

## Taiwan MICE Development—from the Benefits of the Combination in MICE and Gaming Industry of Las Vegas Experience

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### Abstract

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Las Vegas, Nevada of the USA represents one of the most successful cities that developed the MICE industry and gaming industry. This study is based on the case study of Las Vegas; the purpose is to find out the beneficial result that developing by the two well-known industries. When exploring the benefits of the combination in MICE and gaming industry in Las Vegas, it may be an inspiration and reference to the future casino gaming business in Taiwan. With the analysis of the literatures review, we found out most of the U.S. customer visit Las Vegas, not only for the gambling purpose, but also have the spending budget on shopping, shows, sightseeing, food & drink, and attending convention. In addition, according to the attributes of the Las Vegas visitor, it can be divided into four categories: the convention visitors, the package purchasers, the general tourists, and the casino guests. The visitor demographics such as gender, marital status, job categories, age, and ethnicity also has some different results in the four categories of visitor profile. The results of this study indicate that the economy contribution from the combination of MICE industry and gaming industry which includes taxes, food, drink, lodging, shopping, shows, sightseeing and gambling. In addition, in terms of lodging, food and drink, shopping, and sightseeing, the convention visitors spent significantly more than the general tourist and casino guests. It illustrates that we cannot ignore the importance of the economical contribution of the MICE market to Las Vegas.

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**Keywords:** MICE industry, Gaming industry, Taiwan, Las Vegas

### 1. Introduction

The Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) Industry is one of the fastest growing segments of the tourism industry (Weber, 2001).

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It is also a fairly mature industry in Europe and America (Her, 2008). In recent years, numerous Asia countries have been seriously investing in MICE industry software and hardware because of its multi-elements integration characteristic, multiplier effects, and ability to drive growth of a country's tourism industry, which further contributes GDP (TIOER, 2008). Globally, MICE is a US\$280 billion a year industry and has been one of the few industries to see continuous global growth over the past two decades (Wilk, 2010). The MICE industry impact extends beyond the convention and exhibition center; it has boosted the local service industry. For instance, developing international exhibitions will facilitate domestic firms to expand business and to promote international trade. In addition, holding international conferences attract international figures to visit the country can increase tourism benefits and elevate the national image and visibility (Du, 2009).

In Taiwan, the Executive Yuan of has listed the MICE industry as a flagship plan within the "Guidelines and Action Plans for Service Industry Development". The Ministry of Economic Affairs Commerce Department has begun implementation of the "Four year plan for MICE industry development" in 2005, and to improve Taiwan's MICE industry since 2009. In order to continue investing in the industry, the government planned to develop "Taiwan's MICE Promotion Program" from 2013 to 2016 (BOFTT, 2015). Although, despite Taiwan has potential to develop MICE industry and the government has invested in the industry, Taiwan has not yet made significant advances in becoming a regional MICE center, as Taiwan has been overtook by regional competitors. With the recent gaming-related investments made in Singapore and Macau, Taiwan has suffered yet another reverse (Huang, 2006; Wilk, 2010).

Nonetheless, with the recent success experience of gaming-related investments made in Singapore and Macau, it also can be a good inspiration of developing the MICE and Gaming Industry in Taiwan. The casino idea of Taiwan emerged during the 1990s and the Taiwanese government has revoked a long-standing antigambling law and has passed a long-stalled bill in early 2009 to allow the gaming industry to be developed on outlying islands such as Penghu and Kinmen to help stimulate the economies (Lee, 2010). Even though the casino topic has been a bit simmer down after the failing of referendum on first Taiwan casino, nonetheless there are still have numerous people who pay close attention to the issue.

With many Asia nations are planning or undergoing both of the MICE and the gaming business; in order for the Taiwan to catch the wave and profit from the market share earlier, Taiwanese government has to understand and to find out the beneficial result that by developing these two well-known industries and set in motion without further ado.

## **Literature Review**

The Taipei World Trade Center (TWTC) hosts 25 to 30 international trade shows and about 60 domestic shows each year (Her, 2008). Several TWTC shows have come to be ranked among the biggest and best-attended events in the world. For example, the Taipei International Information Technology Show, also known as Computex Taipei, is Asia's largest and the world's second largest information technology event. In 2015, Computex Taipei attracted a record of 130,513 visitors that including 39,130 overseas buyers from 162 countries and leading international exhibitors like Microsoft, Intel and AMD, as well as Taiwan's Acer, Asus and Foxcon (Computex Taipei, 2015).

