



ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT
STUDIES TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT
PROGRAM

ASSESSMENT OF CONFERENCE TOURISM
DEVELOPMENT IN ADDIS ABABA: CURRENT PRACTICES,
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

BY:
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OPPORTUNITIES

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Certification

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Seid Mohamed entitled “assessment of conference tourism development in Addis Ababa: current practices, challenges and opportunities” submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Masters in Tourism Development and Management complies with the regulation of the University and meets the accepted standard with respect to originality and quality.

Signed by the Examining Committee

Examiner Signature.....Date.....

Examiner Signature.....Date.....

Advisor Signature.....Date.....

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work towards the Master of Tourism Development and Management that is, to the best of my knowledge contains no material previously published by another person nor material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree of the University, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CVB	Convention and Visitors Bureaus
ETB	Ethiopian Birr
EU	European Union
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FDI	Foreign direct investments
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IATA	International Air Transport Association
ICC	International Congress & Convention
ICCA	International Congress & Convention Association
ILO	International Labour Organization
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
MICE	Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions
MoCT	Ministry of Culture and Tourism
NGOs	Non -governmental organizations
OAU	Organization for African Unity
PCO	Professional Convention Organizers ()
PPPs	Public-private partnerships
SSA-	Sub-Saharan Africa
TTCI	Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index
UN	United Nation
UNDP	United Nation Development Program
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNWTO	United Nation World Tourism Organization
WTTC	World Travel & Tourism Council
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council

ABSTRACT

The main objective of this research was to assess the current practices, challenges and opportunities of conference tourism development in Addis Ababa. The researcher used descriptive design to answer the objective of the research and used both primary and secondary data. Respondents are composed of 150 conference participants (meet them in star rated hotels conference centers or meeting halls. They have done the questionnaire during the coffee break on individuals hotels which are randomly selected, 14 event organizers and conference planners who are working in those hotels, 3 concerned government offices are ECB,AAACTB,AAICEC and one tourism professional which are purposively selected to get reliable and convenient data for the research purpose. Survey data was processed using SPSS version 26 and analyzed via descriptive statistics. The results of the study indicated that conference tourism sector in Ethiopia is in a very young stage. Though Ethiopia has huge potential in attracting and organizing regional, continental, and global conferences, the sector is still struggling with many challenges. The lack of pre and post (both in the past and current) entertainment activities for conference participants, as a person worked long years in the industry and based on my observation conference centers are not well equipped with facilities, language/communication barriers, lack of cooperation among stakeholders, absence of policy package, lack of well-designed conference infrastructure, absence of one window service for conference participants are major challenges. Access of cheap labor, the presence of various national and international organizations such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, African Union, European Union, Inter governmental authority on development, and the city Addis Ababa is also the seat of more than 135 embassies and NGOs, are some opportunities for the development of conference tourism in Addis Ababa. Furthermore, access to the center of the city, safety and security issues are one part of challenges, countries past record/ experience, tolerance of others culture, venue facilities, costs related with conference product and service and quality of product and services are the major challenges or factor which affect the selection of conference center and venue. Therefore, the researcher recommended that the current organizational structure for the MICE sector should be well redesigned in a way that give full mandate, responsibility and authority for conference tourism sector by the government (Ethiopian Culture and Tourism minister). Furthermore, adequate budget should be allocated by the Ministry of Tourism and Convention Bureau to participate on international BID to bring international conferences to Addis Ababa. Moreover, hospitality professionals should be assigned to work with internal revenue administration office at Bole airport terminals as the tourists and conference participants need good treatment with good welcoming hospitality service.

Key terms: - Meeting, Convention, Conference and Destination.

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in 2012, the tourism industry has experienced significant growth and diversification over the past six decades, establishing itself as one of the leading and fastest-growing economic sectors worldwide. This growth has resulted in the emergence of new destinations that challenge the traditional dominance of North America and Europe. Based on the long-term planning and evaluation conducted by UNWTO in 2012, it is projected that the number of tourists from regions outside of North America and Europe will increase by an average of 3.3% per year from 2010 to 2030. This indicates that approximately 43 million international tourist arrivals can be expected annually, reaching a total of around 1.8 billion by 2030.

International tourism plays a pivotal role in the global development and integration process, serving as a significant driver for economic growth, enhancing a country's competitiveness in the global market, and improving the overall welfare of its population. Presently, the tourism sector employs over 250 million individuals, representing approximately one-twelfth of the global workforce. Furthermore, it contributes to 7% of total investments, 11% of global consumer spending, and 5% of tax revenues, while also accounting for a substantial portion of world trade in services, amounting to one-third (UNWTO Statistics, 2017).

The acronym MICE, which stands for meeting, incentives, conference, convention, and events, is widely recognized in the field of business tourism. Business tourism is a prominent sector within the tourism industry, encompassing various subsectors. According to Swarbrooke (2001), there are approximately fifteen different subsectors within business travel and tourism. It is noteworthy that around 40% of business travelers transition into leisure or other forms of tourism following successful business trips (Swarbrooke, 2001).

According to research, the decision-making process of conference tourism participants and event organizers is challenged by various factors when selecting a destination. These factors include political and technological factors, as well as economic and socio-cultural factors. A conference is a meeting for deliberation or negotiation, while a congress is a larger gathering of

fellow professionals from both domestic and international locations. Conferences can serve as important show windows and posters. Often, the primary motive for organizing a Conference is to increase the organizer's visibility. In the age of globalization, place promotion policies are crucial for cities seeking to enhance their competitive power (ECE, 1998; Logan & Molotch, 1996).

Conference tourism is a significant component of business tourism, encompassing the planning, travel, and participation in conferences and meetings, both domestically and internationally (Ladkin, 2006). According to ICCA statistics from 2010, Africa's share of the global conference industry stands at approximately 3.1%. Currently, there are 32 convention destinations available in Africa. The countries that hosted the highest number of meetings in 2010 were South Africa (86), Egypt (35), Kenya (27), Morocco (25), Tunisia (20), Ghana (9), Nigeria (9), Senegal (9), and Ethiopia (8) (Elzinga, 2011).

Ethiopia has played a significant role in various organizations, including the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the African Development Bank (ADB), and the United Nations (UN). This active participation and leadership have positioned Ethiopia as a favorable destination for hosting numerous conferences, making the country, particularly Addis Ababa, a political center for Africa and a home to many international organizations. According to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MoCT) in 2012, Ethiopia welcomed a total of 1,828,149 inbound tourists between 2006 and 2010. Among these visitors, 157,264 were conference tourists, accounting for 8.6% of the total. Addis Ababa has been a host to several international and local conferences, attracting participants for varying durations. Despite being considered a conference hub of Africa, there is currently no purpose-built conference venue in Addis Ababa, apart from the African Union. As a result, private hotels have taken on the responsibility of hosting the majority of conferences in the city, significantly increasing their sales volume. (Source)

Addis Ababa has the potential to become one of the leading conference destinations in Africa. According to the ICCA's 2011 report, Addis Ababa was ranked 9th in Africa and 197th globally in the international conference tourism market. However, the sector's underperformance is due to insufficient conference facilities and related services in the city, as well as a lack of skilled professionals in this vibrant industry. This has negatively impacted Addis Ababa's competitiveness as one of the important convention centers in Africa. Therefore,

the main focus of this research is to assess the current practices, challenges, and opportunities for conference tourism development in Addis Ababa.

1.2.Statement of the Problem

The MICE sector comprises four primary pillars, namely Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions. This term is an acronym for a specialized niche of group tourism that is dedicated to planning, booking, and facilitating conferences, seminars, and other events. The MICE travel industry involves several components, including corporate meeting planners, meetings and convention departments of hotels, conference centers or cruise ships, food and beverage managers, logistics firms, private tour operators and transfer companies, incentive houses, professional trade organizations, tourism boards, tourism trade associations, and travel-selling professionals. Due to the extensive organization and planning involved, typically years in advance, travel sellers specializing in MICE are usually affiliated with large corporate agencies. The MICE sector is also known as the Meetings Industry and Events Industry (Manzoor Ahmad Khan, 2015).

Since the 1960s, Addis Ababa has been a significant host of conventions and conferences pertaining to Africa (Kaleab, 2012). Despite the city's potential to benefit from MICE tourism, it has not yet reached its expected level. Researchers have found that there is a lack of sufficient studies regarding the current challenges and opportunities of conference tourism in Addis Ababa. Additionally, there is limited literature available on conference tourism in both Addis Ababa and Ethiopia.

Addis Ababa possesses significant potential to emerge as a prominent MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) destination in Africa, thereby presenting a substantial opportunity for event organizers. Nevertheless, the city presently lacks a sufficient number of renowned event organizers and fails to fully exploit its capabilities in marketing and attracting international MICE tourism.

As the researcher himself has been working in the MICE Tourism sector for many years and this has triggered him to do further research on the area. Few empirical studies have been conducted in subject area. A study conducted by Kalleab (2012) was mainly aimed to assess conference tourism challenges and prospects in Addis Ababa. Though the above researcher analysed the challenges and prospects of conference tourism, The difference between my research & Kaleb: he were focused on challenge of Conference Tourism but failed to acknowledge The existing practice & opportunities

with in the sector. List of some of reviewed works on MICE & Conference tourism were: Kaleb 2012, Dawit 2014, Wondimaghen 2019 & Gebeyehu 2020.

The hotels were visited were: Sheraton, Marriot, Hyatt Regency, Capital, Sapphire and Tolip Olympia.

there are several changes at global level which affected the current conference tourism sector since the conduct of the above study. On the other hand, Wondmagegn (2019) tries to study the challenges and opportunities of event organizers in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. However, his research is focused

on the event organizers rather than the current practices, challenges and opportunities of the conference tourism. Furthermore, Gebeyahu Ambelu (2020) has examined the contribution and challenges of MICE Tourism development in Ethiopia. The researcher, however, studied the challenges of MICE Tourism in Ethiopia in general without going deep into conference tourism part. Having the above observed problems and research gaps in mind, this research was focused on the current practices, challenges and opportunities of conference tourism in Addis Ababa.

1.3. Research Question

- What is the current situation of conference tourism practices in Addis Ababa?
- What are the challenges of conference tourism development in Addis Ababa
- What opportunities are available for conference tourism development in Addis Ababa?

1.4. Objective of the Study

1.4.1. General Objective

The overall aim of the research was to assess the current practices, challenges and opportunities for the development of conference tourism in Addis Ababa.

1.4.2. Specific objective

- To evaluate the current situation of conference tourism practices in Addis Ababa.
- To identify the challenges of conference tourism development in Addis Ababa.
- To assess the opportunities available for conference tourism development in Addis Ababa.

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study helps to develop insight on the current practices challenges and opportunities of conference tourism in Addis Ababa. The results of the study also help government officials, conference centres, event organizers and meeting planners as an input for making sound decisions.

The government will beneficiary from the findings of this research as they use the research as input to develop policy directives. For the conference centres, the research will help them how to plan simple and attainable conference in the city. Event organizers and meeting planners will also beneficiary from the research how to work collaborate with other stake holders of conference tourism. Finally, the research can also serves as a work of reference for those interested academicians or researchers.

1.6. Scope of the Study

The scope of the study can be delimited in terms of theme, geographical area, and the methodology adopted.

- Conceptual scope: Conceptually this study is delimited to examine the current practices, challenges and opportunities of conference tourism development in Addis Ababa. Apart from conference, this study didn't investigate the other components of MICE Tourism sector such as incentives and exhibitions.
- Geographical scope: Geographically, this study is delimited to Addis Ababa and pertinent data were gathered from various stakeholders in the city.
- Methodological scope: Methodologically, the researcher used mixed approach (both qualitative and quantitative research methods) and descriptive design. Pertinent data were gathered using structured questionnaire, interview as well as document review. As the main objective of the study is assessing the development of conference tourism in Addis Ababa, current practice, challenges and opportunities the research is limited conceptually on conference tourism.

1.7. Limitations of the study

One of the limitations of the study is accessibility of data from various stakeholders. It was much better if the research considered all the relevant chains in the sub sections among various actors as well as service providers of conference tourism. On top of this, the small sample

size could limit the generalizability of the research findings. The other limitation is that the study is descriptive in nature and couldn't precisely indicate the extent of effect of various factors on the development of conference tourism. Moreover, inadequate number of researches, policy documents, and reliable statistical data were the major challenges which might affect the comprehensiveness of the study.

1.8. Organization of the Study

This study was organized into five chapters. Chapter one is the introduction part, which contains background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, research objectives, significance of the study, scope of the study, limitation of the study and organization of the study. Chapter two were presenting a review of the literature which contains theoretical literature, empirical literature and conceptual framework of the study. Whereas, Chapter three comprises the research methodology, which includes research approach & design, population, sample size & sampling techniques, data sources & data collection methods, reliability & validity of data, methods of data analyses, ethical

Consideration and so forth. The fourth chapter is about data presentation, analysis and interpretation of the research findings. Finally, the fifth chapter presents the summary, conclusion and recommendation based on the finding of the study.

