne."

The questionnaire responses were entered into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19.0 and were examined using descriptive statistics to evaluate the usefulness of the data. Data were checked for reliability to see whether there were any items with low correlations (<0.29) that could potentially be removed in the final questionnaire (Pallant, 2005). The reliability checks revealed that all the items were suitable for the next phase. Therefore, it was appropriate to commence full data collection.

Questionnaire Administration

The researcher travelled to Kuala Lumpur for Convention 3 and Montreal for Convention 4 to set up a stand onsite at the convention venue (see Figures 7.3 to 7.6). Registered attendees were informed about the purpose of the study and were shown an Explanatory Statement. Once attendees gave their consent to participate, they were asked to complete a short questionnaire about their future convention attendance, similar to how Jung (2005) and Boo et al. (2008) conducted their data collection. A small incentive was given to attendees when they handed in their completed questionnaire (e.g. clip-on koala). Attendees could be identified by the lanyard they were wearing, which specified the convention they were attending, their name and country of residence. People who were not wearing a convention lanyard and were not attending the sessions were excluded from the study. Those who were accompanying a registered attendee were also excluded, given that the study focuses on attendees only. The questionnaire required three to five minutes to complete. Participants had the opportunity to complete the questionnaire before and after the programmed sessions and during the meal breaks. It is important to note here that researchers need to be cautious of bias, which can occur when some of the members of the population are represented more than others (Walliman, 2011). To ensure a random cross selection of attendees and to avoid bias from self-selecting attendees, the researcher approached registered attendees, when appropriate, who were walking around the exhibition floor as permitted by the conference organisers.

As previously mentioned, there were Braille and large print versions of the questionnaire available for distribution at Convention 3. There were a few attendees who had vision impairment and subsequently picked up copies of these versions to participate in the study. Some people required assistance by either their carer or the researcher to read out the questions or to mark their answers on the hard-copy questionnaire. It was a humbling experience for the researcher to see respondents who were so willing to support the study.

Figure 7.3: Exhibition Stand shared with Vision Australia at Convention 3 10th ICLV 2011 in Kuala Lumpur

Figure 7.4: Exhibition area at Convention 3 10th ICLV 2011 in Kuala Lumpur

Figure 7.5: Exhibition Stand at Convention 4 ISMRS 19th Scientific Meeting & Exhibition 2011 in Montreal

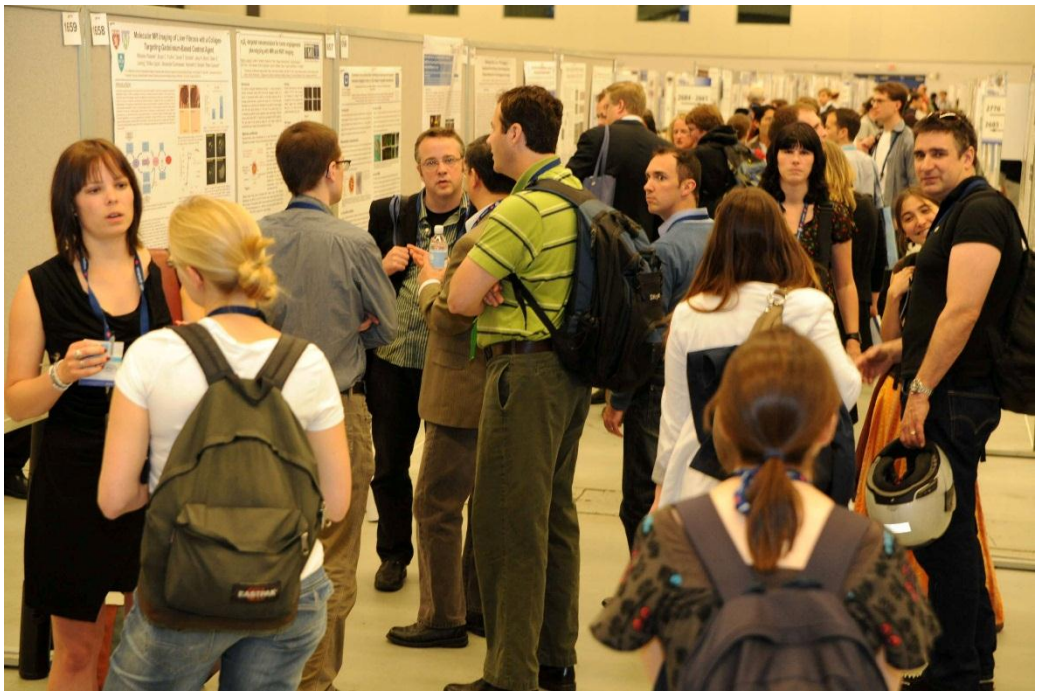


Figure 7.6: Poster sessions at Convention 4 ISMRS 19th Scientific Meeting & Exhibition 2011 in Montreal

Reliability and Validity

When any type of quantitative research study is carried out, the researcher must address the issues of reliability and validity. The following discussion explains how reliability and validity was ensured in Phase Two.

Reliability

Reliability refers to the degree to which the findings would yield the same result if the research were to be repeated or with a different sample of the population (Veal, 2006). Essentially, it is concerned with consistency and replicability of the results. The three most common approaches to reliability testing are the test-retest method, the split-half method and the alternate forms method (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). The test-retest method, involves administering the questionnaire on two occasions to the same respondents and then correlating the data collected (Saunders et al., 2003). The results are deemed to be reliable if strong correlations are evident in the two administrations. The split-half method requires the researcher to divide the survey data into two halves and calculate their correlations (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). When high correlations between the two halves are obtained, the survey measures are considered to be reliable or consistent. Cronbach's alpha coefficient tests can be used to test the internal consistency of the scales, whereby the average correlation between all the items measured provided an indication as to the degree to which each construct was measured consistently (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). The third reliability test is the alternative forms method which involves carrying out two different forms of the same question to the same individuals (Saunders et al., 2003), however this method is generally only applied in studies with long questionnaires. Tests for reliability were carried out in the Belief Measurement phase to ensure consistency of

responses to the questions. For the purpose of this study, the survey instrument was pilot tested and both the split-half method and Cronbach's alpha coefficient tests were used to establish internal consistency reliability.

Validity

Measuring validity refers to assessing the degree to which the data collected by the researcher accurately reflects what it is supposed to measure (Veal, 2006). In other words, validity is concerned with what is actually being measured. The main types of validity quantitative researchers tend to consider include face validity, concurrent validity, predictive validity and construct validity (Veal, 2006). Face validity is established by checking whether the constructs appear to be being measured appropriately, which is often considered to be an intuitive process that is critical when new measures are developed (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Concurrent validity assesses how well measurement outcomes correlate with other measures of the same construct, whereas predictive validity is a test used to determine whether the instrument correlates highly with the predicted outcomes (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Lastly, construct validity is based on the degree to which an instrument captures the construct it is measuring (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Convergent and discriminant validity are both considered subcategories of construct validity. Convergent validity refers to the agreement between the indicators of a scale and discriminant validity refers to the distinctiveness of the factors measured by different sets of indicators (Yang et al., 2011). Construct reliability and validity of construct measurements were assessed with the CFA and overall fit of measurement model was deemed appropriate for testing. Convergent and discriminant validity were also tested during the measurement model evaluation.

Results

Respondent Profile

This section provides a profile of the respondents who participated in Phase 2 of this research. Table 7.10 shows the demographic characteristics of respondents attending Convention 3 and 4. These included gender, age group, marital status, region of residence, association membership and frequency of attendance.

Table 7.10: Belief Measurement Convention 3 & 4 Respondent Profile

	Convention 3		Convention 4		Total	
Demographics	**Count**	**%**	**Count**	**%**	**Count**	**%**
Gender						
Male	123	36.8	763	63.6	886	57.8
Female	211	63.2	437	36.4	648	42.2
Total	334	100.0	1,200	100.0	1,534	100.0
Age						
18-25	50	15.0	85	7.1	135	8.8
26-34	78	23.4	442	36.9	520	33.9
35-44	86	25.7	366	30.5	452	29.5
45-54	73	21.9	214	17.8	287	18.7
55-64	41	12.3	85	7.1	126	8.2
65+	6	1.8	7	0.6	13	0.8
Total	334	100.0	1,199	100.0	1,533	100.0
Marital Status						
single, no children	97	29.6	385	32.2	482	31.7
couple, no children	40	12.2	265	22.2	305	20.0
single with children living at home	16	4.9	34	2.8	50	3.3
couple with children living at home	134	40.9	412	34.5	546	35.9
single and children have left home	9	2.7	7	0.6	16	1.1
couple and children have left home	32	9.8	91	7.6	123	8.1
Total	328	100.0	1,194	100.0	1,522	100.0
Region of Residence						
Australasia	9	2.9	19	1.6	28	1.9
Asia	234	75.5	178	15.0	412	27.6
Europe	43	13.9	377	31.8	420	28.1
North America	17	5.5	576	48.6	593	39.7
South America	1	0.3	13	1.1	14	0.9
Middle East	0	0.0	20	1.7	20	1.3
Africa	6	1.9	2	0.2	8	0.5
Total	310	100.0	1,185	100.0	1,495	100.0
Association Member						
Yes	87	26.3	997	83.1	1084	70.8
No	244	73.7	203	16.9	447	29.2
Total	331	100.0	1,200	100.0	1,531	100.0
Number of times Attended this Convention						
None	77	23.3	122	10.2	199	13.0
Once	128	38.7	207	17.3	335	21.9
Twice	41	12.4	161	13.4	202	13.2
3 times	40	12.1	122	10.2	162	10.6
4 times	21	6.3	88	7.3	109	7.1
5 times or more	24	7.3	498	41.6	522	34.1
Total	331	100.0	1,198	100.0	1,529	100.0

A total of 1,535 people completed a questionnaire at Convention 3 and 4. The Convention 3 respondents comprised 37% men and 63% women, generally aged between 26 and 54 years old. Respondents came from 37 countries. The 14% of respondents from 'other' countries included The Netherlands, Holland, Finland, Denmark, Norway, Slovenia, New Zealand, Switzerland, Ireland, Germany, France, Vietnam, Thailand, Korea, Brunei, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Pakistan, Costa Rica, Nigeria, South Africa, Sudan and Ghana. Most respondents (74%) were not members of the association holding the convention and for 39% it was their second time attending the conference.

Convention 4 respondents comprised 64% men and 36% women, generally aged between 26 and 54. Respondents represented 44 countries, primarily from the USA and Canada. Some of the 'other' countries not mentioned in Table 7.10 include Australia, Japan, Hong Kong, India, Israel, Switzerland and Belgium. Most respondents (83%) were members of ISMRM and were repeat attendees. It is important to note here that it was not possible to gain access to information from the organisers about the convention attendee population in terms of the demographics at the time of data collection and analysis. Therefore, we have no reason to believe that the respondents who completed a questionnaire represented a small proportion of the actual population under investigation or that there was a bias.

Response Rate

In any quantitative study, it is important to measure the response rate. Given that there were approximately 550 attendees at Convention 3 and 5,658 attendees at Convention 4, there were 6,208 potential participants. This study obtained 1,535 completed questionnaires, which equates to an overall response rate of 25%. A review of the convention attendance literature shows that average response rates using questionnaires ranges from 15-30% (Lee & Back, 2005a). The response rate for this study is therefore within the desired average response rate range. The number of completed questionnaires received is also considered to be large (i.e. greater than 200) (Kline, 2005). It was thus possible to perform comparisons according to gender using the analytical techniques chosen. It must be noted however that since the questionnaire was anonymous, it was not possible to compare non-respondents directly.

Data Analysis

The Belief Measurement phase involved numeric analysis using statistical formulae to test our theoretical understanding of the constructs (Walliman, 2011). Quantitative analysis is a process of summarising data to examine the relationships between variables and/or constructs (Walliman, 2011). This type of analysis was chosen based on the TPB framework used and the recommendation that future "quantitative convention research should be more rigorously conducted to test theory, identify broad patterns and make predictions" (Lee & Back, 2005a, p. 17). The data analysis procedures included several steps, from data screening to preliminary data analysis and finally to using structural equation modelling (SEM) for the hypotheses testing. These steps are discussed below.

Data Screening

Once the completed questionnaires were received, the next step was to organise them for data analysis purposes. This involved translating the data into numerical form to calculate the average scores for each question, known as coding (Burnett, 2009). Data were entered into SPSS. Prior to analysis, the researcher performed a data screening process to check the data set for any errors (Pallant, 2005). The data screening process involved checking each of the variables for scores that fall outside the scale range and correcting them accordingly. The researcher also checked whether any respondents needed to be omitted from the analysis due to substantial missing data. There were no data excluded from the analysis.

Preliminary Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis using statistical techniques was performed to test the constructs. The descriptive analysis focused on summarising the data with frequency distributions in terms of means, standard deviations for continuous data and percentages to describe categorical data (Saunders et al., 2003). Descriptive statistics allow the researcher to describe and compare data with simple and meaningful figures from large data sets (Saunders et al., 2003). This was conducted across the entire sample and separately for Convention 3 and 4.

The descriptive analysis showed that the demographic profiles of attendees to Convention 3 and 4 appear to be somewhat different. This led to further analysis to determine whether there were statistically significant differences between the two conventions with respect to the demographic profile of respondents. A chi-square test for independence was used to examine the profiles of the two conventions, given that these variables are categorical. This statistical procedure is used to explore the relationship between two categorical variables to show whether the sample groups are from the same population (Pallant, 2005). Chi-square tests are commonly used in studies to compare groups of respondents before proceeding with more advanced statistical techniques (Lee & Min, 2013; Xie et al., 2008; Yoo, McKercher, & Mena, 2004). Table 7.11 presents the results of the chi-square tests, highlighting the degrees of freedom (df) and p values.

Table 7.11: Chi-square Comparisons of Demographics for Convention 3 & Convention 4

Demographic Variable	Chi-square	df	p value
Gender	36.93	1	0.00*
Age	781.45	5	0.00*
Marital Status	1006.32	5	0.00*
Region of Residence	1779.02	6	0.00*
Association Member	265.04	1	0.00*
Attendance Frequency	445.78	5	0.00*

Note: N = 1,534, *p < .001

Significant differences were found between Convention 3 and 4 for all of the demographic variables. More specifically, there were differences in gender ($\chi 2=36.93$, $p=0.00$), which is to be expected since this finding is consistent with the composition of attendees to both conventions according to gender. Notably, Convention 3 attracted mainly female clinical health care professionals, researchers, students, rehabilitation specialists and optometrists, whereas Convention 4 attracted mainly male academics, doctors, clinicians, physicists, engineers and biochemists. Age differences were detected ($\chi 2=781.45$, $p=0.00$), which may be due to a higher proportion of student attendees aged 18-25 years in Convention 3 (15.0%) compared to Convention 4 (7.1%). Additionally, more respondents aged 26-34 years were present at Convention 4 (36.9%) than Convention 3 (23.4%), which might reflect the fact that early career researchers studying magnetic resonance in medicine do not specialise until later in life compared to researchers in low vision. The marital status of respondents also differed between conventions ($\chi 2=1006.32$, $p=0.00$). The largest disparity was in the 'couple, no children' category, into which 22.2% of Convention 4 fell as opposed to 12.2% in Convention 3. It was expected that there would be differences between the respondents with regard to region of residence ($\chi 2=1779.02$, $p=0.00$) given that Convention 3 was held in Asia and primarily attracted locals from Malaysia (42.9%) and Convention 4 was held in North America, attracting many attendees from the USA and Canada (48.6%). The number of people holding association memberships differed significantly between the two conventions ($\chi 2=265.04$, $p=0.00$). The majority of attendees to Convention 4 were members of the international society which has been holding conventions for nine years longer than Convention 3 (at the time of data collection) and provides the opportunity for members to gain credits for their attendance. Again, significant differences were apparent in terms of the number of repeat attendees to Convention 3 compared to Convention 4 ($\chi 2=445.78$, $p=0.00$). Respondents from Convention 3 were either first-time attendees or had attended once before (61.9%). By contrast, 41.6% of Convention 4 respondents had attended the ISMRM Meeting and Scientific Exhibition five or more times.

Considering that the two respondent profiles are statistically different, the researcher questioned whether Convention 3 and 4 should be analysed separately. Oppermann (1998) assert that convention decision-making factors are quite similar amongst professional association members. Likewise, Ryu and Lee (2013) contend that because professional association attendees engage in a related discipline, homogeneity is evident. Furthermore, it is proposed that academics and industry professionals are similar given that they progress through a professional career with certain qualifications, employment conditions and may undertake changing work roles throughout their working life (Veloutsou & Chreppas, 2015). In a recent study of three international medical academic association conventions by Lee and Min (2013b), all of the data was combined for analysis purposes. More specifically, the 508 respondents were aggregated from: convention A n=149, convention B n=171 and convention C n=188. Therefore, it is argued that the drivers of convention attendance decisions are comparable across different professional associations, like the ISLVRR and ISMRM. For this reason, the responses were combined to perform the overall analysis. This is justified because conceptually they are all association convention attendees. The decision was driven by non-statistical considerations that are contextual to this study.

The data was examined and was deemed adequate for the SEM analysis to be carried out.

Structural Equation Modelling

Originally developed in econometrics, SEM is a tool that has had widespread use by many researchers (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). SEM is a multivariate technique that combines multiple regression and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (Tharenou et al., 2007). Multivariate analysis is helpful in looking at the relationships between two or more variables (Walliman, 2011). SEM is used to test hypothesised relationships between independent and dependent variables as well as mediating and moderating variables simultaneously, which cannot be done using other multivariate techniques (Han et al., 2010). As such, the features that separate SEM from other multivariate techniques include:

- the ability to examine the simultaneous interactions between constructs
- incorporating variables that are not measured directly
- specifying measurement error
- modelling mediating variables
- providing values to assess how well the hypothesised model fits the data set (Golob, 2001; Tharenou et al., 2007).