Another TWTC event, the Taipei International Cycle Show, also known as Taipei Cycle, has earned a place as one of the world's top three bicycle trade shows. In addition to professional MICE services, Taiwan also has much to offer to visitors, for example, natural beauty, traditional customs, culinary delights, and affordable shopping, all easily accessible via modern and convenient public transportation. With direct flight links between Taiwan and major cities in China established in 2009, Taiwan has become a popular destination for large corporate meeting and incentive travel in the Greater China region (TAITRA, 2010).

A statistical report made by the International Congress & Convention Association (ICCA) indicated that the number of international conventions grew stably during this decade. According to statistics of ICCA, the 2007 ranking for over 250 convention cities and over 80 countries around the world, Taipei City was 18th in the world and 9th in Asia with 74 meetings and it was the first time Taipei City ranked among the world's top 20 convention cities. However, the 2014 ranking of Taipei City for over 365 convention cities and over 111 countries around the world fell down to 28th in the world and 5<sup>th</sup> in Asia with 92 meetings (ICCA, 2015).

There is something Taiwan need to emulate from other countries. In mature markets like the United States and Europe, an exhibition usually becomes a citywide undertaking, with various local government offices handling transportation, promoting cultural attractions, and working together to make it a success. In addition, many countries have been promoting MICE as a part of the tourism sector. In Japan, the MICE industry is being developed in line with national land planning and urban redevelopment projects to make cities more attractive by improving their infrastructure, sanitation, and transportation networks (Her, 2008). In Taiwan, however, the MICE industry is governed by Taiwan External Trade Development Council (TAITRA), which has the primary mission of promoting Taiwan's external trade, rather than MICE activities. Furthermore, despite Taiwan government investment in the industry, Taiwan has not yet made significant advances in becoming a regional MICE center, as Taiwan has been overtook by regional competitors. With the recent gaming-related investments made in Singapore and Macau, Taiwan has suffered yet another reverse.

Besides Singapore and Macau, it is not necessarily the case to say that Las Vegas of the USA represents one of the most successful cities that developed the MICE industry and gaming industry. As the Taiwanese government worked on several fronts to help stimulate the strength of the MICE industry in the global arena aggressively for several years in order to increase the number international business meetings being held in Taiwan, furthermore, the Taiwanese government has revoked a long-standing antigambling law and allowed the building of casinos in remote countries to help stimulate the economies. When exploring the benefits of the combination in MICE and gaming industry in Las Vegas, it may be an inspiration and reference to the future casino gaming business in Taiwan.

Nevada is the first to be the legal gambling state in the United States. On April 3, 1941, hotel owner Thomas Hull opened the El Rancho Vegas. It was the first resort on what would become the Las Vegas Strip. After that, the Flamingo Hotel was built in 1946. Even Las Vegas has long been a favorite recreation destination for millions of visitors (Kilby, Fox, & Lucas, 2005). In the early 1950s, however, community leaders realized the cyclical nature of tourism caused a significant decline in the number of visitors during the weekdays, throughout the summer months, and over the Christmas season. To survive during the economic recession, a new market was identified in order to attract more visitors to the area during the slow periods-convention attendees.

On April 29, 1959, the Las Vegas Convention Center officially opened with a 20,340 square-foot rotunda, 18 meeting rooms, and a 90,000 square-foot exhibit hall (LVCVA, 2015a).

The Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA) were founded in 1995. It is in charge of marketing Southern Nevada as a tourism and convention destination worldwide, and also with operating the Las Vegas Convention Center and Cashman Center. With more than 150,544 hotel rooms in Las Vegas alone and over 10.5 millions square feet of meeting and exhibit space citywide, the LVCVA brings visitors to Las Vegas and Clark County by promoting tourism, conventions, meetings and special events and attracts ever-increasing numbers of leisure and business visitors to the area (LVCVA, 2015a). According to Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA) (2015a), the stably growth of the visitor volume over the ten years in Las Vegas have brought huge gaming revenue each year (See Table 1).