1.9. Definition of key terms

- Meeting: A structured gathering that convenes individuals to deliberate on a subject of mutual interest (Davidson 1994)
- Convention: A significant gathering predominantly held in the United States of America is commonly referred to as a convention, typically organized on an annual basis. In contrast, the terms conference or congress are more commonly employed in other regions to denote similar events (S.Medlik, 2003)
- Conference: A participatory gathering has been organized to facilitate discussions, gather factual information, address problems, and engage in consultations. Typically, this conference is of a smaller scale compared to a congress.(Pivac et al..2016)
- Determinants of tourism: There are various factors that determine the scale and pattern of participation in tourism.(S.Medlik, 2003).
- Destination: The destination offers a diverse array of outlets, facilities, services, attractions, and infrastructures, making it an ideal location for hosting various events and attracting business tourism.Swartbrookeetal.,(2001)

1.10. MICE vs Conference tourism differences & similarities:

MICE focuses on the organization, coordination & participation of, attendees for business event, large scale exhibition & incentives in order to understand the industry as a whole while conference is gather professional over common interest or topic.it usually contain a large group of people attendance & are typically an event center or convention center The purpose of conference is to expand industry knowledge, network with likeminded individuals & engage with the topics at hand.

There similarities, both are shared the same challenges and conference tourism is one part of MICE tourism.

CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Concepts of MICE Tourism

Tourism can be broadly categorized into two main types: business tourism and leisure tourism. Both forms of tourism require essential elements such as information, infrastructure, transportation, and accommodation (Cooper et al, 2008). The concept of business travel is closely associated with the practice of traveling for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Congresses, Conventions, and Exhibitions (MICE). Business tourism encompasses all aspects of the traveler's experience when staying overnight away from their permanent place of residence. (Swarbrooke& Horner, 2001).

In the travel industry, the acronym "MICE" stands for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions. This term refers to a specific type of group tourism that involves the planning, booking, and facilitation of conferences, seminars, and other events. MICE travel, also known as the meetings or events sector, is comprised of various components, including corporate meeting planners, meeting and convention departments of hotels, conference centers, or cruise ships, food and beverage managers, logistics firms, private tour operators and transfer companies, incentive houses, professional trade organizations, tourism boards, tourism trade associations, and travel-selling professionals. (Manzoor A. Khan., 2015).

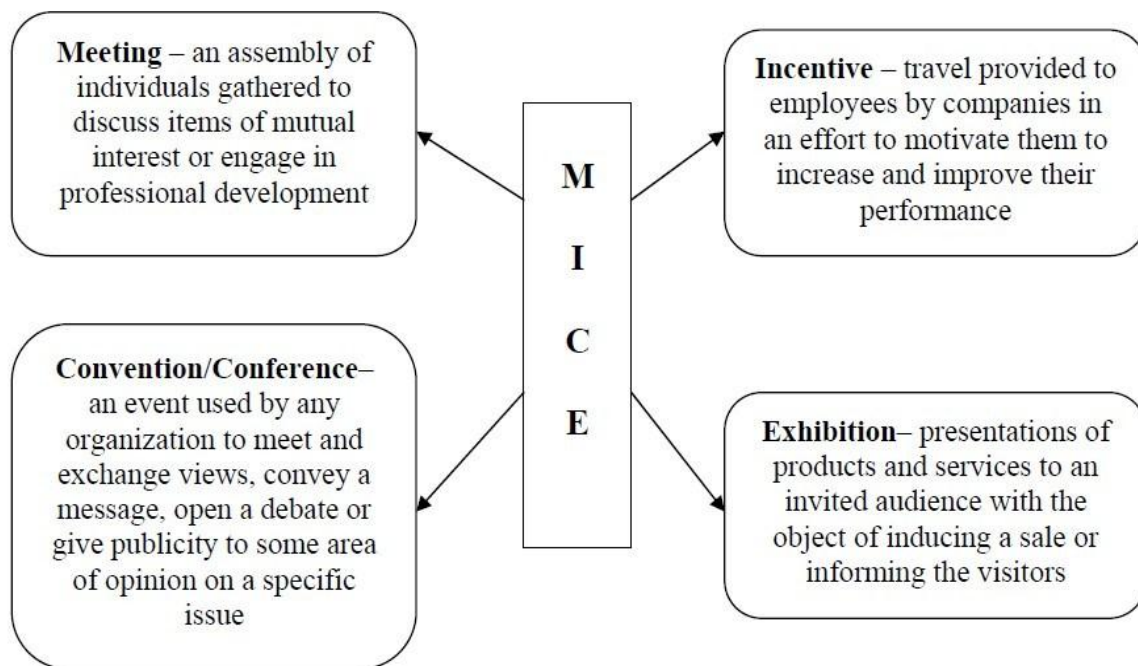


Figure2. 1 MICE components definitions (source Adopted from Tetiana D., (2020)

2.2. Historical Development of Conference Tourism

Business tourism plays a significant role in bridging the gap between culture and commerce. The global business programs that fall under the umbrella of MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) events have a positive impact on the development of historical and cultural tourism, thereby enhancing the appeal of tourist destinations in a particular region. The concept of MICE was introduced in 2006 by the International Congress & Convention Association (ICCA), Meeting Professionals International (MPI), Reeds Travel Exhibitions, and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) with the aim of standardizing industry concepts and creating a stronger image for the sector. (Smagina, N., 2017).

With the establishment of European and Northern American embassies in the 1900s, Addis Ababa was introduced to the international community, thereby enhancing its global recognition. Additionally, the presence of two prominent organizations, namely the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) established in 1958, and the Organization for African Unity (OAU), which later transformed into the African Union (AU) in 1963, has further elevated Addis Ababa's status in the international arena. Over the years, Addis Ababa has emerged as the headquarters for numerous regional, continental, and international organizations, with more than 120 diplomatic missions being established (Fikru, 2007). Consequently, Ethiopia has become a preferred host for various regional and international conferences facilitated by these esteemed organizations.

The terms conference, convention, and congress are often used interchangeably to refer to a gathering or meeting with a large number of participants. In the UK, a small gathering is referred to as a meeting, while a large gathering is called a conference. In the USA, the term convention is used for a similar purpose. Conference tourism is a type of meeting that encourages participation and is designed for discussion, fact-finding, problem-solving, and consultation. Unlike other types of gatherings, conferences do not require any specific tradition, continuity, or periodicity. While they can vary in duration, conferences are typically of short duration and have specific objectives. Conferences are generally smaller in scale compared to congresses. An event organized by any organization to facilitate the exchange of views, convey a message, initiate a debate, or generate publicity on a specific issue typically lasts up to three days

A conference is an organized event held by an organization with the purpose of facilitating the exchange of ideas, conveying a message, initiating a debate, or drawing attention to a specific viewpoint on a particular issue. Unlike other events, conferences do not necessarily

adhere to any established traditions, continuity, or regularity. While conferences can vary in duration, they are typically of short duration and have specific objectives. In comparison to congresses, conferences tend to be smaller in scale (Rogers, T., 2003). In 2017, the United States ranked first as a MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) destination, hosting a total of 941 congresses and conventions as recorded by the International Congress & Convention Association (ICCA). The Travel & Tourism industry directly contributes more to the GDP of every region in the world than automotive manufacturing, with the Americas and Europe being particularly significant. In the Americas, the GDP generated by Travel & Tourism is three times larger than that of auto manufacturing, while in Europe, it is twice the size. In all regions except Asia, Travel & Tourism GDP surpasses that of the chemicals industry, with only a 9% difference in Asia. Furthermore, Travel & Tourism plays a crucial role in employment. In 2011, the industry directly employed 98 million people, surpassing the employment figures of automotive manufacturing, the global chemicals industry, the global mining industry, the global communications industry, and even the global financial services industry by significant margins. With a total impact of 8.7% on world employment, Travel & Tourism stands as one of the foremost job creators globally. In 2011 alone, the industry sustained 255 million jobs, surpassing the employment impact of auto manufacturing, chemicals manufacturing, and mining, and nearly matching that of education. As it is stated on the following table (table 2.1) Ethiopian global travel and tourism competitiveness rank relative to some selected sub-saharan countries it shows improvement from year to year (2009-2013). But, when we compare with other listed countries the rank is not as such blissful.

Table2. 1 Ethiopians Global Travel & Tourism competitiveness Relative to Selected Sub-Saharan African countries (Out of 140 Economies)

Country:	Ethiopia	Kenya	South Africa	Tanzania
Global Rank 2009	123	97	61	98
Global Rank 2010	118	98	45	100
Global Rank 2011	122	103	66	110
Global Rank 2013	120	96	64	109
Continental Rank 2013	17	8	3	12

Source: The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index (World Economic Forum, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2013)

2.3. The Economic Contribution of Conference Tourism

Tourism plays a significant role in the national economy and is one of the most important sectors in terms of generating revenue. It is also one of the fastest growing industries, with an average annual growth rate of approximately 5%. By 2020, the number of international travelers is expected to nearly double compared to 2006. Between 1995 and 2005, tourism experienced a remarkable growth of 25%, and it currently contributes to 10% of the world's economic activity. Furthermore, it serves as a major source of employment, creating numerous job opportunities. Many developing countries rely on tourism as a significant source of foreign exchange earnings. In terms of international trade, the tourism industry ranks around 6th, following trade in fossil fuels, telecommunications and computer equipment, automotive products, and agriculture. In 2007 alone, there were a total of 903 million arrivals, generating approximately US\$ 856 billion in international tourism receipts. Additionally, when considering the receipts from international passenger transports, which amounted to US\$ 165 billion in 2007, the tourism and travel services sector accounts for nearly US\$ 3 billion in receipts per day.

The MICE industry is widely regarded as one of the most prosperous segments of the tourism industry. It is relatively immune to price fluctuations and plays a significant role in mitigating the "peak-trough" seasonal cycles (Spiller, 2014). Additionally, the revenue generated by this industry is distributed across various sectors of the economy, including hotels, restaurants, souvenir stores, transportation services, and telecommunications

Conference tourism plays a significant role in employment, leakage, government taxation, and revenue generation for the global economy, including countries in Africa such as Ethiopia. MICE tourism, characterized by its strong development potential, high added value, and renewal benefits, is being increasingly prioritized by nations worldwide as a strategy to stimulate their national economies (Janakiraman S., 2012)

The conference industry plays a significant role in generating revenue for the tourism industry in various destinations globally. Europe and Asia are recognized as the leading regions in conference tourism, followed by North America and Africa. This growth has led to economic development and the evolution of products to cater to emerging needs, resulting in the tourism sector becoming the 29th largest contributor to the global gross national product (Wekesa, 2006).

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) reported an annual organization of approximately 11,505 conferences and seminars worldwide, with an estimated expenditure of around \$280 million and value creation for stakeholders. The conference and exhibition sectors combined contribute approximately \$1.16 billion, with \$0.4 billion attributed to conferences and \$0.76 billion to exhibitions. The Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) tourism industry brings substantial economic benefits to the host country and city. Vietnam has emerged as a popular tourist destination for both domestic and international visitors.

South Africa has emerged as the leading destination for hosting meetings in Africa, with Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco following closely behind. Kenya holds the fourth position in terms of popularity. In terms of specific cities, Nairobi ranks fifth after Cape Town, Durban, Cairo, and Johannesburg. Within Kenya, the Kenyatta International Conference Centre, United Nations office in Nairobi, Gigiri, Safari Park Hotel in Nairobi, and the White Sands Hotel and Sun-n-Sand Hotel in Mombasa have played a significant role in the development of conference tourism. These venues have consistently hosted a majority of international events and conferences in Kenya. Additionally, other hotels and higher education institutions in the country have also contributed to hosting meetings and events. The Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) segment is widely regarded as the fastest-growing global segment in the tourism market, with an annual growth rate of 8-10%.

According to the World Tourism Organisation (WTO), international tourism arrivals would reach 1.56 billion in 2020 and 1.8 billion in 2030. 1.2 billion of these journeys will be to nearby nations (regional), while 0.4 billion will be long-distance (inter-regional). The data from Ethiopians tourism convention bureau (2017) from the total number of arrivals in Ethiopia arrivals for conference accounts about 36% which is stated on the following table.

Table 2. 2 Ethiopian Convention Bureau 2017 international visitors exit survey.

Year	PURPOSE OF VISIT						TOTAL
	BUSINESS, PROFESSIONAL ,	CONFERENCE	LEISURE & HOLIDAYS	TRANSIT	VISITING FRIENDS & RELATIVES	NOT STATED	
2016	98,789	55,650	325,501	256,250	59,964	73,655	869,809
2017	54,899	16,909	432,687	47,685	325,844	55,320	933,344
2018	134,318	62,077	316,183	170,377	61,678	104,497	849,130
2019	119,548	57,013	303,948	183,434	54,138	93,523	811,604

Source:- Congress and Convention Association (ICCA)

Ethiopia's tourism sector plays a significant role in generating employment opportunities, particularly for women. By recognizing its unique characteristics and addressing its development in a strategic manner, the sector has the potential to create even more jobs. In fact, tourism is a major contributor to urban employment, surpassing other labor-intensive and export-oriented sub-sectors like floriculture and leather, especially for women. While Ethiopia's tourism sector has established a basic institutional framework and received substantial support from donors, it still lacks a comprehensive National Tourism Strategy to guide the implementation of the National Tourism Development Plan (NTDP). Developing a strategic approach to the sector's growth has the potential to stimulate inclusive stakeholder dialogue and create employment for approximately 1.8 million people, in line with the tourism targets set by the World Bank Group and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Ethiopia (MCTE) for the year 2015 (Strategic Paths to Competitiveness and Job Creation in Ethiopia's Tourism Sector, 2012).

