



The interplay between competitive advantage and innovation in the MICE industry: a bibliometric and systematic review

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Abstract

Maintaining a competitive edge through innovation has become crucial in the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) industry given the rapid changes in global markets and technology breakthroughs. The relationship between innovation and competitive advantage in the MICE industry is examined in this systematic study, which employs the PRISMA technique to examine material from 2014 to 2024. The review delineates the fundamental concepts and dimensions of innovation and competitive advantage that are particular to the MICE industry, accentuating tactical methodologies and technical breakthroughs that bolster market standing and operational efficiency. Gained insights highlight how important innovation is to competitiveness and sustainable growth in a market that is becoming more complicated and environmentally concerned.

Keywords— *MICE industry, competitive advantage, innovation, systematic review, PRISMA.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The ever-evolving landscape of global markets and technological advancements has presented enterprises with new obstacles to staying competitive and relevant. Companies must constantly adapt and create new strategies to sustain their competitive advantage in the ever-changing business environment (Mady et al., 2023). In this situation, innovation shows itself to be one of the most important elements that can support businesses in thriving in a market that is becoming more and more competitive (Barforoush et al., 2021).

A company's ability to innovate is frequently what gives it a sustainable competitive advantage. Businesses can offer distinctive goods and services, increase operational effectiveness, and react faster to the shifting wants of their clientele thanks to innovation (Wahyono, 2020). Furthermore, adding value for clients and growing the business's market share can both be significantly aided by innovation.

In particular, the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) sector must manage the complex relationship between competitive advantage and sustainability. This industry is known for its high degree of player competition and dynamic nature. Businesses in the MICE sector need to constantly innovate in order to stand out from the competition and satisfy customers' changing needs. In an increasingly conscientious market, it is critical to comprehend how sustainable practices not only promote environmental conservation but also foster innovation (Rhee & Stephens, 2020), enhance brand equity, and bolster a company's market position (Lam et al., 2021).

Innovation in the MICE sector can take many different forms, such as the creation of novel event formats, the incorporation of cutting-edge technologies like virtual and augmented reality, and the adoption of environmentally friendly sustainable practices. By streamlining processes, cutting expenses, and improving attendee experience dramatically, these innovations can strengthen a company's competitive position (Chong & Ali, 2022).

The goal of this research is to provide a systematic evaluation of the body of literature on competitive advantage and innovation in the MICE business, given the complexity and importance of these problems. This review aims to give a thorough and organized examination of how innovation promotes competitive advantage in this industry by utilizing the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) methodology. Key trends, tactics, and technological advancements that have been shown to promote innovation and provide businesses a competitive edge will be made easier to detect with the aid of the systematic review.



This study attempts to provide deep insights into the methods via which innovation can be used to gain and preserve competitive advantage in the dynamic MICE business by methodically evaluating the literature. The objective is to create a thorough map of the academic environment as it exists today, highlighting major themes, trends, and future directions. The present review aims to investigate multiple pivotal research inquiries: (RQ1) How are innovation and competitive advantage defined in the MICE sector? (RQ2) What are the dimension of competitive advantage in this industry? (RQ3) What are the main objectives and research approaches used in the MICE industry's studies on competitive advantage?

The remaining sections of this study are organized in accordance with these research questions. We will go into the approach used for this review and the process for choosing the research in the next part. Through this systematic inquiry, the research will augment comprehension of the pivotal function of competitive advantage and innovation in the MICE sector and furnish pragmatic directives for the execution of efficacious innovation tactics. In the end, these insights will drive sustainable growth and long-term success in an increasingly competitive and environmentally conscious marketplace.

II. METHOD

A bibliometric and methodical analysis was conducted in this study using Emerald database and Science Direct database as the main source. The methodology of this research was created to ensure the accuracy and quality of the documents that were analyzed (Saunila, 2020). This included the use of Boolean operators in conjunction with a variety of indicators to enhance the search process. Additionally, the Emerald and Science Direct were selected as the database for this study due to its stringent inclusion criteria, which highlight the reliability and scholarly value of the resources that were explored.

