



## MOTIVATIONAL PUSH AND PULL FACTORS INFLUENCING INTENTIONS TO REVISIT JORDAN AS A MICE DESTINATION

Ammar Ramadan<sup>a</sup> , Azilah Kasim<sup>b</sup> 

<sup>a</sup> Universiti Utara Malaysia (Sintok, Malaysia), School of Tourism Hospitality and Event Management; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8281-3384>; e-mail: ammar.alramadan@hotmail.com

<sup>b</sup> Universiti Utara Malaysia (Sintok, Malaysia), School of Tourism Hospitality and Event Management, Langkawi International Tourism and Hospitality Research Center; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2217-0989>; e-mail: azilah@uum.edu.my

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### ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study is to examine the impact of push and pull factors on the intentions of international participants to revisit MICE events held in Amman, given that there are very few existing studies on the topic. This research is quantitative and employs a questionnaire method to collect data. For data analysis, partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was utilized to test the research hypothesis with a purposive sample of 479 international visitors who had attended 14 MICE events held in Amman in 2022. The study revealed that networking opportunities, educational opportunities, destination image, travel cost, destination attraction and accessibility have a significant positive impact on revisit intentions. In terms of implications, these findings contribute to enriching push and pull theory in this context among MICE participants. In practical terms, the findings contribute to empowering planners, managers, marketers and organizers in the MICE industry in terms of creating and promoting effective strategies related to MICE tourism. The findings are anticipated to be useful for conference organizers, enabling them to attract repeat participants in this extremely competitive event industry.

### KEYWORDS

push factors, pull factors, revisit intention, MICE

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Meeting, incentive, convention and exhibition (MICE) tourism was designated as one of the fastest-expanding segments in the tourism industry for 2020 (Anas et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2019; Nasir et al., 2019), generating two to four times the revenue of other segments (Anas et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2019). Besides generating high tourism earnings, MICE has also benefited destinations by creating jobs, reducing seasonality, increasing

the attractiveness of destinations to tourists, and helping countries develop their tourism services and infrastructure. This, in turn, helps stakeholders attract high-spending tourists (Alananzeh et al., 2019; Anas et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2019; Nasir et al., 2019). Notwithstanding the fact that numerous countries and governments consider MICE an important component for increasing tourism revenue (Cró & Martins, 2018; Whitfield et al., 2014), there are still a number of developing nations that have struggled to market



Tanford et al. (2012)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Houdement et al. (2017)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Rittichainuwat et al. (2001)	-	Hospitality educators	+	+	+	+	+	+
Severt et al. (2007)	-	Not specified	+	+	+	+	+	+
Zhang et al. (2007)	-	Educators	+	+	+	+	+	+
Mair and Thompson (2009)	-	Academic association	+	+	+	+	+	+
Yoo and Zhao (2010)	-	Hospitality industry professionals	+	+	+	+	+	+
Malekmohammadi et al. (2011)	-	Conference attendees	+	+	+	+	+	+
Kim et al. (2012)	-	International academic conventions	+	+	+	+	+	+
Kim and Malek (2017)	-	Medical convention attendees	+	+	+	+	+	+
Mair et al. (2018)	-	Association conference attendees	+	+	+	+	+	+
Pavluković and Cimbajević (2020)	-	Academic attendees	+	+	+	+	+	+
Hashemi et al. (2020)	-	Academic conferences	+	+	+	+	+	+
Gračan et al. (2021)	-	Convention attendees	+	+	+	+	+	+

Source: authors.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Travel motivation and push-pull theory

Motivation is the term used to describe the psychological and biological needs and desires that encompass the underlying forces that elicit, direct and integrate a person's behaviour and activities (Dann, 1981). The explanation of what travellers are looking for and how to address such expectations is provided by their motivation, a crucial component in understanding travel behaviour (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1981). Also, it is anticipated that as motivation is thought to be the primary driving force for behaviour, it will have an impact on tourists' attitudes toward revisiting a particular destination (Kim et al., 2013).

In order to understand travel behaviour among tourists, and to characterize the push and pull factors

and revisit intentions, push and pull theory is used as the basis for this study. The theory primarily supports the use of two factors in explaining tourists' behaviour, i.e. push factors which are explained by the individual's internal travel goals, and pull factors which are explained by the individual's choice of destination attributes. The push-pull theory explains how tourists behave by identifying the various demands and desires that may influence their final destination choice. Push factors are defined as socio-psychological demands that affect travel decisions, whilst pull factors refer to attributes that attract tourists to select a specific destination after deciding to travel (Preko et al., 2019). This theory suggests that certain push and pull factors drive travel decisions (Dann, 1981). Conventional wisdom holds that push factors come before pull factors (Dann, 1977, 1981). Therefore, previous studies

have demonstrated that pull factors cannot be effective without push factors.

Numerous works including those of Crompton (1979), Dann (1981), Iso-Ahola (1982), Baloglu and Uysal (1996), Battour et al. (2012), and Dayour and Atanga Adongo (2015) have acknowledged the significance of the push and pull theory in explaining the motivations of tourists in selecting a travel destination and can be used to shed light on why tourists choose to travel to a specific destination (Baniya et al., 2017; Fila Hidayana et al., 2019; Khuong & Ha, 2014; Kim, 2021). The concept of push-pull was initially applied by Dann (1977), and also by Crompton (1979) who in a more extensive manner listed nine push-pull factors: seven being social psychological push factors (i.e. escape, self-exploration, relaxation, prestige, regression, kinship enhancement and social interaction) and two cultural pull factors (i.e. novelty and education).

Related studies examined push-pull factors in multiple domains including spas (Dimitrovski et al., 2021), health and wellness (Ting et al., 2021), youth tourism (Preko et al., 2019), travel motivation (Luvsandavaajav & Narantuya, 2021), and event tourism (Qi et al., 2019). Furthermore, push-pull theory has been widely used in tourism and event studies (Baniya et al., 2017; Baptista et al., 2020; Dimitrovski et al., 2021; Luvsandavaajav & Narantuya, 2021; Preko et al., 2019; Qi et al., 2019; Yousefi & Marzuki, 2015), thus confirming its applicability in this domain.