Table 4. 3. MICE Tourism arrival and revenue generated from the year 2016-2019 including conference tourism in the world

Arrivals		Receipts		
Year	Count	% growth	In USD*	% growth
2016	870,597	0.7936	3,259,515,168*	0.7936
2017	933,344	0.07207	3,494,439,936*	0.07207
2018	849,122	-0.09	3,179,112,768*	-0.099
2019	811,604	-0.044	3,038,645,376*	-0.0074

Source: Ethiopian Convention Bureau 2017 Data

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In 2016, the Travel & Tourism industry directly generated 466,000 jobs, accounting for 1.9% of total employment. It is projected that this number will increase by 4.7% in 2017, reaching 488,000 jobs, which will still represent 1.9% of total employment. These figures encompass various sectors within the industry, such as hotels, travel agents, airlines, and other passenger transportation services. Additionally, the employment statistics include the activities of restaurants and leisure industries that are directly supported by tourists. Looking ahead, it is anticipated that by 2027, the Travel & Tourism sector will directly contribute to 657,000 jobs, reflecting a 3.0% increase over the next ten years. When considering the broader impact of the industry, including effects from investment, the supply chain, and induced income impacts, the total contribution of Travel & Tourism to employment was 1,236,000 jobs in 2016, equivalent to 5.1% of total employment. This is expected to rise by 3.3% in 2017, reaching 1,277,000 jobs, which will still represent 5.1% of total employment. By 2027, it is forecasted that Travel & Tourism will support 1,751,000 jobs, accounting for 5.0% of total employment, reflecting a 3.2% increase over the period.

In 2016, the direct contribution of the Travel & Tourism industry to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) amounted to ETB30,476.2mn, accounting for 2.2% of the total GDP. It is projected that this figure will increase by 8.9% to ETB33,181.3mn in 2017. This growth

including hotels, travel agents, airlines, and other passenger transportation services (excluding commuter services). Additionally, the direct contribution encompasses the activities of the restaurant and leisure industries, which are directly supported by tourism. Furthermore, it is anticipated that the direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP will experience a compound annual growth rate of 6.4%, reaching ETB61,526.9mn (2.2% of GDP) by 2027. In terms of the total contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP, which includes broader effects from investment, the supply chain, and induced income impacts, it amounted to ETB78, 676.4mn in 2016, equivalent to 5.7% of GDP. This figure is expected to grow by 7.1% to ETB84, 297.4mn (5.7% of GDP) in 2017. Looking ahead, it is projected to rise by 6.5% annually, reaching ETB158, 300.0mn by 2027, accounting or 5.8% of GDP.

The tourism sector is significantly impacted by political instability and disruptions in infrastructure. This industry is characterized by low essential wages in comparison to other sectors, and income is often seasonal, leading to a loss of confidence among highly skilled professionals who command higher salaries. Consequently, such insecurity may discourage individuals from joining or remaining in the sector for an extended period of time (Bull, 1995). The issue of employment is a major bottleneck for the Ethiopian tourism sector.

2.4. Stakeholders in the Conference Tourism

The tourism industry is influenced by various stakeholders who play a significant role in its development and support. These stakeholders include the government, tourism institutions, conference organizers, conference planners, and organizers in AU and UNCC, as well as conference managers and other industrial actors (Sharpley et al, 2005). Jitendra S. & Ravi P. (2016) further categorize the stakeholders of MICE tourism into three groups: clients, suppliers, and other players. Clients consist of associations, event planners, and corporations.

On the other hand, suppliers in the MICE industry consist of national trade organizations, airlines, cruise lines, venues such as convention and exhibition centers, hotel ballrooms, conference rooms, meeting rooms, and alternative venues such as universities, castles, and heritage homes. Other suppliers include restaurants, accommodations, professional convention organizers (PCOs), destination management companies, entertainment providers, technical specialists, and intermediaries. In addition, government organizations such as public organizations, agencies, and departments at different levels (federal, state, and local) provide

funding and ideas for various MICE activities. Convention industry associations, whose members include clients and suppliers, such as the International Convention and Congress Association (ICCA), are also important players in the industry. Singh J. (2021) has conceptualized the process of giving in the MICE industry as a wheel, with the MICE event located in the center and the spokes of the wheel housing the various service professionals who supply services. At any point during the planning or execution of the MICE event, one or more of the service professionals (suppliers) may take on a more vital function that is specific to the event's overall success. The delegates or "end customers" are located around the circumference of the wheel and will interact with a number of industry providers throughout the conference. The interplay among each supplier and the delegates is critical to the success of the MICE event and will impact the delegates' overall experience.

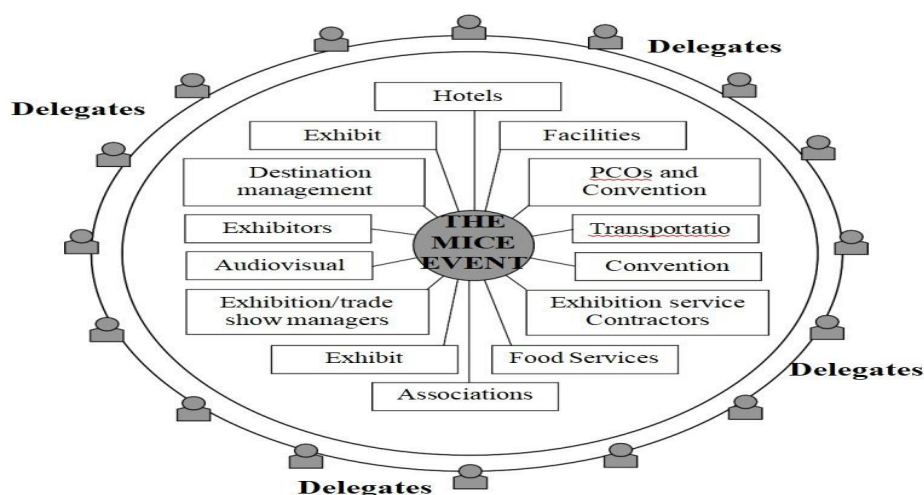


Figure2. 2 Stakeholders of MICE tourism (source Adopted from Singh J., (2021))

According to Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau (2010), stake holders of convention tourism are discussed below.

1. Convention and Visitors Bureaus (CVB)

The CVB serves as a central organization that promotes and supports the growth of both government and privately owned entities in attracting visitors and organizing MICE events within the country. Acting as an intermediary, the CVB connects MICE visitors and organizers with qualified local service providers. The primary responsibility of a CVB is to represent the country by investing in marketing initiatives that bolster the MICE industry it represents.

2. None Associations/organizations

Associations are typically non-profit entities that can be established at the national, regional, or international level. When these associations plan to host conferences, they often entrust the related tasks to specialized service providers known as Professional Conference Organizers.

3. Corporations

Corporations are entities established with the primary objective of generating profit and delivering financial returns to their stakeholders. Effective communication with employees and clients is a key priority for these organizations. Compared to association meetings, the lead-time required to organize corporate meetings is typically shorter. It is common for companies to outsource event and conference management services to external providers, rather than investing in an in-house division for this purpose

3. A Professional Conference organizer (PCO)

A Professional Conference Organizer (PCO) is a specialist in the planning and management of congresses and conferences for associations that desire to hold a scheduled conference but prefer not to undertake the majority of the organizational tasks

5. Incentive Houses

Incentive houses typically collaborate with corporations to design and implement incentive programs aimed at assisting companies in achieving their objectives. Incentive travel programs necessitate meticulous attention to detail, as they must be tailored precisely to the unique requirements and specifications of each individual company.

6. Destination Management Companies (DMC)

A DMC is a local service organization that provide consulting services, creative events and exemplary management of logistics based on an in-depth knowledge of the destination and the needs of the incentive and motivation markets

7. Professional Exhibition Organizers (PEO)

A Professional Exhibition Organizer (PEO) is typically responsible for managing all aspects of an exhibition, from its inception to its conclusion. One of the primary responsibilities of a PEO is to plan, coordinate, and oversee the exhibition, which may involve selecting appropriate subcontractors and service providers to assist with the various tasks involved in organizing an exhibition.

8. Venues

Venues are now one of the most important factors influencing the decision to host a MICE event. Venues suitable to host MICE events are hotels, conference hotels, conference centres and exhibition halls.

2.5. Fundamentals of Conference Tourism

Components of conference tourism are like the amenities we use in the conference centre such as AV requirements, refreshments, writing pads, flip chart, and other electronics devices, human capital, infrastructure, environment or ambiance and location etc (self).

2.6. Theoretical foundations of the study

This research used the stakeholder & sustainable tourism theories because the two are very important to make conference tourism successful and sustainable as it holds both governmental & non-governmental bodies.

2.6.1. Stakeholders' theory

In the tourism industry, stakeholders are defined as individuals or groups who are affected by development, whether positively or negatively. The involvement of stakeholders is crucial in mitigating potential conflicts between tourists and the host community, as it allows the latter to participate in shaping the direction of tourism development. The government plays a significant role in promoting sustainable tourism, which can be achieved through various means such as marketing, information services, education, and advice provided through public-private collaborations. However, it is important to consider the values and hidden agendas of governments when evaluating their motives for sustainable tourism. In any ecologically sensitive or remote area, as well as in areas new to tourism, the concept of carrying capacity becomes essential. Carrying capacity refers to the maximum number of tourists or visitors that an area can sustainably accommodate without causing harm to the environment or the local culture. This capacity can be adjusted and revised over time, in line with changing perceptions and values. (Bramwell, B., & Lane, B. 1993).

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a crucial role as stakeholders in advocating for conference tourism. Their involvement spans from leading efforts to promote sustainable tourism practices to conducting research in the field. Additionally, university research teams and scientists can be enlisted to provide valuable assistance in the planning process. The travel, tourism, and hospitality industry heavily relies on large conventions, meetings, and other major organized events. As cities and convention centers vie for this lucrative business, it is important to recognize the significant impact these activities have on resource consumption and the environment. Special attention must be given to major sporting events, such as the Olympic Games, which pose unique.

Challenges in terms of environmental burdens and degradation. However, it is worth noting that the regular convention industry can impose even greater burdens on the environment (Bramwell, B., & Lane, B. 1993).

Emissions can be achieved," says John Smith, a sustainability expert in the convention industry. In response to this growing demand for sustainable practices, convention organizers and hospitality providers are increasingly incorporating green initiatives into their operations. This includes implementing eco-friendly practices such as waste reduction, energy conservation, and water management. Additionally, there is a rising trend of utilizing renewable energy sources and adopting sustainable building designs for convention venues. Moreover, the focus on sustainability extends beyond the physical aspects of conventions and events. Many organizations are now prioritizing the use of locally sourced and organic food options, as well as promoting responsible and ethical practices in their supply chains. Furthermore, the concept of "green meetings" is gaining traction, where virtual conferences and webinars are being utilized as alternatives to physical gatherings. This not only reduces the carbon footprint associated with travel but also allows for greater accessibility and inclusivity for participants from different geographical locations. In conclusion, the green conventions and events sector is experiencing significant growth as organizations recognize the importance of incorporating sustainable practices into their operations. By embracing eco-friendly initiatives, convention organizers and hospitality providers can contribute to a more environmentally conscious industry while meeting the evolving demands of their clients.(Bramwell, B., & Lane, B. 1993).

2.6.2. Sustainable tourism theory:

Sustainable tourism encompasses the entirety of the tourism experience, taking into account economic, social, and environmental concerns, as well as the improvement of tourists' experiences and the fulfillment of host communities' needs. It is essential for sustainable tourism to prioritize environmental protection, social equity, quality of life, cultural diversity, and a thriving economy that generates employment and prosperity for all. This concept is rooted in sustainable development, and there may be some confusion regarding its precise definition. However, there is now a widespread consensus that tourism should strive to be sustainable. In fact, with proper planning, development, and management, all forms of tourism have the potential to be sustainable. Organizations dedicated to tourist development are actively promoting sustainable tourism practices to mitigate the negative impacts caused

by the growing influence of tourism, particularly its environmental effects. (Bramwell, B., & Lane, B. 1993)

A local community is commonly defined as a group of individuals who reside in the same area and interact with one another. This term is often used to describe a group that shares common values and experiences social cohesion within a specific geographical location, typically larger than a single household. Additionally, the term can also encompass a national or global community. The origin of the word "community" can be traced back to the Old French word "communauté," which is derived from the Latin term "communitas" meaning fellowship or organized society.

Sustainable tourism can bring economic development, job creation, and infrastructure development to local communities. The revenue generated from tourism can lead to economic growth and prosperity in popular tourist destinations, ultimately improving the standard of living for residents. Sustainable tourism operators are committed to creating job opportunities for local community members (McCool, S. F., Moisey, R. N. 2001). As tourism demand increases in a destination, there is a need for improved infrastructure to support both the tourism industry and the local community. Sustainable conference tourism development involves creating and maintaining a sustainable conference tourism sector in a specific location, region, country, or part of the world. This requires tourism practices that prioritize environmental sustainability, cultural preservation, and long-term social and economic benefits. The findings of conference tourism components, challenges, and contributions to achieving sustainable conference tourism in a destination are presented.