Additionally, SEM is concerned with examining two types of variables: observed and latent (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). Observed variables are usually continuous and are directly observed. For example, an observed variable might be age, gender or height. Latent variables are not directly observed, but instead are inferred from observable responses. Examples of latent variables include attitude, values, perceptions, choice intentions and behaviour. Using SEM allows researchers to model latent variables while taking into account the unreliability of the indicators. Given that the TPB constructs (attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control) are latent, it is appropriate to use SEM to predict behavioural intentions (Ajzen, 1991). SEM was chosen for the quantitative analysis in this study to answer the hypotheses and considering that future convention tourism researchers need to use more multivariate explanatory techniques. As noted by Lee and Back (2005a), such methods can assist in explaining and predicting relationships amongst multiple variables to advance the convention tourism discipline. This study therefore adopts SEM using Amos version 20.0 to test the hypotheses developed.

Structural Equation Modelling Assumptions

Like other multivariate statistical tests, there are several underlying assumptions researchers need to be aware of when using SEM as a technique to analyse data (Byrne, 2010). Some these assumptions include: adequate sample size, missing data, normality of the observed variables, absence of outliers and linearity between the observed variables (Kline, 2005). Each of these assumptions is discussed and evidence is provided with regard to checks for model assumptions applicable to this study.

Sample Size

It is important to consider the size of the sample with SEM because it is generally understood that SEM is a large sample technique as it relies on tests that are sensitive to sample size (Kline, 2005). If sample sizes are too small, the mathematical basis of analysis could be unsound. There has been some discussion regarding appropriate sample sizes for SEM. In Schumacker and Lomax's (2004) review of the literature, they found that sample sizes of 250-500 were most commonly used and samples fewer than 100 or 150 were below the absolute minimum. Hair et al. (1998) recommends at least 100 cases, preferably 200. Kline (2005) considers sample sizes under 100 to be small and 'untenable' in SEM unless they are used in simple models. Studies with of 100-200 cases are deemed to have a medium sample size and those with 200 or more are thought to be large (Kline, 2005). Studies with sample sizes under 200 generally results in unstable parameter estimates and the power of significance tests could be limited. A larger sample size is therefore desired for SEM and was obtained in this study (n=1,535). More detail is provided in the Belief Measurement Results chapter.

Missing Data

A common issue many researchers face is what to do when there is missing data. In a perfect world, every respondent answers every question in a questionnaire, yet rarely does this occur (Hair et al., 1998). It is important for researchers to address missing data issues because it can reduce the precision of the statistical tests and affect the generalisability of the results (Hair et al., 1998). Moreover, in order for SEM to be performed properly, the analysis must be based on a complete set of data.

During the data screening process, it became apparent that there was a small amount of missing data, which could be problematic when running SEM. For example, one respondent did not indicate their gender, seven respondents did not answer whether they intend on attending the next conference and 40 respondents did not provide a country of residence. It was therefore decided that in order to produce a model that would fit the data well, a missing data analysis needed to be performed. This procedure was done to help ascertain whether the missing values occurred randomly or systematically (Pallant, 2005). The four types of missing data analysis methods were reviewed: available case methods, single imputation methods, model-based imputation methods and special forms of multivariate estimation (Kline, 2005). Given that model-based imputation methods are considered to be more sophisticated than the former two methods and are easy to perform, an expectation-maximization (EM) was run in SPSS to impute missing data based on responses to items answered by the same person elsewhere. The imputation is essentially a complex process that is based on the correlations within the data (Kline, 2005).

Multivariate Normal Distribution

An assessment of the normality of data is a prerequisite for many statistical procedures, as normal data is an underlying assumption in parametric testing (Tharenou et al., 2007). SEM is no different. It assumes that the variables have multivariate normal distribution. According to Tharenou, et al. (2007) multivariate normality assumes that all of the combinations of variables (dependent and independent) are normally distributed. If multivariate normality does not exist, large differences in tests relating to the model fit (e.g. chi-square test) could occur, which ultimately undermines a model's utility (Tharenou et al., 2007). In general, violation of the normality assumption can inflate the chi-square figure or under certain circumstances it may deflate it (Tharenou et al., 2007).

Skewness and kurtosis tests were conducted to examine deviation of data distribution from normality, as commonly used by researchers (Pallant, 2005). The skewness value indicates the degree of departure from symmetry of a distribution and the kurtosis value provides an indication of the degree of 'peakedness' of a distribution (Pallant, 2005). One way of determining whether the data is normally distributed is to identify whether the skewness and kurtosis values lie within twice the standard deviations of the mean (Field, 2005). For this study, the dataset displayed a maximum skewness of -0.81 and a maximum kurtosis 9.50 for the observed variables (see Table 7.12). While the skewness value was in the range of the recommended values, the kurtosis value was higher than five (Tharenou et al., 2007). This result suggests that there was some evidence of violation of normality in the observed variables, therefore some of the cases were reviewed to determine whether they needed to be removed for the purpose of analysis.

Table 7.12: Skewness and Kurtosis Distribution

Skewness	Kurtosis
-2.56	.19
-2.37	.42
-2.13	.43
-2.12	.48
-1.85	.75
-1.77	.90
-1.75	.90
-1.71	.93
-1.70	.96
-1.61	.97
-1.51	1.23
-1.50	1.31
-1.41	1.32
-1.34	1.41
-1.33	1.45
-1.32	1.50
-1.29	1.60
-1.29	1.62
-1.27	2.38
-1.24	2.48

-1.23	2.81
-1.22	2.84
-1.19	2.88
-1.16	3.38
-1.12	3.74
-1.10	3.89
-1.09	4.14
-1.07	6.01
-.84	7.95
-.81	9.50

Outliers

Another critically important assumption associated with SEM is the requirement that the data is checked for outliers (Hair et al., 1998). An outlier is something that lies outside or is substantially different from the other values in a set of data (Hair et al., 1998). When performing data checks, a researcher needs to check for outliers that could exert a great deal of influence on the results of a statistical test and ultimately distort the analysis. If outliers are identified, they need to be removed to ensure that they do not affect the model significance. In order to avoid biased results, the data set should be examined for both univariate (outliers on one variable alone) and multivariate (outliers on a combination of variables) (Pallant, 2005). Univariate outliers can be assessed using box plots, whereby extreme values are located far away from the box (Pallant, 2005). Multivariate outliers can be detected using Mahalanobis distance, which measures the distance that each case has from the means of the predictor variables in the sample (Pallant, 2005). These procedures were performed, resulting in no substantial outliers being found.

Linearity

By default SEM assumes that the relationships between variables are linear (Tharenou et al., 2007). By definition, linearity assumes that there is proportional relationship (i.e. straight line) between two variables (Tharenou et al., 2007). Violation of the linearity assumption means that estimates of model fit and standard error are biased. Linear relationships can be explored by creating bivariate scatterplots (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The points should approximately fit. The data for this study showed that the scatterplots were generally lying within the diagonal line, suggesting that the linearity assumption is not violated.

Structural Equation Modelling and TPB

SEM has been used in several TPB studies to test the hypothesised relationships between constructs and on some occasions to explain gender differences (e.g. Lee & Back, 2007b; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2010; Sparks, 2007; Tsai & Coleman, 2005; Venkatesh et al., 2000). It must be noted, however, that other statistical tests could be used to determine whether any significant differences between males and female attendees exist with regard to their convention attendance intentions. Some examples include t-tests or ANOVAs, which have been used in previous applications of the TPB (e.g. Quintal et al., 2010; Sparks & Pan, 2009). While

significance testing using these types of tests helps to highlight the nature of group differences, they do not provide an insight into the relative strength of the observed relationships between the constructs unlike SEM (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004).

From the preliminary analysis discussed, the researcher investigated whether the assumptions for SEM were met in this study. It was concluded that indeed SEM could be applied, given that the study is founded on TPB and as such there is competence in using the SEM technique. Further, when using advanced statistical procedures to analyse data, it is helpful for the researcher to have a basic understanding of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and multiple regression (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). CFA in particular plays an important role in the model specification process in SEM to provide theoretical support for the model (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). These two types of analysis will be briefly discussed.

Structural Equation Modelling Steps

In a SEM study, a researcher typically undertakes five sequential steps, as illustrated in Figure 7.7. Each of these steps are discussed.

STEP 1: MODEL SPECIFICATION

Using relevant theory and research to develop the theoretical model either as a set of structural equations or as a path diagram

STEP 2: MODEL IDENTIFICATION

Identify whether the model can in theory and in practice be estimated with observed data

STEP 3: MODEL ESTIMATION

Obtaining estimates of the model's parameters. This can be done using a specialised SEM program such as Amos

STEP 4: MODEL TESTING

Determining how well data collected fits the specified model

STEP 5: MODEL MODIFICATION

Making changes to the initial model to improve the data fit

Figure 7.7: Steps of Structural Equation Modelling (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004)

Model Specification

First the researcher proposes a statistical model based on theory and or empirical research. SEM is best suited to confirmatory rather than exploratory modelling, thus it is an appropriate statistical technique to use to test rather than to develop theory (Kline, 2005). It is important to note that SEM does not assume relationships between variables. The researcher not only needs to be able to specify the causal relationships between two variables in their model using analytical methods, but they need to stipulate why variables are related through theoretical justifications (Hair et al., 1998). The model specification process requires the researcher to use theoretical insight to specify the relationships between variables from a thorough review of relevant theory and previous analyses (Bowen & Guo, 2012). The constructs in this study: attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, convention location and behavioural intentions are all unobserved concepts that are dependent on manifest indicators. In this step, the researcher constructs a path diagram, such as the TPB model, to depict the hypothesised causal relationships between the constructs (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010).

Model Identification

Next is the model identification step. Once the researcher has collected the data, they need to assess whether the SEM assumptions have been met and then test the extent to which the hypothesised model fits the observed data (Bowen & Guo, 2012). One of the ways this can be done is using factor analysis, which is a statistical procedure used to investigate the relationships between observed and latent variables (Byrne, 2001). Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) are the two basic types of factor analyses. The former seeks to determine how observed variables are linked to their underlying constructs and the latter tests the strength of the hypothesised relationships between the observed variables and the underlying constructs that are grounded in theory and empirical research (Byrne, 2001). The purpose of CFA is to test statistically whether the measurement scales are both valid and reliable and to identify whether the sample data is suitable for modelling (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). This study used CFA given that there are several examples of TPB studies that have used CFA to assess the adequacy of their model fit using SEM (e.g. Barber et al., 2010; Han et al., 2009; Lee & Back, 2008; Leroy et al., 2009; Sparks, 2007; Yang et al., 2011).

When CFA is performed, it is able to specify the correlational relationships between factors in a model, yet when CFA is applied using SEM the correlations as well as the causal associations between the factors are specified (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). It is important to note that researchers need to decide which variables to include in the structural model based on the CFA, given that if they do not select the right variables, based on the factor loadings, the validity of their model may be questioned (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). To assess the adequacy of the measurement model in this study, a CFA was performed and is presented in Chapter 8.

Goodness of Fit

Evaluating the overall model fit is a critical step in SEM to ensure that the hypothesised model provides an indication that it accounts for the actual relationships in the observed data (Bowen & Guo, 2012). It is important to note that a good fit does not mean that the model is "correct" or fully supported, rather it means that it is plausible, and therefore cannot be rejected (Hair et al., 1998).

There is no single way to assess the goodness of fit, instead researchers use a number of indices to provide insight into how the overall model fits the observed data (Byrne, 2001). Researchers commonly assess the normed fit index (NFI), comparative fit index (CFI), adjust goodness of fit index (AGFI) and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). It is generally accepted that for the CFI, NFI and AGFI values, a value of 0.90 or greater signifies a good fit model (Byrne, 2001). The RMSEA value should be less than 0.05, values higher than 0.08 represent reasonable errors of approximation in the population (Byrne, 2001). When comparing these thresholds with this study's measurement model the values shown in Table 7.13 indicates that overall, the measurement model yielded a good fit to the data (χ^2=586.011, df=80, χ2/df=7.33, p<0.001, NFI=0.95, CFI=0.96, AGFI=0.93, RMSEA=0.06).

Table 7.13: Fit Indices for the Measurement Model

Fit Indices	Recommended Value	Measurement Model
NFI	>0.90	0.95
CFI	>0.90	0.96
AGFI	>0.90	0.93
RMSEA	<0.05 – 0.08	0.06

Although there are rules of thumb for acceptance of model fit, it could be argued that these indicators are arbitrary. A more salient criterion may be to simply compare the fit of a model to the fit of other models pertaining to the same phenomenon. For example, the following were achieved in similar study by Lee and Back (2007b) CFI=0.98, AGFI=0.88 and RMSEA=0.06. Notably, these indices are not dissimilar to those in the present study.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

After testing the goodness of fit, the next step was to subject the data to a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). This was done to ensure validity and reliability of the scales, to demonstrate their hypothesised factor structure and to identify the extent to which the observed variables are lined to the latent constructs (Byrne, 2001). Table 7.14 presents the standardised factor loadings for each of the direct measures according to the latent constructs. The standardised factor loadings range from -1.00 to +1.00 and are considered to demonstrate convergent validity if they are greater than 0.40 (Han et al., 2010; Tharenou et al., 2007).

Table 7.14: Standardised Factor Loadings for the Direct Measures

Constructs	Standardised Factor Loadings
Attitude (A)	
Q13a - for me attending would be enjoyable	0.85
Q13b - for me attending would be interesting	0.84
Q13d - for me attending would be career helpful	0.44
Subjective Norm (SN)	
Q16 - most people who are important to me think I should attend	0.82
Q17 - most people whose opinions I value would approve of me attending	0.82
Q18 - most people in a similar role to me at work would attend	0.48
Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)	
Q27 - attending the next conference is my decision	0.71
Q28 - I am confident that if I want to, I could attend	0.90
Q29 - if I really wanted to, I could attend	0.86
Convention Location (CL)	
Q36 - for me the next conference destination is an ideal meeting place	0.77
Q37 - I am satisfied with Melbourne being the next conference destination	0.94
Q38 - overall, I have a favourable image of the next conference destination	0.77
Intention (IN)	
Q39 - I intend to attend the next conference in Melbourne	0.91
Q40 - I plan to attend the next conference in Melbourne	0.92
Q41 - I will make an effort to attend the next conference in Melbourne	0.75

All factor loadings are significant at p=0.01.

As shown in Table 7.14, the standardised factor loadings for all of the constructs were within a satisfactory range from 0.44 to 0.94. The attitude construct factor loadings were reliable with “for me attending the next conference in Melbourne would be enjoyable” (0.85) and “for me attending the next conference in Melbourne would be interesting” (0.84) receiving relatively high loadings. However, the item “for me attending the next conference in Melbourne would be career helpful” was substantially lower (0.44).

The standardised factor loadings for the subjective norm construct were also acceptable. Again, the two items "most people who are important to me think I should attend the next conference in Melbourne" (0.82) and "most people whose opinions I value would approve of me attending the next conference" (0.82) received strong factor loadings, yet "most people in a similar role to me at work would attend the next conference in Melbourne" meets the minimum criteria but was comparably lower (0.48).

All of the standardised factor loadings for the PBC construct were satisfactory, with "I am confident that if I want to, I could attend" receiving the highest loading (0.90), followed by "if I really wanted to, I could attend" (0.86) and "attending the next conference is my decision" (0.77). Similarly, there was a clear representation of the underlying intention construct with high factor loadings for "I plan to attend the next conference in Melbourne" (0.92), "I intend to attend the next conference in Melbourne" (0.91) and "I will make an effort to attend the next conference in Melbourne" (0.75).

Since the analysis of the standardised factor loadings were within the desired range and were significant at p=0.01, it can be said that convergent validity was achieved. This means that the specified direct measures sufficiently represented the constructs.

Model Estimation

The model estimation step then follows using software such as Amos or LISREL. This is where the researcher obtains estimates of the model's parameters (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). Once the researcher confirms that their measurement model has been validated through CFA, they proceed with model estimation whereby they examine the paths between latent variables, which is essentially a form of multiple regression (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). SEM allows researchers to test how well the latent variables are able to predict an outcome or a behaviour and to identify which variable is the best predictor of a behaviour (Pallant, 2005). In the case of a TPB study, intention is the dependent variable and the direct measures of attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control are the independent or predictor variables (Francis et al., 2004). The multiple regression equations produced by SEM provides the researcher with an indication of the relative contribution of each independent variable on the dependent variable or the strength of the structural relationships (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). It also shows how much of the dependent variable can be explained by the independent variables in terms of statistical significance (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). Amos produces a tabular output that displays the standardised and standardised regression coefficients, the standard error estimates of the standardised regression coefficients and tests of statistical significance (Bowen & Guo, 2012).

The next step involved identifying scale reliability and assessing the data quality. According to Ajzen (1991), it is important to ensure that each of the direct measures of the behaviour under investigation has a high internal consistency. It was therefore necessary to measure the internal consistency of each construct. One of the most widely adopted measures to examine internal consistency is Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Pallant, 2005). Cronbach's alpha coefficient was performed to test the reliability of the scales used in this study. The general rule of thumb is that measures with an alpha of 0.90 or greater are highly reliable and alphas of 0.70 have a less than fair reliability (Tharenou et al., 2007). Table 7.15 presents means, standard deviations and reliability coefficients for the latent constructs. Note that the scoring of these constructs was outlined earlier in the chapter in the computing belief measures section.

Table 7.15: Internal Consistency Reliability of the Direct Measures

Direct Measure Variables	No. of items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cronbach's α	No. of Cases
Attitude (A)	4	6.38	0.73	0.68	1479
Subjective Norm (SN)	3	5.90	0.98	0.71	1488
Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)	3	5.76	1.32	0.85	1507
Convention Location (CL)	3	5.77	1.25	0.85	1519
Intention (IN)	3	5.91	1.24	0.89	1518

Note. Mean belief strength scored from +1 (*negative*) to +7 (*positive*)

The mean values for the five constructs ranged from 5.90 to 6.38 (out of 7). The attitude construct was rated the highest (6.38), and the high score shows that the attendees had a favourable overall attitude toward future convention attendance. The intention and subjective norm constructs produced mean values of 5.91 and 5.90. Lastly, the convention location and PBC constructs received mean values of 5.77 and 5.76.

The reliability coefficients reported in Table 7.16 ranged from 0.89 to 0.68. Four out of the five measures were greater than the acceptable value of 0.70 (Hair et al., 1998). However, attitude was slightly below the suggested level (0.68). Since some scholars argue that a minimum alpha of 0.60 in various cultural and social contexts may be considered acceptable, it can be assumed that this model is acceptably reliable (Hair et al., 1998; Tharenou et al., 2007). Given that there were strong positive correlations amongst the direct measures, there is evidence to suggest that convergent validity was established. It can therefore be said that the instrument measured the latent constructs well in this study.