Push-pull theory primarily describes correlations among factors when choosing a travel destination. Based on this theory, these factors affect travellers' decisions and behaviour and integrates internal and external factors that facilitate or inhibit revisiting decisions. As such, this theory is deemed superior for elucidating the relationships and how they result in revisit intentions in a MICE setting. As the MICE tourism market has gained recognition as one of the most important segments in the business events setting (Barkidija Sotošek, 2020; Cassar et al., 2020), it is necessary to examine the motivations of MICE tourists (Altareri, 2016; Micić et al., 2019). Therefore, based on an extensive literature review, this study identified six push and pull factors from the perspective of the attendees as mentioned in Table 1 which include networking opportunities, educational opportunities, travel cost, destination attraction, destination image and accessibility. Thus, this justifies the selection of this theory as the theoretical underpinning of this current study.

### **Business event motivation**

The MICE event sector significantly affects a local economy both directly and indirectly and contributes to the development of many destinations (Dimitrovski et al., 2021). The types of event that influence attendance

motivation are different depending on the event. Researchers have long argued the factors motivating attendance (Dragin-Jensen et al., 2018), and event planners and destination marketers usually aim to better understand these motivational factors in order to expand their knowledge and ensure attendee satisfaction (Dragin-Jensen et al., 2018). Yoo and Chon (2008) indicated that numerous motivational factors drive MICE travellers' decisions and behaviours while Anas et al. (2020) stated that motivational factors determine the success of MICE event. The motivational push and pull factors can be used to predict travellers' intent to attend or return to MICE events while Ramadan and Kasim (2022) revealed that the push and pull factors strongly influence an attendee's intention to revisit the same MICE event. Consequently, it is reasonable to assume that when push-and-pull travel motivations are combined, the likelihood of returning to a MICE destination increases; thus, it is essential to understand such events from the perspective of MICE attendees.

MICE tourism studies have classified the motivational drivers into two categories, namely push and pull factors (Gračan et al., 2021; Kim & Malek, 2017; Mair et al., 2018; Malekmohammadi et al., 2011; Zhang et al., 2007). As seen in Table 1, the decision-making model developed by Oppermann and Chon (1997) has been widely used for assessing event attendance motivation and a more refined version of the model was later introduced by Zhang et al. (2007). However, empirical testing has never been done on both. Subsequent studies have since continued exploration on the motivational factors and Severt et al. (2007) came up with five motivational dimensions namely activities and opportunities, networking, locational convenience and educational opportunities, as well as products and deals. According to Yoo and Chon (2008), destination stimuli, safety and health situations, attendance cost, networking opportunities and educational opportunities represent the key motivations for MICE event participation.

Mair and Thompson (2009) investigated leisure tourism decision-making models in the context of conferences, with a particular focus on UK conference delegates. The authors identified cost, networking opportunities, destination attractiveness and accessibility as the fundamental factors for attending an association event. Malekmohammadi et al. (2011) identified professional and prestige as push dimensions which include networking and educational opportunities, and destination factors such as cost, image and accessibility as pull dimensions. Kim and Malek (2017) explored the three motivational dimensions for attending medical conventions namely location which includes accessibility and attractions; programme which includes educational opportunities; and personal and professional development which

includes networking opportunities. Another study on the factors affecting academic travellers' motivation to attend international conferences was conducted by Pavluković and Cimbalević (2020) who identified the attributes of costs and accessibility as well as attractiveness. Similarly, Gračan et al. (2021) found that accessibility, attraction, networking and educational opportunities are major factors influencing attendees' behavioural intentions toward MICE events.

Based on the discussion above, Table 1 shows the dimensions of motivational factors in the context of conventions, which are posited to drive the decision to attend MICE events. Table 1 also provides samples of these convention studies, largely comprised of planners, association representatives, educators and academic convention attendees. Despite motivational factors being studied from various perspectives, the present study determined six from the perspective of international attendees, including networking opportunities, educational opportunities, travel cost, destination attraction, destination image and accessibility. These factors have therefore been utilized to develop a conceptual framework for investigating the push-pull factors for re-attending MICE events.

### Networking opportunities

Networking opportunities are deemed primary motivators for attending MICE events (Cassar et al., 2020) and are also the main motivation for (re)attending a MICE event. Numerous studies have shown that attendance is influenced by the desire for peer recognition, meeting new professionals, and having more networking opportunities (Barkidija Sotošek, 2020; Cassar et al., 2020; Dimitrovski et al., 2021; Gračan et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2012). Event participants typically have a natural goal of acquiring new knowledge and skills when attending conventions, and this becomes their primary motivation for doing so. Attendees often choose to re-attend the convention that best meets their networking objectives and relevant research has revealed that networking opportunities have a positive impact on participants' decisions to attend or (re)attend MICE events (Barkidija Sotošek, 2020; Hashemi et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2012; Lee & Min, 2013; Lee et al., 2019; Mair & Thompson, 2009). Therefore, the hypothesis below is proposed:

H<sub>1</sub>: Networking opportunities have a positive impact on the intention to revisit a MICE destination.

### Educational opportunities

Educational opportunities are defined as the learning of new ideas, knowledge and skills for MICE event attendees (Kim et al., 2012) while Barkidija Sotošek (2020) illustrated that educational opportunities make up the primary dimension of attendance in the convention domain. Furthermore, it is a crucial motivating factor

for attending MICE events (Mair et al., 2018) and the motivation to attend and re-attend MICE events stems from the acquisition of skills, knowledge sharing and the exchange of ideas among attendees (Barkidija Sotošek, 2020; Cassar et al., 2020; Gračan et al., 2021; Pavluković & Cimbalević, 2020). Previous research has detected that educational opportunities pose a positive impact on participants' decisions to re-attend MICE events (Gračan et al., 2021; Hashemi et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2012; Lee & Min, 2013; Pavluković & Cimbalević, 2020). MICE event participants have a significant opportunity to acquire such opportunities and that strongly motivates them to revisit the same event. Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H<sub>2</sub>: Educational opportunities have a positive impact on the intention to revisit a MICE destination.