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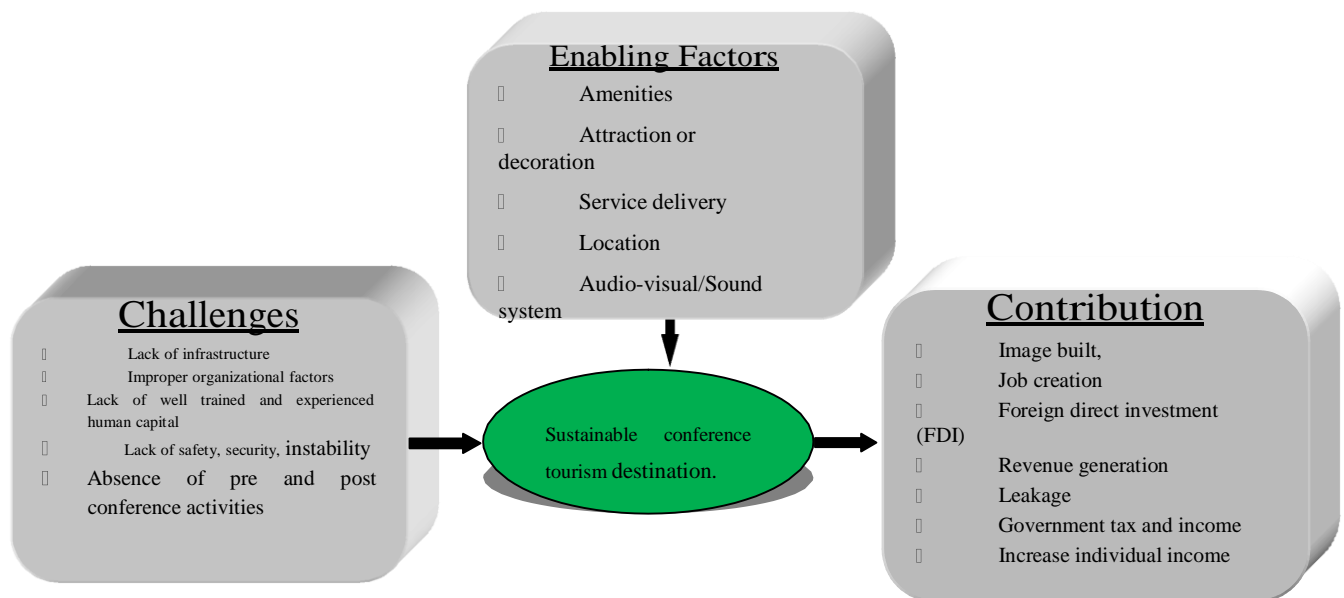


Figure 2. 3Findings of conference tourism components, challenges and contributions (Source: - Self)

2.7. Factors affecting conference Tourism

According to Cooper C, et al. (1993) Conference tourism can be affected by different factors such as;

1. The health of national and international economies greatly influences conference tourism. When business activities decline, conferences are often cancelled or run on lower budgets.
2. Crises and disasters have a significant impact on conference tourism. Immediate travel bans can lead to the cancellation or postponement of scheduled conferences and meetings. However, paradoxically, crises and disasters can also stimulate demand for

- meetings, training courses, and international conferences.
3. Technological advancements, such as satellite video and teleconferencing technology, as well as the use of webcasts for broadcasting conferences over the internet, have had a significant influence on conference tourism (Davidson, R and Cope, B, 2002).
 4. Social factors and working patterns also play a role in conference tourism. The concept of having an office in the home is becoming more common, which may result in an increased demand for conferences as people seek to satisfy their social instincts by coming together in regular meetings.
 5. Changes in a country's industrial and commercial structures can impact conference tourism. Reductions in trade union membership have led to trade union mergers, resulting in fewer trade union conferences. As Cooper C, et al,(1993) additional factors which affect conference tourism development includes
 - The range and availability of accommodation
 - The types and availability of convention, meeting& exhibition space
 - The convenience of the destination
 - The image of the city or destination
 - The drawing power of the city or destination
 - The availability of recreational & entertainment activities
 - The access to transport and infrastructure

2.8. Practice, Challenge and Opportunities of Conference Tourism development.

Tewodros Gebeyehu Marketing head of ECB, told Anadolu Agency that Ethiopia, which hosts the African Union (AU), 115 embassies, several global development agencies, and NGOs have a vast potential to be the hub of the MICE industry.

For more than half a century, Ethiopia has been hosting high profile ordinary and extraordinary annual and bi-annual summits of the head of state and governments, ministers and experts meetings of the Organization of African Union which is now the African Union (AU)," Girma noted.

He added that United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) which has been operating in the capital Addis Ababa since 1958 has a fully developed meetings and exhibitions venue, The United Nations Conference Centre in Addis Ababa (UNCC-AA).

MICE tourist development has several hurdles.

For example, Covid 19 pandemic has significantly impacted the growth and income of Ethiopia's meetings, incentives, conference and exhibition (MICE) industry, there are environmental difficulties associated in running an event, the most visible of which being the impact of transportation. This adds to hazardous emissions into the atmosphere as well as other negative consequences on natural resources. The issue can also be found in the amount of garbage created and the necessity for its disposal.

Energy, transportation, waste management, waste reduction, and resource recovery, including materials purchase and procurement, are the key areas of influence of events.

For instance, using transportation during an event generates a quantity of toxic emissions that will have an adverse effect on the ecosystem. To solve this issue, the event organisers should limit the number of automobiles used in an event. For instance, providing shuttle buses assists in minimising the amount of usage of smaller automobiles that may only carry little load. Lowering the negative environmental effects from transportation becomes one of the most important goals in environmental protection (Tola, M. W., & Gebremedihen, K. A., (2020).

Water contamination is one example of how event sites are frequently exposed to serious environmental risks and pollution, which may be brought on by the upkeep of further facilities supporting events. Air pollution, notably from carbon dioxide emissions, is caused by global tourist traffic events. Sewage is an element that offers the necessities of life for both locals and the surrounding environment. This why environmental challenges related with MICE tourism become one of the major problems of tourist industry all over the world (UNWTO, 2008).

Since, conference tourism is a part of MICE tourism it shares the challenges discussed above. Particularly in Ethiopia specially in Addis Ababa major challenges for conference tourism development are the lack of a proper tourism structure as well organization; inadequate conference facilities and service providers; a lack of expertise and insufficient human resource development in the sector; and lack of pre and post conference activities (Kaleab B., 2012).

According to Tekabe (2016), The tourism industry in Ethiopia faces several significant challenges. These challenges encompass a lack of promotion, inadequate physical infrastructure, misperceptions surrounding the image of Ethiopia, and a shortage of trained personnel. Additionally, there are other obstacles that require attention, such as ineffective

marketing, limited access to financing, and insufficient development and implementation of strategies. Certain stakeholders have even criticized the failures and limitations of Tourism Ethiopia (formerly ETO) for its inability to bring about any substantial change.

Regarding opportunities Dawit T., (2014), The growth of mobility of people, increased use of social media, increased use of hotels and related services, growing number of event planners, expansion of hotels, expansion of convention centres, globalization, expansion of Ethiopian airline destinations, and being the seat for regional and international organizations are all opportunities for the development of convention tourism in Addis Ababa. However, there are also challenges to convention tourism development, such as language barriers, technology barriers, lack of educated manpower, tax, customs and visa processing issues, safety and security issues, policy-related issues, and lack of coordination and management. Conference tourism is a rapidly growing segment of the tourism industry worldwide.

Ethiopia's position as a regional air transport hub and as a center for regional development and diplomatic institutions presents unique opportunities to capitalize on the conference tourism segment. Ethiopia's tourism has traditionally focused on the socio-cultural and historical aspects of the country's development. The Addis Ababa-Upper Rift Valley corridor has the potential to become a vibrant and sustainable tourist destination for both domestic and foreign visitors. The capital city of Addis Ababa is well-connected by air transport, and

Ethiopian Airlines was selected as the best airline in Africa in a 2004 UNWTO report. Additionally, Ethiopia is still recognized by many tourists as an undiscovered destination due to its hidden treasures. Because of its cultural and natural heritages, Addis Ababa has a better chance of becoming a hub for conference tourism. Business tourism is one of the most dynamic and fast-developing spheres in the world economy. Its success brings about the exchange of technologies, contacts, information, exhibitions, congresses, business trips, and aligned tourism activities. Business tourism is concerned with people traveling for business purposes, and it is a significant contributor to the tourism industry (Swarbrooke& Horner, 2001:4-5).

2.9. Empirical Review Literature

Several studies have been conducted in the area of MICE tourism in general and conference tourism in particular. According to Gezachew Andarege (2013), The primary challenges faced in the development of tourism include inadequate infrastructure, security issues,

absence of museums, insufficient service and facilities, and inadequate preservation and protection of heritage sites. Additionally, financial constraints pose a significant obstacle to the growth of the industry.

Nabil Dabour (2003) further highlights that the sector is hindered by a lack of knowledge and awareness, limited technical expertise, ineffective promotion efforts, inadequate tourism-related infrastructure, absence of a cohesive tourism strategy and policy, insufficient safety measures, and a lack of diversification within the tourism sector.

Kaleab B., (2012) examined the researcher has identified several challenges and prospects related to conference tourism in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It has been found that the absence of a suitable structure and organization for the tourism sector, along with a lack of adequate conference facilities and service providers, pose significant obstacles to the development of conference tourism in the city. Additionally, the sector suffers from a lack of professionalism and weak human resource development. Furthermore, the absence of pre and post conference activities has been identified as a hindrance to the growth of conference tourism. However, it is important to note that the researcher solely focused on the challenges of conference tourism and failed to acknowledge the existing practices and opportunities within the sector.

Furthermore, Dawit T., (2014) conducted a study on the findings indicate that The quantity of convention tourism is increasing at a moderate pace, however, there is a lack of improvement in terms of quality, security, destination location, convenient venue, and pricing. It has been observed that the most significant factors influencing decision-making in conference planning are destination location, convenient venue, and pricing. Furthermore, it has been identified that the integration of destination marketing and management is a visible gap in the development of conference tourism. Similar to Kaleab, Dawit has also overlooked the practices and opportunities in the sector, and his observations are too general

Moreover, Getaneh and Ephrem (2020) in their study entitled “urban tourism development in Africa evidence from Addis Ababa” reported that Despite the significant potential for MICE tourism in the city, it has not been able to fully capitalize on this opportunity. Research has identified several key factors that are hindering the development of MICE tourism in the city. These include the absence of an integrated framework for stakeholder participation, partnerships that are not strategic and therefore short-term in nature, inadequate promotion and marketing efforts, a shortage of qualified and skilled personnel in the MICE tourism sector, and a lack of facilities that cater to the needs of business travelers.

Furthermore, Gebeyahu Ambelu (2020) has examined the contribution and challenges of MICE Tourism development in Ethiopia. The researcher, however, studied the challenges of MICE Tourism in Ethiopia in general without going deep into conference tourism part.

Girma Wondmagegn (2019) has assessed the challenges and opportunities of event organizers in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The researcher found out that limited awareness about MICE and the organizers, substandard facilities and services, budget constraint, lack of training, VISA facilitation problems, lack of international representation, safety and security problems, lack of national convention bureau, and weak event organizers association as the major challenges facting the sector. Furthermore, the researcher identified that the opportunities include the city as a center of political and economic diplomacy, the increasing government attention, the rich cultural and tourism resources as well as the location and air access.

2.10. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Based on the discussion handle throughout the above section and the objectives of the research the researcher develops the following conceptual frame work. The main objective of the research is assessing the current practice, challenge and opportunities of conference tourism in Addis Ababa.

Management and leadership related practices which have their own effect on the development of conference tourism. Challenges like lack of infrastructure, different natural and manmade factors (Covid 19 and political unrest), and other managerial problems affect the development of conference tourism. the opportunities available for conference tourism development are Addis Ababa being the seat for AU and regional organizations, proximity to Europe and Asia, cultural and historical tourism resources, etc. Based on stakeholders theory that the success of tourism development (including conference tourism) depends on the collaboration and integration among sustainable tourism key actors such as the private sector, public entities, tourists, facilities, etc.