Table 7.16: Combined Internal Consistency Reliability of the Indirect Measures

Indirect Measure Variables	No. of items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cronbach's α	No. of Cases
Attitude (A)	4	13.72	5.37	0.59	1404
Subjective Norm (SN)	3	10.77	7.37	0.73	1217
Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)	3	7.27	5.85	0.48	1448
Convention Location (CL)	3	10.39	6.50	0.52	1492

Note. Cross-product values range from -21 to +21

The mean cross-products of the indirect measures are summarised in Table 7.16. All of the mean values were positive and ranged from 13.72 to 7.27. Again, attitude towards attending a future convention was rated the highest (13.72) and PBC the lowest (7.27). Three of the four constructs yielded reliability scores of 0.59 or lower, indicating that the reliability of these measures was less than fair. However, the reliability score for subjective norm was acceptable at 0.73.

In order to assess the strength of the association between the constructs, a correlation analysis was performed. This provided an opportunity to examine the convergent and discriminant validity of the constructs. Table 7.17 displays the results of the correlation analysis.

Table 7.17: Correlation Matrix

Number	Direct Measure Variables	1	2	3	4
1	Attitude (A)				
2	Subjective Norm (SN)	0.30*			
3	Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)	0.15*	0.33*		
4	Convention Location (CL)	0.28*	0.53*	0.40*	
5	Intention (IN)	0.10	0.30*	0.47*	0.35*

Note: N = 1,519, *p < .001

According to Table 7.17, the correlations ranged from 0.10 to 0.53, which indicates that no substantial effects of multicollinearity occurred. Multicollinearity is evident when two or more independent variables appear to be measuring the same thing (i.e. providing correlations >0.70) (Tharenou et al., 2007). The direct measures of subjective norm, PBC, and convention location were all positively correlated. Attitude, however, provided the weakest correlation with intention (0.10), whereas there was a strong positive correlation between PBC and intention (0.53). The results showed that the five factors had only one construct loading above 0.50, indicating that the discriminant validity was satisfied. These results show that the proposed measurement model was appropriate for further analysis.

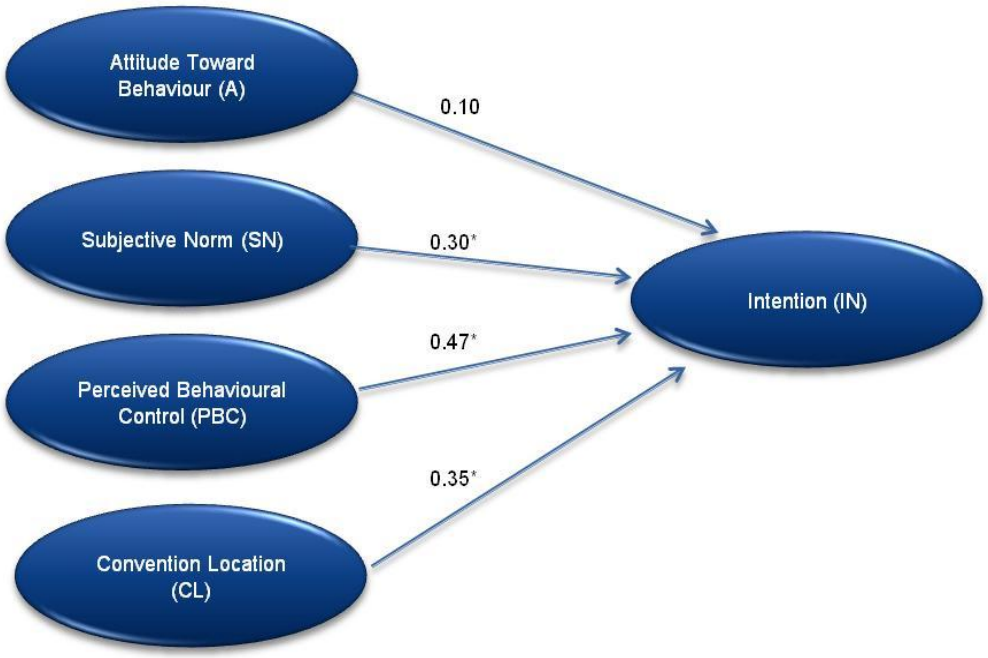
Model Testing

Step four involves assessing the goodness-of-fit indices on the overall model by looking at the chi-square significance test and other indicators to accept or reject the model based on and/or adequately fitting the acceptable model criteria (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). When the researcher deems that the model is acceptable, they can proceed with interpreting the findings to identify whether the relationships between the constructs in their model correspond to existing theory (Bowen & Guo, 2012). The methods used in the model testing step will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.

Overall Model

The purpose of the Belief Measurement phase was to assess the strength of the beliefs that attending a convention would produce certain outcomes for attendees, the strength of the normative influences on the decision to attend, the strength of the control beliefs that facilitate or interfere with convention attendance and the strength of the beliefs about the convention location. The data gathered during this phase helped predict future convention attendance intentions and were used to test the hypotheses.

A structural analysis on the overall model was necessary to examine the relationships between the hypothesised constructs. Figure 7.8 depicts the structural relationships between attitude toward convention attendance, subjective norm, PBC and the convention location with intention. The standardised coefficients link the predictor variables to the dependent variable and measure the strength of association. Hypotheses 1, 3, 5 and 7 were tested in this model.



* $p<0.05$ is significant

Figure 7.8: Convention Attendance Measurement Model

The model presented in Figure 7.8 shows that subjective norm, PBC and convention location are significant predictors of convention attendance intention. The relationships between the following constructs were significant: subjective norm and intention (β=0.30), PBC and intention (β=0.47), in addition to convention location and intention (β=0.35). The path between PBC and intention was relatively stronger than the paths between subjective norm and convention location. These findings indicate that hypotheses 3, 5 and 7 were supported. However, the path between attitude and intention was not significant (β=0.10). This suggests that attitude is a weak predictor of convention attendance intentions and is contrary to hypothesis 1. A summary of the hypothesis testing on the overall model is shown in Table 7.18.

Table 7.18: Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results on Overall Model

Hypothesis		Testing result
H1	Attitude → Intention	Not supported
H3	Subjective Norm → Intention	Supported
H5	Perceived Behavioural Control → Intention	Supported
H7	Convention Location → Intention	Supported

Model Comparison by Gender

The next step involved splitting the data into two groups to test the moderating role of gender on the convention attendance decision. The purpose of this step was to test the validity of the TPB with regard to gender for the hypotheses formulated, similar to what Ryu and Han (2010) did when they sought to predict tourists' intentions to try local cuisine by gender. A multi-group approach was adopted, which allowed the researcher to compare the path coefficients for both samples (Tharenou et al., 2007). As previously discussed in the respondent profile section, the composition of men and women in the sample was 886 and 648 respectively, which is a sufficient sample size for comparative purposes using SEM (Hair et al., 1998).

Measurement Invariance

Often researchers set out to determine if their overall model is applicable across groups, as was the case in this study. This involves testing for measurement invariance to identify whether the same latent construct means the same thing for men and women (Williams, Vandenberg, & Edwards, 2009). This step was conducted as guided by Schumacker and Lomax (2004), who recommend that measurement invariance should be tested prior to testing parameter estimates between groups. Although the fit indices discussed in Table 7.13 yielded a good fit to the data, it does not automatically imply that the measurement model is invariant across different groups e.g. for male and female respondents. In order to test whether there is a moderating effect of gender on the convention attendance decision, measurement invariance tests were performed.

There are six tests that can be conducted to determine whether the path coefficients are equal across two groups: configural invariance, metric invariance, intercept invariance, error-uniqueness estimates, factor variance estimates and factor covariances. However, establishing configural and metric variance are considered to be the most crucial for researchers using SEM (Williams et al., 2009). It was therefore necessary to test the model on configural and metric invariance. This procedure can be done using Amos to indicate whether the patterns of factor loadings across gender groups are invariant (Ryu & Han, 2010). It requires specifying the model in the two groups, constraining the parameters to be equal and examining the fit of the constrained model. If the chi-square difference statistic does not reveal a significant difference between the original and the constrained-equal models, then the researcher concludes that the model has measurement invariance across groups (that is, the model applies across groups) (Williams et al., 2009). Therefore, no further invariance tests are necessary. Essentially, if the measures are not equivalent, the validity of the inferences could be questionable when the overall model and structural relationships are investigated (Williams et al., 2009). Table 7.19 shows the unconstrained (overall) model for all groups combined and the gender model where certain parameters are constrained to be equal between the groups.

Table 7.19: Measurement and Structural Invariance

Model	χ2	df	χ2/df	RMSEA	NFI	CFI
Unconstrained (overall) model	586.011	80	7.325	0.064	0.953	0.959
Structural invariance for gender groups	711.485	160	4.447	0.047	0.944	0.956

Table 7.19 shows that the constrained model fits well ($\chi2=711.485$, df=160, $\chi2/df=4.447$, $p < 0.001$, NFI=0.944, CFI=0.956, AGFI=0.913, RMSEA=0.047) and there is a statistical difference between the chi-square statistic. As a guide, the χ2/df ratio of the model is commonly under five, although under three is a better result (Chen & Tsai, 2007). We can therefore assume configural and metric invariance, which indicates that two samples of men and women can be compared and attach the same 'meanings' to the scales because the factor loadings are equivalent across groups. This certainly adds to our knowledge about the overall model as the factor structure holds up across gender. Once measurement invariance was established, comparisons of the structural models for the gender groups could be performed.

Model Modification

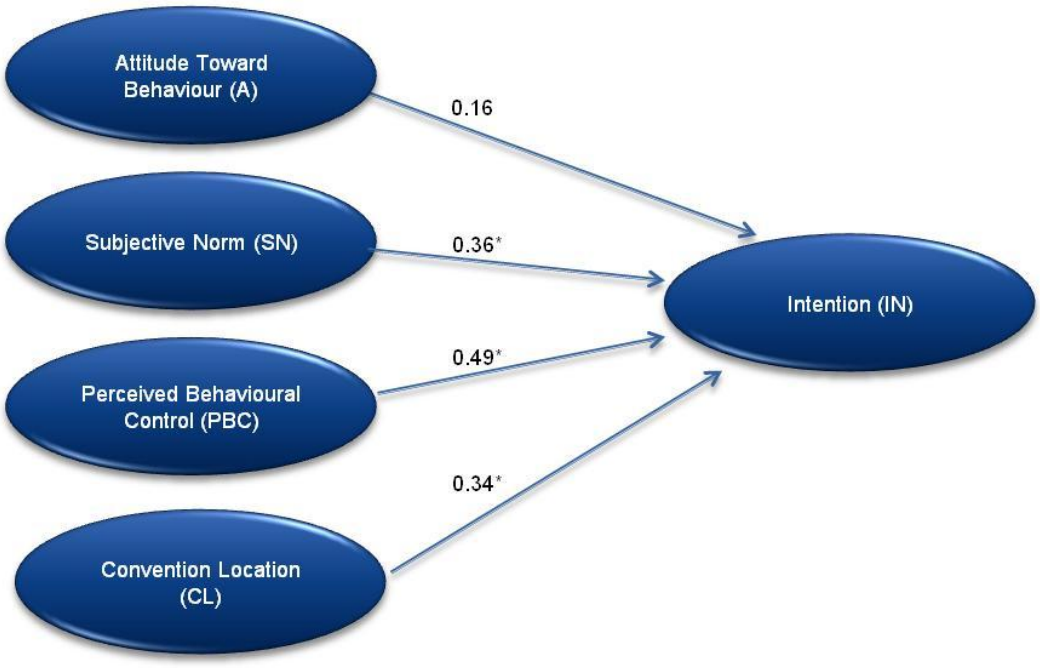
The final step that most researchers do is to look for ways to improve the model fit (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). In such cases, researchers may make changes to the initial model by adding or removing variables if it makes theoretical sense to do so (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). Each of these steps were followed sequentially in this study in order to produce the measurement models.

Another feature of SEM is that it allows researchers to compare regression coefficients, means and variances simultaneously between groups (Byrne, 2010). SEM is therefore beneficial when a researcher seeks to perform a multiple group analysis to determine whether or not components of the measurement model are invariant (equivalent) across certain groups (Byrne, 2001). This step, not shown earlier in Figure 7.7, involves testing for invariance across more than one sample to find out whether or not the path coefficients differ, for example for males and females (Byrne, 2001). This step was undertaken in this study to identify the moderating role of gender on the convention attendance decision to test the validity of the TPB from a gender perspective according to the hypotheses formulated.

This section of the chapter discusses the model being separated into two groups, one for males and one for females. Comparisons are made between the two models to identify the similarities and differences between convention attendance intentions according to gender. Finally, the indirect measures are examined to ascertain whether statistically significant differences exist between the two groups.

Model Comparisons

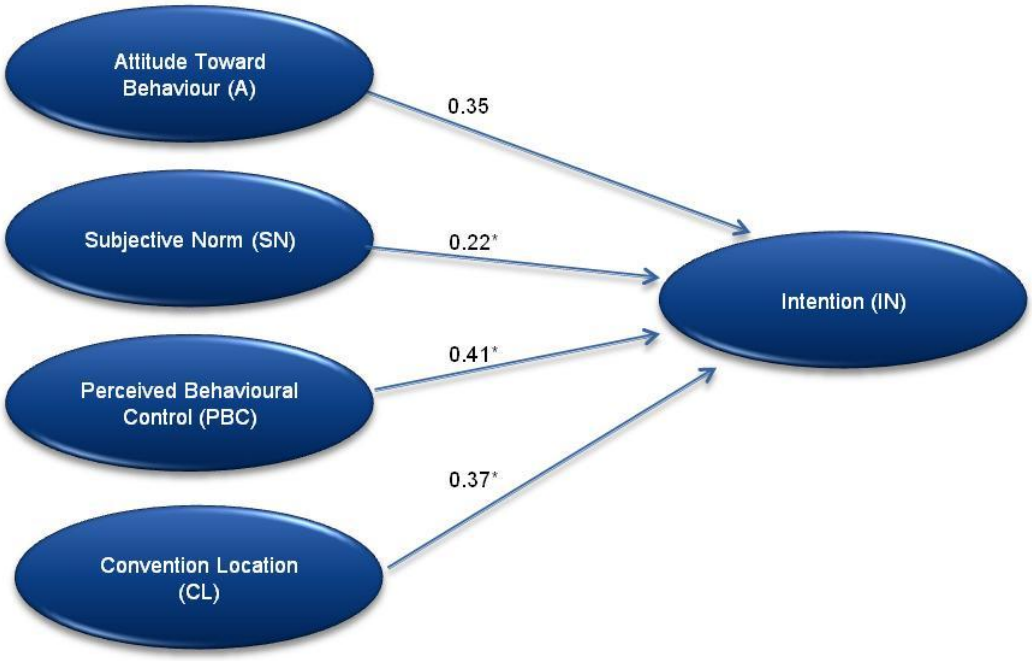
The relationships between the four constructs and intention were then examined by gender. Figure 8.2 and 8.3 present the standardised path coefficients for males and females.



* $p<0.05$ is significant

Figure 7.9: Male Convention Attendance Measurement Model

Consistent with the overall model, the findings from Figure 7.9 show that there were significant positive relationships between subjective norm (β=0.36), PBC (β=0.49), and convention location (β=0.34), with intentions, yet attitudes towards convention attendance (β=0.16) was not significantly associated with intentions. This implies that hypothesis 1 was not supported. The results also reveal that the direct effect of PBC on convention attendance intention was greater than subjective norm and convention location.



* p<0.05 is significant

Figure 7.10: Female Convention Attendance Measurement Model

In line with Figure 7.10, there were significant positive relationships between subjective norm (β=0.22), PBC (β=0.41) and convention location (β=0.37) with intention, as shown in Figure 7.9. Similarly, attitude was not significantly associated with intention (β=0.35) for women. Perceived behavioural control emerged as the strongest predictor of convention attendance intention, followed by convention location, attitude and lastly subjective norm.

Following the confirmation of configural and metric invariance, the invariance of structural coefficients across the gender groups was examined. The unstandardised path coefficients were used for this purpose to compare the relationships between male and female convention attendee behavioural intentions, as presented in Table 7.20. Note that unstandardised coefficients are examined whenever groups are compared for various reasons rather than standardised coefficients which are referred to at the overall model measurement level (Hair et al., 1998).

Table 7.20: Unstandardised Coefficients and P Values for Overall Model by Gender

		Men		Women		
Hypothesis	**Paths**	**Path coefficients**	**p value**	**Path coefficients**	**p value**	**Testing result**
H2	Attitude → Intention (stronger for Men)	0.16	0.797	0.35	0.001	Not supported
H4	Subjective Norm → Intention (stronger for Women)	0.36	0.000*	0.22	0.000*	Not supported
H6	Perceived Behavioural Control → Intention (stronger for Women)	0.49	0.000*	0.41	0.000*	Not supported

*p < .001

The results illustrated in Table 7.20 show that hypotheses 2, 4 and 6 were not supported. Contrary to H3, attitude has a stronger relationship with intentions for women than men (β=0.35 vs. β=0.16).

As shown in Table 7.21, further analysis of the direct measures showed that women rate attending the next convention higher than men with regards to enjoyment, interesting content, relevancy and as a means to help their career.

Table 7.21: Attitude Towards Attendance Direct Measures by Gender

	Men	Women
Direct Measures	**Mean**	**Mean**
enjoyable	6.57	6.72
interesting	6.62	6.76
job relevant	6.01	6.31
career helpful	5.85	6.33

Further Tests for Significant Differences between Comparative Models

If a model is considered to have an acceptable fit, the focus then moves to evaluating specific elements of fit. One of the ways used to further evaluate the fit is to examine the critical ratio of each parameter estimate divided by its standard error, represented as a z statistic (Byrne, 2010). After adding paths among the constructs in the overall measurement model, the entire structural model is run to generate the baseline model for structural invariance. Essentially, it is a z-test for the difference between coefficients from Model 1 to Model 2. These values need to be greater than or equal to 1.96, which indicates that the coefficients between groups are significantly different at $p<0.05$ (Byrne, 2001). Values of 2.54 or greater are also significant at $p<0.01$ (Hoyle, 1995).

