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THE MEETINGS, INCENTIVES, CONFERENCES AND EXHIBITIONS TOURISM STRATEGY AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE: A CASE OF KENYATTA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE – NAIROBI, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was explore the meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions tourism strategy and organizational performance: A case of Kenyatta International Convention Centre – Nairobi, Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The population of study consisted of all the employees of the KICC. The sample size of this study was 130 individuals determined using purposive sampling. Primary data was collected using questionnaires containing both open and close ended questions while secondary data was collected from literature such as KICC financial record and the National MICE strategy. The quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics. In a correlation test was carried out to find the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables. From the research results, the more the meetings held by KICC the higher the amount of revenue obtained by the government with most meetings being organized by government ministries in the months of April to June. Regarding exhibitions and organizational performance, the results indicated that the organization was located in a desirable position within the CBD giving it good access and proximity. The correlation test was reported as positive and significantly different from 0 because the p-value of 0.586 was greater than 0.10.

Key words; Meetings, Exhibition, Organizational performance

1. Introduction

Kenya has a number of strengths that support its potential for long-term growth. Its natural beauty and coastal location provide significant potential. Tourism is considered a big business in Kenya. Travel expenditures today are a major source of income and employment in many nations (Edgell, 2006). Global tourism today provides employment for more than 222 million people worldwide, or approximately one in every twelve workers, and it is widely believed that service industries are one of the major potential growth areas of post-industrial societies (Bell, 1974; Brackenbury, 2002). MICE is a new strategy emerging in the tourism globalized industry with the characteristics of high value creation and high potentiality; great value, great employment opportunity, and great inter-industry linkage; superior service, superior order, and superior environment and which characteristics that allowed MICE to be chosen as a benchmark service industry. Any analysis done on the tourism labour markets, however, is problematic, due to the diversity of the industry (Ladkin, 2005). The diverse and fragmented nature of tourism significantly adds to the complexity of estimating the category of employment, the number of people employed in the tourism industry and the way in which the industry contributes to the growth of the nation's GDP. Due to this fact therefore, defining tourism employment and its contribution to a nation's GDP is difficult (Riley et al., 2002).

2. Statement of the Problem

The MICE tourism sub-sector was launched in Kenya for the first time in July 2011. The whole world embraces this strategy in the tourism sector but very few studies have been done on the impact of MICE strategy on organizational performance. For example, Othman and Rosli (2011) did their study on the impact of tourism on small business performance in Malaysian Islands. The study found that tourism sector as measured by tourist arrivals and tourist customers has significant positive impact on the financial and non-financial performance of the small businesses. This finding consolidates tourism development theory that tourism is an important catalyst for entrepreneurial development and small business performance. The question that could rise from this study was that what were the factors that catalyzed the tourism sector to enable it help in entrepreneurial development? Did tourism develop just because of its name or there were some factors put in place to help it develop?

Christopher (2013) also did a study on the factors affecting implementation of the Kenya vision 2030 strategy in public sector a case of Kenyatta international conference centre. The research attempted to establish the level of influence Kenyatta international conference centre as a conference and meetings centre for tourism attraction has on the implementation process of the industry. The research also determined factors that lead to the increase or decrease in number of tourists in the country. Christopher (2013) found that proper provision of incentives in the sector builds up the confidence of tourists in the country but did not mention the findings on the effect of exhibitions to the sector.

A number of questions there could arise from the studies indicated above, for example, are there any other factors that influence tourism organizational performance apart from provision of incentives? Can strategies be put in place to help regional areas to gain the lucrative MICE market? Can the professionalism and quality of service provided by venues in the main capital city be found in other regional areas to build up the industry? This study is aimed at identifying other factors that could lead to organizational performance in the tourism sector other than provision of incentives and answering these questions therefore filling this gap. It is also aimed at identifying the relationship that exists between MICE tourism strategy and organizational performance.

3. Objectives of study

The general objective of the study was to examine the effects of MICE tourism strategy on organizational performance. The study focused on the following specific objectives:

- i. To identify whether the number of meetings held in the tourism sector affect organizational performance.
- ii. To determine whether the incentives provided in the tourism sector affect organizational performance.
- iii. To examine whether conferences held in the tourism sector affect organizational performance.
- iv. To determine whether exhibitions held in the tourism sector affect organizational performance.