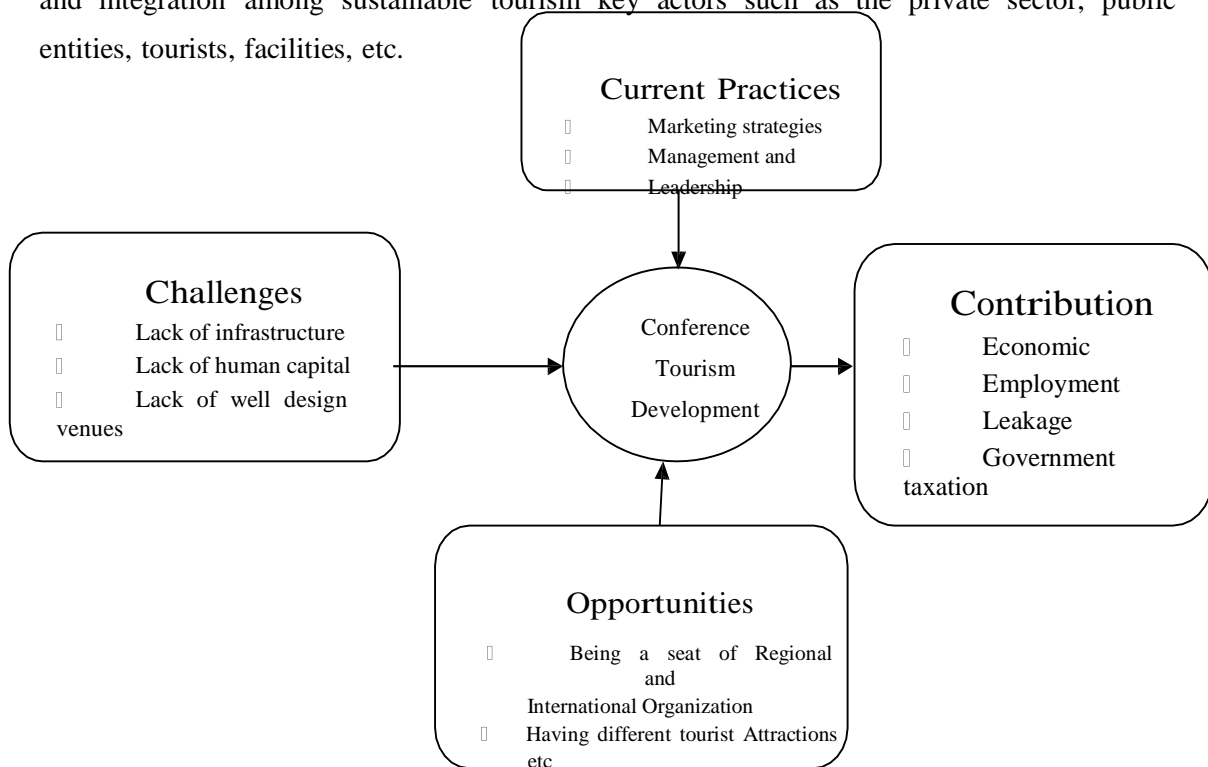


Figure2. 4 Conceptual Framewor (source Self)

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research methodology including research approach and design, data sources and types, sample size and sampling techniques, methods of data analysis and ethical considerations.

3.2. Description of Study Area

According to Ritchie and Crouch (2003), urban centres have emerged as significant tourist destinations due to their physical infrastructure, cultural heritage, and natural attractions, all of which cater to the interests of tourists (Haven-Tang and Jones, 2009). Addis Ababa, like many other cities worldwide, is characterized by its diverse population. The ethnic makeup of the city consists of approximately 80 different ethnic groups. According to the estimates provided by the Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia and the Population Census Commission in 2007, the population of the city was recorded at 2,738,248.

Among the tourism potential of Addis Ababa includes conference tourism and the city has been hosting numerous international meetings concerning Africa. This gives conference tourists the opportunity which they could not get in other places. According to Addis Ababa culture and tourism commission (2007), the city is gifted with natural and manmade attractions such as six mountains (Enloto, Wochecha, Yerer, Furi, Ziquall a, and Menagesha) and around 250 birds' species roaming freely Indigenous plants, hot spring water, around 150 historical buildings and monuments, cultural and religious festivals and other attractions.

Addis Ababa was brought to the international community with the opening of European and Northern American embassies in the 1900s. Furthermore, what had increased Addis Ababa's prominence within the international community was the existence of two organizations. These are; United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), established in 1958 and Organization for African Unity (OAU) present day African Union (AU) established in 1963. Since then Addis Ababa has been serving as the seat of various regional, continental, international organizations and over 120 diplomatic missions are in existence (Fikru,

2007).

For this reason Addis Ababa is pronounced as the diplomatic capital city of Africa. Hence, making the city as a place where international community convenes. Among the prime attractions for business tourists visiting Addis Ababa is for its conference tourism potential. According to MoCT (2012), from 2006-2010 a total of 1,828,149 inbound tourists had visited the country from which 157,264 were conference tourists 8.6%. From this one can infer that business tourism has emerged as one of new economic resources in the country. Addis Ababa is the seat of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the diplomatic capital of Africa. This metropolitan has three strata of administration; City Government at the top, 11 Sub City Administrations in the Middle, and 116 Woreda administrations at the bottom.

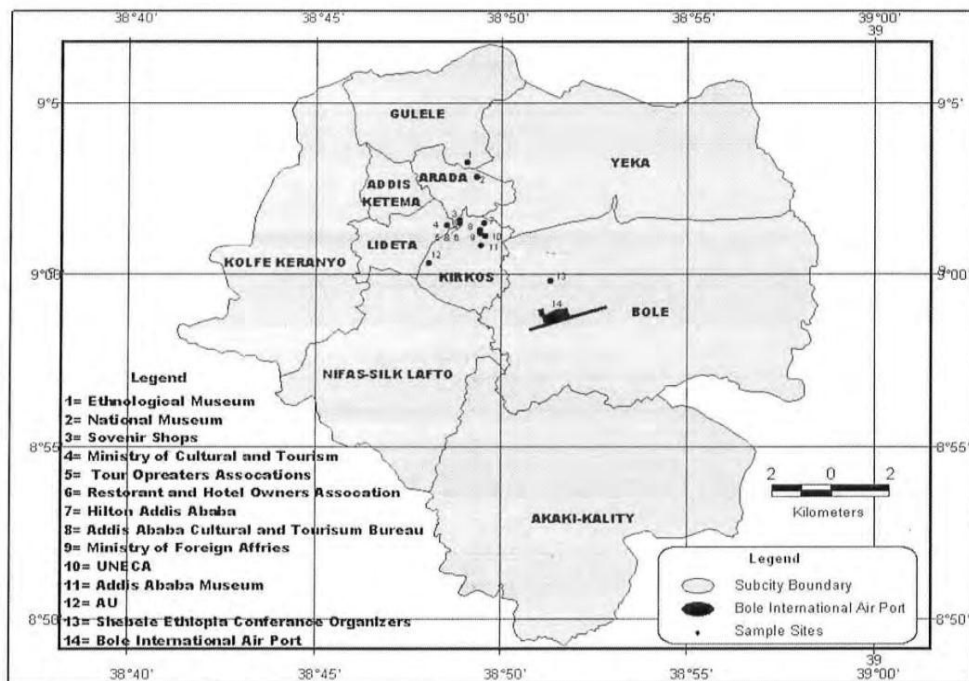


Figure3. 1 Map of Addis Ababa with sample site (Researcher data)

3.3. Research Approach & Design

A research design serves as a comprehensive plan outlining the methodological sequence and detailed description of the actions undertaken by a researcher to address fundamental research questions and achieve research objectives. Cooper and Schindler (2006) and Chandra (2004) have suggested that the utilization of quantitative data and statistical analysis is preferable for survey research. However, in order to present a more practical argument, the author further contend that the incorporation of qualitative data, with the objective of supporting quantitative data in a specific study, holds greater value. This suggests that a mixed research approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods, can be considered as the third methodological paradigm in scientific inquiries (Krishnaswamy et al, 2006). Consequently, the researcher in this study employed a mixed research approach. In terms of research design, a descriptive design was utilized with the intention of providing a comprehensive account of the current practices, challenges, and opportunities pertaining to conference tourism in Addis Ababa.

3.4. Population, Sample size and Sampling.

3.4.1. Population

The Population of the study constituted conference participants doing the conference in different star rated hotels and I mate them through conference planners worked in those hotels, conference and convention planners', head of Ethiopian convention bureau, head of Addis Ababa Arts, Culture and Tourism Bureau, head of Addis Africa International Convention exhibition and Centre (AAICEC), and tourism professionals. According to Addis Ababa Arts, Culture and Tourism Bureau, most of the convention planners are leaving the sector due to the current political unrest and the global pandemic (Covid 19) in the country and as the researcher main focus is on Addis Ababa, it is the Addis Ababa Arts, culture and Tourism Bureau who knows the facts of the current situations. Because of this convention and conference planners who are working currently are very few in the city and the researcher will try to incorporate purposively in the research.

3.4.2. Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

In this study, the sample was chosen using both purposive and simple random sampling techniques. In order to gather qualitative data, the researcher use interviewe with the

relevant informants from different offices including Head of Convention Bureau at Ethiopian Ministry of Tourism, marketing director at Addis Ababa Art, Culture and Tourism Bureau, general manager of Addis Africa international conference and exhibition centre, and tourism professionals. The interviewees were selected using purposive sampling as they have appropriate information related to conference tourism.

Furthermore, since the total number of conference participants in Addis Ababa is large enough when we compare with other cities in the country, convenient sampling method (where units are selected for inclusion in the sample due to convenient) was used to gather data from 150 participants from 6 conferences held hotels during the data collection period. Besides, survey data were gathered from

14 convention and conference planners out of which 12 are hotel convention and conference planners and 2 are independent event organizer.

3.5. Data sources & Data Collection Method

3.5.1. Types and Sources of Data

The researcher used both primary and secondary data source for this study to collect important information from target population using structured questionnaire, semi structure interview and personal observation. Secondary data source like previous study, articles, books, and other related writings were used to organize review literature and other related concepts with this study.

3.5.2. Data Collection Method

In order to achieve the research objectives, relevant data was collected through the use of questionnaires, interviews, and document reviews. The survey data was obtained through questionnaires distributed to conference participants. According to Kostas E. as cited in Cohen (1989), a questionnaire is defined as a self-report instrument used to gather information about variables of interest in an investigation. Therefore, a closed-ended questionnaire was designed to elicit responses only in the area of study that the research was going to cover. Additionally, closed-ended questionnaires enable researchers to easily collect information from several respondents in a short period of time, sometimes with little or no notice, which is time-saving. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews were selected as a means of data collection, as they provide in-depth information and knowledge from a few

respondents. The interview questions were planned in advance, allowing the researcher to change their order and ask additional questions when necessary to clarify a response (Veal, 2006). Accordingly, interviews and focus group discussions are recommended as the best data collection instruments (Kothari, 2004). Respondents were identified, and a schedule was developed to conduct interviews. After the development of an interview checklist, appointments were made with the respondents, and data was collected with their consent. Researcher used cross sectional methods of data collection.

Use purposive sample technique researcher collected data from interviewees & it represent data and also researcher has gotten the population by simple random sampling technique.

3.6. Methods of Data Analysis

Quantitative data gathered using questionnaire were processed with the help Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 and analysed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation). The data will present using table and other tools like graph and pie chart. Moreover, qualitative data gathered using interview and document review were analyzed using thematic analysis method.

3.7. Reliability & Validity of Data Collection Instruments.

A measurement that produces consistent results with equal values is referred to as reliable. It assesses a study's consistency, precision, repeatability, and credibility. It denotes the degree to which it is free of bias (error), ensuring consistent measurement throughout time and across the many elements in the equipment (Mohajan, H. K, 2017). For high-stakes scenarios (e.g., licensure examinations), reliability should be more than 0.9, but values of 0.8 or 0.7 may be acceptable in less significant situations. In general, reliability values exceeding 0.8 have been considered high (Downing, S. M., 2004).

Table 3.1. Reliability result from SPSS

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.871	23

According to table 3.1 the reliability coefficient of all variables in the study are above 0.70 so, it is possible to say the measurements used in the research are reliable. According to Yirgalem (2016, citing Creswell, 2009) validity is the degree to which a test measures what it contend to measure. The accuracy with which a method measures something is indicated by its validity. A method is regarded valid if it accurately measures what it promises to measure and the findings closely match real-world values. Because there is no statistical test to

evaluate whether a measure sufficiently addresses a subject area, validity is normally determined by the expert opinion of the field (Mohajan, H. K., 2017). Accordingly, the researcher was attempted to examine content validity (does the test measure the target concept?), construct dependability (Is the test entirely reflective of what it is intended to measure?), face validity (Does the content of the exam appear to be appropriate for its intended purpose?) and band Criteria for validity (Do the results correlate to a separate test of the same thing?) by creating pre-questioners for different instructors, hotel managers, convention/conference planners, tourism professionals and personnel.

3.8. Ethical Consideration

The researcher has used a well-defined, ethical approach, upholding the rights and confidentiality of the participants at all times. Before gathering data, the researcher received ethical clearance certificate from the Center for Environment and Development Studies, college of development studies, Addis Ababa University. Then after, the researcher communicated the objectives of the study and requested the respective institutions to allow him collecting data for the study purpose. Respondents were informed about the fact that their identity will not be disclosed and assured that they can withdraw at any stage of the research. Furthermore, all sources used in the research were duly acknowledged.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. DATA ANALYSIS INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

The major purpose of the study was to assess current practice and challenges of conference tourism development in Addis Ababa. This chapter presents the data analyses and interprets the findings of the study. Survey data were gathered from 162 respondents (150 conference participants and 14 Event organizers) out of the 164 conference participants and event organizers, making the response rate of 98.8%. The researcher found the above population in the Hotel conference center and employee in those hotels working as conference planner.