### Destination image

Destination image is deemed to be a major predictor of revisit intentions (Al-Dweik, 2020; Houdement et al., 2017; Ramli et al., 2020) and is also deemed a critical element in tourists' decisions to attend MICE events. Destination image significantly affects tourists' intentions to re-participate in events held at the same destination in the future (Al-Dweik, 2020). According to Al-Dweik (2020) a positive image can increase attendee's intentions to (re)attend an event and its destination and give positive recommendations to others, and vice versa. Related studies have found that the destination image positively influences return intentions (Al-Dweik, 2020; Allameh et al., 2015; Fitri, 2021). Based on all the above, the following hypothesis is suggested:

H<sub>3</sub>: Destination image has a positive impact on the intention to revisit a MICE destination.

### Travel cost

Travel cost is considered a strong factor influencing choices to re-attend MICE events (Elston & Draper, 2012; Kim et al., 2020; Veloutsou & Chreppas, 2015; Yoo & Zhao, 2010). Abbasi et al. (2021) demonstrated that the travel cost for attracting and maintaining repeat visitors is significantly lower than that for attracting first-time visitors. A destination that entails exorbitant travel costs has a negative effect on future attendance, thus causing the failure of the event. In short, unsuitable travel costs make international tourists avoid (re)attending MICE events (Anas et al., 2020; Barkidija Sotošek, 2020; Houdement et al., 2017). Relevant empirical studies revealed that travel cost has a positive impact on tourists' willingness to (re)attend MICE events (Liang & Latip, 2018; Thong et al., 2020; Watjanasooontorn et al., 2019; Yodsuwan et al., 2021). Based on this, the hypothesis below is suggested:

H<sub>4</sub>: Travel cost has a positive impact on the intention to revisit a MICE destination.

### Destination attraction

Destination attraction is considered a vital motivational factor for visiting or revisiting a destination (Bi et al., 2020) and has also been identified as a key driver of a tourist's decision to revisit a particular destination (De Nisco et al., 2015). Destination attractiveness also plays an important role in maximizing the economic benefits yielded from event attendance (Hashemi et al., 2020). Ramadan and Kasim (2022) have also declared that a destination that provides various attractions inspires event planners to host MICE activities there and entices travellers to revisit it. Furthermore, a destination that provides more attractions encourages MICE tourists' decisions to revisit it in the future (Hashemi et al., 2018). Related studies have detected that destination attraction has a positive influence on a tourist's decision to revisit (Choi, 2013; Puspitasari et al., 2020; Sianipar et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2020). Based on all the above, the following hypothesis is suggested:

H<sub>5</sub>: Destination attraction has a positive impact on the intention to revisit a MICE destination.

### Accessibility

Accessibility is considered a significant factor in the MICE context, as it is related to the destination. Alananzeh (2012) elucidated that MICE tourists consider the aspect of accessibility in the pre-, during and post-attendance phases. Whitfield et al. (2014) revealed that such tourists consider accessibility as an essential element in their decision to revisit an event destination while Hashemi et al. (2020) also affirmed that accessibility is an important factor. Barkidžija Sotošek (2020) explained that for a destination with high accessibility, the journey would not take long and would not need numerous modes of transportation. Hence, the higher the accessibility, the more desirable the destination becomes. Previous studies demonstrated that accessibility has a positive impact on the intention to revisit a destination (Giao et al., 2020; Hashemi et al., 2020; Lee & Min, 2013; Ngoc & Trinh, 2015). The following hypothesis is suggested:

H<sub>6</sub>: Accessibility has a positive influence on intention to revisit a MICE destination.

### Revisit intentions

Travel behaviour has been classified into pre-, during and post-travel behaviours. In the post-travel stage, word-of-mouth recommendations are taken into consideration by tourists (Lee et al., 2019) while in each phase, the tourist will use their experience and weigh the pros and cons of the destination. This research focuses on the post-travel stage, specifically revisiting intentions.

The concept of revisit intention is one of the key issues discussed in the event domain (Al-Dweik, 2020; Bi et al., 2020; Fitri, 2021; Tsai, 2021; Yen, 2020). Revisit

intention refers to tourists' willingness to make a repeat visit to the same destination (Abbasi et al., 2021). Weru (2021) acknowledged that revisit intentions are the best predictor of post-travel behaviour, when tourists have a strong intention to engage in such behaviour, they prefer to participate in an event or revisit MICE destinations. Revisit intention has been viewed as an extension of the tourists' experience describing their future willingness to revisit the same destination being determined by previous travel experience (Ramadan & Kasim, 2022). Most studies related to MICE focused on destination selection from the standpoint of tourists and meeting planners (Aktas & Demirel, 2019; Crouch et al., 2019; Houdement et al., 2017; Liang & Latip, 2018; Para & Kachniewska, 2014; Pavluković & Cimbajević, 2020); however, only a handful of studies investigated revisit intentions from the standpoint of tourists in the MICE domain (Bi et al., 2020; Fitri, 2021; Yodsuwan et al., 2021). The intention to revisit is therefore one of the concerns that would be prioritized in the MICE environment to enable successful events, as well as an improved understanding among participants. Consequently, research on revisit intention in the MICE context is still scarce (Bi et al., 2020).

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section provides the methodology used in the current study. It consists of the study area, research model, sample size, research design, measurements, questionnaire, data collection tool and sampling technique.