**Table 1: The Ten Year Statistics of Las Vegas (Year 2004 to 2014)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Visitor Volume</b>	<b>Clark County Gaming Revenue</b>
2004	37,388,781	8,711,426,000
2005	38,566,717	9,717,322,000
2006	38,914,889	10,630,387,000
2007	39,196,761	10,868,464,000
2008	37,481,552	9,796,970,000
2009	36,351,469	8,838,261,000
2010	37,335,436	8,908,574,000
2011	38,928,708	9,222,677,000
2012	39,727,022	9,399,845,000
2013	39,668,221	9,674,404,000
2014	41,126,512	9,554,002,000

**Source:** Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (2015a)

According to the survey for American Gaming Association in 2012, it showed that most American consumers have accepted the casino gaming activities as parts of a leisure life.

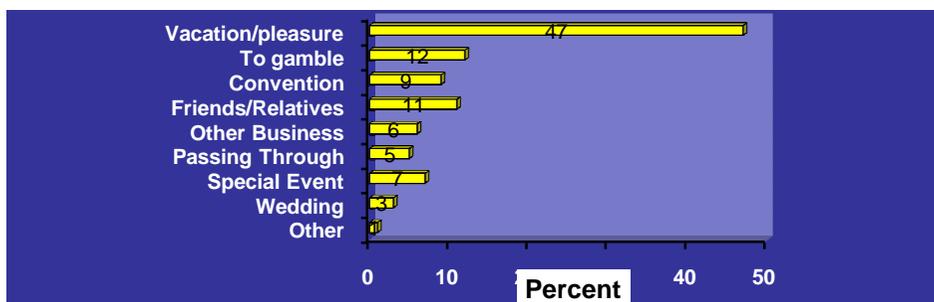
Meanwhile, when visiting the casino, most of the American consumers are not only there for the gambling purpose but also for participating for other related entertaining facilities, such as high-class restaurant, shows, shopping, bars & lounges, conference, and spa. As a result, for most visitors, going to a casino involves more than just gambling. As for non-gambling visitors, seven percent of the visitors attended conferences, trade shows, or business meetings (See Table 2).

**Table 2: American Consumer Participate in Entertaining Facilities in Casino**

Entertainments	Percentage
Fine dining restaurant	70 %
Shows	40 %
Bars/clubs	14 %
Shopping	11 %
Conference	7 %
Recreational facilities/Spa	6%

**Source:** American Gaming Association (2013)

Another survey from LVCVA in 2014 (LVCVA, 2015b), it showed that forty-seven percent of visitors mentioned vacation or pleasure as the primary purpose of current visit to Las Vegas. Twelve percent visitors were primarily to gamble, up significantly from 2010-2012 surveys, but down from 15% in 2013. Nine percent were in Las Vegas to attend a convention, trade show, or corporate meeting; up from 7% in 2013 (See Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Primary Purpose of Current Visit Survey**

**Source:** Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (2015b)

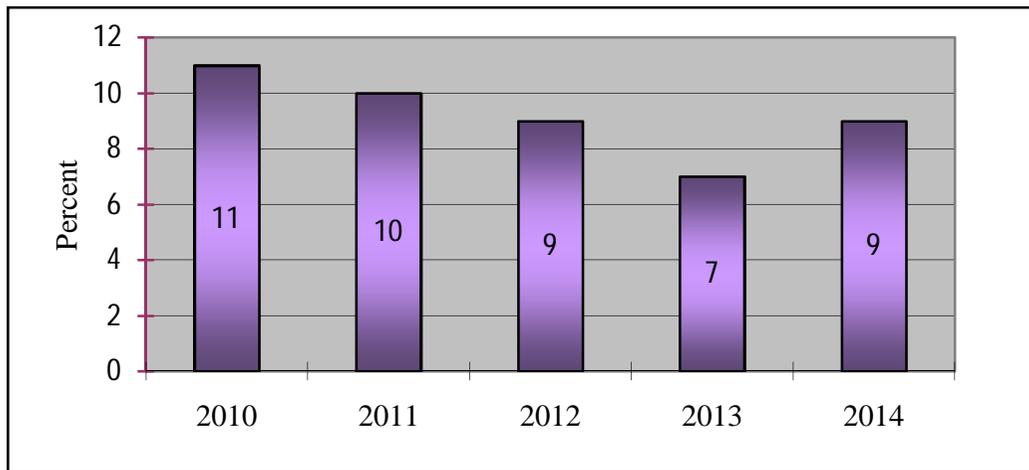
The average trip expenditures of tourists in Las Vegas are steadily in growth. According to the survey from LVCVA in 2014, the average trip expenditures of convention visitors was \$1,039.19(USD); the average trip expenditures of general tourists was \$820.89(USD) (LVCVA, 2015b). Therefore, even majority purpose of visiting Las Vegas was tourism, however, the convention visitors has higher average trip expenditures than other category of tourists, it represents the important status of convention visitors to Las Vegas. There are 22,103 conventions held and attracted 5,169,054 convention delegates visited Las Vegas in 2014; the number are steadily in growth every years (LVCVA, 2015a). Table 3 illustrates the growth of ten year statistic of convention and delegates in Las Vegas.