4.1). A response rate of 50% is considered appropriate, a rate of 60% is considered good, and a rate of 70% or more is considered excellent out of the sample size for analysis and reporting, according to Mugenda & Mugenda (2003). As a result, the study's response rate was good.

As it is clearly shown in chapter three, the data were collected from conference participants, event organizers, concerned government offices and well-known tourism professionals using questioner and interviews. Accordingly following table shows the response rate of the distribution questionnaire.

Table4. 1 Questionnaire response rate

Questioner distribution for	Distributed	Returned	Rate	Remark
Conference participants	150	148	98.8	
Event organizers	14	14	100	
Total	164	162	98.8	

The information has been gathered, reviewed, and revised for clarity, legibility, relevancy, and adequacy. This includes checking for non-response and accepting or rejecting pre-coded answers (textual responses are assigned numerical codes or values based on the following scale or range). These codes have made data entering easier. The data collected from conference participants and even organizers via questionnaire was analysed using SPSS software version 26. The acquired quantitative data was analysed using mean, standard deviation and descriptive frequency.

4.1. Demographic Analysis

Demographic information about the participants in this study was reported on Table 4.2. It included the frequency distribution of all demographic variables such as gender, age, number of conferences they attend and types of conference they attend.

4. 2. Demographic data of the respondents

Table 4. 2 Demographic data of the respondents

Gender of respondents					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	70	47.3	47.3	47.3
	Female	78	52.7	52.7	100.0
	Total	148	100.0	100.0	
Age of respondents					
Valid	below 18-30 years	6	4.1	4.1	4.1
	31-45 years	68	45.9	45.9	50.0
	46-60	55	37.2	37.2	87.2
	Above 60 years	19	12.8	12.8	100.0
	Total	148	100.0	100.0	
How many times have you attended conference in Addis Ababa					
Valid	first time	37	25.0	25.0	25.0
	2-5 times	54	36.5	36.5	61.5
	more than 5 times	57	38.5	38.5	100.0
	Total	148	100.0	100.0	
Type of conference you experienced					
Valid	Business	47	31.8	31.8	31.8
	education	23	15.5	15.5	47.3
	Seminar	39	26.4	26.4	73.6
	Workshop	35	23.6	23.6	97.3
	Others	4	2.7	2.7	100.0
	Total	148	100.0	100.0	

(Source Survey result 2023)

Table 4.2 shows demographic variables related with respondents age, sex and their experience. Accordingly, 47.3% (70) of the respondents are male and the remaining 52.7% (78) of the respondents are female. Therefore, it is possible to say female participation in the conference is good and the gathered information is gender balanced. Related with age of the participants 4.1% (4) of the respondents are aged below 30 years, 45.9% (68) are aged from

31-45 years, 37.2% (55) of the respondents are aged between 46 and 60 years, and the remaining 12.8% (19) are aged above 60 years.

From the age of the respondents one can clearly understand what they asked and fill in responsible manner. Concerning number of conferences attend in Addis Ababa 25% (37) of the respondents attend conference for the first time, 36.5% (54) of the respondents are attend

2-5 times and 38.5% (57) are attend more than 5 time in different conferences held in Addis Ababa. From this we can concluded that the participants can give correct and comprehensive response for the question raised for them as the majority of the respondents have frequent experience in participating conference held in Addis Ababa.

Concerning types of conference they participate, 31.8% (47) of the respondents are participating in business conference, 15.5% (23) in educational conferences, 26.4% (39) of the participants were seminars, 23.6% (35) in workshops and the remaining 2.7% (4) of the respondents were participated in other forms of conferences. Here we can conclude that most of the conferences held in Addis Ababa are business and seminars.

4.3. Basic questioner analysis

4.3.1. Current practices of conference tourism in Addis Ababa

(Respondents were not willing to be recorded their voice)

In this part of the presentation, conference participants were asked their opinion concerning development practices, evaluation, challenge and opportunities related with conference tourism in Addis Ababa to response using a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire as (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral (Neither Agree Nor-dis Agree), 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree). The replies were analysed in terms of mean score, using (strongly disagree mean range 1.00-2.00, disagree mean range 2.01-3.00, neutral mean range 3.01-4.00, agree mean range 4.01-5.00, and strongly agree mean range 5.01-6.00) as the rule of thumb for mean computation.

Table4. 3 The current conference tourism Development practice

Development practice			
Items	No respondents	Mean	Std. Deviation
There were pre and post conference entertainments	148	2.6622	1.12820
The conference center is equipped with the necessary facilities: internet, fax, telephone, secretarial services etc	148	2.3919	1.21574
Grand mean		2.5270	1.17197

Source Survey result
2023)

As it is shown on table 4.3 the respondents were disagree with the mean score of 2.66 about the existence of pre and post conference entertainment in the conference centres. Concerning the necessary facilities in the conference canters the respondent also disagree with the mean value of 2.39. What we have understood from the above data is there is no good development practice of conference tourism in the conference centres and they are not well equipped with the necessary entertainment facilities like internet, fax, telephone, secretarial services and other essential equipment for conference. When we see the grand mean of the above information the respondents dis agree with the grand mean of 2.5270.

When we see the current practice of MICE tourism in Ethiopia it is very young in its history. To lead and administer the MICE tourism the strategy document of the Ethiopian Convention Bureau (ECB), which was established in 2021 as a specialized wing of the ministry level Tourism Ethiopia and tasked to lead the growth of the country's MICE industry, underlines that Ethiopia has significant potential and experience in attracting and organizing regional, continental, global meetings, conferences, and exhibitions.

The major mission of the Ethiopia Convention Bureau is to lead, develop, and support Ethiopia's MICE industry's competitiveness and commercial sustainability. The overall organizational structure is depicted on the following figure.



Figure 4. 1. Organizational structure of Ethiopian convention bureau. (National MICE* Vision and Strategy for Addis Ababa 2020 – 2030)

Ethiopia Convention Bureau has the following vision

The year 2030 will see Addis Ababa as Africa's city, and Ethiopia as Africa's meetings destination of choice, and the origin of a far stronger and more successful MICE sector driven by Ethiopia Convention Bureau and characterized by an effective industry (National MICE* Vision and Strategy for Addis Ababa 2020–2030)

The bureau has also the following six major goals namely increase volume, value, length of stay of participants, improve seasonality and geographical spread, and promote redistribution

Table 4. 4 Six goals of Ethiopia Convention Bureau ((National MICE* Vision and Strategy for Addis Ababa 2020 – 2030)

Increase Volume	Taking advantage of the fact that MICE in Africa is growing at a faster pace than leisure tourism, the goal is to increase the number of delegates coming into the country from the region and globally.
Increase Value	Conferences attract large numbers of delegates that are lucrative from a spend-per-delegate-per-day basis; the goal is to focus on value segments to enhance the sector's foreign direct investment contribution to the GDP.
Increase Length-of-Stay	Whilst generally shorter than leisure visits – delegates can be encouraged to stay longer through targeted pre and post tour marketing and packaging of itineraries against length-of-stay objectives.
Improve Seasonality	Meetings can be more easily scheduled into off-peak season than leisure tours; thus the goal would be to grow visitation to Ethiopia into shoulder periods ensuring year-round sustainability of the sector.
Improve Geographical Spread	Pre and post conference tours if well packaged will ensure the spread of economic impact throughout the country; at a later stage regional meetings can also be dispersed into secondary cities such as Hawassa, Bishoftu and Bahirdar.
Promote Redistribution	MICE is a sector offering opportunities to engage broadly across the value chain in the provision of services; capacity building of private sector to deliver best practice standard MICE events will assist in the promotion of redistribution of economic impact.

A variety of strategies for forging strong public and private sector partnerships to aid in the development and promotion of MICE. These initiatives include engaging the public sector to remove barriers, hosting quarterly industry stakeholder meetings, educational and training workshops to build capacity in local organizations, developing ambassadors to support the bidding agenda, and participating in joint sales and marketing activities such as exhibiting at international industry trade shows; initiatives that will support collaboration and strengthen Ethiopia's overall sector. The following figure shows the implementation plan for achieving the National MICE Vision by 2030:

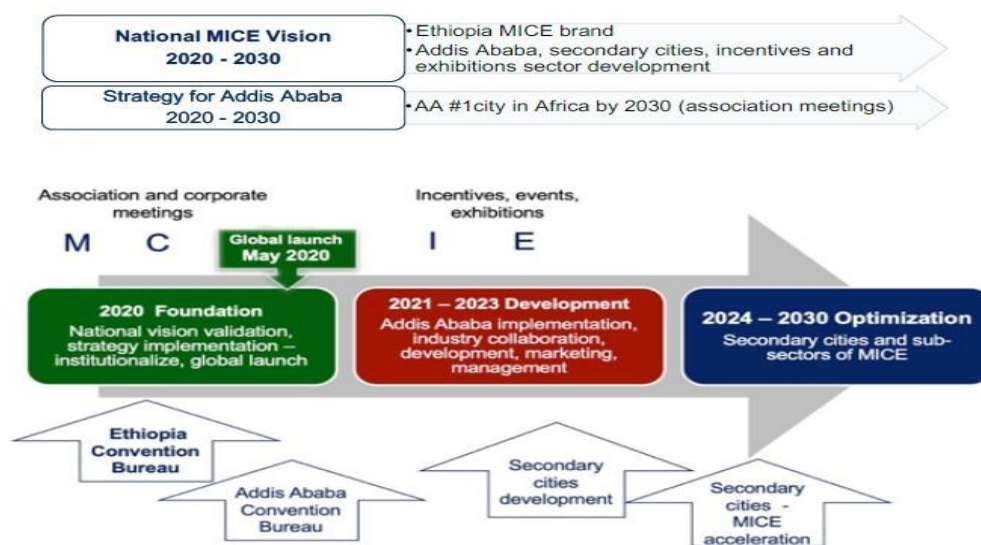


Figure 4. 2 Implementation plan for achieving the National MICE Vision by 2030 :(National MICE* Vision and Strategy for Addis Ababa 2020 – 2030)

Table 4. 5. Opportunities to the development of conference tourism

Opportunities			
Items	No Respondents	Mean	Std. Deviation
Complex shops are accessible with all necessities at hand	148	2.7027	1.07829
My conference center was suitable for my needs (location, products and services)	148	2.2162	1.10988
My hotel was accessible to the general market	148	2.4189	1.09429
The ambiance or atmosphere of the conference center was attractive	148	2.3784	1.12731
Addis Ababa is well advertised as a convention destination	148	2.5878	1.29325
The conference center has a mechanism to assist different language speakers (participants)	148	2.7162	1.56944
My hotel offers services such as; internet, secretarial service, fax, mobile rental etc	148	2.5203	1.93595
The conference center is equipped with the necessary facilities: internet, fax, telephone, secretarial services etc	148	2.3919	1.21574
Overall, the price I paid for different services and products related to the conference is reasonable	148	2.4392	1.09561
Grand		2.4879	1.27997

(Source Survey result 2023)

As it is indicated in the above table, the respondent were agreed on the mean score of 2.7 about Complex shops are accessible with all necessities at hand. In addition the respondent were agreed on the mean score of 2.21 about conference center suitability issue, such as location, products and service related.in related to hotel accessibility towards the general market, the respondent agreed a mean score of 2.41. Related to the ambiance of the conference center, respondent agreed on the mean score of 2.37 which shows the conference center is attractive. Related with destination the respondent agreed mean score of 2.58 that Addis Ababa is well advertised as a convention destination. The respondent also agreed on the mean score of 2.71 that the conference center has a mechanism to assist different language speakers (participants).In addition the respondent agreed on mean score of 2.52 in related to hotel offers different services such as internet, secretary, fax and mobile rental etc. Also the respondent agreed mean score of 2.39 that the conference center is equipped with the necessary facilities like internet, fax, telephone and secretarial service etc. In related to the overall conference center, the respondent agreed on mean score of 2.43 like the price paid for different services and products related to the conference is reasonable. As it is inscripted on tbale 4.4 the grand mean of the respondents concerning opportunities is 2.4879.(Refer the analysis & the voice on page 41 of chapter 4) (Respondents were not willing to be recorded their voice)

4.3.2. Challenges for conference tourism development in Addis Ababa.

Table4. 6 Challenges to the development of conference tourism

Challenge			
Items	No Respondents	Mean	Std. Deviation
Language is not barrier to communicate with people outside the venue; such as in shops and other service area	148	2.5270	1.15732
Overall, I am satisfied with the products and services at the destination	148	2.2973	1.03319
I will use the conference center and its services again when I got the chance	148	2.2500	1.04897
I will recommend Addis Ababa as a competitive conference destination	148	2.4000	1.30916
Grand		2.3685	1.13716

(Source Survey result 2023)

Concerning challenges to the development of conference the respondents with the mean score of 2.52 were dis agree that language is not barrier to communicate with the host communities means they face difficulties in communicating with shop and other service providers. The respondents with the mean value of 2.29 were dis agree about their satisfaction in products and services at the destination. Concerning their intention to use the conference center and service again the respondents were dis agree with the mean value of 2.25 which mean they do not have interest to use the conference center and the service they get from the center again. Concerning the recommendation Addis Ababa as a competitive conference destination the respondents were dis agree with the mean value of 2.4. Which means they do not recommend Addis Ababa as the good conference destination for others due to their dissatisfaction during their stay. 2.3685 is the grand mean of the respondent on challenges of conference tourism development.

