

The 2nd International Conference on Integrated Information

## International Events: the impact of the conference location

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### Abstract

The event industry is one of the most rapidly developing types of business, not only in terms of the financial revenue that it generates, but also in terms of the destination's development that hosts the event. The destination is one of the most important factors that shapes the decision making process of potential participants, regarding their participation in conferences. Therefore, conference organizers should invest on the evaluation criteria that advance the dynamic of the location. This leads to the employment of a communication strategy, based on the dynamic of the conference location. The paper presents the evaluation criteria as derived from the literature review and evaluated by participants. The outcomes of the research demonstrates the significance of each evaluation criterion and extension of the factor of "Conference Location". A dynamic Simulation Model is further demonstrated in an attempt to help conference organizers to appropriately allocate the resources on this factor.

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Events, Conference Location, Communication Strategy, Dynamic Simulation Modeling

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### 1. Location, location and location

The interest in the value of academic conferences is steadily growing in the last years, according to the statistics of the ICCA [1]. The majority of cities already has the infrastructure and necessary facilities to host events of this caliber. [2].

The convention industry is a global industry with high competitiveness. However, the amount of research conducted is inconsistent with the rapid development of the industry, reducing in this way its dynamic [3-4]. Therefore, despite the increased performance of the sector, scientific conferences remains a less researched area, in terms of employing an integrated communication approach. Insufficient attention has been paid either in

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developing an understanding of communication strategies adopted by conferences, either in the assessment of the degree to which they are successful [5].

Table 1.1: Conference Statistics 2001 – 2010 (source: ICCA, 2011).

Year	Events (Meetings)
2001	5,262
2002	6,090
2003	6,294
2004	7,524
2005	7,825
2006	8,549
2007	9,036
2008	9,610
2009	9,225
2010	9,120

Lee and Back (2005) [6] report the results of the survey of 137 scientific articles, published in the most famous journals of the convention industry for the period from 1990 to 2003. A recent research in 144 scientific articles in this sector for the period 2000-2009, shows a faint, almost imperceptible, difference in the amount of publications [7]. Traditionally, the research focuses on the economic and social impacts that conferences offer in destinations [8-10]. Based on the review of a 14 year old season, Lee and Back (2005) [6] conclude that researchers mainly focus on the choice of conference location, destination marketing and economic impact.

The factor of the conference location is of paramount importance for the successful organization of scientific conferences. In their research, the Borghans, Romans and Sauermann (2010) [11] argue that the factor of the conference location is the second most important factor, which is able to shape the decision making process of potential delegates, regarding their participation in conferences. The literature review reveals multiple criteria regarding the significance and complexity of conference's location [12-19]:

- E Destination with infrastructure, able to meet the needs of both the conference organizers (convention center), and the needs of participants in terms of accommodation and facilities.
- E Destination with historical and cultural heritage, able to increase the interest of participants and by extension the levels of participation.
- E Destination with appropriate weather conditions that allows the smooth run of conferences.
- E Destination with adequate availability of travel services, able to meet the needs of visitors in terms of nourishment and entertainment.
- E Destination, able to offer a variety of transportation modes so that it can be easily approached.
- E Safe destination, free of high terrorism, theft and injuries.
- E Calm environment that ensures the smooth running of conferences, without interference or disturbance from the local community.

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