### 3.1. STUDY AREA

Jordan has many vital attributes as a possible international MICE destination as it is situated in the heart of the Middle East, making it an attractive conference venue for international events (Alananzeh et al., 2019). Jordan's MICE industry has come of age and is now developing into an outstanding destination, offering remarkable tourism experiences that would entice tourists to return. According to Alananzeh (2012), Jordan's exceptional destination attributes make up the basis of its global competitive edge. About 68% of its MICE events are held in its capital city of Amman (Alananzeh et al., 2019). The International Congress and Convention Association (2023) reported that 88% of MICE events are concentrated there. Therefore, MICE events play an essential role in boosting Jordan's image as a tourism destination, reducing seasonality, and attracting high-spending tourists to Amman in particular (Alananzeh et al., 2019; Ramadan & Kasim, 2022).

### 3.2. SAMPLE SIZE

The population for this study includes those international tourists who attended MICE events held in Amman in 2022 and the sample size was determined based on the total number of event attendees in 2021. According to a report by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (2021) approximately 80,000 visitors attended such events in 2021. Sekaran and Bougie (2016) stated that if the population exceeds 75,000, the sample size should be at least 384 which is sufficient for this study.

### 3.3. RESEARCH MODEL, RESEARCH DESIGN, MEASUREMENTS AND QUESTIONNAIRE

Figure 1 represents the study model that shows independent and dependent variables and the proposed relationship between them. This study is quantitative in nature, analyzing the push-pull factors affecting revisit intentions and its measurements were derived from past studies and modified accordingly. The constructs of networking opportunities, educational opportunities, destination image, travel cost, destination attraction and accessibility are considered independent variables, and revisit intention is the dependent variable. Networking opportunities (NO) were measured via five items, as suggested by Yoo and Zhao (2010) and Gračan et al. (2021); educational opportunities (EO) were measured through six items as suggested by Gračan et al. (2021), Grant and Weaver (1996), and Kim et al. (2012); destination image (DI) was measured using eight items, as suggested by Xu et al. (2018) and Alananzeh (2012); travel cost (TC) has five items derived from Pavluković and Cimbalević (2020), Alananzeh (2012) and Rittichainuwat et al. (2001); while five items were used to measure destination attraction (DA), following Hashemi et al. (2020); six items were used to measure accessibility (AC), following Hashemi et al. (2020), Pavluković and Cimbalević (2020), and Alananzeh (2012). Intention to revisit (RI) was measured using four items, as suggested by Bi et al. (2020).

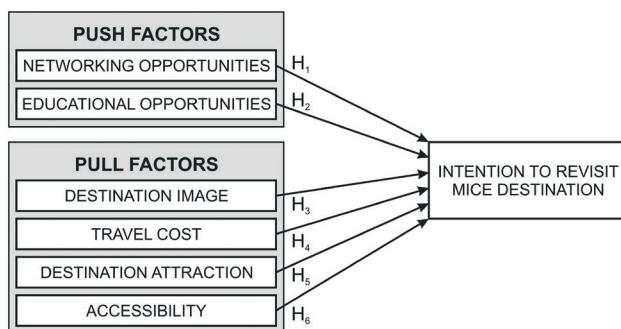


Figure 1. Conceptual framework for the study  
Source: authors

The content validity of the research instrument was confirmed by five academic and tourism experts, ensuring that the measures incorporate enough items to represent the concept (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Any potential confusion was alleviated by providing clear definitions of networking opportunities, educational opportunities, destination image, travel cost, destination attraction, accessibility and revisit intentions at the beginning of the evaluation sheet given to the experts. Using these definitions, they were required to identify any deficiencies or contamination in each item and evaluate their suitability for measuring the factors. After collecting all the comments, a consensus analysis was conducted to compare them. Minor modifications were made to the scale based on the agreement of two or more experts. Finally, the instrument design was finalized and the items were evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale, where (1) represented *strongly disagree* and (5) represented *strongly agree*. The questionnaire was developed in English.

### 3.4. DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

This study collected data by self-administering questionnaires and the respondents were chosen using the purposive sampling technique. The researcher was stationed at international MICE events and purposefully approached participants through a screening question to confirm if they were international tourists and if they had attended events in Amman before. Based on the researcher's judgment and knowledge, questionnaires were distributed to 479 international participants attending 14 international MICE events in Amman from June to September 2022.

## 4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Before conducting the analysis, the data were screened to ensure that it was error-free (Pallant, 2013). The SPSS software was used for this purpose, including examinations for data accuracy, missing values, outliers (univariate and multivariate), multicollinearity and normality (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). After confirming that the data was error-free, the partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) method was employed to analyze the latent constructs, and Smart-PLS 3.0 was used to test the hypotheses. PLS-SEM is more suitable for complex models, small sample sizes, non-normal data distribution, reflective measures and predictive research (Hair et al., 2011). Therefore, this study utilized PLS-SEM as a reflective construct.

#### 4.1. RESPONDENTS' PROFILE

In Table 2 the demographic variables are utilized to describe the basic information about respondents. Out of the 479, 223 (46.6%) were male, and the remaining 256 (53.4%) female. Considering age, most were between 30 and 39 (29.4%), followed by 40–49 (24.8%), 50–59 (21.7%), 60 and above (12.9%), and 20–29 (11.1%). In the context of education, most of the respondents have a Bachelor's degree (168; 35.1%), followed by a Master's (141; 29.4%), a PhD (123; 25.7%), a college diploma (29; 6.9%), or just high school education (18; 3.8%). Concerning marital status, most are married, 347 (72.4%), whilst the rest are either single – 115 (24.0%), divorced – 10 (2.1%), or widowed – 7 (1.5%). In terms of income, most of the respondents make between \$2000 and \$3000 (34.7%) per month, followed by \$3000 to \$4000 (20.7%), \$1000 to \$2000 (18.4%), more than \$4000 (17.5%), and less than \$1000 (8.8%). For nationality, most are from Asia (264 or 55.3%), followed by Europe (110 or 22.9%), Africa (67 or 13.9%), America (35 or 7.3%), and only three (0.6%) from Australia.

