



# **Report of Study Tour Abroad (International Conference)**

## **APTA The 30<sup>th</sup> 2025 Conference**

**Service Organization: National Kaohsiung University of Hospitality and  
Tourism**

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**Countries Dispatched to: South Korea**

**Period of Study Tour Abroad: 2025/07/06 to 2025/07/09**

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## **Abstract**

This report documents my participation in the 30th Annual Conference of the Asia Pacific Tourism Association (APTA), held in South Korea from July 6 to 9, 2025. The study tour was supported by the International Academic Conference Subsidy provided by the National Kaohsiung University of Hospitality and Tourism (NKUHT). During the conference, I had the opportunity to present my thesis-in-progress titled “Negotiating Love and Logistics: Factors Driving Couples’ Selection of Hybrid Destination Wedding Venues in Dalat City, Vietnam”, in the Thesis-in-Progress (TiP) Session on July 7.

This academic mission combined active engagement in high-level conference activities, scholarly discourse, and international networking with institutional visibility. In addition to delivering a well-received presentation, I participated in a range of keynote sessions, concurrent panels, and networking events featuring global leaders in tourism research. The experience offered substantial intellectual enrichment, especially in understanding trends in tourism innovation, technology integration, regenerative tourism, and the future of destination management across Asia-Pacific.

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## 1. Purpose

The core purposes of participating in the APTA 2025 Conference were multidimensional:

***Research Dissemination:*** To present preliminary findings of my doctoral research concerning hybrid wedding tourism in Da Lat, Vietnam — an emerging niche in post-pandemic tourism studies — and to obtain constructive academic feedback from international peers.

***Scholarly Networking:*** To connect with leading researchers, practitioners, and institutions working on tourism innovation, destination branding, wedding tourism, and sustainability, with a view to establishing academic partnerships and exploring opportunities for collaborative research.

***Knowledge Acquisition:*** To explore contemporary discourses around regenerative tourism, AI-driven transformation in tourism and hospitality, and tourism resilience, as presented in keynote lectures and thematic panels.

***Representation of NKUHT:*** To promote the academic profile and international engagement of NKUHT by actively participating in a global forum and fostering institutional presence through professional exchange and visibility.

## 2. Process

### ***Pre-Conference Preparation (July 6, 2025)***

I arrived in South Korea on July 6 and completed registration procedures at the conference venue. This day was spent reviewing the program, finalizing presentation slides, and meeting with fellow TiP presenters to understand session logistics and expectations. The informal discussions provided a supportive environment for early-stage researchers.

### ***Day 1 – July 7, 2025: Presentation and Tip Session***

#### Thesis-in-Progress (TiP) Session:

I presented my study titled “Negotiating Love and Logistics: Factors Driving Couples’ Selection of Hybrid Destination Wedding Venues in Dalat City, Vietnam.” The presentation investigated the convergence of emotional and logistical considerations in destination wedding decision-making among Vietnamese millennials, with a specific focus on the hybrid format (ceremony + honeymoon).

The session was attended by early-career researchers, professors, and industry practitioners. My presentation generated insightful questions on the socio-cultural context of wedding tourism in Vietnam, logistical constraints in emerging destinations like Da Lat, and the application of qualitative research in tourism consumer behavior. One of the highlights was the constructive feedback I received on refining my coding structure and positioning the concept of “hybrid destinations” within broader destination branding theory.

#### Concurrent Sessions:

I attended sessions focusing on smart tourism, consumer psychology, and digital experiences in tourism. These sessions expanded my understanding of how technological innovation is reshaping traveler behavior and expectations — knowledge that will directly inform my theoretical framework.

#### Welcome Reception:

The evening reception served as an effective networking opportunity.

### ***Day 2 – July 8, 2025: Anniversary Special Session & Academic Engagement***

#### APTA 30th Anniversary Special Session & Opening Ceremony:

A milestone celebration featuring keynote talks from tourism pioneers, including Dr. Daniel R. Fesenmaier and Mr. Harry Hwang (UN Tourism). Their insights on 30 years of research and tourism development aligned well with my interest in long-term shifts in tourism consumption patterns.

#### Concurrent Sessions 4 & 5:

These sessions included topics on visitor experience design, sustainable tourism planning, and generational tourism preferences. I was especially engaged by a panel on how Gen Z travelers are redefining value in experiential tourism — a point highly relevant to wedding tourism motivations.

#### APTA Board Dinner:

Attending the Board Dinner gave me the chance to interact with senior researchers and board members in an informal setting. The exchanges provided insights into research funding, publishing, and international cooperation in tourism education.

### ***Day 3 – July 9, 2025: Future-Focused Dialogues and Closing Ceremony***

### Special Session: OTA, City Tourism & Future Trends:

Presentations from executives at AGODA and TPO highlighted data-driven urban tourism strategies and 30-year trajectories of tourism in global cities. The session offered important benchmarks for developing tourism policies in medium-sized cities like Da Lat.

