

Co-Created Destination Branding for Creative MICE Tourism:

Building Synergies with Cultural Heritage Assets

by

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## ABSTRACT

This study develops a Creative MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions/conferences and Exhibitions) Tourism Destination Branding Model (CMDBM), and argues for co-creation and synergies between MICE and heritage resources in a popular business destination. MICE tourism can be enhanced through co-created offerings by adding innovative value to MICE tourism experiences. The proposed CMDBM framework aims to help determine how a destination can develop a co-created MICE brand through collaboration with key stakeholders to better meet potential MICE travelers' other touristic interests and cultural values.

The research project was undertaken in collaboration with the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, and several heritage institutions in New Orleans. The study adopts both qualitative and quantitative research designs to explore the destination brand strategy. The qualitative data were acquired through interviews with relevant stakeholders to analyze the use of destination branding strategies and understand existing and potential synergies with heritage institutions. The quantitative portion measures MICE attendees' perceptions of the co-created value of enhancing MICE destinations with cultural heritage appeal. NRPA Conference attendees' responses provide a practical understanding for stakeholders.

This research provides both practical and theoretical insights for the tourism industry for destination communities, and has salient conceptual and theoretical implications for the academy. The study confirms that MICE tourism, collaborating with cultural heritage assets, can enrich MICE travelers' travel experiences. The destination

brand strategy was identified with supportive cultural heritage resources and an appropriate destination brand framework of MICE tourism was proposed. As confirmed by MICE attendees' evaluations from the case study, it extends the literature on destination brand, destination brand awareness, destination brand experience, destination brand personality, and destination brand equity.

The empirical exploration of MICE destination branding has been handicapped in existing literature by a lack of conceptual marketing perspectives. This work will lend credence to the important aspect of business destination marketing and stresses building synergy and adding value to MICE tourism experiences. As destination marketing programs become competitive, especially in the context of equitable distribution of monetary benefits across different stakeholders, creating synergies become crucial in the destination. A co-created brand strategy can help make destinations more competitive.

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## INTRODUCTION

Destinations are recognized as the primary component of analysis in the field of tourism research (Pike & Page, 2014). Morgan, Pritchard and Pride (2004) indicate that destinations have emerged as the leading brands in the travel industry. As a result of increased global competition, destinations have turned toward marketing and branding strategies for better practices, which can better utilize limited resources to increase tourism (Jacobsen, 2012; Zenker & Martin, 2011). In destination attractiveness, strong business tourism offerings and allied conference and exhibition facilities are essential elements across many countries, regions and cities. (World Tourism Organization, 2016). Because of increasing competition, there is a need for destinations to offer innovative forms of tourism.

Creative tourism is one form of innovative tourism that draws on synergies between different components of the industry. According to Richards (2011), the growth of new consumption patterns, more skilled practices of tourism activity and changes in the tourism production have enhanced the demand for creative tourism. Creative tourism suggests a level of co-creation, or co-makship between different stakeholders to offer highly valued experiences. In order to enhance the tourism product, service and experience, tourism and creativity should be linked (Richards, 2011). For instance, a network of creative businesses not only offers products to tourists but provides a wide range of unique experiential offerings developed by a local community. The active involvement of creative producers and other stakeholders in the co-creation process can be developed to enhance the cultural and socio-economic potential of destination (Richards, 2011). The co-creation process takes place between co-creators in a certain

value creation environment and co-creative setting (Mitleton-Kelly, 2011). The term ‘co-creation’ has been used broadly to describe a shift in thinking from defining value in the organization to a more participatory process where stakeholders generate and develop meaning (Ind & Coates, 2013).

Developing interactive conceptualizations of brand co-creation should be based on a stakeholder typology and a stakeholder framework. According to Hatch and Schultz (2010), brand value is co-created through stakeholder relationships and social interactions within a network. The concept of enterprise branding can strengthen the co-creation process (Hatch & Schultz, 2010). It is not only driven by the identity stakeholders create together and define for themselves but is supported by the interdependent activity that arrays from buying and selling products and services (Hatch & Schultz, 2010). Ind and Coates (2013) argue that brand meaning is created by stakeholders in their interaction process. The sense of brand and branding has shifted from the brand conceptualization as firm-provided assets for products and services to brand as a collaborative activity of firms and all of their stakeholders, in their value co-creation context (Merz, He & Vargo, 2009). Brands are considered to support defining the future of a destination in that they promise potential to the tourists and the local residents (Blain, Levy & Ritchie, 2005). The primary role of a brand is to identify the product or services and to differentiate them from those of competitors (Blain et al., 2005). From the tourism perspective, destination branding identifies, delineates, and differentiates a destination, as well as communicates destination image. Destination branding benefits tourists to experience these features which make the destination more distinctive and attractive (Blain et al., 2005; Hall, 1999). Qu, Kim and Im (2011) stress that the concept of destination branding is

significant for a destination to be identified and differentiated from alternatives in the minds of the target market. Destination branding can create a positive destination image that influences consumer destination choice (Blain et al., 2005) and builds emotional links with visitors (Morgan et al., 2004). In addition, destination branding activities serve to reduce perceived risk and consumer search costs (Blain et al., 2005). Creating a differentiated destination image is considered standard for a destination to survive within a globally competitive marketplace (Qu et al, 2011). The image of a destination brand is described as the perception of the place as reflected by the relations held in the tourist memory or that of other stakeholders such as the local government, local residents and destination management organizations (DMOs) (Cai, 2002). Due to growing competition among destinations, destination branding has become a strategic marketing tool worldwide (Garcia, Gomez & Molina, 2012).

Jones and Li (2015) imply that business tourism, including MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions, and exhibitions) activities, has long been targeted for development by the industry, governments and other related agencies. The MICE industry is often described as one of the major sub-sectors within the global tourism industry, which is growing and maturing at a rapid rate (Mistilis & Dwyer, 1999).

Morozova (2013) notes the success of the MICE industry according to the current global trends within the sector's development. Due to increases in the flow of business travelers, increasingly more destinations are interested in developing business tourism in the context of globalization of the growing tourism marketplace (Morozova, 2013). In addition, Rutherford and Kreck (1994) argue that MICE not only contributes economically to the host destination, but also develops and improves tourism activities by

travelers' repeat visits and their word-of-mouth communication. The term 'business tourism' in this dissertation refers to all travel associated with attendance at meetings, incentive events, conferences, and exhibitions—the traditional definition of 'MICE tourism.' Business tourism can be interpreted as any business trip beyond the normative forms of MICE travel. In this study, however, both terms 'business tourism' and 'MICE tourism' will be used interchangeably in the same sense.

This research brings together the notion of business tourism with heritage tourism, arguably one of the most pervasive forms of non-business travel. The term 'heritage' refers to an inheritance, including cultural and natural environments that humankind inherits from previous generations. Cultural heritage includes tangible heritage sites and intangible cultural forms. Tangible heritage includes monuments and historic buildings, and intangible cultural forms are associated to the cultural experience of humankind, such as include works of art and rituals (Jokilehto, 1999). Natural heritage resources include natural phenomena, regions, and environments which bear some degree of cultural meaning (Butler & Boyd, 2000). Heritage tourism is often defined as people visiting, observing or experiencing heritage attractions, historical resources, living culture or contemporary arts (Timothy, 2011). Cultural tourism is essentially synonymous and is sometimes described as travelers visiting, experiencing or participating in living culture, art, performance, music or other components of contemporary culture, motivated by an interest in the historical, artistic, and scientific or heritage offerings of a community, region, or institution (Silberberg, 1995; Timothy, 2011). According to Timothy's (2011) argument, in this study, cultural tourism and heritage tourism will be used interchangeably.



Numerous tourism scholars have demonstrated the importance of destinations. Leiper (1979) states that most aspects of tourism take place at a destination, and Spott (1997) indicates that destination resources are what attract visitors. Like all other products, destinations use marketing to communicate their unique qualities by differentiating themselves from their competitors (Morrison & Anderson, 2002) and to attract business travelers (Hankinson, 2005). Hankinson (2007) points out some challenges of place branding. For instance, DMOs have little control over the process because of the influence of a broad range of stakeholders including diverse public and private organizations. Different people have different expectations and purposes associated with place. This indicates that place brand embraces significantly more points of contact, thus the large number of influential stakeholders is considered a challenge with place brands (Buhalis, 2000; Konecnik & Go, 2008). Konecnik (2010) indicates that place branding strategies, as a strategic marketing platform, must remarkably derive from the internal stakeholders' opinions of each place. A mutually supportive relationship between the different stakeholders for a long-term perspective is significant in destination branding strategies (Ruzzier & Chernatony, 2013).

Many destinations consider MICE events an image maker in modern tourism, because of MICE's lucrative benefits and the visibility it brings to the locale. Destinations compete to host MICE events (Richard & Wilson, 2004), and the MICE sector contributes to the regional and national destination image (Mahadewi, Bendesa & Antara, 2014).

## **Research Problem**

MICE tourism seldom functions as a solitary destination product. Many business travelers take in other non-business activities while in the destination—visiting a museum, playing golf, or attending a play or concert. Many MICE travelers add extra days to their itineraries so that they may appreciate the cultural or natural resources in the MICE destination. Despite its significance, there has been little academic or management interest in the ancillary interests of MICE tourists while on business travel. Heritage and MICE are a natural combination, as many MICE destinations are also important cultural destinations that have other attractions to offer business travelers beyond the business functions of their journeys. Nonetheless, few, if any, researchers have researched this important and potentially lucrative crossover that has important implications for increased expenditures and longer stays.

Destinations with natural beauty, unique cultures and MICE facilities are expected to grow as an ideal place for international MICE tourism with heritage and cultural tourism as salient ancillary offerings. To study MICE tourism and heritage tourism as two complementary sectors for the same destination, a clear understanding of each sector needs to be a primary point in this study. MICE tourism, with its strong economic power, has the potential to improve local and national brand significance. Since MICE requires grand scales of facilities and services, it has direct and indirect impacts on the general tourism industry and synergy on other industries as well. Well-preserved cultural heritage and authentic natural heritage may also be attractive for the MICE tourism sector. The two sectors may be able to work together in a symbiotic relationship that draws tourists and keeps them longer in the destination.

Creative destination branding is important and holds potential to attract new residents, employees and travelers to a business location (Ashworth & Voogd, 1994; Buhalis, 2000; Garcia et al., 2012; Hankinson, 2005; Morgan et al., 2004). Many destinations with potential tourism attributes desire to develop the MICE industry in conjunction with their own culture- and nature-based tourism products. Some business travelers do not participate in extra tourism experiences other than the business purposes for which they have traveled. In spite of the increasing attention being given to both MICE and heritage tourism individually, there has been little academic and empirical work to understand the symbiotic ways in which business tourism can expand its portfolio to embrace by building synergies with heritage resources to create a more holistic and successful destination.

### **Purpose Statement**

MICE tourism has become well recognized as a significant development tool for local economies. How to strategize successful initiatives to boost MICE tourism is a significant concern for destinations. Destination branding is one way MICE stakeholders can work together to design and market MICE tourism. These efforts need to focus on producing sustained benefits for the host destination such as co-creation opportunities between stakeholders, economic benefits for residents, community empowerment, and enhancement of local pride.

The international tourism industry is becoming an increasingly competitive marketplace where only the best-marketed and managed destinations are likely to be successful (Buhalis, 2000). Therefore, comprehensive strategic planning is required to

address all aspects that have an impact on tourism destinations (Buhalis, 2000; Evans, Fox & Johnson, 1995). This study proposes a co-created MICE destination branding model to examine destination branding in the context of MICE tourism. It is aimed specifically at cultural heritage offerings in a MICE destination to argue that MICE tourism depends on co-created offerings between stakeholders by adding value of the creative MICE tourism experience.

By exploring challenges and opportunities, this research will provide significant implications for both practitioners and the academy. MICE destinations will add value to benefit their effective practical and promotional marketing efforts. From an academic or theoretical perspective, this study will suggest a creative MICE tourism branding framework based upon the extant literature, which will be tested and modified where appropriate based on the findings of the study. The entire process will make an important contribution to existing scholarship.

The empirical exploration of MICE destination branding has been handicapped in existing literature by a lack of conceptual marketing perspectives. This work will lend credence to many important aspects of business destination marketing and stresses building synergy and adding value to a MICE tourism experience. As destination marketing programs become competitive, especially in the context of the equitable distribution of monetary benefits across different stakeholders, creating synergies becomes crucial in the destination. A co-created brand strategy can help stimulate a favorable intention to make a competitive destination.

## **Delimitations**

This study is delimited to the following:

- Business tourism can be interpreted as any business trip beyond the normative forms of MICE travel. As previously stated, the term ‘business tourism’ in this dissertation refers to all travel associated with attendance at meetings, incentive events, conferences, and exhibitions—the traditional definition of ‘MICE tourism.’ Both terms ‘business tourism’ and ‘MICE tourism’ are used interchangeably in this study.
- Heritage tourism is often defined as people visiting, observing or experiencing heritage attractions, historical resources, living culture or contemporary arts (Timothy, 2011). Cultural tourism is essentially synonymous and is sometimes described as travelers visiting, experiencing or participating in living culture, art, performance, music or other components of contemporary culture, motivated by an interest in the historical, artistic, and scientific or heritage offerings of a community, region, or institution (Silberberg, 1995; Timothy, 2011). In this study, as noted earlier, cultural tourism and heritage tourism will be used interchangeably, according to Timothy’s (2011) argument.
- As stated previously, developing collaborating conceptualizations of co-created destination brands has to be based on stakeholder typology. As previously noted, this study focuses on the role of cultural/heritage tourism in a MICE destination context. As a supporting group, cultural heritage institutions will represent local community and as a participating/attending group, MICE travelers will provide consumer/customer perspective.

- ‘Creative tourism,’ is a form of innovative tourism that draws on synergies, suggests the level of co-creation between stakeholders to offer highly valued experiences for tourists (Richards, 2011). In this study, “creative tourism” will be used in this respect suggesting co-creation between stakeholders to make synergies in MICE destination.
- Wide-ranging literature refers to co-creation in the context of customer orientation. Although co-creation has been discussed in the context of customer relationship management (Maklan, Knox & Ryals, 2008), this dissertation will examine the innovative potential of co-creation to build synergies between businesses and cultural heritage tourism resources. From this perspective, co-creation in this study will be used as innovative form of collaboration in destination branding to add value for the destination.

## **Limitations**

The following discusses the limitations of this study and how the research address the concerns.

- The case study will be conducted based on specific case, location and time. In particular, this research will study a case of NRPA (National Recreation and Parks Association) annual conference in New Orleans. New Orleans is a unique location of which is well known city for its unique cultural heritage assets, and NRPA annual conference is an exceptional case in that parks and recreation professionals gather to share and exchange their knowledge and information.

Thus, it may provide data which relate to the specific case of the NRPA conference and its location in New Orleans.

- Destination branding refers to a marketing activity which makes the destination more distinctive and attractive. Recently New Orleans has launched a new branding campaign “One Time in New Orleans” to promote its rich heritage and authentic culture. In the survey, it will be requested for participants to consider “One Time in New Orleans” as a destination brand for “New Orleans” with strong cultural/heritage resources and image.

### **Assumptions**

The following outlines the assumption made by the researcher.

- In the United States, New Orleans has been ranked as one the most popular MICE destinations among cities during the last five years, and also recognized as one of the most popular heritage cities with plentiful cultural heritage assets and resources. Considering the city’s unique setting as a heritage city, it is assumed that New Orleans is representing a popular MICE destination with cultural heritage tourism resources.

## Definition of Terms

The following provides definitions of terms used in the study:

- Co-creation: “an interactive, creative and social process between stakeholders that is initiated by the firm” (Roser, DeFillippi and Samson, 2013, p.4) in the value creation process
- Creative tourism: “Travel directed toward an engaged and authentic experience, with participative learning in the arts, heritage, or special character of a place, and it provides a connection with those who reside in this place and create this living culture” (UNESCO, 2006, p.3)/ Suggesting a level of co-creation, or co-makership between different stakeholders to offer highly valued experiences. (Richards, 2011)
- Cultural tourism: “Visits by persons from outside the host community motivated by interest in the historical, artistic, scientific, or lifestyle/heritage offerings of a community, region, group or institution” (Silberberg, 1995)
- Destination marketing/ branding: the activity which identifies and differentiates from alternatives in the minds of the target market/ Makes the destination more distinctive and attractive/ Can create a positive destination image that influences consumer destination choice and builds emotional links with visitors (Blain et al., 2005; Morgan et al., 2004; Qu et al., 2011)
- Heritage institution: Museums, Historic attractions, Tourist attractions with local cultural resources etc.
- Heritage tourism: People visiting, observing or experiencing heritage attractions, historical resources, living culture or contemporary arts (Timothy, 2011)



- Host destination: Destination Management/Marketing Organization (DMO), Convention Visitors Bureau (CVB), The City, The Official Tourism Organization of the City, etc.
- MICE organization: Association, Meeting Planners, Convention Centers, other event venues, etc.
- MICE tourism: Meetings, incentives, conventions (or conferences), and exhibitions
- MICE traveler: People who undertake personal or employer-funded trips to attend meeting, incentives, conventions and exhibitions, both in their home countries and overseas. Travelers who comes to the destination for the purpose of attending the MICE events (Chiang, King, & Nguyen, 2012; Hankinson, 2005)

## LITERATURE REVIEW

To develop suitable research questions, a review of the academic literature was undertaken. First, the core concepts of the study are presented. Related literatures of creative tourism, MICE and cultural heritage tourism, and stakeholder collaboration are elaborated on, and the definitions of MICE and cultural heritage tourism are explained. Also, the reviews of literature from the destination marketing/branding perspective, as well as stakeholder collaboration are discussed. Secondly, to establish a theoretical foundation, the close relationships between core concepts, including creative tourism, MICE destinations, co-creation and cultural heritage resources are discussed. Also, the concepts related to destination branding are examined through pioneer branding frameworks. Finally, hypotheses are developed based upon the proposed conceptual model.

### **Core Concepts and Description**

#### *Creative Tourism*

The concept of creative tourism was introduced fairly recently and is considered a new generation of understanding tourism that involves both tourists and local communities when creating tourism products (Campelo et al., 2014; Jamal, Othman & Mohammad, 2011; Richards, 2011). Richards and Raymond (2000) define creative tourism as “tourism which offers tourists to develop their creative potential through active participation in courses and learning experiences which are the characteristics of the destination where they are undertaken” (Richards & Raymond, 2000, p.18). The

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) also defines creative tourism as “travel directed toward an engaged and authentic experience, with participative learning in the arts, heritage, or special character of a place, and it provides a connection with those who reside in this place and create this living culture” (UNESCO, 2006, p.3).

The concept of creative tourism implies a level of co-creation between a destinations’ stakeholders. Creativity is considered the core of creative tourism (Tan, Kung & Luh, 2013). The relationship between tourism and creativity suggests that they can be associated in order to enhance the tourism product and tourism experience (Richards, 2011). Silberberg (1995) indicates that collaboration with another form of tourism appeals to a broad audience as it offers a variety of experiences that most people are seeking, and eventually increases the perceived value for their time and money. Collaboration does not just expand the market geographically but also broadens the potential market in terms of market segments. Collaboration also contributes to bringing potential cultural tourism and other tourisms together and helps build synergies between MICE tourism and heritage tourism. Furthermore, it enhances communication and implementation of mutually beneficial opportunities (Silberberg, 1995). MICE facilities, and cultural resources can be linked together and transformed, to creative tourism by stimulating visitors to experience different activities in a specific destination. Creative tourism can help destinations rethink and refit cultural tourism and business tourism in innovative ways and increase their general creative potential (Richards, 2011).

## *MICE Tourism*

MICE has traditionally been composed of four major segments: meetings, incentives, conventions (or conferences), and exhibitions. MICE travelers are defined as people who take personal or employer-funded trips to attend meetings, to utilize incentives offered by their employers, or to attend conventions and exhibitions (Chiang, King, & Nguyen, 2012). In short, MICE is one part of the broader phenomenon of business travel. The MICE sector is complex and fragmented. It involves many interested parties, including participants, planners, convention and visitor bureaus (CVBs), meeting venues, accommodations, transportation operators, sponsors and suppliers, all involved in the planning and implementation of an event in general (Ladkin, 2006; Wood & Brotherton, 2008). The whole flow and mix of destination products and services govern the MICE tourism sector (Woo & Ladkin, 2011). This form of business tourism is one of the fastest growing segments of the tourism industry worldwide (Mistilis & Dwyer, 1999) and is less seasonal than more traditional forms of leisure travel; it may take place at any time of the year (Chiu & Ananzeh, 2012) MICE has a synergistic impact on the general tourism industry and other tourism markets as it requires the same facilities and services other forms of tourism also require.

### Components of MICE

Meetings are gatherings of people. They vary in size from a few people to several thousand (Wood & Brotherton, 2008). Meetings in the MICE industry refer to fewer than 50 participants gathering in hotels, resorts, or convention centers (Chiu & Ananzeh, 2012). The purposes of meetings are diverse; they usually include communicating,

informing, exchanging ideas, teaching, training or celebrating. Meetings are typically held in various venues, including convention centers, hotels, corporate offices, universities or sports stadiums (Wood & Brotherton, 2008).

Incentives are reward trips offered to employees. They usually include attending meetings or conferences, as well as leisure travel and package trips (Chiu & Ananzeh, 2012). Companies use incentive trips “to motivate, reward, and recognize employees for excellent performance, service and commitment” (Pizam, 2005, p. 339). Incentive trip programs are generally associated with upscale international destinations. High-quality leisure activities and entertainment experiences are often included in the programs (Wood & Brotherton, 2008).

A convention represents a meeting of representatives of a group or organization, or business people with similar interests. Conventions are often described as meetings of large number of people ranging from hundreds of people to tens of thousands (Wood & Brotherton, 2008). According to Wood and Brotherton (2008), conventions usually have a formal structure. These include several functions such as board of director meetings, general assembly symposiums and workshops for a period of several days. In general, conventions are organized by associations annually and sometimes include an exhibition (Wood & Brotherton, 2008). A conference, a near-synonym of convention, usually suggests high levels of discussion and participation by its attendees (Astroff & Abbey, 1998). It often takes the form of an annual meeting with large numbers of delegates (Chiu & Ananzeh, 2012). Organizations use conferences “to meet and exchange views, convey a message, open a debate, or give publicity to an area of opinion on a specific subject”

(Pizam, 2005, p. 424). Conferences and conventions are typically considered the events where people of similar interest gather information and exchange activities (Law, 1987)

Exhibitions refer to trade shows and consumer shows (Leong, 2007). Products and services are displayed at the same time during an exhibition. Astroff and Abbey (1998) indicate that exhibitions and trade shows are a lucrative and fast-growing segment of the MICE industry. According to Law (1987), exhibitions can be classified by size, type, and geographical origin of participants, and the two main types are the public shows and trade shows. Compared to the large size of international trade shows, the impact of public shows is limited since they attract many people mostly from the local area. Large international exhibitions may bring significant impacts to the destination through the numbers of visitors and their longer stays (Law, 1987).

#### Players (Stakeholders) of MICE

Stakeholders are players with an interest in a common problem or issue and include all individuals, groups, or organizations “directly influenced by the actions others take to solve a problem” (Gray, 1989, p.5). Freeman (2010, p.46) defines stakeholders as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives.”

Mason (2016) suggests that tourists, host populations, tourism industry representatives and government agencies are key players in tourism planning and management. In the business tourism sector, three major performers are considered: associations/meeting planners, tourism organizations of the host destinations, and association members or attendees (Lee, 2005; Oppermann & Chon, 1997). These players are integrated as a system and interrelate with one another (Oppermann & Chon, 1997).

Associations are the organizations that mainly plan events for their members and are forced to develop the best price-valued package in the market (Hu & Heimstra, 1996). Meeting planners are responsible for every aspect of meetings and conventions and play a major role in the success of meetings and conventions (Alexander, Kim & Groves, 2012). Their roles include site selection, contract negotiations, registration, invitations, event promotion and marketing, program and exhibition management, speaker and gift selection, organizing local tours, and arranging transportation (Beaulie & Love, 2004; Toh, Dekay, & Yates, 2005). In addition, meeting planners have a strong decision-making influence in choosing a destination and facility for meetings (Clark, Price, & Murrmann, 1996). There are many studies that examine critical factors that influence meeting planners' choice of destination and facility for MICE events (Bonn, Brand & Ohlin, 1994; Lee & Weaver, 1994; Oppermann, 1998).

Destination managers and promoters compete for the right to host association meetings (Lee, 2005; Oppermann & Chon, 1995). Destination management organizations (DMOs) and convention and visitors bureaus (CVBs) play important roles in organizing marketing activities and developing destinations' desired images in the marketplace (Wang, 2008). DMOs have become an increasingly important subject matter for tourism scholars (Line & Runyan, 2014). DMOs are management and marketing organizations responsible for driving business to the destination (Pike & Page, 2014). DMOs also provide leadership and direction for the multifaceted tourism system (Murphy & Murphy, 2004). Many countries and cities consider DMOs the most vital means of competing and attracting visitors to their respective destinations (Pike & Page, 2014). A critical role of DMOs is getting the destination to connect better the supply and demand elements of

tourism to make the best use of destination resources (Pike, 2015). DMOs engage in, and undertake, leadership and destination management roles to enhance business performance (Pike & Page, 2014). In creating branding strategies, different political and economic viewpoints will impact the level of involvement of DMOs (Webster, Ivanov, & Illum, 2009). Zavattaro, Daspit and Adams (2015) discuss that a lead DMO is usually responsible for creating an overall place brand strategy. Lead DMOs can be organized at the national, state/provincial or local government level, or they may be public-private collaborative efforts that are specific to tourism, such as a Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) (Zavattaro, Daspit & Adams, 2015). In the United States, CVBs often function as DMOs (Ha & Love, 2005). The role of the CVB is primarily to develop, promote, and maintain a city's image in order to position it as an attractive destination for MICE tourists and other visitors (Ford & Peeper, 2007). CVBs serve as a liaison between meeting planners, the host destination, and visitors. They collect information from hotels, attractions, restaurants, and shops to provide information to potential visitors (Ha & Love, 2005). CVBs also often support planning meetings, conventions, and trade shows (Torrence, 2001; Connell, 2002). CVBs need to ensure that the tourism industry understands that from a long-term perspective, the wellbeing of the destination is more important than maximizing business profits (Wang & Krakover, 2008).

Association members or business people have to decide whether or not to attend a meeting since there is always some temporal, financial or other constraints to attending. The common goal of meeting planners and destinations is to increase the number of attendees at a given event and to increase the number of events in a given destination (Oppermann, 1998; Oppermann & Chon, 1997). Destination image is an important part



of an attractive convention location, including destination characteristics such as accessibility and transportation networks. It plays a major role in organizers' and attendees' destination choice (McCartney, 2008).

Academic research on MICE tourism commenced in the mid-1980s and developed through the 1990s and 2000s (Pearlman & Mollere, 2009). In MICE research, economic impacts and site-selection issues have received the most academic attention (Ladkin, Weber & Chon, 2002; Lee & Back, 2005), with MICE being viewed as a major contributor to the economic development of regions, cities and countries (Crouch & Ritchie, 1997; Lee & Back, 2005). In the past decade, the MICE industry has continued to grow on a global and regional scale (Yoo & Weber, 2005). Growing investments in convention facilities, increased number of convention attendees, and more recognition of the benefits of MICE tourism are testimony to the influence of this phenomenon.

Concurrent with the growth in the MICE sector has been considerable growth in research on this lucrative form of tourism (Yoo & Weber, 2005). Business tourism provides much higher levels of revenue for local businesses as visitors are willing to pay more due to their inflexible schedules (Buhalis, 2000). In providing higher levels of income, employment and government revenue, business related travel has benefitted many regions (Lee & Back, 2005). Owing to the use of expense accounts and business budgets, business travelers are higher spenders on average than leisure travelers, and hence the market is able to generate high levels of internal investment for cities and regions (Bradley, Hall & Harrison, 2002). MICE travelers are also major users of the entertainment and accommodation facilities of the locations they visit (Bradley et al., 2002). Issues regarding convention site selection by meeting planners have been studied

(Chacko & Fenich, 2000; Clark & McCleary, 1995; Crouch & Ritchie, 1997). In addition, MICE has been the traditional and most important target of many CVBs' marketing activities (Weber, 2001). A content analysis of convention tourism research found that few studies have focused on convention attendees, even though they are the fundamental drivers of the convention industry (Yoo & Weber, 2005).

### ***Heritage Tourism***

Heritage can be both cultural (of human origins) and natural, as both elements are inheritances from the past that are used for the present as tourism or recreational resources (Timothy, 2011). Boyd (2002) argues that natural heritage with outstanding natural beauty such as national parks and many nature-based World Heritage Sites should be included in the definition of heritage tourism. Most heritage resources currently refer to cultural resources that are elements of the past that were created and modified by human beings.

Cultural tourism has developed as an objective of both heritage institutions and the tourism industry worldwide (Silberberg, 1995). Cultural tourism is defined as "visits by persons from outside the host community motivated by interest in the historical, artistic, scientific, or lifestyle/heritage offerings of a community, region, group or institution." A cultural tourism destination may be created by understanding tourists and their various of travel motivators and personal interests (Silberberg, 1995). Cultural resources are a vital asset for tourism destinations and suppliers. As such, the sustainability of these resources is an essential function for tourism marketing (Buhalis, 2000).

Cultural attributes can attract long-haul tourists, which may increase the average length of stay, and they help cultural tourism be an income generator since they bring in new money. If tourists from out of the community pay to attend a museum or cultural events, the community is essentially exporting its products and contributing to economic development (Silberberg, 1995).

Authenticity is considered as a principal ingredient of cultural heritage management (Chhabra, 2005, 2008; Timothy, 2011). Heritage managers accept that visitors are an important part of heritage management and try to improve visitors' experiences that manifest in creating repeat visitors, positive word-of-mouth, donations and increased public appreciation. In tourism, mindfulness was introduced as a possible tool for destinations in meeting the needs of visitors and natural, cultural, and historical resources (Moscardo, 1996). In the heritage and sustainable tourism literature, mindfulness represents a state of mind expressed by actively processing new information within the surrounding environment in such a way that it builds respect and awareness among visitors for their cultural and natural surroundings (Timothy, 2011). It is important for heritage managers to minimize negative impacts by facilitating visitor mindfulness and to educate visitors while they offer proper interpretation. As heritage managers try to provide high-quality consumer experiences, mindful visitors will enjoy and appreciate heritage sites more and many negative impacts can be mitigated. Mindful visitors are usually more receptive to learning and pay more attention to educational activities than mindless visitors (Timothy, 2011).

The challenge for heritage institutions is ensuring the rational use of public goods, for all stakeholders' benefits and at the same time preserving the resources for future

generations (Buhalis, 2000). While trying to meet their preservation and educational mandates, museums and heritage attractions have had to meet the challenge of being open to commercial management (Silberberg, 1995). Silberberg (1995) suggested the need for collaboration as part of strategic planning in creating a cultural tourism destination at one place or at one time.

According to Silberberg (1995), tourism industries have considered cultural attractions and events as valuable potential collaboration partners. He also stresses that heritage institutions need to communicate with other stakeholders to meet not only preservation and educational needs, but also wider community needs such as tourism and economic development. The collaboration issue is also a key factor for destination competitiveness (Gill & Williams, 1994). Museums and historic sites need to develop policies and practices that solve the problems tourism operators face and meet wide community needs. It is suggested that heritage managers may collaborate with MICE industry representatives to achieve community goals and alleviate some of the issues facing the tourism industry (Silberberg, 1995). Museums can provide opportunities for meeting planners who need to choose alternative attractions and activities for delegates or spousal programs, and they can develop operating schedules that coordinate as much as possible, with common retail hours. The academic and the government community, in collaboration with CVBs or the chambers of commerce may play an important role for successful cultural tourism partnerships and relationships (Silberberg, 1995).

Sustainable planning in tourism is appropriate for heritage destinations, and a collaborative tourism planning approach is critical in the heritage context. In heritage tourism, community members need to be cooperatively involved in preserving and selling

the past. This requires that they develop a collaborative approach to tourism (Timothy & Tosun, 2003).

Cultural heritage attractions and activities are considered in this study given their potential to enhance the MICE destination's attractiveness and competitiveness (Arnett, Laverie & Meiers, 2003; Arzeni, 2009). As Morrison and Anderson (2002) indicate, destination branding is used to develop a distinctive identity and personality that is different from competitors. For destinations, making resilient relationship between tourism and culture can be more attractive and competitive (Arzeni, 2009). In this regard, highlighting the heritage and cultural assets of a destination holds promising potential for the destination to be developed into a unique niche in the tourism industry (Apostolakis, 2003).