Table 2. Summary of demographic characteristics ( $n = 479$ )

Demographics	Indicators	Frequency	Valid percentage
Gender	Male	223	46.6
	Female	256	53.4
	Total	479	100.0
Age	20–29 years	53	11.1
	30–39 years	141	29.4
	40–49 years	119	24.8
	50–59 years	104	21.7
	60 and above	62	12.9
	Total	479	100.0
Education	High school education	18	3.8
	College diploma	29	6.1
	Bachelor's degree	168	35.1
	Master's degree	141	29.4
	PhD	123	25.7
	Total	479	100.0
Marital status	Single	115	24.0
	Married	347	72.4
	Divorced	10	2.1
	Widowed	7	1.5
	Total	479	100.0

Income	Less than \$1000	42	8.8
	1001–2000	88	18.4
	2001–3000	166	34.7
	3001–4000	99	20.7
	More than 4000	84	17.5
	Total	479	100.0
Nationality	Asia	264	55.3
	Europe	110	22.9
	Africa	67	13.9
	America	35	7.3
	Australia	3	0.6
	Total	479	100.0

Source: authors.

#### 4.2. TESTING THE MEASUREMENT MODEL

The measurement model assessment entails evaluations of the internal consistency, reliability and construct validity of the measurement scales (Hair et al., 2017). The reliability of each item is determined by its factor loadings on the corresponding constructs (Hair et al., 2017) with normal loadings being at least 0.70, and explaining 50% or more of the item variance as indicated by the constructs (Henseler & Chin, 2010). Hair et al. (2014, p. 107) stated that “indicators with outer loadings between 0.40 and 0.70 should be considered for removal only if the deletion leads to an increase in composite reliability and average variance extracted (AVE) above the suggested threshold value”. Table 3 shows that items with outer loadings of 0.40 and lower were omitted, hence raising composite reliability and the AVE values (Hair et al., 2014). Overall, eight items out of 39 were omitted for having loadings lower than 0.40. This means that 31 items with loadings above 0.40 were retained. The internal consistency and reliability of the measurement scales were determined using composite reliability. Table 3 demonstrates composite reliability values ranging from 0.853 to 0.950, indicating that the scales are reliable with values exceeding 0.70 (Hair et al., 2017). The validity of the measurement scale was determined through convergent and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2017). Convergent validity involves assessing indicator reliability and AVE. Table 3 shows that all the latent variables' AVE values exceed the cut-off value of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2017), with a range of between 0.592 and 0.826, indicating adequate convergent validity for all the constructs. Meanwhile, discriminant validity, or the degree of differences between the latent variables, was assessed using measures of cross-loadings, the Fornell-Larcker (1981) criterion, and the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of



correlations (Hair et al., 2017). Based on the findings with the other constructs. Hence, discriminant validity in Tables 4, 5 and 6, each item has a weak correlation is confirmed for all the indicators in this study.

Table 3. Convergent validity and reliability analysis ( $n = 479$ )

Construct	Items	Item loadings	Indicator reliability	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (CR)	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Item(s) deleted
Accessibility (AC)	AC1	0.769	0.591	0.914	0.937	0.749	AC6
	AC2	0.760	0.578				
	AC3	0.940	0.883				
	AC4	0.891	0.793				
	AC5	0.948	0.900				
Destination attraction (DA)	DA1	0.721	0.521	0.929	0.948	0.788	None
	DA2	0.959	0.920				
	DA3	0.819	0.671				
	DA4	0.956	0.915				
	DA5	0.957	0.916				
Destination image (DI)	DI1	0.787	0.619	0.886	0.913	0.638	DI3, DI6
	DI2	0.786	0.618				
	DI4	0.732	0.536				
	DI5	0.729	0.531				
	DI7	0.867	0.753				
	DI8	0.877	0.769				
Educational opportunities (EO)	EO2	0.882	0.778	0.882	0.919	0.739	EO1, EO6
	EO3	0.807	0.650				
	EO4	0.905	0.819				
	EO5	0.842	0.709				
Networking opportunities (NO)	NO1	0.700	0.490	0.785	0.853	0.592	NO5
	NO2	0.785	0.616				
	NO3	0.781	0.610				
	NO4	0.809	0.655				
Revisit intention (RI)	RI1	0.923	0.852	0.928	0.950	0.826	None
	RI2	0.955	0.912				
	RI3	0.949	0.900				
	RI4	0.799	0.639				
Travel cost (TC)	TC1	0.823	0.677	0.826	0.886	0.722	TC2, TC4
	TC3	0.865	0.747				
	TC5	0.861	0.741				

Source: authors.

