

Master in Business Engineering and Production

Opportunities of hybrid formats for future conferences

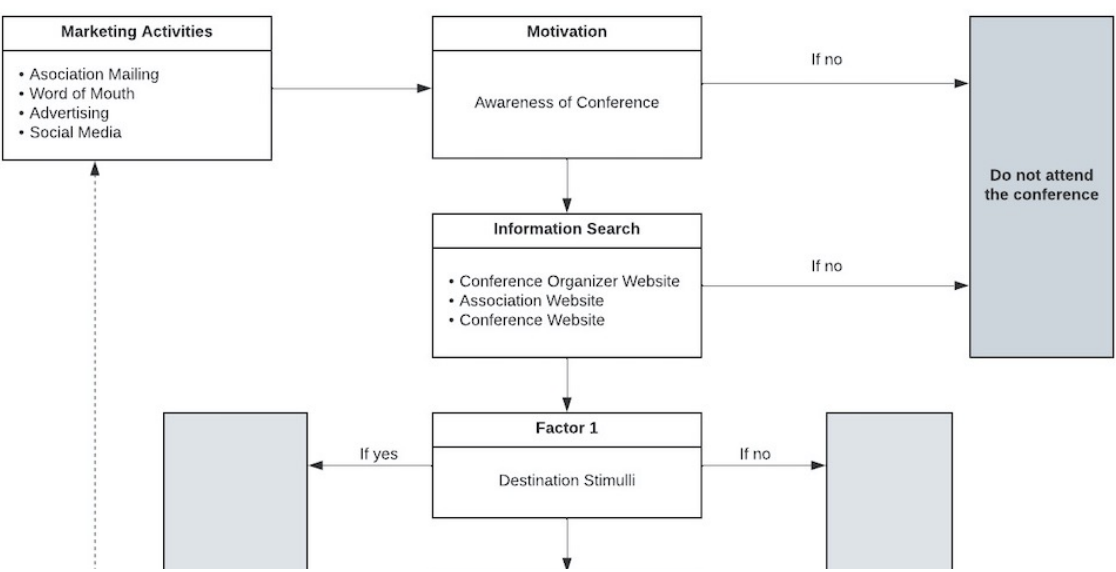
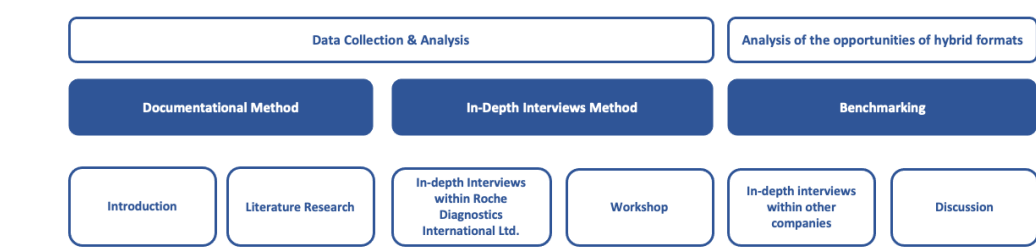
Project Aim

To explore the change of conferences and event development after the COVID-19 pandemic.
And to identify the opportunities that hybrid events could provide for the participation in future conferences with a specific focus on the situation of Roche Diagnostics International Ltd.