An alternative is to simply run two separate one-sample models, one for males and one for females, and identify the difference in standardised path coefficients. Other studies have looked at chi-square difference test, as was done by Ryu and Han (2010), which essentially yields the same result. However, using the critical ratios of differences in multi-group analysis provides a rigorous statistical test that considers individual parameters of a model, which is appropriate for gender comparisons (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). Therefore, in order to test for significant differences between the coefficients, a critical ratio test was performed in Amos to examine the differences between gender. While this approach is rarely used in TPB literature, there are some examples of critical ratio testing in gender and tourism studies to test significant differences (e.g. Kristjansson, Sigfusdottir, Allegrante, & James, 2011).

The critical ratio analysis reveals that a value of -2.95 was obtained for the attitude and intention path, which exceeds 1.96 and 2.54. Therefore, the path values of 0.16 for men and 0.35 for women are statistically different from one another ($p<0.01$). The values of -1.88 for subjective norm and intention, -1.39 for PBC and intention and 0.48 for convention location and intention do not exceed 1.96. This indicates that no other statistically significant differences exist between men and women with regard to their convention attendance intentions.

A key result to take notice of here is that while overall attitude was not significant, from a gender perspective it had the most difference. This is an important finding because it differs from the limited research on this construct in the context of convention attendance, which has shown a positive association between perceived behavioural control and intentions.

Indirect Measures

Additional analysis was conducted to compare the indirect measures, given that the SEM component of the Belief Measurement phase only looked at the direct measures to see which construct is a stronger predictor of convention attendance intentions. The indirect measurement analysis involved comparing the mean scores of the indirect belief cross-products of men and women to ascertain whether statistically significant differences exist between the two groups (refer to Table 7.22). An independent samples t-test was performed due to its statistical robustness for identifying such differences (Field, 2005). The threshold level for statistical significance was set at the general level of $p<0.05$.

To further demonstrate whether the differences between genders are substantive, the effect size statistical technique was used, also known as 'strength of association' (Field, 2005). The effect size tests whether the association between two variables is statistically significant to indicate the magnitude of the difference between means (Pallant, 2005). In order to obtain the effect size statistic, eta-squared (ŋ2) was calculated in the present study, which is one of the most commonly reported measures of effect size for t-tests used in quantitative research (Tharenou et al., 2007). Since SPSS does not provide a procedure to illustrate eta-squared, the researcher calculated the value using the following formula:

$$\eta^2 = \frac{t^2}{t^2 + df}$$

The guidelines are 0.01=small effect, 0.03=moderate effect and 0.05=large effect (Field, 2005).

Table 7.22: Gender Differences in Indirect Behavioural, Normative, Control and Convention Location Beliefs

	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women		
Behavioural Beliefs	**Mean belief strength**	**Mean belief strength**	**Mean evaluation**	**Mean evaluation**	**Mean cross-product**	**Mean cross-product**	**Cross product difference**	**ŋ2**
update my knowledge	6.28	6.34	6.65	6.73	16.96	17.78	0.82*	0.08
network with colleagues	6.27	6.33	6.37	6.54	15.53	16.63	1.10*	0.08
present a paper(s)	5.78	5.56	5.97	5.96	13.11	12.63	0.48	0.03
learn about the host country's approach to my field	5.16	5.67	4.95	5.66	7.03	10.69	3.66*	0.02
Normative Beliefs								
supervisor/employer	5.81	5.69	5.56	5.68	11.07	10.62	0.45	0.03
colleagues	5.83	5.87	5.26	5.34	10.69	11.02	0.33	0.02
family	5.62	5.88	5.42	5.45	9.92	11.42	1.50*	0.08
Control Beliefs								
money/funding	5.49	5.34	6.27	6.40	13.04	13.47	0.43	0.03
travel distance	4.90	5.10	3.64	3.84	-2.36	-1.51	0.85	0.04
time	5.94	5.89	5.92	6.10	12.12	13.04	0.92*	0.05
family will accompany me	4.04	4.00	4.73	4.88	5.24	6.24	1.00*	0.05
Convention Location Beliefs								
safety/security	5.51	6.16	6.26	6.32	12.63	14.36	1.73*	0.12
accessibility	5.62	6.08	4.65	4.93	3.98	5.94	1.96*	0.08
tourist appeal	5.30	5.67	6.17	6.37	12.05	13.99	1.94*	0.14

Note. Mean belief strength scored from +1 (*unlikely*) to +7 (*likely*).Belief-based ranges from -126 to +126. Significance levels refer to the differences in the cross-products based on an independent samples *t*-test. ŋ2 = eta-squared
* $p<.05$ means significantly different

Behavioural Beliefs and Outcome Evaluations

As shown in Table 7.22, statistically significant differences exist between men and women's perceptions for three of the four behavioural belief cross-products. In particular, "I will update my knowledge" was perceived to be the most positive outcome of attending the next convention for both genders but higher for women than men (17.78 vs. 16.96). This result was statistically significant between men and women, with a correspondingly large effect size of 0.08. The behavioural belief "I will network with colleagues" was considered to be the next key advantage of travelling to Melbourne for the upcoming convention. Female attendees possessed a more favourable attitude about the networking aspects to convention attendance than men (16.63 vs. 15.53) and the effect size figure was also large at 0.08. The most noticeable disparity between the mean-cross products was that female attendees more strongly believed that by attending the next convention "I will learn about the host country's approach to my field" (10.69 vs. 7.03). The fourth behavioural belief "I will be able to present a paper(s)" was slightly more important for men (13.11 vs. 12.63), however this was not significant. While not presented here, some respondents indicated that presenting a paper did not apply to them and this was slightly higher for women than men (8% vs. 4%).

Normative Beliefs and Motivation to Comply

The normative belief cross-products were assessed in terms of the three important referents that have an impact on the convention attendance decision. The findings show that females were more inclined to seek the approval of their family when deciding whether or not to attend the next convention. This can be seen by the significant difference between the two groups (11.42 vs. 9.92) and the fact that the magnitude of the difference between the cross-product means was noticeably large (0.08). While not significant, females reported higher levels of normative influence from their colleagues (11.02 vs. 10.69), whereas males saw their supervisor/employer to be the most important referent (11.07 vs. 10.62). The results further indicate that 11% of respondents stated that the approval of their supervisor/employer was not applicable to them, and this proportion was slightly higher for men than women (12% vs. 7%).

Control Beliefs and Control Power

The control beliefs represent the facilitators and impediments to convention attendance. In this study, control beliefs were analysed using four measures. The highest cross-product score received was for the belief "having the money/funding" and there was little difference in the cross-products between men and women (13.04 vs. 13.47). It could thus be said that the greatest impediment to future travel decisions for both genders relates to their financial resources. Respondents were asked to rate whether "the travel distance to Melbourne will be a concern in my decision to attend the next conference". The findings reveal that travel distance was not an issue for respondents and there were no statistically significant differences between the mean cross-products (-2.36 vs. -1.51). The control belief "having the time to attend" produced significantly different mean cross-products for men and women (12.12 vs.13.04), with a large effect size of 0.05. Similarly, while the mean control belief strength and control power scores for "having my family (e.g. partner and/or children)

accompanying me" were fairly neutral, women considered that would make it easier for them to attend if they travelled with their family (6.24 vs. 5.24), which represented a significant difference between genders.

Convention Location Beliefs and Convention Location Evaluation

According to respondents, Melbourne is considered to be a safe/secure destination that is easily accessible and has tourist appeal, as presented in Table 7.22 in the mean evaluation section. In terms of the convention location beliefs, all of the mean cross-products were significantly different for men and women. Specifically, women were more concerned with the "safety/security" at the convention destination (14.36 vs. 12.63), with a large effect eta square score of 0.12. Likewise, the mean cross-products for "accessibility (ease of travel)" was higher for women than men (5.94 vs. 3.98), with a correspondingly large effect size of 0.08. Furthermore, attending a convention at a destination that has "tourist appeal" was significantly higher for women than for men (13.99 vs. 12.05 respectively) and the disparity between the scores was particularly large, as represented with an eta square score of 0.14.

Summary

The Belief Measurement phase sought to measure the relative strength and importance of the salient beliefs to predict convention attendance intentions for an upcoming convention in Melbourne and to identify the role that gender might play in moderating the convention attendance decision. Chapter 7 justified, selected and described the methods used to achieve research objectives two and three. It summarised the principles of Belief Measurement to provide a structural outline of the latter half of the chapter. It outlined the scoring and computing of the belief measures. A discussion on the approaches implemented to ensure the reliability and validity of the data collected from respondents in Phase Two was provided. The processes used to recruit and select respondents were then presented, along with the research sites, instrument design, pilot test and administration. The data analysis procedures were presented, specifically SEM, to pave the way for the Belief Measurement findings.

Before proceeding with a comparative analysis of the constructs by gender, a structural analysis was performed on the overall model. This was done by assessing the model fit criteria and evaluating the path coefficients. The results revealed that the proposed model had a good fit to the data. Despite the larger chi-square for the second model, the overall fit was better for the constrained model. At the overall level, it was hypothesised that attitude would have a positive effect on intention to attend a convention. The impact of attitude on intentions was non-insignificant. It was further hypothesised that subjective norm, PBC and convention location would have a positive effect on intention to attend a convention. The findings showed that these hypotheses were supported.

The model was then separated into two groups, one for males and one for females. A measurement invariance test was then conducted to determine whether the measurement model was invariant across groups. The invariance test provided evidence to suggest that configural and metric invariance was established. Comparisons were made between the two models to identify the similarities and differences between convention attendance intentions according to gender. From a gender perspective, it was expected that attitude toward future convention attendance will have a stronger positive relationship with intention to attend a convention for men than for women. This hypothesis was not supported, with the results suggesting that attitude has a stronger relationship with intentions for women than men. There was also reason to propose that subjective norm would have a stronger positive relationship with intention to attend a future convention for women than for men, yet this hypothesis was also not supported. A review of the literature led to the assumption that PBC would have a stronger positive relationship with intention to attend a future convention for women than for men, however again this was inconsistent with the data gathered in this study.

Finally the indirect measures were examined to ascertain whether statistically significant differences exist between the two groups. Female respondents placed greater importance on the following convention attendance beliefs: “tourist appeal”, “safety/security”, “accessibility”, “update my knowledge”, “network with colleagues”, “family”, “time” and “family will accompany me”. The beliefs that were non-significant between males and females were: “present a paper(s)”, “learn about the host country’s approach to my field”, “supervisor/employer”, “colleagues”, “money/funding” and “travel distance”. The next chapter will discuss the implications of these findings.

Chapter 8: Discussion

As discussed in Chapter 5, this study adopted a sequential exploratory research strategy which is characterised by an initial qualitative phase followed by a quantitative phase (Creswell, 2009). According to the strategy, data collection and analysis are conducted sequentially, then the findings from these two phases are interpreted. The purpose of this chapter is to therefore interpret the findings from the Belief Elicitation and Belief Measurement phases, to provide a review of the entire study and give possible explanations for the results in relation to the literature. This chapter will also compare and contrast the results to previous studies as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. The implications for theory and academe are contained in Chapter 9.

Each of the four TPB constructs and the belief measures is discussed, as shown in Figure 9.1. References are made to the conceptual background that underpinned this study, where applicable. Some of the open-ended comments from both phases are included to complement the data obtained. The discussion highlights the similarities and differences in the results across both phases to further our understanding about the convention attendance decision and the moderating role of gender.

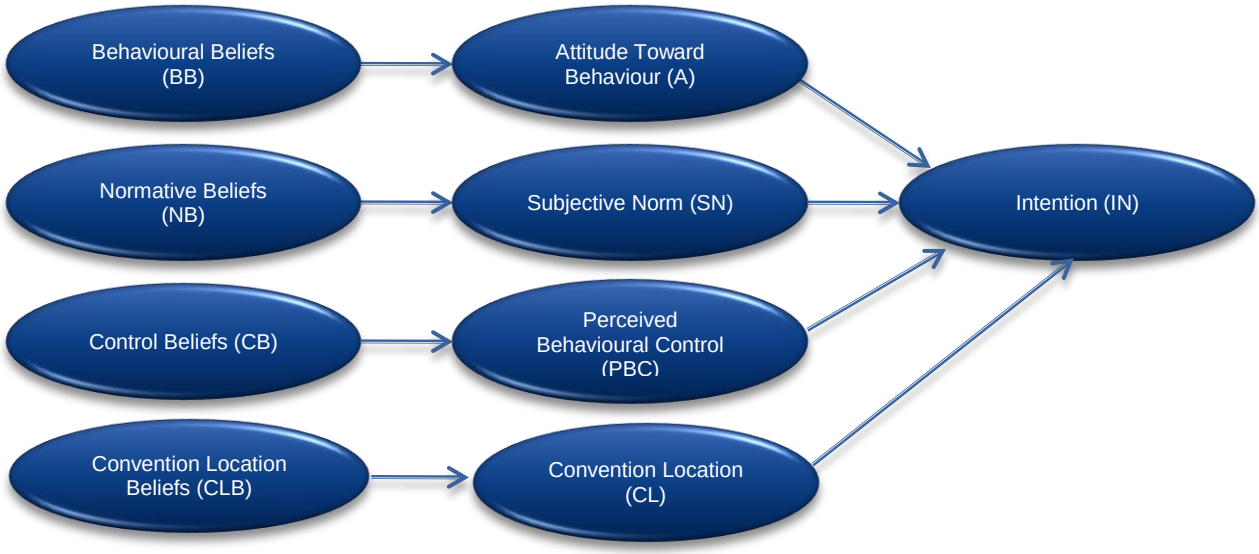


Figure 8.1: Theory of Planned Behaviour Constructs and Measures with Convention Location (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010)

Review of the Study Results

Behavioural Beliefs Identified in this Study

The foundation of attitudes can be explored by eliciting salient beliefs about the behaviour under investigation and assessing the subjective probabilities and values associated with various beliefs (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). As discussed in Chapter 7, attitude is a determinant of intention in the TPB model, which is derived from a person's expectation about the likelihood of particular outcomes (i.e. behavioural beliefs) and their evaluation

of the consequences (i.e. their belief about the value of the outcome) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Behavioural beliefs about attending a future convention were elicited in the Belief Elicitation phase. The beliefs that were most salient were “update my knowledge”, “network with colleagues”, “present paper(s)” and “learn about the host country's approach to my field”.

Update my Knowledge

The primary purpose for holding an association convention is to present new knowledge within a specialised field (Arcodia & Reid, 2003) and, not surprisingly, this study demonstrates that attendees’ quest for fresh insights indeed exists. A key outcome of attending WCIM2012 in the Belief Elicitation phase was the educational component. Respondents mentioned that the next convention would provide them with an opportunity to “keep abreast of what’s new in internal medicine,” “gain professional experience,” “update my scientific knowledge,” and to “exchange information and news about medicine.” In line with the convention attendance factors and/or motivators identified in previous empirical studies, respondents conveyed that the desire to learn and gain professional development was important to their convention decision (Bauer et al., 2008; Kim et al., 2012; Mair & Thompson, 2009; Ngamsom & Beck, 2000; Severt et al., 2007; Tanford et al., 2012; Yoo & Chon, 2008; Yoo & Zhao, 2010).

The educational component was considered to be a positive outcome of attending a future international association convention that was cited by both the male and female respondents frequently in this study. However, in the Belief Measurement phase, the behavioural belief ‘I will update my knowledge’ was perceived to be the most positive outcome of attending the next convention, with the highest mean cross-products of 16.96 for men and 17.78 for women. This result was statistically significant by gender, with a corresponding large effect size of 0.08. This finding is similar to previous literature, where women appear to place slightly more importance on attending a convention to build knowledge and they perceive attendance as a tool for career advancement (Edwards et al., 2011; Weber & Ladkin, 2008). An Australian female attendee to Convention 3 mentioned that “location is less relevant than content of conference.” Another comment made by a female attendee from Finland attending Convention 3 was “I am an optometrist in private practice so having time to travel is a consideration of getting a good cost and return (knowledge) is extremely important so I hope to see papers/plenaries that would be practical and clinically relevant.”

In terms of the implications that these results may have for marketing, it seems that potential attendees appear to evaluate a convention based on its ability to provide educational benefits, which is important for convention marketers to recognise. The educational benefits draw people to attend, particularly females, with the convention location being a secondary factor in the decision-making process. Association planners could attract more women to their conventions by selecting themes where women in particular specialise such as human factors and management as noted by Cohoon et al. (2011) in relation to the computing industry. Pre-convention promotional campaigns could build awareness and engage prospective attendees some months before the convention about the theme, educational sessions and keynote speakers in order to attract more people. International associations, particularly in the medical field, are seen to be a leading player in the

industry. It is their mandate to shape and lead debate on issues affecting their members and the wider community within their field of study. Through training, research and other member benefits, associations seek to improve the professional lives of its members. Many associations are not-for-profit organisations that aim to operate economically and to achieve a modest annual surplus through attracting attendees to their conventions. It is therefore essential that they provide the platform for attendees to update their knowledge through holding conventions. Furthermore, given that attendees have high expectations about the educational component at conventions and are more easily distracted (perhaps due to technology advancements), meeting planners need to package educational opportunities in an entertaining way to facilitate interactive learning, as opposed to simply hearing a well-known speaker (Lee & Back, 2009). Associations could re-broadcast sessions from the convention at a later date to engage the community in the field of interest and potentially generate revenue from it. Delivering recorded content as a live event post-convention, provides the opportunity to offer additional industry credits, reach those who were unable to attend, and drive attendance for future conventions and essentially extends its life outside the convention dates. Another alternative is to stream keynote speakers live to generate additional revenue in registration fees, sponsorship dollars, custom hosting and advertising. Exhibitors could embrace the opportunity to partner with live content as a way of reaching new markets and building relationships with existing customers.

Networking

The Belief Elicitation phase revealed that the opportunity to socialise with colleagues through networking would be a positive outcome of attending a future convention. Typical comments about the networking aspect of the convention were as follows: it would be a "good opportunity to get in contact with people in the industry—in clinical research work that I do," traveling to Santiago would allow me "to meet colleagues from other countries," and "meet new faces and make new friends." This finding supports the body of convention attendance literature, showing that the social aspect to conventions is an important component of attending a convention (e.g. Grant & Weaver, 1996; Jago & Deery, 2005; Lee & Back, 2007a; Mair & Thompson, 2009). As Edwards et al. (2011, p. 28) point out, there is a sense of "camaraderie that develops…the appeal of engaging with other like-minded people, the relationships that are enhanced and developed…business events develop a social space that is important as it facilitates and reinforces social interaction and, in turn, influences the effectiveness of collaborative learning". The power of the informal networking that takes place in various formats such as in the breaks, at lunch, and during pre-dinner drinks can be strengthened when people interact in program sessions.