Table 4. Cross-loadings of indicators

IV'S	Items	AC	DA	DI	EO	NO	RI	TC
AC	AC1	<b>0.769</b>	0.655	0.648	-0.560	0.572	0.534	0.557
	AC2	<b>0.760</b>	0.580	0.604	-0.452	0.631	0.703	0.639
	AC3	<b>0.940</b>	0.654	0.664	-0.554	0.583	0.613	0.591
	AC4	<b>0.891</b>	0.557	0.578	-0.492	0.516	0.574	0.523
	AC5	<b>0.948</b>	0.627	0.641	-0.538	0.561	0.603	0.575
DA	DA1	0.588	<b>0.721</b>	0.655	-0.525	0.594	0.547	0.557
	DA2	0.668	<b>0.959</b>	0.689	-0.578	0.604	0.623	0.610
	DA3	0.599	<b>0.819</b>	0.654	-0.537	0.570	0.555	0.550
	DA4	0.648	<b>0.956</b>	0.676	-0.570	0.593	0.613	0.607
	DA5	0.652	<b>0.957</b>	0.684	-0.572	0.598	0.619	0.608
DI	DI1	0.580	0.588	<b>0.787</b>	-0.643	0.552	0.519	0.566
	DI2	0.556	0.574	<b>0.786</b>	-0.646	0.568	0.495	0.544
	DI4	0.652	0.619	<b>0.732</b>	-0.510	0.662	0.719	0.644
	DI5	0.465	0.538	<b>0.729</b>	-0.516	0.441	0.407	0.453
	DI7	0.581	0.633	<b>0.867</b>	-0.606	0.566	0.518	0.568
	DI8	0.585	0.639	<b>0.877</b>	-0.617	0.563	0.528	0.572
EO	EO2	-0.527	-0.507	-0.608	<b>0.882</b>	-0.477	-0.383	-0.434
	EO3	-0.466	-0.499	-0.606	<b>0.807</b>	-0.566	-0.431	-0.554
	EO4	-0.554	-0.551	-0.645	<b>0.905</b>	-0.523	-0.402	0.478
	EO5	-0.513	-0.587	-0.665	<b>0.842</b>	-0.583	-0.483	-0.577
NO	NO1	0.410	0.419	0.456	-0.446	<b>0.700</b>	0.388	0.417
	NO2	0.443	0.476	0.525	-0.529	<b>0.785</b>	0.436	0.497
	NO3	0.469	0.522	0.571	-0.567	<b>0.781</b>	0.447	0.550
	NO4	0.645	0.588	0.615	-0.447	<b>0.809</b>	0.791	0.806
RI	RI1	0.594	0.555	0.573	-0.414	0.548	<b>0.923</b>	0.531
	RI2	0.679	0.655	0.663	-0.488	0.653	<b>0.955</b>	0.627
	RI3	0.629	0.597	0.616	-0.438	0.581	<b>0.949</b>	0.569
	RI4	0.651	0.599	0.625	-0.456	0.809	<b>0.799</b>	0.810
TC	TC1	0.623	0.577	0.610	-0.441	0.791	0.781	<b>0.823</b>
	TC3	0.523	0.543	0.592	-0.563	0.556	0.447	<b>0.865</b>
	TC5	0.521	0.542	0.598	-0.570	0.550	0.442	<b>0.861</b>

Note: AC – accessibility, DA – destination attraction, DI – destination image, EO – educational opportunities, NO – networking opportunities, RI – revisit intention, TC – travel cost.

Source: authors.

Table 5. Fornell-Larcker discriminant validity criteria

IV'S	AC	DA	DI	EO	NO	RI	TC
AC	<b>0.865</b>	–	–	–	–	–	–
DA	0.713	<b>0.888</b>	–	–	–	–	–
DI	0.728	0.757	<b>0.799</b>	–	–	–	–
EO	–0.600	–0.628	–0.738	<b>0.860</b>	–	–	–
NO	0.669	0.667	0.716	–0.631	<b>0.770</b>	–	–
RI	0.710	0.668	0.688	–0.499	0.727	<b>0.909</b>	–
TC	0.674	0.662	0.713	–0.602	0.787	0.713	<b>0.850</b>

Note: the diagonal values (bolded) denote the AVE square root, whilst the off-diagonal values denote the constructs' correlations; AC – accessibility, DA – destination attraction, DI – destination image, EO – educational opportunities, NO – networking opportunities, RI – revisit intention, TC – travel cost.

Source: authors.

Table 6. Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)

IV'S	AC	DA	DI	EO	NO	RI	TC
AC		–	–	–	–	–	–
DA	0.776		–	–	–	–	–
DI	0.793	0.830		–	–	–	–
EO	0.670	0.692	0.831		–	–	–
NO	0.741	0.757	0.818	0.761		–	–
RI	0.756	0.715	0.727	0.541	0.762		–
TC	0.738	0.736	0.801	0.706	0.859	0.724	

Note: AC – accessibility, DA – destination attraction, DI – destination image, EO – educational opportunities, NO – networking opportunities, RI – revisit intention, TC – travel cost.

Source: authors.

#### 4.3. ASSESSMENT OF THE STRUCTURAL MODEL

Hair et al. (2017) stated that the coefficients of determination ( $R^2$ ), effect size ( $f^2$ ) and predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ) of structural models are all measured. The findings shown in Table 7 indicate that the coefficients of determination ( $R^2$ ), effect size ( $f^2$ ) and predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ) values are acceptable. In this study, the  $R^2$  value of 0.672 for revisit intentions is deemed substantial (Cohen, 1988). The  $f^2$  values for accessibility, destination image, educational opportunities, networking opportunities and travel cost are small (0.043, 0.020, 0.025, 0.046, 0.029) on revisit intentions, while destination attraction has no effect (0.017). The blindfolding procedure was utilized to test the predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ) of the model, specifically to obtain the cross-validated redundancy of each endogenous construct (Hair et al., 2017).

A  $Q^2$  value of 0.519 was obtained, suggesting the model's adequate predictive relevance. Following structural model assessment, the bootstrapping procedure was used to examine the hypothesized correlation between the push-pull factors and revisit intention.

#### 4.4. HYPOTHESES TESTING

The subsequent stage is hypothesis testing, which involves evaluating the causal link identified in the structural model, namely the relationship between the push-pull factors and the intention to revisit. The causality between the variables was examined using the bootstrapping method via 5000 sub-samples (Hair et al., 2017). Hypothesis testing entailed the determination of the  $t$ -statistic value, which is deemed significant if it is greater than the  $t$ -table value (1.96). Table 7 demonstrates the outcomes of the hypothesis

Table 7. Results and hypothesis testing of the structural model using partial least squares

Hypothesis	Relationship	Standardized beta coefficient	Standardized error	t-values	p-value	Decision	f <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup>	Q <sup>2</sup>
H <sub>1</sub>	NO → RI	0.225	0.052	4.433	0.000	Supported	0.046	0.672	0.519
H <sub>2</sub>	EO → RI	0.135	0.053	2.644	0.008	Supported	0.025	–	–
H <sub>3</sub>	DI → RI	0.168	0.063	2.677	0.007	Supported	0.020	–	–
H <sub>4</sub>	TC → RI	0.172	0.047	3.642	0.000	Supported	0.029	–	–
H <sub>5</sub>	DA → RI	0.134	0.055	2.444	0.015	Supported	0.017	–	–
H <sub>6</sub>	AC → RI	0.206	0.055	3.733	0.000	Supported	0.043	–	–

Note: AC – accessibility, DA – destination attraction, DI – destination image, EO – educational opportunities, NO – networking opportunities, RI – revisit intention, TC – travel cost; f<sup>2</sup> – effect size, R<sup>2</sup> – coefficients of determination, Q<sup>2</sup> – predictive relevance; indicates significant path key:  $p < 0.05$  ( $t > 1.96$ ) (2-tailed).

