Methodology

A survey was developed using previous studies of the motivators for and inhibitors to meeting attendance. Additional questions regarding demographics were added. The online survey included 16 questions, ranging from general demographics to motivating and inhibiting factors of meeting attendance.

Four planner members of the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) agreed to participate in the study. These planners emailed their association members alerting them to the fact that they would be receiving a link to an anonymous survey regarding meeting attendance. The four planners sent a second email that included a letter from the researchers explaining the research project, the informed consent process, and the survey link. Each participating planner member was then asked to send out a third email to their association members, approximately a week after the second email, thanking them for participation in the survey and/or to remind them to fill out the survey. There were a total of 885 survey respondents. Survey results were entered into SPSS for data analysis.

Findings

Generation Y (ages 18–26) made up just over 1% (1.3%) of the respondents. Generation X, ages 27–42, totaled 19% of the respondents. The Baby Boomer generation, ages 43–61, had the largest representation, 72.1%. The Matures had a 7.6% representation.

"Educational purposes" was the most important motivator across generations. "The relevance of conference topics" was the only other variable that had a very high rating across generations. At the other end of the spectrum, "Available medical facilities" was the only variable to receive a very low rating across generations. As might be expected, Gen Y and Gen X respondents rated "Career enhancement" much more important than did the Boomers and Matures.

Inhibitors to meeting attendance were not as clearly delineated. One variable, "Topics not of interest to me," was the biggest inhibitor for Matures, Boomers, and Gen Y while "Total costs for attendance" was the biggest inhibitor reported by Gen X. Gen X demonstrated another variance by rating "Meeting location's surrounding area" lowest while the other generations reported "Family unable to travel with me" lowest. Gen Y rated "Location of meeting too far from home" a much less significant inhibitor than the other generations.

Application of Results

The existence of a multigenerational membership fundamentally affects the operations of conference planners. The results of this study will assist conference planners in delivering relevant services for their diverse membership.

Conclusions

Conference attendance substantially impacts an association's annual budget. Financial gains observed from conferences are utilized to meet the educational, business, and networking needs of association members. Thus, it is critical to understand the influences of conference attendance.

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27. A NEW METHOD TO ESTIMATE THE NUMBER OF ATTENDEES TO A FESTIVAL WITH OPEN GATES

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Introduction

To have an accurate estimate of attendance for a festival is essential for both social and economic impact assessments of that festival. This job may be easily done for a festival

with controlled gates and/or with ticket sales. However, it may be a major challenge for a festival with multiple entrances/venues/activities and without gates. Currently, there are no agreed upon methodologies among researchers as to how to estimate an open-gate festival attendance (Tyrrell & Ismail, 2005). This study aims to develop a new method—cross-location survey method to avoid disadvantages inherent in pervious methods (i.e., grids and gate counts, Getz, 1991; tag and recapture, Brothers & Brantley, 1993; aerial photographs, Raybould, Mules, Fredline, & Tamljenovic, 2000, etc.). This new method was used to estimate the total attendance for the 2008 National Cherry Blossom Festival (NCBF) held between March 29 and April 13, 2008 in Washington, DC.

Methods

Cross-location survey method involve surveys at two locations: one in a popular place that is very likely visited by visitors (i.e., a museum) and that counts and keeps a record of visitor number for each day; the other at the main venues of a festival. In Washington, DC, The National Air and Space Museum (NASM) is such a place with an accurate record of visitor numbers on a daily basis. At the NASM, every fifth visitor was asked at its main exit if he or she has attended the festival or was intending to attend during the festival period. Likewise, at the different venues of the festival, visitors were asked if they have visited the museum or were intending to visit during the same time period. In theory, the number of visitors at the museum who have attended or were intending to attend the festival would be the same as the number of visitors at the festival who have visited or were intending to visit the museum. Thus, the total estimated number of festival attendees can be estimated by the following formulas:

$$V_F/S_F \times N_F = V_M/S_M \times N_M \quad (1)$$

or

$$P_F \times N_F = P_M \times N_M \quad (2)$$

or

$$N_F = R \times N_M \quad (3)$$

V_F: number of visitors surveyed at the festival that visited or will visit the museum
S_F: total number of visitors surveyed at the festival
V_M: number of visitors surveyed at the museum that attended or will attend the festival
S_M: total number of visitors surveyed at the NASM
N_F: total number of festival attendees to be estimated
N_M: total number of visitors recorded at the NASM during the festival period
P_F: the percent of visitors who visited or will visit the NASM (surveyed at the NCBF)
P_M: the percent of visitors who attended or will attend the NCBF (surveyed at the NASM)
R: the ratio of P_M versus P_F

Findings

Surveys were conducted by the lead author and eight graduate and undergraduate students from West Virginia University. A total of 1,310 visitors at the museum were approached. Of this number, 1,095 visitors responded, resulting in a response rate of 83.6%. Of those who responded, 747 or 68.22% reported having attended the festival or will attend. At the main venues of the festival, a total of 1,714 visitors were approached. Of this number, 1,237 visitors were willing to participate in this study, resulting in a response rate of 72.2%. Of these 1,237 visitors, 1,230 answered the question concerning if they have visited or will visit the museum during the festival period. A total of 420 or 34.10% of these 1,230 visitors reported so. Thus, the ratio R is about 2.00 (i.e., 68.22%/34.10%=2.00).