When analysing the findings from a gender perspective, it appeared that the women who were interviewed, in particular, saw networking as a key advantage of attending the next convention. This finding was corroborated in the Belief Measurement phase, whereby networking with colleagues was the second key advantage for women, behind updating knowledge, of travelling to Melbourne for the next convention. Further analysis revealed that women more strongly believed that networking was an important benefit to their convention attendance compared to their male counterparts (with mean cross-products 16.63 vs. 15.53). This result was again statistically significant by gender, with a corresponding large effect size of 0.08.

Social role theory suggests that gender differences in behaviour are attributed to the different roles undertaken by males and females (Eagly & Wood, 1999). Given that social role theory proposes that females develop traits that manifest communal behaviour such as the tendency to be friendly, unselfish and expressive, it would make sense, in the context of this study, that women value networking more than men (Eagly & Wood, 1991). Additionally, as the theory posits, women are considered to be more compliant to social influence, and more cooperative and conciliatory, which is congruent to the networking activities at conventions (Eagly & Wood, 1999). Research has shown that women tend to be more relationship-oriented than men (Van Hooft et al., 2006); and this could mean that they place a greater importance on evaluating a convention based on the opportunity to socialise with colleagues and develop friendships. It appears that conventions provide a unique opportunity for women to build and nurture personal and professional relationships with their peers, which they may not otherwise have the ability to do outside their employment. Alternatively, perhaps women value social connections more highly than other components of the convention, reflecting the contention that, some women use their networks for social support rather than to gain a competitive advantage in their industry (Tonge, 2008).

These findings suggest that when convention planners and marketers are seeking to attract more female attendees, it is recommended that they emphasise the social networking opportunities that are scheduled during the convention. These could be the opening ceremony, gala dinner, and closing ceremony in addition to the programmed excursions or tours that may be included in the convention program. As Lee and Min (2013, p. 20) note, "…convention organisers should assign more weight and investment to staging opportunities for professional education and social networking". The convention program structure therefore needs to have a variety of sessions and opportunities to ensure that there is ample time for discussion and networking.

Given that networking opportunities are significant predictors of future convention intentions according to Mair and Thompson (2009), when promoting an upcoming convention, marketers could highlight that sufficient time will be allocated to facilitate networking between attendees, invited speakers and possibly exhibitors. Recommendations for meeting planners include offering opportunities for online discussions in advance of the convention, pairing people up with others of like interests and creating more special interest subgroups. Meeting planners could allow more time in the program for reflection and informal discussion.

Presenting Papers

Some of the respondents in the Belief Elicitation phase expressed interest in presenting a paper at the next convention. An advantage of attending would be “being able to do a paper presentation” and “paper presentation—for me to present.” Previous convention researchers have highlighted that presenting papers is a key driver of attendance, particularly in academic conventions (Jarumaneerat et al., 2007; Yoo & Chon, 2008). Presenting a paper allows people to impart their research to like-minded experts and such experiences can be associated with advancing professionally, enriching one’s curriculum vitae and making oneself known in the industry (Veloutsou & Chreppas, 2015). According to a study on academic conference attendance by Veloutsou and Chreppas (2015), one of the factors that best predicts intentions to attend is the likelihood that their work will be published. This is due to the perception that a presentation could help advance their career.

For some attendees, their attendance depends on how their research is progressing at the time of abstract submission. Their intentions to attend are influenced on “having presentable work in time” (male Canadian Convention 4) and “advances in my research. I would really like to present good results” (male Canadian Convention 4). For others, it depended on their abstract acceptance, “I will definitely come if I have work accepted at the conference” (female USA Convention 4) and “whether my abstract is accepted will determine a yes or a no” (male Canadian Convention 4). This is consistent with Veloutsou and Chreppas (2015) who claim that academics are unlikely to attend if their work is not ready in time to be presented at a future conference. Rejection of a submitted paper could also deter an individual from attending an upcoming convention (Eke, 2011). Interestingly, some respondents indicated that presenting a paper was not applicable to their convention attendance decision and it was notably higher for women than men (8% vs. 4%).

According to respondents in Phase Two, presenting a paper was slightly more important for men (mean cross-products 13.11 vs. 12.63), however this was not statistically significant. Therefore, it appears that there is no need for planners or marketers to consider gender-specific programming or marketing in relation to presenting papers. However, to attract more attendees to their convention overall, convention marketers could accentuate the opportunities for potential attendees to present or submit a poster presentation as well as or instead of delivery of an oral presentation, thereby actively participating in advancing knowledge in their field of interest. This could possibly assist in boosting attendee numbers, particularly if the association is interested in obtaining more presenters to their convention. In order to increase attendance numbers, associations could encourage universities and teaching hospitals in Australia to partly or fully sponsor the travel and registration costs of attendees from developing nations who present papers.

Learning about the Host Country

In the Belief Elicitation phase, respondents, particularly women, mentioned that learning about how the host country and/or city specialises in their field was an important part of the convention attendance experience. This is a new addition to our understanding of convention attendance drivers that has not been linked previously to convention attendance decisions in the literature. This finding was therefore deemed worthy of further investigation in the Belief Measurement phase to explore whether attendees belonging to other medical or scientific professional associations consider finding out about developments in the host convention destination to be particularly important in their convention attendance decisions.

The results from the Belief Measurement phase provided further evidence to support the contention that females consider learning about how the host country and/or city specialises to be an important benefit of attending an international convention. An analysis of the direct measure mean-cross products showed that female attendees more strongly believed that by attending the next convention "I will learn about the host country's approach to my field" (mean cross-products 10.69 vs. 7.03). Gender may be a factor here because women tend to desire to interact and learn from other people who, in this study's context, reside in the host country (Eagly & Wood, 1991). It might be that women benefit from learning from others about their field of interest at the convention location because they are considered to be more relational and value interactions with experts in the field whilst they are onsite (Eagly & Wood, 1991). Perhaps women are particularly interested in immersing themselves in the host country to enhance their learning experience, as is the case for women studying abroad (Salisbury et al., 2010). Furthermore, as noted by McGehee et al. (1996), cultural learning is one of the top 'push' factors for women when travelling for leisure. Perhaps some association convention attendees desire a diversity-rich experience outside the walls of the convention venue where they can actively engage with the host country/city's approach to their field.

There are implications for planners and marketers relating to this desire among attendees, particularly, women, to experience life in the host country. Importantly, conventions often include field trips as part of the convention program to showcase facilities, service centres, clinics or teaching hospitals that are aligned to the field. For example, the 10th International Conference on Synchrotron Radiation Instrumentation was held in Melbourne in 2009 and offered a half day excursion to the Australian Synchrotron - the largest stand-alone piece of scientific infrastructure in the southern hemisphere. Of the 670 people who attended the conference, 500 people took part in the guided tour of the facility to learn about the developments in Australia (Melbourne Convention + Visitors Bureau, 2011). Conventions such as these provide opportunities to showcase the contribution made by the practitioners in the field and provide a platform for sharing achievements in research and development. They subsequently become a catalyst for further developing the city's reputation in the area. Benefits could be gained not only for attendees but from a local, state and federal government perspective to take advantage of the prospect of educating fellow colleagues about the latest developments in the host country that have relevance on the world stage.

TPB Construct: Attitude Toward Attendance

Having identified the salient behavioural beliefs arising from this study, it is now appropriate to look at attitudes towards attending a convention. In the context of convention attendance, attitudes are predispositions or feelings toward a convention and these predispositions can be favourable or unfavourable (Moutinho, 1987). In this study, attitude was predicted by the extent to which a potential attendee evaluates the benefits of attending a future convention. Attitude toward future convention attendance was tested in H1 to determine whether it had a positive effect on intention to attend a convention. The findings showed that attitude was not a significant predictor of convention attendance intention (β=0.10), therefore H1 was rejected. Not only was the relationship between attitude towards attendance and intention insignificant in this study, but it was the weakest predictor of intentions overall. Thus, attitude toward convention attendance, whether it was favourable or unfavourable, did not influence attendees' intentions. Nonetheless, the behavioural beliefs were found to be the most important factors in the convention attendance decision according to respondents in Phase Two.

While this result was not positive, it is consistent with other studies where attitude did not play a significant role in affecting the behavioural intention of travel decisions (e.g. Bianchi et al., 2017; Hsu & Huang, 2012; Lam & Hsu, 2006). As noted by Yuzhanin and Fisher (2016), the TPB does not suggest that all of the constructs contribute equally, significantly and simultaneously to intention. For some applications, subjective norms and PBC may explain behavioural intentions more so than attitude, which appears to be the case in this study (Yuzhanin & Fisher, 2016). One explanation for this non-significance is that people attend a convention with the expectation that it will be enjoyable, interesting and helpful for their career. This poses the question whether attitude toward convention attendance is a 'hygiene factor' in that attendees expect that a convention will provide educational opportunities to fulfil their desire to learn. As Baker and Crompton (2000) note in the festival context, hygiene factors such as infrastructure, information sources and comfort amenities are 'ordinary' components of events and their existence is expected. Ultimately, the core product of the convention is the program itself, which satisfies attendees' personal and professional development needs (Zhang et al., 2007). Perhaps the educational program only becomes important to attendees when there is a lack of educational opportunities, which may lead to dissatisfaction. In Lee and Min's (2013b) study, professional education was categorised as a 'dissatisfier' in that the opportunity to exchange knowledge and learn is a must-have attribute in the convention experience. The weak correlation found in this study may lead to questions as to whether attitude toward attendance should be considered as an antecedent leading directly to behavioural intention or as a moderator that interacts with other variable(s) in predicting behavioural intention.

It was further hypothesised that attitude would have a stronger positive relationship with intention to attend a convention for men than for women (H2). However, according to the Belief Measurement results, attitude has a stronger relationship with intentions for women than men (β=0.35 vs. β=0.16). Further analysis showed that the path values were statistically different from one another ($p<0.01$). This indicates that there was a statistically significant difference between men and women with regard to their attitude toward convention attendance. This is consistent with the results from Kim et al. (2012) where attitude had a significantly greater effect on behavioural intention for the female respondents. It might be that women perceive convention

attendance as a means of enjoyment, where they can be exposed to interesting job relevant content and being there will be helpful for their career (Mair & Frew, 2016). However, further research is needed to confirm this.

Normative Beliefs Identified in this Study

The attendees interviewed in the Belief Elicitation phase named three groups of referents that influence their intention to attend a convention: their employer/supervisor, colleagues, and family members (i.e., spouse/partner and children). Each of these is discussed below.

Supervisor/employer

Although association convention attendance is considered to be voluntary, the attendees interviewed in the Belief Elicitation phase mentioned that it was important to receive approval from their employer/supervisor when making convention attendance decisions. These results are consistent with Lee and Back (2007b), who mention that convention attendance is made possible with the cooperation of the association attendee's boss/advisors and their colleagues.

The Belief Measurement phase revealed that males saw their supervisor/employer to be the most important referent with regard to their decision to attend an upcoming convention (mean cross-products 11.07 for men vs. 10.62 for women). This finding is consistent with Giles and Larmour (2000) who found that males were significantly more inclined to comply with their supervisors. In the convention context, research has shown that convention attendance is driven by business purposes and is therefore reliant on the cooperation of one's manager/advisor (Lee & Back, 2007b). A Malaysian attendee at Convention 3 said that "it all depends on my employer and supervisor." This might be because the employer needs to make decisions about professional development opportunities according to one's performance and many other factors that have an impact on the business environment. It is thus suggested that convention marketers allow sufficient time for people to obtain permission to attend, provide information about why the convention would be valuable and perhaps use testimonials from managers who have sent their employees to the convention and as a result their work has benefited in some way. This could potentially help people who may feel a need to 'seek permission' to attend a convention.

Notably, on average 10% of respondents stated that the approval of their supervisor/employer did not apply to them and this proportion was slightly higher for men than women (12% vs. 7%). The fact that some people are self-employed (e.g. have their own practice), this means that they would not have an employer to approve of their convention attendance. In such cases, other drivers of attendance might be more important. For instance, one of the females from Canada who attended Convention 3 said, "I am an optometrist in private practice so having time to travel is a consideration of getting good cost and return (knowledge) is extremely important. So I hope to see papers/plenaries that would be practical and clinically relevant."

Colleagues

As with most travel decisions, individuals can be influenced by various people when they make travel plans (Sparks & Pan, 2009). Normative pressures from colleagues can potentially affect the decision to travel for the purpose of attending a convention for some people. Indeed, this was the case in Phase One, which revealed that one's professional colleagues/peers have a strong voice with regard to the convention attendance decision.

This was further tested in Phase Two where colleagues/peers appeared to be more important referents for women than men (mean cross-products 11.02 for women vs. 10.69 for men). Colleagues are the second most influential referent according to the females in this study. A possible explanation for these results might be that women tend to be more relationship-oriented than men and as such, women are more likely to be conscious of the opinions of others and feel the social pressure of important referent groups compared to their male counterparts (Eagly & Wood, 1991; Harris & Ateljevic, 2003; Van Hooft et al., 2006). This could lead them to place a greater importance on evaluating a convention based on the opinions of their colleagues, than male attendees (Eagly & Wood, 1991). As noted by Sparks and Pan (2009, p. 492) "…it seems that, apart from family influences, females are more likely to feel the social pressures of reference groups than males."

In order to attract more attendees, pre-convention marketing material aimed at female attendees could contain testimonials from colleagues or peers who have previously attended the convention. Such messaging could convey to potential attendees the positive aspects of attending the upcoming convention by emphasising what they would miss out on if they did not attend. The convention website content should aim to inspire, inform and facilitate the decision to attend. In addition, an online forum discussion could be posted on the convention website to create a sense of anticipation about the convention and its benefits from well-regarded colleagues. Another recommendation is to select a small number of frequent and reputable convention participants to be 'convention advocates', with the role of promoting the convention via their social media accounts. By seeing that their colleagues will be attending an upcoming convention, it could increase the registration conversion rate for people who have yet to make the decision to attend the convention. Convention planners and marketers could utilise the 'convention advocates' to facilitate an invite-a-colleague program, which has the potential to reach their contacts and engage potential new attendees who are not currently in the invite-a-colleague convention database. It is more likely for potential attendees to open and act on an email from a trusted source and colleague than if they were to receive an email from an unknown recipient. To reward those who are active in inviting their colleagues to attend, a discounted convention registration rate could be provided or a prize could be given to the person who brings the most people, which could be announced at the gala dinner.

Family Members

Family members have also been recognised to carry influential power on one's decision to attend a convention. This was evident in the Belief Elicitation Phase, where family members were considered to be important referents when making convention attendance decisions. This finding is consistent with previous convention attendance studies according to Ngamsom and Beck (2000) and Rittichainuwat et al. (2001).

Gender differences were detected with regard to the subjective normative influence of family members on the convention attendance decision in Phase Two. Unsurprisingly, when it came to seeking approval to attend a future convention, the family was a more dominant referent for women compared to males (mean cross-products 11.42 vs. 9.92). This is consistent with previous studies where it has been found that convention attendance is influenced by family members including spouses and/or children (Ngamsom & Beck, 2000; Oh et al., 1993; Rittichainuwat et al., 2001). Further, there was a statistically significant difference according to gender, with a corresponding large effect size of 0.08. Possible reasons for this may be that family responsibilities can be considered to be more of a priority to women over their career at times due to the traditional division of labour in society (Eagly & Wood, 1999; Hite & McDonald, 1995).

Some of the marketing implications include segmenting the convention attendee database into people with dependent children. Specific messaging could be developed to market the benefits of attending the convention, such as emphasising the knowledge that they will leave with, certifications that they can achieve and potential to make connections that would not be possible without meeting face-to-face in a convention environment. In essence, the convention key takeaway is the reason to attend that can outweigh all the other reasons for not attending such as family responsibilities.

TPB Construct: Subjective Norm

The relationship between subjective norm and behavioural intention was investigated in hypothesis 3. It was postulated that there would be a positive relationship between the two constructs as guided by Phase One and the literature. The results revealed that the relationship was indeed statistically significant (β=0.30), with subjective norm being the third strongest predictor of convention attendance intentions. That is, intention to attend a future convention is associated with the perceived social pressure from important referents. This means that if people believe that most of their important referents approve of their intention to travel to the next convention, it is likely that they will attend. Previous research has also shown that subjective norm has a strong positive association with travel intentions (e.g. Bianchi et al., 2017; Hsu & Huang, 2012; Lam & Hsu, 2006; Sparks & Pan, 2009). In the convention attendance context, Lee and Back (2007b) found that subjective norm was the most influential factor on convention attendance intentions in their study.

It was further postulated that subjective norm would have a stronger positive relationship with intention to attend a future convention for women than for men (H4). The results revealed that subjective norm was a more significant predictor of convention attendance intention for men (β=0.36) compared to women (β=0.22). It can therefore be concluded that H4 was rejected. The results are in line with a study by Kim et al. (2012) which showed that subjective norm had a significantly greater effects on behavioural intention for the male respondent group compared to the female respondent group with regards to Korean tourists' overseas travel. Perhaps the supervisor/employer influence outweighs other normative influences on convention attendance intentions for males.

Marketing messages could be used to draw more potential male attendees by appealing to the normative influences of attendance. Collaborating and brainstorming with previous speakers, facilitators and sponsors could assist with developing strategies in order to make the convention attendance messaging more compelling. They may be able to help convention marketers and planners come up with a brand new design and marketing campaign to ensure the success of the convention, particularly if they would also benefit from building relationships with male attendee market. Additionally, attendees are more likely to recommend the convention to others in face-to-face conversations and via social media platforms if they were satisfied with their experience (Severt et al., 2007). Essentially, exceeding the expectations of attendees not only increases the likelihood of those attendees returning to the next convention, but may also drive new attendees as current attendees promote the convention to friends, employers and colleagues.

It is important to note that while the normative component of conventions is important, there appears to be other factors that have a stronger influence on the decision to attend a convention such as perceived behavioural control.