Theoretical Review

4. Consumer Behavior Theory

The official definition of consumer behaviour given by Belch (1998) is 'the process and activities people engage in when searching for, selecting, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing of products and services so as to satisfy their needs and desires'. Behaviour occurs either for the individual, or in the context of a group, or an organization. Consumer behaviour theory (CBT) in MICE strategy and organizational performance is of utmost importance in that it determines product use, and is often of great interest to the marketer (KICC), because this may influence how a product is best positioned or how we can encourage increased consumption. This model focuses on the relationship between the firm and its potential consumers. The firm communicates with consumers through its marketing messages (advertising), and the consumers react to these messages by purchasing response. Looking to the model we will find that the firm and the consumer are connected with each other, the firm tries to influence the consumer and the consumer is influencing the firm by his decision.

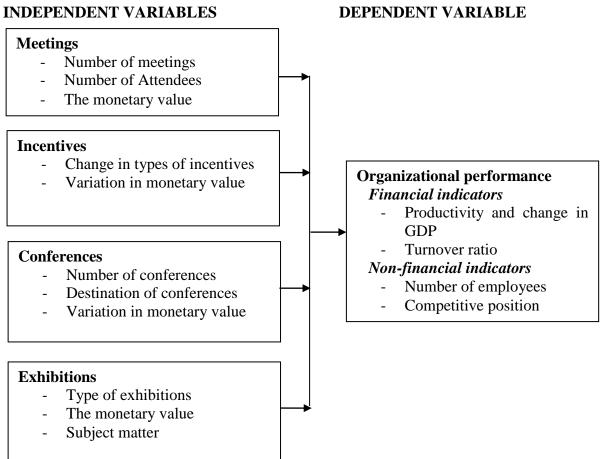
5. Grounded Theory

Grounded theory development typically includes holistic thick descriptions of behaviour processes (Geertz, 1973; Glazer & Strauss, 1967). These descriptions provide an opportunity to collect both emic (informant own) and etic (researcher) interpretations of the informant lived

experiences and plans. While etic reporting captures important insights on behaviour (e.g., Arnould & Price, 1993; Belk & Costa, 1998), etic reports in concert with emic interpretations allow researchers a rich method of capturing the complexities and nuances of conference tourism experiences. Consumer (e.g., international visitor) self-reporting of lived experiences provides insights on both motivations and behaviour. This is greatly facilitated by the feedback given by the clients (informant) to the provider of the service or researcher in this case; that gives the provider of the service KICC insights in the behaviour and experience of the informant. It therefore provides rich information that enables the KICC to capture the complexities and nuances and how best to address them.

6. Conceptual Framework

Jabareen (2009) defines a conceptual framework as a network, or a plane of interlinked concepts that together provide a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon or phenomena. The concepts that constitute a conceptual framework support one another, articulate their respective phenomena, and establish a framework-specific philosophy. This research articulates its conceptual framework in terms of a dependent variable and various independent variables.



Conceptual Framework INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

7. Research Methodology

The research design used in this study was descriptive research design. The target population of study consisted of all the employees of the Kenyatta International Convention Center, Nairobi. The target employees of the KICC were those with the knowledge of Meetings and Exhibitions. The sample size of this study consisted of 130 individuals from the KICC determined using purposive sampling. The researcher used questionnaires as the research instrument to gather the relevant information needed related to the study.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

8. Meetings

This is a general term specifying the coming together of a number of people in one place, to confer or carry out a particular activity. They are a meeting of delegates for a shared interest and objective with a predetermined agenda and itinerary. An organization like KICC conducts meetings and events for the purpose of earning revenues to enhance its financial performance.

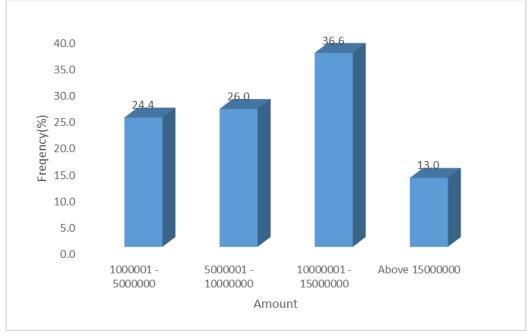


Figure 2: Amount of revenues to the government

Figure 2 indicates that an overwhelming majority indicated that the government gets Ksh 10,000,001 – 15,000,000 from KICC per month. This was followed by 26% of the respondents who indicated that the revenue that the government obtained was between Ksh 5,000,001 and 10,000,000 while 24.4% of the respondents indicated that the government obtains between Ksh. 1,000,001 and 5,000,000. Finally 13% were of the opinion that the government obtained above Ksh.15, 000,000 from KICC meetings. This is a clear indication that the more the meetings held by KICC the higher the amount of revenue obtained by the government. The researcher conducted a cross tabulation on the average number of meetings held within a month and the number of delegates and this was summarized in table 1