### ***Cultural Tourists***

Marketing theory suggests that each market is composed of groups of customers who have different needs and wants (Kotler, 1999). McKercher (2002) proposed a cultural tourism typology model using the importance of cultural motives and the depth of experience as core dimensions. It is classified as five types of cultural tourists based on centrality and depth of experience: 1) purposeful cultural tourist (high centrality and deep experience), 2) sightseeing cultural tourist (high centrality and shallow experience), 3) casual cultural tourist (modest centrality and shallow experience), 4) incidental cultural tourist (low centrality and shallow experience), and 5) serendipitous cultural tourist (low centrality and deep experience).

For incidental cultural tourists, cultural tourism reasons do not play any meaningful role in the decision to visit a destination. While at the destination, this tourist

will participate in some cultural tourism activities which allows the person to be engaged with the destination in a shallow manner. For casual cultural tourists, cultural tourism plays a limited role in their destination decision making process and this type of cultural tourist will also have a shallow experience in cultural tourism. For serendipitous cultural tourists, cultural tourism plays little or no role in their decision to visit a destination, but this type of tourist has a deep cultural experience while visiting cultural attractions. For purposeful cultural tourists, learning about other cultures or heritages is a main motivator for visiting a destination and this type of cultural tourist ends up having a deep cultural experience (McKercher, 2002).

It is recognizable that business travelers are an attractive segment in tourism. Buhalis (2000) points out that business tourism provides much higher revenue for local businesses as visitors are willing to pay more for their inflexible schedules. Bradley, Hall and Harrison (2002) discuss that business travelers are higher spenders on average than leisure travelers, and hence the market is able to generate high levels of internal investment for cities and regions. McKercher and du Cros (2003) argue that business travelers tend to be well educated and affluent tourists and wish to pursue some recreational activities outside business hours. Also, as previously stated, business travel benefits numerous regions as it provides higher levels of income, employment and government revenue (Lee & Back, 2005). Many business travelers have the opportunity to incorporate some pleasure activities on their trips (McKercher & du Cros, 2003). MICE travelers are also major users of the entertainment and accommodation facilities of the locations they visit (Bradley et al., 2002). In spite of the importance, business tourism

and travelers are often ignored as a potential market segment for many tourism destinations which focus exclusively on leisure travel.

According to McKercher and du Cros (2003), business travelers tend to be grouped in the incidental and casual cultural tourist segments, which is expected given their trip purpose, either having low or modest importance of cultural tourism in their decision making to visit a destination. Figure 1 shows the cultural tourist typology suggested by McKercher and du Cros (2003).

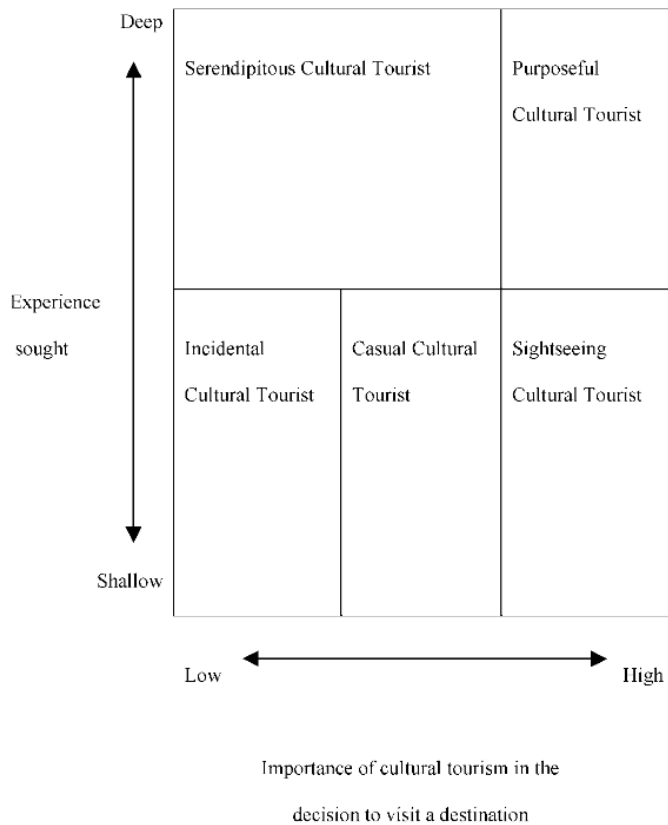


Figure 1. Cultural Tourist Typology by McKercher (2002)

## ***Destination Marketing and Branding***

Hultman and Hall (2012) specify that the destination is the locality strategically positioned to be visited and consumed. Destinations are recognized as the most significant geographical component of analysis in the field of tourism research, much more than the place of origin or transit spaces (Pike & Page, 2014). The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) describes destinations as “the fundamental units of analysis in tourism” (UNWTO, 2002). Leiper (2000) says that destinations are places towards which people travel and where they choose to stay for a specified amount of time to experience certain characteristics or features. A destination is considered a well-defined geographical area and visitors understand it as a unique entity, with a legislative and political framework for tourism planning and marketing (Buhalis, 2000; Barnes, Mattsson & Sorensen, 2014). Destinations offer a combination of tourism products and services that are consumed under the destination’s brand name (Buhalis, 2000). Morgan et al. (2004) indicate that destinations have emerged as the leading purveyors of branding in the travel industry. Places can be multi-functional, so the same place may offer diverse functions such as historic buildings, shopping and sports facilities, and entertainment venues (Ashworth & Voogt, 1990). This suggests that the same destination can be consumed simultaneously by different consumer segments (Hankinson, 2005). Campelo et al. (2014) suggest that a destination is a metaphysical space determined by a relation of values and meanings that are attached to it. When the economic, social, and environmental impacts of tourism are considered, destinations require thoughtful understanding and careful management in the brand development that represent those (Campelo et al., 2014).



Destination marketing is increasingly competitive worldwide. According to Buhalis (2000), marketing destinations need to balance the strategic objectives of all stakeholders and the sustainability of local resources. Destination marketing supports the success of tourism policy, which needs to be coordinated with the regional development strategic plan. In order to maximize benefits for all stakeholders, destination marketing should lead to the optimization of tourism impacts (Buhalis, 2000). Developing a destination marketing strategy is a complex process due to the dynamics of benefits and interest of stakeholders. It is extremely challenging to manage the conflicting interests of different stakeholders for controlling and for marketing destinations. Therefore, marketing strategies should try to take into account all stakeholders' needs and wants (Buhalis, 2000).

The principal role of a brand is to identify a product or service and to differentiate it from its competitors (Blain, et al., 2005), thus earning a competitive advantage (Aaker & Equity, 1991; Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000; Keller, 1993). As competition for global tourism markets increases, branding has become a significant component of tourism management (Blain et al., 2005). Branding has been defined as a method used to develop a unique identity that engages the customers' mind and separates similar products among competitors (Morgan et al., 2004). Usually branding is related to consumer products; nevertheless, tourism destinations are progressively implementing branding strategies to create and differentiate an identity that highlights the uniqueness of the destination (Blain et al., 2005; Hankinson, 2001; Henderson, 2000). As Cai (2002) suggests, only branded destinations are able to create a distinctive identity through emotional appeal and relationship building rather than differentiation on the basis of functional qualities.

Therefore, many tourism researchers and marketers have considered destinations as brands and have applied branding concepts to tourist destinations. Gnoth (2007) discusses that a destination brand involves cultural, social, natural and economic values.

Destination branding needs to be directed by the theory of place and sense of place so that it can benefit from and contribute to the natural, cultural, social, and economic wellbeing of the destination (Hankinson, 2007; Gnoth, 2007).

Oliveira and Panyik (2015) emphasize that a destination should be favorably differentiated from its competitors to be successfully promoted in the target markets. They also suggest that a destination should be positively positioned in the minds of potential visitors. Destinations use marketing to communicate their unique identity by differentiating themselves from their competitors (Morrison & Anderson, 2002) in order to attract tourists to the location (Hankinson, 2005). There are different ways of defining destination branding in the marketing literature (Hankinson, 2004). Among several definitions, Blain et al. (2005) define destination branding as the set of marketing activities that relates to the creation of a name, term, symbol, logo, or other graphic which differentiates a destination; expresses the expectation of a travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; and emotionally connects the visitors. Kerr (2006, p. 277) defines destination branding as “name, symbol, logo, word or other graphic that both identifies and differentiates the destination; furthermore it conveys the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; it also serves to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of destination experience.” Destination branding is about lowering costs and changing the visitor type and the nature of their behavior. Destination branding also aims

to change tourism products, integrate stakeholders and local communities, and respond to local concerns (Oliveira & Panyik, 2015). Destination marketing and branding have become strategic tools worldwide due to growing competition among destinations (Garcia et al., 2012).

As indicated earlier, destination branding is a marketing tool which significantly impacts visitors' destination choices (Blain et al., 2005). Branding expresses the potential of a memorable travel experience that is exceptionally related with the destination. It serves to associate an emotional link between the visitor and the destination, and highlights the recall of pleasant memories from visitors' destination experience (Blain et al., 2005). Destination branding has been recognized as an essential part of the travelers' decision-making process and their travel behaviors and intentions. A unique and strong destination brand can influence pre-purchase attitudes or perceptions and post-purchase evaluations. Cai (2002) indicates that destination brands involve perceptions about a place as reflected by the associations held in the tourist's memory. Thus, it facilitates destination marketing by providing potential travelers with pre-trip information which enables them to familiarize themselves with a destination, distinguishing that destination from its competitors and creating a set of expectations about the travel experience (Murphy, Benckendorff & Moscardo, 2007). Additionally, a destination brand is able to help travelers fortify or modify perceptions of the destination after a trip (Ritchie & Ritchie 1998). Such perceptions in turn can influence consumers' evaluations of their satisfaction, loyalty, and following behavior intentions, such as recommendation and repeat visitation (Gallarza & Saura, 2006).

### ***Stakeholder Collaboration for Destination Branding***

The role of stakeholders has been extensively recognized in the existing literature (Schianetz, Kavanagh & Lockington, 2007; Strong, Ringer & Taylor, 2001). In addition, engagement and collaboration of stakeholders has become crucial to the continued success of a tourism destination (Aas, Ladkin & Fletcher, 2005; Bornhorst, Ritchie & Sheehan, 2010; Jamal & Getz, 1995). Destination management organizations (DMOs) manage resources rationally and ensure that all stakeholders can benefit from the long-term perspective. To satisfy all stakeholders' needs and wants, DMOs should act as facilitator to succeed at a complex range of strategic objectives (Buhalis, 2000). The DMO is viewed as a coordinator and educator who helps create synergies between the public and private sectors. Gretzel, Fesenmaier, Formica and O'Leary (2006) note that master developer thinking focuses on careful management that contributes to the quality of the experience at the destination. Master developer thinking requires an active involvement of the DMO in the actual implementation of the destination planning, and highlights business principles. The role of the DMO includes convincing local stakeholders that tourism is a valuable investment and it can facilitate economic development by generating interests among existing businesses/organizations and attracting new businesses/markets to a destination. As a master developer, a DMO needs to establish a credible reputation by producing meaningful interactions and synergies between its key stakeholders (Gretzel et al., 2006).

The tourism industry needs collaboration in planning (Hall, 1999) and many different stakeholders have interests in the tourism planning process (Ladkin & Bertramini, 2002). Tourism planning plays a significant function in tourism and

destination development. Appropriate tourism destination planning can help strengthen synergies between important stakeholders. Timothy and Tosun (2003) claim that sustainable tourism planning is appropriate for heritage destinations and a collaborative tourism planning approach is critical in the heritage context. Stakeholders need to develop a collaborative approach to heritage tourism in order to cooperatively preserve and sell the past (Timothy & Tosun, 2003). Collaboration means a process of joint decision-making on a problem among important stakeholders (Gray, 1989). Jamal and Getz (1995) apply collaboration theory to community-based tourism planning. When stakeholders work together and recognize the potential advantages of it, collaboration can be used effectively to resolve conflict or advance shared ideas. Jamal and Getz (1995) indicate that collaboration for tourism destination planning depends on incorporating the major stakeholder groups.

In the context of tourism, to provide products and services to potential tourists, destinations have to effectively manage resources and capabilities between businesses, and both cooperation and competition are required in this management (Wang & Krakover, 2008). Strategic management and marketing objectives for destinations include enhancing the long-term prosperity of local people, profitability of local businesses and maximizing visitors' satisfaction (Buhalis, 2000). When some stakeholders take advantage of resources for short-term benefits, conflicts may develop. The most challenging, yet most fundamental point, to long-term success is cooperation in embracing all stakeholders' interests (Buhalis, 2000; Jamal & Getz 1996; Palmer & Bejou, 1995; Timothy, 1998; Yuksel, Bramwell & Yuksel, 1999).

Different kinds of stakeholders are involved in destination management, planning and marketing of MICE destination (Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005). Because of the complexity of the stakeholder relationships, a strategic effort is required (Sautter & Leisen, 1999). As Buhalis (2000) indicates, all stakeholders' strategic objectives need to be balanced in marketing a destination (Buhalis, 2000). Destination marketing enables the success of tourism policy, which needs to be coordinated with the local development strategic plan. Marketing MICE destinations should also optimize and maximize benefits for the area (Buhalis, 2000). The most important challenge for MICE destination marketing is perhaps to bring all different stakeholders together to cooperate rather than compete and to pool resources towards developing an incorporated marketing mix (Buhalis & Cooper, 1998; Timothy, 1998).

Owing to the numerous stakeholders involved, branding places generally becomes more complicated than branding products (Balakrishnan, 2009; Hankinson, 2004; Kavaratzis, 2012; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Kemp, Childers & Williams, 2012; Zenker & Martin, 2011). Destination branding incorporates a mix of services created and provided in collaboration with local stakeholders (Beritelli, 2011; Haugland, Grnseth & Aarstad, 2011), which contributes meaningfully to the quality of the experience (Perdue & Pitegoff, 1990).

One unique characteristic of a destination brand is its inclusion of various stakeholders in a collaborative decision making process (Prideaux & Cooper, 2002). Stakeholders may bring different interests (Ramírez, 2001), and define their role in diverse ways within a particular community (von Friedrichs Grangsjø, 2001), thus

stakeholders' "interests cannot be summarily restricted to consideration of a single variable" (Sautter & Leisen, 1999, p. 316–317).

As Prideaux and Cooper (2002) argue, a destination brand is the tangible and positive outcome of the success of unity and collaboration between the stakeholders of a tourism destination. The conceptualization of destination branding as a collaborative process is the critical issue that illustrates how tourism literature has described the interrelationships among stakeholders in the predestination branding process.

Stakeholder collaboration in the creation of the destination brand has been associated to the development of a destination's marketing efforts (Cai, 2002) and, as a result, to the advance of positive destination brand equity (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007). In the same way, the success of the destination brand is linked to the message delivered and to the degree of shared meaning which is included in the message (Foley & Fahy, 2004).

The stakeholder approach suggests that understanding the complex relationships with multi-stakeholders needs to be fundamental to the effective management. The stakeholders affect and are affected by organizations that are eventually dependent upon their key stakeholders (Freeman, 2010). In applying stakeholder theory to MICE tourism contexts, it is recognized that events can only occur as a result of the communication between key stakeholders and the managing organizations (Clarkson, 1995). In management practice, stakeholder theory is concerned with ensuring satisfaction within the context of the organization. Stakeholder theory requires managers to consider all related stakeholders in their exceptional operative setting and to ensure the involvement of these players to build ethical, reasonable and successful relationships between an organization and networks of stakeholders, (Campbell, 1997; Donaldson & Preston,

1995; Jawahar & McLaughlin, 2001; Rowley, 1997; Savage, Nix, Whitehead, & Blair, 1991; Strong et al., 2001).

This study presents a stakeholder typology that indicates the key stakeholders considered in creative MICE tourism to build a synergy effect with heritage tourism. Table 1 shows a general stakeholder typology that considers creative MICE tourism’s strategic links with cultural tourism. As indicated, MICE travelers, as representing attending stakeholder group and cultural heritage institutions, as representing supporting stakeholder group will be mainly considered in this research in terms of stakeholder co-creation for creative MICE tourism. A review of the literature on cultural/heritage tourism, which will bring synergies to a MICE tourism to make the destination more attractive and distinctive for potential visitors, will be explored in the next part.

Table 1. Stakeholder Typology of Creative MICE Tourism (links with cultural tourism)

Stakeholder categories	Stakeholder roles within categories
Organizing	DMOs, CVBs
Operating	Meeting planners
Facilitating	Convention center & venues
Participating	Associations
<b>*Attending</b>	<b>MICE travelers, MICE event attendees</b>
<b>*Supporting</b>	<b>Heritage institution &amp; host community</b>
Sponsoring	Government, civic organizations, funders & sponsors

(Adapted from Todd, Leask & Ensor (2017).)



## **Theoretical Background**

### *Creative Tourism for MICE Destinations*

Business tourism often has synergistic relationships with leisure tourism. Business tourism can enrich a destination image, counter seasonality and promote the short-term leisure market. Although business visitors frequently stay for short periods of time in the destination, they spend at least twice as much money as leisure visitors (BTP, 2005). By extending business programs to embrace leisure activities and other services, spending opportunities will be enhanced for ancillary sectors. In addition, Buhalis (2000) indicates that business travelers often combine pleasure with business for the time and cost efficiency. The more people recognize the opportunities offered by business tourism, the more destinations desire to attract domestic and international business travelers. Many worldwide destinations invest in building convention centers with the expectation of improving destination image and generating economic benefits for local communities by linking MICE tourism with other popular tourism activities (Tang, Jones & Webb, 2007).

Many countries, regions and cities consider that MICE-related exhibition and conference facilities are an important component in destination attractiveness as a robust business tourism extends economic performance (World Tourism Organization, 2016). This increasingly dominant view follows the argument that more MICE activity means more business visitors and additional people to the destination, which results in higher spending and extended visitor stays (Jones & Li, 2015).

Studies still lack research on the collaborative potential of MICE tourism with other forms of tourism within a destination, such as heritage and cultural tourism. A

review of MICE tourism literature reveals that meeting planners' site-selection and destination marketing have a strong influence on decision-making regarding choosing a destination and the facility for meetings (Clark et al., 1996). These decisions significantly affect both associations and host destinations because these entities financially depend on a large attendance (Oppermann, 1998). Earning revenue by increasing the number of attendees is a common goal of meeting planners and tourism destinations (Oppermann & Chon, 1997). In addition, as mentioned in the introduction, people are willing to visit a destination with multiple attractions rather than a place which offers comparatively fewer leisure opportunities or other attractions. A study of likely visitation to multiple destinations during a single trip reveals that cumulative attractions are a strong draw when there is a variety of ancillary services and attractions in the tourism portfolio (Lue, Crompton & Stewart, 1996). From this standpoint, destinations offering a range of cultural/heritage attractions can be attractive for MICE tourists and provide a competitive advantage over other MICE destinations. As such, DMOs should consider capitalizing on heritage resources to build a co-created MICE tourism brand.

According to Buhalis (2000), image is the most important criterion for selecting a destination, especially for leisure and business markets. Image is a set of expectations and perceptions that a prospective traveler has of a destination. Hankinson (2004) indicates that destinations with a rich history or cultural heritage hold potential to showcase a strong positive image. The destination image can be enhanced through exposure to a destination's marketing program and the interaction of the actual experience of visiting the destination with previously held images (Hankinson, 2004).

Destination image is of considerable importance for associations and meeting planners, and the meeting destination image varies widely (Lee, 2005). Business associations and meeting planners can increase attendance at their events simply by holding them at favorably perceived destinations (Lee, 2005). Destinations consider MICE events an image-maker in modern tourism, as they have lucrative benefits, resulting in strong competition between destinations to host MICE events (Richard & Wilson, 2004). Mahadewi et al. (2014) indicate that the MICE industry involves various other tourism sectors, including convention services, convention facility providers and entertainment. The MICE sector is recognized as an important contributor to destination image at regional and national levels (Mahadewi et al., 2014).

Including MICE activities, business tourism has long been targeted for growth by governments, the tourism industry and other related agencies (Jones & Li, 2015), because, as already noted, there is some indication that business travelers have a higher spend per day or per trip than leisure travelers. There may be potential to develop visitor-relevant facilities over a longer period of time than the traditional holiday peaks, and the amenities a city or country can offer may be extended by developing exhibition and conference facilities. A co-created MICE branding strategy can support complimentary sectors to benefit local residents and expand a destination tourism portfolio (Jones & Li, 2015).

### ***Creative Tourism: Co-creation with the Local Community for Tourist Experience***

While the business focus has shifted from products to services and then experiences, the experience economy has become an essential marketing strategy to assure customer satisfaction and loyalty (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Tourism is a

consumption experience (Govers, Go & Kumar, 2007) which “designates those facets of consumer behavior that relate to the multisensory, fantasy and emotive aspects of one’s experience of products” (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982, p.92). In the experience economy, opportunities are given to customers to participate actively, to interact with the environment, and accordingly allow them actual experience with creative activities (Ali, Hussain & Ragavan, 2014; Hung et al., 2014). As tourists developed exclusive experiences while participating in activities at the destination, it became creative tourism (Richards & Wilson, 2007).

Creative tourism comprises active participation and authentic experiences. These components allow tourists’ creative potential and skills development through a connection with local community and culture (Jamal, Othman & Mohammad, 2011; Richards, 2011). Richards and Wilson (2007) indicate that activities related to creative tourism provide visitors the opportunity to learn more about the local traditions and skills, and distinctive potential of the destination. Richards (2011) also stresses that local destination managers need to identify the activities, which are closely associated to their destination to develop creative tourism. Kim, Stepchenkova and Babalou (2018) also demonstrate that the destination branding process of local tourism attractions from the co-creation perspective.

Tourism products are about the experience and emotions of tourists. Destination branding tries to reflect this by establishing unique and memorable relationships with the destination, and consolidating and reinforcing the emotional links between the tourists and the destination (Blain et al., 2005; Cai, 2002; Pine & Gilmore, 1999). As tourism focuses on delivering memorable experiences (Hemmington, 2007), the destination brand

creates important assets through which a destination can communicate the emotional links between tourists and the destination (Im, Kim, Elliot & Han, 2012). A tourist's memorable experience is meaningful and can motivate the tourist to visit a specific destination (Quan & Wang, 2004). On destination choice, the impact of memory is significant as positive memories of previous visits influence tourists' revisit intentions (Marschall, 2012).

Heritage and leisure tourism activities are often viewed to a great extent, as an experiential consumption (Chen & Chen, 2010). Tourism experience is composed of numerous small encounters with a variety of tourism principals (Buhalis, 2000). Tourists perceive the destination as a brand comprised of a collection of suppliers and services. Before they visit the destination, they develop an image about it, as well as a set of expectations based on previous experience, word of mouth, press reports, advertising, and common beliefs (Chon, 1992, Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997, Buhalis, 2000). The overall impression of tourists develops their image of a destination after their visit (Buhalis, 2000).

Tourists often pursue multiple attractions to reduce the risk of dissatisfaction with an attraction and money or time constraints (Lue, Crompton & Fesenmaier, 1993). Tourists may seek different locations where they can experience multiple attractions, such as natural resources; cultural and social environments; sports, recreation and educational activities; and shopping (Lue et al., 1993). In MICE tourism, meeting attendees' participation often relates to destination preferences (Oppermann & Chon, 1995). Oppermann (1995) suggests that if a conference is held in highly desirable destinations with supporting resources, attendance will be higher. Meeting destinations

with iconic tourist attractions and activities achieve higher levels of attendance because of their attractiveness to potential attendees (Alkjaer, 1976; Usher, 1991). By investing in natural and cultural heritage attractions and infrastructure, MICE destinations can seek to secure a niche position on the international tourism map, developing an industry that is sustainable and plentiful in synergies with other strategic sectors in the urban economy (Russo & Van Der Borg, 2002).

### ***Destination Branding for MICE Tourism with Cultural Heritage Institutions***

Kaplanidou and Vogt (2003) indicate that a brand builds on destination components after creating a unique destination image that is different from competitors. Cities with enough financial means for destination branding have succeeded in developing positive brand images, which has led to the successful transformation of several post-industrial cities into active leisure and business tourism destinations. Typically, this positive destination image is related to features such as heritage and history, the character of the local people, associations with famous people, and capital city and international city status (Ward, 2013). Campelo et al. (2014) stress three important aspects of a destination branding strategy: 1) recognizing the cultural characteristics of the place, 2) understanding the people who live in that place, and 3) appreciating how a shared sense of place is constituted and experienced. When creating a unique destination brand, the important challenges include the need of understanding the nature of place identity and recognizing the core attributes which can help define a destination's character (Campelo et al., 2014). These challenges are closely associated with the local culture and core values of the place (Cai 2002; Marzano & Scott 2009). Daniels (2007) suggests that the place's culture and core values can determine the nature of the service exchanges and

relationships, which is a fundamental attribute of tourism experience that also needs to be considered. The long-term sustainability of a destination brand is a function of the brand's ability to appeal to the target market effectively and to deliver the brand values efficiently (Morgan et al., 2004). This brand ability relates to meaningful images and appropriate promotional messages. Moreover, in the branding process, the ability is a function of a destination brand as indicating how it can incorporate the stakeholders' diverse and conflicting interests (Morgan et al., 2004). Destination branding incorporates an amalgamation of services in collaborating with local stakeholders (Beritelli, 2011; Haugland et al., 2011) that meaningfully improve the quality of the experience (Perdue & Pitegoff, 1990).

As indicated in several studies, including this study, co-creation in tourism is viewed as the active collaboration between tourists and tourism practitioners (Mathis, Kim, Uysal, Sirgy & Prebensen, 2016). It is considered a marketing approach that is more consumer-oriented than other stakeholders. Co-creation allows consumers' active involvement in cooperation with tourism practitioners when it comes to creating products and services (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Even though tourists are considered to play a main role in co-creating their travel experiences, the practitioners still take the leadership in designing and providing experience activities in the tourism destination (Raymond, 2010; Tan, Kung & Luh, 2013).

Campelo et al. (2014) note that a destination branding strategy needs to be initiated by understanding what characterizes sense of place as experienced by local populations. They conclude that destination branding activities are significantly influenced by an in-depth appreciation of the sense of place for the local community.

Furthermore, the study stresses that understanding sense of place and positioning the local community at the center of a branding strategy are important in developing an effective destination brand. As Campelo et al. (2014) indicate, a destination branding strategy is about recognizing the destination's cultural attributes, understanding the local people and appreciating how a shared sense of place is constituted and experienced. Sense of place assists in creating the uniqueness of the destination experience (Ryan, 2002), and it offers the source of how places are well-defined and eventually how destination brands are communicated (Campelo et al., 2014).

As indicated, brands help determine a destination's future as they make promises to the people who visit, as well as to the people who belong (Blain et al., 2005; Go & Gover, 2011). Many studies confirm that destination brands need to represent an attractive destination image that is not only different from competitors but has the potential to highlight the essential competencies, identities, and cultures of the destination (Cai, 2002; Blain et al., 2005; Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). In many studies, destination branding strategies have adopted corporate branding techniques and models (Trueman, Klemm & Giroud, 2004; Hankinson, 2007; Dinnie, 2008). Apostolakis, Jaffry, Sizeland and Cox's (2015) study used historic attractions to discuss the role of unique local resources that create a competitive advantage in destination branding. Yet, local communities are frequently left aside in destination branding processes, even though they are always considered to be a significant stakeholder group in destination marketing. In this regard, local communities' participation in designing and providing tourism activities to create memorable experiences at the destination should be seriously reflected in creative tourism planning. Local cultural heritage institutions need to take part as they



symbolize local communities who can enthusiastically represent authentic heritage assets in the destination.

Creative MICE tourism can enhance a business destination's portfolio and give it an edge over other competitive MICE destinations. This proposed study focuses on co-creation and synergies between MICE and heritage resources in a popular business destination. Co-creation has become an emerging trend, which calls for synergies between key stakeholders of popular forms of tourism to enhance a destination's brand value. Campelo, Aitken, Thyne and Gnoth (2014) suggest that recognizing the cultural characteristics of a place and understanding the people who live there are the principal parts of a destination branding strategy. When creating a distinctive destination brand, one of the most important challenges is the need to understand the nature of a place's identity and recognize the core attributes that define its character (Campelo et al., 2014). These are significantly related to its culture and core values (Cai 2002; Marzano & Scott, 2009). How the culture and core values of the destination will determine the nature of service exchanges and relationships also needs to be examined, because these are a fundamental part of the tourism experience (Daniels, 2007).

### ***Conceptualized Frameworks for Destination Branding***

To understand, explain and predict consumer behavior with respect to destination branding, numerous majority marketing concepts, theories and frameworks have been applied. Ooi (2004) indicated that much of destination brand research focuses on how brand images and messages are framed and presented. In marketing in general, a brand is recognized as an extension of its image (Keller, 2003). It is challenging to examine a destination's brand as the literature lacks a generally accepted framework (Konecnik &

Gartner, 2007). The lack of research regarding destination brand measurement indicates that conceptualizing how tourists value a destination brand is complicated (Boo, Busser, & Baloglu, 2009). Theoretical models and conceptualizations of destination branding have been developed to integrate the concepts of branding and destination image. Figure 2 shows a relational brand network presented by Hankinson (2004).

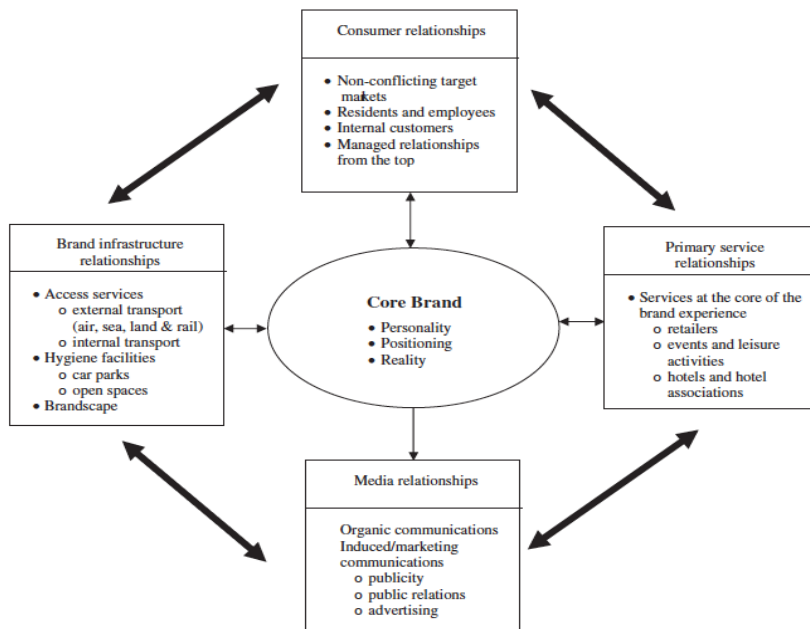


Figure 2. Places as Relational Brand Networks (Hankinson, 2004)

Hankinson’s (2004, p. 110-111) framework is built around the concept of brand networks in which place branding performs four main functions: 1) brands as communicators, where brands “represent a mark of ownership, and a means of product differentiation manifested in legally protected names, logos, and trademarks”; 2) brands as perceptual entities, which “appeal to the consumer senses, reasons, and emotions”; 3) brands as value enhancers, which “has led to the concept of brand equity”; and 4) brands

as relationships, where “the brand is construed as having a personality that enables it to form a relationship with the consumer.” Hankinson’s (2004) model of the place brand postulates place as “relational brand networks” in which the place brand is represented by a core brand and four categories of brand relationships (consumer relationships, primary service relationships, brand infrastructure relationships, and media relationships) that enhance the brand reality and the brand experience. Another model that is frequently referred to in the literature is the place branding model (Fig. 3) by Cai (2009).