Daily record of visitor numbers in the museum was obtained from the museum's communication department. A total of 466,334 visits were recorded for 16 days during the festival period. The total attendance is then estimated to be 466,334×2.00=932,668 persons. Because this number is estimated based on the survey, which accuracy is subject to sampling error, the sample size in this study can assure a sampling error of 3%. Thus, it is 95% certain that the actual attendance ranges between 876,708 persons (932,668−932,668×2×3%) and 988,628 persons (932,668+932,668×2×3%). In addition, 19.5% (or 181,870 persons) and 80.5% (or 750,798) of the festival attendees are local residents from DC and visitors from other places.

Because the museum number did not differentiate adults from kids, a visual count of kids and adults was conducted on March 31, April 4, 5, and April 8. A total of 9,412 persons were counted. Of this number, 7,670 or 81.49% were adults. The estimated number for adult attendees for the festival is

Table 1
Festival Attendance Breakdown by Age

Age	Percent	Number
Infant–2 years	2.67	24,902
3–5 years	2.50	23,317
6–9 years	3.64	33,949
10–13 years	4.22	39,359
14–17 years	3.81	35,535
18 years and over	83.16	775,607
Total	100.00	932,668

Percent is estimated based on survey.

760,031 persons (81.49% × 932,668) based on this percent. Information on kids was more specifically asked in the questionnaire survey, which resulted in 83.16% of attendance or 775,607 attendees being adults (Table 1). This number is comparable with that from the visual observation. The total attendance number can be broken down into different age groups based on the percent for each group obtained from the survey (Table 1).

To verify the accuracy of the estimated attendance based on the cross-location survey, on-site counts of adult visitors at the tidal basin area—the main venue of the festival with more than 2000 cherry trees planted along the lake bank—was conducted on varying hours between 9:00 am and 8:00 pm during 10 days, which covered weekdays and weekends and both good weather and foul weather. Also, 20 groups were tracked to estimate the percent of visitors who exited the bank loop and did not pass through the counting point. The average hourly number is 2909 persons, and the exit rate is 42.3%. The total estimated adult attendees at the tidal basin area during the festival would be 728,553 persons (2909/h × 11 h/day × 16 days × 1.423). This number plus the estimated attendees for the festival parade (about 37,000 based on on-site street counts) is 765,553, which is close to the above two numbers for adults (760,031 and 775,607).

Application of Results

The estimated total attendance by different age groups provides valid information needed for social and economic impact assessments for the festival. The cross-location survey method can be also applied and tested by other large-scale festivals with open gates and multivenues.

Conclusions

Previous studies found that a large number of festival attendees also reported having visited museums. For example, Prentice and Andersen (2003), in studying Edinburgh's festivals, found that of those interviewed, 38.9% had visited or were intending to visit the Royal Museum. This number is comparable to 34.1% reported in this study. More surveys in the future need to be conducted to see if the *R* value of 2.00 is a constant. If so, the total attendance for the NCBF is then a function of the total attendance for the NASM. This will save efforts needed to estimate the festival attendance because what is needed is to multiply the NASM attendance by the ratio *R*.

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28. DECISION-MAKING MODEL FOR THE CONVENTION INDUSTRY INCLUDING THREE STAKEHOLDERS: ATTENDEES, SHOW MANAGERS, AND CONVENTION CENTER MANAGEMENT

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Introduction

The decision-making process in the convention industry is somewhat complex due to the variety of events and the multiple stakeholders that are involved in the decision-making process. This study expands Oppermann and Chon's (1997) Conference Participation Decision-Making Model by including the three primary stakeholders (attendee, show manger, and venue management). The purpose of this study is to develop and apply the Convention Decision-Making Process Model for the convention industry to establish critical issues in the decision-making process throughout the course of the convention development by the multiple stakeholders. Therefore, the primary research question is: What are the critical decision-making issues for the stakeholders (attendees, show managers, and convention center management) pertaining to the convention experience? The convention experience includes decisions before the event, during the event, and after the event.

Methods

Qualitative interviews were used to collect data and answer the posed research question. The purpose of using a qualitative method is to gain a deeper understanding about what influences their decisions pertaining to their convention experience. A total of 40 interviews were conducted with attendees, show managers, and convention center management. The interview process used both open-ended and closed questions. Upon gaining permission from each indi-