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		•	On your own personal opinion, approximately how many meetings does your organization host within a month?							
		20 and below	21 - 40	41 - 60	61 - 80	above 80	_			
What is the	below 100	4	2	6	4	4	20			
average	101 - 200	5	1	17	3	7	33			
number of	201 - 300	2	4	13	5	6	30			
delegates	401 - 500	4	2	5	3	6	20			
per	above 500	2	0	12	2	4	20			
meeting?										
Total		17	9	53	17	27	123			

Table 1: Cross tabulation on the number of meetings and the number of delegates

Results from table 1 indicates that for KICC holding below 20 meetings, majority (5) of the respondents indicated that the average number of delegates who attended were between 101 and 200. This was followed by 4 respondents who indicated that the number of delegates were below 100 and between 401 and 500. Finally, 2 respondents said that the number of delegates were 201-300 and above 500. For those respondents who indicated that the number of meetings held on average within a month were between 21 and 40, majority of the respondents indicated that the number of meetings held indicated that the number of meetings were between 41 and 60, majority (17) of the respondents indicated that the number of delegates were between that the number of delegates were between 101 and 200. The researcher went ahead to determine a sector that gives KICC more meetings and table 2 had the summary of the results.

Sector	Frequency	Percentage
Government Ministries	42	34.1
Parastatals	13	10.6
Corporate Sector	8	6.5
International Organizations	37	30.1
NGOS	23	18.7
Total	123	100.0

Table 2: Sectors that give KICC the most meetings

Results from table 2 indicated that majority (42, 34.1%) of the respondents indicated that the government ministries were the ones that gave KICC most meetings, 23(18.7%) respondents indicated that NGOs also gave KICC most meetings while 37(30.1%) respondents indicated that international organizations also gave more meetings to KICC. Parastatals was fronted by 13(10.6%) respondents. Finally, 8(6.5%) respondents were of the opinion that the corporate sector gave most meetings to KICC. The fact that KICC is a government parastatal, from the

study therefore, the government is the one that offers most meetings to the organization. The researcher then sought to understand the period of the year that the organization held most meetings and the results were summarized in table 3.

Period	Frequency	Percentage
Between January and March	18	14.6
Between April and June	51	41.5
Between July and September	35	28.5
Between October and December	19	15.4
Total	123	100.0

Table 3: Period of the year that the organization held most meetings

Results from table 3 indicate these periods and majority (51, 41.5%) of the respondents indicated that most meetings were held in between the month of April and June. This was followed by 35(28.5%) respondents who indicated that meetings were mostly held between July and September. Finally, 19(15.4%) respondents indicated that most meetings were held between October and December. The researcher further conducted a correlation analysis to determine the extent with which meetings affected organization performance and the results were summarized in table 4.

Table 4: Correlation between meetings and organizational performance

		Meetings	Organizational Performance
Meetings	Pearson	1	.609
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	Ν	123	123
Organizational	Pearson	.609	1
Performance	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	Ν	123	123

The correlation reported in the table 4.7 is positive and the value of 0.609 is significantly different from 0 because the p-value is less than 0.10. This suggests that the company should focus more on its efforts on Meetings because there is a significant level of effect of meetings on the number of customers.

9. Incentives

In a bid to determine how incentives influenced the performance of KICC, the researcher posed statements for respondents to give the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with facts regarding incentives and table 5 had the response.