Table 4. 7 Evaluation and measurement

Evaluation or measurement			
Items	No Respondents	Mean	Std. Deviation
The safety and security of the conference center was in an acceptable level of standard	148	2.4054	1.20564
My finance related issues; such as credit card service, ATM, use of foreign currencies etc, have been fulfilled	148	2.3108	1.14791
The price of accommodation charged was fare	148	2.5068	1.12786
The price of my air travel was fair	148	2.3649	1.03771
I am satisfied with the quality of accommodation, restaurants and bars	148	2.4324	1.15566
Overall, the current condition of the venue and its facilities (outlets) is excellent	148	2.4459	1.17967
The service related to immigration was fast and up to the standard	148	2.7162	1.17826
Emergency exit signs and other relevant information are sufficient at the conference center	148	2.5405	1.28507
Grand		2.4653	1.16472

(Source Survey result 2023)

As it is clearly stated on the above table (table 4.7), the respondents were disagree with the mean score of 2.40 about the safety and security of the conference center was in an acceptable level of standard. On the other hand the respondents were disagree on mean score of 2.31 about finance related issues; such as credit card service, ATM, use of foreign currencies etc, have been fulfilled in the conference centers.

Concerning the price by a mean score of 2.50 the respondents were disagree that there is fare accommodation charge in the hotels where they stay. Related with the price of transportation the respondents were disagree with them mean score of 2.36 that the air transport fee was faire. On the other hand the respondents were disagree with the mean score of 2.43 that they are satisfied with the quality of accommodation, restaurants and bars in the conference centers. Related with the overall the current condition of the venue and its facilities (outlets) the respondents were disagree with the mean score of 2.44 that over all the facilities in the conference centers were is excellent. Concerning the immigration service the respondents were disagree that there was fast and up to standard service with the mean score of 2.71. Finally, related with emergency exit signs and other relevant information available in the conference centers the participants were disagree with the mean score of 2.54 that there was sufficient emergency exit signs and other information's at the conference center. 2.4653 is the grand mean of the respondents on evaluation and measurements of conference tourism.

Summary of descriptive statistics.

Table 4. 8 Likers scale summery analysis

Item	Grand mean	Grand S.devation	Remark
Development practice	2.5270	1.17197	
Opportunities	2.4879	1.27997	
Challenges	2.3685	1.13716	
Evaluation or measurement	2.4653	1.16472	

(Source Survey result 2023)

As it is clearly indicated on the above table 4.8 the least grand mean score is 2challenges of conference tourism development and on the other hand the highest grand mean score is for Development practices. Which indicates the practice of conference tourism is very low. That means the conference canters found in the city are not convenient, not well furnished and equipped.

4.3.3. Data collected from event organizers and conference planners

Based on the data collected specifically from event organizer and conference planners currently working as event organizer as well as conference planner is not advisable apart from the pandemics of covid 19 there are unforeseen and unexpected challenges coming from both internal and external factors like the instability of the country due to the ongoing civil war and the situation happened through the entire world. So the current practice is very difficult to survive or to come back to the business because in addition to AU and UNECA Hotels are the one who can do the available conferences because they have their own team to do the task as an event organizer and conference planners. Even the previous connection was good with Ethiopian convention bureau but for the last three for years including current year, they did not have any connection with the ECB and due to that the majority of them are closed their office and engaged on some other businesses while some of them are hired and working for other companies. The opportunities for conference tourism is still good but it needs coordination, collaboration with the concerned stakeholders

Table 4. 9 Location related attributes

Which one of the following specific attributes do you think is more important to participants as far as location is concerned					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Location of the venue	3	21.4	21.4	21.4
	Access to accommodation	5	35.7	35.7	57.1
	Access to the center of the city	6	42.9	42.9	100.0
	Total	14	100.0	100.0	

(Source Survey result 2023)

The above table shows from specific attributes as far as location is concerning 21% of the respondents says that location of the venue is prior than other attributes, 35.7% of the respondents says access to accommodation is take the first place from the other and 42% of the respondents says access to the center of the city have more significant than others attributes. From this one can clearly understand that access to the center of the city is more value to conference participants in collection of conference center.

Table 4. 10 Safety and security factors

Which one of the following specific attributes do you think is more important to participants as fare as safety and security is concerned					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	At the Venue	1	7.1	7.1	7.1
	On travel	2	14.3	14.3	21.4
	In the Hotel	5	35.7	35.7	57.1
	At the city	6	42.9	42.9	100.0
	Total	14	100.0	100.0	

(Source Survey result 2023)

Table 4.10 shows 7.1% of respondents believe that safety and security at the venue is more significant, 14.3% of the respondents give priority to safety and security on traveling, 35.7% of the participant says safety and security in the hotel is the first concern and 42.9% of the participant give priority for safety and security at the city.

Table 4. 11 Destination Image related factors

Which one of the following specific attributes do you think is more important to participants as fare as destination image is concerned					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Country's identity	4	28.6	28.6	28.6
	Country's past record	6	42.9	42.9	71.4
	Participants perception towards Addis Ababa	4	28.6	28.6	100.0
	Total	14	100.0	100.0	

(Source Survey result 2023)

The above table shows 28.6% of the participant says countries identity is more valuable in related with destination image for selecting conference centers, on the other hand 42.9% of the participant confirmed that countries past record (experience) is more significant from other destination image attributes in selection conference center and the remaining 28.6% of the respondents says participants perception towards Addis Ababa is prior than others.

Table 4. 12 Culture related factors

Which one of the following specific attributes do you think is more important to participants as fare as welcoming culture is concerned					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Peoples cooperation	5	35.7	35.7	35.7
	Tolerance of others cultures	7	50.0	50.0	85.7
	Cultural similarities	2	14.3	14.3	100.0
	Total	14	100.0	100.0	

(Source Survey result 2023)

Table 4.12 Shows 35.7% of the participant says conference participants were give attention for cooperation of host peoples, 50% of the participants says conference participants were give attention to behavior of host peoples towards tolerance to others culture and the remaining 14.3% of respondents says cultural similarities were the prior concern of conference participants in selection conference center.

Table 4. 13 Convenient related factors

Which one of the following specific attributes do you think is more important to participants as fare as convenient venue is concerned					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Convenient meeting rooms	4	28.6	28.6	28.6
	Neatness	3	21.4	21.4	50.0
	Venue facilities	7	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	14	100.0	100.0	

(Source Survey result 2023)

Table 4.13 Shows 28.6% of the respondents says convenient meeting rooms are more important in selection of conference centers, 21.4% of the respondents are states that neatness the venue is prior than other factors and 50% of the participants says venue facilities are prior than other factors in selection of conference venue.

Table 4. 14 Cost related factors

Which one of the following specific attributes do you think is more important to participants as fare as relate costs are concerned					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Conference product related cost	7	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Accommodation cost	4	28.6	28.6	78.6
	Living cost	3	21.4	21.4	100.0
	Total	14	100.0	100.0	

(Source Survey result 2023)

Table 4.14 Illustrates 50% of respondents confirm that conference product related costs is more important in selection conference center, 28.6% of them says accommodation cost is more important and the remaining 21.4% of the respondents says living cost is more prior than others.

Table 4. 15 Product and service mix related factors

Which one of the following specific attributes do you think is more important to participants as fare as conference product service mix is concerned					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Price	4	28.6	28.6	28.6
	Products and services	7	50.0	50.0	78.6
	People	3	21.4	21.4	100.0
	Total	14	100.0	100.0	

(Source Survey result 2023)

Table 4.15 Illustrates 28.6% of respondents confirm that price is more important in selection conference center from other products and service mix, 50% of them says product and service quality is more important and the remaining 21.4% of the respondents says peoples are prior than others mix.

4.4. Interview Analysis

For the interview the researcher was prepared 10 semi structured interview questions and the researcher were conducted face to face interview with three concerned government offices (Addis Ababa art culture and tourism bureau (AACTB), Ethiopian tourism convention bureau and Addis Africa international conference and exhibition center) and one well known tourism professionals in Ethiopia who is called Dr. Ayalew Sisay. The data from the above interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis method as follows.

Concerning the current status of conference tourism in Addis Ababa in terms of conference participant, target market, facilities, infrastructure and competitiveness of the city in attracting conference both the interviews were confirmed that there is lack of well-developed and organized conference center and infrastructure and they also stated that there is lack of skilled and experienced human capital related with event organizing in general specifically conference tourism.

From the side of AACTB they are not directly participate or facilitate conferences held in Addis Ababa as they are one of the concerned office. The other problem they identify is that there is structural problem in the organization. The bureau were organized mice as directorate but there is no assigned professional's and directors rather the directorate is led by marketing manager. This unclear working procedure hinders them from understanding the status of conference tourism in the city. On this topic Dr. Ayalew says that currently tourism industry in general is affected by the global pandemic Covid 19 and the current political instability in different part of the country. Due to this most of the international conference did not willing to come to Ethiopia.

Related with the current practices in the process of developing conference tourism in Addis Ababa. The convention office promotes the stakeholders whatever is possible. The convention bureau also has a mandate to write a letter to facilitate the Visa issue for those who are concerned to travel.

The office also helps other ministry office to create awareness on MICE tourism like Custom office, revenue office and AACTB itself. They are doing more of awareness to other ministry offices. Mainly event organizers are the one working closely with the convention bureau. And they also made an excellent transformation with secondary cities out of Addis Ababa those who have better MICE potential such as Bahir Dar, Hawasa and Debrezeit (Bishoftu) to develop MICE tourism in general. AACTB by their side they are not clear about the current practice of conference tourism. As they side even if there is a mice directorate on their organizational structure there are no professionals who are assigned for this job. Due to that the work is done by marketing manager of the bureau. So, it is difficult to evaluate the current practice of conference tourism in the city.

Concerning the contribution of conference tourism in Addis Ababa all interviews were confirmed that there is big problem in compiling data and analysis the contribution of the conference tourism. But, they mentioned that political contribution, job creation, generate

revenue, means for the creation of foreign currency, and image building for the city and the country in general. But, they failed to state in terms of quantity. As per the report from the convention bureau 75% of travelers are coming for conference tourism from different parts of the world and 50% of the revenue is coming from conference tourism during the period of 2016 up to 2023. But, this data is also too general and not specific and clear.

Regarding the opportunities for the development of conference tourism in Addis Ababa all the interviews were mentioned the availability of cheap labor, availability of different national and international organizations such as United Nation Economic Commission for Africa, African Union, European Union, IGAD, and also the city is the seat of more than 135 embassies and NGOs, the city is also has different cultural entertainment campaigners, the African leading Airlines also found in Addis Ababa which have a great opportunities for the growth of the conference tourism in Addis Ababa.

In terms of stake holders all interviews stated the following as the main stakeholders for the development of conference tourism in the City. Individual investors in the sector, Government, Travel agency, Event organizers and conference planners, Hotel owners, Tour and Travel companies, diplomats, ENSA, MOFA, EAL, Telecommunication, different associations and airport administration.

In regarding with the collaboration between different stakeholders all interviews confirmed that there is weak relationship between stake holders. Over all there is no joint forces to work together to achieve one goal because all stakeholders are going separately with no any consideration of others. For instance there was the National Tourism Council lead by the Prime minister but it is not well functioned even the Ethiopian Orthodox church was part of it as Dr. Ayalew says. Due to the malfunctioning of the joint force, Ethiopia becomes the most expensive destination for tourists coming to the country specifically to Addis Abba.

Regarding policy package that govern and guide the development of conference tourism AACTB says there is no policy for Addis Ababa art Culture and tourism bureau and also there is no tourism strategy. This creates big challenge on the performance of the office. This also aggravated by the absence of good organizational structure based on the objectives of the office and professionals are not assigned to the right place for right position, there is no commitment from the higher officials working in the office due to lack of knowledge as well as skills regarding conference tourism in particular and MICE in general. The Other big bottle neck for the performance of the bureau is the political appointees who led the sector are from another field of studies. According to convention bureau there is policy but there is

MICE strategy. Currently the policy is under development stage related with MICE tourism. Dr. Ayalew also stated that there is tourism council which focus more on international conference council association (ICCA) which Ethiopia was a member. But, currently Ethiopia is not the member of the organization. Due to this data related with MICE is not available on ICCA after 2019.

Related with challenges to the development of conference tourism all interviews were agree that the followings are the major challenges. The Global pandemic Covid 19, Political instability, lack of infrastructure, disorganized office structure lack of collaboration between government office and other stakeholders, absence of joint forces, lack of well trained, skilled and experienced work force particularly on MICE tourism.

Generally the interviews were recommend the following comments to make Addis Ababa the hub for conference tourism. There should be facilitation committee and national Tourism council, to create workable policy independently like the Convention bureau in the ministry should establish independently and get its own budget to achieve its target and be competitors in the east African market at least, needs to take experiences from other countries and cities who have good performance on conference tourism such as Geneva, South Africa. Strengthen collaboration with both internal and external stake holders.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1. Conclusion

Based on the analyzed data the researcher put the following conclusion in line with the general and specific objective of the research. As it is clearly shown in chapter four the data were collected from 148 conference participants, 14 event organizers and convention planners, three concerned government offices and one well known tourism professionals to answer the following three research questions.