**Table 3: The Ten Year Statistics of Convention and Delegates in Las Vegas (2005~2014)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Convention Held</b>	<b>Delegates</b>
2005	22,154	6,166,194
2006	23,825	6,307,961
2007	23,847	6,209,253
2008	22,454	5,899,725
2009	19,394	4,492,275
2010	18,004	4,473,134
2011	19,029	4,865,272
2012	21,615	4,944,014
2013	22,027	5,107,416
2014	22,103	5,169,054

**Source:** Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (2015a)

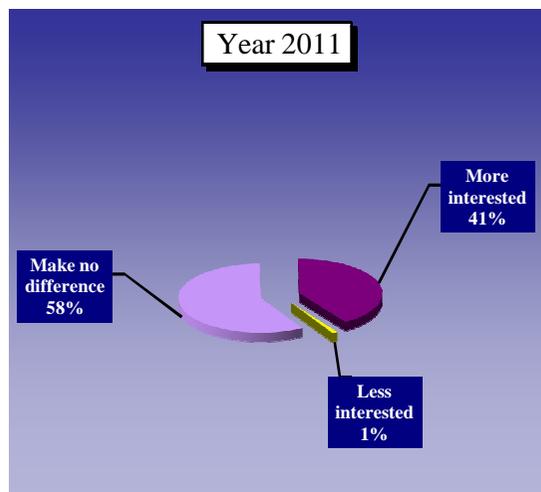
Visitors were asked if they had attended a convention, trade show, or corporate meeting while in Las Vegas. Nine percent said they had in 2014 (LVCVA, 2015b). Figure 2 illustrates the change of percentage from 2010 to 2014.

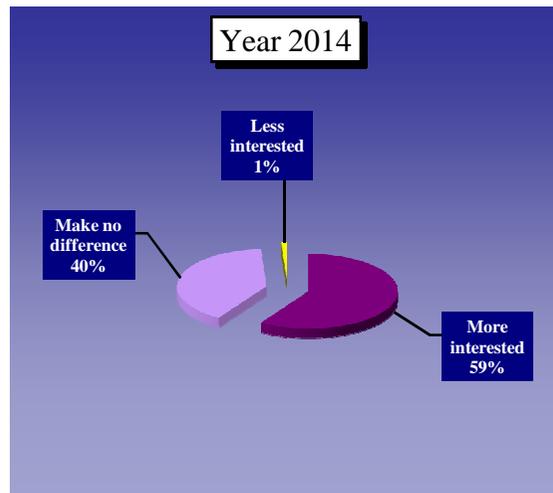


**Figure 2: Conventions/Trade Shows/ Corporate Meetings Survey**

**Source:** Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (2015b)

Convention visitors were asked if holding a convention in Las Vegas made them more or less interested in attending the convention, or if it made no difference. In 2014, fifty-nine percent said having the convention in Las Vegas made them more interested in attending (up from 41% in 2011 and 46% in 2012) and forty percent said it made no difference (down from 58% in 2011 and 52% in 2012) (See Figure 3).





**Figure 3: Interest in Attending Conventions, Trade Shows, or Corporate Meetings**

**Source:** Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (2015b)

According to the different trip characteristics, we can divide all visitors traveled in Las Vegas into four types: convention, package, tourist, and casino. In 2014, the male convention visitor is more than the female convention visitor is. In addition, there is high percentage that the convention visitors were employed; however, the casino guests have high percentage of retired in job categories. Furthermore, the average age of convention visitors were lower than casino visitors were; and the casino guests have higher average age than other types of visitors.