	Stro	ongly	Agr	·ee	Neu	tral	Disa	agree	Stro	ongly	ТОТ	TAL
	Agr	ee							Disagree			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
The organization provides enough payment to meet the requirements of life of its employees.	17	14	32	26	22	18	32	26	20	16	123	100
The organization provides rewards for skilled employees commensurate with their performance in the MICE industry.	36	30	63	51	-	-	24	20	-	-	123	100
The organization provides bonuses for workers according to their post and consistent with their level of performance.	40	33	52	42	-	-	12	10	-	-	123	100
Theorganizationprovidesaftersaleservicesandtransportationallowancesforthoseattendeeswhoinputmorerevenuetotheorganization.	21	17	72	59	11	9	19	15	-	-	123	100

Table 5: Effect of financial incentives on the organizational performance

The researcher posed statements and regarding the fact that the organization provides enough payment to meet the requirements of life of its employees, majority (32, 26%) of the respondents agreed while the same percentage disagreed. This was followed by 22(18%) who were neutral while 20(16%) strongly disagreed. Finally, 17(14%) respondents strongly agreed. Concerning the statement that the organization provides rewards for skilled employees commensurate with their performance in the MICE industry, majority (63, 51%) respondents agreed while 36(30%) of the respondents strongly agreed. The organization provides bonuses for workers according to their post and consistent with their level of performance was another statement where 52(42%) agreed while 40(33%) strongly agreed. Lastly, the organization provides after sale services and transportation allowances for those attendees who input more revenue to the organization, 72(59%) respondents agreed while 21(17%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 21(17%) strongly agreed while 19(15%) disagreed.

The researcher posed statements regarding the effects of moral incentives and organizational performance and the results were summarized in table 6.

	Str	ongly	Agr	ee	Neu	ıtral	Disa	agree	Str	ongly	ТОТ	TAL
	Agı	ee							Disagree			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
The organization ensures appropriate social security and health insurance for employees.	43	35	51	42	29	24	-	-	-	-	123	100
The organization is keen to give a fair opportunity for employees in complaints and suggestions.	31	25	61	50	11	9	20	16	-	-	123	100
Theorganizationprovidesappropriateofficesandwell-furnishedonesemployees.	31	25	73	60	-	-	19	15	-	-	123	100
The organization gives smooth annual leave for employees in accordance with rules and regulations.	53	43	30	24	19	15	-	-	21	17	123	100

 Table 6: Effect of Moral Incentives on the organizational performance

The organization ensures appropriate social security and health insurance for employees was the first statement that the researcher wanted to know how it affects organizational performance. Majority of the respondents (51, 42%) agreed with the statement, 43(35%) strongly agreed, 29(24%) were neutral. Majority (61, 50%) agreed, 31(25%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 20(16%) disagreed while 11(9%) were neutral. The organization provides appropriate offices and well-furnished ones for employees was another statement. Majority (73, 60%) of the respondents agreed while 31(25%) strongly agreed. The researcher further went ahead to identify if the organization gives smooth annual leave for employees in accordance with rules and regulations. Majority (5, 43%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 30(24%) agreed, 19(15%) were neutral while 21(17%) strongly disagreed. The researcher further conducted a correlation test to determine the relationship between meetings and organizational performance and the results were summarized in table 7 in the next page.

		Incentives	Performance of the organization
Incentives	Pearson Correlation	1	.304
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	Ν	123	123
Performance of the organization	Pearson Correlation	.304	1
	Sig. (2-tailed) N	.000 123	123

Table 7: Correlation between Incentives and organizational performance

The correlation shown in the table 7 above is positive and the value of 0.304 is significantly different from 0 because the p-value is less than 0.10. This suggests that the company should put some more emphasis on Incentives so that it can increase its performance. Therefore, organizations which chose applying Incentives strategies may also choose to apply in conjunction with Incentives either conferences or exhibitions. This will also make the organization more competitive.

10. Conference

The researcher divided the conferences into two sections, financial section and moral section on conferences. Table 8 indicates the summary of the financial aspects of conferences.

	Stro	ongly	Agr	ee	Neu	itral	Disa	agree	Stro	ongly	ТОТ	AL
	Agr	ee							Disa	agree		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
The organizational strategy on Conferences allow the centre to host many events	16	13	41	33	15	12	21	17	30	24	123	100
The organization rates for Conferences enable clients to host more events at the centre	37	30	49	40	-	-	12	10	25	20	123	100
The organization provides financial incentives to institutions to develop untapped markets.	13	11	51	42	22	18	-	-	37	30	123	100

Table 8: Financial aspects of conferences and organizational performance

The organizational strategy on Conferences allow the centre to host many events was the first statement. Majority (41, 33%) of the respondents agreed, 16(13%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 15(12%) of the respondents were neutral, 21(17%) of the respondents disagreed while 30(24%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. On the other hand, the researcher sought to know if the organization rates for Conferences enable clients to host more events at the centre. 37(30%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 49(40%) of the respondents agreed 12(10%) of the respondents disagreed while 25(20%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. Finally, the organization provides financial incentives to institutions to develop untapped markets was another statement. 13(11%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 51(42%) of the respondents agreed.