- What is the current status of conference tourism practices in Addis Ababa?
- What are the challenges for conference tourism in Addis Ababa?
- What opportunities available for conference tourism development in Addis Ababa?

Concerning conference tourism development practice there is lack of pre and post entertainment activities for conference participants which enables the conference participants to extend their length of stay and they also have good word of mouth about the destination. Regarding the conference centers facilities and equipment most of the conference centers are not well equipped and they lack sufficient secretarial services, strong and fast internet facilities, well designed and AI based conference facilities. When we evaluate the current situation related with conference tourism there is weak immigration service, low quality of accommodation, restaurant and bar service, expensive transportation cost, weak and boring financial related services such as ATM, credit card service, there is also substandard conference centers and lack of one window service in the conference centers. Currently Ethiopia is not a member of ICCA which makes difficulty to get reliable data on conference held in Addis Ababa as well as Ethiopia in general.

Regarding challenges to the development of conference tourism in Addis Ababa; language/communication barriers, lack of cooperation among stakeholders, absence of policy package related with conference tourism, improper organizational structure, lack of well-designed conference infrastructure, absence of one window service for conference participants specially for foreign participants in the conference center, lack of well trained and experienced manpower, relatively high living, transportation, and accommodation cost are major challenges. The other big challenge is that affects the current conference tourism

practice in Addis Ababa is the global pandemic Covid 19, and the current prolonged political instability in the country that lasting for more than three years. The immense challenges which highly irritated tourists and conference participants who came from abroad is the situation happened in Ethiopian airlines duty free because the duty free did not accept the local currency while tourists and conference participants wants to buy some commodities by the local money as the airport is the final destination after their stay and go back to their destiny due to that tourists and other travelers are not happy.

The access of cheap labor, the presence of various national and international organizations such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, African Union, European Union, IGAD, and the city is also the seat of more than 135 embassies and NGOs, the city also has different cultural entertainment campaigners, and Ethiopian airline (the African leading air lines) is also present in Addis Ababa, all of which provide excellent opportunities for the growth of conference tourism in Addis Ababa. On the other hand, inaccessibility of complex shops and markets, unfit/below standard conference center ambiance, unprompted conference destinations, high cost and low value of many are big threats.

Related with the factors affecting in selection of conference centers and venues Access to the center of the city, safety and security at the city, countries past record/ experience, tolerance of others culture, venue facilities, costs related with conference product and service and quality of product and services are the major factor which affect the selection of conference center and venue. It does not mean that other factors are not significant rather the above listed factors are more significant and they need special attention by event organizers and conference planners in selecting conference centers and venue.

5.2. Recommendations

As per the above conclusion the researchers forward the following recommendations for the government and stake holders in development of conference tourism in Addis Ababa. Recommendations for the government (Addis Ababa art, culture and tourism bureau, Convention bureau head at Ministry of tourism and Addis Africa international conference and exhibition center).

By reviewing the current organizational structure there should be well designed and restructured road map specifically on MICE sector which will give full mandate, responsibility and authority for conference tourism sector. Tourism minister, Convention bureau needs to have its own budget to participate on international BID to bring international conferences to Addis Ababa. There should be one window service for tourist's and conference participants which increase their satisfaction at the conference center.

As it is known currently the sector is owned by the government the lion share in facilitating and providing policies, strategies and resource allocation is leave for the government. So, Government should be revoked actively the private sectors to revive the sector and should provide experience sharing program and take a benchmark from countries like Geneva and South Africa which have good experience in conference tourism practice.

The government should facilitate and provide Hospitality professionals who work collaborate with gumruk staffs at Bole airport terminals as the tourists and conference participants need good treatment with good welcoming hospitality service in a professional manners instead of assigned only police and other security forces. The government should have developed good working culture that invite stakeholders to work together to develop conference tourism both in the city and national level to achieve common goal which is the development of conference tourism in Addis Ababa. There should be well design policies in the destination including bole international airport duty free local currency needs to accepted instead of ignored not to accept to sale goods and services as it is the final destination for tourists those who ended their stay and back to some other destination. To enable as getting recent, reliable and well organized data related with conference and tourism in general, Ethiopia should be re-join ICCA as she was a member in the past.

Recommendations for stakeholders such ENSA, MOFA, EAL, Tele communication, Water and sewerage authority, hotels, airport administration specifically gumruk and civil aviation at bole airport terminal (first impression is last impression), other government offices who are directly or indirectly have contact with the tourism sector in general should mainstream

tourism as one of their task, they should be open and responsive to work together and implement policies and strategies of tourism specially on MICE tourism and they should be a active member of tourism council.

Recommendation for private event organizers and convention planners, tour operators, hotels, travel agency, different professional associations, investors who engaged in to the hospitality industry. They should be actively support and give feedback for the government in giving trainings for those professionals in the government tourism related sectors. When they provide and plan events and conventions they should in corporate pre and post entertainment for conference participants in their package. As the living and Accommodation cost is very high relatively with our neighbouring countries such as Kenya the above stakeholders should revise their price.

Access to the center of the city, safety and security at the city, countries past record/ experience, tolerance of others culture, venue facilities, costs related with conference product and service and quality of product and services are the major factor which affect the selection of conference center and venue. It does not mean that other factors are not significant rather the above listed factors are more significant and they need special attention by event organizers and conference planners in selecting conference centers and venue.

As it is clearly concluded above access to the city center, safety and security in the city, the country's past record/experience, tolerance of other cultures, venue facilities and amenities, costs associated with conference product and service, and the quality of product and services are the major factors that influence the selection of conference center and venue. So, hotels airport managements, event organizers, convention planners' should give special attention for the above factors in selection, providing and organized event and convention centers.

Recommendation for future researchers as the scope of the research is limited to Addis Ababa geographically and accesses the current practice challenges and opportunities conceptually in the future other researchers can further elaborate the research on country level and they can investigate the impacts of conference tourism on Ethiopian economy.

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Appendix one Questioners for Conference participants

Developing a measurement scale. Journal of travel research,47 113-122

APPENDIX

Addis Ababa University

College of Development Studies

Centre for Environment and Development Studies

M.A Program of Tourism Development and Management

QUESTIONNAIRES FILLED BY CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is designed to collect data for the master's degree thesis entitled: "Conference tourism development in Addis Ababa: Practices, Challenges and Opportunities". The study is conducted in partial fulfilment for the Master of Arts degree in Tourism Development and Management at the Centre for Environment and Development Studies, College of Development Studies, Addis Ababa University. The data will be used only for academic purpose and your identity will not be mentioned in any way in the research report. Thus, you are not expected to write your name or provide other personal information. Moreover, your participation in the study is fully voluntary-based, and hence you can withdraw at any stage of the data collection process. Thank you very much in advance for your willingness to spare 15-20 minutes from your precious time to participate in this survey. Please indicate your willingness to participate in the study by encircling on one of the following options:

- a) Yes, I am willing to participate in this study
- b) No, I am not willing to participate in this study

If you have question or inquiry, please don't hesitate to contact me through the following address: +251 911218433

PART I: GENERAL BIOGRAPHY OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

This part of the questionnaire aims to collect bio data of survey participants. Kindly encircle on the option that best reflects your answer.

1. Gender

- a. Male ☐
- b. Female ☐

2. Age group

- a. Below 30 ☐
- b. 31-45 ☐
- c. 46-60 ☐
- d. Above 60 ☐

3. How many times have you attended conference in Addis Ababa?

- a. First time ☐
- b. Two – five times ☐
- c. More than five times ☐

4. Where was the conference held?

- a. Hotel venue ☐
- b. UNCC (United Nations Convention Centre) ☐
- c. African Union ☐
- d. Others _____

5. Type of conference attended

- a. Business ☐
- b. Education ☐
- c. Seminar ☐
- d. Workshop ☐
- e. Others _____

6. How many nights have you spent in the hotel?

- a. One night ☐
- b. Two nights ☐
- c. More than two nights ☐

PART II: PERCEPTION TOWARDS CONFERENCE TOURISM

The following statements are aimed to measure your perception towards conference tourism facilities and services in Addis Ababa. Please indicate your level of agreement on the statements on the five points likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree) by putting a tick mark on your choice.

Key- 1: Strongly Disagree, 2: Disagree 3: Neutral 4: Agree 5: Strongly agree

S/No	Items	1	2	3	4	5
Development and Practice						
1	There were pre and post conference entertainments. (Development)					
2	The conference centre is equipped with the necessary facilities: internet, fax, telephone, secretarial services etc. (Development)					
(Evaluation or measurement)						
1	The safety and security of the conference centre was in an acceptable level of standard. (Evaluation)					
2	My finance related issues; such as credit card service, ATM, use of foreign currencies etc, have been fulfilled. (Evaluation or measurement)					
3	The price of accommodation charged was fair.(Evaluation and Measurement)					
4	The price of my air travel was fair.(Evaluation and measurement)					
5	I am satisfied with the quality of accommodation, restaurants and bars. (Evaluation)					
6	Overall, the current condition of the venue and its facilities (outlets) is excellent. (Evaluation)					
7	The service related to immigration was fast and up to the standard .Evaluation and measurement)					
8	Emergency exit signs and other relevant information are sufficient at the conference centre. (Evaluation)					
Challenge						
1	Language is not barrier to communicate with people outside the venue; such as in shops and other service areas. (Challenge)					
2	Overall, I am satisfied with the products and services at this destination. (Challenge)					
3	I will use the conference centre and its services again when I got the chance. (Challenge)					
4	I will recommend Addis Ababa as a competitive conference destination. (

S/No	Items	1	2	3	4	5
	Challenge)					
Opportunities						
1	Complex shops are accessible with all necessities at hand. (Opportunity)					
2	My conference centre was suitable for my needs (location, products and services) (Opportunity)					
3	My hotel was accessible to the general market. (Opportunity)					
4	The ambiance or atmosphere of the conference centre was attractive. (Opportunity)					
5	Addis Ababa is well advertised as a convention destination. (Opportunity)					
6	The conference centre has a mechanism to assist different language speakers (participants). (Opportunity)					
7	My hotel offers services such as; internet, secretarial service, fax, mobile rental etc. (Opportunity)					
8	The conference centre is equipped with video conferencing equipment. (Opportunity)					
9	Overall, the price I paid for different services and products related to the conference is reasonable. Opportunity)					

PART III: FACTORS AFFECTING THE CHOICE OF CONVENTION CENTRES.

1. Which one of the following specific attributes do you think is more important to participants as far as location is concerned?
 - a) location of the venue
 - b) access to market
 - c) access to accommodation
 - d) access to the centre of the city
2. Which one of the following specific attributes do you think is more important to participants as far as safety and security is concerned?
 - a) at the venue
 - b) on travel
 - c) in the hotel
 - d) at the city
3. Which one of the following specific attributes do you think is more important to participants as far as destination image is concerned?
 - a) country's identity
 - b) country's past record
 - c) Participant's perception towards Addis Ababa
 - d) slogans used to promote the destination
4. Which one of the following specific attributes do you think is more important to participants as far as welcoming culture is concerned?
 - a) people's cooperation
 - b) tolerance of other's culture
 - c) cultural similarity
 - d) Others _____
5. Which one of the following specific attributes do you think is more important to participants as far as convenient venue is concerned?
 - a) Convenient meeting rooms
 - b) Neatness
 - c) Venue facilities
 - d) Others _____

6. Which one of the following specific attributes do you think is more important to participants as far as related costs are concerned?
- a) transportation cost
 - b) conference product related cost
 - c) accommodation cost
 - d) living cost
7. Which one of the following specific attributes do you think is more important to participants as far as conference product-service mix is concerned?
- a) Promotion
 - b) Price
 - c) Product and services
 - d) People
 - e) Physical evidence
 - f) Place
 - g) Process

Appendix Three interview questions

Part Four: Interview questions for Addis Ababa Arts, culture and Tourism Bureau, MICE Tourism Director

1. How do you describe the current status of conference tourism in Addis Ababa (in terms of arrivals (conference participants), target markets, facilities, infrastructure, and competitiveness of the city in attracting conferences, etc)?
2. How do you describe the potential of the city for conference tourism development?
3. What do you think are the contributions of conference tourism in Addis Ababa?
4. What opportunities are available for conference tourism development in Addis Ababa?
5. Who are the main stakeholders responsible for the development of the conference tourism in the city?
6. How do you describe your collaboration with conference tourism stakeholders in Ethiopia in general and Addis Ababa in particular? In what ways do you participate the stakeholders? How often do you participate them? How do you evaluate its effectiveness?
7. Are there any policy packages that govern and guide the development of conference tourism in the city? If yes, please describe the focal points of the policy.
8. What are the challenges or bottlenecks to develop conference tourism in Addis Ababa?
9. What activities or measures have been taken so far by the bureau to develop conference tourism in Addis Ababa?
10. What do you recommend to make Addis Ababa as a hub for conference tourism in Addis Ababa?