Finally, both of the convention and casino visitors have unity visitor origin—majority was American citizens. As for the package purchasers, they were the most likely visiting from a foreign country (See Table 4). According to the survey from LVCVA (2015b), the percentage of Asian visitors were up significantly in package visitors from 4% in 2010 to 18% in 2014; as well as casino group, up significantly from 5% in 2010 to 13% in 2014.

**Table 4: Las Vegas Visitor Demographics in 2014**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Convention</b>	<b>Package</b>	<b>Tourist</b>	<b>Casino</b>
Male	61%	48%	48%	49%
Female	39%	52%	52%	51%
Married	84%	81%	80%	81%
Employed	91%	67%	63%	50%
Retired	3%	17%	18%	36%
Average Age	44.4	44.1	43.7	50.0
White	83%	67%	80%	77%
Asian/Asian American	5%	18%	7%	13%
American Citizen	91%	57%	83%	93%
Foreign	9%	43%	17%	7%

**Source:** Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (2015b)

Generally speaking, there are numerous reasons to visit Las Vegas, the first priority of motive is casino gaming, and usually people played in casino hotels. Moreover, it brought variety of entertainments, including shows, gourmet food, shopping, sightseeing, etc. Las Vegas is also a famous place to host many special sport events, such as horsemanship tournaments, and golf tournaments. Meanwhile, Las Vegas is also a well-known capital of wedding. Many casino hotels have their own wedding chapel. It is also one of the reasons to attract thousands of tourists.

According to the survey from LVCVA in 2014, it can be divided all visitors traveled in Las Vegas into three types: convention visitor, general tourist, and casino guest. We find out the average room cost per night, average trip expenditures on food & drink, shopping, and sightseeing were significantly higher for convention visitors than for general tourists and casino guests. In terms of shows, the casino guests spent slightly more than convention visitors, and general tourists. In addition, casino guests also spent less on average room cost per night, and sightseeing as well, compared to general tourists, and convention visitors (See Table 5).

**Table 5: 2014 Las Vegas Visitor Spending Profile**

Item	Convention	General Tourist	Casino
Average lodging expenditures-average per night	\$117.27	\$84.52	\$58.07
Average trip expenditures on food & drink	\$370.28	\$264.15	\$269.60
Average trip expenditures on shopping	\$269.36	\$206.45	\$246.12
Average trip expenditures on shows	\$124.90	\$120.66	\$130.22
Average trip expenditures on sightseeing	\$157.38	\$145.11	\$81.11

**Source:** Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (2015b)

According to the visitor demographics data from LVCVA, we noticed that the Asian guests growth rapidly since 2012. By 2013, twelve percent Las Vegas visitors were Asian, and ten percent were Asian in 2014 (up significantly from 3% in 2011 and 9% in 2012); the number is far more than Hispanic group and African American group (See Table 6).

**Table 6: Las Vegas Visitor Ethnicity Statistics(2008–2014)**

Item	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Asian/Asian American	2%	2%	3%	3%	9%	12%	10%
African American/Black	4%	4%	5%	4%	5%	5%	4%
Hispanic/Latino	4%	5%	6%	7%	8%	8%	8%

**Source:** Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (2015b)

It is not necessarily the case that those who are most passionate about gambling are the Chinese and Southeast Asians (Hu, 1995). In fact, the gaming business volume in Asia has been growing at a rather unexpected and spectacular rate. In fact, Asians spend almost twice as much as Americans do on gaming as a percentage of disposable income (Norton, 2010). In accordance with the research of Loo, Raylu & Oei (2008), there has been an increase in the participation of social gambling among Chinese communities as a result of the social acceptance of gambling within Chinese culture.

From big development investments to filling seats at the slot machines and boundless gambling options, Las Vegas has become the playground for China's rich mainlanders and wealthy middle class. The biggest casinos in Las Vegas have extended Baccarat table game, which is Nevada's biggest moneymaker, the Asian pop singers, and fine Chinese dining restaurants. In addition, during peak Chinese travel seasons, all of the biggest casinos will participate in Chinese holidays promotional events, with elaborate themed displays, and outfit fortunate red decorations (Flor Cruz, 2014).