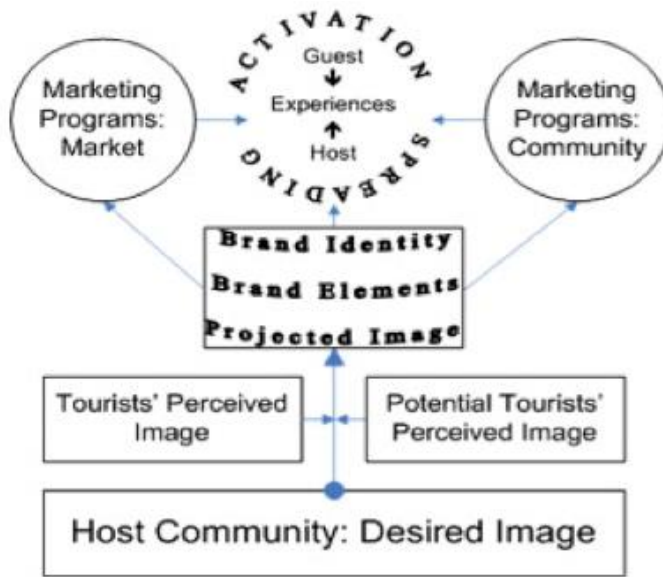
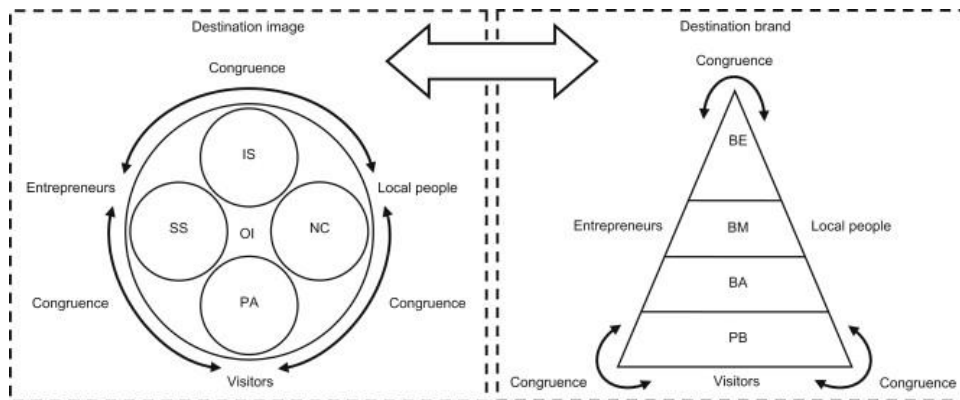


Figure 3. Cai's (2009) Place Branding Model

Cai (2009) enhances his earlier conceptual model of place branding, which he proposed in 2002, giving place identity more emphasis. With the revised model, Cai demonstrates a clear internal perspective in the community-based tourism branding model, which underscores the significance of different stakeholders, their long-term relationships and interdependences. Various stakeholders and their main role in place

brand identity are marked at all stages of brand development. Konecnik (2010) indicates that place branding strategies, as a strategic platform for marketing, should remarkably derive from the ideas of internal stakeholders in each place. Also, a mutually supportive long-term relationship among the diverse stakeholders is significant (Ruzzier & De Chernatony, 2013). Many place branding studies address the topic of place image, and some argue for the need to adopt a broader perspective, investigating place brands from a public policy, commercial, cultural and historical perspective, and even beyond tourist attractions (Dinnie, 2004; Hanna & Rowley, 2008).

One model worthy of note is presented by García et al. (2012). They developed a destination-branding model based on stakeholders' interests (Fig. 4). They created the index to measure the success of destination branding; it is based on similarities and differences between different stakeholders and provides a practical evaluation of the destination brand's degree of success and confirms the differences among stakeholders. The study argues the risks of a traditional strategy that is focused only on visitors, overlooking the objectives of local people and entrepreneurs. This study inspires the idea of co-creation in destination branding especially with local community as well as visitors.



*Notes: IS: infrastructure and socioeconomic environment; NC: natural and cultural resources; PA: pleasant atmosphere; SS: social setting environment; OI: overall image; PB: presented brand; BA: brand awareness; BM: brand meaning; BE: brand equity.*

Figure 4. Conceptual Model: Relationship between Destination Image and Destination Brand (Garcia et al., 2012)

Berry's (2000) service-branding model comes from the services marketing literature and its adaptation to tourist destination branding is of interest to academics and practitioners. García et al. (2012) take into consideration Berry's (2000) model of destination branding when considering the triple stakeholders (entrepreneurs, local people and visitors). In García et al.'s study (2012), the success of a destination brand is specifically shaped in a four-main-construct pyramid: Presented Brand (PB), Brand Awareness (BA), Brand Meaning (BM), and Brand Equity (BE). PA is the brand message (the name and logo and its visual presentation) that a company conceptualizes and promotes (Berry, 2000). BA is the ability to recognize and recall a brand (Aaker & Equity, 1991; Berry, 2000; Berry & Seltman, 2007) and is reflected in the salience of the brand in the customer's mind (Aaker & Equity, 1991). It is a core component of a brand's influence on tourism (Oh, 2000). BM refers to the stakeholders' dominant perceptions of the brand (Berry, 2000). It is the concept or impression that immediately comes to their

minds in reference to the brand (Berry & Seltman, 2007). BE is defined as the real and perceived assets and liabilities that are associated with the brand (Aaker & Equity, 1991). It is the increased value added to a product by its brand name (Kamakura & Russel, 1991), and it is important in contributing to competitive advantages (Aaker & Equity, 1991). The study indicates that it is necessary to work coordinately on PB, BA, BM and BE with visitors and local people. In the case of destination brands, García et al. (2012) claim that a conceptualization of the brand value based on the stakeholders is more appropriate than the typical formation based only on the visitor. As many scholars point out, the challenge with place brands is the large number of influential stakeholders (Buhalis, 2000; Hankinson, 2007; Konecnik & Go, 2008); destination branding needs to carefully consider the collaboration between stakeholders.

For the conceptualization and measurement of brand equity to understand how customers perceive the brand, numerous tourism studies employ customer-based approaches (Gartner, 2009; Christodoulides & De Chernatony, 2010; Davcik, da Silva & Hair, 2015; Round & Roper, 2015). These studies previously conducted adopt Aaker's (1996) and Keller's (1993) customer-based brand equity (CBBE) conceptualization. In the tourism literature, a few studies consider CBBE measurement in a destination context (Boo et al., 2009; Chekalina, Fuchs & Lexhagen, 2018; Dedeoğlu, Van Niekerk, Weinland & Celuch, 2019; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Pike, 2015; Yang, Liu & Li, 2015). Yang, Liu and Li (2015) examine the impact of customer experience on CBBE for tourism destinations and confirm the structure of destination brand equity. Dedeoğlu et al. (2019) study aims to develop a more comprehensive customer-based destination brand equity model, compared to those examined in previous studies. They confirm that DBA

affects DBP and DBP affects DBE in a positive and significant way respectively. In addition, Chekalina et al. (2018) focus on destination brand equity in their study, taking destination resources, value in use and value for money into CBBE theory. Based on this review of the literature, a modified version of the destination branding model focusing on MICE tourism will be discussed below.

### ***Modified Model of Creative MICE Tourism Destination Branding***

This study proposes a modified version of Garcia et al.'s (2012) model to examine co-created destination branding in the context of MICE tourism and heritage tourism. In this study, a destination's presented brand (DB), destination brand awareness (DBA), destination brand experience (DBExp), destination brand personality (DBP), and destination brand equity (DBE) are considered.

A destination's presented brand (DB)

DB refers to the brand message that indicates the name and logo and the visual presentation the destination conceptualizes and promotes (Berry, 2000). Brand analysis is associated with perceptions usually from its unique attributes and the brand attitudes (Gracia et al., 2012). DB is considered to be a core in communicating its identity, which aids brand awareness, and indicated as if it is appealing, attractive and interesting (Aaker, 1996; Berry, 2000; Berry & Seltman, 2007; Garcia et al., 2012; Keller, 1993).

Destination brand awareness (DBA)

DBA is used to present the ability to recognize and recall a brand (Aaker & Equity, 1991; Berry, 2000; Berry & Seltman, 2007). Aaker (1996) insists that brand

awareness represents the strength of the brand's presence in the mind of the target audience. In addition, destination marketing aims to raise DBA by creating a unique brand (Jago, Chalip, Brown, Mules & Ali, 2003).

#### Destination brand experience (DBExp)

Brand experience is the primary driver of brand equity (Berry, 2000). The concept of brand stresses the emotional benefits to consumers through purchase experiences (Ambler, 1997; Bhat & Reddy, 1998; Long & Schiffman, 2000). Moreover, it has been suggested that the tourist experience, which was influenced by destination image and destination performance, can be the core structure for building destination brands (Buhalis, 2000, Hall, 2002, Murphy et al., 2007; Ooi, 2004). According to Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009), brand experiences involve sensation, feeling, cognitions and behavioral responses as a result of particular brand stimuli. Barnes et al. (2014) capture these four dimensions of destination brand experience (DBExp) and suggest that DBExp affects future oriented decision-making, and it is a significant determinant of visitor outcomes, specifically satisfaction, intention to revisit and intention to recommend (Barnes et al, 2014).

#### Destination's brand personality (DBP)

Aaker (1996) indicates that a brand can be differentiated from another using traits that the consumers associate with human personality traits, and defines brand personality as a set of human traits associate with a brand. This is also referred to as brand meaning, which describes the stakeholder's perception, concept or impression of the brand (Berry, 2000; Berry & Seltman, 2007). In the tourism sector, Ekinici and Hosany (2006) define a



destination's brand personality (DBP) as a set of human characteristics associated with a destination. The personality traits directly associate with a destination through contact with local people or by the destination image. The personality traits also indirectly attribute to the destination through marketing strategies (Cai, 2002).

#### Destination brand equity (DBE)

Konecnik (2004) describes the brand image as the sum of the beliefs and impressions people hold about a place. Brand image is considered to be the emotional perceptions that consumers attach to specific brands (Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990; Keller, 2003). Cai (2002) also describes the image of DB as the perceptions about the place held in a tourist's mind. The image that visitors have of a destination plays a main role in decision making to travel and is one of the most important reasons that affect tourist destination choices and future behavioral intentions (Chen & Tsai, 2007). Tourism and hospitality brand image has been considered a main dimension of brand equity (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Kim & Kim, 2005). Destination brand equity (DBE) is defined as the real and perceived assets and liabilities that are associated with the brand (Aaker & Equity, 1991). It is the increased value added to a product by its brand name (Kamakura & Russell, 1991), and it is an important contribution to a competitive advantage (Aaker & Equity, 1991). Brand loyalty is the core of brand equity, which is defined as the attachment that a consumer has to a brand and also the commitment to repurchase or recommend (Aaker & Equity, 1991; Oliver, 1997). The ability to create customer loyalty is a major goal of brand management (Boo et al., 2009). Brand quality is also one of the major dimensions of a destination's brand equity (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007). Brand quality is defined as the perception of the overall quality of a product or service (Keller,

2003). Destination brand quality refers to perceptions of quality of attributes for a destination brand (Bianchi, Pike & Lings, 2014). Table 2 illustrates the elements of core concepts of destinations branding with definitions.

Table 2. Destination Branding Elements and Definitions

<b>Concepts</b>	<b>Core elements</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Literature review</b>
<b>DB</b> Destination Brand	DB Name DB Logo DB Visual presentation	Destinations' presented brand and its message Communication of its identity which aid brand awareness (Indicator: appealing, attractive & interesting)	Aaker (1996), Berry (2000), Berry & Seltman (2007), Garcia et al. (2012), Keller (1993), Wells (1964)
<b>DBA</b> Destination Brand Awareness	DB Recognition DB Recall DB Dominance	Ability to recognize and recall destination's brand reflected in visitors' mind Ability to identify the destination brand	Aaker (1996), Berry (2000), Berry & Seltman (2007), Garcia et al. (2012), Hsu & Cai (2009), Keller (2003)
<b>DBExp</b> Destination Brand Experience	Sensory DB exp. Affective DB exp. Intellectual DB exp. Behavioral DB exp.	Sensory (based on visual, aural, olfactory, gustatory and tactile exp.), affective (feeling, sentiments & emotion), intellectual (thought, stimulation of curiosity and problem solving) and behavioral (physical action, bodily exp. and behavior) brand experience evoked by brand-related stimuli	Barnes et al. (2014), Brakus et al. (2009)

<b>DBP</b>	DB Attribute	Brand meaning, perception and/or	Aaker (1996), Berry
Destination	DB Benefits	impression	(2000), Garcia et al.
Brand	DB Attitudes	Attributes – Descriptive elements	(2012), Keller
Personality		characterizing a destination	(2003)
		Benefits – personal value attached to a destination	
		Attitudes – Visitor’s overall evaluations related to belief	
		(Indicator: credibility and reliability)	
<b>DBE</b>	DB Loyalty	Perceived assets & liabilities	Aaker (1996), Aaker
Destination	DB Quality	associated with the destination brand	& Equity (1991),
Brand	Satisfaction	Increased value added to a destination	Berry (2000), Garcia
Equity		be its brand name	et al. (2012), Kladou
		(Eventually affects visitor’s	& Kehagias (2014),
		satisfaction, repeat visitation and	Konecnik & Gartner
		recommendation)	(2007), Pike (2015),
			Yoo et al. (2000)

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Figure 5 presents the Creative MICE Tourism Destination Branding Model (CMDBM) used in this study. In the preliminary stage, the study will use a hypothetical example of a destination, which is hypothesized to have an innovative MICE destination brand with heritage offerings, to discuss the application of this model. The approaches that CMDBM can promote a destination’s core brand strategy will be discussed. The proposed model will explain that host destination, which is represented by a DMO or CVB, initiates the creative MICE tourism destination brand working with the MICE organizations such as meeting planners and convention center. To build co-created synergies with heritage tourism, the new DB (destination brand) in each stage considers

the cultural/heritage resources the destination can offer. This model is designed to provide value to the MICE attendees to suggest a destination's brand equity.

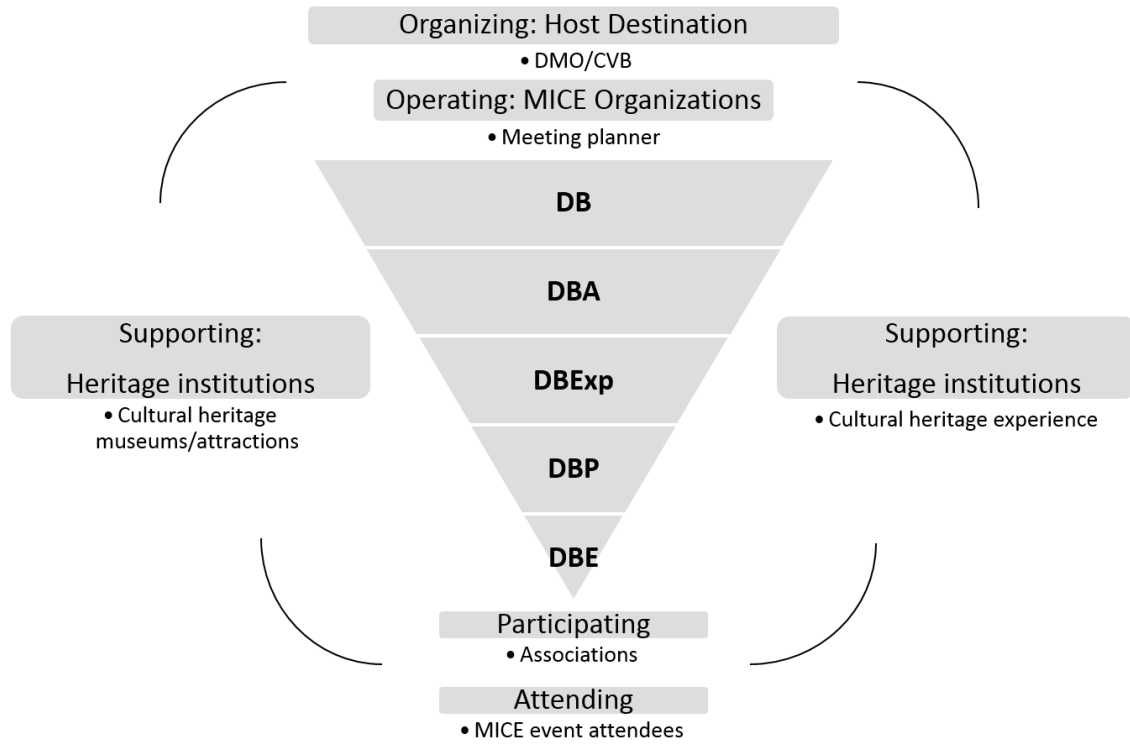


Figure 5. Proposed Creative MICE Tourism Destination Branding Model (CMDDBM)

## **Research Questions and Hypothesis Development**

A few studies have focused on designing value added MICE tourism experiences using a co-creation strategy with local resources. Although potential research questions have significant implications for both MICE and heritage tourism in terms of their relationship and destination marketing, they have not been seriously addressed or discussed in the academic literature. This research examines the following question: how can a heritage destination design co-created destination brands using MICE strategies through collaboration between key stakeholders through a crossover strategy by integrating other forms of tourism into the creative tourism product instead of focusing on MICE resources only? Four different stakeholder groups are considered to answer this question: the host destination's tourism organizations, MICE organizations, heritage institutions and MICE visitors. Destination managers will identify the potential to be a successful MICE destination and heritage destination and how the destination utilizes destination-branding strategy to promote MICE tourism by taking advantage of cultural/heritage assets. MICE organizations and heritage institutions will provide data about how they collaborate to strategize destination branding. Finally, the value and effectiveness of destination branding and MICE tourism experiences will be studied through visitors' responses. As previously noted, this study focuses on the role of cultural/heritage tourism in a MICE destination context. Thus, heritage institutions and MICE travelers' perspectives will be mainly considered.

The point of reference used here is a modified version of García et al.'s (2012) destination branding model. Several measures will be used to gauge the involvement of key stakeholders. Based on a thorough review of the academic literature, this study

suggests the modified conceptualization of destination branding to enhance a destination's brand value and equity. Selected destination branding concepts (destination's resented brand, brand awareness, brand experience, brand personality and brand equity) will be addressed to explore stakeholders' co-creation of destination branding in investigating the symbiosis between MICE tourism and heritage tourism. The study will explore how MICE tourism can engage with other forms of tourism, in this case heritage tourism, and how stakeholders can develop strategies for destination branding using other tourism resources beyond the MICE product.

The destination brand's main job is to communicate an identity and support brand awareness (Aaker, 1996; Berry, 2000; Berry & Seltman, 2007; Garcia et al., 2012; Keller, 1993). Thus, DB is considered to have a significant influence on DBA (hypothesis 1). Yang et al.'s (2015) customer experience study on customer-based brand equity (CBBE) for tourism destinations verifies that destination brand awareness (DBA), destination brand image (DBI, considered DB in this research) and destination brand quality (DBQ, considered DBP in this research) have significant effects on destination brand liability (DBL, considered DBE in this research). From Yang et al.'s study, this research considers the relationship between DB and DBP, and DBP and DBE. DB is considered to have a significant impact on DBE (hypothesis 1b) and DBP is considered to have a significant influence on DBE (hypothesis 4). In Dedeoğlu et al.'s (2019) comprehensive customer-based destination brand equity model, the results shows that DBA affects DBP, and DBP affects DBE in a positive and significant way respectively. Accordingly it is expected that DBA has a significant influence on DBP (hypothesis 2a), and DBP has a significant impact on DBE (hypothesis 4). Additionally, Veasna, Wu and Huang (2013)

indicate that a direct relationship destination source credibility (considered to be DBP in this research) and destination satisfaction (considered to be DBE in this research) to be partially significant, but the relationship between destination image (considered DB in this research) and destination satisfaction (considered to be DBE in this study) is not significant. Therefore, hypothesis 4 (DBP has a significant impact on DBE) is upheld here.

Barnes et al. (2014) indicate that destination brands are complex experiential brands. They suggest that destination brand experience is a significant determinant of visitor outcomes, specifically satisfaction, intention to revisit and intention to recommend, and that satisfaction plays a key role in further processing visitor experiences. They test the relationships between destination brand experience (DBExp in this research) and satisfaction, intention to revisit and intention to recommend (all are considered DBE in this research) respectively, and find partial support (sensory and/or affective experience to satisfaction, intention to revisit, and/or intention to recommend) from the results. Kumar and Kaushik's (2018) research examines the role of destination brand experience (DBExp), a new conceptualization, in assessing the holistic and unified view of tourism destinations. Findings of both studies suggest that various dimensions of DBExp have a varied influence on destination brand identification, which subsequently affects both tourists' trust (considered to be DBP in this research) and loyalty (considered to be DBE in this research) toward tourism destinations. Based on the literature related to destination brand experience, the four hypotheses of DBExp can be predictable (1a, 2, 3 and 3a).

## *Hypotheses*

H1: Destination Brand has a significant influence on Destination Brand Awareness.

H1a: Destination Brand has a significant influence on Destination Brand Experience.

H1b: Destination Brand has a significant influence on Destination Brand Personality.

H2: Destination Brand Awareness has a significant influence on Destination Brand Experience. H2a: Destination Brand Awareness has a significant influence on Destination Brand Personality.

H3: Destination Brand Experience has a significant influence on Destination Brand Personality.

H3a: Destination Brand Experience has a significant influence on Destination Brand Equity.

H4: Destination Brand Personality has a significant influence on Destination Brand Equity.



### Conceptual Model

To undertake a structural equation model test, eight theoretical hypotheses were developed through a literature review. The model is proposed in Figure 6.

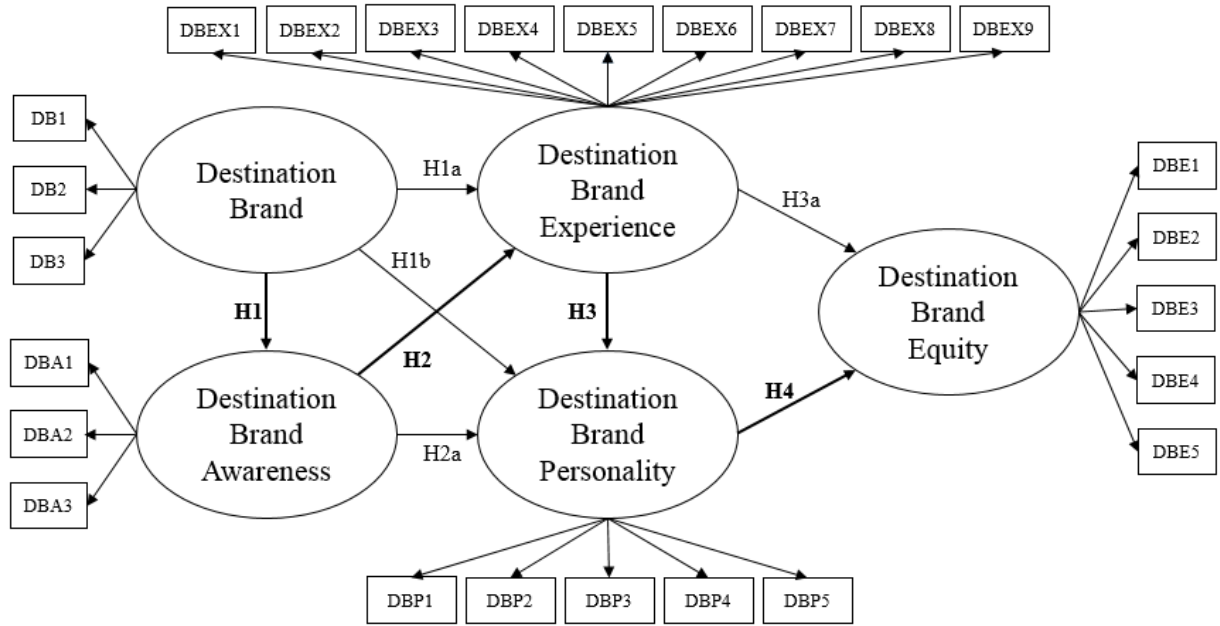


Figure 6. The Proposed Model

## **Case Study: New Orleans**

Each destination can offer resources for certain types of demand, and hence destinations may consider branding for the right target market. Certain destinations are branded unique and exclusive as they see themselves offering a unique and valued experience for visitors. These destinations are often promoted for special occasion trips or for incentive trips.

As noted earlier in this dissertation, there has been little academic and management interest in the connection with cultural heritage-based tourism in the context of MICE destinations. If heritage and cultural tourism opportunities are provided to MICE participants in the destination, it can be expected not only to bring economic rewards to the place but also to create a favorable image of the destination via a known destination brand. Its unique cultural heritage in conjunction with its popular MICE facilities and programs, a destination can benefit by developing as an ideal place for business tourism, with heritage and cultural tourism serving as ancillary attractions for MICE travelers.

Five US cities, including Scottsdale, San Antonio, New Orleans, Boston and Philadelphia, were considered potential locations for data collection for this study. These five cities were ranked among the best MICE destinations in the United States and are recognized for their cultural/heritage offerings. From this list of cities, New Orleans was selected through a review of relevant literature, suggestions from the dissertation committee, and communication with relevant DMOs and other stakeholders. Considering its plentiful cultural heritage assets and resources, such as its multicultural environment, historical architecture, musical patrimony and other cultural festivals, as well as its

growing potential as a meeting and convention destination, the researcher would argue that New Orleans is the ideal example for this research.

### *New Orleans—A Destination for MICE and Heritage*

New Orleans, Louisiana, is located at the delta of Mississippi River near where it enters the Gulf of Mexico. From a tourism perspective, the city is known for its nightlife, music and food—all reflecting its history as a melting pot of French, African and American cultures (Google Travel Guide New Orleans, 2018).

Thanks to its multicultural heritage, music and cuisine, and position as one of the oldest settlements in the United States, New Orleans remains a hotspot for heritage tourism, with over 9.5 million people flocking to the city each year to experience its cultural heritage, unique personality, and intangible elements of music and cuisine (About New Orleans, LA / Additional Info, 2018).

Cvent, a private company, ranks the most popular destinations for MICE events in the United States every year, based on meeting and event booking activity in Cvent Supplier Network, their flagship product (Cvent, 2016). New Orleans ranked the 13<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> most popular MICE destinations among cities in the United States during the last five years. Table 3 shows the stakeholder typology for this case study of 2017 NRPA Annual Conference in New Orleans.

Table 3. Stakeholder typology of this case study

<b>Stakeholder categories</b>	<b>Stakeholder roles within categories</b>
Organizing	New Orleans Convention Visitors Bureau
Operating	National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA)
Participating/Attending	NRPA members, conference attendees
Facilitating	New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center
Supporting	Cultural/Heritage institutions in New Orleans

### *Stakeholders*

Organizing: Destination Management Organization (DMOs)

#### *New Orleans & Company*

New Orleans & Company, formerly the New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau, is a nationally accredited destination marketing organization (DMO). In Louisiana, it is the largest private economic development corporation. As a central local DMO in New Orleans, NO&CO implements direct sales, marketing, branding, public relations and visitor services in order to make decision-makers and visitors to choose New Orleans (New Orleans & Company, 2018).

#### *New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation (NOTMC)*

The New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation (NOTMC) is the official leisure travel promotion agency of New Orleans. By developing the tourism industry, NOTMC contributes to creating jobs and economic growth of the city. As a publicly funded organization, NOTMC supports the growth of leisure travel to New Orleans by

providing online marketing, advertising, public relations and special event programming. NOTMC plans to improve the city's image as an attractive place to visit and to increase number of travelers and tourist spending (New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation, 2018).

#### “One Time in New Orleans,” New Orleans’ New Promotion

New Orleans launched a new advertising campaign, “One Time, in New Orleans,” promoted by NOTMC. It was a part of celebrating the city’s 300<sup>th</sup> birthday, and announced at the “One Time in New Orleans Press Conference” on September 5, 2017. The city’s mayor said that the campaign would capture the essence of locals and visitors who always leave with stories to tell about New Orleans’ rich heritage and culture (New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation, 2017). The president of NOTMC expected that this ad campaign would be a platform to forever associate New Orleans with great stories and storytelling (New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation, 2017). New Orleans planned to enhance this ad campaign by NOTMC and the tourism industry to continue bringing historic numbers of visitors to New Orleans, and to promote the 2018 Tercentennial signature events throughout the year (New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation, 2017).

#### Operating: MICE Organization

##### *National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)*

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) is a national non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of public parks, recreation and conservation.

NRPA's mission is to advance parks, recreation and environmental conservation efforts that enhance the quality of life for people. Its vision is ensuring that everyone has access to park and recreation opportunities for health, conservation and social equity, in sustainable communities (National Recreation and Park Association, 2018). Through its network of nearly 60,000 recreation and park professionals and advocates, NRPA encourages the promotion of healthy and active lifestyles, conservation initiatives and equitable access to parks and public spaces (Registration for the 2017 NRPA Annual Conference, Now Open, 2018). NRPA's annual conference is the flagship event of NRPA and the premier meeting of the park and recreation community (NRPA Annual Conference, 2018). According to the NRPA, the 2017 annual conference was comprised of more than 7,000 total attendees, nearly 500 exhibitors, more than 500 expert speakers and nearly 300 education sessions (The 2017 NRPA Annual Conference Big Easy Preview, 2018).

Participating/Attending: NRPA members, NRPA Annual conference attendees

NRPA annual conference attendees are mostly park and recreation professionals who are seeking active networking activities or motivating education sessions. Since the NRPA annual conference is considered one of the largest gatherings in the park and recreation field in the world, thousands of people come to showcase their products and services to others with purchasing power. Education sessions are for those who want to showcase a particular area of expertise or any experience that could benefit peers and other communities. According to the NRPA report, 82% of attendees are at the management level or higher in their profession, and 87% of attendees play a role in their agency's purchasing process at the conference (NRPA Annual Conference, 2018).

Facilitating: Destination MICE Organization

*New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center*

The Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, the largest convention center in New Orleans, has long been recognized as one of the top convention centers in the United States (New Orleans at its best!, 2018). After restoration work and renovation upgrades, the facility boasts contiguous exhibit space. The convention center holds many of the city's major business events including conventions and tradeshow annually (New Orleans, LA Meeting Planning Overview, 2018).

Supporting: New Orleans Cultural/heritage Institutions (also in APPENDIX)

*National World War II Museum*

The National World War II Museum is considered one of the top museums in the United States and the top-rated individual tourist attraction in New Orleans. Since its opening in 2000, almost two million visitors have visited this museum. While exploring wartime artifacts and learning interesting facts and histories at the museum, visitors can experience World War II and a different side of New Orleans's history. The WWII Museum is considered a unique cultural heritage institution in New Orleans which provides unique access to experiential history (The National World War II Museum, 2018).

### *French Quarter*

The French Quarter is known as one of New Orleans' most historic neighborhoods. As a city's historic heart, The French Quarter is famous for its energetic nightlife and colorful buildings with cast-iron balconies. In Bourbon Street, it is featured with many jazz clubs, Cajun restaurants and bars. Near Quieter streets, visitors can experience gourmet food and local crafts to the French Market. Also, to Jackson Square, people may enjoy street performers' entertainment in front of soaring St. Louis Cathedral (French Quarter, 2018).

### *Jazz National Historical Park*

New Orleans is widely recognized as the birthplace of the uniquely American brand of music, Jazz. New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park was established in 1994 to celebrate the origins and evolution of jazz. The park is located near the French Quarter, and provides a great setting to share the cultural history of the people and places related to the beginnings and progressions of jazz in New Orleans. Through interpretative systems designed for educating and entertaining, the park pursues to preserve information, resources and sites associated with the origins and early development of jazz (About New Orleans Jazz Park Information, 2018).

### *Preservation Hall*

New Orleans' Preservation Hall, a musical venue in the French Quarter, was established in 1961. The Preservation Hall Foundation was launched in 2011 to protect, preserves, and perpetuates the musical traditions and heritage of New Orleans. The



Preservation Hall Foundation tries to create greater awareness and appreciation for jazz music and local communities through music education, community engagement, historical archiving, and support for musical collective (Preservation Hall Foundation, 2019). Operating as a music venue, a touring band, and a non-profit organization, the Preservation Hall continues its mission as a foundation of New Orleans music and culture. The Preservation Hall venue presents jazz concerts over 350 nights a year featuring ensembles from a current collective of numerous local master practitioners (Our History, 2018).

*Jackson Square (St. Louis Cathedral/ Presbytere/ Cabildo)*

Jackson Square is a historic park in the French Quarter. In 1960, it was declared a National Historic Landmark for its significant character in the New Orleans history, and as the site where in 1803 Louisiana was made a United States territory pursuant to the Louisiana Purchase. This well-known landmark is surrounded by historic buildings such as the St. Louis Cathedral, the Presbytere and Cabildo, Louisiana State Museums (About Jackson Square, 2018). St. Louis Cathedral is the oldest Cathedral in North America. It stands facing Jackson Square and bordered by the historic Cabildo on one side and the equally historic Presbytere on the other. The Presbytere, one of the showcase units of the Louisiana State Museum, is also an architecturally important building in the French Quarter. It was designed in 1791 to match the Cabildo, alongside St. Louis Cathedral in the French Quarter. The Cabildo, one of the Louisiana State Museums, was the seat of Spanish colonial city hall of New Orleans (About Jackson Square, 2018).

### *New Orleans Museum of Art*

New Orleans Museum of Art (NOMA) is the oldest fine arts institution in New Orleans. The museum was opened in 1911 and now hosts a permanent collection of approximately 40,000 objects. The sculpture garden at NOMA is one of the most important sculpture installations in the United States, with over 60 sculptures situated on City Park's natural landscape (Welcome to the New Orleans Museum of Art, 2018).