Source: authors.

testing. The PLS-SEM output revealed a significant relationship between networking opportunities and intentions to revisit ( $\beta = 0.225$ ,  $t = 4.433$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). Hence, H<sub>1</sub> is accepted. The second hypothesis was also confirmed, since there is a significant positive correlation between educational opportunities and revisit intentions ( $\beta = 0.135$ ,  $t = 2.644$ ,  $p = 0.008$ ). So, H<sub>2</sub> is supported. The third hypothesis, that there is a significant positive correlation between destination image and revisit intentions, was confirmed as well ( $\beta = 0.168$ ,  $t = 2.677$ ,  $p = 0.007$ ). So, H<sub>3</sub> is accepted. Additionally, the fourth hypothesis, that travel cost and revisit intentions have a significant positive association, was also confirmed ( $\beta = 0.172$ ,  $t = 3.642$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). So, H<sub>4</sub> is supported. The fifth hypothesis was confirmed likewise, with a significant positive association between destination attraction and revisit intentions ( $\beta = 0.134$ ,  $t = 2.444$ ,  $p = 0.015$ ). So, H<sub>5</sub> is accepted. Finally, the sixth hypothesis was confirmed too, with a significant association between accessibility and revisit intention ( $\beta = 0.206$ ,  $t = 3.733$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). So, H<sub>6</sub> is supported.

## 5. DISCUSSION

Although motivational push-pull factors and their effects on visitors' intentions to return in different tourism and event settings have long been the focus of tourism research, there is still a paucity of literature in this area. Despite the fact that motivation has been extensively studied (Jago & Deery, 2005; Mair & Thompson, 2009; Tanford et al., 2012), it varies depending on the person's background and circumstances. Therefore, there is a crucial need to examine motivation (Kim & Malek, 2017). This present study aims to examine the effects of push-pull factors on the revisit intentions of international MICE participants achieving the main research objective.

Based on the PLS statistical result, it was shown that there is a strong and positive correlation between networking opportunities and revisit intentions ( $\beta = 0.225$ ,  $t = 4.433$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), suggesting that this would be higher if there are more networking opportunities among tourists at the MICE event. The results of the study agree with those of Gračan et al. (2021), Lee et al. (2019), Mair and Thompson (2009), Malekmohammadi et al. (2011), Kim et al. (2012) and Lee and Min (2013) who revealed that networking opportunities positively and significantly impact revisit intentions. The outcome of this study is also consistent with the theory of push-pull, which justifies networking opportunities as a significant push factor in affecting tourist behaviour (Crompton, 1979). Mair and Thompson (2009) indicated the importance of networking opportunities and the possibility of attending MICE events again in the future. Lee et al. (2019) highlighted networking opportunities as a main driver of reattending a conference among international delegates. Prior studies (Gračan et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2012; Lee & Min, 2013) also demonstrated that networking opportunities are a key motivator for revisiting the same MICE events in the future. Therefore, the more important networking opportunities are as a motivator for attendance, the more likely the tourists are to attend the conference again in the future.

The PLS-based statistical outcomes in this study revealed a significantly positive association between educational opportunities and revisit intentions ( $\beta = 0.135$ ,  $t = 2.644$ ,  $p < 0.008$ ) meaning that high educational opportunities among tourists positively influence their intention to revisit MICE destinations. The result of this study is consistent with the theory of push-pull, which justifies educational opportunities as a push factor that greatly impacts tourist behaviour (Crompton, 1979), aligning with the outcomes of Gračan et al. (2021), Lee and Min (2013), Kim et al. (2012) and Yoo and Chon (2008), who discovered the positive and significant effects of educational opportunities on revisit intentions.

Based on these results, attendees seem to evaluate and revisit MICE events based on their ability to provide educational opportunities which represent a strong motivator for attendance (Barkidija Sotošek, 2020) as participants typically decide to re-attend conferences due to such opportunities (Jago & Deery, 2005). Repeat tourists are motivated by educational opportunities to attend in the future (Kim et al., 2012) and have a major influence on participants' decisions (Kim et al., 2012; Mair & Thompson, 2009; Tanford et al., 2012; Yoo & Zhao, 2010). Hence, the greater the importance of educational opportunities as a motivating factor for participation, the more likely the attendee will return.

The path coefficient analysis of this study showed a significantly positive association between destination image and revisit intentions ( $\beta = 0.168$ ,  $t = 2.677$ ,  $p < 0.007$ ). This means that an enticing destination image encourages international tourists to revisit the same MICE event. The results of the study agree with those of Al-Dweik (2020), Allameh et al. (2015), and Fitri (2021), which demonstrate the significant positive influence of destination image on intentions to revisit. Tourists are motivated to return to a particular destination if it has a positive and strong image (Al-Dweik, 2020). Ramli et al. (2020) concluded that the destination image has a significant influence on travellers' decision-making and behavioural intentions. Al-Dweik (2020) also confirmed that destination image significantly affects tourists' intentions to participate in events held at the same destination in the future. This outcome supports public-private sector collaborations to improve MICE events in any destination, specifically in developing nations, especially Jordan (Alananzeh et al., 2019). Thus, since MICE events are significant for the economic development of such countries, there is a need for them to develop a positive destination image so that MICE tourists will return there in the future (Al-Dweik, 2020).

