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# Assessing the Prospects of MICE Tourism: A Systematic Review of Economic Effects, Digitalization and Hospitality Infrastructure

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**Abstract:** MICE tourism—meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions—ranks among the most profitable and fastest-growing segments of the global tourism industry. Based on recent literature, this article assesses the sector's current status, economic effects, and future trends. To identify the key factors in MICE tourism development—destination competitiveness, hospitality infrastructure, the value chain, and digitalization—a systematic review of 15 recent academic publications is conducted. Findings indicate that MICE tourism generates significant economic effects and contributes to destination branding, yet the sector confronts challenges including disintermediation, post-pandemic digitalization, and sustainability requirements that remain difficult to meet. Strategic investments in hybrid event technologies, stakeholder collaboration, and smart city infrastructure are therefore indispensable, the study suggests, for competitiveness in the global MICE tourism market.

**Keywords:** MICE tourism, Hospitality Infrastructure, Destination Competitiveness, Digitalization, Value Chain, Systematic review.

## Introduction

Tourism, one of the major economic activities worldwide, encompasses several types of tourism, among them meeting and business tourism. Within the entire tourism sector, Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) tourism is rapidly emerging as one of its most important and fast-growing sectors [5]. The UNWTO considers this sector mature and places it at the core of the tourism industry, as one of the main drivers of the tourism sector's development and a significant source of income, employment and investments [5]. This type of tourism attracts high-spending business travellers, provides employment throughout the year and promotes the development of local infrastructure unlike the typical leisure tourism [2]. MICE tourism has a medium to high purchasing power and a high prescriptive capacity. Moreover, this sector has a deseasonalized nature since it takes place primarily during work days [5]. However, it is required a complex integration of infrastructure, policy and digital innovation in order to succeed in MICE destination [14].Past studies have explored MICE tourism in different perspectives including value chain analysis [1; 10; 13], economic impacts [2; 8], and the impact of COVID-19 pandemic [3; 5]. Yet, due to the dynamic nature of the industry, it is a necessary to synthesize the recent studies to identify the factors

of current competitiveness and potential development. The present research fills the gap by analyzing 15 recent articles systematically. The research questions in this study are: (1) What are the key factors on competitiveness and economic for MICE destinations? (2) How digitalization and the COVID-19 pandemic change the management of MICE tourism? (3) How value chain and stakeholder collaboration effect the development of MICE?

**Literature Review**

Economic Impact and Competitiveness of Destinations The MICE sector is rapidly growing worldwide and it has a high multiplier effect on other economic activities in host destinations [2]. According to Dwyer and Forsyth [2], it is essential to examine the impacts and net benefits of an increasing MICE sector for the whole economy to be able to make informed policy decisions. MICE tourism is a way of creating wealth both quantitatively (given the high purchase power of tourists) and qualitatively (generating knowledge and talent) [5]. Zazueta-Hernández and Velarde-Valdez [4] stated four factors of major importance for the competitiveness of MICE tourism: resource factors, destination management factors, environmental conditioning factors, demand conditioning factors. Additionally, the inclusion of cultural and heritage resources can greatly enhance the value of the MICE destination's brand [12].

MICE VALUE CHAIN AND INTERMEDIATION The MICE tourism distribution channel is quite complex. According to the findings of Rojas-Bueno et al.

[1] and Taipakova [13] it is being a slow but consistent process of disintermediation by skipping intermediaries in order to decrease costs but total disintermediation is not possible because of high standard requirements for quality services in MICE market [1;13]. Moreover, according to the statement of Rojas-Bueno et al.

[10] although incoming agents provide value (convenience, good rates) but there is no consensus about intermediaries among stakeholders. Hotel is most dissonant stakeholder.

Digitalization and Post-Pandemic Changes. As the COVID-19 pandemic severely affected MICE tourism, it brought a trend of using digital webinar/online platforms and hybrid event [3]. Digital transformation is a technological problem as well as a managerial issue [5]. The pandemic brought more attention to the importance of digitalization and made destinations with the capability of hybrid event more attractive to event organizers [5]. The most promising format for MICE event is Hybrid format. It combines the advantages of virtual and live event as per the research of Litvinova-Kulikova et al. [3]. The urban mobility practice is highly responsive to MICE tourism as found by Masciarelli and Marchesani [14], it caused some imbalances that needs to be addressed by the public managers of smart city projects.

**Methodology**.

We apply the systematic literature review methodology to examine the current status, economic impact and the trend of the future global MICE tourism. This method is suitable since it helps us to synthesize the existing academic knowledge and discover the gaps for further research. We do not need to make up survey data or make up empirical results.