### *The Historic New Orleans Collection*

The Historic New Orleans Collection (THNOC) is a museum, research center, and publisher dedicated. It was founded in 1966 to preserve the history and culture of New Orleans and the Gulf South. Williams Research Center holds a million items that document standard of living as well as historical events for more than three centuries. The Collection includes plentiful library items and photographs, prints, drawings, paintings, and other artifacts. The exhibition spaces of the museum present multicultural stories by showcasing the history and fine art exploring the development of Louisiana (About Historic New Orleans Collection, 2018).

### *New Orleans Jazz Museum*

The New Orleans Jazz Museum is a music museum, dedicated to preserving and celebrating the history of jazz music. As one of the national historic landmarks, the museum is strategically located at the intersection of the French Quarter. It serves as a performance space, exhibition gallery, research library and archive with comprehensive collection of jazz artifacts, including sheet music, historical musical instruments,

photographic prints, live recordings and rare film footage (New Orleans Jazz Museum, 2018).

*New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and Foundation, Inc.*

New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, often known as Jazz Fest, is an annual festival celebrating music, cuisine and culture of New Orleans. As one of the world-famous events, the festival attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors to New Orleans. Visitors can experience the days surrounding the festival and the various shows at nightclubs scheduled during the festival weekends. The Foundation was established in 1970 as a nonprofit owner of the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival. It is reported that the festival drives \$300 million a year into the local economy. The Foundation believes that Jazz Fest has potential to be a major success of New Orleans and the festival's profits can be redistributed into the local community (About us, 2018).

*Ogden Museum of Southern Art*

The Ogden Museum of Southern Art, established in 1999, is located in the Warehouse Arts District of downtown New Orleans. The Museum is recognized for its original exhibitions, public events and educational programs of the South. The features explore the development of Southern art along with its heritage of music, literature and culinary heritage in order to provide a comprehensive Southern traditions. Almost 85,000 people visit the museum annually, many guests enjoy its broad range of programs including exhibitions, lectures, film screenings, and concerts. The museum's mission is to broaden the knowledge, understanding, interpretation and appreciation of the Southern arts and culture (About Ogden Museum, 2018).

### *Southern Food & Beverage Museum*

The Southern Food & Beverage Museum is a non-profit museum based in New Orleans. This unique museum explores and celebrates the unique culinary heritage of the American Southern states, and explains the roots of the food, drinks the related culture of the South. The museum hosts several special exhibits, demonstrations, lectures and tastings which showcase all aspect of the Southern culinary, from the cultural traditions to the basic recipes and communities designed through food and beverage (Southern Food & Beverage Museum, 2018).

### *Other cultural heritage resources (Tourist Experience focused)*

#### Festival experience

New Orleans is the host of several famous national and local events. In Bourbon Street, which runs through the center of French Quarter, people may appreciate the festive spirit of Mardi Gras, Jazz Fest, bars and cafes throughout the year. In February or March, people visit New Orleans to enjoy Mardi Gras. In April, people can experience French Quarter Festival and/or the two-week long New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival. Also Essence Festival on July 4, Satchmo Summer Fest in August, and Voodoo Art & Music Experience in October are also well-known events people are willing to experience in New Orleans (About New Orleans, LA / Additional Info, 2018).

#### Culinary experience

Culinary experience is considered vital to the New Orleans experience. The culinary heritage of New Orleans is influenced by Creole cuisine, Cajun cuisine, and soul

food. Creole cuisine is a fusion and unique to the New Orleans area, mostly influenced by French, Spanish, West African, and Native American cuisine. Cajun cuisine is based partly on French cuisine, and often includes local ingredients such as onions, bell peppers, and celery, similar to Creole cuisine. Soul food, very popular in New Orleans, was created by the African-American descendants of slaves. It is closely related to the cuisine of the Southern United States, but its origins trace back to West Africa. (About New Orleans, LA /Additional Info, 2018).

### Musical experience

As known as a birthplace of jazz, the streets and clubs, including Preservation Hall, provide plentiful of musical experiences for both residents and visitors. During the annual Mardi Gras celebration, musicians perform at Bourbon Street and people enjoy the festive spirit. Near the French Quarter, there are numerous music clubs bars which offer not only live jazz, also blues and rock music. People can have experience with live music entertainment day and night. (About New Orleans, LA / Additional Info, 2018).

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts both qualitative and quantitative research designs to explore the destination brand strategy among stakeholders. The qualitative data were acquired from a content analysis of the destination's marketing activity. They contributed importantly to the development of the survey questionnaires in the subsequent quantitative part. The quantitative portion examines the destination branding strategy to determine its effectiveness. The questionnaires and research variables are created based on a review of the literature. The purpose of the other qualitative portion through interview with stakeholders was to analyze the use of destination branding strategies by stakeholders to create synergies with heritage institutions, and examine the degree of collaboration to examine the links between stakeholders. The results are expected to show stakeholders' understanding of the crossover between MICE and heritage tourism for co-created destination branding. An adjusted model of destination brand conceptualization will explain how a destination can effectively make use of both MICE services and cultural/heritage offerings to better meet potential attendees' other touristic interests and cultural values and eventually better perform destination branding equity.

Survey research provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or options of a population by studying a sample of that population. It includes cross-sectional and longitudinal studies using questionnaires or structured interview for data collection – with the intent of generalizing from a sample to a population (Fowler, 2013). The questionnaires in this study were developed based on literature reviews of both MICE and heritage tourism and also from previously conducted pre-research contents on this case: the destination, the conference, and the organizations.

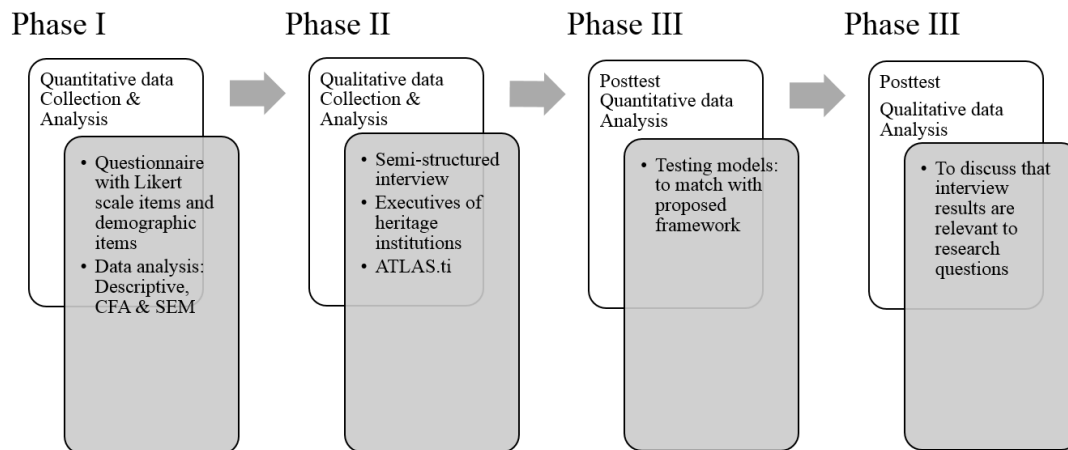


Figure 7. Mixed Methods Approach (Adapted from Creswell & Clark, 2017)

## Quantitative Research Design

The quantitative portion of the study primarily examines the destination branding strategy to gauge its effectiveness and extent of collaboration, and to elaborate on the link between stakeholders. It aims to develop a conceptual model of destination branding. The questionnaires and instruments were created based on a literature review and content analysis. An altered model of destination branding conceptualization will explain how a destination can effectively make use of both MICE and cultural/heritage offerings to better meet visitors' tourism needs and their cultural values and eventually better perform the destination branding equity. Figure 8 shows the procedures of the quantitative portion of this study.

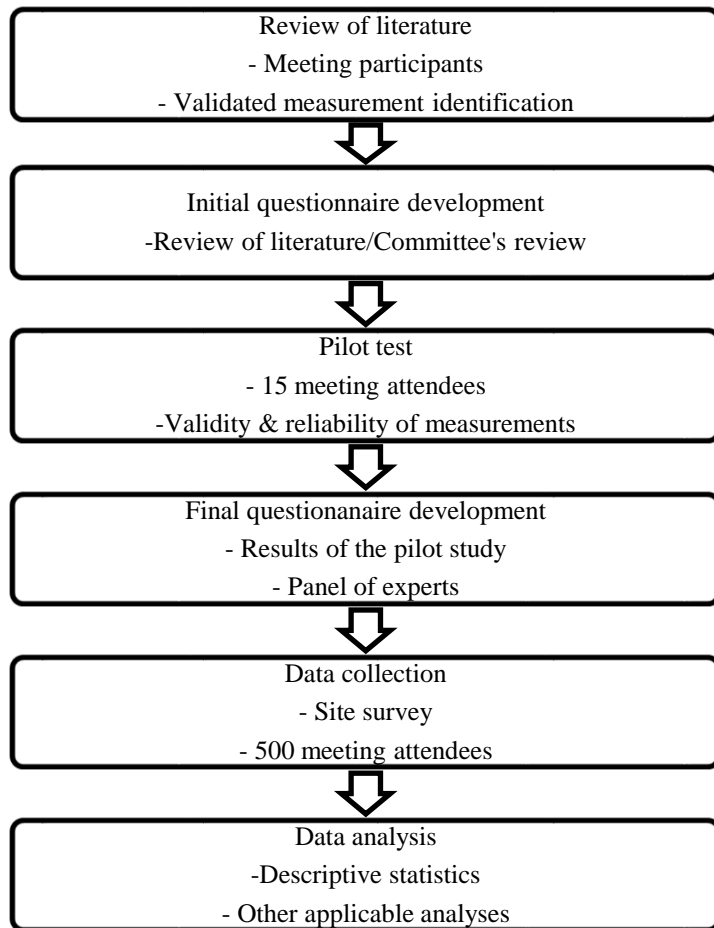


Figure 8. Research Procedures of the Quantitative Study

***Quantitative Research - Survey***

**Study Site and Populations**

Fieldwork for this study took place in 2017, in New Orleans, based on the committee’s suggestion and the interests of stakeholders. The study targeted the 2017 NRPA annual conference attendees scheduled at the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center from Monday September 25 to Thursday 28. The population for the



study in the destination was the NRPA Conference attendees, which was expected to be more than 7,000, from other states (considered domestic attendees) and other countries (considered international attendees).

### Survey Design

The survey was developed in English for both domestic and international participants. A pilot study was conducted offsite, recruiting people who had experienced MICE tourism before through the researcher's personal network. A total of fifteen participants, including university students (both undergraduate and graduate students), faculty/staff members in college, government officials, private business owners, and retirees participated in the pilot study. Based on pilot study responses and comments, some wording and survey content were adjusted to make the questions more appropriate. Following the pilot study, the survey was sent to the research committee members, who are tourism scholars, for further scrutiny to strength the face validity of the survey.

The questionnaires are comprised of three parts. The first part includes the purpose of travel and information source, as well as travel patterns, such as length of stay (for the events only and plan to add extra days), and travel party. Additionally, travel motivations and preferred activities/attractions were included in this part. Travel motivation questions were given to measure rating the importance of each reason for travelling to New Orleans (from 1 = not at all important to 5 = extremely important). The instruments of the survey were derived based on a thorough review of the literature. Ten motives regarding nature, culture, leisure, socialization, enjoyment, and official/business, were included after the related literature. Preferred tourism activities/attractions were included in the survey for the purpose of group clustering. The questionnaires for

preferred activities/attractions were designed as interest and priority to visit/enjoy cultural and heritage resources in New Orleans, to see that how much they are interested in and have priority to visit some of popular cultural heritage attributes in New Orleans during their visit. Five attractions and three activities were included. These selected cultural heritage resource items were based on pre-research contents and recommendation of New Orleans tourism expertise, including NOTMC staff, convention center staff, and a tourism faculty member of the local university. Meeting attendees' perceptions were measured by quantifying how the heritage destination and tour activities influenced their sense of MICE tourism experience to examine how heritage tourism can impact meeting attendees.

The second part includes questionnaires regarding destination branding strategy based on the modified branding model. All instruments of destination branding were derived from reviews of the literature. In this part, a Destination's presented Brand (DB), Destination Brand Awareness (DBA), Destination Brand Experience (DBExp), Destination Brand Personality (DBP), and Destination Brand Equity (DBE) are discussed.

A five-point Likert scale, strongly agree (5) - strongly disagree (1), extremely satisfied (5) - extremely dissatisfied (1) was used to measure conference attendees' perceptions about destination branding and the marketing activity that makes the destination more distinctive and attractive. Taking New Orleans as a case study for this research, the research adopted the city's most recent destination branding campaign, "One Time in New Orleans." This branding campaign was just launched two weeks before the NRPA conference, so it was assumed that not many attendees were aware of

the new campaign. However, instead of using a random destination branding phrase created only for this study, the research used this new destination campaign as an example case for the destination brand of New Orleans.

The last part includes questions about socio-demographics. This portion of the study attempts to examine the potential relationship between attendees' orientation and their perceptions of heritage tourism and experience with MICE tourism. Information on gender, age, hometown, residence, and level of income and education were sought.

### Reliability and Validity

In this part of the quantitative research, a reliability test was performed to test the internal consistency and validity of each scale. The Cronbach's alpha for the all branding variables is 0.969; a value of 0.7 or larger indicates a good internal consistency (Nunnally, 1975). Yu (2001) argued that while 0.7 and above was considered a high internal consistency, scales with a lower value should not automatically be regarded as unreliable. It is contended that a value of 0.6 can still be considered acceptable (Arrindell & Van der Ende, 1985). Validity means concurrent and convergent of the measurements (Campbell & Fiske, 1959). In this study, the validity was established through factor analysis to meet an adequate threshold. A principal component factor analysis was used to classify the dimensions of destination branding. The calculation of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin statistics was 0.961, which suggested that the data are suitable for factor analysis.

### *Survey Data Collection and Analysis*

The data were collected using a systematic random sampling method, surveying every fifth NRPA attendee in three fixed locations in the venue: near the two booths set up for the survey purpose only and in the lobby area in front of the main conference hall. The main booth was placed in the lobby on the second floor, where all meeting rooms for smaller sessions were located, and another one was placed at the NRPA Connect Zone in the exhibition hall. During the four-day conference, including the first pre-registration day, the researcher spent a total of 39 hours on surveying, with two NRPA interns' assistant for two and half hours.

The potential respondents were initially asked whether or not they were local residents, which was necessary to identify appropriate participants for the study. If a potential respondent answers "no," he/she was given the self-administered questionnaire, either on paper or online (produced in Qualtrics on six tablet PCs at the site, or using QR code or survey link via email) to complete in 15-20 minutes.

The final survey produced 516 usable responses after accounting for incomplete responses, which resulted in an 86.4% response rate. Invalid questionnaires, such as those with too many missing values, were excluded from the analysis. The quantitative analysis element of this study includes descriptive analysis, reliability analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, structural equation modeling (SEM), and other applicable analyses.

Table 4 illustrates how different aspects of the destination branding model link together to add value and build destination brand equity. Table 5 demonstrates each destination branding item with its wording on the actual survey for participants. Its descriptive statistic findings will be displayed in the result section.

Table 4. Operationalization Table of the Destination Branding Model

<b>Concepts</b>	<b>Elements</b>	<b>Variables</b>
<b>DB</b> (Destination Brand)	DB	- DB is Appealing
	Name/Logo/Visual presentation	- DB is Attractive - DB is Interesting
<b>DBA</b> (Destination Brand Awareness)	DB Recognition	DB is the first that comes to your mind when think of a destination for MICE with heritage
	DB Recall	DB is easy to recognize among the other DBs
	DB Dominance	DB is the only that comes to your mind when think of a destination for MICE with heritage
<b>DBExp.</b> (Destination Brand Experience)	Sensory DB exp.	DB makes a strong impression on my senses
	Affective DB exp.	DB induces feeling, sentiments & emotions
	Intellectual DB exp.	DB makes me think and stimulate my curiosity & problem solving
	Behavioral DB exp.	DB makes me to engaged in physical activities & behaviors and gives me bodily experience
<b>DBP</b> (Destination Brand Personality)	Sincerity	DB ensures down to earth, honest, wholesome & cheerful characteristics
	Excitement	DB is daring, spirited, imaginative & up to date
	Competence	DB is reliable, intelligent & successful
	Sophistication	DB has upper class & charming aspects
	Ruggedness	DB has outdoorsy & tough features
	Conviviality	DB is friendly & family oriented
	Traditionalism	DB offers traditional & authentic cultural attributes

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<b>DBE</b> (Destination Brand Equity)	DB Quality	DB identifies a better-quality destination than other similar ones
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High quality of accommodation</li> <li>- High quality of infrastructure</li> <li>- High level of cleanliness</li> <li>- High level of personal safety</li> <li>- Appealing local food</li> <li>- High quality of services</li> <li>- Few problems with communication</li> <li>- Good value for money</li> </ul>
	DB Loyalty	DB encourages visiting the destination
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of previous visitation</li> <li>- Time of last visitation</li> <li>- One of the preferred destination to visit</li> <li>- Destination provides more benefits</li> </ul>
	Satisfaction	Positive aspects of DB
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Intention to revisit</li> <li>- Intention to recommend</li> </ul>

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Table 5. Destination Branding Items

Measurement		Item wording
<b>The Brand</b>		
The Brand - Appealing	DB1	Is it appealing to you?
The Brand - Attractive	DB2	Is it attractive to you?
The Brand - Interesting	DB3	Is it interesting to you?
<b>Brand Awareness</b>		
Awareness - My mind	DBA1	As a conference destination, it comes to my mind when I think of heritage tourism.
Awareness - Recognize	DBA2	It is easy to recognize among other heritage destinations.
Awareness - Identify	DBA3	It has the ability to identify the place as a heritage destination.
<b>Brand Experience</b>		
Sensory experience: Visual	DBEX1	It satisfies my sensory experience: Visual (image of its heritage) experience
Sensory experience: Aural	DBEX2	It satisfies my sensory experience: Aural (music) experience
Sensory experience: Olfactory	DBEX3	It satisfies my sensory experience: Olfactory (smell of environment) experience
Sensory experience: Gustatory	DBEX4	It satisfies my sensory experience: Gustatory (culinary) experience
Sensory experience: Tactile	DBEX5	It satisfies my sensory experience: Tactile (feeling of touch) experience
Affective experience: Feeling	DBEX6	It satisfies my affective experience: Feeling (feeling welcome and/or relaxed)
Affective experience: Sentiment/emotion	DBEX7	It satisfies my affective experience: Sentiment/emotion (love of the cultural/heritage surroundings)

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Behavioral experience	DBEX8	It satisfies my behavioral experience: Physical action/bodily experience & behavior (e.g. experiencing heritage trail, etc.)
Intellectual experience	DBEX9	I It satisfies my intellectual experience: Thought/curiosity/problem-solving (e.g. museum exhibition, economical souvenir purchase, etc.)
 <b>Brand Personality</b>		
Personality - Credible	DBP1	It is a credible brand for me.
Personality - Reliable	DBP2	It is a reliable brand for me.
Personality - Pleasant sensations	DBP3	It suggests pleasant sensations of the heritage destination.
Personality - Good value	DBP4	It indicates good value for money.
Personality - Reasons to experience	DBP5	There are reasons to experience it over competitors (other conference destinations).
 <b>Brand Equity</b>		
Equity - Encourage	DBE1	It encourages me to visit the destination.
Equity - Better quality	DBE2	In comparison to other alternative conference destinations, it identifies a better-quality destination.
Equity - Satisfied	DBE3	I am satisfied with it during my conference experience here.
Equity - Experience again	DBE4	I would like to experience it again in a future opportunity.
Equity - Recommend	DBE5	I would recommend the positive aspects of it to other people.

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## Qualitative Research Design

### *Qualitative Data – Interviews*

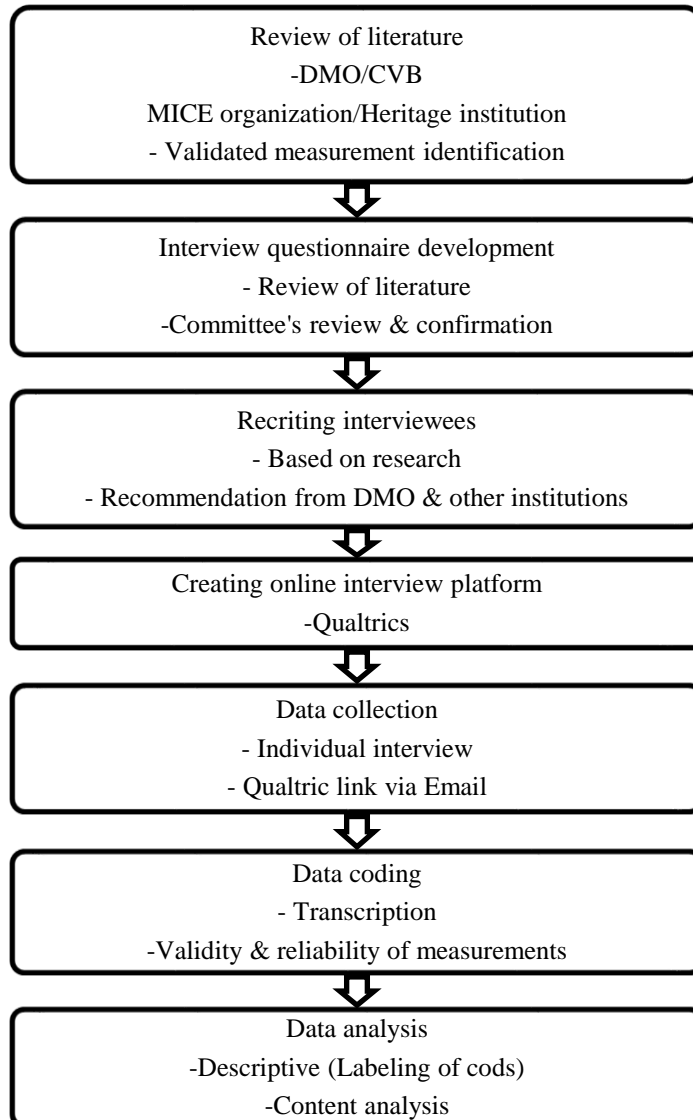


Figure 9. Research Procedures of the Qualitative Study

## Research Design

The results of interviews are expected to show stakeholders' understanding of, and collaboration with, MICE and heritage tourism for creative MICE tourism destination branding. At this stage in the research, interviewing heritage professionals in the destination would suggest how a destination can effectively make use of MICE and heritage resources to better perform their branding and marketing efforts. Qualitative research communicates interpretive and evaluative knowledge, and it is especially suitable for studying phenomena about which little is known (Creswell, 2013b). In this study, interviews were used to obtain a description of the lived world of the interviewees to understand better the sense of the described phenomena (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The researcher conducted email interviews with ten executives in popular cultural heritage institutions in New Orleans. These interviews involve semi-structured, open-ended questions that were intended to derive the views and opinions of key players (Creswell, 2013a).

Given the exploratory nature of this research, the interview was considered the most appropriate method in examining and evaluating the potential impact of the mechanisms of social context on stakeholders' perceptions. Primarily, a destination manager was contacted to obtain first-hand knowledge about the destination branding strategy the destination is currently using. This information was used to reinforce further the following interviews with heritage specialists. Based on each component, interview questions regarding heritage organizations' understanding and perceptions of destination branding were developed. They also drew out information and knowledge related to their perceptions of the use of multiple forms of tourism in a MICE destination to help create a

recognizable brand. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with heritage stakeholders. The results are utilized to provide contextual information, since there is little relevant empirical research. The interview questions were developed according to reviews of existing models and related concepts, and confirmed by the research committee.

### Interview Design

As noted above, semi-structured interviews were performed as a source of qualitative data for this research. Compared to structured interviews, semi-structured interviews can make better use of the knowledge-producing potential of dialogues by allowing much more leeway for following up on whatever angles are deemed important by the interviewers (Leavy, 2014). Good interview questions invite interviewees to give descriptions, and good interviewers tend to avoid more abstract and reflective questions (Leavy, 2014). Interviews was conducted via e-mail. The customized link with interview questions were sent to selected participants (after confirming their contact details) via email.

### Email Interview (Online interview)

Even though qualitative research is important in the social sciences, there are some weaknesses in most qualitative approaches. Qualitative work is time consuming and data can be difficult to access and expensive to interpret (Ratislavová & Ratislav, 2014). As the number of internet users increases, the internet is considered to be new and valuable data collection tool for qualitative research. The email interview is often used to exchange information online between researcher and interview participants within a

particular timeframe, because of spatial distance or workload. It is obviously a less expensive research method. Furthermore, it can reduce the time required, even though obtaining in-depth information can still be available (Ratislavová & Ratislav, 2014). It is sometimes difficult to set perfect dates and times for interviews that are convenient for both the interviewer and the participant (Ratislavová & Ratislav, 2014). Using email is easier for researchers to make contact with participants from distant locations, who might otherwise be hard to access (Mann & Stewart, 2000). Via email, the researcher can interview several participants at the same time, which saves time and money (East, Jackson, O'Brien & Peters, 2008; Meho, 2006; Selwyn & Robson, 1998). Transcribing a lengthy audio files of the interviews also requires a great deal of time. Using email interview method makes transcribing the interview much easier (Ratislavová & Ratislav, 2014). Time and cost efficiency are important advantages.

Since it is obvious that email interviews lack nonverbal and paralinguistic signals, Ratislavová and Ratislav (2014) suggested that email interviews must be used for qualitative research only in reasonable cases, such as when the research is constrained by a tight budget for travel, and/or when the researcher needs to deal with social groups which are closed or difficult to access.

Bowker and Tuffin (2004) indicate that researchers can get rich data from email interviews, and Ratislavová and Ratislav (2014) stress that the quality and the richness of interview data obtained via asynchronous email interviews are not much different from those acquired in face-to-face interviews. The answers from the email interview are more structured and may reduce data repetition. Email interviews allow participants to be better focused and can have more time to think about and consider their answers. The

participants can review their responses and reflect on them, and this practice helps them engage in more careful and meaningful communication (Ratislavová & Ratislav, 2014).

The relationship between the researcher and the interview participants is mostly based on trust, which is an important factor in qualitative research. It encourages honesty in communication and supports the researcher to get closer to the participant's experience. The relationship is based on mutual respect and openness (Ratislavová & Ratislav, 2014). Because it was limited to build close relationship between interviewer and interviewees in the online environment, the researcher tried to build relationship with interview participants via several emails and telephone calls, to encourage their openness through the entire interview process. From the initial email for recruiting the interviewees and until the final interview confirmation email, the researcher and each interviewee had more than three times of two-way communications on average.

### Qualitative Data Collection

The researcher provided potential participants, executives of heritage institutions in New Orleans, with detailed information about the research and asked whether they were willing to participate in online interview. Informed consent reflects the use of email and identifies the strategies utilized to protect information to be confidential. The link to the online interview form was sent only to those who agreed to informed consent in previous emails. Starting the interview on Qualtrics provides the proof that participants had been informed and agreed to participate in the research. Also, email responses stating that they had read the letter of consent and that they agreed to take part in this study were reflected satisfactorily.

The interview participants were initially informed about the subject, purpose and importance of the study via an introduction letter during the recruitment process. The researcher supplied information about the researcher and the point of the interview and provided potential expected implications, along with the research committee chairs' contact information. The researcher clearly understood the responsibility of building a relationship with all participants. Via email, the researcher provided a link to connect with Qualtrics. The researcher created a document for each interviewee and then copied all the contents to create a consecutive interview transcript. The researcher set the deadline for answers, and sent only one reminder if it was not completed by due date, so that participants would not feel pressure to continue participating. The researcher checked Qualtrics every day, and when new data came in, they were initially printed as hard copies for back up and kept in binders in a locked cabinet. The data was immediately cleaned of identifying information and then the contents was put into a computerized folder that was protected with a password. The contents were copied without identifying information and pasted into a Word document with assigned code only (McCoyd & Kerson, 2006). To increase the richness of the data, the researcher tried to be specific when creating the questions by providing a clear definition of important terms and detailed background information of each question. Participants were given 2.5 weeks to complete the online interview, so the participants were not required to answer immediately, which provided flexibility for them to find adequate time to participate (Ratislavová & Ratislav, 2014).

## Reliability and Validity

Qualitative reliability means that the researcher's approach is consistent across repeated investigations different conditions with different investigators (Gibbs, 2018). To check reliability, efforts were made to make sure that there was not any shift in the meaning of the codes during the coding process by constant data comparisons with the codes and by memo writing about the codes (Creswell, 2013a). Qualitative validity indicates that the researcher examines the accuracy of the findings by applying certain procedures (Gibbs, 2018). To check validity, this study used member checking and peer debriefing to decide the accuracy of the qualitative findings (Creswell, 2013a). Transcripts were also checked several times to make sure that they did not contain obvious misstatements made during the downloading of the data from the Qualtrics.

### *Interview Data Analysis and Interpretation*

The interview transcripts were analyzed using ATLAS.ti. The researcher sequentially performed two phases of the coding processes. In the first phase, transcripts were examined and compared to each other. The first coding process allowed the researcher to remain open to all possible emerging theoretical directions, and to provide an opportunity to reflect on the contents and the nuances of the data (Charmaz, 2006; Saldana, 2012). Also, besides the codes, personal analytic memos were used to reflect the process of coding. After the first coding, the data were reconstructed to develop a better sense of categorical, thematic, conceptual, and/or theoretical association (Saldana, 2012). In this stage, some codes were combined together, and some codes were deleted if there were sufficient infrequency, irrelevance, and redundancy (Silver & Lewins, 2014).

To increase the validity, observation notes were used to check if there were potential biases or vague answers while documenting the process of data collection and coding.

In addition to the interview analysis of coding and interpreting, word clouds were used as another method to perform textual analysis and provide insights from a large collection of documents (Cui, Wu, Liu, Wei and Zhou, 2010). The entire documents were selected to generate word clouds for each code at ATLAS.ti. The purpose for using word clouds is to visualize word frequencies (Rethinking How to Analyze Data with ATLAS.ti 8 Windows, 2016). Word clouds are considered useful as a powerful way of showing what words are more and less frequent in a given document to a particular code (Rethinking How to Analyze Data with ATLAS.ti 8 Windows, 2016). Using word clouds is a popular method in academic research for visually summarizing large amounts of text (Wang, Zhao, Guo, North & Ramakrishnan, 2014). Word clouds are used as a simple and effective visualization technique to provide an initial impression of text documents (Lohmann, Heimerl, Bopp, Burch & Ertl, 2015). They demonstrate the most frequent words of a text as a weighted list of words in sequential, circular or random spatial layout (Lohmann, Ziegler & Tetzlaff, 2009). The font size and color of words indicate the frequency popularity or significance. Word clouds present the contents in an aesthetically appealing manner with color, position and orientation (Lohmann et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2014). They are used to visually encode additional information and provide support in comparing the words and word frequencies of difference textual documents (Lohmann et al., 2015).

Three or more word clouds for each concept are provided in the findings section, to suggest the insights on what the concept is about from the perspective of interviewees.



Word clouds can help facilitate a greater understanding about what the interviewees are saying regarding certain concepts (Rethinking How to Analyze Data with ATLAS.ti 8 Windows, 2016).

## DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

### **Quantitative Data Analysis and Findings**

#### *Sample Characteristics*

##### Conference Attendee Profile

Among 516 respondents, 480 provided their place of residence (state or country). 98% are domestic visitors; more than 40% came from following six states: California (10.6%), Illinois (8.7%), Texas (7.4%), Arizona (5.1%), Maryland (4.9%) and Florida (4%). Table 6 shows detailed information of MICE traveler profiles. The sample of respondents was represented by more males (57%) than females (43%). In terms of age, 75% of respondents were between 30 and 59 years old, 12.3 % were between 18 and 29 years old and 12.5% were 60 years or older. Most respondents were relatively well-educated individuals (89.1% had completed a college degree or beyond) and affluent (85% had indicated over \$50,000 house hold income; about 50% of total respondents had indicated over \$100,000 household income). With regard to marital status, approximately 70% of respondents were married or in a long-term relationships, and 30% were single. In terms of employment type, about 92% of respondents were full-time/part-time employees, 3.3% were retired, 2.6% were students, and only 0.8% were unemployed or full-time homemakers.

