Antecedents of Local Food Adoption in Business Events: An analysis of the Hotels' Perspective

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Abstract

From 2004 to 2018, the MICE industry (Meetings, Incentive travels, Conventions and Exhibitions) has rapidly developed at an annual growth rate of 13% globally. And the Thai government has strongly supported the MICE industry, so the Thai MICE industry has developed fast in the Asia-Pacific region, which benefits the economy and social welfare of Thailand. Thailand's increasing volume of MICE-driven businesses, brings tremendous business investments to Thailand. Meanwhile, it also brings great concerns across the country concerning energy consumption, material wastes and environment sustainability. In recent years, event sustainability and food sustainability have become global concerns. In response to global concerns and sustainable development framework, business event stakeholders have gradually incorporated the local food practices into their sustainability options to achieve events sustainability as pointed out by 2019 Meetings & Events Future Trends. Furthermore, more and more business event organizers have embraced the local food into their venue selections to enhance event attendees' experience and event satisfaction to maintain its competitive advantages among the fierce MICE venue competition. Hotels as one of important parties in business events in terms of implementing sustainable event practices and providing foodservices, undoubtedly, it will be of vital importance in addressing hotels' sustainability performance in business events. However, local food, though highlighted as the top-3 meeting trend in recent years, there are scanty research studying the antecedents of local food adoption in business events, especially from the hotels' perspective. This study aims to fill in the gaps of antecedents of local food adoption in the sustainable events development from hotels' perspective that exists in the discourse of the Thai MICE industry. Based on the empirical evidence, this paper applied the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to investigate the antecedents of local food adoption in business events under the mega-trend of event sustainability by the application of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). It incorporated Attitudes toward local food adoption in business events, Subjective Norms toward local food adoption in business events, Perceived behavior control toward local food adoption in business events and Behavioral Intentions to implement the local food adoption in business events as hotels' antecedents of local food adoption actual behavior. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed for analysis purpose. Causal relationships among the above four constructs and represented 6 hypotheses were further tested. The findings of the research are supposed to make contributions on reducing the economic and environmental impacts brought by business events, generating the long-term economic, social and environmental sustainability between both local communities and hospitality & business event industry in Thailand. Most importantly, implications from the empirical results are projected to provide some managerial implications to the MICE industry, enhancing Thai MICE competitive advantages.