## **Research Method**

The main focus of this paper is on the largest and fastest growing segment of the Asia gaming economy—casino gaming industry and MICE industry. It provides an overview of the various venues where casino gaming and MICE takes place, including Las Vegas, Nevada. The result of analysis provides a look at the future development of both casino gaming industry and MICE industry in Taiwan.

The purpose of this exploratory study is to explore and determine the accurate direction of developing the casino gaming industry and MICE industry market in Taiwan, according to the successful experiences from Las Vegas. To accomplish the purpose, this study uses secondary data published from several sources such as books, reports, and the Internet. In addition, with the analysis of the literatures and expert interviews, the results show the economy contribution from the combination of developing MICE industry and gaming industry.

## **Findings**

With the analysis of the literatures review, we have the following findings:

1. Most of the U.S. consumers visit Las Vegas, not only for the gambling purpose, but also have the budget to spend on shopping, shows, sightseeing, food & drink, and attending convention.
2. According to the attributes of the Las Vegas visitor, it can be divided into four categories: the convention visitors, the package purchasers, the general tourists, and the casino guests. The visitor demographics such as gender, marital status, job categories, age also has some different results in the four categories of visitor profile.

3. The results of this study indicate that the economy contribution from the combination of MICE industry and gaming industry which includes taxes, food, drink, lodging, shopping, shows, sightseeing and gambling.
4. The gaming business volume in Asia has been growing at a rather unexpected and spectacular rate. Comparatively, the Asian visitors in Las Vegas have grown rapidly from 2012 to 2014; in addition, they have outnumbered all the other minority groups in U.S. including African American and Hispanic groups. Asian visitors now account for ten to twelve percent of tourists to Las Vegas, up from two percent in 2008.
5. For all of the visitors in Las Vegas, there are a certain percentage of convention visitors. Their consumer behavior might have difference than other type of tourists. In terms of lodging, food and drink, shopping, and sightseeing, the convention visitors spent significantly more than the casino guests. It illustrates that we cannot ignore the importance of the economical contribution of the MICE market to Las Vegas.

## **Conclusion**

Derived from the visitor profile of Las Vegas, we have arrived the following conclusions:

1. Due to the fact that casino gaming is not the only purpose to visit Las Vegas, the tourists love to participate many variety of entertainments, including shows, high class restaurants, shopping, sightseeing, conventions, special sport tournaments, and weddings, etc. Hence, if Taiwan has the opportunity to operate casino businesses, with the combination development of the MICE and the gaming industries will have mutual benefits to the both industries.
2. Although the purpose of majority Las Vegas visitors is tourism, however, the convention visitor has higher spending power than other tourists do. Furthermore, subsequent in completing convention business, most of the convention visitors will stay and enjoy fun activities with their companions such as colleagues, friends, spouses, and kids. Hence, we can not underestimate the buying power of the convention visitors and their companions. To create variety of entertainment activities would be a smart idea to generate more profits.

3. There are significant difference between the convention visitors and casino guests. The convention visitors have higher male number and being employed, and lower average age at the demographic profile. However, the casino guests have higher retired number and higher average age at the demographic profile. Hence, both of the MICE and casino gaming industry can complement each other and gather and collect the two targeted customers.
4. We understand the most passionate about gambling are the Chinese and Southeast Asians; in addition, the gaming business volume in Asia has been growing at a rather unexpected and spectacular rate. That is why casino bosses have worked successfully to lure Asian customers to Las Vegas, by means of Chinese-friendly hospitality, auspicious decorations, fine delicacies, and boundless gaming options. A surge of Chinese influence and investment not only has changed the landscape of Las Vegas, but also has brought great economic contribution.
5. In terms of lodging, food and drink, shopping, and sightseeing, the convention visitors spent significantly more than the casino guests did. Their consumer behavior might have difference than other type of tourists; however, we cannot underestimate the buying power of the convention visitors. On the other hand, in terms of shows, the casino guests spent slightly more than convention visitors, and general tourists. Hence, it illustrates that the potential business opportunity and economical contribution from the combination of MICE and gaming industry. With many Asia, countries are planning or undergoing both of the MICE and the gaming business, Taiwan has to catch the wave in order to profit from the market share earlier.

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