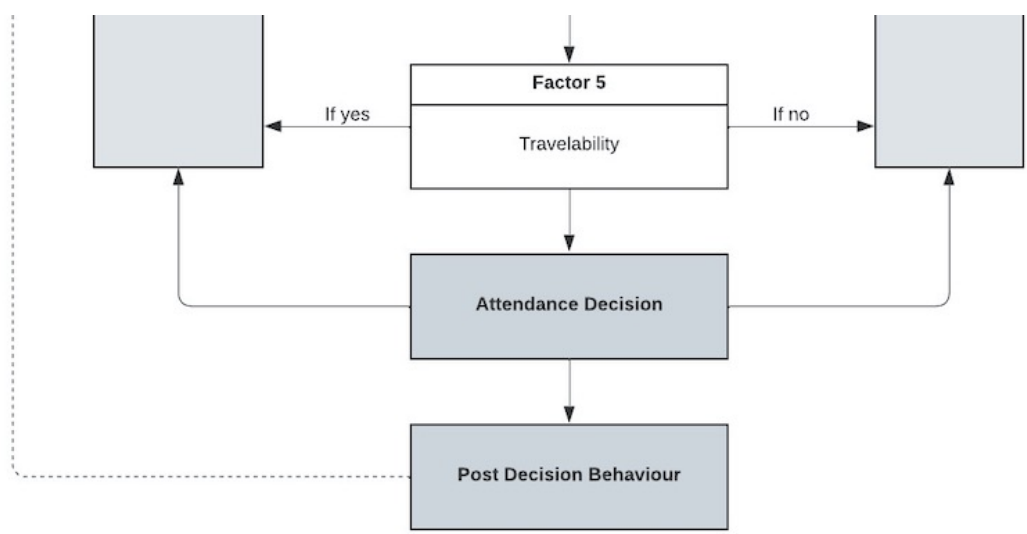
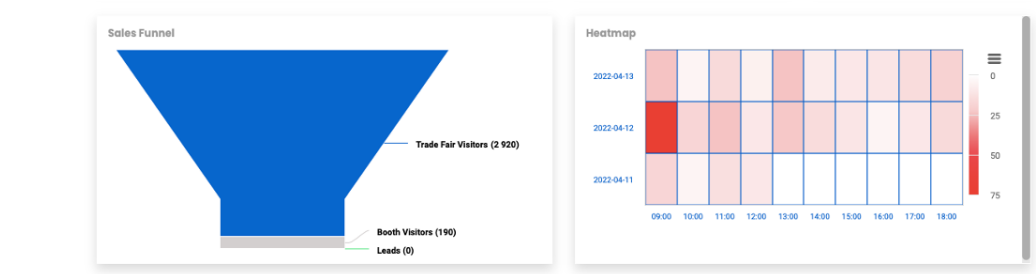
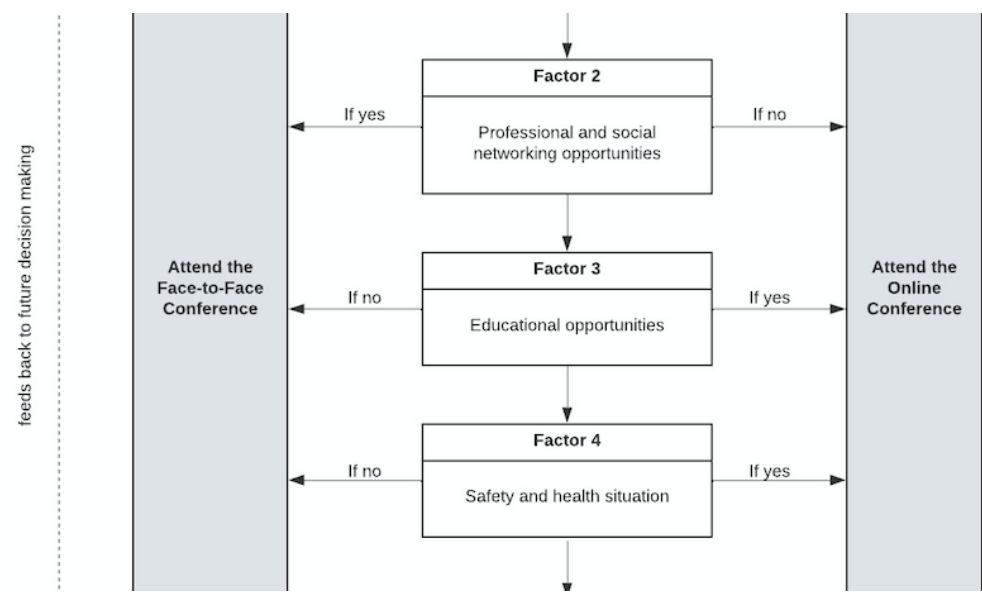
Model of conference participation decision-making process



Methodological Approach



	Face-to-face	Online	Hybrid
PROS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Social interaction.Networking.Feeling of belonging to an academic community.Hands-on sessions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reduce cost of attendance.Synchronous and asynchronous virtual sessions.Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.Reach out more attendees.Provide comprehensive analytics and reporting data.Flexible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Physical sessions with online participation.Synchronous and asynchronous virtual sessions.Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.Reach out more attendees.
CONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">High cost.Large carbon footprint.Risk of disease transmission.Accessibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Lack of social interaction.A high number of no-shows.Low engagement level.Technical glitches.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">High cost.Risk of disease transmission.Difficulties in interacting between in-person and online attendees.Logistical and technologically challenging.



Problem Description

Traditionally, conferences were held in a face-to-face format, facilitating interaction among the participants. However, due to COVID-19, conferences have been forced to cancel, postpone, or reformat their meetings, shifting from face-to-face to online formats. At the same time, many companies have been forced to adapt their event organization process to one that, given the mobilization restrictions, will allow them to continue to participate in and organize conferences and events. Despite the rapid deployment and benefits of online conferences, the overwhelming number of online conferences has caused a "digital burnout" syndrome among attendees. This fact, combined with the lack of social interaction and the sense of detachment from reality, has made it necessary to reconsider the format in which conferences have been developed.

Main Findings

One of the most significant findings was the conceptualization of the process for organizing conferences and events. This process consists of five stages: Plan, Promote, Execute, Follow-up, and Measure. As a result of the analysis carried out, the main characteristics of each stage have been identified and compared according to the implementation of face-to-face, online and hybrid event formats. The second major finding was the identification of the advantages and disadvantages of holding a face-to-face, online, and hybrid conference. And concluding that there is a gap between face-to-face and online formats, where hybrids are possible. The hybrid format manages to cover the disadvantages presented by face-to-face and online formats. Hybrid events provide an opportunity to add value by being able to reach more people (face-to-face plus virtual). As conferences and events are experiences, the journey experience of the participants should be considered. For that reason, it is paramount to take into account the factors that influence the participant's decision-making when choosing whether or not to participate in an event, as well as what type of format a participant would choose.

Therefore, this research project presents a modified model of the conference participation decision-making process.

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