Table 6. Conference Attendee Profile (n=516)

<b>Variable</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Gender (n=509)</b>		
Female	220	43.2%
Male	289	56.8%
<b>Age (n=513)</b>		
18-29	63	12.3%
30-39	124	24.2%
40-49	148	28.8%
50-59	114	22.2%
60-69	58	11.3%
70 and over	6	1.2%
<b>Education (n=513)</b>		
Some high school	0	0%
High school graduate	7	1.4%
Some college	49	9.6%
Technical school or Associate's degree	14	2.7%
Bachelor's degree	244	47.6%
Master' degree	172	33.5%
Doctorate or equivalent	27	5.3%
<b>Income (n=511)</b>		
Under \$24,999	12	2.3%
\$25,000-49,999	64	12.5%
\$50,000-74,999	83	16.2%
\$75,000-99,999	95	18.6%
\$100,000-149,999	142	27.8%
\$150,000 and over	115	22.5%

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<b>Marital status (n=512)</b>		
Single (no children)	109	21.3%
Single (with children)	45	8.8%
Married or in a long term relationship (no children)	79	15.4%
Married or in a long term relationship (with children)	279	54.5%
<b>Employment (n=512)</b>		
Employed	468	91.9%
Unemployed	2	0.4%
Retired	17	3.3%
Student	13	2.6%
Full-time homemaker	2	0.4%
Others	7	1.4%

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## Marketing Profiles

Table 7 shows that 51% of the respondents were repeat visitors to New Orleans. Fifty one percent of repeat visitors' purpose of the previous trip to New Orleans was identified as business related, 49% visited for pleasure/personal purposes. Most respondents (96%) identified that the main reason for their current visit to New Orleans was the NRPA Annual Conference. In terms of the primary reason for their visit, the most important reason was the importance of the conference itself (62%), followed by networking (26%). Destination attractiveness was relatively low (12%) as their primary reason on conference attendance. Participants' sources used to obtain information about the conference destination (New Orleans for this study) were also identified. About 54% of visitors used online search engines, and approximately 40% of visitors used conference materials. Their own experience and word-of-mouth were also ranked as

significant sources of information about the destination. For travel companions, 64% of respondents traveled with their colleagues and 25% traveled alone. Eighteen percent of respondents indicated that they traveled with family members or friends (multiple answers were possible for this question). The median number of family members, friends, or colleagues they travel with is 1, 2, and 3, respectively. With regard to their plans to stay extra days in addition to the scheduled conference days, 33% of them indicated that they would add extra days in New Orleans. The mean and median numbers of extra days from the respondents' answers who planned to add extra days are 1.97 and 2 respectively. When respondents were asked about funding for the trip sponsored by an organization they serve, most of them responded that their trip to New Orleans for the NRPA Conference was funded by their employers either fully (71%) or partially (21%). Among those whose trip was fully funded and who plan to stay longer after the conference, about 30% of those mentioned that their extra days would be fully or partially covered by their employers.

Table 7. Marketing Profiles

<b>Variable</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Experience with the destination (n=516)</b>		
First time	254	49.2%
Repeat	262	50.8%
<b>Purpose of previous visit to the destination (n=252)</b>		
Business trip	124	49.2%
Personal trip	128	50.8%

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<b>Trip Purpose (n=515)</b>		
NRPA Conference	495	96.1%
Others	20	3.9%
<b>Primary reason for visiting the destination (n=513)</b>		
Importance of the conference itself	319	62.2%
Networking	133	25.9%
Destination attractiveness	61	11.9%
<b>Information sources (n=987 from 516 respondents)</b>		
Online search engine	278	53.9%
Conference materials	203	39.3%
My own experience	172	33.3%
Word-of-mouth	167	32.4%
Social networking sites	62	12.0%
CVB/tourism website	49	9.5%
Newspaper or Magazine	16	3.1%
Radio or TV	4	0.8%
Others	36	7.0%
<b>Travel Party (n=561 from 516 respondents)</b>		
Travel with Colleagues (Median=3)	331	64.1%
Traveling Alone	128	24.8%
Travel with Family members (Median=1)	66	12.8%
Travel with Friends (Median=2)	29	5.6%
Travel with Others	7	1.4%
<b>Extra days (n=516)</b>		
Extra days (Median=2)	172	33.3%
No extra day	344	66.7%

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<b>Funding for trip (n=516)</b>		
Full employer funds	366	70.9%
Partial employer funds	109	21.1%
Personal funds	41	7.9%

## Travel Behavior

Respondents were asked how important the following items were in their making decision to visit New Orleans. Among these ten items, as presented in table 8, the most important was “to attend the conference” (4.69), followed by “to network at the conference” (4.19), “to enjoy local food” (3.45), “to enjoy cultural/heritage activities” (3.41), and “to experience a new place” (3.35).

Table 9 and figure 10 show the responses when people were asked to rate their interests and priorities related to visiting major cultural and/or heritage attractions in New Orleans. Culinary-related experiences and the French Quarter rated highest both on interest and priority, followed by music-related and festival experiences. The Jackson Square-St. Louis Cathedral-Cabildo attraction cluster was rated relatively high on interest, but a little lower on priority. Meanwhile, even though people were interested in the National World War II Museum, it was not considered a priority to visit. The Jazz National Historical Park and Preservation Hall were ranked relatively low both on interest and priority. These cultural and heritage-related experiences and attractions were extracted from the list the local tourism experts recommended. For the Jazz National Historical Park and Preservation Hall, the recommendation is to develop marketing promotions to target business/MICE visitors to New Orleans and increase their awareness and interest.

Table 8. Importance in Decision to Visit New Orleans

<b>Decision</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Importance</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Attend the conference	514	4.69	0.66
Network at the conference	512	4.19	0.97
Enjoy food	513	3.45	1.29
Enjoy cultural/heritage activities	513	3.41	1.18
Experience a new place	513	3.35	1.33
Enjoy outdoor activities	512	2.99	1.21
Weather	511	2.64	1.30
Relieve stress	513	2.63	1.41
Spend time with family or friends	512	2.54	1.45
Take time off from work	512	2.30	1.39
Others	239	1.33	0.98

(5=extremely important and 1=not at all important)



Table 9. Interest and Priority of Attractions/Experiences

<b>Cultural/Heritage Resource</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Interest</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Culinary experience	504	3.96	1.12
French Quarter	503	3.94	1.10
Musical experience	504	3.51	1.23
Festival experience	504	3.27	1.31
National World War II Museum	502	3.12	1.4
Jackson Square/ St. Louis Cathedral/ Cabildo	503	3.11	1.33
Jazz National Historical Park	503	2.92	1.28
Preservation Hall	503	2.60	1.24

(5=extremely interesting and 1=not at all interesting)

<b>Cultural/Heritage Resource</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Culinary experience	504	3.63	1.30
French Quarter	503	3.41	1.29
Musical experience	504	3.00	1.34
Festival experience	504	2.80	1.35
Jackson Square/ St. Louis Cathedral/ Cabildo	503	2.66	1.34
Jazz National Historical Park	503	2.28	1.19
National World War II Museum	502	2.24	1.22
Preservation Hall	503	2.09	1.13

(5=essential priority and 1= not a priority)

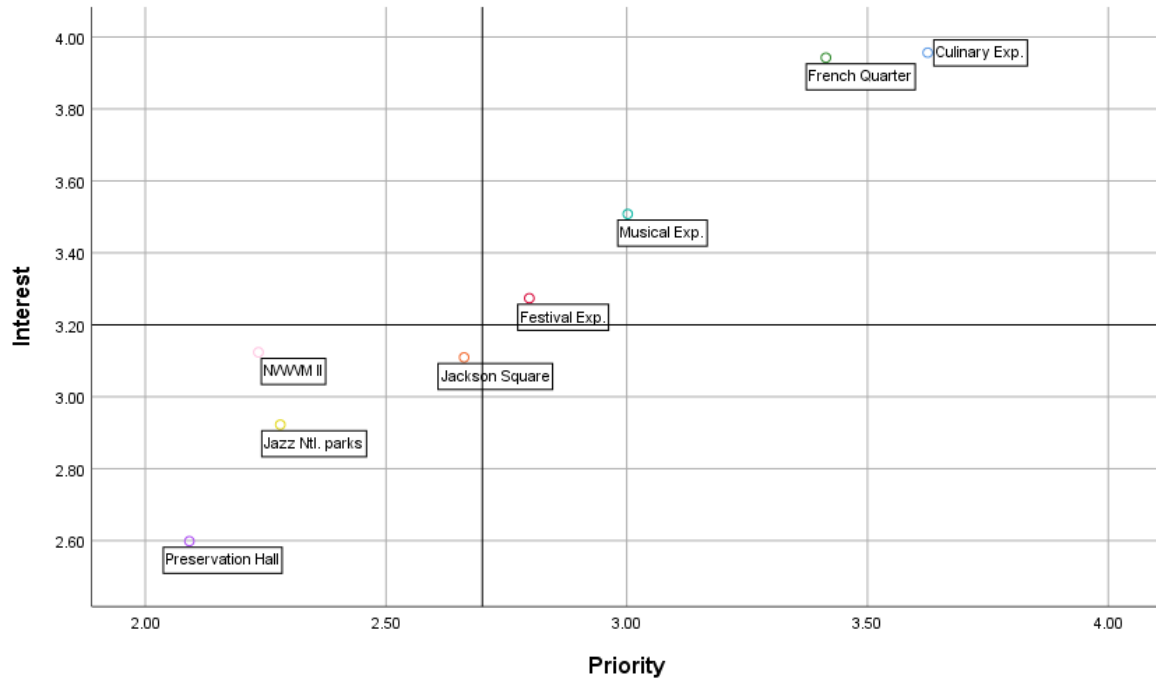


Figure 10. Cultural Heritage Attraction/Experiences Interest-Priority Analysis

### *Destination Branding*

The means, standard deviations and Cronbach's Alpha scores are shown in Table 10. The composite reliability is computed to assess the internal consistency reliability. As shown in Table 10, the composite reliability values of all of the constructs exceed the minimum of 0.70 as suggested by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), which confirms that the indicators for all five constructs could be sufficient to represent the underlying factors.

Table 10. Descriptive Statistics

<b>Item</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
<b>The Brand</b>			
The Brand - Appealing	3.33	1.046	.958
The Brand - Attractive	3.28	1.034	
The Brand - Interesting	3.36	1.089	
<b>Brand Awareness</b>			
Awareness - My mind	3.20	1.112	.913
Awareness - Recognize	3.38	1.111	
Awareness - Identify	3.31	1.132	
<b>Brand Experience</b>			
Sensory experience: Visual	3.44	.969	.922
Sensory experience: Aural	3.46	1.043	
Sensory experience: Olfactory	2.81	1.063	
Sensory experience: Gustatory	3.59	1.069	
Sensory experience: Tactile	3.01	.944	
Affective experience: Feeling	3.69	.982	
Affective experience: Sentiment/emotion	3.62	.967	
Behavioral experience	3.39	.950	
Intellectual experience	3.43	.952	
<b>Brand Personality</b>			
Personality - Credible	3.23	1.005	.936
Personality - Reliable	3.18	.991	
Personality - Pleasant sensations	3.36	1.038	
Personality - Good value	2.99	1.030	
Personality - Reasons to experience	3.21	1.051	

<b>Brand Equity</b>			
Equity - Encourage	3.38	1.133	.936
Equity - Better quality	3.22	1.057	
Equity - Satisfied	3.58	1.061	
Equity - Experience again	3.61	1.123	
Equity - Recommend	3.68	1.113	

(5=strongly agree/extremely satisfied and 1=strongly disagree/extremely dissatisfied)

The convergent and discriminant validity of the model are measured following the procedure suggested by Fornell and Lacker (1981). The discriminant validity constructs are tested by calculating the square root of average variance extracted (AVE), then compared with the interconstruct correlation. Standardized loading, construct reliability (CR) and AVE scores are shown in Table 11. As shown in Table 11, all AVE scores are higher than the correlations between the latent construct and other constructs in the model, with all the AVE square roots above 0.70 except the score of DBExp (.578), which exceed the threshold of 0.50 as suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981). Accordingly, it can be concluded that each construct had good discriminant validity.

In order to test the convergent validity of each construct, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted. Table 11 indicates all items have factor loadings higher than 0.7 except the score of olfactory experience (.551), which exceed the commonly accepted benchmark of 0.5 for each factor (Nunnally & Berstein, 1994). Also, the t-values derived from the analysis shows the evidence for convergent validity of the constructs, when indicating all values exceed the threshold of 1.96 as recommended by Gefen and Straub (2005).

Table 11. Validity and Reliability of Measurement Model

Item	Factor Loading	S.E.	Est. / S.E.	Construct Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
<b>The Brand</b>					
The Brand - Appealing	.954***	.006	162.005	.954	.873
The Brand - Attractive	.952***	.006	158.290		
The Brand - Interesting	.918***	.008	112.303		
<b>Brand Awareness</b>					
Awareness - My mind	.843***	.015	55.261	.895	.739
Awareness - Recognize	.900***	.012	77.781		
Awareness - Identify	.903***	.011	79.018		
<b>Brand Experience</b>					
Sensory experience: Visual	.801***	.017	45.951	.924	.578
Sensory experience: Aural	.782***	.019	41.688		
Sensory experience: Olfactory	.551***	.032	17.187		
Sensory experience: Gustatory	.773***	.019	39.875		
Sensory experience: Tactile	.707***	.023	30.084		
Affective experience: Feeling	.837***	.015	55.894		
Affective experience: Sentiment/emotion	.815***	.017	49.206		
Behavioral experience	.776***	.019	40.817		
Intellectual experience	.755***	.020	36.894		
<b>Brand Personality</b>					
Personality - Credible	.918***	.009	102.540	.934	.740
Personality - Reliable	.906***	.010	91.753		
Personality - Pleasant sensations	.882***	.011	78.799		
Personality - Good value	.774***	.019	40.832		
Personality - Reasons to experience	.841***	.015	57.801		
<b>Brand Equity</b>					
Equity - Encourage	.842***	.015	57.591	.925	.725
Equity - Better quality	.849***	.014	60.364		
Equity - Satisfied	.868***	.012	69.468		
Equity - Experience again	.873***	.012	70.530		
Equity - Recommend	.891***	.011	80.011		

The measurement model is estimated conducting confirmatory factor analysis, using AMOS and Mplus. Structural equation modeling requires a set of observed variables for each construct in order to estimate latent factors. The measurement model for this study includes five latent variables: Destination Brand, Destination Brand Awareness, Destination Brand Experience, Destination Brand Personality and Destination Brand Equity. The results demonstrate that all variables are significantly related to their specific constructs, verifying the posited relationship between the indicators and the constructs. As Table 12 shows, the loadings indicating that sequential relationships are above the recommended 0.50 threshold value (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Furthermore, the measurement model showed clearly satisfactory goodness of fit indices ( $\chi^2/df = 3.624$ , RMSEA = .071, SRMR = .035, CFI = .943, TLI = .936, IFI = .944, NFI = .924).

Table 12. Goodness of Fit Statistic

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Statistic Value</b>	<b>Threshold Value</b>
Normed chi-square ( $\chi^2/df$ )	3.624***	<5
Root mean square error of approximation ( <b>RMSEA</b> )	.071	<.08
Standardized root mean square residual ( <b>SRMR</b> )	.035	<.05
Comparative fit index ( <b>CFI</b> )	.943	>.90
Tucker-Lewis index ( <b>TLI</b> )	.936	>.90
Incremental Fit Index ( <b>IFI</b> )	.944	>.90
Normed Fit Index ( <b>NFI</b> )	.924	>.90

\*\*\* p<.001

The hypotheses proposed in this study were tested using an SEM procedure. The structural model involves significance tests for the estimated coefficient (paths), which provide the results of accepting or rejecting the proposed relationships between latent constructs. A

structural model with five constructs is estimated using maximum likelihood (ML). The results for the model indicate that the overall fit indices demonstrate a good model fit to the data displaying the strong significant paths. In other words, the regression coefficient is all positive and significant as shown in Table 13, which indicates that all hypothesized relationships between constructs are supported in the study.

Table 13. Standardized Path Coefficient of Structural Model

<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Variable</b>	<b>Path coefficient</b>	<b>t value</b>
<b>H1</b>	<b>Brand -&gt; Brand Awareness</b>	<b>.605</b>	<b>15.854***</b>
H1a	Brand -> Brand Experience	.274	5.293***
H1b	Brand -> Brand Personality	.144	2.997***
<b>H2</b>	<b>Brand Awareness -&gt; Brand Experience</b>	<b>.563</b>	<b>12.427***</b>
H2a	Brand Awareness -> Brand Personality	.111	2.129**
<b>H3</b>	<b>Brand Experience -&gt; Brand Personality</b>	<b>.676</b>	<b>13.503***</b>
H3a	Brand Experience -> Brand Equity	.347	4.854***
<b>H4</b>	<b>Brand Personality -&gt; Brand Equity</b>	<b>.560</b>	<b>7.914***</b>

\*\*\*p< .001; \*\*p< .01

The results show that the brand has a significant influence on brand awareness, brand experience and brand personality. Brand awareness has a positive impact on brand experience and brand personality. Results also show that brand experience directly influences both brand personality and brand equity and brand personality is significantly related to brand equity (see Figure 11).

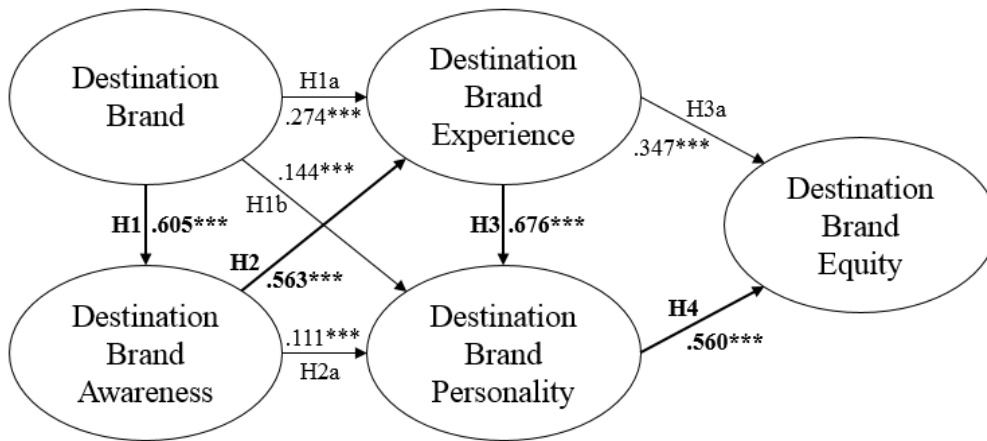


Figure 11. Model Parameters for the Proposed Research Model (\*\*p < .01. \*\*\*p < .001)



## **Qualitative Data Analysis and Findings**

### ***Interview Findings***

Ten executives from New Orleans' cultural heritage institutions participated in the interviews. These participants were asked about the city's destination branding, relationship between cultural heritage tourism and MICE tourism, and partnerships with other tourism organizations to promote either heritage or MICE tourism.

#### **Part 1. Destination Branding in New Orleans**

In the first part of the interview, after a brief introduction, the executives of cultural heritage institutions in New Orleans were asked about destination branding. They were asked how they expect New Orleans' new branding campaign to make the city more distinctive and attractive, and how they consider the brand to be beneficial to the tourism industry in New Orleans. Also, considering travelers, it was asked if interviewees believe that destination branding benefits MICE travelers who visit New Orleans in experiencing the unique features of the destination and eventually affects MICE travelers' satisfaction with their entire travel experience. Finally, they were asked if they believe the new destination brand will be beneficial for their institutions and how they rate New Orleans' branding strategy to promote heritage tourism. Ten executive members shared their views and thoughts about the destination branding.

Participants were confident that New Orleans has a reputation as a premier destination with authentic history, abundance of dining, musical and festival experiences, and unique cultural heritage celebrations. According to them, the city makes marketing efforts to attract more business events, and they believe that people visit New Orleans for a special experience, not only for a leisure purpose, but also for attending conferences and meetings.

Regarding the new branding campaign “One Time in New Orleans,” both positive and negative perspectives were found. Some of the interviewees did not really know or were not sure about the new brand campaign. Some say that the wording is somewhat vague, which makes it hard to understand what the phrase is meant to convey. Since the city’s tourism is operated largely by word of mouth, some doubt how long the tag line would be around. Those who were skeptical about this new branding campaign believed that it not very effective in making the city more attractive or distinctive. Some say that it fails to utilize the actual culture bearers to promote the city, and it may not impact their organization. Examples of these failures include:

*“I don’t think this campaign makes New Orleans more distinctive and attractive”*  
(Interviewee 5).

*“‘One time in New Orleans’ seems to be a little on the vague side”* (Interviewee 9).

*“While it is always good to have a marketable brand or image to promote tourism, I am not sure that ‘One Time in New Orleans’ captures the spirit of the city”* (Interviewee 7).

*“The tag line seems too similar to Las Vegas’s ‘What Happens in Vegas Stays in Vegas’”* (Interviewee 7).

*“‘One Time in New Orleans’ does little to make the city seem more distinctive or attractive”* (Interviewee 7).

*“New Orleans is already seen as a premier destination”* (Interviewee 2).

*“New Orleans is constantly selling its culture as its main experts: however they did not utilize the actual culture bearers to promote the city”* (Interviewee 5).

Nevertheless, several participants had more positive views of this new branding campaign. The words combined with a strong visual that portrays a uniqueness of New Orleans. It creates an appeal of New Orleans as a destination for once in a lifetime experiences. They believe the idea behind the campaign is to emphasize how everyone who visits New Orleans has a story, and the campaign is meant to encourage people to share their experiences. The same participants think the brand does a good job of showcasing a lot of resources New Orleans has to offer. Some of them believe that the new branding campaign is more focused on leisure travel, but they also believe that this marketing effort has the potential to benefit MICE travelers as well. Destination branding is essential to convey the message that New Orleans is a prime location to hold conferences and meetings. Many participants suggested that the destination brand helps to attract visitors to the city and draws people to its cultural institutions. They believe the destination brand is beneficial for local heritage institutions because the marketing effort celebrates New Orleans' rich culture. In addition, they believe that this branding does contribute to MICE visitors' overall satisfaction. Examples of positive opinions of the new brand include:

*“In my experience, MICE travelers are seeking something different and unique, especially for conference related affairs. This branding contributes to their overall satisfaction” (Interviewee 5).*

*“The brand does a great job of showcasing all that new Orleans has to offer, and I think highlighting those offerings makes the city seem more attractive as a destination” (Interviewee 8).*

*“...anything that brings people to the city will help us. Then it is our jobs to get them to visit us” (Interviewee 3).*

This part of destination branding is divided into five codes: about New Orleans, branding for heritage, branding for New Orleans, branding for travelers, and ‘One time in New Orleans.’ Each code was selected and pasted it into the word cloud generator to visualize the word frequencies. Music shows up as the largest word in the first cloud and other words that are large and significant are culture, heritage and food that suggest what the executives of cultural heritage institutions in New Orleans believe the most valuable resources of the city. The large and noteworthy words of branding for heritage, as indicated in the second cloud, are people, music, help and beneficial, which suggest that these executives of heritage institutions believe the branding strategy somehow helpful and beneficial for their institutions. The cloud of branding concepts for New Orleans shows several notable words including city, more, diverse, unique, cultural, spirit, and tourism, suggest several components are used in describing the destination branding itself for the city. Experience shows up as the largest word in the fourth cloud of branding for travelers, and cultural is the next remarkable word in this code. Other notable words including heritage, music, memorable and unique suggest those the city with its brand can provide for New Orleans visitors. Finally, the last cloud of ‘One time New Orleans’ shows that people and experience are the most significant word here, followed by unique, city and visitors, underscore the importance of people (visitors) and unique experience at the city in their new branding campaign.





## Part 2. Cultural Heritage Tourism

In the second part of interview, the interviewees were asked about cultural heritage tourism in New Orleans. They were asked if they believe that a destination's unique natural and cultural resources attract more MICE travelers to New Orleans and eventually these unique qualities can be more effective to differentiate the destination from its competitors. Also, they were asked to elaborate their thoughts on that New Orleans' cultural heritage resources are beneficial for the destination and the tourism organizations in attracting more MICE events and travelers to the city.

All interviewees strongly believe that New Orleans' cultural heritage resources are assets to the city and make the destination unique and more attractive to travelers. With a great deal of history, the city offers authentic and unique experiences that lead to more visitors. The cultural heritage cannot be replaced as it protects the city's unique qualities, which is the reason people frequently extend their stays in New Orleans beyond their business-related activities. They stress that New Orleans' cultural heritage resources are what makes the city attractive to travelers, including MICE travelers. They believe the city's tourism marketing organization does a good job of promoting the cultural heritage. Some participants noted that MICE travelers may want the MICE events to be in interesting places; thus, the marketing strategy that makes a place seem naturally interesting, including New Orleans, would help attract more MICE visitors. Examples of positive opinions about the attractiveness of cultural heritage resources include:

*"I believe the resurgence of traditional music and culture has differentiated New Orleans in the past five years" (Interviewee 4).*

*"...as time goes on, more and more visitors want to take part in what makes a city unique, rather than the same as other cities" (Interviewee 5).*

*“We serve as an asset to New Orleans tourism organizations, as we directly do what they are trying to market” (Interviewee 5).*

*“...New Orleans is an exciting location for MICE travelers... When people have to travel here for work, they know they are also going to have fun, and experience things they won't experience in Las Vegas, LA, Houston, Atlanta, etc” (Interviewee 8).*

*“...our natural and cultural heritage resources are definitely attractive to MICE travelers” (Interviewee 10).*

There are also concerns for New Orleans as a sustainable heritage tourism destination. There is a growing sense of exploitation among culture bearers with the influx of so many tourists. The proliferation of free entry music clubs on Bourbon and Frenchman Streets for tourists undermines the work of artists trying to sustain themselves. There is a pervasive opinion that simply marketing the city is not enough to assist local cultural heritage activities and institutions. Sustainable cultural economies must put public money to use to support the cultural heritage assets that draw more travelers. Examples of concerns for the destination's cultural heritage tourism include:

*“New Orleans is a unique American city. Everything must be done to protect the city's unique qualities. My fear is that with everyday become a Mardi Gras day that the unique nature of these special seasonal events will be minimized” (Interviewee 9).*

*“The cultural heritage resources represent a vital quality of life necessity for both locals and tourists. More should be done to promote such events” (Interviewee 9).*

*“...I often wonder what programs tourism agencies are doing to assist local heritage and cultural activities and venues” (Interviewee 4).*



This part of cultural heritage tourism of New Orleans is divided into three codes: about New Orleans Heritage, heritage for MICE and heritage for New Orleans. Each code was selected and pasted it into the word cloud generator to visualize the word frequencies. Unique and city show up as the two largest words in the first cloud which is the best descriptions for New Orleans heritage, and other words that are large and significant include cultural, heritage, resources and experiences. The second cloud displaying data on heritage for MICE shows several notable words including unique, cultural, heritage, attract (attractive), travelers and visitors. The last cloud of heritage for New Orleans shows that city, cultural, resources, assets and visitors are notable words. All three word clouds suggest the interviewees believe that the unique cultural heritage resources are the assets for the destination in providing unique experience for visitors including MICE travelers.

Part 2-1. About New Orleans Heritage



Part 2-2. Heritage for MICE



Part 2-3. Heritage for New Orleans



Figure 13. Three Word Clouds for Cultural Heritage Tourism

### Part 3. Collaboration (partnership) to promote both MICE and heritage tourism

In the third part of interview, the interviewees were asked about their collaboration and/or partnership with other organizations. They were asked if they have had partnerships with tourism organizations including convention center, convention visitors bureau, and/or any other tourism-related organizations in New Orleans, and if they believe it is a good idea/opportunity or beneficial for their institutions to collaborate with these organizations to promote cultural heritage tourism in New Orleans. Considering the destination New Orleans, they were asked if they believe that the MICE tourism industry should consider collaborating and partnership with cultural heritage attractions and events to attract more MICE events and increase more MICE travelers, to enhance their travel experience and satisfaction with the destination.

According to the interviews, many cultural heritage institutions have collaborated with the New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau (NOCVB, recently changed its official name, New Orleans & Company) and New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation (NOTMC) in terms of promotion and marketing activities. Some interviewees said that NOCVB and NOTMC are supporters and promoters of local cultural heritage institutions, and they believe that these play a large part in how visitors learn about the city's culture and heritage. Some interviewees indicate that the heritage institutions support NOCVB and NOTMC more, as they provide all the materials these tourism organizations request. Some do not believe that these activities are really helpful for the heritage institutions. A few answers are found that they have operated without collaboration or do not need collaboration with these tourism organizations. Examples of opinions about collaboration include:

*“All tourism-related organizations benefit the museum because they help in spreading the word about it” (Interviewee 2).*

*“We always support the initiatives of the NOCVB is speaking to visiting journalists and others” (Interviewee 3).*

*“We often support tourism development initiatives directly providing content and identity for their campaigns” (Interviewee 4).*

*“...we are regularly included in the NOCVB guide distributed to tourists. We have also advertised in their publications” (Interviewee 7).*

*“We do partner with the NOCVB and NOTMC to promote the museum to visitors. It is absolutely beneficial” (Interviewee 8).*

*“There is a lot of benefit in collaborating with these institutions” (Interviewee 8).*

*“...we are in partnership with the NOCVB...it is beneficial” (Interviewee 10).*

*“While we are open to collaborations, I do not think it is the opportunity our venue needs. We've operated for this long without collaboration” (Interviewee 5).*

*“...our individual culture bearers should have the opportunity to partner with the tourism industry to better contribute to our overall economy” (Interviewee 5).*

Most participants believe that there is a benefit in collaborating with tourism organizations, as well as MICE organizations, in showing that all of these destination organizations are involved in the city and its culture. It is a good opportunity to show the visitors that they are more well-rounded and ingrained in the community. Most of the interviewees welcome opportunities to partner with tourism-related organizations if cultural heritage resources the city has can be better promoted. They think such partnerships are particularly helpful in terms of enriching people's travel experiences and satisfaction with the destination. Some suggest that

these tourism organizations should focus on building more culture and making the city more livable for cultural heritage institutions, rather than focus on attracting more tourists.

This part of collaboration for tourism is divided into three codes: collaboration promotes heritage, collaboration promotes MICE, and collaboration suggestions. Same as earlier two parts, each code was selected and pasted it into the word cloud generator to visualize the word frequencies. City, visitors and partner show up as the largest words in the first cloud which is the best descriptions for collaboration promoting heritage part of city, and other words that are large and significant include collaborate, collaborating, benefit, beneficial, sincere, promote and support, suggest that cultural heritage institutions believe collaborating with other tourism organizations is supportive for their organizations. The second cloud displaying data on collaboration for MICE shows that experience is the most significant word in this code, and several noteworthy words including collaboration, city, always and special, indicate that they believe collaborating with tourism organizations may assist providing special experience for MICE travelers. In the last cloud of collaboration suggestion, culture and cultural show up as the largest words followed by heritage, better, focus and promote. This suggests that the interviewees may recommend the NOCVB and other tourism organizations to focus more on cultural heritage resources of the city to be positioned and promoted as an attractive MICE destination.

Part 3-1. Collaboration promotes Heritage



Part 3-2. Collaboration promotes MICE



Part 3-3. Other collaboration suggestions



Figure 14. Three Word Clouds for Collaboration (partnership)

#### Part 4. New Orleans Tourism Marketing/Branding

In the final part of interview, the interviewees were asked about tourism marketing and branding strategies of New Orleans. They were asked what kinds of essential strategies they may suggest for New Orleans tourism stakeholders to promote the city's destination brand or brand name, especially for MICE travelers who want to experience more of New Orleans' cultural heritage tourism.

Historic Architecture, authentic dining experiences, ubiquitous music and unique cultural celebration and festivals would make a New Orleans visit special. Interviewees recommended that the city should continue to incorporate music, arts, food and culture into its marketing strategies. They find that the brochures and articles the city establishes for visitors list sites related to certain themes (i.e., music, food, writers, architecture, etc.), and they believe these are helpful in getting people to explore the city's cultural heritage sites that are relatively less popular. The Louisiana Department of Travel helps to make visitors more aware of smaller, more local cultural heritage institutions within its broader cultural and geographic context. Some institutions partner with other small art and historical organizations have overlapping missions and goals. In terms of programming, they collaborate with local smaller cultural organizations to develop richer cultural heritage themes. In addition, it is suggested that there is a salient need to engage with MICE organizations to encourage attendees to explore beyond hotels and convention center and onto the streets and into the cultural venues throughout the city, to be ready to experience local culture and heritage. Examples of opinions about tourism marketing and branding strategies of New Orleans include:

*“...emphasize many things using lots of different types of representatives. New Orleans generally uses the same musicians or the same chefs over and over. ...should use people of different races, sexes, ages, etc.” (Interviewee 2).*

*“...engaging with tour to get their attendees out of convention centers and hotels” (Interviewee 4).*

*“...connect directly with culture bearers and build the cultural economy around the individuals who make this place unique” (Interviewee 5).*

*“...to explore lesser known heritage sites” (Interviewee 7).*

The last part of tourism marketing and branding suggestions for New Orleans is divided into three codes: New Orleans heritage resources to be promoted, MICE and heritage recourses to be co-created, and marketing and branding idea to be utilized. Each code was selected and pasted it into the word cloud generator to visualize the word frequencies. City, visitors, cultural and food show up as the largest words in the first cloud which is the best descriptions for New Orleans heritage resources to be promoted for marketing and branding strategies. Other words that are large and significant include music, arts and festivals which suggest that culinary, music, arts and festivals experiences are most significant heritage cultural resources the city should promote for its marketing and branding purpose. Second cloud of MICE and heritage recourses to be co-created shows several notable words including unique, different, strategies, cultural, heritage, promote, peoples and trip. The last cloud of marketing and branding idea include cultural, heritage and institutions as largest, and followed by people, organizations, collaborating, support and culture. This may suggest that the executives of cultural heritage institutions consider that collaborating is the most important marketing and branding strategy as they support the city’s cultural and heritage resources via stakeholders’ collaboration.