Control Beliefs Identified in this Study

In terms of the control beliefs associated with convention attendance, the main factors that were mentioned were: having the financial resources, travel distance, time and accompanying family. Each of these factors will be discussed.

Money/Funding

According to the respondents interviewed, the convention attendance decision was guided by having the financial resources. This issue particularly applies to those attendees who rely on their employer to fund the travel costs. For example, one respondent expressed interest in attending the next convention "if attendance was subsidised." Other respondents said "gaining financial support from my department and having money myself" and "sponsorship from company" would make it possible to attend. Other scholars have also noted that the convention cost can be an impediment to attendance (Mair & Thompson, 2009; Rittichainuwat et al., 2001; Veloutsou & Chreppas, 2015; Yoo & Zhao, 2010).

Having the financial resources to attend the next convention was seen to be the greatest enabler for future convention attendance. The control belief “having the money/funding” was an important component in the attendance intention decision for respondents in the Belief Measurement phase. For example, some respondents mentioned, “if my abstracts are accepted. I only get financial grants with accepted abstracts” (female Holland Convention 3), “just cost, if my advisor has the funds to help pay for the trip” (female USA Convention 4) and “the only factor that will stop me coming is finance” (female UK Convention 3). However, from a gender perspective, there was very little difference in the cross-products between men and women (13.04 vs. 13.47). Therefore, it appears that financial resources have an impact on future travel decisions for all attendees irrespective of gender. This finding is consistent with previous literature (e.g. Mair & Thompson, 2009; Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Rittichainuwat et al., 2001).

In relation to convention planning and marketing, ensuring that attendees have sufficient time to prepare their budget could have a positive impact on their convention decision. Benefits could be gained from registering for the convention at an early stage, at the time of the current convention if possible. Additionally, there could be a “register now, pay later” option or if timing permits, an option where registration payments could be made in instalments. Perhaps subsidies for attendees who come from countries that have been under-represented in previous conventions could be made available to boost international registrations. For attendees who may not be able to attend a convention due to financial constraints, organisers could encourage individuals or associations from developed nations to sponsor an attendee, with a view to partly or fully sponsor their travel and registration costs. Similarly, in the convention budget, organisers could include a provision to make a certain percentage of income available to support attendance from people in developing nations, which could be made available through scholarships and or travel grants.

Travel distance

Travel distance was raised by interviewees as an impediment to their attendance in the Belief Elicitation phase, as was found by Veloutsou and Chreppas (2015). This factor was further explored in the Belief Measurement phase. Findings show that travelling to Melbourne for the next convention was not an issue for respondents. Specifically, the control belief “I expect that the travel distance to Melbourne will be a concern in my decision to attend the next conference in Melbourne” generated negative mean cross-products of -2.36 for men and -1.51 for women. This means that travel distance did not play a critical role on the convention attendance decision. Interesting, this finding is contrary to existing literature where it is postulated that if a convention is considered to be too far away, people may not attend (Severt et al., 2009; Yoo & Zhao, 2010). It might be that the draw of the convention’s educational component, networking opportunities, presenting papers, convention location and the approval of important referents have a more influential role on the decision to attend compared to the travel distance.

There were no statistically significant differences between males and females with regard to their perceptions of travel distance and their intentions to attend. It is recommended for the convention marketing plan to take into account how attendees view a destination from a travel distance perspective. Travel distance information could be provided to attendees in the pre-convention marketing campaign to show how accessible the convention destination is to major cities. Convention planners and marketers could collaborate with the local Convention Bureau to assist with the convention location promotional material. Ultimately, a successful convention should draw people to attend despite the possible travel distance, with pre-event marketing campaigns accentuating the educational component, speakers, networking opportunities and other benefits of attending.

Timing, Work and Family Responsibilities

As expected, time was regarded as a facilitator or inhibitor to convention attendance in both phases. This is again consistent with the literature as noted by convention attendance authors (e.g. Mair & Thompson, 2009; Rittichainuwat et al., 2001; Severt et al., 2009). Some of the comments included, “ability to get rostered time from work” (female Australian Convention 4), “dates not clashing with other events” (male UK Convention 3) and “how far developed my practice is” (female South African Convention 3).

Respondents were asked to comment on the control belief “I expect to have the time to attend the next conference in Melbourne” and “having the time would enable me to attend the next conference in Melbourne”. The mean cross product analysis revealed that there were significantly different mean cross-products for men and women (12.12 vs.13.04), with a large effect size of 0.05. It appears that time is more of a factor for women than for men, perhaps because of the societal pressures to balance work and family responsibilities whilst maintaining a household (Eagly & Wood, 1999; O’Neil & Bilimoria, 2005). For some of the female interviewees in the Belief Elicitation phase, family responsibilities were considered to be one of the main barriers to attending. Given that 39.2% of respondents attending Convention 3 and 4 have children living at home, family responsibilities was an important consideration when deciding whether or not to attend a future convention. When asked whether there were any other factors that would influence or impede them to come to Melbourne for the next convention, a female respondent from Belgium attending Convention 3 mentioned that “young children at home with school obligations.” Therefore, potential external constraints such as time and family can inhibit some people from attending an upcoming convention despite their intentions to do so (Han et al., 2010).

In response to these inhibiting factors, associations could provide reduced membership and convention registration prices for women on career breaks (e.g. maternity leave). To the author’s knowledge, two associations: IEEE and the National Centre for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT) offer discounts for those unemployed for family reasons. In order to build attendance numbers and influence future convention attendance intentions, it is recommended that other professional associations follow suit (Mavriplis, et al., 2010). Considering that attendees have many conventions to choose from and they regard schedule conflicts as a reason for not attending a convention, it is important for convention marketers to consult with potential attendees about their timing preferences when deciding on the convention dates (Comas & Moscardo, 2005;

Oppermann, 1996b). It might also be worthwhile to send a 'save the date' email to past and prospective attendees, asking them to mark their calendars for the convention. This way, they will have advanced notice about the timing and could start making plans to attend the next convention.

Accompanying Family

The Belief Elicitation phase revealed that having family accompany attendees could make it easier for them to attend an upcoming convention. This finding is in line with Jago and Deery (2005) who found that the convention location was important to the convention attendee decision-making process, particularly amongst people who travel with accompanying persons. The reason for this might be because accompanying persons experience more of the destination whilst attendees are participating in the convention program, therefore the destination needs to be attractive to them to meet their tourist needs.

The mean control belief strength and control power scores for "having my family (e.g. partner and/or children) accompanying me" were fairly neutral in the Belief Measurement phase, with scores ranging from 4.00 to 4.88 out of 7. The women sampled however, noted that it would be easier for them to attend if they travelled with their family (6.24 vs. 5.24). Interestingly, having one's family accompany them was raised in the Belief Elicitation phase by men more so than women. This is supported by Yoo et al. (2016) who speculate that association convention attendees who travel accompanied by their family tend to be more productive during the convention sessions than those who travel alone because they are more focused. Some attendees who leave their family at home could be preoccupied with what they left behind, such as their domestic responsibilities as suggested by Harris and Ateljevic (2003). Interestingly, when attendees travel with accompanying partners, both parties are able to have their 'own time' followed by time to connect (Yoo et al., 2016). The couple time provides opportunities to explore the host destination, share experiences that can strengthen the spousal bond and bring intimacy to relationships when the convention commitments are finished (Yoo et al., 2016). Conveying the possible pre- and post-convention touring opportunities that attendees could undertake around the convention might be a way of increasing attendance numbers to encourage attendees to bring their family members. Organising an accompanying persons' program might also be valuable to facilitate attendance.

A female respondent from Australia attending Convention 3 noted "I would appreciate onsite child care activities/facilities." This might be important for local attendees in particular who may not otherwise be able to attend due to dependent children of certain ages. Convention marketing strategies could also allow for the provision of on-site childcare activities/facilities to accommodate attendees with infants, as noted by Jago and Deery (2005) and Mavriplis et al. (2010). This is already being done by the Council for Australasian Tourism and Hospitality Education (CAUTHE) as a strategic way to improve issues of equity of access for female delegates. Similarly, Weber and Ladkin (2005) suggested that due to the increase in time pressure and family obligations felt by attendees, consideration should be given when meeting planners are selecting venues in regards to the child-care facilities available. Offering registration subsidies to attendees who bring their children

could entice more people to attend and potentially extend their stay, which benefits both the association and the destination.

TPB Construct: Perceived Behavioural Control

The measurement of perceived behavioural control was predicted by the extent to which intervening opportunities or inhibitors may affect future convention attendance. The Belief Measurement phase indicated that PBC was the strongest predictor of convention attendance intention (β=0.47). The results show that PBC has a positive effect on intention to attend a convention, thus supporting H5. This means that attendees perceive that they have the ability to attend the next convention if they wanted to. Support for this finding can be found in a number of studies (such as Bianchi et al., 2017; Hsu & Huang, 2012; Lee & Choi, 2009; Quintal et al., 2010). However, these results differed from Lee and Back's (2007b) study, where PBC had a weaker correlation (β=0.15) to intentions compared to the other constructs. Perhaps this is because past experience was included in their model and had the strongest effect on intention. Essentially, Lee and Back (2007b) recognised that PCB is significant in explaining association convention attendee participation and this study also supports this notion.

Based on the interviews and previous literature, it was hypothesised that PBC would have a stronger positive relationship with intention to attend a future convention for women. However, the results show that PBC was in fact stronger for men (β=0.49) than for women (β=0.41). It may be that men perceive themselves to have greater control over their decision to attend a convention with regard to the money/funding, time and work/family commitments (aligning to the agentic traits of independence) (Eagly & Wood, 1991). Women, on the other hand, sometimes face constraints to travel due to the responsibility of caring for their family and running a household, regardless of how successful they are in their career (Priola, 2007; Shaw, 1994).

In order to increase female convention attendance, associations and meeting planners could consider providing incentives to attendees, such as super early bird registrations for those who register onsite at the previous convention, and subsidies for early career researchers and/or loyal attendees. Also, given that the timing of the meeting is important, associations could survey attendees about when it would be most convenient to hold future conferences based on the majority of members' preferences. Ultimately, conventions that are affordable, are scheduled in periods that have less conflicts with family and work responsibilities, and have programs to bring accompanying persons are more likely to result in higher attendance numbers. Convention marketers and planners could also provide virtual attendance to key note sessions to address the issue of time for women. That way people who have timing, funding and/or family conflicts could participate and pay for selected sessions, which could increase revenue for associations and ensure that those who could not attend are not missing out on some of the educational benefits.

Convention Location Beliefs Identified in this Study

Three key salient beliefs about the convention location were uncovered in this study. There were safety and security, accessibility of the destination and tourist appeal. These will be discussed in turn.

Safety and Security

Safety is a fundamental requirement for convention attendance, meaning that if it is not ensured, potential attendees may abandon their attendance decision-making process before considering the other possible benefits of attending (Lee & Min, 2013b). Feeling safe and secure at the convention location was raised by respondents in both phases of this study.

In the Belief Elicitation phase, safety and security emerged as a potential facilitator or inhibitor to the convention attendance decision. As previously noted by Lee and Min (2013), attendees are becoming more concerned about natural disasters, disease outbreaks, terrorism attacks and localised violence that may occur at a convention location. Convention attendees seriously examine environmental factors such as climate, local people, safety and security during the attendance decision-making process (Lee & Min, 2013). It should be noted, however, that the elicitation data was collected during a time of world economic recovery and after a natural disaster in Chile in 2011. The earthquake that occurred in Chile a month prior to the interviews may explain at least some of the safety concerns amongst respondents.

Concerns with safety and security at the destination were mentioned particularly by the female interviewees who shared that this would make it difficult for them to attend the next convention if this was a factor at the next destination. According to the Belief Measurement phase, as expected, it is more important for women to feel safe and secure at the convention location than men (14.36 vs. 12.63). This result was statistically different for men and women, with a large effect size of 0.12 reported. The findings suggest that women are more concerned than men with their personal safety when deciding whether or not to attend a future convention. This lines up with previous research that shows that the safety and security at the convention location appears to be an important factor for women in the decision to attend a convention (Jago & Deery, 2005; Mair, 2010a). When respondents were asked to evaluate the next convention destination, Melbourne was considered to be a safe/secure destination for a conference with similar mean evaluation cross-products of 6.26 and 6.32 provided by men and women respectively.

Overall, in order to assure potential attendees of the safety and security at a convention location, it is important for organisers to choose locations that are perceived to be safe and then distribute information about how safe and secure the selected destination is. This would be particularly important if the international association had mainly female members or regular female attendee representation. Meeting planners could also perhaps attract more female attendees if they were to hold the convention within close proximity to accommodation given that safety and security are integral to the convention attendance decision (Jago & Deery, 2005).

Accessibility

According to Lee and Back (2007a), the most important convention location attribute for potential convention attendees is accessibility. Similarly, in a study of economic conferences, 80% of the respondents surveyed preferred to travel to easy-to-reach places (Borghans et al., 2010). Essentially, destinations that are difficult to get to require longer travel time, more connections and possibly less frequent departures (Lee & Min, 2013b).

Guided by the Belief Elicitation phase, respondents were asked to indicate how important accessibility (ease of travel) is to their decision to attend a convention in the Belief Measurement phase. The results showed that women placed a higher importance on accessibility compared to men (6.08 vs. 5.62). In terms of the mean cross-products for 'accessibility (ease of travel)', there was a statistically significant difference between men and women (women 5.94 vs. men 3.98), with a corresponding large effect size of 0.08. In a study of women solo travellers, women noted that their choice of destination can be limited due to accessibility (which may also be associated with safety and security) (Wilson & Little, 2005). There may also be a relationship between travel time to the convention destination and the lack of time available to women to attend conventions due to a range of family and other commitments.

Where the duration of the journey is seen as problematic, as may be the case for a trip to Australia, convention planners could suggest including stop overs in Asia and/or New Zealand to potential female overseas attendees pre or post-convention to make the travel journey easier. Furthermore, in order to attract more attendees, convention marketers could promote a convention as an opportunity for a 'once-in-a-lifetime' trip and encourage delegates to bring their family and extend their stay. It is suggested that the international flying times to Melbourne, for example are in fact not as long as some perceive, therefore providing a map of flight routes could be beneficial to overcome the accessibility argument. On the other hand, where the problem lies with the overall length of the convention trip (including both travel time and the time at the destination), convention planners should include the potential to register for an online component of the conference, which would assist with providing more equitable access for women.

Tourist Appeal

Holding a convention in an attractive location, particularly for international attendees, can have a positive impact on the amount of abstract submissions, which in turn can lead to increased attendance numbers (Borghans et al., 2010). Convention attendees want to travel to certain destinations more than others, which leads to strong materialisation for some conventions (Lee & Back, 2007a). In this study, there were high levels of agreement reported for the following destination image statements: "for me the next conference destination, Melbourne, is an ideal meeting place", "I am satisfied with Melbourne being the next conference destination", and "overall, I have a favourable image of the next conference destination, Melbourne". Therefore, this study shows that Melbourne, as a convention destination, is considered to have tourist appeal.

In the Belief Measurement phase, a convention destination with 'tourist appeal' could positively affect attendance intentions for women in particular (women 13.99 vs. men 12.05). These scores were significantly different with a large effect size score of 0.14. Previous research suggests that one's gender significantly influences the perceived image of a destination (Beerli & Martin, 2004). More specifically, women have reported to have a more positive image assessment of a tourist destination in the context of holidaying in Spain (Beerli & Martin, 2004). Further research on how men and women may perceive destination image differently in the convention context is needed to investigate this issue.

In terms of the marketing implications, pre-convention marketing could target potential male attendees in order to highlight the tourist appeal of the convention location. Travel information could be provided to attendees to show the sightseeing opportunities, attractions, dining options and sporting activities. Again, convention planners and marketers could utilise the resources from the local Convention Bureau to assist with the convention location promotional material.

TPB Construct: Convention Location

The findings reveal that the majority of respondents cited visiting Melbourne to be an advantage of attending the next convention. The second strongest predictor of convention attendance intention was convention location (β=0.35). Hypothesis 7 stated that convention location would have a positive effect on intention to attend a convention and was supported. This finding provides evidence for the contention by many scholars that the location or destination of the convention is an important driver of convention attendance (Bauer et al., 2008; Mair & Thompson, 2009; Ngamsom & Beck, 2000; Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Ramirez et al., 2013; Yoo & Chon, 2008; Yoo & Zhao, 2010). In line with existing literature, the evaluation of the convention location appears to be central to future attendance decisions. For example, some of the comments from respondents were: "It is a beautiful city of Australia" (male Indian Convention 4), "the fact that it's in Melbourne" (female USA Convention 4), "I have heard a lot about Australia and have never been there" (male USA Convention 4), and "beautiful and happening city of Australia. I would like to visit Melbourne" (female Belgian Convention 4).

It is recommended that convention marketers provide information to specifically reduce apprehensions about safety, security, health and political stability for attendees as these issues are often concerns for potential travellers. Promotional material should also emphasise the fact that visiting the destination (in this case Melbourne, Australia) is easily accessible, hassle free and that there are numerous unique experiences that attendees could participate in either pre- or post-convention.

Summary

This chapter summarised the results from the Belief Elicitation and Belief Measurement phases. The relative strength and importance of the salient beliefs to predict convention attendance intentions for an upcoming convention in Melbourne were identified. Perceived behavioural control has the greatest direct effect on behavioural intention of attending a convention. The strong link between perceived behavioural control and behavioural intentions suggests that the greatest potential for influencing attendee behavioural intentions is to communicate the low costs, timing of the convention and the opportunity to bring accompanying persons. Social influence from referent members such as supervisor/employer, colleagues and family members was also found to be an important factor influencing their convention attendance intention. Convention location was an important component of the decision to attend an upcoming convention. However, while attitude towards attendance was non-significant, other demographic characteristics such as involvement with the association or employment status may have a strong influence on the convention attendance decision, which could be further explored in future empirical studies.

The chapter also discussed the role that gender plays in moderating the convention attendance decision. Both similarities and differences were found, which provides an important contribution to the literature, given its approach and context. Notably, some convention attendance factors appeared to be more pertinent to men than women and vice versa, which were explained through reference to social role theory. For example, the opportunity to present a paper(s) was an important component for the male participants interviewed, whereas the networking opportunities were seen to be a more positive outcome of attending for women. Convention marketers and planners could include not only destination messaging in their website content but also details of the convention that will convince potential attendees to attend. The following chapter will reflect on the implications and conclusions of this study.

