

Impact of Information Technology on Service Standards in MICE Tourism in Sri Lanka

W.M.M.P.S. Dilshan*, J.P.R.C. Ranasinghe, A.M.D.B. Nawarathna and M.M.G.K. Marasinghe

Department of Tourism Studies, Uva Wellassa University, Badulla, Sri Lanka

The Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions (MICE) industry is an important and growing segment of the tourism industry with great potential. Further, with its exponential growth, many international MICE organizations are using information technology to maintain service standards within the industry. Hence, the objectives of the study were (i) to identify the present situation of using information technology, (ii) to identify the current issues and barriers associated with information technology, (iii) to identify benefits to the company by using information technology, (iv) to examine the factors affecting in improving information technology on service standards in MICE tourism in Sri Lanka. Primary data were collected through structured interviews, using a purposive sampling technique, from 12 MICE managers out of 28 event management organizations in Sri Lanka. All these organizations had membership of Sri Lanka Association of Professional Conference, Exhibition and Event Organizers. Qualitative data analytical method was employed and the collected data were transcribed and analysed by using thematic analysis. The findings of the study revealed that present situation of using information technology was not adequate and costly, difficult to convince, tech-savvy employees, and lack of government support as current issues and barriers associated with information technology on service standards in MICE tourism in Sri Lanka. Further, technologized MICE events could be used by organizers as a tool for gaining competitive advantages, cost reduction, time-saving, increase efficiency, and maintaining a good relationship with clients of the company which is affected by service standards in the MICE tourism industry. Moreover, this study identified price factor, government support, tech-savvy personals, and accurate database management system as factors affecting to improve information technology on service standards in MICE tourism in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: MICE tourism, Information technology, Service standards