The research team set out to create a search technique that would find publications that were closely related to the research topic. This tactic was supported by a thorough assessment procedure that aimed to identify the articles that were most and least relevant. This was necessary in order to exclude any search results that significantly deviated from the study's stated objectives. After a thorough examination of many potential search strategies, the search equation that follows turned out to be the most appropriate option out of all those that were taken into consideration. The paper's abstract, keywords, and title were all searched for the chosen terms. The following search terms were used in this systematic review for each electronic database that was selected:

- Emerald : TS = "competitive advantage\$" AND "innovation*" AND "MICE*"
- Science Direct : TS = "competitive advantage\$" AND "innovation" AND "MICE"

For searching on Emerald database, the construction of the search equation was segmented into three principal categories: (1) competitive advantage, (2) innovation, and the (3) MICE. Initially, to encompass a wide array of terminologies, a thesaurus dictionary facilitated the identification of synonyms for the main terms. The 'AND' operator played a crucial role in limiting the search results to articles that included components from the three categories that were discovered. Furthermore, the utilization of the wildcard sign (*) proved to be crucial in identifying various word variants in the search outcomes. Furthermore, the strategic use of the dollar sign (\$) allowed for the inclusion of plural forms of the designated terms in the analysis. Boolean operators are essential to bibliometric research because they make it possible to create complex and accurate search queries, which raises the relevance of the data that is found.

A. Study selection

The study selection process was an iterative and incremental process, in which it was divided into several stages with different activities carried out. The search covered documents added to the Emerald and Science Direct from the start of 2014 through mid of 2024. The implementation of the designated search algorithm on June 8, 2024, led to the initial identification of 567 articles from Emerald and 289 articles from Science Direct for this study's analysis.

Furthermore, the established search parameters were applied to the title keywords of the papers. This comprehensive approach was designed to ensure extraction of the most relevant and meaningful results while optimizing search duration. To uphold a thorough and systematic examination of the scientific literature, the research incorporated the PRISMA statement as its guiding framework. The selection of PRISMA was informed by its proven effectiveness in enhancing the reliability, replicability, and rigor of systematic reviews, a fact underscored by (Page et al., 2021).

B. Inclusion and exclusion criteria



The following inclusion and exclusion criteria (Table 1) were established to select studies that are relevant to obtaining answers to the proposed research questions (Merigó et al., 2017). The results obtained after applying the search strings were identified. The inclusion and exclusion criteria should be applied in each study.

Table 1

Inclusion criteria and exclusion criteria.

Inclusion Criteria:

The research work is related to the competitive advantage and innovation in the context of MICE.
The publication includes definition, dimension, and state of art on competitive advantage
Research papers are published between 2014 and 2024. The research papers are written in English.
The research papers have been published after being submitted to a peer review process.
The full version of the publication is available through the subscription of our institution or by the associations of which we are members. The research follows the appropriate structure of a research according to the research method.

Exclusion Criteria:

The research work is not related to the digital competence of teachers or students in the context of higher education. The publication does not include the state of the art on digital competence.
Research papers are not published between 2014 and 2024. Research papers are not written in English.
Research papers have been published without a peer review process.
The full version of the publication is not available through subscription from our institution or from the associations of which we are members. The publications do not follow the appropriate structure of a research according to the research method.

C. Quality criteria

Papers that met all the inclusion criteria and not match any of the exclusion criteria would be fully reviewed to decide if it fulfills a set of characteristics or quality criteria. In this review, the quality criteria focused on the description of the concept of innovation and competitive advantage, the research objectives, research design, research instrument, research state the art of digital competence in the context of MICE.

Each question had three options and answers were coded as yes (1 point), no (0 point) and partial (0.5 point). Publications would be scored based on the content corresponding to the questions. Papers included in the final process must have or exceed a value of 7.5 as a cut-off point for the selection of papers.

The remaining 82 articles were evaluated by a set of quality questions as criteria. From this step, 73 articles were eliminated. In the end, 9 articles were selected to do the analysis and answer the research questions.

This data extraction procedure is represented through a PRISMA flow in Fig. 1 (Moher et al., 2010; Page et al., 2021).