Part 4-1. New Orleans Heritage resources



Part 4-2. MICE-Heritage



Part 4-3. Marketing/Branding Idea



Figure 15. Three Word Clouds for New Orleans Tourism Marketing/Branding

### ***Interview Data Summary***

The interview analysis demonstrates that New Orleans is considered a leading destination with authentic history, plenty of culinary, musical and festival experiences, and unique cultural heritage celebrations. The city makes marketing efforts to attract more business events, and people visit the city for a special experience. Even though heritage professionals shared both positive and negative perspectives about the new branding campaign, they have more positive views of it. The destination brand helps to attract visitors to the city and draws people to its cultural institutions, which is beneficial for local heritage institutions because the marketing effort celebrates the city's rich culture. They also believe that this branding does contribute to MICE visitors' overall satisfaction.

It is obvious that cultural heritage resources are important assets for New Orleans and make the destination unique and more attractive to MICE travelers. With a great deal of history, the city offers authentic and unique experiences that lead to more visitors. The cultural heritage maintains the city's unique qualities, and people frequently extend their stays in their MICE destination for this reason.

It was confirmed that there are benefits for heritage institutions in collaborating with tourism and MICE organizations, and most of them welcome opportunities to partner with tourism-related organizations if cultural heritage resources the city has can be better promoted. Partnerships will be helpful enriching visitors' travel experiences and satisfaction with the destination. Tourism organizations should focus on building more culture and making the city more livable for cultural heritage institutions, rather than focusing on attracting more tourists. Interview participants for this research recommended that the city should continue to incorporate music, arts, food and culture into its marketing strategies.

## DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This research examines the idea of destination branding and integrates MICE travelers' brand experience into the destination-branding framework. By applying local cultural heritage institutions' perspectives, as well as travelers' evaluations, this study advances knowledge about co-creation and sense of destination branding. This research project focuses on developing and testing a theoretical framework of destination branding, especially targeting MICE travelers in a cultural heritage tourism destination. This adds to the growing literature on the destination branding context.

As noted by local heritage professionals, cultural heritage resources are assets that make the destination unique and more attractive to MICE travelers. Cultural heritage institutions, in collaborating with tourism and MICE organizations to better promote destination's cultural heritage resources, will enrich MICE travelers' travel experience and potentially contribute to them extending their stays. Co-created destination branding supports attracting more MICE events and visitors to the destination, benefits local cultural heritage organizations, and eventually will improve MICE travelers' overall satisfaction with the destination.

Few studies in the tourism literature have simultaneously examined the structural relationships among destination brand, destination brand awareness, destination brand experience, destination brand personality and destination brand equity in either MICE or business tourism, or in the cultural heritage context. For this purpose, an empirical examination was conducted in a destination well known for both MICE tourism and cultural heritage tourism, where destination branding is necessary to be positioned competitively. In particular, previous studies have overlooked exploring the destination brand relationships with destination experience, as well as with specific tourism destinations such as MICE and cultural heritage

tourism destinations. Thus, it is critical to identify the destination brand strategy and propose an appropriate destination brand framework. As confirmed by MICE attendees' evaluations from the case study, this extends the literature on destination brand, destination brand awareness, destination brand experience, destination brand personality, and destination brand equity.

## **Theoretical Contributions**

### ***Creative MICE Tourism Destination Branding Model (CMDBM)***

Many destinations make efforts to improve their destination brands to differentiate their destinations from competitors, and to provide a unique value, attract more visitors and encourage repeat visitation, longer stays and positive word of mouth (Blain et al., 2005; Pike, 2015).

Destination marketers continually advance branding efforts such as designing logos, developing slogans, publishing brochures, creating websites, and organizing events (Chekalina, Fuchs & Lexhagen, 2018). In a tourism destination context, as indicated earlier, numerous studies have applied the concept of customer-based brand equity (CBBE) theory by linking destination brand equity assessment and the service nature of tourism (Boo et al., 2009; Chekalina et al., 2018; Dedeoğlu et al., 2019; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Pike, 2015; Yang et al., 2015). As they transfer the conceptualization and measurement approaches developed for product brands (Christodoulides & De Chernatony 2010), a lack of theoretical discussion are often pointed out, especially regarding model dimensions and measurement scales applied in tourism as a service brand (Chekalina et al., 2018).

This research contributes to the development of knowledge on marketing/branding to a tourism destination context. To be specific, this study focuses on the business tourism sector and

creates an innovative branding model of a MICE destination. The model is based on a thorough review of the literature and was tested in one of the leading MICE destinations in the United States—New Orleans, with data derived from the NRPA annual conference attendees in 2017.

In this study, Keller's (2003) customer-based brand equity pyramid and Gnoth's (2007) conceptualization of destination brand are utilized to associate findings from previous destination branding studies. This approach is consistent with Garcia et al.'s (2012) destination branding framework. To propose Creative MICE Tourism Destination Branding Model (CMDDBM) underpinned by García et al.'s (2012) destination brand framework to examine destination branding in the context of MICE tourism, the study takes into account the destination brand experience (DBExp). The study proposes that the core component of the CMDDBM is about MICE travelers' evaluations of the destination capacity to transform its cultural heritage resources into destination brand equity. Finally, the study suggests integrating the concept of brand experience of MICE destination travel into Garcia's model. Results from a Structural Equation Modeling test confirm the classified structure and demonstrate reliability and empirical robustness of the proposed CMDDBM. The influence of destination brand and brand awareness on the evaluation of the destination brand experience was hypothesized, which, in turn affects destination brand personality and equity. The explanatory power of the CMDDBM model is high and correlations for five destination branding dimensions exceeded the value of 0.50 for the samples.

The findings of this research are compatible with previous studies on the customer-based brand equity (CBBE) model and destination branding pyramid (Dedeoğlu et al., 2019; Veasna, Wu & Huang, 2013; Yang et al., 2015). It confirms the multidimensional nature of the tourism destination, especially in accordance with the MICE destination brand model, integrating

concepts of destination brand (DB), destination brand awareness (DBA), destination brand experience (DBExp), destination brand personality (DBP) and destination brand equity (DBE), as proposed in CMDBM constructs. Examining the hypothesized relational structure within the CMDBM model confirms previous findings regarding relationships between destination brand constructs fully or partially. The results are in line with studies demonstrating that general judgments that DB and DBA positively influence DBP and DBE. The confirmation of the hypothesis which DBExp has positive relations with other destination brand dimensions is an important finding that has not been previously discussed in the literature. Also, specific tourism destinations and/or resources such as cultural heritage resources at a MICE tourism destination have not been studied before.

Figure 16 illustrates the modified CMDBM based on the findings of this study. Compared to the previously proposed CMDBM, as the two arrows indicate, this modified conceptualization suggests the significance of the destination brand experience that is reinforced by local cultural heritage institutions' support with sufficient cultural heritage attractions and experiences to be offered for MICE attendees. Destination management organizations or convention and visitors bureaus representing the host destination as a stakeholder group of organizing MICE events is pulled out of the actual figure with five destination branding dimensions. It indicates that the host destination's MICE organizing stakeholder should take the most important roles in initiating and organizing marketing and branding activities in order to position the destination as an attractive one for MICE visitors. The four straight lines between stakeholder groups suggest that sustainable relationships and collaboration must be developed to support co-creation and synergies between stakeholders in MICE destination branding exercises.

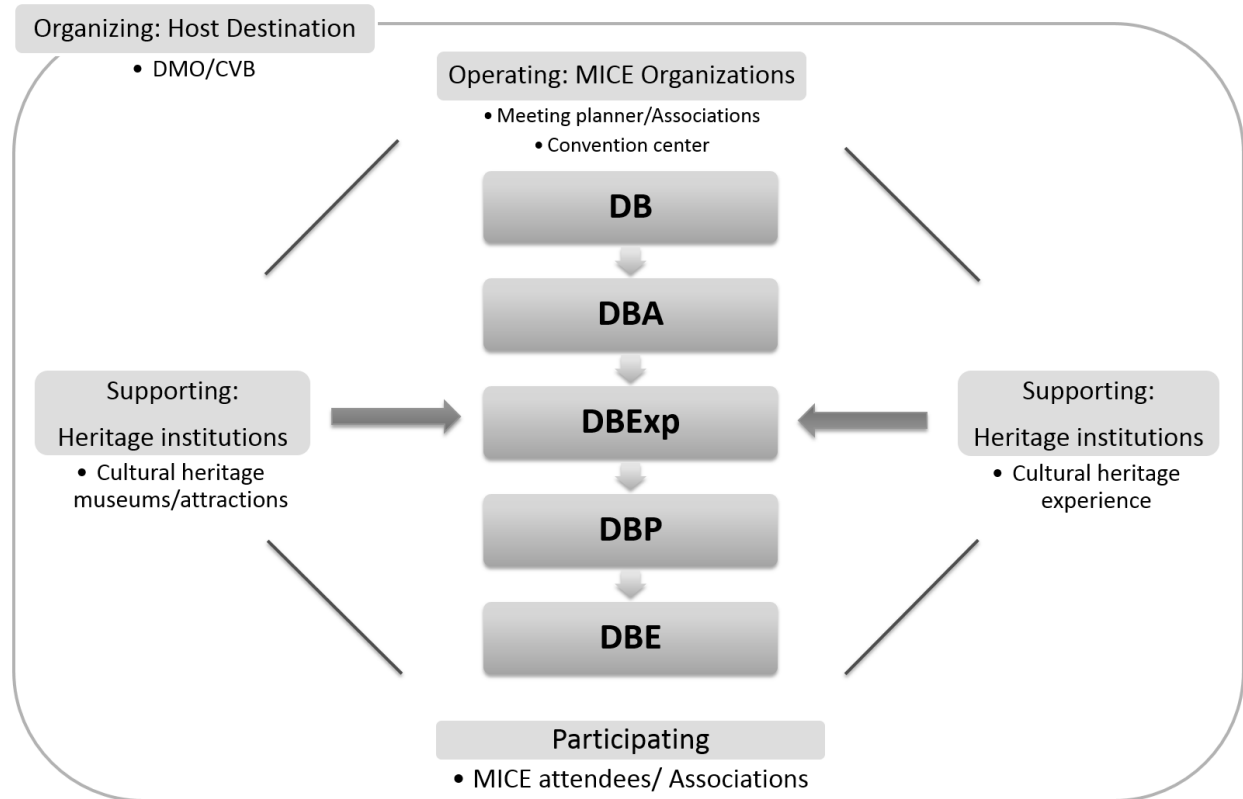


Figure 16. Modified CMDDBM, based on the Findings of the Research

### ***Co-creation with Local Cultural Heritage Institutions***

This study examined the implications of how cultural heritage tourism experiences at a MICE destination can actually be more attractive when engaging in MICE destination branding. In doing so, the study adopts marketing and branding perspectives to approach the destination branding dimensions. The theoretical representation of destination branding dimensions is mostly based on the previous marketing and branding literatures that have been investigated without bringing destination brand experience into a theoretical framework, especially for specific tourism destinations such as a MICE tourism or cultural heritage tourism destination.

The items of destination brand experience are derived from previous studies on brand experience and destination brand experience (Barnes et al., 2014; Brakus et al., 2009) and have been adopted to apply for cultural heritage tourism in a MICE destination. To differentiate the destination branding from general destination marketing contexts, this study utilized an unique approach with the addition of cultural heritage resources.

The study is based on destination branding and stakeholders' collaboration literature for cultural heritage tourism experiences in MICE destinations. As Barnes et al. (2014) indicate, the destination brand experience is a complex concept and is likely to vary according to the specific destination. Thus, careful management is recommended to provide different types of brand experiences for diverse destinations. By incorporating destination branding experiences in the theoretical framework for MICE tourism with cultural heritage assets, more thorough examinations of destination branding relationships were investigated, which enriched the proposed and modified CMDDBM.

As Murphy, Pritchard, and Smith (2000, p. 44) note, a tourism destination is "an amalgam of individual products and experience opportunities that combine to form a total experience of the area visited." Once tourism experiences are positioned in tourists' minds, it can be concluded that destinations and tourists co-create places (Chekalina et al., 2018). Destinations co-create tourism experiences by offering the functional, emotional and symbolic value of tourists' visit (Gnoth, 2007). Also, by consuming the product, service and natural and cultural heritage resources at the destination, tourists experience the destination and evaluate the value of their experience (Vargo & Lusch, 2004; Moeller, 2010). Tourism experiences are co-created as explored; thus, it is significant to follow the experiential path of visitors and to provide the experiential materials needed for them to co-create the destination brand experience (Cabiddu,



Lui & Piccoli, 2013). By adopting and applying destination brand experiences in the destination branding model, this study significantly verifies the co-created concept with tourist' experience at the destination.

Because different stakeholders may have different interests and define their role in different ways, Marzano and Scott (2009) emphasize that a destination brand is considered the conclusion of the collaboration in terms of extremely complex multi-stakeholder managerial perspectives. Yet, most of the literature has been focused on external stakeholders or customers only (Park & Petrick, 2006). García et al. (2012) highlight that many studies in destination branding do not involve local communities as stakeholders. Freire (2009) and Marzano and Scott (2009) highlight the risks of overlooking local communities when developing the destination brand identity. In this regard, García et al. (2012) argue the risks of a traditional strategy that is focused only on visitors but overlooks the objectives of local people and entrepreneurs.

Buhalis (2000) stresses that marketing destinations should balance the strategic objectives of all stakeholders, as well the sustainability of local resources. It is obvious that cultural heritage resources are a significant asset for destinations and tourism suppliers. As such, the sustainability of these resources is an important function for tourism marketing (Buhalis, 2000). As Morgan et al. (2004) observed, the long-term sustainability of a destination brand is an essential function for destination branding to successfully appeal to the target market and to efficiently deliver the brand values. This ability of the brand is a function of how a destination brand is able to incorporate the different interests of the diverse stakeholders involved in the branding process (Morgan et al., 2004). García et al. (2012) claim that a conceptualization of the brand value based on the stakeholders is more suitable than the usual configuration based only on the visitor, as emphasizing the necessary to work coordinately on destination branding dimensions with

visitors and local community. In this regard, Campelo et al. (2014) indicate that a destination branding activity is significantly influenced by an appreciation of the sense of place for people who belong and stress that the importance of understanding sense of place and positioning the local community at the center of a branding strategy for the development of an effective destination brand. Sense of place is based on, and creates the uniqueness of, place experience. Destination branding strategies must recognize the cultural characteristics of the place, understanding the local people (Campelo et al., 2014; Ryan, 2002).

The co-creation approach with local community as well as tourists in building destination branding process (Kim, Stepchenkova & Babalou, 2018) is significantly discussed in this study. The active involvement of creative local producers, such as local cultural heritage institutions, in the co-creation, as they develop and provide a wide range of unique experiential offerings to business travelers including MICE attendees, the cultural social and economic potential of destination can be enhanced (Richards, 2011). MICE tourism has become a significant development tool for local economies. An effective destination brand is one way MICE stakeholders can work together to design and market MICE tourism. The efforts need to focus on producing sustainable benefits for the destination such as co-creation opportunities between stakeholders including cultural heritage stewards as well as visitors, economic benefits for local people, community empowerment, and enhancement of local pride. In the host destination, New Orleans, the cultural resources are recognized as essential assets of the city, and the destination tourism suppliers believe that it would be a critical reason MICE event attendees may extend their stay to partake of the city's heritage offerings. Rather than focusing only on attracting more tourists to the city, developing and implementing more livable and sustainable marketing/branding strategies through co-created practices especially with local cultural heritage

institutions will enrich business travelers' destination experiences and satisfaction with the destination. This is a crucial consideration for the host destination.

## **Managerial Implications**

### ***MICE Travelers as Cultural Tourists***

According to McKercher and du Cros (2003), business travelers tend to be grouped in the incidental and casual cultural tourist segments, which is expected given their trip purpose, either having low or modest importance of cultural tourism in their decision making to visit a destination. In this regard, MICE travelers can be considered either incidental or casual cultural tourists in the sense that cultural tourism plays no or a limited role in their decision making for MICE events attendance. These travelers will participate in cultural heritage activities at the MICE destination in a shallow manner. However, when the opportunities of cultural heritage experiences are offered to these groups of people at MICE destinations, it is notable that these people may show their potential power to move to serendipitous cultural tourist group. Aggressive experiential marketing activities especially targeting these groups would be expected to make these people end up with memorable cultural heritage experiences at the MICE destination.

Further, if destination branding strategies are well performed, especially with cultural heritage resources, it would be expected that these two groups of people (either in incidental or casual cultural tourists) can be move to even purposeful cultural tourists group. As mentioned already, according to McKercher and du Cros (2003), most MICE visitors are considered incidental or casual cultural tourists. Nevertheless, on the basis of this research study, if cultural

heritage tourism opportunities can play as a significant motive to attend MICE events for them in their decision making phase, it can be concluded that these people are purposeful cultural tourists, and the Co-created MICE Destination Branding is expected to be successfully and effectively practiced and performed.

In this regard, the purpose of CBDBM for MICE destinations to operate should be twofold: 1) make incidental or casual cultural tourist into serendipitous cultural tourists, as the destination offer plenty of opportunities for cultural heritage experiences for MICE attendees, while they are already in the destination, or 2) make incidental or casual tourists into purposeful cultural tourists, as the destination practice Destination Branding strategy collaborating with local cultural heritage institutions, to increase potential MICE attendees' importance of cultural motives when they decide to attend the MICE events, eventually to engage more of local cultural heritage experiences and attractions.

The sensible marketing strategy that can stimulate visitors' pursuit of their desires for a destination experience, collaborating with the conference association, meeting planners, and/or convention center for their MICE events, would be the case of the first practice, such as having a reception party for a MICE event at the local museum. The forceful marketing strategy that can increase potential MICE attendees' interest in the destination experience in their decision making about whether or not to attend a MICE event can be the case of the second practice, such as introducing the specially created tour program of local cultural heritage institutions only for the specific MICE event attendees. Figure 17 illustrates McKercher's (2002) the cultural tourist typology; the two arrows indicate the suggested marketing practices for MICE travelers, grounded on the findings of this research.

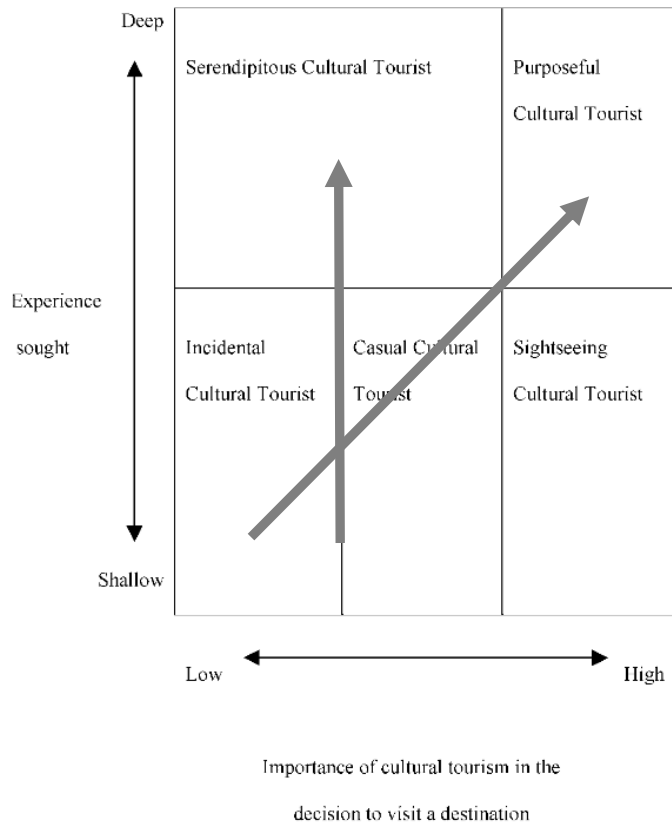


Figure 17. Cultural Tourist Typology by McKercher (2002) and Suggested Marketing Practices for MICE Visitors

### ***Destination Brand Experience and Affective Experience***

Because of its ability to assess consumer behavior more holistically, destination brand experience (DBExp) has gained considerable attention in marketing research (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Smith & Wheeler, 2002). Recently, Kumar and Kaushik (2018) examine the role of DBExp by assessing the holistic and unified view of tourism destinations. Their study offers some implications for destinations in terms of marketing, related to building DBP and DBE among tourists using DBExp. Kumar and Kaushik (2018) indicate that the different instruments

of brand experience capture the principle of actual tourists' interactions with several destination stimuli (Kumar & Kaushik, 2018). It has been noted that a destination brand, to be effective and successful, needs to promise a tourist a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination (Barnes et al., 2014). According to Barnes et al. (2014), destination brand experience is still a new idea that has not been applied to tourism research broadly. It can be suggested that destination brand experience (DBExp) may support DMOs' efforts by assessing the performance of a destination in a holistic and comprehensive manner. As DBExp captures the full range of visitors' destination experiences, it may act as a practical symbol (Kumar & Kaushik, 2018). Still, only a handful of studies in the context of tourism destinations have considered the character of brand experience in evaluating branding strategy (Barnes et al., 2014).

By considering and finally incorporating destination branding experience in the current theoretical branding framework, enhanced destination branding model is developed, specifically focused on business tourism context. Especially, by co-creating with cultural heritage assets of the destination, branding experience at the MICE tourism destination can be advanced to provide rich and authentic cultural experience for MICE travelers. Also, as the qualitative portion of the research indicates, concrete destination branding strategy with cultural heritage resources intensely satisfies travelers' affective experience including feeling (feeling welcome and/or relaxed), and sentiment/emotion (love of the cultural/heritage surroundings). Veasna et al. (2013) indicate that a tourist should have more satisfaction from the destination experience if a person has more emotional attachment to a destination. In addition, Barnes et al. (2014) reveal that sensory DBExp is dominant and followed by affective DBExp in importance. Intellectual DBExp or behavioral DBExp are not significant in their studies and they conclude that this is

likely to be due to the type of destination. They indicate that affective brand experience is clearly important and greatest trigger for visitor outcomes in the case of art and cultural heritage tourism destinations. Prayag, Hosany, Muskat, and Del Chiappa (2017) empirically tests an integrative model linking tourists' emotional experiences (considered to be an affective experience in this study), perceived overall image (considered to be DBP in this study), satisfaction, and intention to recommend (considered to be DBE in this study). Even though some of their hypotheses are rejected, which are different from this research, its conclusion confirms the results of this research. It demonstrates that emotional experiences of tourists perform as antecedents of perceived overall image and satisfaction evaluations. Additionally, overall image has a positive effect on tourist satisfaction and intention to recommend, which is compatible with the result of this study.

In terms of destination marketing, branding is considered an extremely important point. In today's competitive marketplace, as indicated earlier, only a few destinations that perform attractive and distinctive marketing practices with their branding strategy can be competitive and positioned in tourists' mind as the best destination for tourism (Anholt, 2004; Hankinson 2004; Pike, 2015). Successful destination branding strategies are considered to advance a social and emotional identity that can improve the attractiveness of the destination for visitors through building emotional links with travelers (Khalil & Ibrahim, 2015). Morgan et al. (2004) emphasize that 'the battle for consumers in tomorrow's destination market place will be fought not over price but over hearts and minds' (p. 61). In destination branding, development of emotional relationships with travelers is considered a fundamental role (Barnes et al., 2014). Destination managers are recommended to focus on emotional relationship with travelers in their branding strategies, as they encourage co-created nature of distinctive destination experiences.

## **Limitation of the Results and Future Research**

It is important to understand the limitations of the research and applicability of the results. As identified, this research studied a specific case of the 2018 NRPA annual conference in New Orleans. One limitation here, as indicated in the introduction, is that this study took place at a single major event/conference at a single location rather than surveying a wider range of events at a wider range of destinations. Thus, it was expected that the results offered data and findings that pertain to the specific case of the NRPA conference and its location in New Orleans. As well, as per the character of this designated MICE event—the NRPA annual conference—the research is limited in terms of a global perspective in destination branding. For this particular event, only two percent of survey respondents were not from the USA, which is not enough data with which to analyze the global perspective and offer global conclusions. Future research needs to be conducted for international MICE events at renowned cultural heritage tourism destinations where not only residents consider attending but many foreign visitors may also consider attending. Nevertheless, despite the limited organizational and geographical scope of this study, it does provide additional empirical material and contributes to the conceptual development of co-created experiences in destination branding.

In terms of this case study with its new branding campaign highlighted in this research, as stated in the introduction, another limitation is that participants' perceptions of a destination brand may be biased since they are not familiar with the new promotional activities of the destination. The researcher made special efforts to ensure that participants had a better understanding of the concept of a destination brand, not a phrase or expression as it is. Survey participants' perceptions of the destination brand were cautiously managed in this manner. However, the researcher received some comments that the new promotional phrase the case



study used is not adequate to represent the destination New Orleans or to make it attractive. One year later when the researcher tried to see if the promotional activities were successfully marketed at the destination, it was hard to find any further information other than the DMO's official website. It may be evaluated as an example of a marketing catchphrase that fails to appropriately utilize the authentic and unique cultural and heritage resources the destination has to offer.

Another limitation of this study was the limited collaboration with actual DMOs of the destination. The host destination's official DMO contributed to this research project by providing full information of the new brand promotion and campaign. Due to DMO's sales and marketing confidentiality, the agency was unable to participate in the interview portion of this study. The proposed and then revised CMDBM should enable DMOs to better understand travelers' brand perceptions in destination branding co-creation processes. Because DMOs are a main stakeholder group that can benefit from the findings and implications of this destination branding study, future research on MICE destination branding should involve more active participation and contributions by the local DMOs.

This study focuses on cultural heritage resources at a MICE tourism destination to develop co-created destination branding. To increase the generalizability of the findings for CMDBM, the author suggests retesting the model with different MICE destinations in different heritage contexts. Future research should also consider different tourism resources beyond cultural heritage for advancing CMDBM, or different markets for designing distinctive co-created destination branding models.

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APPENDIX A

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES

<Survey Questionnaires>



## **Destination Branding in Creative MICE Tourism (Meetings, Incentives, Convention or Conference, and Exhibitions)**

Thank you for participating in this study. I would like to understand conference attendees' experiences and perceptions of their business travel in destinations known for their heritage assets. You have to be at least 18 years old to participate. Your participation is completely voluntary and confidential, and you are free to withdraw from the survey at any time. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Your responses are expected to provide a practical understanding for stakeholders and add to existing scholarship on the subject. The information you offer will be used for academic research only and will not result in any penalty or negative consequences. If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Eunhye Grace Kim, PhD candidate ([eunhye.kim@asu.edu](mailto:eunhye.kim@asu.edu)), Dr. Deepak Chhabra, Associate Professor, ([deepak.chhabra@asu.edu](mailto:deepak.chhabra@asu.edu)) in the School of Community Resources & Development, Arizona State University.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Arizona State University Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788.

Return of the completed questionnaire will be considered your consent to participate.

Thank you so much for your kind help and support.

**I. Destination experience**

1. Is this your first time to New Orleans?  Yes  No  
 If no, what was your main purpose of the previous trip to New Orleans?  
 Business  Pleasure/Personal
2. Is the NRPA conference your main reason for visiting New Orleans?  Yes  No
3. What is your primary reason for attending the NRPA conference? (Please check one)  
 Destination attractiveness  Importance of the conference itself  Networking
4. What source did you use to obtain information about New Orleans, the destination you visit for conference? (Please check all that apply)  
 My own experience  Newspaper or Magazine  Radio or TV  
 Online search engine  Social networking sites  Word-of-mouth  
 Destination's Convention Visitors Bureau/tourism website  Conference materials  
 Others: (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
5. Who is traveling with you? (Please indicate number of people you are traveling with)  
 I am traveling alone  Family members (\_\_\_ppl)  Friends (\_\_\_ppl)  
 Colleagues (\_\_\_ppl)  Others: (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_(\_\_\_ppl)
6. Do you plan to add **extra days** to visit New Orleans?  Yes  No  
 If yes, how many **extra days** will you add to your business trip?  
 Extra 1 day  Extra 2 days  Extra 3 days  Extra 4 days  Extra 5 days or more
7. Is your trip funded by your employer or an organization you serve?  
 Fully, yes  Partially, yes  Not at all  
 If yes, will the extra days also be covered by your employer or the organization?  
 Fully, yes  Partially, yes  Not at all  No extra days
8. Please indicate **how important** each of these was in your decision to visit New Orleans.  
 (Please check one for each)

	Not at all important					Extremely important
	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>Attend the conference</b>	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>Network at the conference</b>	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>Experience a new place</b>	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>Enjoy cultural/heritage activities</b>	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>Enjoy outdoor activities</b>	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>Spend time with family or friends</b>	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>Take time off from work</b>	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>Relieve stress</b>	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>Enjoy food</b>	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>Weather</b>	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>Others: (Please specify) _____</b>	1	2	3	4	5	

9. Please rate your **interest** in the following New Orleans attractions and your **priority** to visit/enjoy these. (Please check one for each section, interest & priority)

Not interesting at all					Extremely interesting	Cultural/Heritage resources	Not a priority			Essential priority	
1	2	3	4	5		<b>National World War II Museum</b>	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5		<b>French Quarter</b> (Bourbon Street)	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5		<b>Jazz National Historical Park</b>	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5		<b>Preservation Hall</b>	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5		<b>Jackson Square/ St. Louis Cathedral/ Cabildo</b>	1	2	3	4	5
Not interesting at all					Extremely interesting	Cultural/Heritage resources	Not a priority			Essential priority	
1	2	3	4	5		<b>Culinary experience</b> (Restaurants, food trucks, farmers markets)	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5		<b>Musical experience</b> (Concerts, music events)	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5		<b>Festival experience</b> (Local food, culture, music festivals)	1	2	3	4	5

## II. Destination Branding

Destination branding refers to a marketing activity which makes the destination more distinctive and attractive. Recently New Orleans has launched a new branding campaign “**One Time in New Orleans**” to promote its rich heritage and authentic culture. In this section, please consider “**One Time in New Orleans**” as a destination brand for “New Orleans” with strong cultural/heritage resources and image.