The researcher wanted to determine some of these conference support services that existed and figure 4.4 had the results.

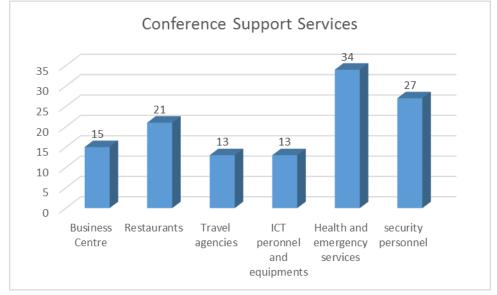


Figure 3 Conference Support Services

Results from figure 3 indicate that majority of the respondents (34, 28%) said that health and emergency services was the major conference service offered by KICC. This was followed by 27(22%) who indicated that there existed security personnel as a conference support service. The presence of restaurants was said by 21(17%) respondents. This was followed 15(12%) respondents who said about business centres and finally 13(14%) who equally said that there existed travel agencies and ICT personnel and equipment. The researcher further conducted a correlation analysis to test the extent of the relationship between conferences and organizational performance and the result was summarized in table 9.

		Conferences	Organizational Performance
Conferences	Pearson	1	245
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	Ν	123	123
Organizational	Pearson	245	1
Performance	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	Ν	123	123

 Table 9: Correlation between Conferences and organizational performance

The correlation represented in the Table 9 is negative, and the value of -0.245 is significantly different from 0 because the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.10. The results therefore indicated that conferences must be incorporated with other factors in the firm in order to influence the performance of the organization. Conferences alone cannot be relied upon in ensuring that the firm does better in the market.

11. Exhibitions

The researcher sought to identify what makes KICC a good location for exhibitions. The response was summarized in table 10.

Reason	Frequency	Percentage
Central location within the CBD	45	36.6
The size of the organization	33	26.8
Proximity	45	36.6
Total	123	100.0

Table 10 indicated that KICC was located in a desirable position because of a number of reasons. Majority (45, 36.6%) of the respondents indicated that it was because the location was in a central location within the CBD, this was given also by a same response to those who indicated that it had a good proximity. The size of the organization was said by 33(26.8%) of the respondents. The researcher then conducted a correlation test to ascertain the relationship between exhibitions and organizational performance and table 11 had a summary of the results.

		Exhibitions	Performance of the organization
Exhibitions	Pearson Correlation	1	.087
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.586
	Ν	123	123
Performance of	Pearson	.087	1
the organization	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.586	
	Ν	123	123

Table 11: Correlation between Exhibitions and Organizational performance.

The correlation reported in the table 11 is positive and significantly different from 0 because the p-value of 0.586 is greater than 0.10. This suggests that the company should focus its efforts on enhancing exhibitions because there is some level of effect of the exhibitions related aspects that should be enhanced to catch the attention of customers and creating customer loyalty.

12. Organizational Performance

Organizational performance was established through the analysis of the total revenues of the organization from the year 2007 to 2015. In this period, the total revenue was seen increasing however at a decreasing rate as can be seen in figure below.

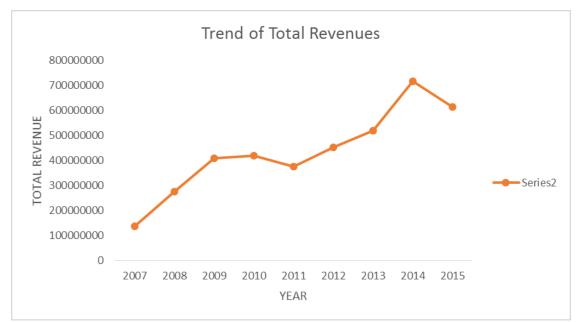


Figure 4 Trend of Total Revenues

13. Summary of the findings

Meetings

To identify whether the number of meetings held in the tourism sector affect organizational performance. This was an indication that KICC being a government parastatal greatly contribute to the revenues that the government obtains. There was a clear indication that the more the meetings held by KICC the higher the amount of revenue obtained by the government. After a cross tabulation on the average number of meetings held within a month and the number of delegates. Majority indicated that for KICC holding below 20 meetings that the average number of delegates who attended were between 101 and 200. The research further revealed that the government ministries were the ones that gave KICC most meetings together with international organizations. The fact that KICC is a government Parastatal, from the study therefore, the government is the one that offers most meetings to the organization between the month of April and June. The researcher further conducted a correlation analysis to determine the extent with which meetings affected organization performance. The correlation reported in the table 4.7 is positive and the value of 0.609 is significantly different from 0 because the p-value is less than 0.10. This suggests that the company should focus more on its efforts on Meetings because there is a significant level of effect of meetings on the number of customers.