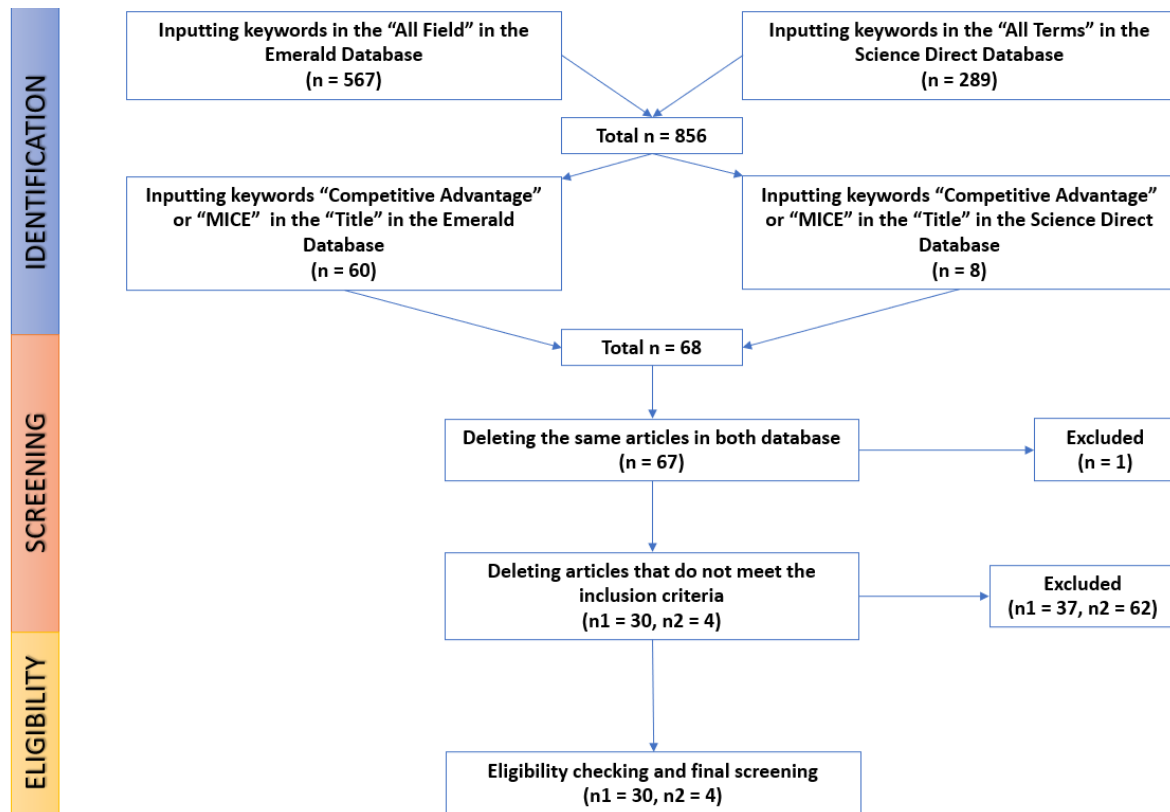


Figure 1: Procedure of Selecting Data

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this section, we provide answers to the research questions through the analysis of the selected articles. It is structured according to the questions posed, presenting the results of the systematic literature review (SLR).

A. How are innovation and competitive advantage defined in the context of MICE?

To clarify the definition of competitive advantage, we looked at a selection of 30 important pieces (n1, Fig. 1) from the scholarly literature to define innovation and competitive advantage in the context of the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) market. Of these, 8 publications relied only on academic research, 4 pieces referenced industry reports, and 8 articles defined innovation and competitive advantage by referencing research papers and industry-specific reports.

The majority of articles offered a broad definition of innovation and competitive advantage that was applicable to many different sectors. Twelve publications, however, put these ideas in the context of the MICE sector. Of these, 7 publications highlighted the distinctive features of innovation in event management, notably the incorporation of cutting-edge technologies like virtual and augmented reality, and 5 publications concentrated on distinctive competitive advantage tactics.

Table 2
Quality criteria.

Quality criteria
1. Is the concept of digital competence clearly defined?
2. Are the research objectives clearly specified?
3. Is the study designed to achieve the objectives?
4. Is the instrument clearly described and design based?
5. Is the sample and population of the study clearly described, and is its size sufficient to carry out the proposed analyses?
6. Are the research questions adequately answered?
7. Do the authors discuss state of art of the research?



In defining innovation within the MICE industry, 14 of the selected publications referred to frameworks established by the European Commission and other major policy bodies (Akbari et al., 2021; Alkhatib & Valeri, 2024; Iqbal et al., 2022; Mendoza-Silva, 2020). For instance, a number of studies emphasized how crucial it is to implement digital technology in order to improve operational effectiveness and event experiences. Innovation has frequently been defined as the process of bringing in novel techniques, concepts, or goods to enhance offerings and add value for participants and stakeholders (Tang & Chen, 2020)

According to the research, gaining a competitive advantage in the MICE sector frequently entailed using special skills and resources to surpass rivals. Providing exceptional client experiences, achieving operational excellence, and implementing sustainable practices were all part of this. Ten publications, for instance, referenced Porter's (1985) concept and emphasized the significance of cost leadership and differentiation tactics in obtaining a competitive edge.