Chapter 9: Implications and Conclusions

This study aimed to develop a more complete understanding of, and the capacity to better predict, convention attendance decisions according to gender, informed by social role theory, and using the TPB as the theoretical framework. A sample of international association convention attendees in the medical field were examined. After presenting an overview of the research findings, this final chapter describes the theoretical and practical implications of the research. An account of the research limitations is then provided, followed by a discussion on future research directions.

Overview of the Results

In Chapter 4, three research objectives were developed to address a number of gaps in the convention attendance and gender literature. These research objectives were:

1. To explore the possible advantages or disadvantages, key influences and the facilitating and inhibiting factors that would affect the decision to attend a future international association convention.
2. To measure the relative strength and importance of the salient beliefs to predict convention attendance intentions for an upcoming convention in Melbourne.
3. To identify the role that gender might play in moderating the convention attendance decision.

The objectives provided the basis for the data collection, which, in accordance with the requirements of the TPB, was split into phase one and two of data collection. The Belief Elicitation phase (Phase One) involved eliciting a pool of behavioural, normative and control beliefs from a sample of attendees to understand the salient beliefs underlying the decision to attend or not to attend a future convention. The findings from the semi-structured interviews led to the identification of four behavioural beliefs, three normative beliefs, four control beliefs and three convention location beliefs. These beliefs were used to develop a self-complete questionnaire that was distributed to attendees at two international medical association conventions. This involved quantitatively testing the strength and importance of the modal salient set of beliefs that emerged in phase one with a larger sample of attendees in Phase Two, the Belief Measurement phase.

In relation to research objectives one and two, the advantages of attending the convention were identified in this study as relating to educational benefits, networking opportunities, presenting paper(s) and learning about the host country's approach to the field. The key influences were identified as supervisors/employers, colleagues and family. Finally, the facilitating and inhibiting factors were identified as cost, travel distance, time and having family accompany the convention attendee. In particular, the findings from the structural equation modelling revealed that of the potential predictors of intention to attend the next convention, PBC emerged as the strongest predictor of convention attendance intention for all respondents, followed by convention location and subjective norm. The findings indicated that the path between subjective norm, PBC and convention location were positive, meaning that hypotheses 3, 5 and 7 were supported which were: subjective norm has a positive effect on intention to attend a convention, PBC has a positive effect on intention to attend a

convention and convention location has a positive effect on intention to attend a convention. However, the path between attitude towards the behaviour and convention attendance intentions was non-significant, hence hypothesis 1 was not supported, suggesting that attitude is a weak predictor of intentions in this context.

The results of the study strongly confirm the works of other researchers with regard to the positive outcomes of attending a convention and the factors that could facilitate or impede convention attendance intentions (Mair & Thompson, 2009; Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Rittichainuwat et al., 2001; Severt et al., 2007; Zhang et al., 2007) and are also in accordance with the findings of Lee and Back (2007b) regarding the importance of behavioural control.

Research objective three aimed to identify the role that gender might play in moderating the convention attendance decision. In relation to this research objective, the study provides evidence that gender differences exist with respect to convention attendance, demonstrating that some convention attendance factors appeared to be more pertinent to men than women and vice versa. Whilst PBC emerged as the strongest predictor of convention attendance overall and the convention location had a positive relationship with intention to attend a future convention for both men and women, there was a stronger relationship between subjective norm and intentions for men. Therefore hypotheses 2, 4 and 6 were not supported.

Further analysis revealed that female attendees consider certain factors to be more influential in their convention attendance decision than men, such as the opportunity to learn about the host country's approach to their medical field. Men, however, see presenting papers to be more of a positive outcome of attending an upcoming convention compared to women. With regard to the indirect beliefs, there were statistically significant differences between the two groups. Female respondents placed greater importance on the following convention attendance beliefs when deciding to attend a future convention: tourist appeal, safety/security at the convention location, updating knowledge, networking with colleagues, managing conflicting family/work responsibilities, having the time to attend and having family accompany them. In addition, female respondents were more inclined to seek support from their family to attend a future convention than men. Notably, there were also similarities, such as having the financial resources, which would facilitate attendance for all respondents. The similarities found between men and women convention attendees may be a symptom of the blurring of the gender boundaries, yet the differences suggest that men's and women's behavioural intention is still, at least partially, distinguishable.

Theoretical Contributions to Convention Attendance Research

This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge concerning convention attendees and their behavioural intentions. An examination of the available literature in this field has highlighted the need to develop a more complete understanding of attendees, in order to discover how attendance decisions might vary for different groups of attendees. In particular, despite the fact that gender appears to be fundamental to travel behaviour, there has been a limited amount of research conducted to date to address gender perspectives in a convention attendance context. A possible reason for this might be that convention tourism literature is still in its incipient stages and scholars are only starting to identify the need for gender-specific research to help inform the planning and marketing of conventions. This noticeable paucity of gender analysis weakens our understanding of convention attendance behaviour and therefore merits attention.

To help fill some of this gap, this study adopted a social sciences perspective to assist in exploring convention attendance decisions with a gender lens. Drawing from social role theory and gender socialisation literature, this study provides a more in depth perspective of gender than the current body of convention attendance literature has offered to date. This research adds to the ongoing sociological debate about the similarities and differences between men and women in the convention tourism context. Given that this study is seeking to understand male and female convention attendees better, this requires a specific investigation of consumer decision-making. It is suggested that social role theory and its applications in consumer behaviour studies provides a theoretical contribution to aid in the explanation of gender differences in convention attendees' decision-making processes. In the context of this study, given that females are likely to develop traits that manifest themselves in communal behaviour such as the tendency to be friendly, unselfish and expressive, it would make sense that women value networking more than men (Eagly & Wood, 1991). Additionally, as the theory posits, women are considered to be more compliant to social influence, and more cooperative and conciliatory, which is congruent to the networking activities at conventions and the pressure to seek approval from family members to attend a convention (Eagly & Wood, 1999).

One of the most significant contributions from this study is uncovering that attendees perceive the "opportunity to learn about the host country's approach to their medical field" as a positive outcome of attending an upcoming convention. Based on the empirical findings to date, this is a new addition to our understanding about the reasons why people attend conventions, potentially because the medical convention attendance-related field has been relatively unexplored. This factor was particularly important for the female attendees, which might be related to the notion that women desire diversity-rich experiences that allow them to interact with people, to grow and develop personally and to learn new ideas (which are communal traits) (Presley et al., 2010). This finding is worthy of further investigation to explore whether attendees belonging to other medical or scientific professional associations consider finding out about developments in the host convention destination to be particularly important in their convention attendance decision.

In light of the fact that little is still known about convention attendance intentions, this study was based on the sound theoretical foundation of the TPB. Following well-established procedures, the TPB identified the salient beliefs of attendees underlying the target behaviour with regard to gender. The TPB was thus found to be useful for predicting convention attendance intentions decisions from a gender perspective.

Practical Contributions to the Convention Tourism Industry

The findings of this study could help practitioners provide maximum benefits to association members by better understanding the needs of their attendees. These results could help convention marketers attract more attendees by creating personalised and targeted messages that accentuate the key outcomes of attending their convention specific to the needs of men and women. To achieve the association's convention goals, a marketing and communications plan could be strategically designed to create maximum awareness among their target audiences and position the congress as the "must-attend event of the year". For example, if the goal of an association is to attract more women to their convention, as may be the case in some medical and scientific industries, the material aimed at attracting female attendees could highlight the social program, safety and security of the convention location and the opportunity to learn about the host destination's strengths in their field of interest. For male attendees, convention promotional campaigns could draw attention to the prospect of presenting papers and the convention location. This would be more effective than sending a generic message to all attendees about the convention, irrespective of their possible reasons for attending.

Additionally, it is important for convention marketers and planners to notify attendees in advance about a future convention to ensure they have blocked out their calendar to attend the event, have started to seek the support from their important referents, particularly from a financial perspective, and are looking forward to benefitting from the program content, networking opportunities and visiting the convention destination.

There are many tools convention planners and marketers can use to attract attendees such as the conference website, which is used as pivotal marketing tool and key source of information. The content of the website needs to inform, inspire and convince potential attendees to attend. The website could accentuate the educational benefits of attending a convention to build awareness and engage prospective attendees about the theme and keynote speakers. This is particularly important for female attendees who consider updating their knowledge to be the most positive outcome of attending the next convention.

When preparing marketing collateral for promotion, 'convention advocates' could be distributing the collateral at other conferences and events that they attend, in the lead up to the next convention. Based on the study's findings, marketing messages aimed at attracting more male attendees could appeal to the normative influences of attendance. As such, these 'convention advocates' could have an exhibition stand at a similar conference, with the purpose of recommending the convention face-to-face to potential male attendees.

Promotional assistance from the host convention bureau could be used to counteract any negative perceptions about the accessibility, travel distance, safety and security or tourist appeal of the convention location. These impediments to the convention attendance decision that were found in this study could be counteracted by highlighting the destination's attractive features. In this way, the possible reasons for not attending an upcoming convention could be minimised in order to create a desire to visit the convention location, particularly for females who are more concerned with accessibility and safety and security.

Social media can be an effective way to engage with potential attendees. Given that convention attendees respond to normative influences with regard to their decision to attend, social media platforms associated with the convention could have short videos of well-regarded colleagues or 'convention advocates' conveying the benefits of attending. This would be useful for females given that one's colleagues or peers appeared to be more influential referents to them compared to males. A highlight video from the previous convention could be shared by 'convention advocates' to provide a visual of what the next convention may look like. The idea is to create engagement opportunities that help drive conference registrations using visual aids. A powerful statement from a previous speaker with a graphic laid upon a headshot of the speaker could give speakers exposure that they may want to share with their own social media community. This could potentially have a flow on effect to new audiences, resulting in more first-time registrations and possibly new association memberships.

Finally, introducing an invite-a-colleague program that is aimed at reaching and engaging people who have not attended the convention before could be beneficial. The influence of past attendees' could be the key to boosting attendance numbers, particularly for the female target market who tend to be influenced by their colleagues to attend.

Limitations

No research study is without limitations, therefore the findings of this research should be interpreted in light of the following limitations. In particular, the Belief Elicitation phase data was collected during a time of world economic recovery and after a natural disaster in Chile in 2010. The earthquake that occurred in Chile a month prior to data collection may explain the concerns for safety when respondents were asked to comment on factors that would make it difficult or prevent them from attending the next convention in Santiago.

In this study, convenience sampling was used, which is a non-probabilistic sampling technique. While this type of sample is commonly used in convention attendance research and in some TPB studies because they are easily accessible to the researcher at the time of data collection (Jennings, 2010; Lam & Hsu, 2006; Yoo & Chon, 2008), future studies could consider one of the probabilistic sampling techniques, particularly if they are to analyse the data using SEM.

It cannot be assumed that the beliefs that emerged in the elicitation phase are transferable between different target populations, timeframes and behaviours. In this study, each phase used a different target population and target behaviour. The study also relied on participants' stated intention to attend a future convention instead of resurveying respondents at the time of the next convention and asking them whether they indeed returned. Given that each phase of data collection in a TPB study is inextricably linked to each other, the procedures require that the data collected be based on the same characteristics in order to elicit beliefs that are directly relevant to the behaviour under investigation. Otherwise, researchers risk compromising the hypothesised relationship between beliefs and behaviour and ultimately the validity of their results. Therefore, ideally it would have been valuable to use the same population for both the Belief Elicitation and Belief Measurement phase; however as discussed in Chapter 7, each convention is different and therefore has a different TACT each time it is held.

It may also be helpful to include non-attendees in the sample population to understand how their non-attendance might have an impact on their intentions to attend a future convention. The Belief Measurement phase could have identified people who were not willing to attend a future convention and a strategy could be developed to influence this group of people to in fact attend. That way, convention marketers could attract more attendees, which is one of their primary goals for holding conventions. However, designing an intervention to modify behaviour was beyond the scope of the present study.

The majority of studies in convention attendance do not conduct tests for non-response bias, which occurs when there is a significant difference between those who participated and those who did not (Lee & Back, 2005a). Future convention attendance studies could consider avoiding non-response bias by introducing soft demographic quotas in an attempt to reflect the population of interest. It is recognised that non-response bias may be important in quantitative research, however it was not factored into this study for time and financial reasons. Additionally, only attendees who had a sufficient command of the English language were included in the study, which was accepted as a potential source of sampling bias from the outset of the research.

Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that the data collected during the course of the study were from a "real-world sample" of the target population during the time in which they were undergoing real-world decision-making relevant to the target behaviour. In other words, the research was not compromised by using data collected at a time that was more removed from the decision-making context, where self-reported contemplations of a hypothetical convention may have compromised the validity of the findings (as was done in Borghans et al., 2010).

As explained in Chapter 4, the present study did not set out to obtain results that could be generalised to all international association conventions. Instead, the research focused primarily on testing for differences in the beliefs between selected conventions, assuming that those selected in the study were reasonably representative of the target population being investigated. However, what can be generalised to other contexts, behaviours and populations are the conceptual and theoretical principles as well as the methodological procedures employed in this study.

Directions for Future Research

In light of some of the limitations of the present study, a number of opportunities exist for future research. Much more research is warranted in the area of gender and convention tourism, before we can truly claim to understand convention attendee behaviour. There is a gap in our knowledge regarding how other demographic variables, such as income, frequency of attendance, cultural background, marital status and family life-cycle might have an impact on the convention attendance decision. Further, these variables could be explored in combination with gender to examine patterns of convention attendance behaviour. Studies could seek to explore what other factors are affected by gender and that might possibly make similarities and differences significant. Examining the moderating effect of different demographic variables is also recommended for further studies.

Given that this study is based on gender, future studies could adopt a critical feminist paradigm, which is aimed at conducting research on and for women. Research conducted from feminist perspectives remains important to understand the nuances of convention tourism more broadly, especially for specific groups of women other than the academics that have been studied to date. Alternatively, researchers could look at male attendees in isolation to help fill in the gaps of our knowledge about male attendees.

While traditional consumer research methods is still needed, future research could look at attendee behaviour using an ethnographic approach, as was done by Fox and McCormick (2009), whereby the researchers shadowed attendees during a convention. Such research would provide rich meaning into the experiential realm of our understanding relating to the convention attendance decision. Future researchers could also take a phenomenology perspective to study the lived experience of being an attendee. Both the ethnographic and phenomenological perspective could be explored with a gender agenda.

In an effort to attract more attendees to international association conventions, convention marketers and planners need to be sensitive to social and cultural issues due to the large numbers of diverse groups that are represented in the attendee population. Future cross-cultural studies are advocated to understand how people from varying cultural backgrounds differ in their convention attendance motivations and the benefits sought from convention attendance according to gender. There is a paucity of cross-cultural research, particularly in the context of international convention attendee behaviour. There is therefore a need to not only conduct future convention research in multiple destinations, but to compare findings across cultures and to analyse them from a gender perspective. Cross-cultural and gender comparisons could provide a more nuanced understanding of the role of gender in the convention attendee decision-making process. For example, some factors might be more relevant to women in certain cultures than others. Implications for convention marketers and planners concerning cross-cultural gender marketing warrants further investigation.

Other studies may want to focus on other types of attendees such as corporate or government attendees to identify how their attendance experience varies compared to association convention attendees. Additionally, other types of convention tourism such as incentive travel, which has an even more limited amount of research to date, could benefit from future examinations with regard to predicting intentions to attend (Mair, 2012). From an analytical perspective, gender is commonly operationalised as a dichotomous variable, whereby males and females are separated according to their biological differences. The similarities and differences that arise relate to their beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. However, it may be that not all biological males and females portray beliefs according to societal expectations. In some cases, it might be meaningful to analyse gender more broadly as a self-assessed continuous variable and measure the level of masculinity and femininity a respondent possesses, in order to fully explore the gender variable. Future studies could be conducted to further examine such theoretical assumptions in the convention travel discipline.

To further predict behavioural intentions of convention attendees, the reasoned action model (RAM) could be applied (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Given that the integrative model introduces background factors (e.g. demographics, culture, socio-economic variables, individual difference variables), replaces the construct of subjective norm to perceived norm and links PBC to actual control, convention attendee behavioural intentions could be conceptualised more broadly. Researchers could go a step further to explore how behaviour can be influenced through intervention. In this way, potential attendees who have formed an intention to attend an upcoming convention but have yet to register, could be exposed to an intervention strategy that uses persuasive messaging to positively affect behavioural intention.

In summary, research about convention attendees has grown over the past decade and has indicated a consistent movement toward acknowledging the complexities of the attendee decision-making process. The focus on gender perspectives in convention attendance literature has only begun to emerge as an important avenue for research. However, exploring gender is only part of understanding how to predict convention attendee behaviour. The increase in the quantity and quality of the literature as well as interpretive perspectives about gender, women and convention attendees has provided a foundation for further study.

Summary

This study has explored the influence of gender on the convention attendance travel decision. It provides an original contribution to the convention attendance literature due to its combination of conceptual and theoretical foundations. This study provides valuable information about the convention attendance decision that has practical implications for association planners and convention marketers.

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Appendix A – Belief Elicitation Explanatory Statement: Organisers

MONASH University

05 February 2010

Explanatory Statement Phase 1: Organising Committee

Understanding Convention Attendee Decision-making Behaviour: A Gender Perspective

This information sheet is for you to keep.

My name is Danielle Ramirez and I am conducting a research project as part of a PhD under the supervision of Dr. Jennifer Laing who is a lecturer within the Department of Management, Tourism Research Unit. I am seeking the permission of the Organising Committee for me to survey conference attendees. This conference was selected due to the type of conference, the number of attendees expected and destination in which the conference is being held.

My study is looking at the decision-making processes of men and women with regard to intention to attend a future convention. It is envisaged that the findings of this study will help conference organisers, meeting planners, destination marketers and associations understand convention attendance decisions in order to attract higher attendance numbers to future conferences.

The research project involves interviewing attendees onsite to learn why they do (or do not) plan to attend the next conference and their travel behaviour. I will be setting up a table/stand at the conference and approach attendees to participate. This should take no more than five minutes of their time. Those who participate in the study will be given a small gift as a gesture to thank them for their cooperation.