Incentives

Regarding the effect of incentives of organizational performance, researcher posed statements for respondents to give the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with facts regarding incentives. Results indicated the effects of finance incentives on organizational performance. The researcher posed statements regarding the fact that the organization provides enough payment to meet the requirements of life of its employees. The organization provides rewards for skilled employees commensurate with their performance in the MICE industry and after sale services and transportation allowances for those attendees who input more revenue to the organization. There was an indication that majority were of the opinion that KICC ensures appropriate social security and health insurance for employees as a moral incentive. The organization provides appropriate offices and well-furnished ones for employees. The researcher further conducted a correlation test to determine the relationship between meetings and organizational performance. The correlation was positive and the value of 0.304is significantly different from 0 because the p-value is less than 0.10. This suggests that the company should put some more emphasis on Incentives so that it can increase its performance.

Conferences

Concerning the relationship between conferences and organizational performance, the researcher divided the conferences into two sections, financial section and moral section on conferences. Regarding financial aspects of conferences, the organizational strategy on Conferences allow the centre to host many events. The organization provides financial incentives to institutions to

develop untapped markets. It was noted that here existed conference support services within KICC such as health and emergency services, security personnel, restaurants, business centres, travel agencies and ICT personnel and equipment. The researcher then conducted a correlation analysis to test the extent of the relationship between conferences and organizational performance. The correlation was negative, and the value of -0.245 is significantly different from 0 because the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.10. The results therefore indicated that conferences must be incorporated with other factors in the firm in order to influence the performance of the organization.

Exhibitions

Regarding exhibitions and organizational performance, KICC was identified as a good location for exhibitions due to its desirable position because of a number of reasons such as the location within the CBD, good proximity to hotels and the size of the organization. The researcher conducted a correlation test to ascertain the relationship between exhibitions and organizational performance. The correlation reported in the table 4.11 is positive and significantly different from 0 because the p-value of 0.586 is greater than 0.10.

14. Conclusions

The conclusions were derived from the objectives. Regarding the influence of meetings and organizational performance, the study concluded that meetings were integral aspect of any tourism related organization. The number of meetings that an organization holds for a specific period affects how the organization will perform. The tourism industry in any country is one of the major revenue earners. It was also concluded that MICE tourism is an upcoming sector and a major revenue contributor to the tourism industry in countries. Meetings and conventions sites are one of the most attractive segments of the travel and tourism market. Very little is known about the factors that determine how the site for a convention is chosen from among many different alternative destinations available. The results of the study were: proximity of the convention participants to conference sites were highly significant; accommodation connected to or part of convention is highly desired; accessibility of accommodation site and local airport was unimportant; entertainment, shopping, sightseeing opportunities were significant; weather expected was not significant; cost of the convention venue is a major factor; site attractiveness generally declines as cost increases; lowest cost sites or 'cheap' sites signalled poor and unattractive convention facilities; convention venue facilities is an important determinant.

15. Recommendations

In order to be a hot spot for MICE, a destination needs to be developed and promoted. Infrastructural facilities accessibility, to accommodation, to venues needs to be of international standard and quality. The study makes the following recommendations

• A number of foundation activities need to be put in place towards harnessing the great potential in conference tourism and building a united front. These will include

Conference tourism product audit; Conference tourism brand; Convention Bureau and; Marketing & Promotion.

- A proper conference tourism product audit is necessary towards forging a united front in tourism development. A product audit will involve: determining the number of conferencing facilities in the country by region and their capacities; determining what number of these facilities has accommodation and those without and determining the available accommodation around facilities without; distance & capacities.
- More focused marketing of conference is paramount at this stage. This will entail standardizing marketing and promotional strategies to ensure the same message is passed across the market about Kenya conference product, locally and internationally.
- A binding team for Conventions, Exhibition and events is important as a stop gap measure prior to establishment of Conventional Bureau for Kenya. This team would involve representatives from the main stakeholders in the larger tourism industry that supply tourism services.

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