(**One Time in New Orleans** = The destination New Orleans w/ strong heritage image)

### 1. <The Brand>

<b>“One Time in New Orleans”</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>					<b>Strongly agree</b>
Is it <b>appealing</b> to you?	1	2	3	4	5	
Is it <b>attractive</b> to you?	1	2	3	4	5	
Is it <b>interesting</b> to you?	1	2	3	4	5	



2. <Brand Awareness>

<i>“One Time in New Orleans”</i>	Strongly disagree			Strongly agree	
As a conference destination, it <b>comes to my mind</b> when I think of heritage tourism.	1	2	3	4	5
It is <b>easy to recognize</b> among other heritage destinations.	1	2	3	4	5
It has the ability to <b>identify the place</b> as a heritage destination.	1	2	3	4	5

3. <Brand Experience>

<i>“One Time in New Orleans”</i>	Extremely dissatisfied			Extremely satisfied	
It satisfies my <b>sensory experience</b> :					
- <b>Visual</b> (image of its heritage) experience	1	2	3	4	5
- <b>Aural</b> (music) experience	1	2	3	4	5
- <b>Olfactory</b> (smell of environment) experience	1	2	3	4	5
- <b>Gustatory</b> (culinary) experience	1	2	3	4	5
- <b>Tactile</b> (feeling of touch) experience	1	2	3	4	5
It satisfies my <b>affective experience</b> :					
- <b>Feeling (feeling welcome and/or relaxed)</b>	1	2	3	4	5
- <b>Sentiment/emotion</b> (love of the cultural/heritage surroundings)	1	2	3	4	5
It satisfies my <b>behavioral experience</b> :					
- <b>Physical action/bodily experience &amp; behavior</b> (e.g. experiencing heritage trail, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
It satisfies my <b>intellectual experience</b> :					
- <b>Thought/curiosity/problem-solving</b> (e.g. museum exhibition, economical souvenir purchase, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5

4. <Brand Personality>

<i>“One Time in New Orleans”</i>	Strongly disagree			Strongly agree	
It is a <b>credible</b> brand for me.	1	2	3	4	5
It is a <b>reliable</b> brand for me.	1	2	3	4	5
It suggests <b>pleasant sensations</b> of the heritage destination.	1	2	3	4	5
It indicates <b>good value</b> for money.	1	2	3	4	5
There are reasons to experience it <b>over competitors</b> (other conference destinations).	1	2	3	4	5

5. <Brand Equity>

<i>“One Time in New Orleans”</i>	Strongly disagree			Strongly agree	
	1	2	3	4	5
It <b>encourages</b> me to visit the destination.	1	2	3	4	5
In comparison to other alternative conference destinations, it identifies a <b>better-quality</b> destination.	1	2	3	4	5
I am <b>satisfied</b> with it during my conference experience here.	1	2	3	4	5
I would like to <b>experience it again</b> in a future opportunity.	1	2	3	4	5
I would <b>recommend</b> the positive aspects of it to other people.	1	2	3	4	5

**III. Socio-Demographic Characteristics**

1. What is your gender?  Male  Female
2. What is your age?  18-29 years old  30-39 years old  40-49 years old  
 50-59 years old  60-69 years old  70 years or older
3. What is the highest level of education you have completed?  
 Some high school  High school graduate  Some college  
 Technical school or Associate’s degree  Bachelor’s Degree  
 Master’s Degree  Doctorate or equivalent
4. What is your annual household income?  
 Less than \$24,999  \$25,000 - \$49,999  \$50,000 - \$74,999  
 \$75,000 - \$99,999  \$100,000 - \$149,999  \$150,000 or more
5. What is your marital status?  
 Single (no children)  Married or in a long term relationship (no children)  
 Single (with children)  Married or in a long term relationship (with children)
6. Are you currently\_\_\_?  Employed  Unemployed  Retired  
 Student  Full-time homemaker  Others: (Please specify)\_\_\_\_\_
7. Please indicate the state (or the country, if you are from out of the U.S.) you live in.  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your participation.  
 Your answers will be very helpful.

If you have any questions, please contact:

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ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

APPENDIX B

INTRO LETTER AND STUDY SUMMARY FOR  
NEW ORLEANS HERITAGE INSTITUTIONS

<Intro letter and study summary for New Orleans Heritage Institutions>

March 28, 2018

To whom it may concern:

I am Grace Kim, a PhD candidate in the School of Community Resources and Development at Arizona State University. I am doing my dissertation research on the topic of "Destination Branding in Creative MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Convention or conference and Exhibitions) Tourism." My proposal aims to examine cultural heritage offerings in MICE destinations to see how MICE tourism may depend on co-created products of a heritage nature to enhance the appeal of a destination.

The NRPA(National Recreation and Parks Association)'s 2017 annual conference in New Orleans was an ideal setting for this research, and NRPA had agreed to facilitate and partner with this project. The survey data collection for this study was completed at the conference, which was held at the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center in September.

We hope to examine New Orleans as a successful combined MICE and heritage destination and would appreciate the opportunity to collaborate with New Orleans' tourism leaders to understand better the complementary relationships between heritage and MICE tourism in a desirable destination.

The results of my research will benefit New Orleans in a variety of ways, not least of which will be the provision of valuable data and insight into the mutually beneficial relationships between MICE and heritage tourism.

The practical summary and study proposal provide details about the study and what our relationship will entail, as well as what you can expect from the outcomes of this research. Please see the enclosed for your reference.

If you have any questions regarding this project or need further clarification, please contact me at [Eunhye.Kim@asu.edu](mailto:Eunhye.Kim@asu.edu) or 480-717-0763. Also, the co-chairs of my dissertation are Dr. Deepak Chhabra ([Deepak.Chhabra@asu.edu](mailto:Deepak.Chhabra@asu.edu)) and Dr. Dallen J. Timothy ([dtimothy@asu.edu](mailto:dtimothy@asu.edu)), both of whom would be happy to discuss any questions or concerns you might have.

I look forward to collaborating with you and look forward to sharing the results of this study.

Sincerely,



**Eunhye Grace Kim, MBA**

PhD Candidate, School of Community Resources & Development  
College of Public Service & Community Solutions, Arizona State University  
Tel: 480-717-0763/ Fax: 602-496-0953/ E-mail: [Eunhye.Kim@asu.edu](mailto:Eunhye.Kim@asu.edu)  
Enclosure: Practical summary & Study proposal

## **PRACTICAL SUMMARY**

This study will develop a Creative MICE Tourism Destination Branding Model (CMDDBM). It focuses specifically on cultural heritage attractions in a MICE destination to argue that MICE consumers may appreciate and enjoy the destination and have more satisfying experiences if they are able to appreciate the destination's heritage. MICE tourism can be enhanced through co-created offerings by adding creative value to MICE tourism experiences. The study argues for co-creation and synergies between MICE and heritage resources in a popular business destination. The proposed CMDDBM framework aims to help determine how a destination can develop a co-created MICE brand through collaboration with key stakeholders. Four different stakeholder groups are being considered: Host destination (City of New Orleans and/or New Orleans tourism organizations), MICE organizations (NRPA and New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center), heritage institutions (tentative) and MICE visitors (NRPA Annual Conference attendees).

This study adopts both qualitative and quantitative research designs. The qualitative data will be acquired through interviews with relevant stakeholders and content analysis of the destination's marketing activities. The purpose of the qualitative portion is to analyze the use of destination branding strategies by stakeholders to understand existing and potential synergies with heritage institutions. The quantitative portion will measure MICE attendees' perceptions of the creative value of enhancing MICE destinations with cultural heritage appeal. Conference attendees' responses are expected to provide a practical understanding for stakeholders.

Since increasing attendance is considered one of the key indicators of successful meetings for associations, associations are forced to develop the best price-valued package in the market. This study will suggest how MICE stakeholders can communicate and interact with each other to achieve success in destination branding. If CMDDBM is effective in enhancing the brand value for visitors and the social and economic wellbeing of both association and the destination, then providing the brand experiences for the association members would demonstrate a successful tourism experience. Also, it will explore ways in which stakeholders can develop strategies for destination branding using other tourism resources beyond the MICE product that function to support MICE tourism. By using a creative destination branding framework, this study aims to suggest how a destination can effectively make use of both MICE services and heritage attractions to better meet potential attendees' other touristic interests and cultural values.

At the end of the proposed project, an executive summary report (with tables of data) would be created for the designated stakeholders and presented in detail. By collaborating with a PhD Candidate from an academic institution, such as the ASU, stakeholders will benefit from the findings of this study, which will provide valuable data and insight into the mutually beneficial relationships between MICE and heritage tourism.

## **RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

### **Introduction**

This study will develop a Creative MICE Tourism Destination Branding Model (CMDDBM). It focuses specifically on cultural heritage attractions in a MICE destination to argue that MICE consumers may appreciate and enjoy the destination and have more satisfying experiences if they are able to appreciate the destination's heritage. The complementary relationships between MICE tourism and heritage tourism lie at the core of this study. MICE tourism can be enhanced through co-created offerings by adding creative value to MICE tourism experiences.

Creative tourism is one approach to innovative tourism that draws on existing and latent synergies. The study argues for co-creation and synergies between MICE and heritage resources in a popular business destination. Previous research suggests that cultural heritage attractions and events can be valuable potential collaborative partners. Many destinations consider MICE events an image maker in modern tourism, because of MICE's lucrative benefits and the visibility it brings to the locale. MICE tourism, with its strong economic power, has the potential to improve local and national brand significance, and so does heritage.

### **Research Problem & Purpose**

Due to growing competition among destinations, destination branding has become a strategic marketing tool worldwide. The proposed CMDDBM framework—the main outcome of this study—aims to help determine how a destination can develop a creative MICE brand through collaboration with key stakeholders and in conjunction with other tourism sectors. A conceptual model of creative MICE destination branding will be developed and tested with different stakeholders in a MICE destination that also has a strong cultural/heritage presence.

Four different stakeholder groups are being considered:

- 1) Host destination (The City): Identify the potential to be a successful MICE destination and how the destination utilizes branding strategies to promote MICE tourism by taking advantage of the region's cultural/heritage assets
- 2) MICE organizations (Association, meeting planner, and convention center) &
- 3) Heritage institutions: Provide insights on how they collaborate, if they do, to strategize destination branding
- 4) MICE visitors: Examine the value and effectiveness of destination branding and MICE tourism experiences by surveying visitors

### **Research Methods**

This study adopts both qualitative and quantitative research designs to explore the destination brand strategy. The qualitative data will be acquired through interviews with relevant stakeholders and content analysis of the destination's marketing activities. The purpose of the qualitative portion is to analyze the use of destination branding strategies by stakeholders including destination managers and MICE organizations to understand existing and potential synergies with heritage institutions (e.g. museums, historic sites, cultural events). The qualitative portion of the study will contribute to the development of a survey questionnaire to be administered for the subsequent quantitative part of the research. The quantitative portion will examine the destination branding strategy to determine its effectiveness and

degree of collaboration as a way of understanding the links between stakeholders. It will also attempt to measure MICE visitors' perceptions of the creative value of enhancing MICE destinations with cultural heritage ancillary appeal. The findings of the data analysis will result in the development of an adjusted model of destination branding that will explain how a destination can effectively make use of both MICE services and cultural/heritage attractions to better meet potential attendees' other touristic interests and cultural values, and eventually better support destination branding equity.

### Summary

By using a creative destination branding framework, this study aims to suggest how MICE tourism can engage with other forms of tourism, such as heritage tourism, for its commercial benefit. Also, it will explore ways in which stakeholders can develop strategies for destination branding using other tourism resources beyond the MICE product that function to support MICE tourism. Heritage and MICE are a natural combination, as many MICE destinations are also important cultural destinations that have other attractions to offer business travelers beyond the business functions of their journeys. This important and potentially lucrative crossover has important implications for increased expenditures and longer stays. It is hoped that the conceptual model will be used as a stepping stone by MICE destinations to enhance their portfolio and remain competitive for years to come.

### \*Expected roles of stakeholders

Stakeholder		Roles
MICE Organization	-NRPA (Completed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview (Regarding service for conference attendees, understanding about host destination, working with other tourism resources, etc.)</li> <li>• Liaison between conference attendees and researcher (Support for the conducting survey from the attendees – onsite or email survey)</li> <li>• Liaison between convention center and researcher (Minimum possible role is required only in the initial communication.)</li> </ul>
	-Convention center (Completed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview (Marketing/branding activity, collaboration with DMO and heritage institutions, etc.)</li> <li>• Support for the onsite survey (if needed)</li> </ul>
Host Destination	-City of New Orleans -New Orleans tourism organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview (Marketing/branding activity, goal of the destination as MICE/Heritage tourism destination, collaboration with stakeholders, etc.)</li> <li>• Provide marketing/branding information</li> </ul>
<b>Heritage Institution</b>	<b>-Museums -Heritage attractions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Interview (Effort for business travelers, collaboration with MICE organization as well as DMOs, etc.)</b></li> </ul>
MICE Visitors	-MICE attendees (Completed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in the survey (Understanding about MICE tourism and Heritage tourism, opinion regarding creative tourism experience while MICE travel, etc.)</li> </ul>

### **\*Definitions of Terms**

- Co-creation: Interactive, creative and social process between stakeholders in the value creation process
- Creative tourism: One form of innovative tourism that draws on synergies, suggests a level of co-creation, or co-makship between different stakeholders to offer highly valued experiences
- Destination marketing/ branding: the activity which identifies and differentiates from alternatives in the minds of the target market/ Makes the destination more distinctive and attractive/ Can create a positive destination image that influences consumer destination choice and builds emotional links with visitors
- Heritage institution: Museums, Historic attractions, Tourist attractions with local cultural resources etc.
- Heritage tourism: People visiting, observing or experiencing heritage attractions, historical resources, living culture or contemporary arts
- Host destination: Destination Management/Marketing Organization (DMO), Convention Visitors Bureau (CVB), The City, The Official Tourism Organization of the City, etc.
- MICE organization: Association, Meeting Planners, Convention Centers, other event venues, etc.
- MICE tourism: Meetings, incentives, conventions (or conferences), and exhibitions
- MICE visitor: People who undertake personal or employer-funded trips to attend meetings, participate in incentive travel, or attend conventions and exhibitions. Travelers who comes to the destination for the purpose of attending the MICE events

### **\*Primary Researcher: Eunhye Grace Kim**

Eunhye Grace Kim is a PhD candidate in the School of Community Resources & Development at Arizona State University (ASU). She holds an MBA in hospitality with a focus on event leadership, and a Bachelor of Political Science in journalism and communication. Her work experience includes administration and event management at National University, government offices, and government organizations in Seoul, South Korea, and Providence, Rhode Island. She works as an instructor in Tourism Development & Management (TDM) program in ASU, and holds a teaching assistant and provides guest lecturer in the courses. Also, as a senior research assistant, she is involved in several research projects including funded work, including the Economic Impact study of Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Recreation, Marketing and Economic Impact study for Wickenburg, Heard Museum study, Phoenix Botanical Garden study, Visit Phoenix project, and Korean Restaurants Performance Index Development project. Her research interests include sustainable destination marketing and branding with MICE tourism and heritage tourism.



APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR  
NEW ORLEANS HERITAGE INSTITUTIONS

<Interview Questions for New Orleans Heritage Institutions>

**Interview** (***The Heritage Institution***: the name of the heritage organization will be inserted here)

Thank you for your participation in this research. Your participation is completely voluntary and confidential, and you are free to withdraw from the interview at any time. The information you offer will be used for academic research only and will not result in any penalty or negative consequences. It will take about an hour to complete the interview. If you have any questions about the interview, please contact Grace Kim, PhD candidate in the School of Community Resources & Development, Arizona State University, at [eunhye.kim@asu.edu](mailto:eunhye.kim@asu.edu).

**-Brief introduction of interviewee and (***The Heritage Institution***)-**

**-Destination brand-** (Please elaborate on each question.)

- 1) (New Orleans) New Orleans launched a new branding campaign “**ONE TIME IN NEW ORLEANS**” this year. How would you expect this campaign to make New Orleans more distinctive and attractive? How do you consider New Orleans’ destination brand to be beneficial to the tourism industry in New Orleans? Please elaborate on your thoughts.
- 2) (Travelers) Do you believe that destination branding benefits MICE travelers who visit New Orleans in experiencing the unique features of the destination and eventually affects their satisfaction with their entire travel experience? Please elaborate on your thoughts.
- 3) (***The Heritage Institution***) Do you believe this new destination brand is or will be beneficial for (***The Heritage Institution***)? As a representative of New Orleans’ cultural heritage institutions, how would you rate New Orleans’ branding strategy to promote heritage tourism? Please elaborate on your thoughts.

**-Heritage tourism-** (Please elaborate on each question.)

- 1) According to research, a place’s unique qualities attract visitors to the destination. This can be more effective by a destination differentiating itself from its competitors. Do you believe that a destination’s natural and cultural heritage resources/assets attract more MICE travelers? Please elaborate on your thoughts.
- 2) Many MICE travelers extend their stay beyond their business schedule to explore and enjoy local cultural heritage. Have you ever considered that New Orleans’ cultural heritage resources (including (***The Heritage Institution***)) are beneficial for New Orleans and the New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau (NOCVB) in attracting more events to the city or increasing more MICE attendees? Please elaborate on your thoughts.

**-Partnership-** (Please elaborate on each question.)

- 1) -For (***The Heritage Institution***)-  
Have you ever had partnerships (tourism perspectives only) with New Orleans Convention Center (NOCC), NOCVB, and/or any other tourism-related organizations in New Orleans before (or currently)? Please provide details. Do you believe it is a good idea/opportunity (or beneficial) for (***The Heritage Institution***) to collaborate with these organizations to promote cultural/heritage tourism in New Orleans?
- 2) -For New Orleans-  
Do you believe that the MICE tourism industry in New Orleans should consider collaborating (partnership) with cultural heritage attractions and events (to attract more MICE events, to increase more MICE traveler, to enhance their travel experience and increase their satisfaction with the destination)? Please feel free to add your comments.

**-New Orleans Tourism stakeholders-**

What are any essential strategies you might suggest for New Orleans' tourism stakeholders to promote the city's destination brand or brand name, especially for MICE travelers who want to experience New Orleans' culture/heritage?

**-Recommend other heritage institutions in New Orleans-**

What kinds of cultural heritage resources do you think New Orleans has and what makes those special for New Orleans? If you are interested in collaborating with other heritage institutions to promote New Orleans' cultural heritage tourism, what institutions would you recommend to be the most representative? Please provide 2-3 organizations with your reason for choosing them.

**\*Definitions of Terms**

- **Destination marketing/branding:** an activity that identifies and differentiates from alternatives in the minds of the target market/ Makes the destination more distinctive and attractive/ Can create a positive destination image that influences consumer destination choice and builds emotional links with visitors
- **Heritage institution:** Museums, historic attractions, tourist attractions with local cultural resources etc.
- **Heritage tourism:** People visiting, observing or experiencing heritage attractions, historical resources, living culture or contemporary arts
- **Host destination:** Destination management/marketing organization (DMO), Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), the city, the official tourism organization of the city, etc.
- **MICE organization:** Association, meeting planners, convention centers, other event venues, etc.
- **MICE tourism:** Meetings, incentives, conventions (or conferences), and exhibitions
- **MICE travelers:** People who undertake personal or employer-funded trips to attend meetings, participate in incentive travel, or attend conventions and exhibitions. Travelers who comes to the destination for the purpose of attending MICE/business events
- **New Orleans tourism stakeholders:** e.g. city of New Orleans, New Orleans Convention Visitors Bureau, New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation, etc.

APPENDIX D

IRB APPLICATION AND EXEMPTION APPROVAL

Instructions and Notes:

- Depending on the nature of what you are doing, some sections may not be applicable to your research. If so, mark as “NA”.
- When you write a protocol, keep an electronic copy. You will need a copy if it is necessary to make changes.

**1 Protocol Title**

Include the full protocol title:

**Destination Branding of Creative MICE Tourism: building synergies with Heritage Tourism**

**2 Background and Objectives**

Provide the scientific or scholarly background for, rationale for, and significance of the research based on the existing literature and how will it add to existing knowledge.

- Describe the purpose of the study.
- Describe any relevant preliminary data or case studies.
- Describe any past studies that are in conjunction to this study.

**Co-creation has become an emerging trend and it calls for synergies between key stakeholders of popular forms of tourism to enhance brand value of destination. Campelo, Aitken, Thyne and Gnoth (2013) suggest that recognizing the cultural characteristics of a place and understanding the people who live there are the principal parts of a destination branding strategy. When creating a distinctive destination brand, one of the most important challenges is the need to understand the nature of a place’s identity and recognize the core attributes that define its character (Campelo et al., 2013). These are significantly related to its culture and core values (Cai 2002; Marzano & Scott, 2009). How the culture and core values of the destination will determine the nature of service exchanges and relationships also needs to be examined, because these are a fundamental part of the tourism experience (Daniels, 2007).**

**MICE tourism has become well recognized as a significant development tool for local economies. How to strategize successful initiatives to boost MICE tourism is a significant concern for destinations. In the era of smart tourism, a holistic view is needed, and destination branding is one way MICE stakeholders can work together to design and market MICE tourism. These efforts need to focus on producing sustained benefits for the host destination such as co-creation opportunities between stakeholders, economic benefits for residents, community empowerment, and enhancement of local pride.**

**The international tourism industry is becoming an increasingly competitive marketplace where only the best-managed destinations are likely to prosper. Therefore it requires comprehensive strategic planning to address all factors that have an impact on destinations (Evans, Fox & Johnson, 1995; Buhalis, 2000). This study proposes a creative MICE destination branding model, underpinned by García et al.’s (2014) destination brand framework to examine destination branding in the context of MICE tourism. It is aimed specifically at cultural heritage offerings in a MICE destination to argue that MICE tourism depends on co-created offerings between stakeholders by adding value of creative MICE tourism experience.**

### 3 Data Use

Describe how the data will be used.

Examples include:

- Dissertation, Thesis, Undergraduate honors project
- Publication/journal article, conferences/presentations
- Results released to agency or organization
- Results released to participants/parents
- Results released to employer or school
- Other (describe)

**The data generated in this study will be used by Eunhye Grace Kim, a PhD candidate in Community Resources & Development, primarily for her doctoral dissertation. The data may be used for journal publications and presented at academic conferences. Also, the results of the data analysis will be released to responsible stakeholder groups including the National Recreation & Parks Association (NRPA) and New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau (NOCVB).**

### 4 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Describe the criteria that define who will be included or excluded in your final study sample. If you are conducting data analysis only describe what is included in the dataset you propose to use.

Indicate specifically whether you will target or exclude each of the following special populations:

- Minors (individuals who are under the age of 18)
- Adults who are unable to consent
- Pregnant women
- Prisoners
- Native Americans
- Undocumented individuals

- **Interview: (Tentative) Executives in organizations including NRPA, New Orleans Morial Convention Center, NOCVB and some heritage institutions in New Orleans.**
- **Survey: NRPA members (18 or older only) who are attending NRPA's annual conference 2017**

### 5 Number of Participants

Indicate the total number of participants to be recruited and enrolled:

- **Interview: executive members in each organization**
- **Survey: Approximately 700-800 participants**

### 6 Recruitment Methods

- Describe who will be doing the recruitment of participants.
- Describe when, where, and how potential participants will be identified and recruited.
- Describe and attach materials that will be used to recruit participants (attach documents or recruitment script with the application).

The CO-PI, Eunhye Grace Kim (PhD Candidate in SCRD at ASU) will be doing the recruitment of participants. Interviewees will be representatives of each organization. The interviewees are selected based on communications with all stakeholder groups. NRPA's director of conference initiated the communication with other stakeholder group and let them have the letter of introduction and study summary for the better understanding of the project. To recruit interviewees, the CO-PI will communicate with each organization and internal communication is also required to select the right setting for the interview. The interviewees are mostly the executives (directors or above) in each organization. For the survey, the population is comprised of NRPA members who are attending the annual conference in 2017. The conference will be in New Orleans, LA, in September 2017. At the New Orleans Morial Convention Center, participants will be selected randomly through an intercept method. Survey participants will be approached at random in the members' zone at the convention center. (Attached: Letter of introduction and study summary for the interview recruitment/ Script for the survey recruitment)

## **7 Procedures Involved**

Describe all research procedures being performed, who will facilitate the procedures, and when they will be performed. Describe procedures including:

- The duration of time participants will spend in each research activity.
- The period or span of time for the collection of data, and any long term follow up.
- Surveys or questionnaires that will be administered (Attach all surveys, interview questions, scripts, data collection forms, and instructions for participants to the online application).
- Interventions and sessions (Attach supplemental materials to the online application).
- Lab procedures and tests and related instructions to participants.
- Video or audio recordings of participants.
- Previously collected data sets that that will be analyzed and identify the data source (Attach data use agreement(s) to the online application).

The CO-PI, Eunhye Grace Kim (PhD Candidate in SCRD at ASU) will facilitate the procedures. The initial interviews will be starting in August 2017, and additional interviews will be added when needed. The questionnaire will be administered only at the conference in September, 2017. Email interviews and phone interview will require approximately an hour with follow up communication if needed. Answers will be coded after editing and proof reading. Phone interviews will be recorded, transcribed and coded by the CO-PI. For the survey, 6-7 tablets (based on budget) will be used and Qualtric system will be used to create the survey. Via Qualtric, the data will be automatically coded and saved in the system. Each questionnaire will require approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. For the content analysis, the information on the website and/or any marketing materials such as brochures will be used. (Attached: Survey questions/ interview questions)

**8 Compensation or Credit**

- Describe the amount and timing of any compensation or credit to participants.
- Identify the source of the funds to compensate participants
- Justify that the amount given to participants is reasonable.
- If participants are receiving course credit for participating in research, alternative assignments need to be put in place to avoid coercion.

For the survey participants, small incentives will be given from NRPA.

**9 Risk to Participants**

List the reasonably foreseeable risks, discomforts, or inconveniences related to participation in the research. Consider physical, psychological, social, legal, and economic risks.

There will be no risk to participants.

**10 Potential Benefits to Participants**

Realistically describe the potential benefits that individual participants may experience from taking part in the research. Indicate if there is no direct benefit. Do **not** include benefits to society or others.

The executive summary report will be provided to interviewees so that their organizations may expect the valuable practical implication from the study.

**\*Relationship between NRPA & the project:**

In the stage of searching for perfect destination of this project, New Orleans was the in the list, as one of the great potential destinations. Searching for associations, which have their events in those destinations listed in 2017-2018, was initiated. NRPA was the one of the associations that has their annual conference in New Orleans in 2017 Fall so the vice president was contacted by one of the faculty members in the School of Community Resources & Development. The vice president let the director of conference decide about collaborating with this research project and after conference call with committee members, the director of conference of NRPA made a decision to have partnership with this research project. NRPA is looking forward to seeing the results of this research so that they may have insight for the conference marketing and management.



## 11 Privacy and Confidentiality

Describe the steps that will be taken to protect subjects' privacy interests. "Privacy interest" refers to a person's desire to place limits on with whom they interact or to whom they provide personal information. Click here for additional guidance on [ASU Data Storage Guidelines](#).

Describe the following measures to ensure the confidentiality of data:

- Who will have access to the data?
- Where and how data will be stored (e.g. ASU secure server, ASU cloud storage, filing cabinets, etc.)?
- How long the data will be stored?
- Describe the steps that will be taken to secure the data during storage, use, and transmission. (e.g., training, authorization of access, password protection, encryption, physical controls, certificates of confidentiality, and separation of identifiers and data, etc.).
- If applicable, how will audio or video recordings will be managed and secured. Add the duration of time these recordings will be kept.
- If applicable, how will the consent, assent, and/or parental permission forms be secured. These forms should separate from the rest of the study data. Add the duration of time these forms will be kept.
- If applicable, describe how data will be linked or tracked (e.g. masterlist, contact list, reproducible participant ID, randomized ID, etc.).

If your study has previously collected data sets, describe who will be responsible for data security and monitoring.

**The CO-PI, Eunhye Grace Kim, will be responsible for data security and monitoring. Data will be kept on a secure and private portable drive for 2 years. Information collected both from email interviews and during phone interview will only be used in aggregate form and the contents and recordings will not be made public in any way. The aggregated information will be only used for publications and presentations. Quotes may be used anonymously to illustrate a major concept.**

## 12 Consent Process

Describe the process and procedures process you will use to obtain consent. Include a description of:

- Who will be responsible for consenting participants?
- Where will the consent process take place?
- How will consent be obtained?
- If participants who do not speak English will be enrolled, describe the process to ensure that the oral and/or written information provided to those participants will be in that language. Indicate the language that will be used by those obtaining consent. Translated consent forms should be submitted after the English is approved.

**The CO-PI, Eunhye Grace Kim, will be responsible for the consenting participants. The consent process for the interviews will take place via email with documents. The consent process for the surveys will take place verbally at the conference site when inviting participants. (Attached: script for the survey to obtain consent)**

### **13 Training**

Provide the date(s) the members of the research team have completed the CITI training for human participants. This training must be taken within the last 4 years. Additional information can be found at: [Training](#).

- **Principal Investigator (PI): Dr. Deepak Chhabra, completed training on 14-Apr-2016**
- **CO-PI: Eunhye Grace Kim, completed training on 02-Aug-2017**

EXEMPTION GRANTED

Deepak Chhabra  
 Community Resources and Development, School of  
 602/496-0172  
 Deepak.Chhabra@asu.edu

Dear Deepak Chhabra:

On 9/5/2017 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Destination Branding of Creative MICE Tourism: building synergies with Heritage Tourism
Investigator:	Deepak Chhabra
IRB ID:	STUDY00006708
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HRP-503a-Grace Kim.docx, Category: IRB Protocol;</li> <li>• Interview_NRPA.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);</li> <li>• Intro letter and study summary for New Orleans.pdf, Category: Recruitment materials/advertisements /verbal scripts/phone scripts;</li> <li>• Consent_Survey.pdf, Category: Consent Form;</li> <li>• Consent_Interview.pdf, Category: Consent Form;</li> <li>• Survey Recruitment.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials;</li> <li>• Survey_draft.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);</li> <li>• Interview_CC.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);</li> </ul>

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation on 9/5/2017.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Eunhye Kim  
Eunhye Kim

## APPENDIX E

### INTER-CORRELATIONS AMONG MODEL VARIABLES

Inter-correlations among model variables.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
DB-APP	1																									
DB-ATT	.908	1																								
DB-INTR	.876	.873	1																							
DBA-MND	.480	.484	.459	1																						
DBA-RCG	.505	.509	.486	.759	1																					
DBA-IDEN	.533	.536	.520	.752	.819	1																				
DBEX-SV	.502	.522	.496	.562	.544	.552	1																			
DBEX-SA	.464	.465	.463	.569	.512	.529	.686	1																		
DBEX-SO	.353	.361	.346	.353	.321	.348	.455	.444	1																	
DBEX-SG	.453	.457	.469	.509	.486	.496	.672	.743	.421	1																
DBEX-ST	.416	.441	.412	.440	.426	.437	.581	.569	.545	.566	1															
DBEX-AF	.468	.477	.477	.502	.520	.520	.645	.620	.402	.604	.550	1														
DBEX-AS	.420	.419	.419	.502	.500	.522	.578	.626	.445	.589	.551	.807	1													
DBEX-PHY	.453	.476	.450	.542	.500	.529	.595	.545	.376	.555	.546	.665	.641	1												
DBEX-INT	.386	.407	.404	.509	.483	.481	.596	.508	.364	.538	.538	.644	.625	.682	1											
DBP-CRD	.559	.571	.521	.552	.544	.554	.633	.593	.448	.563	.532	.625	.591	.622	.589	1										
DBP-REL	.519	.530	.495	.529	.545	.534	.605	.564	.460	.535	.527	.604	.560	.594	.584	.892	1									
DBP-PL	.516	.513	.523	.555	.551	.584	.591	.581	.450	.566	.504	.629	.640	.598	.610	.801	.783	1								
DBP-GV	.454	.459	.433	.475	.467	.490	.539	.509	.488	.530	.554	.563	.538	.576	.536	.676	.687	.682	1							
DBP-REX	.508	.491	.499	.539	.532	.533	.624	.574	.485	.574	.510	.620	.605	.597	.592	.730	.720	.772	.711	1						
DBE-ENCR	.544	.536	.540	.489	.518	.528	.573	.534	.411	.542	.472	.604	.556	.562	.583	.698	.683	.698	.618	.725	1					
DBE-QUAL	.476	.482	.461	.494	.490	.499	.580	.491	.415	.519	.503	.599	.568	.566	.582	.656	.648	.674	.627	.712	.784	1				
DBE-SAT	.492	.489	.495	.503	.514	.514	.585	.547	.396	.573	.499	.606	.568	.575	.570	.673	.657	.663	.603	.671	.704	.726	1			
DBE-AG	.490	.475	.478	.480	.484	.497	.539	.494	.393	.547	.455	.576	.570	.552	.528	.631	.605	.645	.549	.662	.682	.728	.762	1		
DBE-REC	.486	.462	.488	.496	.497	.524	.560	.528	.412	.559	.489	.613	.604	.567	.556	.633	.616	.657	.573	.678	.729	.711	.786	.844	1	

APPENDIX F

SURVEY RESULTS  
TABLES AND FIGURES

## FINDINGS

A total of 516 onsite surveys are collected from September 25 to 28, 2017 at the New Orleans Convention Center.

### Visitor Profile

480 respondents share their place of residence (state or country). 98% of them are domestic visitors.