Research Design: The approach of this study was qualitative, and it was a descriptive design of a systematic review of the recent academic literature (peer-reviewed). -Data Collection: The data collection method used for this research involved the use of academic databases such as Google Scholar (mostly). -Searching Strategy and Terms: The search method of this study used certain keywords and Boolean such as "MICE tourism", "destination competitiveness", "hospitality infrastructure", "MICE digitalization", and "MICE value chain". -Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria: All of the included articles for this review are based on the following criteria: publications in English language, peer-reviewed and focused on MICE tourism development, economic impact, digitalization, and hospitality infrastructure. Articles before 2017 were excluded or articles that were not completely accessible for this final review. -Data Analysis: Total number of articles selected for final synthesis: 15 articles. The data was processed by a method of "thematic" analysis. Main findings/concepts from the 15 selected articles were extracted, coded and grouped into three main themes, such as 1) Economic impact & destination competitiveness, 2) MICE value chain & intermediation, 3) digitalization, sustainability, post-pandemic changes.

**Results** 15 academic articles have been systematically reviewed to find three main themes regarding MICE Economic Impacts and Competitiveness Factors The majority of the reviewed studies highlighted that MICE tourism significantly boosts local economies. Zazueta-Hernández and Velarde-Valdez [4] found that demand conditioning factors and resource factors were the most important for competitiveness, but comprehensive destination management strategies are required to improve the segment. Campo et al. [9] found that while larger hotels are better prepared to capitalize on MICE events through digital marketing, smaller accommodation establishments face challenges in accessing market intelligence. Jan [8] demonstrated that machine learning algorithms (FFNN-ChOA) can accurately forecast MICE tourism demand, outperforming traditional models.

1. Hospitality, Infrastructure, and Value Chain Dynamics Literature consistently points out that MICE travelers have specific expectations. Ha Nam Khanh [15] found that MICE development is affected by three main factors, in decreasing order of importance: (1) Organization resources; (2) MICE tourist resources; (3) Supplier resources. Furthermore, Kim et al. [12] demonstrated that integrating cultural and heritage resources into destination branding adds significant value. Regarding the value chain, Rojas-Bueno et al. [1] and Taipakova [13] found a steady process of disintermediation, though high service standards prevent total bypassing of intermediaries. Tham et al. [7] highlighted that MICE events can create positive legacies, shifting from narrow economic focus to broader stakeholder benefits and responsible tourism.

2. Digitalization, Sustainability, and Post-Pandemic Dynamics The review identified that post-pandemic MICE tourism relies heavily on digital technology. Litvinova-Kulikova et al. [3] showed that the most promising format for MICE events is Hybrid. Martín-Rojo and Gaspar-González [5] mapped the state of the art in MICE digitalization, proposing future research lines related to innovation and smart destination analysis. Additionally, Li et al. [11] emphasized the growing trend of "Green MICE," finding that "event materials" ranked as the most significant factor for

sustainable MICE development, followed by transportation and venue. Masciarelli and Marchesani [14] found that urban mobility practices are highly responsive to MICE tourism, creating imbalances that public managers must address.

**Discussion**

The findings of this review confirm that MICE tourism is a complex, high-value sector that requires strategic management. The integration of cultural experiences into destination branding, as suggested by Kim et al. [12], aligns with the growing need for destinations to differentiate themselves. However, aligning with the literature, the industry faces infrastructural challenges. Ciuffreda and Simonetti [6] noted that regions with rich cultural assets have substantial potential for MICE growth but often face challenges related to inadequate infrastructure and limited marketing efforts. The results support the theoretical framework of destination competitiveness, showing that infrastructure and service quality are critical [4]. The review also highlights the importance of digitalization. As noted by Litvinova-Kulikova et al. [3], the industry must embrace hybrid event formats to remain competitive. Furthermore, the role of intermediaries remains complex; while disintermediation is occurring [1; 13], MICE stakeholders must ensure high standards of quality service to maintain trust with Professional Conference Organizers (PCOs). The shift towards sustainable "Green MICE" [11] and the integration into smart city frameworks [14] represent crucial future directions for the industry.

**Conclusion**

This systematic review investigated the current state, economic impacts, and future trends of global MICE tourism. The research aim was achieved by identifying that infrastructure, hospitality quality, digitalization, and stakeholder collaboration are the primary drivers of MICE destination competitiveness. The main contribution of this paper is the synthesis of global MICE best practices, highlighting the shift towards hybrid events, sustainable practices, and complex value chain dynamics. Based on the literature, it is recommended that hospitality providers and event organizers develop specialized business facilities, such as modern conference rooms and reliable high-speed internet, to accommodate hybrid events [3]. Furthermore, tourism authorities should invest in smart city infrastructure and urban mobility to handle increased visitor flows securely [14]. Finally, stakeholders should integrate sustainable practices, such as green event materials and transportation, to align with the growing demand for responsible tourism [11]. Future research should conduct empirical surveys with international event organizers to validate these findings across different geographical contexts.

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