A consent form is not required, as the voluntary participation in an interview implies that attendees consent to participate in the research. The questions will not ask attendees to supply any personal or sensitive information that can identify them, and will not pose any risk of distress. As their participation is voluntary, attendees are free to withdraw their consent and discontinue at any time. No findings, which could identify attendees will be reported or published. Only the combined results of all participants will be reported or published. Access to the data is restricted to the researchers. Storage of the data collected will adhere to the University regulations and kept on University premises in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet for five years. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

If you would like to be informed of the aggregate research finding, please contact Danielle Ramirez by telephone on +61 03 9693 3304 or alternatively by email: [redacted] The findings are accessible for six months after the completion of the project.

If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigator:	If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research CF10/0092 – 2010000039 is being conducted, please contact:
Dr. Jennifer Laing Lecturer – Tourism Tourism Research Unit Monash University Berwick Campus [redacted]	Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) Building 3e Room 111 Research Office Monash University VIC 3800 [redacted]

Thank you
Danielle Ramirez

[redacted]

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Appendix B – Belief Elicitation Explanatory Statement: Attendees

MONASH University

05 February 2010

Explanatory Statement Phase 1: Attendees

Understanding Convention Attendee Decision-making Behaviour: A Gender Perspective

This information sheet is for you to keep.

My name is Danielle Ramirez and I am conducting a research project as part of a PhD under the supervision of Dr. Jennifer Laing who is a lecturer within the Department of Management, Tourism Research Unit. My study is looking at the decision-making processes of men and women with regard to intention to attend a future convention.

We have the support of the organising committee of this conference to survey attendees. This conference was selected due to the type of conference, the number of attendees expected and destination in which the conference is being held. It is envisaged that the findings of this study will help conference organisers, meeting planners, destination marketers and associations understand convention attendance decisions in order to attract higher attendance numbers to future conferences.

We are keen to learn why you do (or do not) plan to attend the next conference and your travel behaviour. To achieve this, I have selected you today to participate in the research, as I need your help in answering a few questions about conference attendance. This should take no more than five minutes of your time. Your participation is important to us and as a gesture to thank you for completing the questionnaire you will be given a small gift.

A consent form is not required, as your voluntary participation in an interview implies your consent to participate in the research. The questions will not ask you to supply any personal or sensitive information that can identify you, and will not pose any risk of distress. As your participation is voluntary, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue at any time. No findings, which could identify you will be reported or published. Only the combined results of all participants will be reported or published. Access to the data is restricted to the researchers. Storage of the data collected will adhere to the University regulations and kept on University premises in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet for five years. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

If you would like to be informed of the aggregate research finding, please contact the organising committee who will have access to the findings for six months after the completion of the project.

If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigator:	If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research CF10/0092 – 2010000039 is being conducted, please contact:
Dr. Jennifer Laing Lecturer – Tourism Tourism Research Unit Monash University Berwick Campus [redacted]	Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) Building 3e Room 111 Research Office Monash University VIC 3800 [redacted]

Thank you
Danielle Ramirez

[redacted]

[redacted]
ABN 12 377 614 012 CRICOS provider number 00008C

Appendix C – Belief Elicitation Permission Letter

World Congress of Internal Medicine
WCIM 2010
In conjunction with
PHYSICIANS WEEK
20 - 25 MARCH 2010
MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

19 February 2010

[redacted]

Dear Danielle Ramirez PhD Scholar

Permission Letter for "Understanding Convention Attendee Decision-making Behaviour: A Gender Perspective"

Thank you for your request to recruit participants from the World Congress in Internal Medicine 2010 (WCIM) for the above-named research.

I have read and understood the Explanatory Statement regarding the research and hereby give permission for this research to be conducted.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

Napier M Thomson
Chairman, Organising Committee
President, International Society of Internal Medicine

[redacted]

The Royal Australasian College of Physicians

Appendix D – Belief Elicitation Instrument

MONASH University

Phase 1 Elicitation Interview Questions

Instruction: Please take a few minutes to tell me what you think about the possibility of attending the next WCIM conference in Santiago (11-15 November 2012). Please tell me the thoughts that first come to mind.

Behavioural Belief Questions

What do you think are the **advantages** or **good things** that could occur by attending the next conference in Santiago, 11-15 November 2012?

_____

_____

_____

[ANYTHING ELSE?]_____

What do you think are the **disadvantages** or **bad things** that could occur by attending the next conference in Santiago, 11-15 November 2012?

_____

_____

_____

[ANYTHING ELSE?]_____

Normative Belief Questions

Who (individuals or groups) do you think would **approve** or think you should attend the next conference in Santiago, 11-15 November 2012?

_____

_____

_____

[ANYTHING ELSE?]_____

Who (individuals or groups) do you think would **disapprove** or think you should not attend the next conference in Santiago, 11-15 November 2012?

_____

_____

_____

[ANYTHING ELSE?]_____

Control Belief Questions

What factors or circumstances that would **make it easy** or **enable** you to attend the next conference in Santiago, 11-15 November 2012?

_____

_____

_____

[ANYTHING ELSE?]_____

What factors or circumstances that would **make it difficult** or **prevent** you from attending the next conference in Santiago, 11-15 November 2012?

_____

_____

_____

[ANYTHING ELSE?]_____

Demographic Questions

What is your gender?

☐ Male ☐ Female

Which of the following age groups do you belong to?

☐ 18-25 ☐ 26-34 ☐ 35-44 ☐ 45-54 ☐ 55-64 ☐ 65+

What is your marital status?

☐ single, no children ☐ couple, no children ☐ single with children living at home ☐ couple with children living at home ☐ single and children have left home ☐ couple and children have left home

What is your country of residence?

_____

Are you a member of the association holding this conference (i.e. pay a membership fee)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

How many times have you attended this association's conferences before this one?

☐ Never ☐ Once ☐ Twice ☐ 3 times ☐ 4 times ☐ 5 times or more

Thank you for your participation

Appendix E – Belief Measurement Explanatory Statement: Organisers

MONASH University

12 December 2009

Explanatory Statement Phase 2: Organising Committee

Understanding Convention Attendee Decision-making Behaviour: A Gender Perspective

This information sheet is for you to keep.

My name is Danielle Ramirez and I am conducting a research project as part of a PhD under the supervision of Dr. Jennifer Laing who is a lecturer within the Department of Management, Tourism Research Unit. I am seeking the permission of the Organising Committee for me to survey conference attendees. This conference was selected due to the type of conference, the number of attendees expected and destination in which the conference is being held.

My study is looking at the decision-making processes of men and women with regard to intention to attend a future convention. It is envisaged that the findings of this study will help conference organisers, meeting planners, destination marketers and associations understand convention attendance decisions in order to attract higher attendance numbers to future conferences.

The research project involves surveying attendees onsite to understand why they chose to attend the conference, intentions to attend future conferences, satisfaction with the host city as a Business Events destination and travel behaviour. I will be setting up a table/stand at the conference and approach attendees to complete a self-completed questionnaire which would require 5-8 minutes of their time. Those who agree to participate in the study and complete the questionnaire will be given a small gift (Australian clip-on koala and chocolate) as a gesture to thank them for their cooperation.

Being in this study is voluntary and attendees are under no obligation to consent to participation. However, if they do consent to participate, they may only withdraw prior to the questionnaire being submitted. No findings, which could identify attendees will be reported or published. Only the combined results of all participants will be reported or published. Access to the data is restricted to the researchers. Storage of the data collected will adhere to the University regulations and kept on University premises in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet for five years. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

If you would like to be informed of the aggregate research finding, please contact Danielle Ramirez by telephone on [redacted] or alternatively by email: [redacted]au. The findings are accessible for six months after the completion of the project.

If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigator:	If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research CF10/0092 – 2010000039 is being conducted, please contact:
Dr. Jennifer Laing Lecturer – Tourism Tourism Research Unit Monash University Berwick Campus [redacted]	Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) Building 3e Room 111 Research Office Monash University VIC 3800 [redacted]

Thank you
Danielle Ramirez

[redacted]

Appendix F – Belief Measurement Explanatory Statement: Attendees

MONASH University

February 2011

Explanatory Statement Phase 2: Attendees

Understanding Convention Attendee Decision-making Behaviour: A Gender Perspective

This information sheet is for you to keep.

My name is Danielle Ramirez and I am conducting a research project as part of a PhD under the supervision of Dr. Jennifer Laing who is a lecturer within the Department of Management, Tourism Research Unit. My study is looking at delegates' intentions to attend a future convention.

We have the support of the organising committee of this conference to survey attendees. This conference was selected due to the type of conference, the number of attendees expected and destination in which the conference is being held. It is envisaged that the findings of this study will help conference organisers, meeting planners, destination marketers and associations understand convention attendance decisions in order to attract higher attendance numbers to future conferences.

We are keen to learn why you chose to attend this conference and why you do (or do not) plan to attend the next one. The questionnaire will take 5-7 minutes of your time to complete. Your participation is important to us and as a gesture to thank you for completing the questionnaire you will be given a small gift.

Being in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. However, if you do consent to participate, you may only withdraw prior to the questionnaire being submitted. No findings, which could identify you will be reported or published. Only the combined results of all participants will be reported or published. Access to the data is restricted to the researchers. Storage of the data collected will adhere to the University regulations and kept on University premises in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet for five years. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

If you would like to be informed of the aggregate research finding, please contact the organising committee who will have access to the findings for six months after the completion of the project.

If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigator:	If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research CF10/0092 – 2010000039 is being conducted, please contact:
Dr. Jennifer Laing Lecturer – Tourism Tourism Research Unit Monash University Berwick Campus [redacted]	Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) Building 3e Room 111 Research Office Monash University VIC 3800 [redacted]

Thank you
Danielle Ramirez

[redacted]

[redacted]

Appendix G (1) – Belief Measurement Permission Letters

Majlis Kebangsaan Bagi Orang Buta, Malaysia
National Council For the Blind, Malaysia
94B Jalan Tun Sambanthan, 50470 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Tel: (603) 2272 4959 / 2273 5508 Fax: (603) 2272 4960 E-mail: ncftb@po.jaring.my
Reg. No: 299 / 86 (W/P)

Permission Letter for "Understanding Convention Attendee Decision-making Behaviour: A Gender Perspective"

14 May 2010

Danielle Ramirez
[redacted]

Dear Danielle Ramirez PhD Scholar,

Thank you for your request to recruit participants from the 10th International Conference on Low Vision 2011 in Kuala Lumpur for the above-named research.

I have read and understood the Explanatory Statement regarding the research and hereby give permission for this research to be conducted.

Yours Sincerely,

[redacted]
Executive Director
for Dato' S. Kulasegaran
President
National Council for the Blind, Malaysia (NCBM)

Appendix G (2) – Belief Measurement Permission Letters

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR
ISMRM
MAGNETIC RESONANCE IN MEDICINE

11 June 2010

Danielle Ramirez
Building 901, Berwick Campus
Tourism Research Unit
Faculty of Business and Economics
MONASH UNIVERSITY VIC 3800

Re: Permission Letter for "Understanding Convention Attendee Decision-making Behaviour: A Gender Perspective"

Dear Danielle Ramirez PhD Scholar,

Thank you for your request to recruit participants from the International Society for Magnetic Resonance in Medicine 19th Scientific Meeting & Exhibition 2011 in Montreal for the above-named research.

I have read and understood the Explanatory Statement regarding the research and hereby give permission for this research to be conducted.

It is understood by the ISMRM that Monash University will be responsible for all costs associated with this research project and the representative sent to the destination of Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Associated costs include, but are not limited to, airfare, hotel accommodations, incidentals, food and beverage and any furniture rentals required to assist in survey. As well, the ISMRM will review and approve the final questionnaire and approve the small token gift give-away.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Roberta A. Kravitz
Executive Director
International Society for Magnetic Resonance in Medicine (ISMRM)

[redacted]

International Society for Magnetic Resonance in Medicine
2030 Addison Street, Suite 700
Berkeley, CA 94704 USA
Telephone: +1 (510) 841-1899 Fax: +1 (510) 841-2340
E-mail: info@ismrm.org Web site: http://www.ismrm.org

Appendix H – Belief Measurement Instrument

melbourne convention + visitors bureau MONASH University

A study about your future conference attendance

Please answer each of the following questions by placing an X on the line that represents how strongly you believe in the statement. Some of the questions may appear to be similar, but they do address somewhat different issues. Please read each question carefully.

1. By attending the next conference in Melbourne (31 Mar-4 Apr 2014), I will update my knowledge

Likely _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Unlikely

2. For me to update my knowledge is:

Important _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Unimportant

3. By attending the next conference in Melbourne, I will network with colleagues

Likely _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Unlikely

4. For me to networking with colleagues is:

Important _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Unimportant

5. By attending the next conference in Melbourne, I will be able to present a paper(s)

☐ Not applicable

Likely _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Unlikely

6. For me to present a paper(s): ☐ Not applicable

Important _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Unimportant

7. By attending the next conference in Melbourne, I will learn about the host country's approach to my field

Likely _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Unlikely

8. For me to learn about the host country's approach to my field is:

Relevant _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Irrelevant

9. My supervisor/employer thinks that: ☐ Not applicable

I SHOULD Attend the next conference in Melbourne

_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____

I SHOULD NOT Attend the next conference in Melbourne

10. When it comes to attending conferences: ☐ Not applicable

I WANT TO DO what my supervisor/employer thinks I should do

_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____

I DO NOT WANT TO DO what my supervisor/employer thinks I should do

11. My colleagues think that: ☐ Not applicable

I SHOULD Attend the next conference in Melbourne

_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____

I SHOULD NOT Attend the next conference in Melbourne

12. When it comes to attending conferences: ☐ Not applicable

I WANT TO DO what my colleagues think I should do

_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____

I DO NOT WANT TO DO what my colleagues think I should do

13. For me attending the next conference in Melbourne would be:

a. Enjoyable _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Unenjoyable

b. Interesting _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Boring

c. Job relevant _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Job irrelevant

d. Career helpful _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Career unhelpful

14. My family members think that: ☐ Not applicable

I SHOULD Attend the next conference in Melbourne

_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____

I SHOULD NOT Attend the next conference in Melbourne

15. When it comes to attending conferences: ☐ Not applicable

I WANT TO DO what my family thinks I should do

_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____

I DO NOT WANT TO DO what my family thinks I should do

16. Most people who are important to me think:

I SHOULD Attend the next conference in Melbourne

_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____

I SHOULD NOT Attend the next conference in Melbourne

17. Most people whose opinions I value would:

APPROVE of me attending the next conference in Melbourne

_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____

DISAPPROVE of me attending the next conference in Melbourne

18. Most people in a similar role to me at work would attend the next conference in Melbourne

Agree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Disagree

19. I expect to have the money/funding to attend the next conference in Melbourne

Likely _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Unlikely

20. Having the money/funding would enable me to attend the next conference in Melbourne

Agree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Disagree

21. I expect that the travel distance to Melbourne will be a concern in my decision to attend the next conference in Melbourne

Likely _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Unlikely

22. Travelling far would make it:

EASY To attend the next conference in Melbourne

_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____

DIFFICULT To attend the next conference in Melbourne

23. I expect to have the time to attend the next conference in Melbourne

Likely _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Unlikely

24. Having the time would enable me to attend the next conference in Melbourne

Agree ____:____:____:____:____:____:____ Disagree

25. I expect that my family (e.g. partner &/or children) will accompany me to the next conference in Melbourne

Likely ____:____:____:____:____:____:____ Unlikely

26. Having my family accompany me would make it:

EASY To attend the next conference in Melbourne ____:____:____:____:____:____:____ **DIFFICULT** To attend the next conference in Melbourne

27. Attending the next conference in Melbourne is my decision

Agree ____:____:____:____:____:____:____ Disagree

28. I am confident that if I want to, I could attend the next conference in Melbourne

True ____:____:____:____:____:____:____ False

29. If I really wanted to, I could attend the next conference in Melbourne

Likely ____:____:____:____:____:____:____ Unlikely

30. How important to you is the safety/security at a conference destination?

Important ____:____:____:____:____:____:____ Unimportant

31. Melbourne is a safe/secure destination for a conference

Agree ____:____:____:____:____:____:____ Disagree

32. How important to you is the accessibility (ease of travel) to a conference destination?

Important ____:____:____:____:____:____:____ Unimportant

33. Melbourne is a destination that is easily accessible for a conference

Agree ____:____:____:____:____:____:____ Disagree

34. How important to you is the conference destination's tourist appeal?

Important ____:____:____:____:____:____:____ Unimportant

35. Melbourne is a destination that has tourist appeal

Agree ____:____:____:____:____:____:____ Disagree

36. For me the next conference destination, Melbourne, is an ideal meeting place

Agree ____:____:____:____:____:____:____ Disagree

37. I am satisfied with Melbourne being the next conference destination

Agree ____:____:____:____:____:____:____ Disagree

38. Overall, I have a favourable image of the next conference destination, Melbourne

Agree ____:____:____:____:____:____:____ Disagree

39. I intend to attend the next conference in Melbourne

Likely ____:____:____:____:____:____:____ Unlikely

40. I plan to attend the next conference in Melbourne

Agree ____:____:____:____:____:____:____ Disagree

41. I will make an effort to attend the next conference in Melbourne

True ____:____:____:____:____:____:____ False

42. Are there any other factors that would influence you to come to Melbourne for the next conference?

_____

_____

_____

Please tell us about yourself

43. What is your gender? *Mark ☒ ONE only*

☐ Male ☐ Female

44. Which of the following age groups do you belong to? *Mark ☒ ONE only*

☐ 18-25 ☐ 26-34 ☐ 35-44 ☐ 45-54 ☐ 55-64 ☐ 65+

45. What is your marital status? *Mark ☒ ONE only*

☐ single, no children ☐ couple, no children ☐ single with children at home ☐ couple with children at home ☐ single and children have left home ☐ couple and children have left home

46. What is your country of residence?

_____

47. Are you a member of the association holding this conference (i.e. pay a membership fee)? *Mark ☒ ONE only*

☐ Yes ☐ No

48. How many times have you attended this association's international conferences before this one?
Mark ☒ ONE only

☐ None ☐ Once ☐ Twice ☐ 3 times ☐ 4 times ☐ 5 times or more

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.
Please return it to the Vision Australia stand for YOUR FREE GIFT.