Figure 1: Place of Residence - NRPA Conference attendees (n=480)



Figure 2: Place of Residence - Domestic Visitors (n=471)

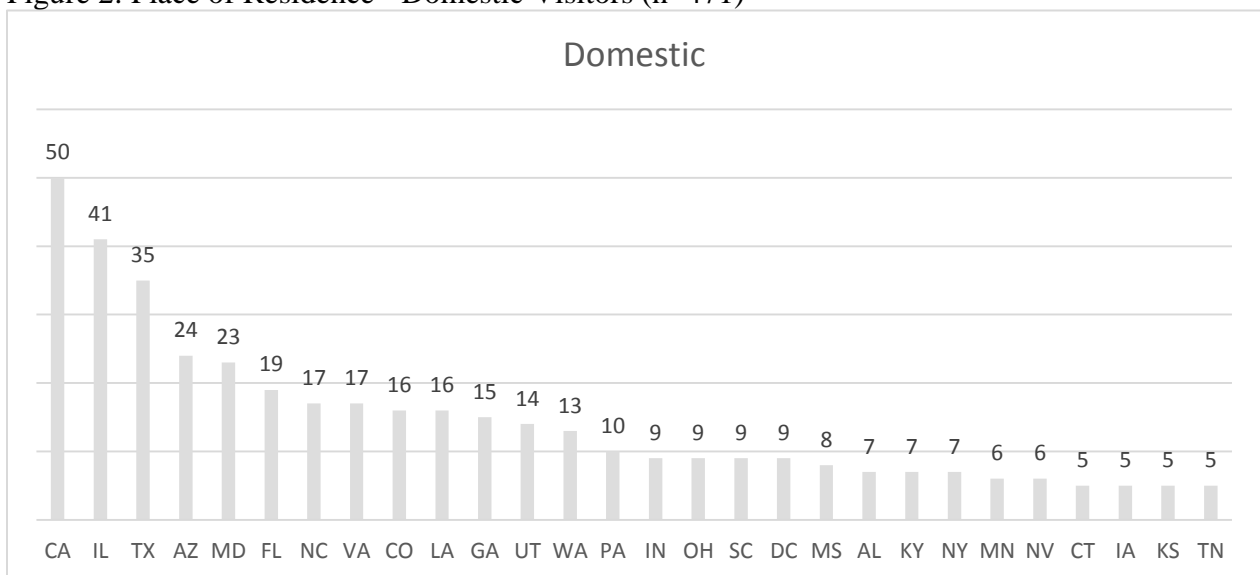




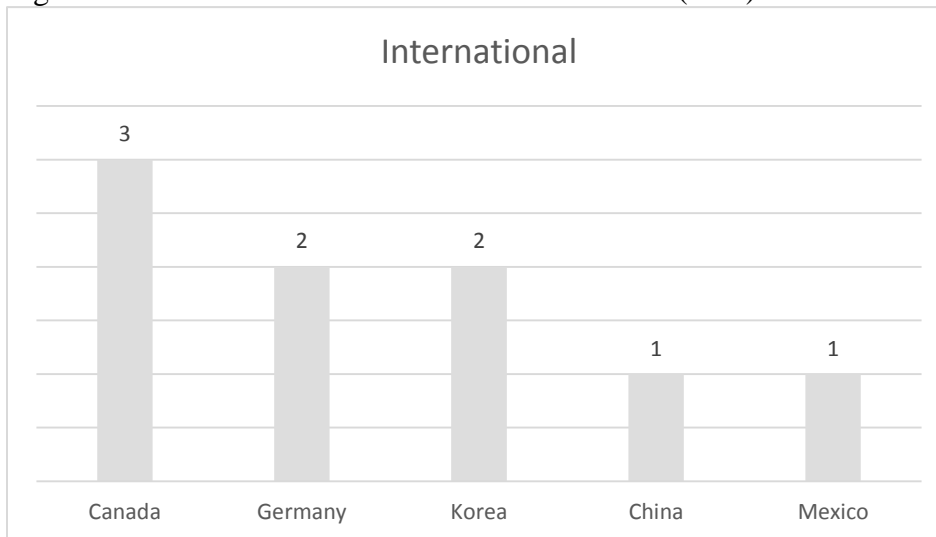
Table 1 presents detailed breakdown of domestic visitors based on their place of residence. More than 40% of the respondent are from six states, including California, Illinois, Texas, Arizona, Maryland and Georgia.

Table 1: Place of Residence - Domestic Visitors (n=471)

	State	N	%		State	N	%		State	N	%
1	CA	50	10.6%	17	SC	9	1.9%	34	OR	4	0.8%
2	IL	41	8.7%	18	DC	9	1.9%	35	VT	4	0.8%
3	TX	35	7.4%	19	MS	8	1.7%	36	WI	4	0.8%
4	AZ	24	5.1%	20	AL	7	1.5%	37	ID	3	0.6%
5	MD	23	4.9%	21	KY	7	1.5%	38	MT	3	0.6%
6	FL	19	4.0%	22	NY	7	1.5%	39	NH	3	0.6%
7	NC	17	3.6%	23	MN	6	1.3%	40	AR	2	0.4%
8	VA	17	3.6%	24	NV	6	1.3%	41	HI	2	0.4%
9	CO	16	3.4%	25	CT	5	1.1%	42	MA	2	0.4%
10	LA	16	3.4%	26	IA	5	1.1%	43	NJ	2	0.4%
11	GA	15	3.2%	27	KS	5	1.1%	44	ND	2	0.4%
12	UT	14	3.0%	28	TN	5	1.1%	45	ME	1	0.2%
13	WA	13	2.8%	29	AK	4	0.8%	46	NE	1	0.2%
14	PA	10	2.1%	30	MI	4	0.8%	47	WV	1	0.2%
15	IN	9	1.9%	31	MO	4	0.8%	48	WY	1	0.2%
16	OH	9	1.9%	32	NM	4	0.8%		USA	9	1.9%
17	SC	9	1.9%	33	OK	4	0.8%		Total	471	100%

Figure 3 illustrates International Visitors from five countries.

Figure 3: State of Residence - International Visitors (n= 9)



With regard to gender, it is noted that the number of male visitors is higher than the number of female visitors.

Figure 4: Gender of Visitors (n=509)

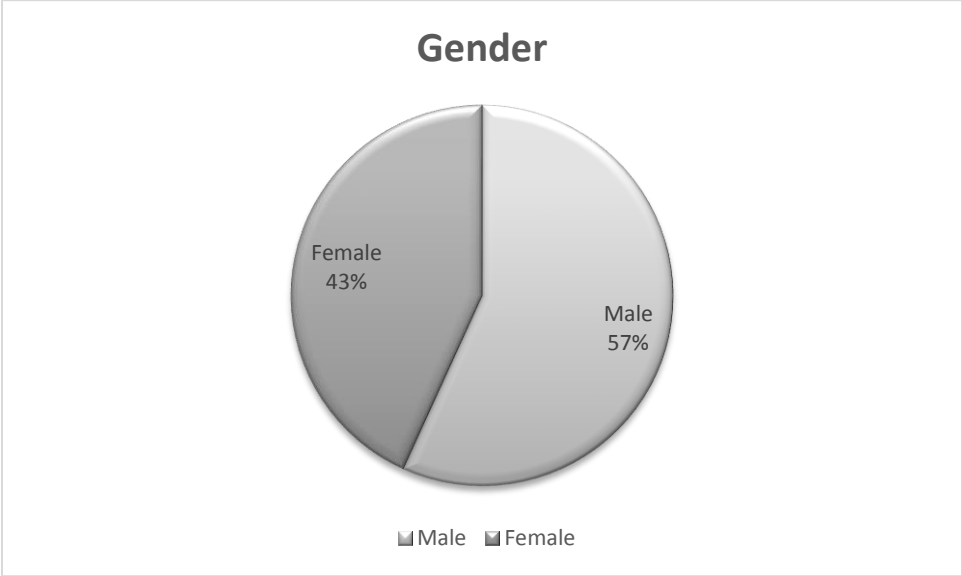
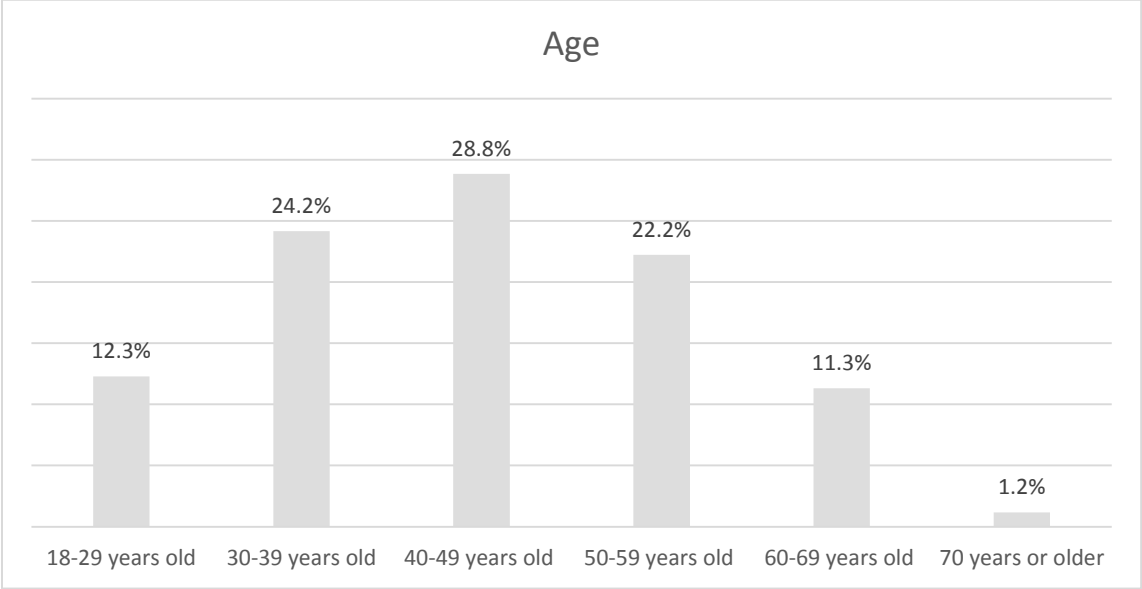


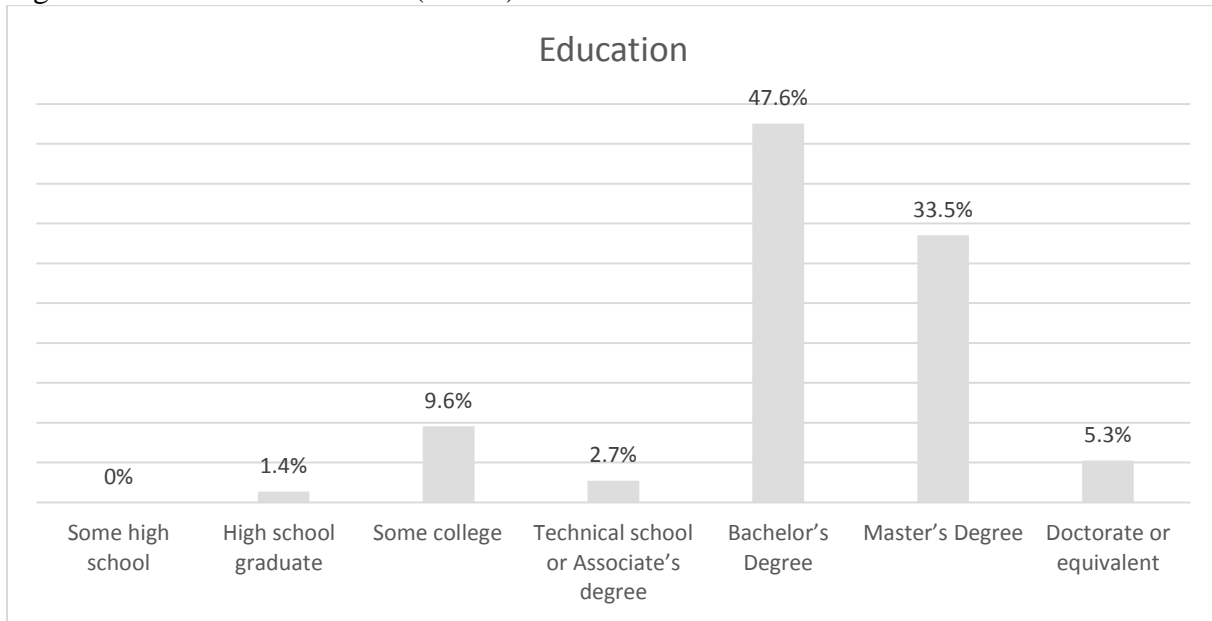
Figure 5 illustrates that 75% of visitors are between 30 and 59 years old.

Figure 5: Age of Visitors (n=513)



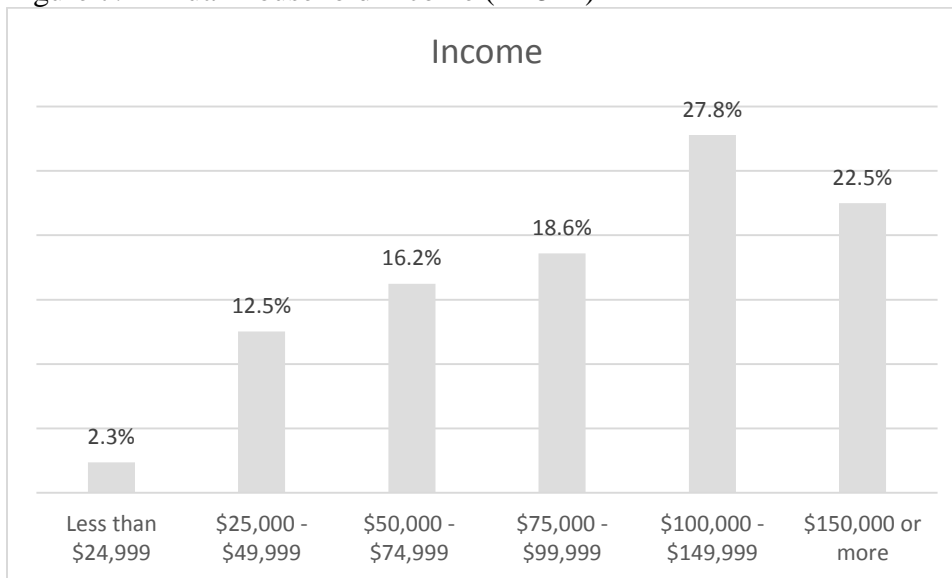
With regard to education, figure 6 illustrates that most visitors (86.4%) have higher than bachelor's degree.

Figure 6: Education of Visitors (n=513)



With regard to annual household income, about 85% of respondents indicate that their income level is higher than \$50,000 and about 50% of respondents show that the income level is more than \$100,000.

Figure 7: Annual Household Income (n= 511)



With regard to marital status, Figure 8 shows that approximately 70% of respondents are married or in a long term relationship and 30% are singles.

Figure 8: Marital status of Visitors (n= 512)

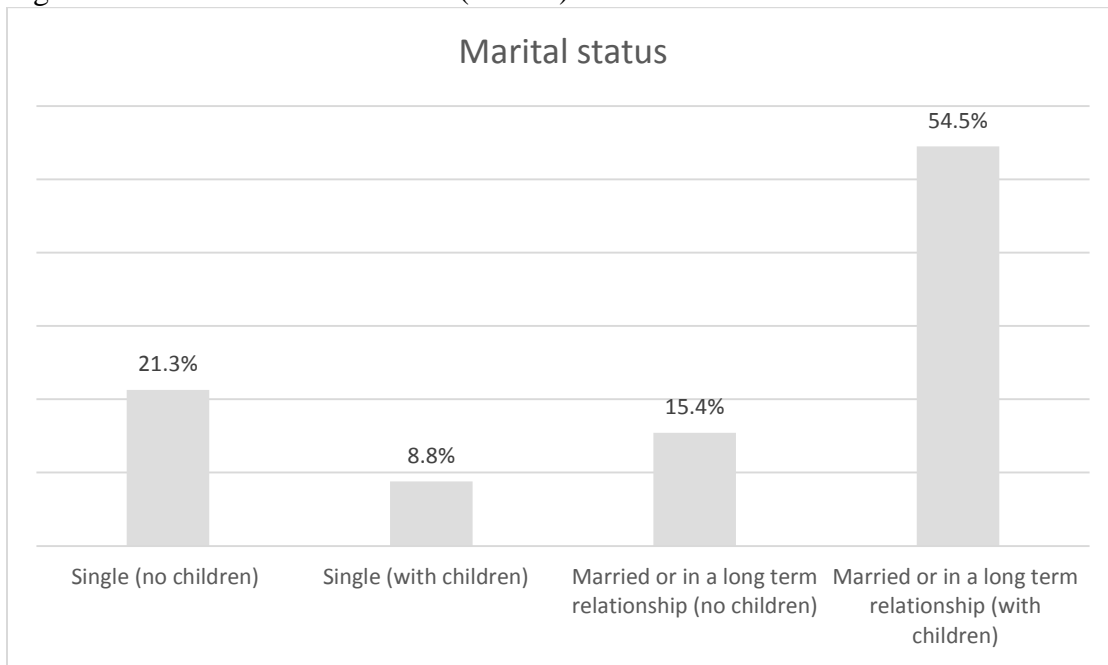
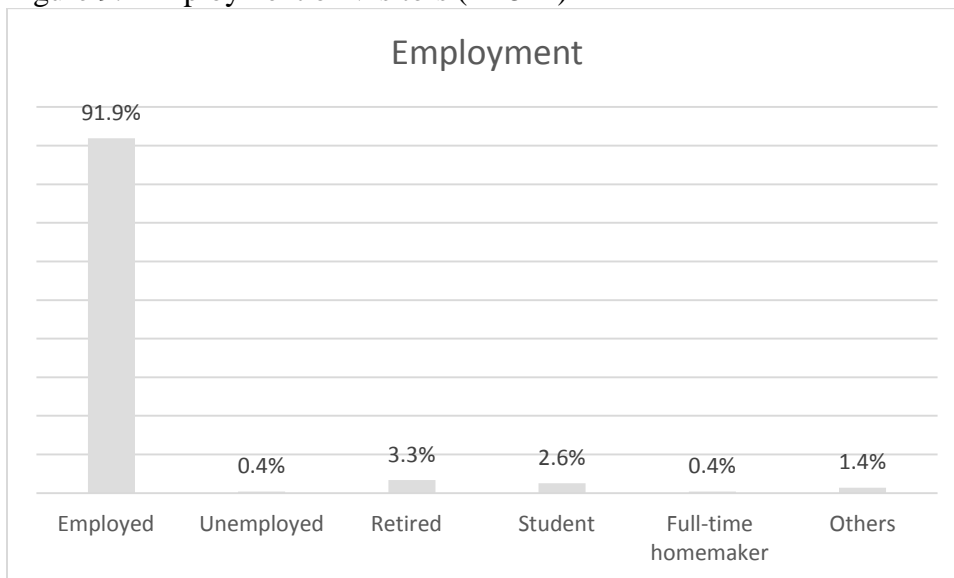


Figure 9 shows that approximately 92% of respondents are currently employed.

Figure 9: Employment of Visitors (n= 512)



**Marketing Profile**

Approximately half of respondents are repeat visitors to New Orleans. Half of repeat visitors' purpose of the previous trip to New Orleans is identified as business whereas others visited for pleasure/personal purpose.

Figure 10. First visit to New Orleans (n=516)

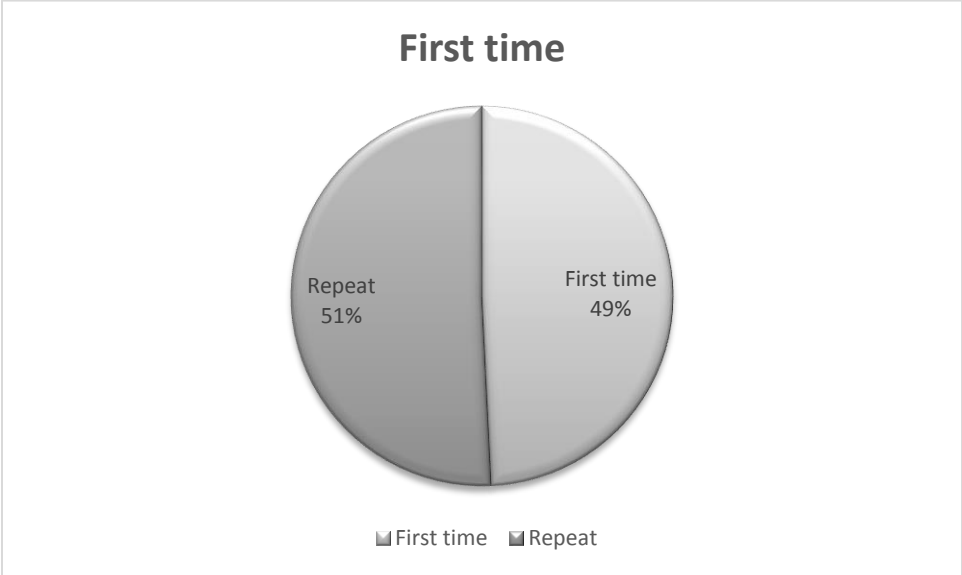


Figure 11. Purpose of previous visit to New Orleans (n=252)



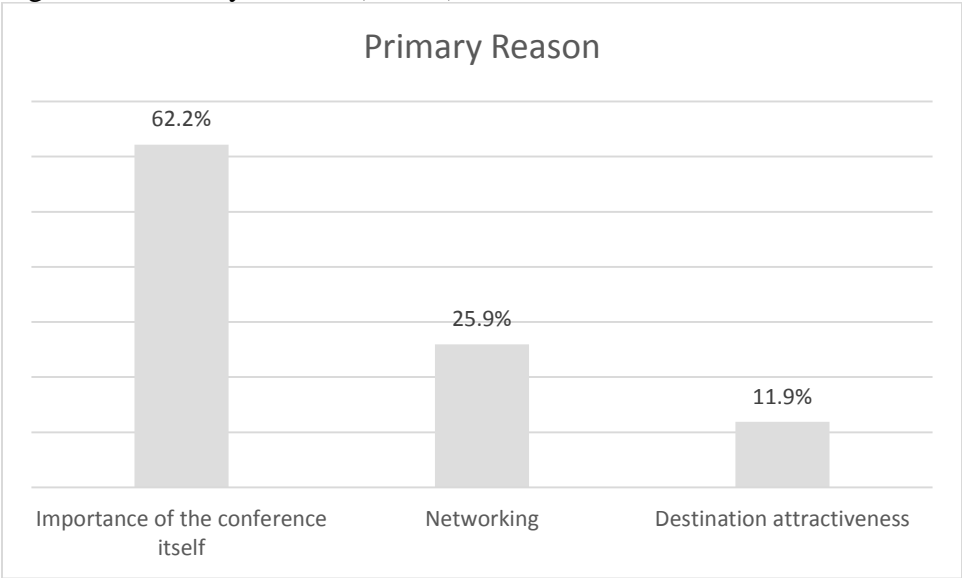
Most respondents (96%) identify that the main reason of their visit to New Orleans is NRPA Conference.

Figure 12. Main Reason (n=515)



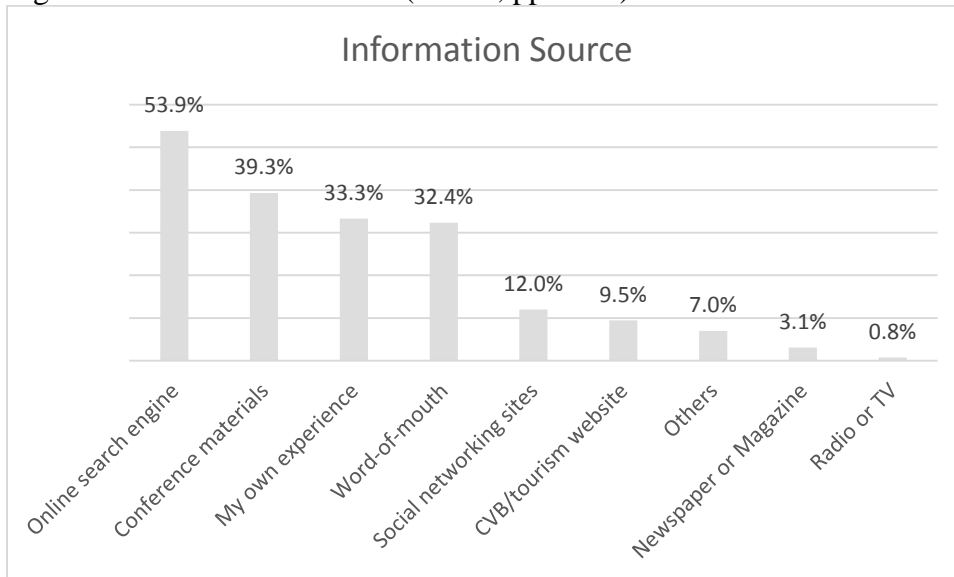
Regarding the primary reason of their visit to New Orleans, the most important reason is the importance of the conference itself (62%), followed by networking (26%). Destination attractiveness is relatively low (12%) as their primary reason of visit.

Figure 13. Primary Reason (n=513)



The source the visitors use to obtain information about conference destination is identified here. More than half of visitors use online search engine and almost 40% of visitors use conference materials. Their own experience and word-of-mouth are also ranked as significant source for visitors to get information about the destination.

Figure 14. Information Source (n=987, ppl=516)



Most people travel with their colleagues (64%) or travel alone (25%). Still many visitors indicate that they travel with family members or friends (multiple answers available).

Figure 15. Who travel with (n=561, ppl=516)

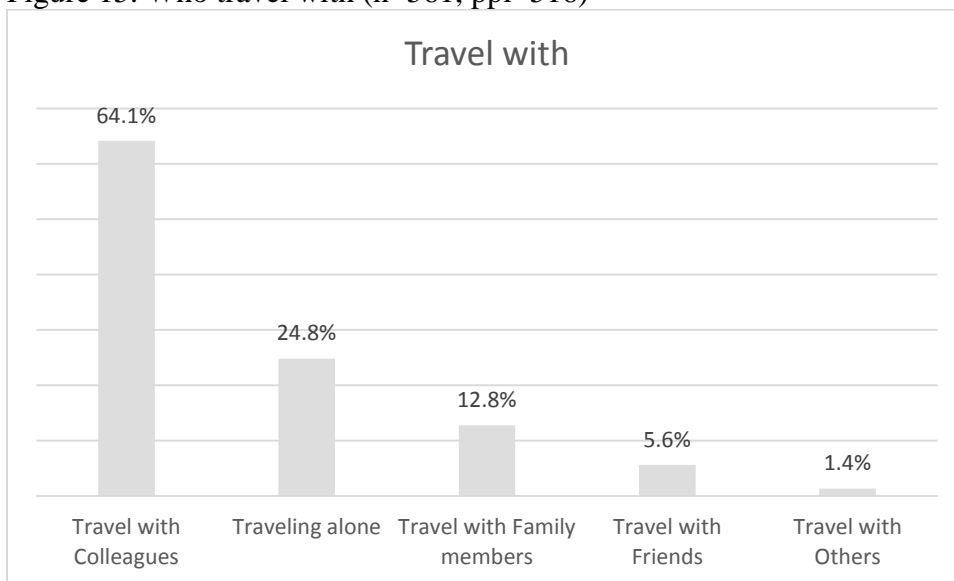


Table 2 indicates the number of family members, friends and colleagues they travel with.

Table 2. Number of people travel with

	Mean	Median
Number of Family members travel with	1.3	1
Number of Friends travel with	3.2	2
Number of Colleagues travel with	6.8	3
Number of Others travel with	80.8	76

Next question is asking visitors' plan to add extra days to visit New Orleans. 33% of visitors plan to add extra days in New Orleans. Figure 17 and table 3 shows that the average and median extra days visitors plan to add to their itinerary.

Figure 16. Extra day (n=516)

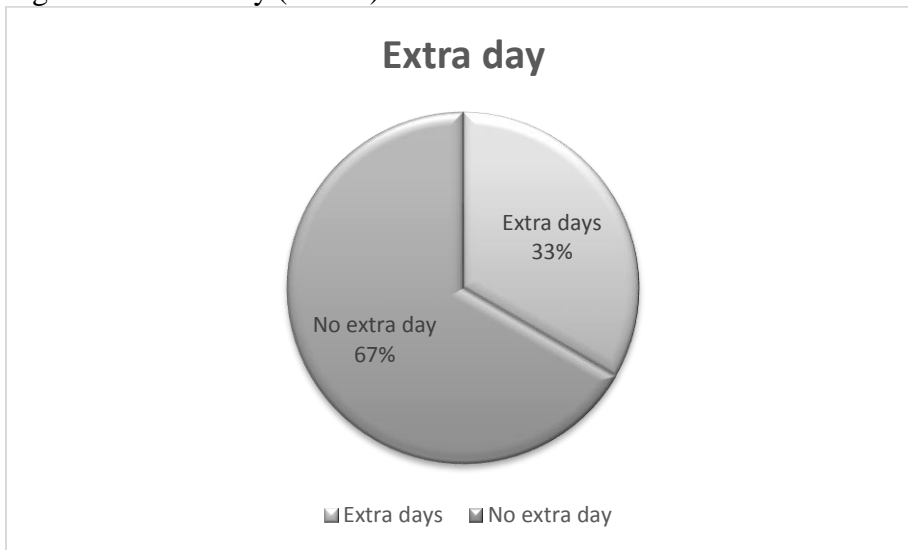


Figure 17. Extra days they add to (n=172)

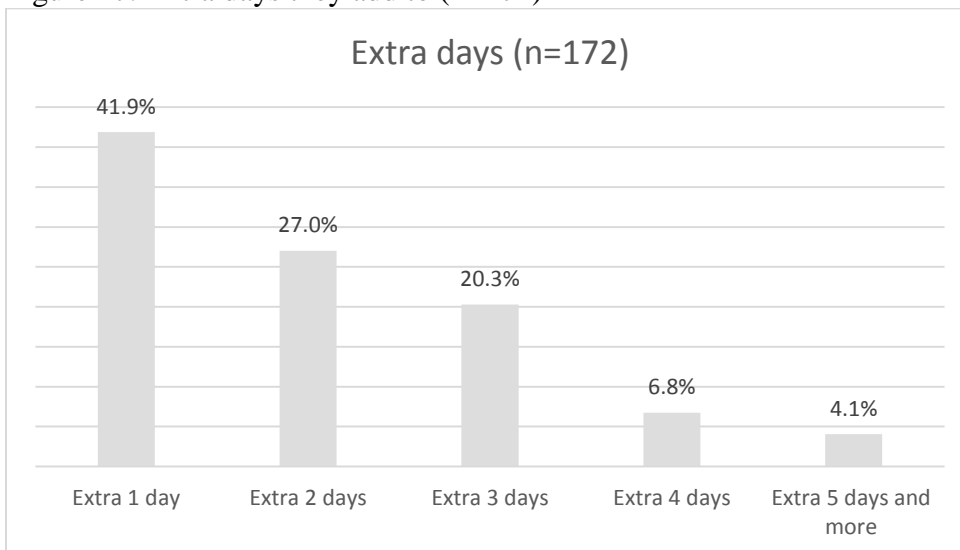




Table 3. Mean & median of Extra days

Mean of extra days	1.97
Median of extra days	2

Next question is about the funding for trip sponsored by an organization they serve. Most visitors' trip to New Orleans for NRPA Conference are funded by their employers either fully (70%) or partially (21%). Among those who fully funded and who plan to stay longer after the conference, about 20% of those mention that their extra days will be fully or partially covered by their employer.

Figure 18. Funding for trip (n=516)

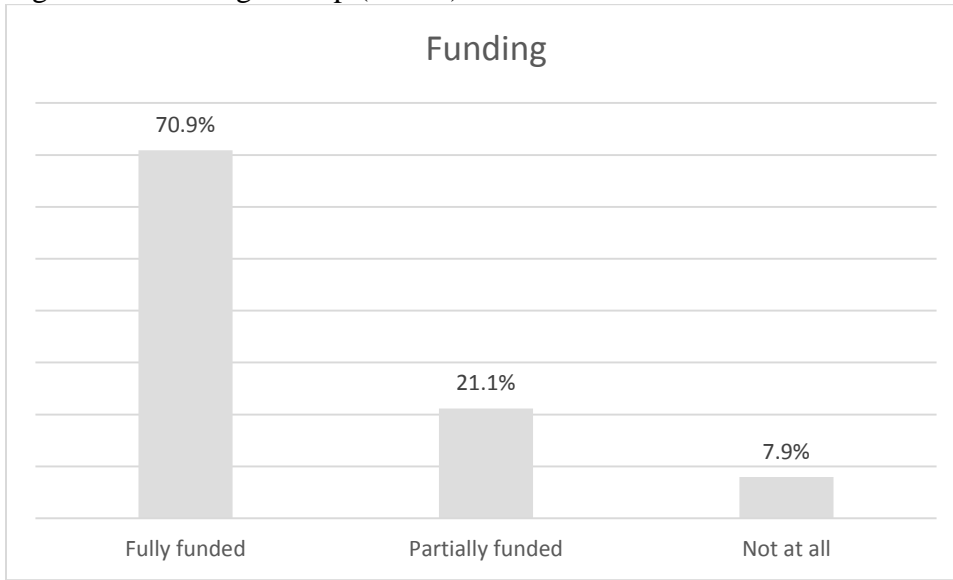


Figure 19. Funding for extra days (n=125)