Additionally, six essays emphasized certain aspects of innovation and competitive advantage in the MICE sector, including customer interaction, sustainability, and technology adoption. These factors were essential to comprehending how MICE companies might develop and maintain their competitive edge in a sector that was changing quickly (Rojas-Bueno et al., 2023).

In conclusion, the chosen literature shows that the introduction and use of novel concepts, tools, and techniques to improve event planning and guest experiences is the wide definition of innovation in the MICE sector. The strategic application of special talents and resources to attain better performance and market distinction is known as competitive advantage. The study emphasizes how innovation and competitive advantage are interwoven ideas that are crucial for MICE firms to succeed in a dynamic and competitive market.

B. What are the dimensions commonly used on competitive advantage in MICE industry?

Various instruments with different dimensions were used among these 4 selected publications (n2, Fig. 1). According to Rojas-Bueno et al. (2023). In the MICE industry, competitive advantage dimensions include quality of service, attention to detail, sensitivity, adaptability, trust, convenience, and relationship marketing. They added that key factors influencing trust and commitment in supply chain relationships within the MICE industry include integrity, trustworthiness, reliability, and benevolence of partners. Trust is essential for creating value in the MICE industry, and it influences the development of professional relationships that lead to repeated business.

Another study from Zazueta-Hernández & Velarde-Valdez (2023) explained the dimensions used to assess competitive advantage in the MICE industry include resource factors, destination management factors, conditioning factors of the environment, and conditioning factors of the demand.

Infrastructure, human resources, and financial resources are all considered resource aspects since they are necessary to provide high-quality experiences and services. Coordination of stakeholders, strategic marketing, and reliable service quality are all necessary for effective destination management. The attractiveness of a place is greatly influenced by environmental conditioning variables, including political and economic stability, regulatory frameworks, and health and safety standards. Demand conditioning elements also include knowing consumer happiness, market trends, and the destination's cultural and social attraction. MICE destinations and businesses can gain and maintain a competitive edge in the global market by utilizing these dimensions.

Furthermore, Radomska et al., (2021) believes the dimensions used to measure competitive advantage in the MICE industry include; high willingness to modify the business model, flexibility and high speed of response to environmental challenges, setting new standards in the industry, and working towards innovation and technology.

An organization's ability to adjust its strategies and operations in response to changing market needs and opportunities, ensuring relevance and competitiveness, is indicated by a high willingness to modify the business model. MICE firms are able to quickly manage disturbances and retain operating continuity because of their flexibility and quick responsiveness to environmental difficulties, like as changes in the economy, regulations, or global health crises. Establishing benchmarks, leading by example, and innovating best practices are all part of setting new standards in the sector and improving its all-around attractiveness and reputation. Last but not least, a strong emphasis on innovation and the adoption of new technologies guarantees that MICE firms can provide cutting-edge solutions, improve attendee experiences, and boost operational effectiveness—all of which are essential for maintaining a competitive edge in a fast-paced, dynamic sector.

Lastly, from the Customer Relation Management (CRM) point of view, in MICE industry, competitive advantage is often achieved through customer insight, customer loyalty, and customer equity (Chumpoonta,

2024). Moreover, customer equity plays a crucial role in gaining a competitive advantage in the MICE industry. By focusing on building long-term relationships with customers and maximizing their lifetime value, businesses can enhance their customer equity and differentiate themselves from competitors. This emphasis on customer equity helps in creating a sustainable competitive advantage in the MICE industry.

The Table 3 [1] offers a thorough synopsis of these dimensions as found in 4 particular journals, along with the goals of the research and the techniques used in these investigations. This thorough summary makes it easy to comprehend how many elements contribute to a competitive edge in the MICE sector and showcases the various ways that scholars have approached the exploration of these important issues.