Based on the PLS path coefficient analysis result, travel cost and revisit intentions are significantly and positively correlated ( $\beta = 0.172$ ,  $t = 3.642$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ). As travel costs become an increasingly important issue for participants, this implies that reasonable travel costs would increase tourists' revisit intentions for the MICE destination. The result of this study is consistent with the theory of push-pull, which justifies travel cost as a pull factor that significantly affects tourists' decisions and behaviours (Mair & Thompson, 2009; Tanford et al., 2012). This result also aligns with the findings of Yoo and Zhao (2010), Yodsuwan et al. (2021), Thong et al. (2020), Abbasi et al. (2021) and Liang and Latip (2018), all of which detected a positive correlation between travel cost and behavioural revisit intentions (Kim et al., 2020). Oppermann and Chon (1997) discovered that MICE tourists' decisions to revisit the same destination depended highly on the travel cost. Related work demonstrated that a positive travel cost encourages

international MICE tourists to visit the destination frequently, thus enabling the destination to profit more (Anas et al., 2020; Barkidija Sotošek, 2020; Houdement et al., 2017; Mair & Thompson, 2009; Tanford et al., 2012; Whitfield et al., 2014). Therefore, destination marketers and event planners should make more effort to attract this segment of tourists.

Destination attraction and revisit intention were found to be positively and significantly correlated using the PLS-based path coefficient analysis ( $\beta = 0.134$ ,  $t = 2.444$ ,  $p < 0.015$ ). This indicates that a destination with many attractions encourages international tourists to revisit the same events. This result also aligns with the outcomes of Lee and Min (2013), Puspitasari et al. (2020) and Sianipar et al. (2021) which demonstrated a positive correlation between destination attraction and revisit intention. This finding is consistent with the theory of push-pull, which justifies destination attraction as a pull factor that greatly impacts tourist behaviour (Bi et al., 2020). De Nisco et al. (2015) revealed that the attraction of the destination is among the key factors affecting revisit intentions. Maulida et al. (2020) determined that destination attraction significantly influences such intentions. Therefore, destinations with multiple attractions encourage MICE organizers to hold events and motivate tourists to revisit the same one (Anas et al., 2020).

The path coefficient results from the PLS-based SEM revealed a significant positive relationship between accessibility and revisit intention ( $\beta = 0.206$ ,  $t = 3.733$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ). This finding indicates that the degree of tourist return intention is greater if tourists have easy accessibility to MICE events. The current finding is in agreement with push and pull theory, which justifies accessibility as a pull factor with a great impact on tourist behaviour in selecting a destination (Ćulić et al., 2021) as well as Giao et al. (2020), Hashemi et al. (2020), Lee and Min (2013), and Ngoc and Trinh (2015) which confirmed that accessibility has a positive impact on revisit intentions. Alananzeh (2012) acknowledged that international tourists consider AC as a very important construct in their participation in MICE events in Jordan. Anas et al. (2020) and Barkidija Sotošek (2020) declared that when MICE events are held in destinations with high accessibility, the intention of attending or re-attending the same event increases. Thus, accessibility can be the primary driver of attendees' intention to revisit a certain MICE destination.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Each event is unique, with a variety of contents, participants, reasons for attending and influential elements. Despite extensive studies on attendance

motivation carried out by meeting planners and hospitality educators, with several involving international academics, very few had examined international MICE attendees. Accordingly, the purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between the motivations of attendees and their intentions to revisit.

This study contributes to the theory of motivational factors, specifically push and pull theory, which serves as the basis for examining the factors driving international tourists to (re)attend MICE events held in Jordan. This is a pioneering study using a large sample of international MICE travellers which sheds light on the effect of the motivational factors and the association between these constructs and revisit intentions. More importantly, the integrated relationships between the push factors (i.e. networking opportunities and educational opportunities), pull factors (i.e. destination image, travel cost, destination attraction and accessibility), and revisit intentions have yet to be conceptualized and examined in the MICE event literature from the standpoint of international attendees in the context of the Middle East, especially Jordan. By understanding push and pull motivations, tourism marketers can develop specific programs to meet or even surpass the expectations of travellers (Yousefi & Marzuki, 2015). Tourism marketers and planners should be aware of the significance of foreign tourists' travel motivations and concentrate on creating events that will better meet visitors' demands by balancing what they desire (push factors) with what the destination can provide (pull factors) to suit those needs.

Apart from that, this study also offers several practical implications. The findings provide significant insights for event organizers, planners, managers, marketers and associations in Jordan, in planning, developing and marketing MICE tourism using suitable strategies. There is a need for MICE event planners and destinations to collaborate towards strengthening participation motivation and increasing interest in the events being organized. It is hoped that the findings in this study would aid in attracting and retaining attendees in the competitiveness of the global event industry. The focus on international tourists allows meeting planners, organizers and managers to comprehend their motivations and thus take beneficial and informed actions for their MICE tourism event.

As with all other studies, the present one is not free of limitations. This research only focused on Amman, thus limiting the generalizability of the findings. Future works could replicate this study by focusing on other destinations in Jordan such as the Dead Sea and Aqaba. Additionally, this study only concentrated on the motivations of international tourists, so to obtain more comprehensive data, future work could focus on meeting planners, academics and educators.

Furthermore, the examination of the push-pull factors was based on a direct relationship. Future studies could incorporate a moderating variable to examine the push-pull relationship in the MICE setting. Finally, this work only analyzed the relationships between the push factors (networking opportunities and educational opportunities), the pull factors (destination image, travel cost, destination attraction and accessibility), and revisit intentions. Future research could incorporate other motivational factors that may significantly improve revisit intentions.

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