### Concurrent Sessions 7 & 8:

The final academic sessions covered resilience in tourism systems, destination recovery post-COVID, and smart governance. These discussions strengthened the policy implications section of my research.

### Ceremony & Farewell Dinner:

The closing event concluded the conference with expressions of gratitude and reflections on the achievements of APTA over the past three decades.

## 3. Experience

The APTA 2025 conference provided a platform for comprehensive academic growth:

***Theoretical Advancement:*** The integration of technological, cultural, and emotional factors in travel decisions discussed during the conference will significantly refine the theoretical lens of my research.

***Practical Perspective:*** Observing the academic-industry dialogue on hybrid event design, AI adoption in tourism operations, and urban tourism planning deepened my understanding of real-world applications.

***Feedback and Refinement:*** The TiP session helped me recognize the gaps and strengths in my current methodological approach, especially the balance between emic and etic interpretations in qualitative data.

***Strategic Networking:*** I built lasting connections with scholars from Dong A University, Macau University, NKUST, Greenwich University, Philippines Diliman University and Hong Kong PolyU, setting a foundation for future co-authored publications and mobility opportunities.

## 4. Suggestions

Based on this experience, I would like to offer the following suggestions:

### ***For NKUHT:***

Sustain and expand funding opportunities for international conference participation across student and faculty levels.

Encourage early-career researchers to engage in TiP-style sessions that foster safe, collaborative learning environments.

Provide professional branding tools (business cards, templates, QR codes) to enhance the institution's presence.

Integrate research presentation with targeted field visits when possible, to bridge theory and context.

### ***For Future Participants:***

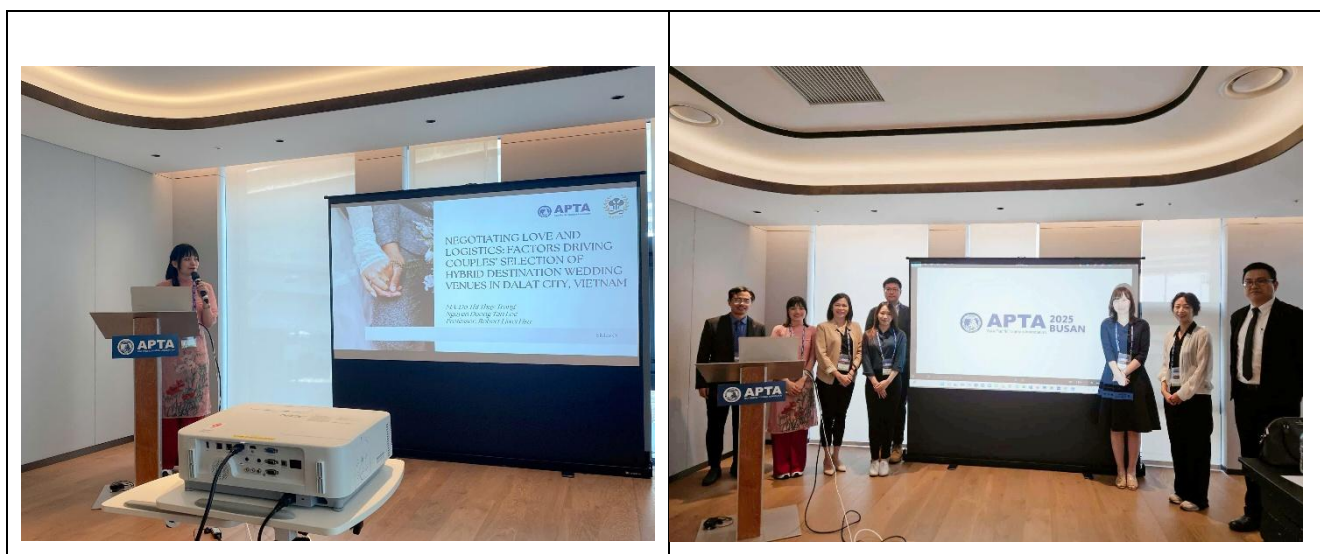
Start preparations well in advance, especially in applying for conference slots and funding.

Design presentations that anticipate interdisciplinary interest and global audience diversity.

Attend networking events with specific goals and follow up with contacts post-conference.

Maintain a reflective journal to capture insights, reactions, and references throughout the event.

## **5. Photos from the Conference**





*Presenting the Tip - session in the Conference*  
(July 7th)



*Captured a photo with the moderator, commentator, and fellow presenters*



*Connecting with fellow conference delegates  
from Dong A University*



*Connecting with fellow conference delegates from  
Philippines Diliman University*



*30th APTA Conference Anniversary Special  
Session with Speaker*

*Listened to a keynote speech by special guests  
on 30 years of tourism research*





*Connecting with fellow conference delegates  
from NKUST*



*Visiting Taejongdea*





*Experiencing in Busan with international friends*