Table 3: Information of Articles

No	Journal Title	Published Year	Dimension	Research Purpose	Methodology
1	The Role of Intermediaries in the MICE Tourism Value Chain: Consensus or Dissonance?	2023	Quality of service, attention to detail, sensitivity, adaptability, trust, convenience, and relationship marketing	The major research purposes of the study were to identify and validate the variables that determine value creation in the MICE sector and to analyze the role of intermediaries from the perspective of all MICE stakeholders	The methodologies employed in the study included grounded theory with in-depth interviews, qualitative analysis with external evaluators, and a survey design using a Likert scale to measure respondents' agreement with statements
2	Analysis of Competitiveness Factors for MICE Tourism: The Case of Mazatlan, Sinaloa	2023	Resource factors, destination management factors, conditioning factors of the environment, and conditioning factors of the demand	The research purpose was to analyze the competitiveness of MICE tourism in Mazatlan, focusing on its comparative advantages and factors determining its competitiveness.	The methodology involved a mixed approach using quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques, including interviews, surveys, and documentary analysis.
3	Injecting Courage into Strategy: The Perspective of Competitive Advantage	2020	High willingness to modify the business model, flexibility and high speed of response to environmental challenges, setting new standards in the industry, and working towards innovation and technology	The study investigated how risky strategies impact dynamic growth priorities and organizational performance, specifically focusing on revenue dynamics. It explored the relationships between risky decisions, competitive advantage, revenue growth, and the mediating role of competitive advantage on firm performance.	The study utilized direct questionnaire interviews with 122 companies using paper-and-pencil methods. Data collection employed a five-point Likert scale to assess perceptions, and hypotheses were tested using structural equation modeling (SEM).
4	Overcoming Business Disruption for MICE Business (Powered by ZOHO CRM)	2024	Customer insight, customer loyalty, and customer equity	The study aimed to identify and validate the variables determining value creation in the MICE sector and to analyze the role of intermediaries from the perspective of all MICE stakeholders.	Methodologies included grounded theory with in-depth interviews, qualitative analysis with external evaluators, and a Likert scale survey.

C. What were the major research purposes and methodologies in the studies of competitive advantage in the context of MICE over the past ten years?

Firstly, the research concretized the concept of competitive advantage and offered us an understanding from different aspects and subdivides innovation. Furthermore, it presented us with several precise instruments under different theoretical frameworks to carry out competitive assessment in MICE industry.

To clarify the progress that has been made in the research on competitive advantage in MICE industry over the past ten years, we examined research purposes and research method to gather the related information.

In the first study, the aim of the study was to examine the competitiveness of MICE tourism in Mazatlan, with a particular emphasis on the elements that determine its competitiveness and its comparative advantages. Furthermore, with a particular focus on revenue dynamics, the next study examined the effects of risky tactics on dynamic growth priorities and organizational performance. It investigated how hazardous choices, competitive advantage, revenue growth, and the competitive advantage's mediating effect on firm performance are related to one another.

The next study is willing to examine the competitiveness of MICE tourism in Mazatlan, with a particular emphasis on the elements that determine its competitiveness and its comparative advantages. In the fourth study, the purpose of the research is to explore the importance of implementing Customer Relationship Management (CRM) technology, specifically Zoho CRM, in the MICE industry to overcome business disruptions caused by digital technology during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study aims to highlight the benefits of using CRM technology, the capabilities of CRM information systems, and the criteria for selecting CRM systems in the MICE industry. Additionally, it emphasizes the role of digital transformation in enhancing business operations and customer relationships within the MICE industry.

The major research purposes of the study were to identify and validate the variables that determine value creation in the MICE sector and to analyze the role of intermediaries from the perspective of all MICE stakeholders. The methodologies employed in the study included grounded theory with in-depth interviews, qualitative analysis with external evaluators, and a survey design using a Likert scale to measure respondents' agreement with statements.

VI. CONCLUSIONS



The systematic review sheds light on how innovation is essential to gaining and preserving a competitive edge in the MICE sector. This paper outlines innovation as the driving force behind operational excellence and difference through a thorough investigation of the literature, which is essential for satisfying changing industry standards and customer expectations. The dimensions of competitive advantage that have been discovered span a wide range of attributes, including technology integration, customer equity, flexibility and responsiveness, and market position. These techniques are utilized by MICE firms to improve their market position and secure their long-term existence. This review provides a thorough framework for comprehending and putting into practice innovative strategies in the MICE sector by combining insights from various methodologies and research goals. This is crucial for managing competitive pressures and fostering sustainable success in a fast-paced global marketplace.

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